



1076 American Sermons

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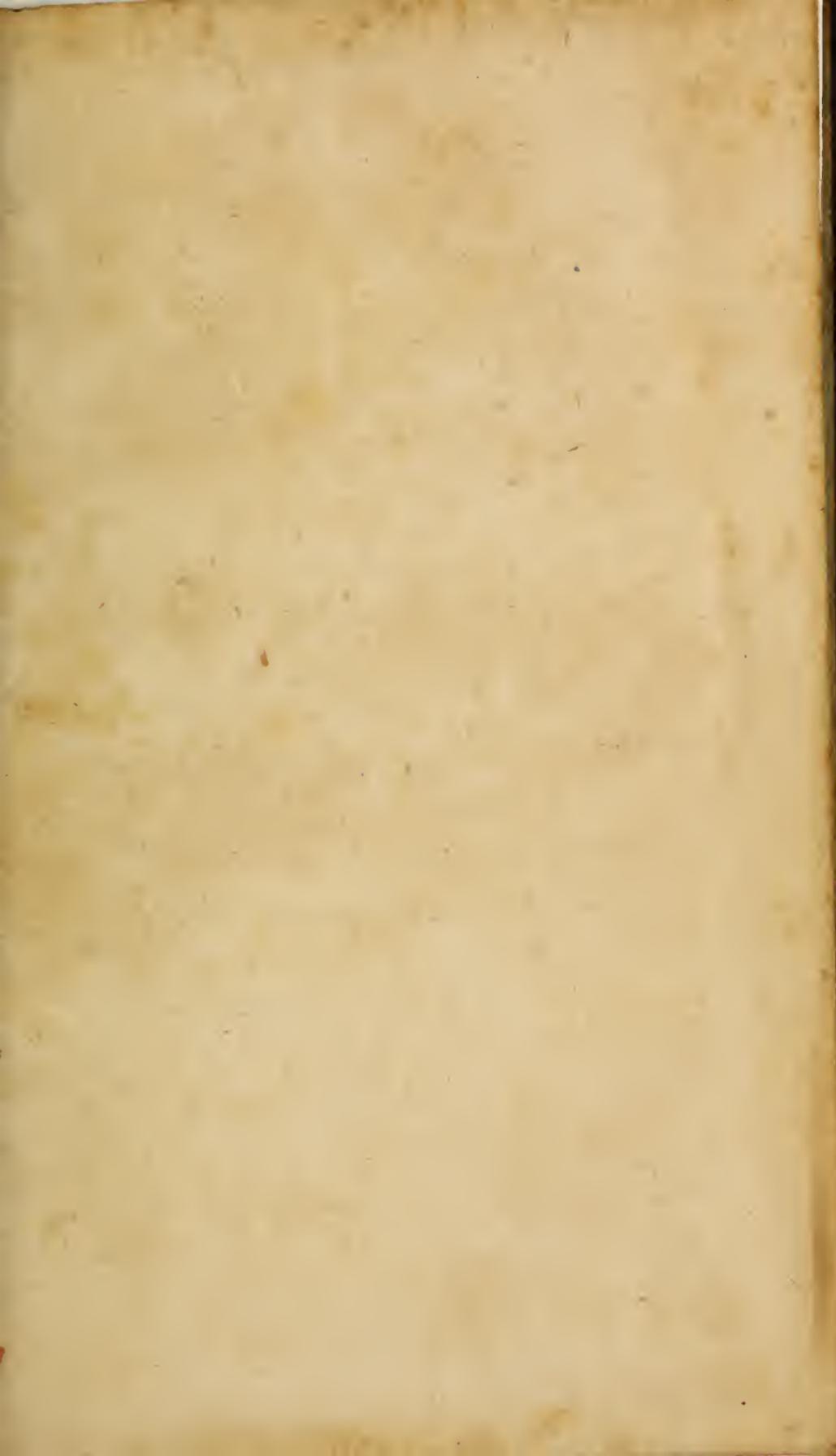
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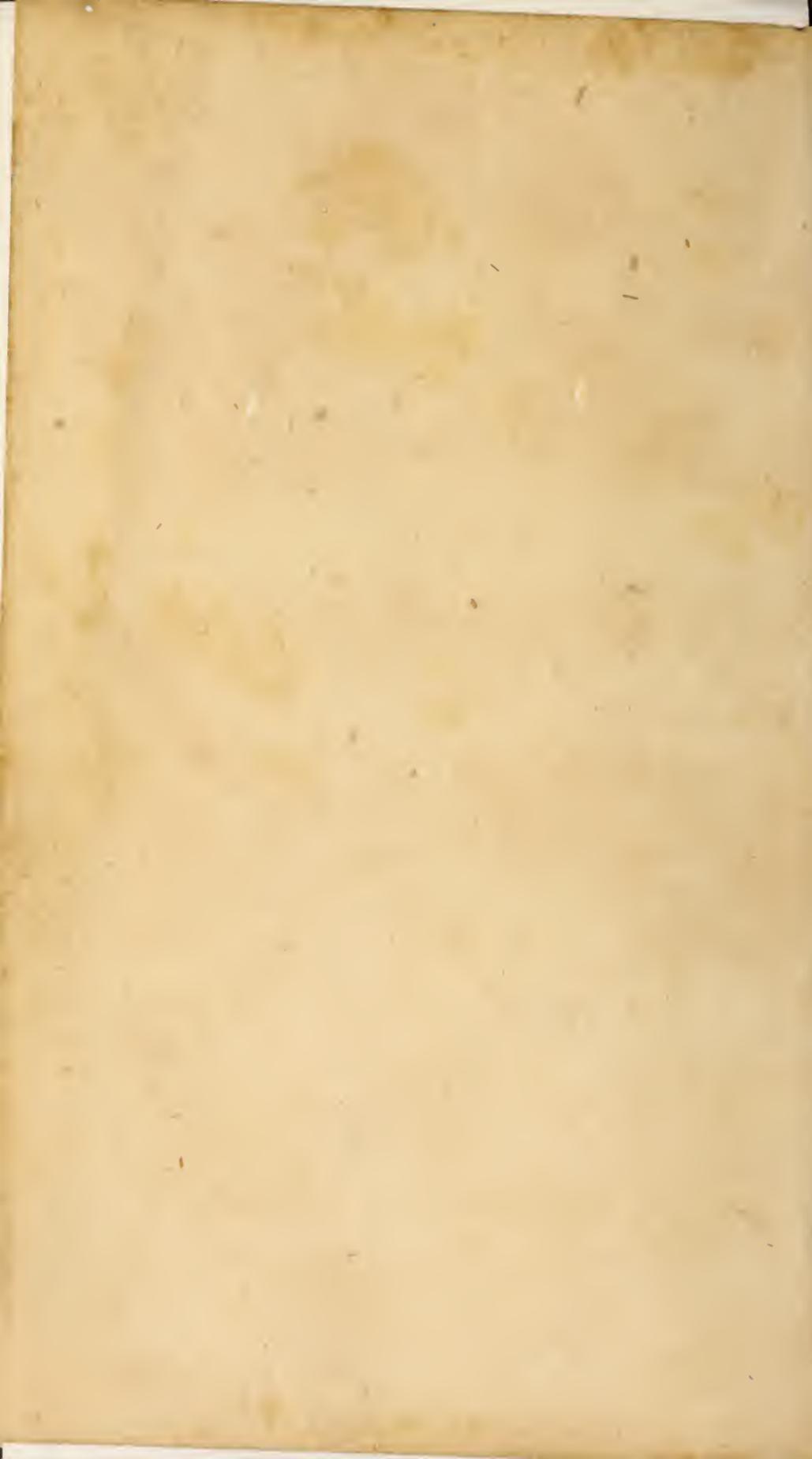
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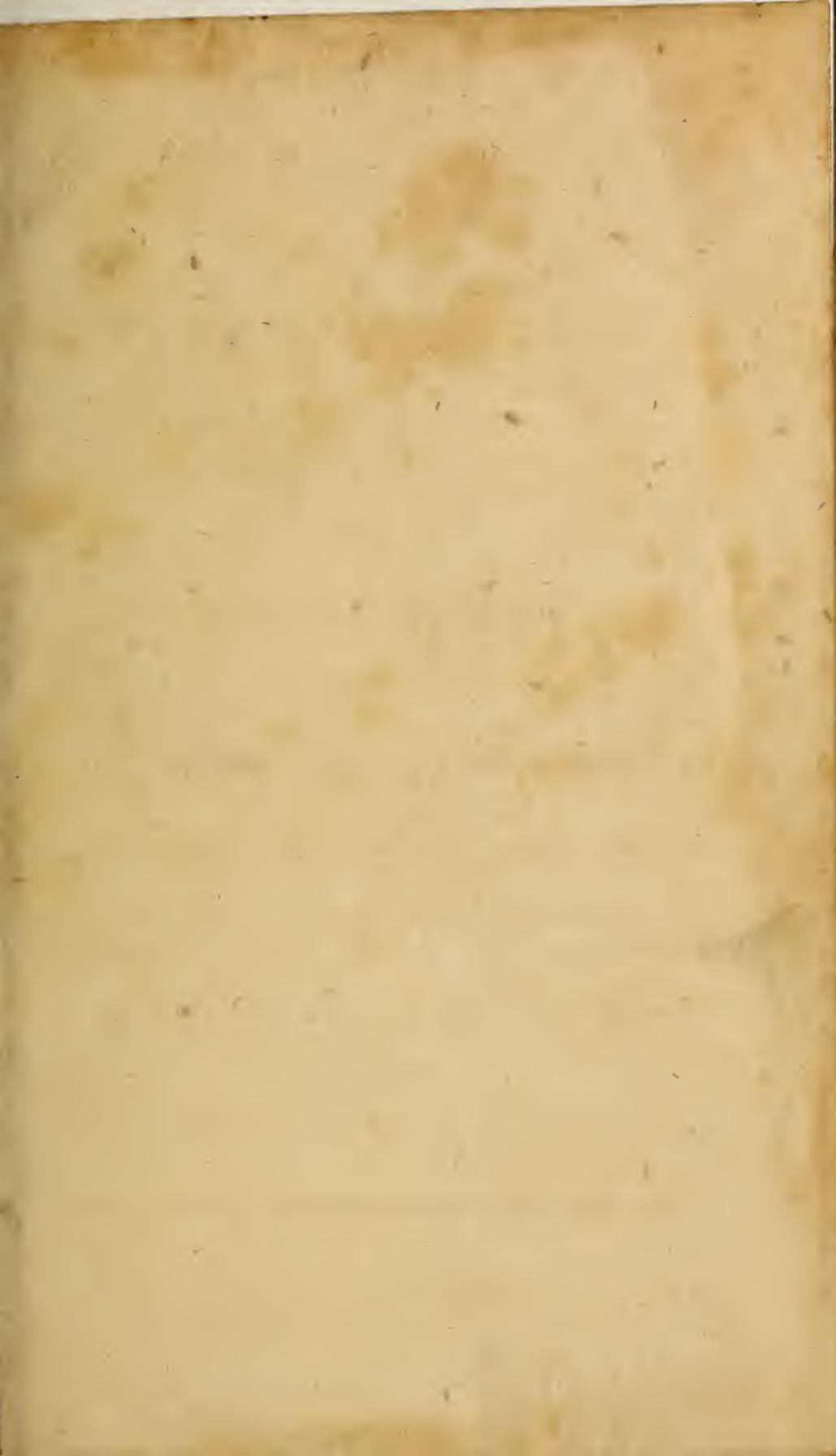
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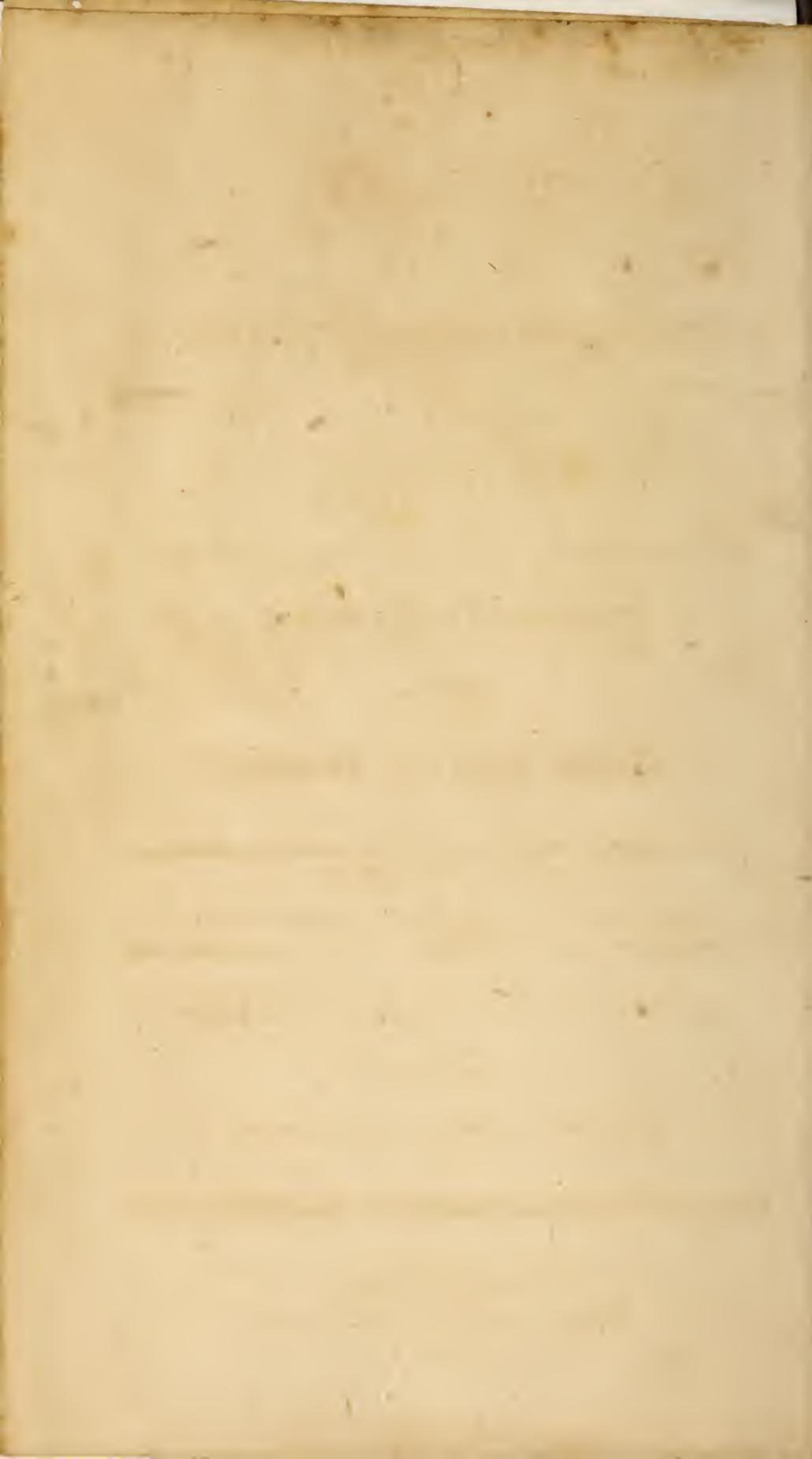
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Oliver Sarridge

A
SUMMARY
OF
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE
AND
PRACTICE:

DESIGNED ESPECIALLY, FOR THE USE OF THE PEOPLE IN
THE NEW SETTLEMENTS
OF THE
United States of America.

✓ BY THE TRUSTEES
OF THE
MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF CONNECTICUT.

WRITTEN AT THE SPECIAL REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

—*—
[PUBLISHED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS.]

HARTFORD :
PRINTED BY HUDSON & GOODWIN.
1804.

STANDARD

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

PRACTICE

THE NEW TESTAMENT

THE NEW TESTAMENT

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

IN THE CITY OF

NEW-YORK

PRINTED BY

THE NEW-YORK

NEW-YORK

NEW-YORK

1844

INTRODUCTION.

FROM the earliest ages of Christianity it appears, that the Church of Christ has been fully persuaded of the utility and importance of brief Summaries of Christian Doctrines. This is evident, from the confessions of faith which have been composed and circulated, in every age and country, where the Gospel has been known and Churches have been formed.

That there has always been a good use made of them, no one will pretend. But, that they may be important and serve to increase knowledge, as to divine truth, is exceedingly obvious.

There are many, in every age and in all places, who are so destitute of a sense of the importance of Religion, that they would never attend to the sacred Scriptures, with that degree of engagedness, which is necessary, to collect, from them, any thing like a system of doctrines. But, by the aid of a compendium of the doctrines and duties of the Gospel, accurately drawn up, with scripture proofs; they may, in a short time, arrive at the knowledge of every important truth. And, most certainly, it would greatly assist such as have an inquisitive turn of mind.

Besides, such as are inclined to devote but a small portion of time to religious subjects, may have patience, or curiosity at least, to peruse a compendium of Christian Doctrines, while they neglect the Sacred Volume.—And, farther, such a Summary would naturally lead the mind to apprehend the *connection* and *harmony* of the various truths which compose the Christian system, as it presents them to the mind, nearly in one view. In addition to these considerations, it is apprehended, that such a Summary is well calculated to heighten the comforts and enjoyments of real Christians, who build all their hopes of future glory on the Gospel System. When the foundation of all their hopes is exhibited, as it is in the Summary under consideration, it must be highly calculated to raise their joys, increase their comforts, and strengthen their faith.

INTRODUCTION.

From a persuasion and conviction of the utility and importance of such a compendium, the Missionary Society of Connecticut, at their meeting, on the third Tuesday of June 1803, Voted, "*That the Trustees of this Society be requested, to prepare or procure, publish and distribute, a Summary of the Christian Doctrines, for the benefit of the people in the New Settlements.*" The view the Society had in such a publication, was not to dictate articles of faith, but to aid and assist their brethren and friends in the New Settlements, who but partially enjoy the means of instruction, in forming their faith.

The Trustees, in conformity to the wishes of the Missionary Society, have united in the following Summary. It comprises, in as short a compass, the various Christian Doctrines and duties, as it is thought will consist with perspicuity. There is not an attempt fully to obviate the objections, which the opposers of the doctrines of Christianity have usually made, as it would swell the work to too great a size. All that is aimed at, is, to shew what doctrines are taught in the Sacred Scriptures, with some references to such passages as contain them. It is hoped it may instruct the ignorant, assist serious inquirers, and afford edification and comfort to the Christian mind. Let it be faithfully perused; and as far as it is found to express the sentiments and doctrines contained in the scriptures, let it be received; and the end proposed in the publication of it will be answered.

A SUMMARY
OF
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE.

CHAPTER I.

Of the being of a God.

1. **T**HAT something has been from eternity is a plain dictate of reason: for, on the contrary supposition, the Universe must have sprung out of nothing, without any cause or reason whatever; and the whole ground of our reasoning from effect to cause is subverted: but a supposition which subverts a main ground of our reasoning is plainly contrary to reason.

2. *That something* cannot be matter because matter is unintelligent: for, it is as contrary to reason to suppose unintelligent matter should produce intelligence, as to suppose nothing should produce something; and because, matter is mutable; for, mutability and eternity are incompatible. *That something* cannot be finite intelligence, for this is equally mutable as matter.

3. *That eternal something*, then, must be infinite intelligence, and the cause of all things which are not eternal, as finite spirits and matter; and is the being or existence which we call God.

4. The visible Heavens, the Earth and the Seas and all that in them is, in their nature, order and use, bear as evident marks of design, as the most curious works of man's device; and in both, we are irresistibly led by the appearance of design to infer a designer.

5. The designer of the Heavens, the Earth and the Seas, and of the various creatures therein, could not be themselves: for no creature or thing can be the designer of its own existence and original perfection. *Man* cannot be supposed the designer of the works of nature; because, the production of those works infinitely

transcends his wisdom and power; particularly, not of himself: and for this further reason, that he cannot exercise wisdom and power before he is, with a view to produce himself. The parent cannot be the designer of the offspring, and the absurd supposition of a succession of parent and offspring without a beginning would not help the matter, because the whole series would be without a designer, or any cause at all. The Designer then of the works of nature must be the Eternal and Infinite Intelligence, or God: and to him is due eternal homage from all his rational offspring. Thus every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God.

6. Hence it follows, that God is immaterial, or a pure Spirit; self-existent or uncaused by any thing prior to, or without himself. He exists by necessity of nature, or the reason of his existence results from his essential nature as God: and though that reason be incomprehensible by finite minds, the supposition of his non-existence is the greatest of all absurdities, repugnant to the clearest dictates of reason, and every way destroys itself.

CHAPTER II.

Of the means whereby God maketh himself known.

1. **G**OD is invisible except in his operations, and in his word. In these he makes himself known to finite minds, in such order and progression as is best suited to their respective natures and capacities. These operations and acts, taken together, through all duration, are a perfect expression, as far as understood, of the nature and character of God. Their design is to express his nature and character; and as none of them are in vain, they will be more and more understood through the progress of eternal ages.

2. No event ever takes place either with, or without the intervention of means, instruments, or subordinate agents, but must be considered as an effect of divine power; and will, either in its nature, relations, or final issue, display the true character of God: and this display is *the Glory of God*, and the end of all his works. Psalm xix. 1, 2. civ. 24, 25. 1^o 23. lxxvi, 10. Rom. ix. 17.

3. The operations and acts of God are comprised in his giving being to creatures, and in his disposal of them: or, in the works of creation and providence. These are unfolded in the revelation he has made of himself in the Holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Holy Scriptures.

1. **T**HE Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God and the only perfect rule of faith and manners. 2. Tim. iii. 16.

2. The proof that these Scriptures are the word of God is drawn from the following main sources.

The books of the Old Testament have been acknowledged to be divine by the body of the Jewish nation, from the times in which they were received into their canon, and have been publicly read as such, at their solemn feasts, before the assembled nation, and in their synagogues, on their weekly and other Sabbaths and days of solemn worship, and have always been, and now are, the records of the nation. The miraculous facts and events recorded in those books are, therefore, true. For, had they been forged and introduced, at any period, as the records of the nation, they would not have been received as true, any more than a similar state of facts could now be palmed upon any other nation, as their true history. But, if those facts are true, the Old Testament is divine.

The prophecies contained in the Jewish Scriptures have many of them been fulfilled; especially those relating to the Messiah from Genesis to Malachi have received an admirable accomplishment in JESUS CHRIST; in respect to the time, manner, and circumstances of his appearance, person, offices, character, mighty works, preaching, sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, glorification and progress of his kingdom; and thus prove the divine authority of those Scriptures, and also of the Scriptures of the New Testament.

The miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, and by his disciples in his name, his resurrection from the dead, and the miracles wrought by his Apostles, also in his name, for several ages after his ascension, prove that he was what he claimed to be, the Son of God—the light of the world—the truth and the life—the Sent of God—and the way to the Father. For God would not have raised from the dead an impostor, nor have, in those miraculous works, set his seal to falsehood.

The attestation which Jesus Christ gave to the Old Testament Scriptures, in his numerous references to the various parts of it; in his declaration that it behoved him to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day in fulfilment of what was writ-

ten in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him; in his direction to the Jews to search them as the records which testified of him; and in the testimony of his Apostles, by commission from him; that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God; and that the Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but that holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, demonstrates their truth and inspiration.

The wonderful agreement of all the parts of the Scriptures, written, as they were, in different ages of the world, and by persons of various talents, and in different circumstances, as to fact, doctrine, object, design and end, concentrating in Christ and his redemption, proves them divine.

The sublime views they give of God, suited to create reverence, esteem, love, trust, confidence and joy; their conformity to the dictates of right reason; the pure morality they inculcate, with respect to ourselves and others, in every possible condition and relation; the just light in which they place the character of man as fallen, depraved, and helpless, prone to evil and averse from good, alienated from God and from one another, and utterly lost to hope and happiness; the views they give of the plan of salvation through a glorious Mediator—of the perfect character of the compassionate Saviour—of his dying love—of his atonement, righteousness and intercession—of the perpetuity, extent and glory of his kingdom—of the life and immortality which he has brought to light by the Gospel, and of the final and utter destruction of the wicked, are worthy of God, and suited to the state and condition of man, and corroborate the proof of their divine authority.

The same appears from the happy effects which the Scriptures have produced, in the countries where they have been received, in rooting out idolatry and superstition; in extirpating the errors and abominable rites of polytheism; in diminishing the number and publicity of the most detestable vices; and, where cordially believed, in renovating the heart; in reconciling men to God and to one another; in restoring, in some good degree, peace on earth and good will to men; in subduing the passions which rankle in the heart to the empire of reason; in reconciling men to affliction and adversity; in bearing them above the world; in vanquishing the fears of death and the grave; and in carrying their views forward to a glorious immortality: From the inimitable sublimity of a great part of those writings, especially the prophecies:—From the simplicity and impartiality which appear in the narration of facts and description of characters, free from either adulation or censure,

leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions.—From the accordance of profane history and tradition, recognized in every age and nation, with the relation of the most important facts and events recorded in the Scriptures—From the testimony of the enemies of revealed Religion, admitting the reality of the miracles wrought by Christ, and, after him, by his disciples through several ages—From the innumerable references, in the Scriptures, to the state of things in the world, with respect to times, places, persons, characters, conditions and events, which have in no single instance been found to be false, though exposed to the investigation of the enemies of Revelation in every age—From the consistent and rational account which they, and they alone, give of sacrifices, which all the ancient nations offered to their Gods; their origin, import and end; of circumcision, which has been practised by several nations from the days of Abraham to the present time; of the Passover and innumerable other ceremonies of the Jewish ritual; their nature, typical relation, accomplishment and abrogation in Christ—From the grand and extensive views they present us of the dominion of God, over all creatures and things; of the perfection, immutability, and eternal duration of his government; and of the nature, progress and final glory of his Kingdom.

The same appears from the character, circumstances and prospects of the witnesses of the truth in every age; particularly in the age of the Apostles. The account we have of these first witnesses, proves that they were honest men; men of truth and fearers of God. *They could not deceive*; because, they could have no motives to deceive, which ever did, or ever can operate on the human mind; their whole interest both for this life and the life to come must oppose the attempt. And had the facts of which they testify been false, they must have known that every effort to deceive would have proved abortive. *They could not be deceived*; because they were eye witnesses of the facts they relate; their eyes had seen and their hands had handled of the word of life—From the constancy and uniformity of their testimony under reproaches, persecutions and sufferings, in every form and degree, even unto death; in which, many of them consummated and sealed their testimony—From the credit they obtained even in the City of Jerusalem, where the things they relate, were transacted, and where they were opposed by the whole force and policy of the Government—From the progress of their doctrine through a great part of the Roman Empire, notwithstanding the numerous bloody persecutions by the Emperors, from Nero to Dioclesian—From the wonderful preservation of the Church, down to the present day, amidst the fire of persecution kindled by Antichrist, and fed with myriads of

victims through a long succession of ages; and the more subtil and dangerous attacks of the infidel Philosophists of the last and present age—From the increasing purity, zeal, and amplitude of the Church, notwithstanding the rage and power of its numerous enemies; and from the accomplishment of the prophecies in these great events which embrace the principal changes and revolutions which have taken place, within and beyond, the ancient limits of the Roman Empire; and which are now fulfilling, in the face of the whole world, in the present state of the nations; and especially of the Jewish nation; all which events are delineated by the spirit of inspiration with the accuracy of historical narration.

To conclude: The unsearchable mysteries which these writings reveal, far abound, but not opposed to the natural conceptions of men; the immense scenes which they unfold, displaying to the view of men all the great events of time, in this and in other worlds, and in their origin and consequences reaching from eternity to eternity; the incomprehensible depths of wisdom which they disclose, in causing all things, of however discordant and opposite natures, to unite in producing one great design, as plainly prove that the eternal and only wise God speaks in them, as any other writings, or works of art, prove the degree of intelligence and wisdom of their author.

The Book of Nature and of Revelation being open to view, it remains to point out some of the leading truths which they discover.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the manner of the Divine substance.

1. **T**HE Holy Scriptures testify that there are Three who bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and that these Three are One. 1 John v. 7.

2. *The Word* is the same divine person as, in many other parts of Scripture, is called, *The Son*, and the names by which the persons in the Sacred Trinity are commonly designated are *The Father*, *The Son*, and *The Holy Ghost*. John i. 14.

3. The doctrine that God is Three in One and One in Three, is a mystery which cannot be fully comprehended by men in the present state; nevertheless, it is a doctrine of primary importance, and lies at the foundation of that which is the end and consummation of all God's works, the work of Redemption.

4. God cannot be One and Three in the same respects; because, to assert this would be a contradiction in terms, and contrary to reason; but it implies no contradiction, to assert he is so, as in truth he is, in different respects.

5. The word *person* is not used in Scripture, as applied to the Sacred Trinity; but the personal pronouns I, thou, he, and other words which designate persons, are applied to it, and the word *person* seems most appropriate, and not liable to any valid objection.*

6. The Three who bear record in Heaven cannot be understood as merely three *relations, operations, or offices*, because perfection is ascribed to each; and perfection is not an attribute of relations, operations or offices, but of Being.

7. The same perfection, counsel and operation are, in Scripture, attributed to the three persons in the Trinity, and they are equal in manner of existence, in knowledge, power, wisdom, holiness, glory and happiness. Gen. i. 1, 2; *In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.* Gen. i. 26. *And God said let US make man in OUR own image.* John i. 1, 3. *In the beginning was the WORD, and the word was with God, and the word was God. All things were made by him.* Col. i. 17. *He, [the Son] is before all things, and by him all things consist.* Psa. civ. 30. *Thou sendest forth thy SPIRIT they are created and thou renewest the face of the Earth.* John v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto and I work.* 21. *For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.* John vi. 63. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth.* John xiv. 23. *We [the Father and the Son] will come unto him [the believer] and make our abode with*

* NOTE. In Hebrew i. 3; the Son, according to our translation, is said to be the brightness of his [God's] glory and the express image of his *person*, on which, it is proper to remark.

1. That the Greek word *hypostasis* there rendered *person*, more properly signifies *substance*, or *subsistence*, than *person* in its common acceptation, and might have been so rendered. *Person* more aptly answers to the Greek word *prosopon*.

2. Be this as it may, the word *person*, as here used, is applied to God generally, and not to either divine person as distinguished from the other two persons in the Godhead.

3. Proper Divinity is, in this chapter, directly applied to the Son, in those words, *Thy Throne, O God, is forever and ever and ever*; and impliedly, in other parts of it. But the term *Son* is there used to designate the Lord Christ, as *Mediator*. God is said to make the worlds *by him*; to speak to us, in these last days, *by him*; to appoint him to be the heir of all things; to give him, *as heir*, a more excellent name, than to the Angels; to make him so much better than the Angels as his name is more excellent than theirs; and to anoint him with the oil of gladness above *his fellows*: all which expressions imply inferiority of office, though he is by nature God: and it appears, that in this office alone, *the Son* is said to be *the brightness of God's glory, and the character, or express image of his person*.

him. 16, 17. He [the Father] will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the SPIRIT of truth. Jude 25. To the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power both now and ever. Amen.

8. The Three Divine Persons being possessed of infinite knowledge, wisdom, power and rectitude, their affections, volitions and acts will be necessarily the same, and the union of the Sacred Three will be infinitely perfect. In what other respects the Three are One, or the One Three, the light of eternity may more fully reveal.

9. In the essential nature of God there is a foundation for ineffable complacency and communion between the Sacred Three, of which all holy complacency and communion between creatures, and between the Creator and creatures is an expression more or less perfect, but still infinitely short of that which exists between the Sacred Three in One. John xvii. 21. *That they all may be one, even as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us.*

10. To the adorable Three in One, the Holy angels with veiled faces, pay their humble adoration, when they cry one to another, saying, *Holy, Holy, Holy*, is the Lord of Hosts; and the Church of the first born in their universal doxology to *the Father*, to *the Son*, and to *the Holy Ghost*. To whom be praise and dominion for ever. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

Of the perfections of God.

PERFECTION in God may be comprised in his possession of infinite blessedness, and in a propensity and power, unlimited as his nature, to communicate being and blessedness to creatures.

The notion of absolute perfection, in general, being confused, and indistinct in our minds, it will aid our conceptions to consider it in parts, as it is related to different objects.

The works and word of God lead us to attribute to him Eternity, Infinity, Immutability, Independence, Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence, Goodness, Wisdom, Justice, Truth and Holiness. The seven first, belonging to power or sufficiency, are called natural perfections; the five last, belonging to the heart, are called moral perfections.

1. **ETERNITY** is the mode of the Divine existence, as time is, of the existence of creatures. It is, of course, incomprehensible. It is, in our conceptions, duration without beginning and without end; but it is duration without succession. Periods marked by the revolution of days, months, years and ages are *relative* to creature existence, but *irrelative* to the existence of God. With him is no succession of counsel or operation; he possesses all things in one present, all-comprehensive, and perfect view. *He is the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity.* Isa. lvii. 15.

2. **INFINITY** is predicable of the nature and perfections of God, generally. It is not in itself a distinct perfection; but it imports, that God's nature and perfections are without bounds or control, or that he is supreme and exalted far above all. Psa. cxlvii. 5.

3. **IMMUTABILITY** in God results from, or is necessarily connected with, his eternity. Whatever is predicable of an eternal existence must be itself eternal. Change either of mode, circumstance, or action, implies beginning; and that which hath beginning cannot be eternal. Immutability in God does not imply that he cannot exercise opposite affections towards the same being or person, at different times, on a change of character of such being or person, but the contrary. Nor does it imply that he cannot, on special occasions, suspend, or reverse, the laws of nature, for such special interpositions are as much embraced in the plan of God's eternal counsels, as the most common events. But it implies, that his nature and perfections are ever the same; and that his operations are the result of his eternal counsels. Jam. i. 17. *With whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning.* Mal. iii. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not.*

4. **INDEPENDENCE**, as a perfection of God, imports that he is not controlled by blind necessity, fate, chance, or any cause without himself, and that he derives nothing, in relation to his being, volitions, acts, or enjoyments, from creatures. But it does not imply that he would be equally glorious and happy, if creatures had never been formed; for his glory and happiness consist, as properly, in doing what he does, as in being what he is: the former is equally necessary, by a necessity of fitness and wisdom, as the latter is, by a necessity of nature. Dan. iv. 35. *None can stay his hand, or say unto him What dost thou?* Psa. civ. 31. *The Lord shall rejoice in his works.* Zeph. iii. 17. *The Lord thy God will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing.* Communicated good is a source of joy in God, but this does not imply dependance, be-

cause communicated good itself is from God, and his joy in it is essential and eternal, though the communication itself is, in respect to creatures, in time.

5. OMNIPRESENCE is not distinct from universal agency, in which, God creates and supports all things, moves all things, lives in all life, and inspires or controls every thought or action of creatures. Its relation to place, or universal space, is not to be understood strictly, but figuratively; still the notion of universal presence is best accommodated to our conceptions, and expressions denoting this, are used by the Spirit of inspiration. Psa. cxxx. 8, 9, 10. *If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in Hell, behold, thou art there: if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

6. OMNISCIENCE, or infinite knowledge, extends to all creatures, and events, which have been, are, or shall be: their beginning, duration, changes, relations, and end. Particularly, to the state, circumstances, volitions, actions and eternal destination, of moral agents. It embraces things possible as well as actual. It is absolutely perfect, unlimited and eternal. All things actual are but the expression of the perceptions of the *Eternal Mind*. Acts xv. 18. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.* Rev. ii. 23. *I am he that searcheth the reins and hearts.* Mat. x. 30. *The very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

7. OMNIPOTENCE, or infinite power, is the immediate, or mediate, cause of all things: whether being, state, attribute, motion, volition, action, or event, which ever-has, or will, come into existence: of course, nothing can control, hinder or resist it. For no effect can resist the cause which gives it being. Contradictions are no object of power; nor, any more of infinite, than of finite, power: for they involve self-destruction. But as to all things which are objects of power, omnipotence has no limitation, but what is prescribed by fitness and wisdom. Mat. xix. 26. *With God all things are possible.*

8. GOODNESS in God is that propensity of the Divine Mind which is pleased with *the existence* and *the communication* of good or happiness; with its existence, in the *Eternal Three*, and its communication, to creatures. In relation to communicated good, its object is the greatest possible good to the system of intelligent creatures; and the greatest possible good to individuals, as far as is consistent with this; but it does not secure the final happiness of all. Psa. cxlv. 9. *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* 1. Pet. i. 6. *If need be,*

ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. Rom. ix. 17. For this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee.

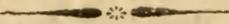
9. WISDOM, in a good sense, proposes a good end, and devises the best means to attain it. So far, as it proposes a good end, it is a moral perfection, and not distinct from goodness; and so far, as it devises the best means to attain that end, it is a natural perfection, and not distinct from knowledge. Its most distinguished character, however, is moral, for which reason it is ranked among the moral perfections. As wisdom exists in God it proposes and attains the greatest possible good: it is displayed in all his works and eminently in the work of Redemption. Psa. civ. 24. *O Lord how manifold are thy works? In wisdom hast thou made them all.* 1. Cor. i. 24. *Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* Rom. xvi. 27. *To God only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen.*

10. JUSTICE in God, in its largest sense, is a propensity to render to all according to their work. To them who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honor and immortality, *eternal life*; and to them who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, *indignation and wrath*. And thus it is the same as righteousness. This is *retributive justice*. More commonly, to render tribulation to the wicked merely. This is *vindictive justice*. And sometimes it is synonymous with *faithfulness*. 1. John i. 9. *If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.* Heb. vi. 10. *God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love.* Vindictive justice executed on the enemies of God is not an exercise of malevolence towards them, but it is an expression of good will towards his holy kingdom; and good will is as much displayed in showing his wrath on the vessels of wrath, as in declaring the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy. Psa. cxxxvi. *To him who smote great kings for his mercy endureth for ever. Sihon king of the Amorites, for his mercy endureth for ever. And Og the king of Basban, for his mercy endureth for ever.*

11. TRUTH in God is that propensity by which he is necessarily inclined to represent to his creatures, in his word and works, his nature, counsels, and acts, and whatever he sees fit to make known, as they really are in themselves. When he says, he that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned, his declaration must be equally ~~rested~~ rested on, in both propositions. Because, both equally express his purpose, as it exists in his own mind. There is nothing which can justify the supposition that God may dispense with his threatenings, any more, than with his promises. God said to our first parents,

in case of disobedience ye *shall* surely die : the Tempter said, ye *shall not* surely die ; but he was a murderer and a liar from the beginning. Num. xxiii. 19. *God is not a man that he should lie ; nor the son of man that he should repent ; hath he said, and shall he not do it ; or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good ?* Heb. vi. 18. *It is impossible for God to lie.*

12. HOLINESS comprehends the whole moral character of God. The word is the most apt which can be found to express it. Holiness is goodness or love, it is wisdom, justice, truth, faithfulness, mercy. It is, in a word, *moral rectitude*. Its distinguishing character is *purity* ; to which, sin considered as a filthy and abominable thing, is contrasted. In view of this divine purity Isaiah exclaims, Isa. vi. 5. *Woe is me, for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips ; and I dwell in the midst of a people, of unclean lips ; for mine eyes have seen the king the Lord of Hosts.* And Job, Job xlii. 5, 6. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee ; Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*



CHAPTER VI.

Of the acts of the Divine Will, their nature—Of decrees—Of foreknowledge—Of Sovereignty.

1. **T**HE phrase *acts of the will*, though in common use, is, strictly speaking, improper. For, acts are predicable of agents or beings, and not of qualities or faculties. They are that energy of agents, in the exercise of which they produce events. They are power, or the expression of it. In a large, but improper sense, they include counsel, purpose or decree ; these relate to events, but in creatures, do not produce them.

2. The ground of the exercises of the will or power of God is *fitness*, arising from the nature and relations of things, as viewed in the Divine Mind. For, though nature and relation themselves are the effect of the will of God, yet nature and relation being produced, or supposed, fitness results from them : and this fitness is the ground or reason of all God's acts respecting them, and ought to be the ground or reason of the acts of intelligent creatures. It is fit that God should be glorified ; and therefore it is fit that he should produce beings with such qualities as, in his treatment of them, shall display his glory. If a holy creature be supposed, it is fit that glory should be decreed as his state and reward. If a sinner be supposed, it is fit that wrath should be decreed as *his* state and reward. Because,

these opposite rewards will equally display the true character of God, as the friend of righteousness and the enemy of unrighteousness. If an intelligent creature be produced, it is fit, that he should reverence, love, and serve God. If an unintelligent creature be produced, it is fit, that it should be made subservient to the intelligent. The fitness of any thing consists in its being adapted to the end for which it was made. The end of all things is the glory of God. That conduct in rational agents which displays the glory of God is *fit and proper conduct*: and that which does not, is *unfit and improper conduct*. It is fit that holy creatures should enjoy the favor of God, because they answer the end of their being: and it is fit that sinners should meet his frowns and displeasure because they do not answer that end; and are wholly useless except in their destruction.—Rom. ix. 22. *What if God, willing to show his wrath and make his power known, endureth with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. 23; And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.*

3. The acts of the will of God are necessarily according to fitness: and hence arises their obligation on creatures. To the will of God we owe obedience and submission; not as *his will* simply; but as his *fit and righteous will*. Isa. v. 3. *And now, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. Ezek. xviii. 29. O House of Israel are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?*

4. The counsels and purposes of God are all eternal, and so are all his acts, though they have succession as viewed by creatures: for, whatever is predicable of an Eternal Being must be eternal. 2. Tim. i. 9. *According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.*

5. The counsels of God embrace every event which ever takes place: particularly, the being, character, actions, and eternal state, of every intelligent creature.—2. Tim. i. 9; fore-cited. 1. Peter ii. 8. *Being disobedient, whereunto they also were appointed. Acts ii. 23. Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain.*

6. God, in his eternal counsels, has chosen a certain number of the human race to be heirs of eternal life; and hath ordained and provided the instruments and means, which to his wisdom seem meet, for that purpose. 1. Peter i. 2. *Elect, according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father. Mark xiii. 20. For the Elect's sake, whom he hath chosen. Rom. xvi. 13. Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord.*

7. The election of God is not grounded on good works foreseen and fore-known, of those who are called; but is an act of sovereign goodness. 2. Tim. i. 9. *Not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.* Eph. i. 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we SHOULD BE HOLY.* Rom. viii. 29. *Whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.*

8. Knowledge, in the order of nature is prior to purpose or decree: for nothing can be decreed which is not known, and known to be proper to be brought into existence. But knowledge of the certain futurity of an event, or fore-knowledge, is grounded upon a decree to bring it to pass: for such decree alone is the cause of its futurity. Acts xv. 18. *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world;* but his works, in purpose and design, must be prior to fore-knowledge, in order to be its object.

9. Sovereignty in God is the right to exercise his power in giving being, capacity and happiness to creatures, and in taking them away, as seems good to him, without being accountable to them. Rom. xi. 34. *Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?*

10. In the exercise of sovereignty God, in fact, has formed creatures with various degrees of being, power, excellence and enjoyment: and disposes of them, in his providence, some to honor, and some to dishonor. He creates Angels, men and worms. Some creatures he forms for immortality: of these, some are chosen to be heirs of glory, and some are left to fall into sin and endless ruin. Others he forms to come into existence and perish in a day; and, lastly, others, without perception, or a capacity for pleasure or pain.

11. The sovereignty of God is exercised in all his operations and acts. It is perfectly distinct from *arbitrariness*: and is always limited by fitness and wisdom. There are important reasons for the distinctions which God makes among his creatures, in their formation and use, tho' often beyond our comprehension. Paul says, 1. Tim. i. 16. *For this cause obtained I mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which shall hereafter believe on him to life-everlasting,* and there are good reasons for every other act of sovereign mercy; as well as for every distinction which is made among creatures. Dan. iv. 35. *He doth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the Earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?*

12. The sovereignty of God is, as explained, calculated to

afford comfort to all who love God and his kingdom. It is matter of great joy that all things are under a wise direction; and it is the only ground of hope to sinners. In view of it, we have reason to adopt the words of Christ, Mat. xi. 25. 26. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*—And the sublime adoration of Paul, offered up in view of the same subject, 1. Tim. i. 17. *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the Only Wise God, be honor and glory, forever and ever. Amen.*

CHAPTER VII.

Of creation—Of Angels, their orders, their power, their original state, their trial with its consequences, their office and agency—Of man in his original state, his trial and fall.

1. **G**OD is the Creator of all things visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers, whether they be things in Heaven or things on Earth. Col. i. 16.

2. Creation is the act of God alone, producing something out of nothing. God said, Let there be light, and there was light. He spake, and it was done: He commanded, and it stood fast. It is not merely the formation of the world out of pre-existing materials, but also the production of those materials themselves. Heb. xi. 3. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed, by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*

3. God, at a period unknown, created various orders of intelligent creatures superior to man, who, in Scripture, are called *Angels*. They were in being, at the creation of this world: for, when God laid the foundations of the Earth, *the morning stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy.* Job xxxviii. 7. They are designated also, by the various names, *thrones, dominions, principalities and powers*; which denote their various orders, and also their power, authority and excellence. Col. i. 16. They are represented as spiritual essences, in their original; of great understanding and strength, and quick to do the will of God. Heb. i. 7. *He maketh his Angels spirits, his ministers a flame of fire.* Psa. ciii. 20. *Bless the Lord ye his Angels who excel in strength, who do his commandments, harkening unto the voice of his word.*

4. The Angels were all created holy and happy, and were in the immediate presence of God in Heaven. They were for a season in a state of trial. What the test of their obedience was, is, to us, unknown. Some of them were chosen to be heirs of glory, who continued, by the grace of God, faithful, through the term of their probation, and are now confirmed in a never-ending state of holiness and happiness. Their election of God is manifest. *I charge thee*, says Paul to Timothy, 1. Tim. v. 21. *Before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels.*—Others were left to themselves, and they sinned, became apostate from God, were cast out of Heaven, and are now reserved in chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day: and will then be punished, in that everlasting fire, which is prepared for them. Jude 6. These evil Angels are, in Scripture, called *Devils*. They are implacable enemies of God and man, and are forever accursed. Their great leader, who was among the Angels, in his first estate, like Lucifer son of the morning among the other stars, is now called the *old serpent*: and, by way of eminence, *the Devil, and Satan*. He was far above them in power and preeminence, and now is, and will be, as far below them in infamy and ruin. Isa. xiv. 12. *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the morning!*

5. The office of the Holy Angels is to minister to Christ as Mediator, and to the members of his mystical body. They were created by him and *for* him. *They are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of Salvation.* Heb. i. 14. In this character they acted at the creation of this world; at the birth of Christ; at the close of his temptation in the wilderness; at his agony in the garden; at his resurrection; at his ascension; and will attend him at the final judgment. In the same character they have ministered to holy men, in every age, and will minister to such, to the end of the world: and, in so doing, they execute the commands of Christ, whether for correction, or for support, defence and consolation.

6 The agency of evil Angels is exerted, in attempting to bring dishonor upon God and ruin upon men; in misrepresenting the ways, and perverting the word of God; in seducing men into idolatry and heresy; in tempting them to leave the service of God and to indulge the lusts of the flesh and of the mind; in hardening them in sin, especially in the sin of unbelief; and, generally, in working in the children of disobedience. Also, in tempting and worrying the Saints; stirring up their lusts; tormenting them with doubts and fears; leading them to despondency; and all, to bring them to dishonor God, to wound religion; to prove stumbling blocks to others; and, as far as may be, to hinder their progress Heaven-ward. Rev. xii. 9. Eph. ii. 2. Luke xxii. 31.

7. In the beginning God created the visible Heavens, the Earth and the Seas, and all things which are therein, within the space of six days; to each of which was assigned, according to the wisdom of God, a particular work; and, to the last, the creation of man; the end and crown of the whole. Gen. i.

8. God created man upright; in the image of God made he him; male and female created he them. He was in the image of God as possessed of understanding to discern betwixt good and evil; of rectitude of heart to choose the good and refuse the evil; and of dominion over the creatures. Eccl. vii. 29.—Gen. i. 26.

9. God placed the man whom he had made in the garden of Eden, formed by the munificent hand of the Creator, to furnish the happy pair both support and delight. In the midst of the garden he placed two trees; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the test of his obedience; and the tree of life, the pledge of immortality.

10. God commanded the man, saying, *Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* Gen. ii. 17. And this threatening of death in case of disobedience, with the promise of life represented by the tree of life, which was its symbol, in case of obedience, were, in their nature, a *covenant of works* between God and the first man Adam, in which, he was acted with, and acted, as the head and representative of the whole human race, his future descendents, who were to reap the fruits of his obedience, or abide the consequences of his disobedience, equally with himself. 1. Cor. xv. 22. *In Adam all die.* Rom. v. 17. *By one man's offence death reigned by one.* 14. *Who (Adam) is the figure of him that was to come.* 18. *As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

11. Eve, our common mother, being beguiled by the subtilty of Satan, through the serpent the instrument of his fraud, *Took of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat;* and so incurred the penalty of death for themselves and all their posterity. Gen. iii. 6.

12. The life promised to Adam, in case of obedience, was eternal life, and the death threatened in case of disobedience was eternal death; or an equivalent vicarious suffering. The former was of free gift; the latter was of debt. Rom. vi. 23. *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.* 1. Cor. iv. 7. *What hast thou which thou didst not receive?*

13. The penalty threatened will be executed, according to its true import, on every individual of the human race : on those who do not take benefit of the dispensation of grace through Christ, *personally* ; and on those who do, *in Christ their surety* : who is made a curse for them. Gal. iii. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us.*

CHAPTER VIII.

Of sin—its nature and demerit—Original sin—Depravity.

1. **S**IN is that temper of heart which stands opposed to the holy nature, or laws of God. Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*

2. The holy nature of God, of which his law is a transcript, is that propensity of heart which rejoices in the sum of good which exists in himself ; and which hath been, or shall be, communicated by him to creatures ; and which is the proper source of all communicated good.

3. External action is not, by itself, either holy or sinful ; but is merely the evidence or proof of a holy or sinful heart, or temper. 1. Sam. xvi. 7. *The Lord seeth not as man seeth : for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.*

4. The demerit of sin is not to be estimated by its actual effects ; for these are limited and controlled by the power and wisdom of God ; but by its proper nature and tendency. Psa. lxxvi. 10. *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee ; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.* Gen. 1. 20. *But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day to save much people alive.*

5. The nature and tendency of sin, in itself, is to destroy all good in God and the creature. Psalm xiv. 1. *The fool hath said in his heart, no God,* Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* Rom. iii. 15, 16. *Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways.*

6. The good sin tends to destroy is *infinite* : of course, the evil of sin is *infinite*. Rom. vii. 13. *That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*

7. God hates sin in proportion to its demerit : that is with infinite hatred : or with all his heart. Jere. xliv. 4. *Howbeit,*

I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing which I hate.

8. If such infinite hatred of sin exists in God, it is fit that he should express it : because it is fit that he should make himself known. Rom. ix. 22. *What if God, willing to show his wrath and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction ?*

9. For God to express his wrath partially, is to misrepresent it. His wrath against sinners is made known by bringing on them natural evil or suffering ; infinite wrath is made known by bringing on them infinite natural evil or suffering : infinite evil in degree cannot be inflicted on them because they are finite : therefore, it behoves to be infinite in duration. 2 Thess. i. 9. *Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*

10. Of those who perish, some will be greater sinners than others ; therefore their punishment, though equal in duration, will be unequal in degree, and proportionate to their several degrees of guilt. 1 Pet. i. 17. *And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.*

11. Original sin is the sin of the first man Adam, in taking and eating the forbidden fruit, in which he broke the covenant of works, under which he, and his posterity in him as their representative, were, by divine appointment, placed ; and it is set to their account, as deriving from him a depraved nature, in which, as they come into being, they are united to him, and become one with him in a universal revolt from God. Job xiv. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? Not one.* Rom. v. 17. *By one man's offence death reigned by one.* 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48. *The first man is of the Earth, earthy. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy.*

12. The sentence of condemnation against all men proceeds on the ground of *the lapse*, or *the offence*, but none are punished beyond their personal deserts as sinners. Rom. v. 16. *The judgment was by one [offence] to condemnation.*

13. All men as they come into the world are sinners ; because they have a sinful nature or temper ; and are destitute of holiness ; and this nature or temper is in a degree, manifest in their earliest actions, and becomes more and more so, as they advance towards maturity. Psa. li. 5. *Behold ! I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

14. Men are totally depraved ; and, in themselves, utterly helpless. By total depravity, however, is not meant, that they

are destitute of those natural affections which were original in man ; and, while under due limitation, useful in the present state ; such as the conjugal, parental, filial, and fraternal affections ; nor, that they are as sinful as possible : but what is meant is, that they are wholly alienated from God and holiness. Rom. iii. 12—18. *They are all gone out of the way ; they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doth good, no not one — There is no fear of God before their eyes.* John v. 42. *I know you that ye have not the love of God in you.*

15. The impotency of man consists in this, that he cannot effect a change of nature by his own acts or exercises, his reigning temper being wholly opposed to God and holiness ; nor make satisfaction to divine justice, for his sins. John vi. 44. *No man can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him.* Rome ix. 16. *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.* Rom v. 6. *When we were yet without strength in due time, Christ died for the ungodly.* John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.*

CHAPTER IX.

Of the covenant of Redemption, and covenant of Grace.

1. **I**T seems inconsistent with the holiness and truth of God to deliver sinners from suffering the penalty of the law, in their own persons without an atonement, which shall equally declare the Divine righteousness. It was clearly impossible that the cup of suffering should pass from Christ the Surety, for, had it been possible, his importunate prayer that it might pass, would have been specifically granted. Mat. xxvi. 39.

2. To provide an atonement and righteousness that should satisfy the law, in behalf of the Elect, employed the counsels of the Eternal Three, in that ineffable transaction, called the *Covenant of Redemption*.

3. In this covenant, the Sacred Three are represented, in Scripture, as sustaining appropriate characters. The Father, as claiming satisfaction for his violated law ; as giving the Elect to the Son as Mediator ; as putting all things under his feet ; and as engaging effectual support. The Son, as undertaking the work of man's redemption ; engaging to reveal the counsels of God to man ; in due time, to assume human nature, in that nature to obey the law, and make satisfaction to the justice of God, as the head and representative of all who were thus given him ; to govern the world for their sakes, and, in the end, to de-

liver up the kingdom to the Father. The Holy Ghost as engaging to renew and sanctify the redeemed; and to dwell in them, as the sanctifier and comforter *sent* by the Father and the Son. John vi. 37. Eph. i. 22. Isai. xlii. 4. Psa. xl. 7. John i. 18. 2 Cor. v. 14. Col. i. 16, 17. Eph. i. 22. 1 Cor. xv. 24. John xiv. 26. xv. 26.

4. The *Covenant of Grace* is that covenant between God and Christ as Mediator, and the head and representative of all his spiritual seed, which, in the Scriptures, is contrasted with the *Covenant of works* made with Adam, as head and representative of all his natural seed. It is, for substance, involved in the Covenant of Redemption; but, it is distinguishable from it, in that it contemplates man as actually existing and fallen; and tho' made in Christ, as all the promises of God are in him, yet every believer, by his own act, even the act of Faith, becomes personally interested in it, so that God's covenant may be said, in a strict and proper sense, to be *with him*: which cannot, in the same latitude, be said of the Covenant of Redemption. Thus God says to Abraham Gen. xvii. 4. *As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee.*

CHAPTER X.

Of the Incarnation of Christ, his Person, names, and pre-eminence.

1. **I**N the fulness of time, fixed in the Divine counsels, the second person in the Sacred Trinity took into a personal union with himself the nature of man, both soul and body: yet so, as that the Divine Nature and the human nature are, and for ever will be, distinct and unconfounded. Heb. ii. 16. *For verily he took not on him the nature of Angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham.* 17. *Wherefore it behoved him, in all things, to be made like unto his brethren.*

2. This wonderful person was, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, who was of the seed of David, and was born of her, and is very God, and very man. Luke i. 35. *And the Angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the SON of GOD.* 1 John v. 20. *This is the true God and eternal life.* Isai. liii. 3. *He is despised and rejected of men, A MAN of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*

3. The union of the Divine and human natures into one person implies, that Christ was without sin, and this is manifest

from the whole import of the Scriptures. Luke i. 35. *Therefore also, that holy thing which shall be born of thee, &c.* 1 Pet. ii. 22. *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

4. The names by which this Divine person is known, in Scripture, are numerous: two of them which were used in the Old Testament, and recognized in the New Testament, will be noticed. The one is *Michael the Archangel*. See Jude 9, compared with Zech. iii. 1, 2. also Rev. xii. 7. the other, which was the most common and appropriate was *Messiah*; or the *anointed*; of the same import with the name *Christ*, in the New Testament. To which is added by direction of the Angel Gabriel, near the time of the conception, that of *Jesus*, or the *Savior*; these united, *Jesus Christ*, or, the *Saviour anointed*, constitute the name by which he is commonly designated in the New Testament, and point out his office, and his consecration to office, by the Father.

5. JESUS CHRIST is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person. All things were made by him; and by him all things consist. He is the Lord of Angels and men. The Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. The Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. The Judge of the world. The promulgator and end of the law. The Antitype of the whole Jewish economy, apart from whom it has no meaning or use worthy of God, or important to men. The spirit of prophecy is testimony concerning him. He is the author and centre of the whole of revelation; and of all things visible and invisible. He is the head and Saviour of the body, the Church. In all things he hath the pre-eminence; and in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

CHAPTER XI.

Of the Offices of Christ—Christ as Mediator sustains the three-fold character of Prophet, Priest and King.

1. **I**N the office of a Prophet he reveals to us the counsel and will of God; and this he does, in creation, which is his work. *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work.* In Providence, which is the use to which he applies the world. Col. i. 17. *He is before all things, and by him all things consist*; and in his word. The whole of revelation is the word of Christ; it is indited by the Spirit of Christ. 1 Pet. i. 11. *Searching what, or what manner of*

time the Spirit of Christ in them did signify, &c. His name is the *WORD of GOD*, and he is so in every act whereby he makes known the character and mind of God. He is the effulgence of God's glory. He is the *Great Teacher* who came from God.—He is the *Truth*. He alone is worthy to take and unseal the book of God's decrees. John i. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

2. Christ acts in the office of a Priest in atoning for sin—in blessing his people—in pleading the merit of his blood before the throne of God in their behalf: and in presenting his redeemed Church without spot to God the Father. He is stiled our *Great Highpriest*, and a *Priest forever*. He is the substance of the Aaronic priesthood, of which that was but the shadow. He atoned for sin when he offered up himself, soul and body, upon the cross, a sacrifice, through the Eternal Spirit, without spot to God. By this one offering he declared the righteousness of God; and, in behalf of his redeemed Church, bore the penalty of the law and delivered them from its curse, by becoming a curse for them. In this character it became him to be holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Accordingly, his obedience was perfect even unto death; and it was made perfect through sufferings and this obedience, so perfected, is the only ground of justification and eternal life both for himself, as man, and for all the members of his mystical body.

3. Christ acts in the office of a King in employing the Holy Angels as his ministering servants, in using the world in subserviency to his Church—in causing all things to work together for their good—in subduing his people and making them willing and obedient—in overcoming the world—in controlling and conquering Satan and the powers of darkness—in raising the dead at the Last Day—in judging the world both Angels and men—in condemning the wicked, and punishing them in Hell—and, in acquitting the righteous, and rewarding them in Heaven.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Gospel offer—its sincerity—its importance.

1. **T**HE offer of pardon, peace with God, and eternal life is made to all, without distinction, to whom the Gospel comes. Thus Christ proclaims: John vii. 37. *If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink.* See also, Rev. xxii. 17.

2. It is the command of Christ, that the Gospel offer should

be made to all men. Thus he directs his Apostles and Ministers. Mark xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.* 1 Tim. ii. 4. *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

3. Though the external call of the Gospel extends to many, and should be sent to all; yet none will accept the call but they alone, who are chosen in Christ Jesus. Mat. xx. 16. *Many are called, but few chosen.* John x. 26. *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.*

4. Though Christ knows that none but his own sheep will hear his voice, yet his call to others is nevertheless sincere: for, it remains true, that those who come to him, he will in no wise cast out. A sincere offer of a benefit may be made to an unwilling mind, and known to be so, by him who makes it.

5. Sincerity of offer does not suppose or imply that the offer will be accepted; nor does it imply any obligation on the part of him who makes it, supposing him able, to create a willing mind in him to whom it is made. It is sufficient, if he design to make good his offer, on its being accepted.

6. The Gospel offer to the non-elect is not only sincere, but it *may be* important, for reasons resulting from the nature of the Divine government: and unless it can be shown, that no such reasons can exist, it must be high presumption to charge God with trifling, much more, with injustice to his creatures.

7. There *are* important reasons for offering the Gospel to many of the non-elect, among which is this; that now they have no cloak for their sin: and the justice of God in their destruction will be, on that account, the more conspicuous. John xv. 22. *If I had not come, and spoken unto them, says Christ, they had not had sin; but now, have they no cloak for their sin.* 2 Cor. ii. 15. *For we are unto God, says Paul, a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish.* 16. *To the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life, and who is sufficient for these things?*

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the application of Redemption—Regeneration—Repentance—Faith.

1. **A**LTHOUGH a complete and glorious provision is made through the atonement and righteousness of Christ, sufficient for the salvation of the whole world; yet, such is the

opposition of the human heart to God, and to the Gospel of his grace, that none will comply with the Gospel offer, unless renewed by the Holy Ghost. Christ says, John v. 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* John vi. 44. *No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him.*

2. Regeneration, or the new-birth, is such a change of heart as is implied in the presence and indwelling of the Spirit of God in the Soul, imparting to it, in such degree as seemeth him good, his own holy nature. John iii. 6. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.* Col. i. 27. *Christ in you the hope of glory.* Phil. ii. 13. *It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* It is spiritual illumination. Acts xxvi. 18. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.* It is the love of God in the heart 1 John iv. 7. *Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.* It is a new creation. 2 Cor. v. 17. *If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.* It is sanctification begun. It is passing from death to life; the principle imparted is spiritual life, and the beginning of eternal life. Christ in the heart is *the Life.* *The True God and Eternal Life.* Phil. i. 6. John xiv. 6. 1 John v. 20. It is effectual calling. Rev. iii. 20. *If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.* John v. 25. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the time is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.* As an effect, it is life and action in the subject. *It is God that worketh in you to do.* It does not imply loss or diminution of liberty. *It is God that worketh in you to will.* The agent producing this work is the Holy Ghost, and the means or instrument, in active conversion, is the word of God. James i. 18. *Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.*

3. Repentance is that exercise of the new born soul which consists in self-loathing for sin, in view of the spotless purity and holiness of God, and as committed against God, with purpose of heart to forsake it. Thus Job expresseth his penitence; Job xlii. 5. 6. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* And David his: Psa. li. 4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.* It is not sorrow for sin considered simply as an event, which may, and will, be overruled for good. Now, therefore, says Joseph to his brethren, Gen. xlv. 5. *Be not grieved nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life.* Nor as exposing the sinner to punishment. Mat. xxvii. 4. Judas repented himself, saying, *I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood,* but in horror of mind he went and hanged himself, and went to his own place.

4. Faith, in general, is assent to a proposition, asserting or denying a fact, as true, on testimony. It always implies confidence in the moral character of the witness.

Faith in God is assent to a proposition, respecting a fact or doctrine, as true, on the testimony of God, resulting from an affectionate confidence in his perfect and immutable rectitude or goodness. Heb. xi. 6. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Faith in Christ is receiving him on the testimony of God, as the faithful and true witness, and the great teacher sent from God, with rest of soul on him as an all-sufficient Saviour. Gal. v. 6. *For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love.* John i. 12. *As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.* Faith is to believers, in this world, instead of sight. They endure as *seeing* him who is invisible. Heb. xi. 27. To the eye of faith things unseen are presented as real and infinitely solemn and important. Faith is, as it were, their substance and evidence. Heb. xi. 1. It governs and animates the Christian's walk through life. 2 Cor. v. 7. Things seen and temporal, with them loose their ascendancy; they become strangers and pilgrims on the Earth; and they seek a better, even heavenly country. It is the act which unites the believer to Christ, so as to become one with him. It entitles him, through grace, to all the benefits of Christ's purchase—to pardon of sin through his atonement—to justification through his righteousness—to adoption—to peace with God—to sanctification through the Spirit—to grace to persevere, and to the final, complete and eternal, enjoyment of God.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the benefits of redemption—Pardon of sin—Justification—Adoption—Sanctification—Peace with God—Hope—Joy—Efficacious grace—Perseverance.

1. **T**HE pardoning of sin is a gracious act of God in behalf of believers, acquitting them from guilt and punishment, on account of the atonement which Christ has made to the justice of God, in their room and stead. Rom. iii. 25. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins.* It is a gracious act, though complete satisfaction is made; because, the personal ill-desert of believers remains, because the satisfaction

made is not of their own providing or making, and because, faith itself, which interests them in it, is the gift of God. Eph. ii. 8. *By grace are ye saved thro' faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

2. Justification is an act of God as judge declaring believers to be righteous, or right with the law, on account of the righteousness of Christ, in which they are interested by faith, and accepting and treating them as such. Rom. x. 4. *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.* It is a gracious act, because it is not grounded on personal obedience, or good works. Rom. iii. 28. *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.* Faith itself is not the ground of justification considered as a good work; but justification is through faith, as the act which forms the union between Christ and believers, in which, the righteousness of Christ is set to their account. *It is of faith that it might be by grace.*—Rom. iv. 16. They are justified by works, no otherwise than as good works are the proper evidence of the reality of faith. James ii. 18. *Show me thy faith without thy works; and I will show thee my faith by my works.* 17. *Faith without works is dead, being alone.*

3. Adoption is a gracious act of God constituting believers, in their effectual calling, to be his sons; heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, and heirs of all things; and treating them as such, by sending forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying *Abba, Father*; and by bestowing upon them, in due time, the Heavenly inheritance. 1 John iii. 2. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God.* 1 Cor. iii. at the close. *All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*

4. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit; or, it is his presence in the hearts of believers; enlightening their understandings to discern the excellency of Christ and divine truth; spiritualizing their affections; constraining their wills; convincing them, more and more of sin; subduing their corruptions; encreasing their humility; invigorating their faith; weaning them from the world; animating their hope; producing in them the peaceable fruits of righteousness; giving them the earnest of the Heavenly inheritance; and meetening them, more and more, for the full enjoyment of it. 2. Thes. ii. 13.

5. Peace with God is that calm state of mind which results from an unreserved submission of the soul to God, to which we are brought, by the effectual working of his power, in genuine conversion. It is the fruit of the Spirit; and, as far as perfected, it is the end of the controversy which the natural man maintains against God, as a holy and sin-hating God. It does not

originate from a hope that we are forgiven, and become the objects of God's favor; but, from a sense of his excellence; of our own vileness and ill-desert as sinners justly condemned by his holy law; and of his sovereign right to cast us off forever. It is a rest of soul in God, even when we may view ourselves as exposed to his wrath and curse. It is a state of comfort, and even joy in God, without any visible cause or reason, connected with our own happiness. In this state of soul, we can say with the Psalmist. Psa. xcvi. 1. *The Lord reigneth, let the Earth rejoice.*

6. Hope is a prospect of future good, considered as attainable. The christian hope is a prospect of the future good which God proposes to our acceptance, considered not only as attainable, but certain, on embracing the promise which secures it.— There is a foundation laid for christian hope, at first conversion; but sensible exercises of it do not commonly arise till afterwards. It results from a distinct view of the nature of the good promised; and of the character to which the promise is made, and from consciousness, on due examination, comparing ourselves with the description of it in the word of God, that we are of that character. It is, in every degree of it, in the nature of an assured hope. The nature of the good promised, and the character to whom the promise is made are described by the Spirit of truth with clearness and certainty; the promise itself is infallible; and the only doubt can be, whether we are of that character; and this may certainly be known, if we are diligent and faithful to ourselves. Rom. v. 3, 4. *Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.* Heb. vi. 11. *We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.*

7. Joy is delight in present good. It is the consummation and end of hope. For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? Joy in God is delight in him as a present good; dwelling in the heart by his Spirit, as the Shechinah dwelt in the temple of old. 1 Cor. iii. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* A degree of joy attends every degree of hope; and, when the hope is assured, it is unspeakably great. Rom. xii. 12. *Rejoicing in hope.* It also attends every degree of faith; because, faith is the substance of things hoped for; and the objects of it are, in a degree proportioned to the degree of faith, actually present in the soul. Phil. i. 25. *And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all, for your furtherance and joy of faith.*— 1 Pet. i. 8. *Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* It is a fruit of the Spirit, who is the earnest of the Heavenly inheritance, and is itself a foretaste or anticipation of it.

8. By efficacious grace is meant, that grace in the heart is of such divine energy and power, as effectually to subdue the sinner; and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. The heart of the unregenerate sinner is wholly opposed to God, because destitute of grace; but the regenerate cease to be opposed so far as grace operates in the heart, because its nature is to make them willing and obedient. Psa. cx. 3. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* In making the subjects willing, it is not opposed to freedom, any more than any other motive is, which has power sufficient to engage the will. On the contrary, it is the source of all that freedom which is worth enjoying, or which is any privilege, or prerogative of a rational agent, freedom in God's service. John viii. 34. *Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.* 36. *If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

9. By the perseverance of the saints is meant, that there is an infallible connection between the first act of faith in the believer, and his abiding in the faith to the end of life; and between his so abiding, and his eternal salvation. The promise of salvation is made to the believer. *He that believeth shall be saved.* His salvation is certain by promise, when he becomes a believer. It is equally certain, that he alone shall be saved who endureth to the end. Rom. viii. 29. *Whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Rev. ii. 10. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* Heb. x. 39. *We are not of them that draw back to perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

The final perseverance of the saints rests not at all on the stability of their own wills, or on the indefectibility of grace, but wholly on the stability of God's promise in the covenant of grace. John vi. 37. *All that the Father hath given me shall come to me; and he that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* — Nor does it admit, though final salvation be secured to believers, that they may, at times, be wholly destitute of grace; for the Holy Ghost is given them, to abide in them forever. 1 John iii. 9. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

CHAPTER XV.

Of the evidence of grace, both in ourselves and others.

I. **G**RACE as it exists in us, lies in the affections; or, it is the Christian temper. The affections, as they exist in

us, are known to be what they are, not by any process of reasoning, but by consciousness, or intuition. Whether they are holy or sinful affections, however, can be known only by comparing them with the proper standard, and that standard is the word of God. The affections which are the fruit of the spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. But not every kind of affections which go under these names, are the fruit of the spirit; nor is every kind of love to God, joy in God, trust in God, &c. the fruit of the spirit. But such only of which God, viewed in his true character, as exhibited in his word, is the direct object. We may be conscious that we exercise love to God, trust in God, and joy in God; but whether God, in his true character, be the direct object or not, can be known only by the scriptures rightly understood and applied. Those affections which are the fruit of imagination, suggestion or supposed revelation, are spurious, enthusiastic and wholly selfish; being built on the false hope that we are born again, and are the favorites of heaven; and they will be utterly extinct, so soon as the delusion is removed. The proper test that our affections are genuine, both to ourselves and others, and without which there can be no evidence at all, is persevering and universal obedience to the will of God, as revealed in the scriptures. John xiv. 15. *If ye love me keep my commandments.* 1 John v. 3. *This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.* By persevering obedience is not meant sinless obedience; for to this none, in the present life, attain. What is meant is, a *general walk* with God. Sin, however, that gains the will, and appears in outward act, and especially gross sin, will diminish, and often, for a season, wholly annihilate the evidence of grace; and that evidence cannot be regained, but by repentance and reformation. The evidence of grace, therefore, must be in exact proportion to the regularity of our walk. So far as love is perfected, it produces perfect obedience in external acts and perfect love, and that alone casteth out fear.—Hence it is that full assurance of hope is often intermitted, and is usually, at any one time, of short duration. Sins of daily incursion, unless daily repented of, cannot fail to obscure the evidence of grace.

2. Evidence of grace in others is wholly from external walk. The affections in which grace exists, can themselves be known only to him who tries the reins and the heart, and to him who is the subject of them; others can know them only by their fruits. External walk includes not only external morality, a public profession of faith, and a regular attendance on all instituted duties; but the whole of that conversation which shows a

life of faith, weanedness from the world and heavenly-mindedness. This evidence with respect to most good men is doubtful; with respect to some, however, it is entirely satisfactory; but is never infallible. 1 Cor. iv. 5. *Judge nothing before the time; before the Lord come; who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God.*

CHAPTER XVI.

Of a state of trial—Of death—Of the resurrection—Of the last judgment—Of Heaven—Of Hell.

1. **A**DAM for himself and all his posterity, the second Adam excepted, were, by divine constitution, placed in a state of trial, under the covenant of works, the condition of which was, *DO and LIVE*. The good promised was eternal life, and the evil threatened was eternal death. In this trial man failed of obedience, and incurred the penalty. *In Adam all die.*

By the covenant of grace made in Christ man is once more brought into a salvable state; and though he is still under condemnation, and a prisoner of justice, yet he is a prisoner of hope. Zech. ix. 12. *Turn ye to the strong hold ye prisoners of hope.* In this covenant the condition is, *believe and be saved.*

Under the covenant of grace, the abounding of sin, in addition to the first offence, is no bar to salvation; and the chief of sinners may, on the proposed condition, obtain it. *He that believeth shall be saved.*

The time of probation to each individual continues so long as he is in a salvable state, but never beyond the present life; and it may end before life is ended; as in case of those who are judicially hardened, or have committed the sin unto death; for such are not in a salvable state; their final doom is irrevocably fixed. John viii. 21. Eccl. ix. 10. Luke xvi. 26. Rev. xxii. 11. Mat. xii. 32.

2. Temporal death is the dissolution of the connexion between the soul and the body; on which, the soul or spirit goes to God who gave it, and the body returns to the dust from whence it was taken. This great change, or what is equivalent to it, is the lot of all men. Heb. ix. 27. 1 Cor. xv. 52.

At death, the souls of the righteous will be freed from sin, and perfected in holiness; they will, in a moment, be in the

presence of Christ, and will enter into a state of endless happiness; and the souls of the wicked will enter on a state of endless misery; which, with respect to them both, will be consummated at the resurrection. Their bodies will dissolve to their original dust. Those of the righteous will, while they rest in their graves, be still united to Christ; and those of the wicked will be reserved to wrath. Luke xxiii. 43. xvi. 23.

3. At the great and last day, when the trump of God shall sound the alarm, *Arise ye dead and come to judgment*, the bodies of both the righteous and the wicked shall, by the power of Christ, be raised to life again. Those of the righteous will be raised in glory, incorruptible and immortal, and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body; and those of the wicked will be raised to shame and everlasting contempt. The souls and bodies of each shall be reunited never to be separated more. The same bodies, which were laid in the grave, so far as to constitute the raised the same persons, shall be raised from the dead. The body of Christ *raised* was the same as that *crucified*; and the bodies of the saints which were raised, at Christ's resurrection, were the same as those which were laid in the graves, or they would not have been said to come out of their graves. Dan. xii. 2. John v. 28, 29.

4. There is a day or period coming in which God shall judge the world, both Angels and men, in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, at his second coming; when he shall appear in his own glory, in the glory of the Father, with the holy Angels. Christ, as mediator, will judge the world. *For God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained.* Acts xvii. 31. The day or period will be of sufficient duration to declare to finite intelligences the righteousness of God; for it is the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God: to make this known is its object and design. The time when, is hid in the counsels of God from all creatures. Mat. xxiv. 36. *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels in heaven, but my Father only.*

The rule of judgment to those who have enjoyed the word or the written law of God, will be that word or law; and to those who have not, it will be the law written in the heart. Rom. ii. 12. *For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.* 14. *For when the Gentiles which have not the law do, by nature, the things of the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves.* 15. *Who show the work of the law written in their hearts.*

The righteous will be acquitted on the ground of Christ's

atonement ; they will be justified on the ground of his righteousness ; and will be rewarded according to their works ; the wicked will be condemned on the ground of the lapse or offence, and will be punished as that offence hath abounded in wicked works. The sentence of the judge, in case of the righteous, will be, *Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world* ; and, in case of the wicked, *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* Rom. v. 18. Rev. xx. 12. Mat. xxv. 34, 41.

5. Heaven is that perfect state of rest and joy in God which, in scripture, is called everlasting life ; and which includes all manner of life, of the soul, spirit and body, which can be any perfection or blessedness. It is the inheritance of Angels and of all the saints, and the inheritance is God himself. It is given to Christ and to all the members of his mystical body, in the covenant of redemption. Christ is appointed to be the heir of all things : Heb. i. 2. and his members joint-heirs with him. Rom. viii. 17. The sum of the covenant of grace is expressed, Lev. xxvi. 12. in these words, *I will be your God and ye shall be my people.* God is their inheritance, and he vouchsafes to make them his. Deut. xxii. 9. *The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* It is a state of freedom from all pain. Rev. xxi. 4. The blessed inhabitants shall all be perfectly conformed to God, in their affections, volitions and actions ; his will in all things shall be done. Their joy, consisting in the most blessed communion between God and them, and with each other, will be consummate. The union between Christ and his members will be perfected, so that they will have become *one perfect man*, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Eph iv. 13. The man Christ Jesus will forever remain one person with the second person of the Godhead ; and his members will forever remain, in a sense, one with him, their glorious head ; and the joy resulting from hence, to the human nature of Christ, and to the saints in light, will be an expression of the blessedness of the Triune God, as perfect as can be effected, in the progress of eternal ages, by his infinite power, wisdom and goodness.— Their eternal state shall be joy, and their eternal work praise.— 1 Cor. ii. 9. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him ; but God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit.*

6. Hell is that state of eternal torment, which is called eternal death ; the wages of sin, the portion of all the wicked. It consists in an eternal and utter separation from God and all good—in the unrestrained rage of malignant passions, hatred, malice and rage against God and one another ; and in the positive infliction of wrath from the hand of the Almighty. It is

represented by the worm that never dies, and by the fire that never shall be quenched; by everlasting fire, and by a lake of fire burning with brimstone. Whether the wicked in hell will be tormented with elementary fire, or not, is immaterial. Thus much is certain, that the spirit of truth would not represent the torments of the damned beyond their reality, by these dreadful images; nor fill the minds of men with vain fears. On the contrary, no representation to a finite mind can give an adequate conception of the display of that wrath of the Almighty which shall exhibit the strength of his opposition to sin.

Such is the difference which shall be put between the righteous and the wicked—between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Oh, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the means of grace—their nature—their importance.

1. **M**EANS, in general, are those things which are employed by a voluntary agent, in the production of any work or effect. Consequently, means are, in themselves, destitute of power or efficiency; and whatever of these is, in any case, exerted, it must be referred to the agent alone.

2. God, the source of all power, can produce any event he pleases *immediately*, or without the intervention of means; but for important reasons, he often employs them, both in the natural and moral world, in the production of events; and the nature and glory of his operations are, in such cases, thro' them, more perfectly seen and contemplated by creatures. Thus in the kingdom of grace, the treasure of the gospel is committed to earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be of God. 2 Cor. iv. 7.

3. The means which God uses, in convincing, converting and bringing home to himself, his elect, are infinitely diversified; and they are such, in every case, as will most fully display the riches of his grace. Eccl. xi. 5. *Thou knowest not the way of the spirit, &c. even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.* John iii. 8. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the spirit.*

4. The means of grace, in a strict and proper sense, are those,

in which, not only the agency of God, but that of man also, are concerned, and the latter required by a divine appointment; such as prayer, reading the word of God, serious attendance on the public worship of God on the Lord's day and other appointed seasons, and on all other instituted duties. These, when accompanied with a special divine blessing, become effectual to salvation. Ezek. xxxvi. 37. *I will yet, for this, be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.* Rom. x. 17. *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

5. There is no infallible connexion between the use of the means of grace by the unregenerate and their salvation; nor is there between the means the husband-man employs in the culture of his field, and a crop. In both cases, success equally depends on the blessing of God on human endeavor. But such use of means, by the regenerate, as is the fruit of faith, is, by the promise of God, infallibly connected with their salvation. Mat. xxi. 22. *All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

6. Though the use of means, in case of the unregenerate, is not infallibly connected with salvation, yet none may hope for salvation in the neglect of them. *Faith cometh by hearing.*

7. It does not appear, from scripture, that any obtain salvation without the intervention or use of the appointed means of grace. The case of such children of believing parents as having been sincerely dedicated to God in baptism, die in infancy; though there is reason to hope they are saved, is not an exception. For, though such are themselves incapable of using means, yet means are used for them, in their dedication according to God's appointment, so that the promise of God embraces them. Gen. xvii. 7. *I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee.* Acts ii. 39. *The promise is unto you and to your children.* Mat. xix. 14. *Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*—Nor does it appear, that such of the Heathens, Jews or Mahometans who live and die ignorant of the gospel, are an exception. God indeed is no respecter of persons, and in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. Still it must be the only living and true God whom they fear, and the righteousness wrought out by them must be the fruit and evidence of faith. For no man, according to the scriptures, can be justified except thro' the righteousness of Christ, nor through that righteousness, except he be interested in it, nor can he be interested in it, except he be united to Christ by faith, nor can he have faith, except by hearing, nor can he hear except the word be sent him. Indeed, all who from among the

Gentiles are turned to God, of whom the scriptures give an account, are begotten again to a lively hope, by the word of truth. Rom. x. 14, 15, 17. Prov. xxix. 18. *Where there is no vision the people perish, but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.*

8. The sovereignty of God in his various dealings with nations, may as easily be vindicated, as in his various dealings with individuals. For, if all men are justly condemned as sinners, then the bestowment of grace and glory, in any case, is of mere mercy; but surely none can claim mercy, on the footing of justice.

9. Hence appears the vast importance of a diligent attendance on all the instituted means of grace—of an early dedication of ourselves and offspring to God in his covenant—and of sending the good news of salvation, according to the command of the risen Saviour, to his Apostles and their successors, to all nations. Mark xvi. 15, 16. *Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of duties we owe to God and Christ.

DUTIES result from relations. We stand related to God as creatures, formed and supported by his power and goodness; and also to God and Christ as sinners, for whom a ransom of infinite price is paid; and hence arise various duties which we owe to God, to Christ and to ourselves. We also stand related to the whole family of Adam—to our country, and individuals variously, as husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, superiors, inferiors or equals, as neighbors, as members of a family, and as members of the Church of Christ, from whence result various other duties; the most important of these several duties will be noticed in their order.

As the creatures of God we are bound,

1. **TO LOVE HIM** with all the heart and soul and strength and mind. This affection of heart is the great principle of obedience; and the sum of what is required by the divine law, as expounded by Christ himself. Mat. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40. The love of God is, in its nature, good will to men: or, it is an exercise of universal benevolence. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.* 1 John iv. 20. It adds noth-

ing to God's fulness, but it is delight and joy in it as being, in itself, of infinite worth; as well as the spring of all created good. It is complacency in God; because his being and perfections are friendly to the Universe: and it is gratitude; in view of all that good which he bestows on ourselves or others.

2. TO WORSHIP AND ADORE HIM, and him only. This is the homage of the heart: and implies all outward acts which are the proper expression of inward reverence and fear. It is due to God, as God, and our God: and to make any creature, however exalted, the object of worship is idolatry; and the highest affront to God: It is denying him to be God; giving to the creature his prerogative as God; and robbing him, as far as in us lies, of his glory. Mat. iv. 10. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. See thou do it not,* says the angel to John, when about to worship him, *for I am thy fellow servant, &c. worship God.* Exod. xx. 3. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

3. TO REVERENCE HIS NAME. The name of God is his works and word, or whatever makes him known to creatures: and to think and speak of them with awful but filial respect, as expressions of his excellent greatness, and with like respect to mention those appellations which he has appropriated to himself, is to reverence his name. The opposite to this is blasphemy, perjury, profane swearing, denying, or vilifying the scriptures, and cursing or abusing the creatures of God. Exod. xx. 7. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain.*

4. TO OBEY HIM. This is to be conformed to his preceptive will in our affections, volitions and outward actions, as our law-giver and judge, who has a right to enjoin what is fit, generally, or under special circumstances, and who can enjoin nothing but what is so. His law written in the heart is of the same obligation with that written in his word. The duty results from the perfection of God's knowledge and will, and the fallibility of ours. 1 Sam. xv. 23. *Behold! to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.*

5. TO SUBMIT TO HIS PROVIDENTIAL WILL. This duty is, in principle, the same as obedience. It differs only as it relates to the will of God made known in the events of Providence, and as it can be exercised only when those events are afflictive. It consists in bearing affliction with patience, and cheerful acquiescence, because the hand of God is seen in them. It arises from a conviction that all events are brought to pass by the hand of God, pursuant to the plan of his wise and eternal

counsels. Job expresses the language of it, Job ii. 10. *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* Its opposite is murmuring and complaining under afflictions, which, whether God be thought of or not, is real rebellion against him.

6. TO BELIEVE HIS WORD. This duty consists in relying on the bare word of God, apart from any other evidence of the truth asserted, merely because God has said it. Its obligation results from the immutable truth of God; and it is most reasonable, because the testimony of God is as complete demonstration of the fact or truth asserted, as can arise from the evidence of sense, or the clearest deductions of reason. Heb. vi. 18. *That by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation.* To disbelieve his word is exceedingly sinful and highly provoking to God. 1 John v. 10. *He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.*

7. TO TRUST IN GOD. This is something more than a bare assent to the truth on the testimony of God; it is a recumbency of soul on God as a faithful God; faithful to his promises, desiring and embracing the good promised as the portion of the soul. Its exercises are strongest in the darkest seasons. Job expresses it with great strength, when in the deepest affliction. Job xiii. 15. *Though he slay me yet will I trust in him.*

8. TO HOPE IN GOD. This is an affection of heart, as has been said, looking forward to, and desiring the good which God has promised, considered as future and attainable, or rather as certain by the promise of God, notwithstanding the difficulties, however great, which may lie in the way of its attainment.—The Psalmist expresses it fervently. Psa. xlii. 11. *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.*

9. TO REJOICE IN GOD. It is our duty to be filled with the spirit, because it is made the subject of command; but the presence and indwelling of the spirit is the earnest of the heavenly inheritance; it is eternal life begun: John iii. 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.* To rejoice in this is a reasonable outgoing of soul in possession of such a portion; and it is not the less a duty, because it is the necessary effect of the presence of God in the heart. Phil. iv. 4. *Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again, I say, rejoice.*

10. TO PRAISE GOD. This is the expression of joy and admiration. Its object is God's excellent greatness, and it consists in publishing abroad the elevation of soul we feel in view of it, in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, and in other acts,

expressive of our high esteem of God and delight in him. Psa. cl. 2. *Praise him according to his excellent greatness.* 1. 23. *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.*

As sinners we ~~are~~ are bound,

11. TO REPENT OF SIN. This is most reasonable, for our opposition to God, his government and grace is without reason, and wholly against reason; because, there was every thing in God to claim our love and demand our obedience; and because, our own happiness, or well being, was inseparably connected with perseverance in holiness. The obligation to repent would have rested upon us forever, if grace had never been offered; and it will forever rest on those who perish in their sins. But we are now especially bound to repent, since the grace of God hath appeared to men; and this is the great demand of the gospel. Mat. iii. 2. *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* Mark i. 15. *Repent, and believe the gospel.* Luke xiii. 3. *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Acts xvii. 30. *The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he commandeth all men every where to repent.*

12. TO BE HUMBLE BEFORE GOD. This is a duty we owe to God as creatures. Even the holy Angels in token of humble adoration, are represented as covering their faces and their feet with their wings, in the presence of the Lord of Hosts; how much more does it become us who drink iniquity like water, to be humble before God, and to sit in dust and ashes. Humility in us is that sense of heart which arises from a just view of the majesty and unspotted holiness of God, and of our own comparative nothingness, and especially of our guilt and unworthiness. To be humble is not to degrade ourselves below the condition which providence has assigned us, in society; but it is, not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think; and to be inclined, without good evidence to the contrary, to esteem others better than ourselves. James iv. 6. *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.* 10. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

13. TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST. This is the great condition of gospel salvation. *He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.* Mark xvi. 16. This requirement is most reasonable, because God has borne testimony of Christ that he is his Son; and this he has done by a voice from heaven—Mat. iii. 17. *And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*—by his miraculous works—by his resurrection from the dead—and by his ascension into heaven: because he is the faithful and true witness, sent of God to bear witness to the truth; because he is able to save to

the uttermost all that come unto God by him : and because there is no difficulty in believing to an honest and upright heart.

In general, we are bound,

14. To follow the example of Christ, so far as it is imitable by us—to love him as our God, our Saviour and our elder brother—to obey him as our law giver—to honor him as our king and head—to learn of him as our master and teacher—to draw near to God, thro' him, as our intercessor and advocate with the Father—to fear him as our judge—to be willing to fill up what remains of his sufferings, which may be allotted to us, even unto death—to devote ourselves, living and dying, to his cause—to exercise towards him the same affections of heart, and in the same degree, as towards the Father—and to pay him equal adoration and praise, because he is the *TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE*.

In particular, we are bound,

15. To sanctify the first day of the week as a Sabbath of rest, pursuant to Christ's appointment, who is Lord of the Sabbath. God instituted the seventh day from the beginning of time, a Sabbath of rest, and blessed it, and sanctified it; because on that day he rested from all his works, which he had created and made. It was set apart as holy time, for the immediate worship and service of God, in commemoration of the work of creation. It was instituted for the benefit of man while innocent, and also after the fall, as placed under a dispensation of grace. Mark ii. 27. *The Sabbath was made for man.*

To keep holy to God a seventh part of time, and one day in seven, is of moral and perpetual obligation, and is enjoined in the fourth commandment of the moral law. Exod. xx. 8, 9, 10.

Its change from the seventh day of the week to the first day, is no contravention of the fourth commandment; we are still to work six days and to rest the seventh, as from the beginning. *Six days thou shalt do thy work, and the seventh day thou shalt rest.*

The evidence of its change from the resurrection of Christ to the end of the world arises from the declaration of the Apostle. Heb. iv. 9, 10. *There remaineth therefore a rest, or, in the original, a sabbatism, or keeping of a Sabbath, to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his—*From the peculiar honor which Christ has put on the first day—From the early practice of his disciples in meeting on that day to break bread—From its being called the *LORD'S DAY*—From the consideration that the purchase of redemption, a far more glorious work than that of

creation, and the end of it, was completed on that day. And from the general consent, to this point, of the Christian Church from the times of the Apostles to the present day.

The Sabbath is to be sanctified by resting from labour, works of necessity and mercy excepted, and from recreations—by a holy rest of soul in God—by a devout attendance on the public worship and ordinances of God's house, as opportunity presents; and by the reading of his word and other religious exercises and acts of devotion in the family and closet. *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.*

16. TO CONFESS the name of Christ before men. This duty rests upon all who have heard of Christ's name; and are, or, from their advantages, might be acquainted with his doctrine. Mat. x. 32. *Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven.* To confess Christ before men is publicly to profess faith in Christ. They who have not faith cannot profess it without hypocrisy; still their want of faith, being their own fault, cannot excuse them in the omission of so plain a duty.

17. TO DEVOTE ourselves and infant children, whether by nature or adoption, to God in the sacrament of baptism. This sacrament was instituted by Christ, as the initiating seal of the covenant of grace, in which, the washing with water, in the name of the Holy Trinity, represents, that we are born again,—John iii. 5. *Except a man be born of water and of the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*—that we are dead to sin and alive to God, Rom. vi. 4. *Buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life*—that we are interested in Christ, Gal. iii. 27. *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* It initiates into the visible Church or family of Christ, and is to be applied only to such as profess their faith in Christ, and to their infant children. Acts viii. 37. *And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest, (be baptized) and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* Acts xvi. 33. *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he, and all his, straightway.* The infants of believers are proper subjects of baptism, because God included them in the covenant made with Abraham, which was, for substance, the covenant of grace; and on which both the Jewish and Christian Church are founded; and because they never were cut off. The Church of Christ is the *Olive Tree*; the Jews, the natural branches, are, some of them broken off by unbelief; the Gentiles, tho' wild by nature, are grafted in; the Jews, if

they still abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in again; and the immunities of the Christian Church are not abridged but enlarged. Hence infants have the same standing under the Christian, as they had under the Jewish, dispensation. The evidence of this is corroborated by the declaration of Christ,—Mat. xix. 14. *Jesus said, suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven:* And of Peter, Acts ii. 19. *The promise is unto you and your children:* by the baptism of whole families on profession of faith, made by the parent: by the silence of the Jewish converts, on this point, who were forward to complain of a departure from their institutions, in matters of far less importance: and by the early and uniform practice of the primitive Church.

18. To COMMEMORATE the death and sufferings of Christ in the ordinance of the Lord's supper. This is a sacrament instituted by Christ. The bread broken represents the body of Christ broken, and the wine poured forth, the blood of Christ shed, upon the cross, for our redemption. The remembrance of Christ in this ordinance supposes his absence, and our acquaintance with him; they who have no acquaintance with him cannot remember him with that love, hope and desire of his presence, which this ordinance is designed to excite and cherish; nor with that penitence and humility which cannot fail to accompany those exercises; and without which, attendance at his table cannot be an acceptable service.

The command of Christ, *Do this in remembrance of me*, lays an obligation on all adults, who hear the gospel call; because they are bound to repent and believe, and to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; and yet it is addressed immediately to the professed disciples of Christ, and none can do it acceptably, but such as are so in truth; nor indeed those, unless they examine themselves and come to the ordinance in the actual exercise of faith, and the graces of the spirit which attend it. 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.* 29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation, [more properly, judgment in the original] to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

In this ordinance, the worthy receivers commune with Christ, and with one another; and bind themselves, as by an oath, to be the Lord's; and to watch over one another according to the rules of the gospel. It will continue thro' every age, until Christ's second coming; when his presence will supercede its use or propriety. Faith will then be swallowed up in vision; and hope in complete fruition.

19. TO PRAY TO GOD IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. Prayer, in general, is a humble expression of desire of some good, which the person or being addressed is not bound, in justice, to bestow; but which is craved of his benignity or goodness. God is under no obligation to bestow good upon creatures, on the ground of justice, and certainly not on sinful creatures, any farther than he has graciously bound himself by promise. He hath promised no good to men except in answer to the prayer of faith, and preferred to him in the name of Christ. In answer to prayer so preferred, he is bound in justice to bestow such good things as comport with his revealed will; but it is in justice to himself as a faithful God, and not to men on the ground of personal desert. God in sovereignty bestows temporal good things on the evil and unthankful, without their asking for them; but even such good things are the fruit of Christ's purchase, and are continued to men in answer to the prayers of the faithful.

The subject of prayer is, that God may, in all things be glorified; that his kingdom may come, and that his will may, every where, be done; that our sins may, for Christ's sake, be pardoned, and we restored to his love and favor; that our daily wants may be supplied; that we may be kept from sin and temptation; that we may be supported under afflictions, and in God's time, be delivered from them, and from all evil—and that, in the end we may obtain life everlasting. What seems most essential in prayer is a supreme desire that God may be glorified. Our requests, therefore, ought to express or imply this, as a condition, in all cases, where his will is not made known. Such was the prayer of Christ during his agony in the garden. Luke xxii. 42. *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done:* And John xvii. 1. *Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.*

Prayer includes adoration, confession of sin, petition for ourselves, intercession for others, thanksgiving for good bestowed on ourselves and on all men, and praise to God for his excellent greatness.

The reason of the duty arises from the fulness of God, and his ability and willingness to confer on us and others all necessary good; from our absolute dependence on him as creatures; from its being a mean of the bestowment of every blessing, of divine appointment, and from its being a proper expression of our high esteem of God, and of our hope, trust and joy in him, as our chief good and only portion. Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of duties which relate to ourselves.

1. OUR own well being is, in itself, as important as the well being of others; and the common Father of men

regards the welfare of all with equal care, so far as the nature of his government will admit: and as his views are perfect, our own views, so far as right, will be conformed to his. Consequently, our own rights will be determined by the same measure of justice, as the rights of others; and our own good, suppose it only equally known, will be sought, in all proper ways, equally with that of our neighbour. The command, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, supposes that love to ourselves may certainly *be equal* to that of our neighbour.

2. An *unknown* good cannot be an object of desire or pursuit. Consequently, a good *less known* cannot be an object of *equal* desire or pursuit, as a good *more known*. The good of those, therefore, who live in remote regions of the Earth cannot be sought by us, with equal desire, with that of our own countrymen: nor theirs, in general, with that of our intimate acquaintance: nor theirs, with that of our own families: nor yet theirs, with that of our own persons. But indeed, in proportion as the good of others is known, it ought to become an object of equal desire with our own.

3. It may not, in all cases, be proper to employ the same means, or if the same, not in an equal degree, to promote the good of others, if equally known, as in promoting our own good; because, God has not committed it, equally, to our care and management. But we are bound to employ such means as he has prescribed, and as opportunity presents, with like sincerity and affection.

4. In matters of justice, or strict right, between man and man, we may never dispense with it, as due to others; but we may, for good cause, dispense with it as due to ourselves: and, in some cases, are bound to do it. 1 Cor. vi. 7. *Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*

5. With the distinctions thus made, and such as may spring from them, it is generally true, that the same duties are due to ourselves as to our neighbour: regarding always, and in all things, the general interest of Christ's kingdom, as the centre of our desires and pursuits.

6. All duties enjoined on us, of which God or our neighbour is the immediate object, have relation to ourselves; and are essentially connected with our well being: for, in the conscientious discharge of them, we, through grace, secure the favor of God: and, in the neglect of them, we expose ourselves to his wrath and curse, both here and hereafter. But the most important of these are noticed under their proper heads. Chastity,

Temperance and Sobriety, which properly come under the notion of self-government, will be mentioned.

Chastity is that purity of heart which implies the empire of grace over impure lust, preventing its conception in thought and its appearance in word or action. James i. 15. *Lust when it hath conceived, bringeth forth death.* Mat. v. 28. *Whoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* This duty is required by the seventh commandment, and is much insisted on throughout the whole Bible, as being essential in the character of the good man. And whatever is imported by the terms, self-abuse with mankind, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, or by any description of abominable lust which wants a name, is strictly forbidden, as odious in the sight of God, and as awfully exposing men to the fire of his wrath. Heb. xiii. 4. *Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled, but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* Eph. v. 5. *For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.* Rev. xxi. 8. *Whoremongers, &c. shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

Temperance is such moderate use of the creatures of God given for our support and refreshment, as most contributes to health of body and vigor of mind, and as best fits us for the service of God and our generation. In a larger sense, it may be used in labor, study, recreation, rest, pleasure, or other actions and things which, in themselves, and within due limits, are innocent; but without due limits, become occasions of sin. 1 Cor. ix. 25. *Every one that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible.* Eph. v. 18. *Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess.* Ezek. xvi. 49. *Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness.* The sin of intemperance consists in the injury done thereby to ourselves, and to others; in the abuse of the creatures which God has given us to enjoy; in the dishonor done to God by defacing his noblest work; and in its unfitting us wholly for his service. 1 Cor. vii. 31. *And they that use this world as not abusing it.*

Sobriety is that soundness of mind which implies the empire of reason and grace over the appetites and passions; limiting them to their proper sphere, and directing them to their proper objects. It stands opposed to that disordered state of mind which is occasioned by the empire of the inferior faculties. 2 Cor. v. 13. *Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.* It includes in it chastity and tem-

perance, and extends farther. It is the dominion of reason and grace over partial affection, instinct, appetite, passion, fancy, imagination, or other faculty inferior to sanctified reason. All these faculties are useful in their proper place, they belong not to depraved nature as such, but are original in the nature of man, and become sinful only when they are left to domineer in the soul; and to trample on the sacred rights of reason. Without their proper guide, as they are in all men who are destitute of grace, they are the pregnant source of infinite mischief in the world; and will be, till the grace of God shall reign universally in the hearts of men. It is essential to peace with God, peace in our own souls, and peace with our fellow men. All Christians, attain to this grace, as far as they are sanctified. Paul could say, 1 Cor. ix. 27. *I keep under my body and bring it into subjection.* It also stands opposed to drowsiness or sloth which proceed from sensual indulgences. 1 Thes. v. 6. *Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober.*



CHAPTER XX.

Of duties we owe to our neighbour.

WE are bound, 1. TO EXERCISE GOOD WILL to the whole family of Adam, our common progenitor, viewed, especially, as the offspring of God, made at first in his image, now under a dispensation of grace, ransomed by the blood of Christ, which atoned for the sins of the whole world, brought thereby into a salvable state, and capable of inconceivable and eternal happiness—to respect their rights as fellow creatures—to do them good as we have opportunity, and to send the gospel to those who have it not, that they may partake with us in the common salvation. Luke x. 29—37. Mark xvi. 15.

As to the rights of men with respect to each other, we may not invade them. Particularly, we may not deprive them of life, except when authorised by sentence of the law of the land, or when compelled to do it, in our own defence: nor of bodily members, health, ease, or other enjoyment with like exception. Exod. xx. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.* Gal. v. 15. *If ye bite and devour one another, take heed lest ye be consumed one of another.* Nor of chastity, either with or without consent: because, so doing, we expose ourselves, or both ourselves and them, to the curse of God, who seeks a godly seed: and this, not only by the act of incontinence, but by filthy communication either in word or action. Exod. xx. 14. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.* Col. iii. 8. *But now you also put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy,*

filthy communication out of your mouth. Nor of property; either by robbery, theft, fraud, deceit, trespass, or abuse of law. Exod. xx. 15. *Thou shalt not steal.* Mark x. 19. *Defraud not.* Nor deny them the truth to which they are entitled, either in our daily intercourse, or in bearing testimony before any lawful tribunal. Exod. xx. 16. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.* Nor desire or covet any thing that is their's: for the law of God reaches the heart, as well as the outward conduct. Exod. xx. 17. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.* On the contrary, we are bound, in all lawful ways, as we have opportunity, to defend and guard, the life, the honor, the property, the reputation, and, in a word, all the rights of others, with like sincerity and affection as we would our own.

2. TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES. This duty was never taught except in revelation and eminently by Christ and his disciples and followers, nor does it appear to have been so much as thought of by the ancient sages of Greece and Rome. It is however a duty altogether essential in the Christian. It is not to love them with complacence which is required, if there appear to be no moral goodness in them, for this alone is the object of complacential affection: but it is to exercise benevolence, or good will towards them, as the creatures of God, capable of happiness, and whose well being is as important as our own. The possibility of its exercise appears in the whole of God's gracious proceedings with sinful men, who have become enemies to him through wicked works. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have everlasting life.* John iii. 16. *And He commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.* In loving our enemies we do but follow the example of Christ, who died for the ungodly: and who, on the cross, prayed for his murderers, saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Luke xxiii. 34. And the motive to this duty which Christ sets before us is, *that we may be the children of our Father who is in Heaven, who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* Mat. v. 45.

3. TO LOVE OUR COUNTRY. It has been said by some that patriotism is not taught in the Bible: but this is a foul calumny, for it teaches whatever is essential to the common weal.

This affection is exercised in preferring the true interest of the State to any partial interest, and in consenting, if called to it, to sacrifice our all for its defence against unjust aggression. As Magistrates—in providing good laws—in distributing impar-

tial justice to the rich and to the poor—in protecting all in their rights and guarding the common interest and safety. As Subjects—in promoting able and good men to the magistracy, and affording them countenance and support—in reposing due confidence in them—in obeying their ordinances for the Lord's sake—in contributing freely our just proportion for the common defence—in frowning upon fraud, violence and oppression and upon all disturbers of the common peace. And whether as magistrates or people—in respecting the rights of nations—in regarding the faith of treaties, and in avoiding, as the greatest of evils, offensive and unjust war. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. 1 Pet. ii. 17. Tit. iii. 1. Rom. xiii. 7. Heb. xii. 14. Jam. iv. 1.

4. As Husbands, to love our wives, and not be bitter against them; to nourish and cherish them even as the Lord the Church; to cleave to them in the marriage vows renouncing all others; to dwell with them according to knowledge, giving them honor as to the weaker vessel; not to put them away except for fornication; for the Lord hateth putting away; and with them to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, as fellow heirs of the grace of life, that our prayers be not hindered.

As Wives, to reverence our husbands; to obey them, in all things lawful; to be helps meet for them; to dwell with and cleave to them in the marriage vows; renouncing all others; and not to depart from them, except for fornication. And in both characters, to reciprocate offices of kindness; to bear each other's burdens; to participate in each other's joys; and to cover each other's faults with the mantle of charity. Col. iii. 19. Eph. v. 29. 1 Peter iii. 7. Mat. v. 32. Mal. ii. 16. Eph. v. 33.

5. AS PARENTS, to protect, provide for and nourish our children; to educate them for their allotted station and sphere of life; to store their minds with useful knowledge and lessons of prudence; to fit them to act their parts well as members of society; to devote them early to God in baptism; to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and, as far as in us lies, to qualify them to be supports and ornaments of the Church of Christ.

As Children, to obey our parents in the Lord, to treat them with reverence; to give heed to their instructions; to follow their good examples; to cover their failings; to be true to their interests; to serve them faithfully; and to prop and cherish their declining years. 2 Cor. xii. 14. Prov. xxii. 6. Gen. xvii. 12. Eph. vi. 4. Eph. vi. 1. 1 Sam. viii. 3. Gen. ix. 23. Prov. xxviii. 24. 1 Tim. v. 4.

6. As MASTERS, to instruct our servants in the duty of their state, and calling; giving them that which is just and equal; forbearing threatening, knowing that we have a master in heaven, with whom there is no respect of persons.

As Servants to be subject to our own masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward; not purloining, but with good will doing service, as unto God, and not unto men. Eph. vi. 5—9. Col. iii. 22, 23, 24. iv. 1. Tit. ii. 9, 10. 1 Pet. ii. 18.

7. As SUPERIORS, to treat our inferiors with gentleness and condescension; that our influence with them, to do them good, may be enlarged; after the example of Christ, who being in the form of God, humbled himself for our sakes; and who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. Phil. ii. 8. Mat. xx. 28.

As Inferiors, to treat our superiors with respect; to rise up before the hoary head; and to honor the face of the old man. Levit. xix. 32. And, as Equals to treat one another with mutual complacency and courtesy. 1 Pet. iii. 8.

8. As NEIGHBOURS, to avoid tattling, tale-bearing and strife; to rejoice with those who rejoice; and weep with those who weep; to administer comfort and relief to the sick; consolation to the mourners; charity to the poor; reproof to the vicious; counsel to the ignorant; assistance to the unfortunate; to be just in our intercourse; to do good and lend; and, in general, to be emulous in the offices of friendship. 1 Tim. vi. 18. Jam. i. 27. Gal. vi. 10. 1 Tim. v. 13.

9. As MEMBERS OF A FAMILY, considered as a society or community, the master or head of the family is bound to act as a king, and as a priest, in his own house, according to the will of God.

As a king, to enjoin on his household, what is fit and reasonable, as rules of conduct suited to their respective relation and condition, and to enforce obedience under suitable penalties.

Husband and wife, where that relation exists, are the united head of the family, and have a concurrent authority over the children and domestics. Col. iii. 20. Exod. xx. 12. The reasonable commands of the latter are equally obligatory as those of the former: nor can the husband oppose or restrain the lawful authority of the wife, without being chargeable with tyranny and injustice. Still, as the husband is the head of the wife, it does not become her to contend with him, by direct opposition to his will, even for her rights; but rather to submit to injury with patience, contenting herself with applications to his

understanding and conscience, in the sight of God. Eph. v. 23.

The design of all government is to make every one feel the relation in which he stands to the community, and to compel him to conduct as becomes that relation: If this can be effected by force of rational motives, all pains and penalties are both unnecessary and tyrannical; if otherwise, recourse must be had to them. In the government of a family, the rod of correction, for children who cannot otherwise be brought to a proper temper and conduct, is often indispensable. Prov. xiii. 24. The application of the rod should always be such, as to make the subject feel it to be an expression of good will, in him who applies it. If, after sufficient trial, it be found to produce no good effect, recourse must be had to means more efficacious, or better calculated to operate on his hopes and fears; and the point must never be yielded, till it becomes necessary to deliver him over to the more powerful arm of the magistrate, as incorrigible. Deut. xxi. 20, 21.

Families well disciplined and instructed are pillars of both Church and State; or, the nurseries from which, from age to age, both are supplied with useful members; such as will, in their several stations and conditions, seek the common good, by a faithful discharge of their respective duties. Licentious families, on the contrary, are the nurseries of irreligion and vice; and the source of most of the wickedness and misery which have hitherto deluged the earth and filled it with violence. Hence the importance of family government is inestimable; and the responsibility of parents and heads of families incalculable. Prov. xiii. 6. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

As a priest, to instruct those under his care, according to their age and capacity, their duty to God, as their Creator and Preserver; to Christ as their Redeemer; to their parents and governors; to their brethren and sisters, and other members of the family; to themselves and to all around them, as they are variously related to society or to the Church of Christ; to read, or cause to be read, the holy scriptures and other books of instruction, and to explain and inculcate the truths they contain, as their capacity is able to bear them; to exhibit an example, in word and deed, worthy of imitation; to ask the blessing of God before, and return him thanks after, stated meals; to read or cause to be read a portion of the scriptures daily before his assembled household, and to pray with them, morning and evening, with confession of sin, and thanksgiving for mercies daily received. Deut. vi. 7.

The children and servants in addition to their respective du-

ties already explained, are bound to attend the religious service of the family, and not absent themselves, for the sake of business, unless of urgent necessity, much less for the sake of company or diversion. For the same reasons which make it proper for the head of the family to lead in such service, render it equally proper for them to attend and unite in it. Eph. vi. 18. Jer. x. 25.

10. AS MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH we stand related as Pastor and Church, and as private brethren.

It is the duty of the Pastor to feed the flock of God, which he has purchased with his own blood; to preach the word; to give himself to reading, to meditation, to doctrine; to declare the whole counsel of God to the people of his charge, as they may be able to bear it; to be instant in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine; to visit and pray with the sick; to administer consolation to the afflicted; and, as ambassadors for Christ, to beseech men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. Also, to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, on proper occasions, to the proper subjects; to admit new members, who appear duly qualified, into the Church, on their public profession of faith in Christ and obedience to him, with the consent of the brethren; and with like consent, to exercise the discipline of Christ's house, on such as are duly convicted of scandal or offence, unto excommunication, in the name and by authority of the Great Head of the Church; to assist in forming and organizing Churches—in the ordination of Presbyteries—in the discipline of neighboring Churches in his connection—and, in general, in advancing and spreading the gospel of the kingdom.—1 Pet. v. 2. 2 Tim. iv. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 13. Acts xx. 27. Jam. v. 14. 2 Cor. v. 20. Mat. xxviii. 19. 1 Tim. v. 17. Tit. i. 5. Acts xv. 2. Mark xvi. 15.

It is our duty as members, in relation to the Pastor, to obey them that have the rule over us, esteeming them worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and doctrine; because they watch for souls as they that must give account; to provide for their support, as God has prospered us; to pray for them; to encourage their hearts and strengthen their hands in the good work which the Holy Ghost has committed to them, by counsel, assistance and co-operation; and by diligent and faithful attendance on their ministry. 1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Cor. ix. 14. Heb. x. 25.

As related to each other we are bound to watch over one another; to admonish one another in love; to speak often one to another of the things of God; to bear one another's burdens;

to exercise mutual charity and forbearance; and to deal with each other, in case of offence, according to the rules of the gospel. 1 Cor. xii. 25. Col. iii. 16. Mal. iii. 16. Col. iii. 13, 14. Mat. xviii. 15, 16, 17.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of the Church—its officers—its discipline.

1. **T**HE term, Church, in a large sense, means the general assembly of all those, of every age and nation, who are redeemed to God by the blood of Christ, and effectually called by his grace. In this sense, the Church is composed of two parts; the Church triumphant consisting of the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven; and the Church militant consisting of those who have not yet accomplished their warfare on earth. It is called the Zion of God; the City of the living God; the heavenly Jerusalem; the Jerusalem which is above; and the General Assembly and Church of the first born, who are written in heaven. Heb. xii. 22, 23. Gal. iv. 26. This is the only society of men which shall exist forever; and it is that, for which all other societies are raised up, for a time supported, and at last destroyed. Mat. xvi. 18. Isai. xliii. 4.—This society alone enjoys true freedom; because, this alone is actuated, in a sufficient degree, by that charity which is the bond of perfectness and peace. Gal. iv. 26. She is the mother of all true Christians. The Church militant travails in birth with them, and when they are born, she nourishes them with the sincere milk of the word; is solicitous for their welfare, and exercises a parental watch and discipline over them; and the Church triumphant feels, at least, an equal interest in their birth and nurture. Gal. iv. 19, 26. 1 Peter ii. 2. Mat. xviii. 17, 18. Rev. xii. 1, 2. But,

2. The term is frequently used, in a more limited sense, to denote any competent number of professing Christians who have covenanted to be the Lord's, and to walk together in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; and who can, and in the name of Christ do, *assemble* on the Lord's day, and on other occasions duly appointed, for the public worship of God, and for communion with God, and with one another, in the word and ordinances of the gospel. Thus we read of the Churches of Galatia, of the Church in the Cities of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, &c. and in the Village of Cenchrea. Again,

3. The term seems to be used, sometimes for a number of

particular Churches in connection. The Church at Jerusalem in the time of the Apostles consisted of many thousands, who must have met for divine service in separate congregations or assemblies, but the whole body of believers in that City are called *the Church*, as may be seen Acts xv. 4, 22.

4. The orders in the Church, in the Apostolic age, were numerous; to wit, Apostles, Prophets, Teachers, Miracles, Gifts of healing, Helps, Governments, Diversities of tongues, Interpretation of tongues. Of these, Apostles have no successors.— Prophets, miracles, gifts of healing, diversities of tongues and interpretation of tongues have long since ceased, with the occasions which rendered them useful and necessary. There remain only teachers, helps, and governments. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

5. TEACHERS are otherwise called Bishops or Elders; all which are different names of the same office. Elders are called Bishops, Acts xx. 17, 28. *And from Miletus he [Paul] sent to Ephesus, and called for the Elders of the Church, and in his exhortation to them he says, Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flocks, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you OVERSEERS, in the original, BISHOPS.* Also in Tit. i. 5, 6, 7. *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain ELDERS in every City. If any be blameless, &c. For a BISHOP must be blameless.* Also in 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. The ELDERS which are among you I exhort, who am also an Elder, &c. *Feed the flock of God which is among you TAKING THE OVERSIGHT, &c. In the original, exercising the office of a Bishop.*

6. HELPS. If any office different from those now known in the Church is marked by this word, it must be uncertain what that office is, and consequently, whether the reasons for it still exist; but if a known office is designated by it, it must be that of Deacon. The duties of this office originally belonged to the Apostles and Elders, and were, by divine direction, severed from their more important duties, to the end, they might give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word, and in this view, the office of Deacon is aptly designated by the term *Helps*. That this is the true meaning of the term seems the more probable, because, in the enumeration of the officers of the Church, several others, besides this, are pointed out by terms expressive of the nature and object of the offices themselves, and not by appropriate names; as teachers, miracles, governments, and others; and because, in a formal recital, the office of Deacon which is agreed to be one, if not intended by this term, is wholly omitted.

The first who exercised this office were chosen by the brethren

ren of the Church at Jerusalem, and were set before the Apostles, and by them were set apart to office, by prayer and imposition of hands. They were men of honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.

Their duty is described to be *to serve tables*; or to distribute the stock or common property of the Church to widows and other indigent members who had not sufficient means of support; for which purpose it was committed to their custody and management. Acts vi. 1—6. As Deacons they have no authority to teach publicly, or to exercise any other part of the office of Elder. It behoves them to be grave, sincere, temperate, disinterested, sound in the faith, chaste, and to rule their own house well. 1 Tim. iii. 8—12.

7. GOVERNMENTS. Under this term are comprised all who bear rule in the Church. That some are set to bear rule in the Church appears from 1 Cor. xii. 28. *aforecited*: from 1 Tim. v. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor.* From Heb. xiii. 7. *Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God.* 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.* It equally appears from the three passages last cited, that the persons set to rule are *the Elders*. The same appears from John xx. 23.—*Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted; and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained.* But in the exercise of this power by the Elders, the concurrence of the Church seems requisite.—1 Cor. v. 4, 5. *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye be gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan.* 13. *Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.* And the punishment inflicted, in case of offence, is, in a qualified sense, the act of the Church. 2 Cor. ii. 6. *Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many.* It seems not essential that the Elders set to rule in the Church should, in every case, exercise the office of a Pastor or Teacher. 1 Tim. v. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine.*

8. The discipline of offenders, duly administered, is the act of the Great Head of the Church. Its object is to reclaim and restore them by bringing them to repentance. As an act of the Church it is an expression of good will to the subject, and of obedience to Christ. It partakes not of the nature of vindictive punishment; but its end is the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved, in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. 2 Thes. iii. 15.

9. The discipline of the Church is exercised in a first and second admonition, and if those prove ineffectual to gain the offending brother, and he be duly convicted, in excommunication. Mat. xviii. 15, 16, 17. Tit. iii. 10.

10. Excommunication does not dissolve the connection between the Church and the offender, as a brother; but it excludes him, while impenitent, from the communion of the Church, in all Christian ordinances; particularly, in the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's supper. But the duty of the Church to admonish him as a brother still remains. 1 Cor. v. 11. 2 Thes. iii. 15.

11. No member of the Church ought to keep company with an excommunicated brother, in such manner, as is calculated to show complacency in him, or approbation of his character or conduct, nor even to eat with him at a common table; because this will defeat one main design of excommunication, which is that the offender may be ashamed. 2 Thes. iii. 14. This rule, however, must not be construed to supercede the due discharge of relative duties which any member may owe to him, or the duties of kindness or charity, because he is not to be treated as an enemy. 1 Cor. v. 11. 2 Thes. iii. 15.

12. The offences which demand the censures of the Church are heresy, schism, fornication, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drunkenness, extortion, eating the bread of idleness, and other such like crimes, which are a scandal to the Christian profession, and a stumbling-block to those who are without. Tit. iii. 10. Rom. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. v. 11. 2 Thes. iii. 11, 14.

13. A regular and impartial discipline in a Church is essential to its well being—to its shining as a light in the world—to its loyalty to Christ whose institution it is—and to the edification of its members; and an important mean of the conviction and conversion of others. Without it a Church is a candle under a bushel; it is salt without a favour, and fit neither for the land, nor yet for the dung hill.

He that hath ears to hear let him hear. Rev. ii. 20. Luke xiv. 34, 35.

ADDRESS TO THE READERS.

WE have now, agreeably to the direction of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, presented you with a Summary of Christian doctrines and duties, in our apprehensions agreeable to the oracles of God. They are in our view necessary to be believed and practised, that men may be sound Christians, and inherit eternal life. How necessary and important it is, in the view of the Missionary Society and of their Trustees, that you should be sound in the faith, settled and immoveably fixed in the belief of the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and that your practice should be conformable to them, you will be able, in some measure, to determine from the direction of the Society, and the consequent labor and expense which we have been at to compose, print, and transmit this Summary to you.

We are persuaded that what men believe will have a commanding influence on their practice, present comfort, and eternal happiness. And that the true doctrines of the gospel, above all others, are mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ: And that your morals will be good in proportion to the soundness and measure of your faith. And we are of the opinion that a Summary of Christian doctrines and duties may be more necessary and important for you, and your children, than for people in the old settlements, where the gospel is constantly preached, and the ordinances stately administered; where there are much greater advantages for schooling, than you can enjoy; and where books on doctrinal points are more common, and may be more easily obtained. We have therefore wished and labored, as far as in our power, to be helpers of your faith and to relieve those difficulties. At the same time, we by no means wish, that your faith should stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. † We therefore intreat you, dear brethren, like the noble Bereans, to search the scriptures daily whether these things are so. ‡ Try every doctrine by this sure word of prophecy; and let it in all things direct and govern your faith and practice. This is the divine direction: To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it

† 1 Cor. ii. 5. ‡ Acts xvii. 11.

is because there is no light in them. * We beseech you therefore to give the most earnest heed unto the things we have written to you. Examine every article by the word, and as far as you shall find it to correspond with that, let it be adopted as an article of your faith. Teach it also to those under your care, that they also may be nourished up in the words of sound doctrine. If you should give but a superficial attention to these great points of doctrine, you will not only lose the benefit which we have designed you and your children, and ill requite our benevolent labors and purposes; but you will sin against God, against yourselves, and against the fruit of your own bodies. But in proportion as you zealously attend to the doctrines of our holy religion, search the scriptures, and imbibe the truth, from a conviction that it is divinely taught, you will consult your own happiness and that of your children, the more happily will you answer our design in this Summary, and conform yourselves to the divine will. The more entirely you shall practise the duties which it suggests under the like conviction, and in obedience to the supreme will, the greater will be your present peace and usefulness, and your future, eternal reward.

That you may do these duties with the greatest ease and to the best advantage, let the words which God hath commanded be in your hearts, and let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom. § This will enable you to judge with greater accuracy concerning the truth, and the better to distinguish between that and error. It will more effectually prevent your being carried about with every wind of doctrine. It will enable you with greater ease, and to better advantage, to instruct your children and others under your care, in the truth. This is of the highest imaginable importance to yourselves and to them, and to the order, peace and prosperity of your settlements.

If a people will suffer themselves to be unprincipled, and those under their care to grow up in the same state, they generally will be a people without good morals, and it will terminate in their shame and ruin. It will bring the same complaint and threatening of God against them, which he uttered against his own covenant people. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee. || That this may not be your unhappy case, and especially that of your children, in what a peculiar manner does it concern you, in conformity to the divine precepts, that the words of the law should be in your heart, and that ye should teach them diligently to your children? That ye should talk of them when ye sit in the house, and when ye walk by the way, and

* Isaiah viii. 20. § Col. iii. 16. || Hosea iv. 6.

when ye lie down, and when ye rise up ?* This will make you and the generation rising up under your care, like Apollos, mighty in the scriptures. This will give you great dignity and influence in your families. It will cause your faces to shine before men, and make you eminently useful in society. It will be a source of edification and comfort to yourselves and others.

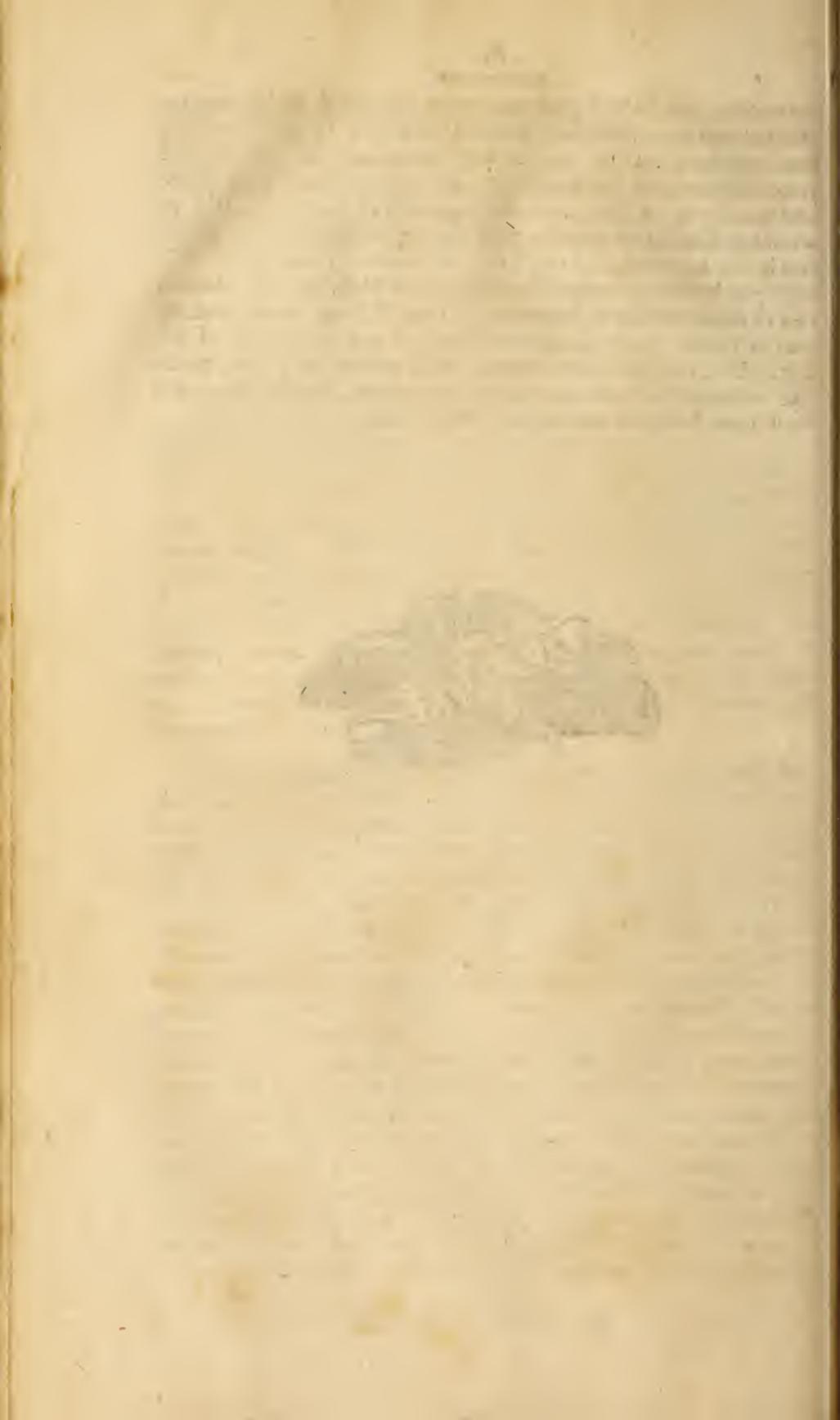
You will readily perceive, that these duties, which are always of the highest importance to men, in all circumstances, are more so to you, and to all under your care, on the account of your disadvantages with respect to schooling, your want of the constant preaching of the word, and by reason of the scarcity of good books among you. These deficiencies can be made up to yourselves, and especially to your children only, by your more than ordinary attention to the scriptures, and to the doctrines and duties which they inculcate, and by your uncommon diligence and faithfulness in teaching them to your children, and young people. This will show your faithfulness to God and to them; and do them and ages to come the most essential services. It will be one of the most effectual means of uniting you in the faith, and order of the gospel, and of facilitating the settlement and support of the gospel ministry among you. It will do honor to God, and be the means of your and your children's present and future edification, usefulness, dignity and happiness.

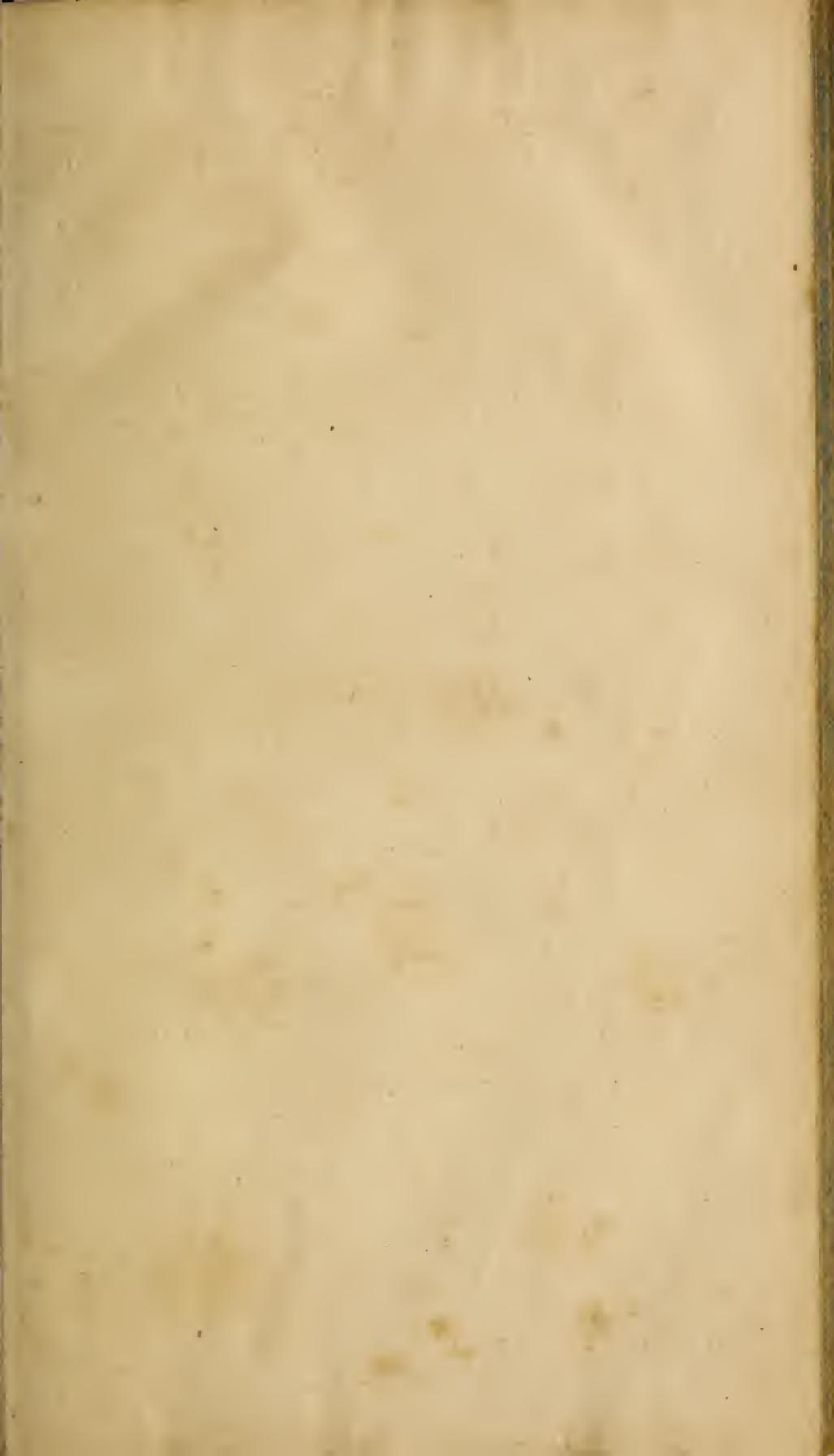
While we suggest these things to your most serious consideration, and you have this ocular evidence of our labors and concern for you, we persuade ourselves you will kindly receive our warm and pressing exhortations, that you zealously and faithfully attend to the momentous duties we have been recommending. We beseech you, dear brethren, not only to know the doctrines and duties of religion, but to reduce them to constant practice. We recommend the words of our blessed Saviour, and of his holy Apostle, relative to this point to your serious attention. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.¶ Be ye hearers of the word and not doers only, deceiving yourselves.— Who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but doer of the work, shall be blessed in his deeds.‡ We must practice well no less than believe well, that we may be happy. Without holiness no man can see the Lord. We are all acting for eternity. Our days are flying rapidly to a close. Our harvest will soon be past and our summer ended. God's eye is upon you, and he will witness for us, how we have instructed and entreated, warned and counselled you, and how you have regarded our counsels and

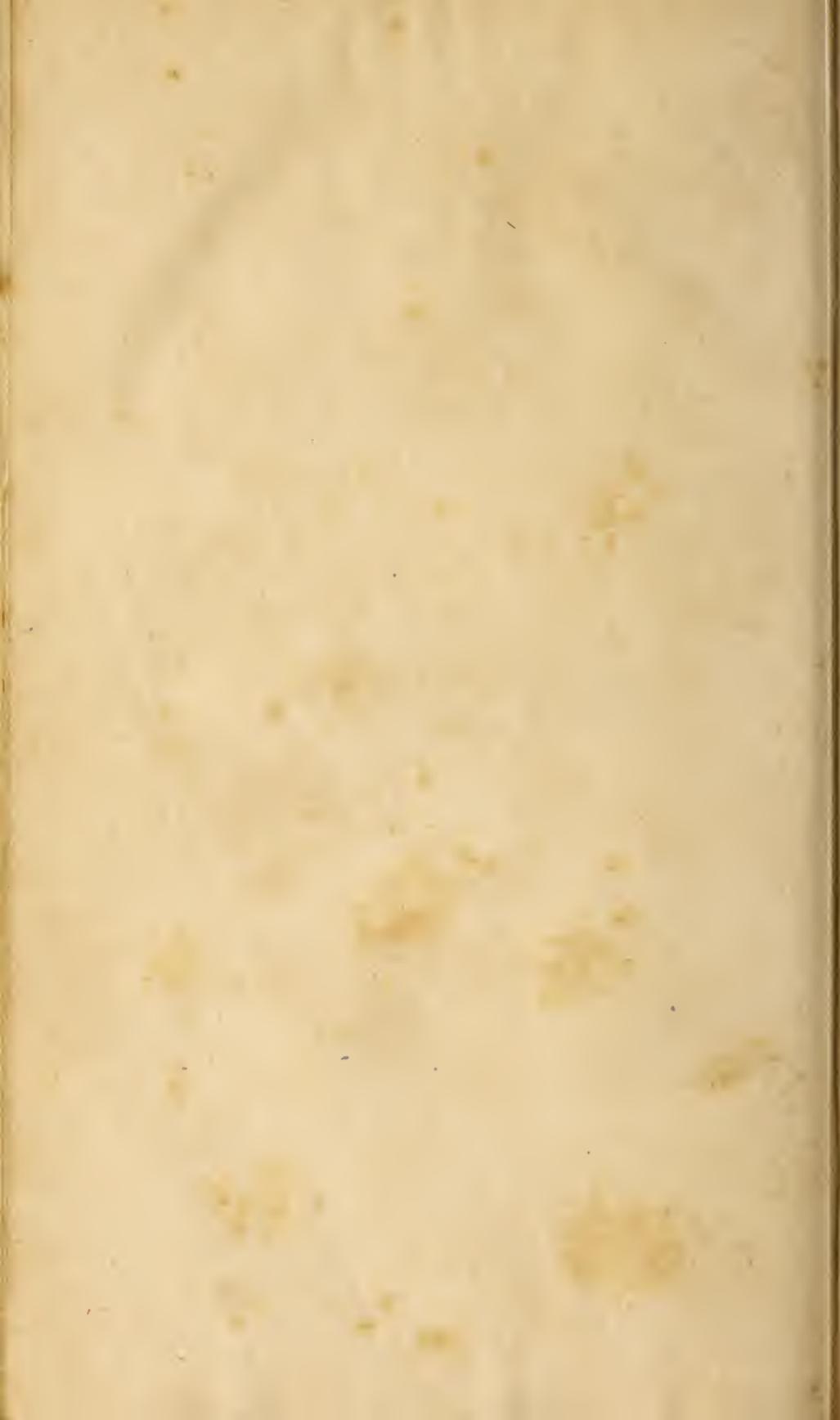
* Deut. vi. 8. ¶ John xiii. 17. ‡ James i. 25.

entreaties, and he will give every man according to his works. We beseech you, therefore, beloved brethren, by these weighty considerations, for the sake of your own souls, for the good of your children, and for the sake of ages yet unborn, for the peace and prosperity of Zion and the happiness of the nation, that ye would be Christians indeed; and that ye would grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We urge you by the command and mercies of God, by the solemnities of death and final judgment. Yea, if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye our joy; that ye be like minded, to believe and obey the gospel, that ye have the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

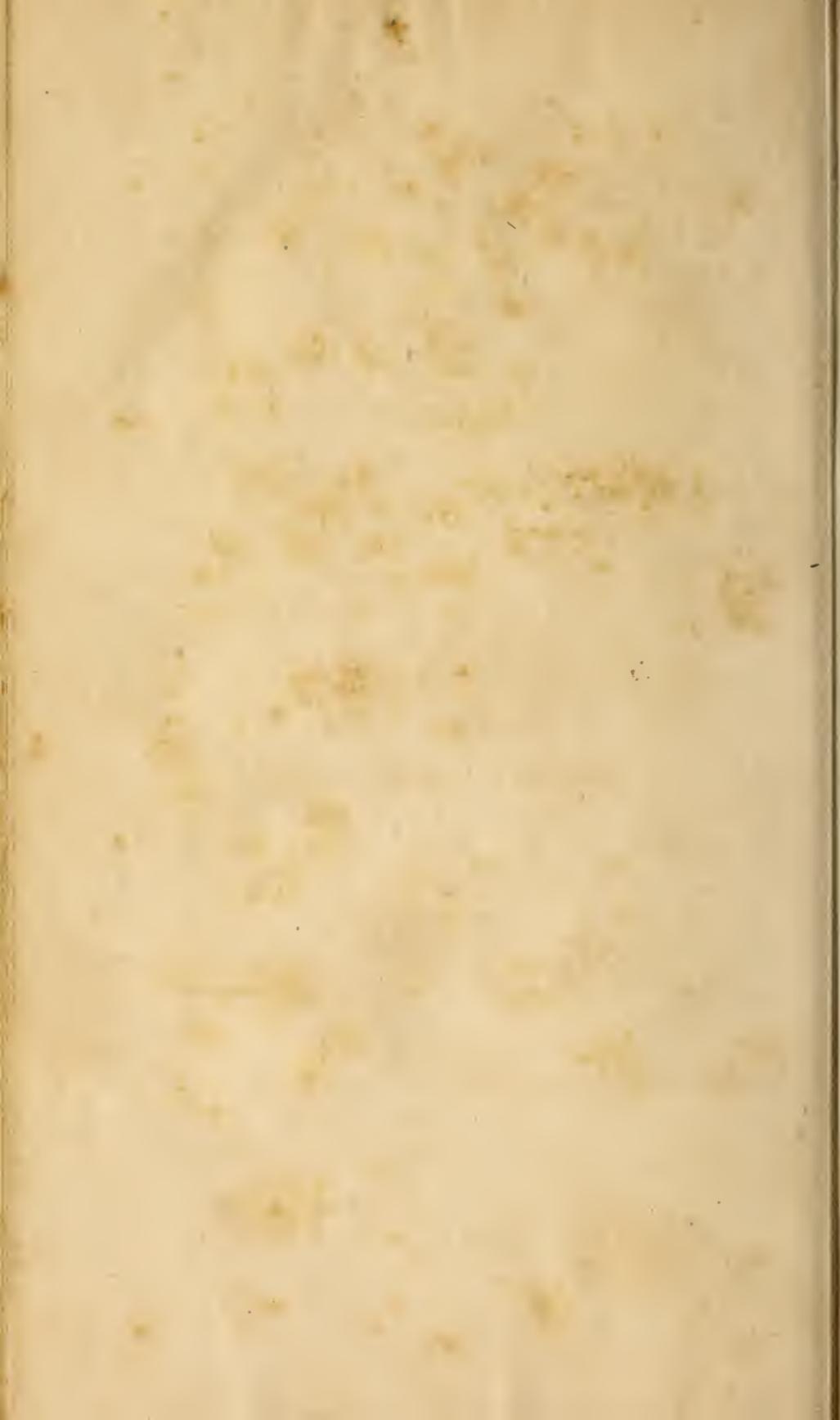












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A
DISCOURSE,
ON THE
GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY
OF THE
NEW-TESTAMENT:

DELIVERED AT NEW-HAVEN,

SEPTEMBER 10th, 1793,

AT THE

ANNUAL LECTURE,

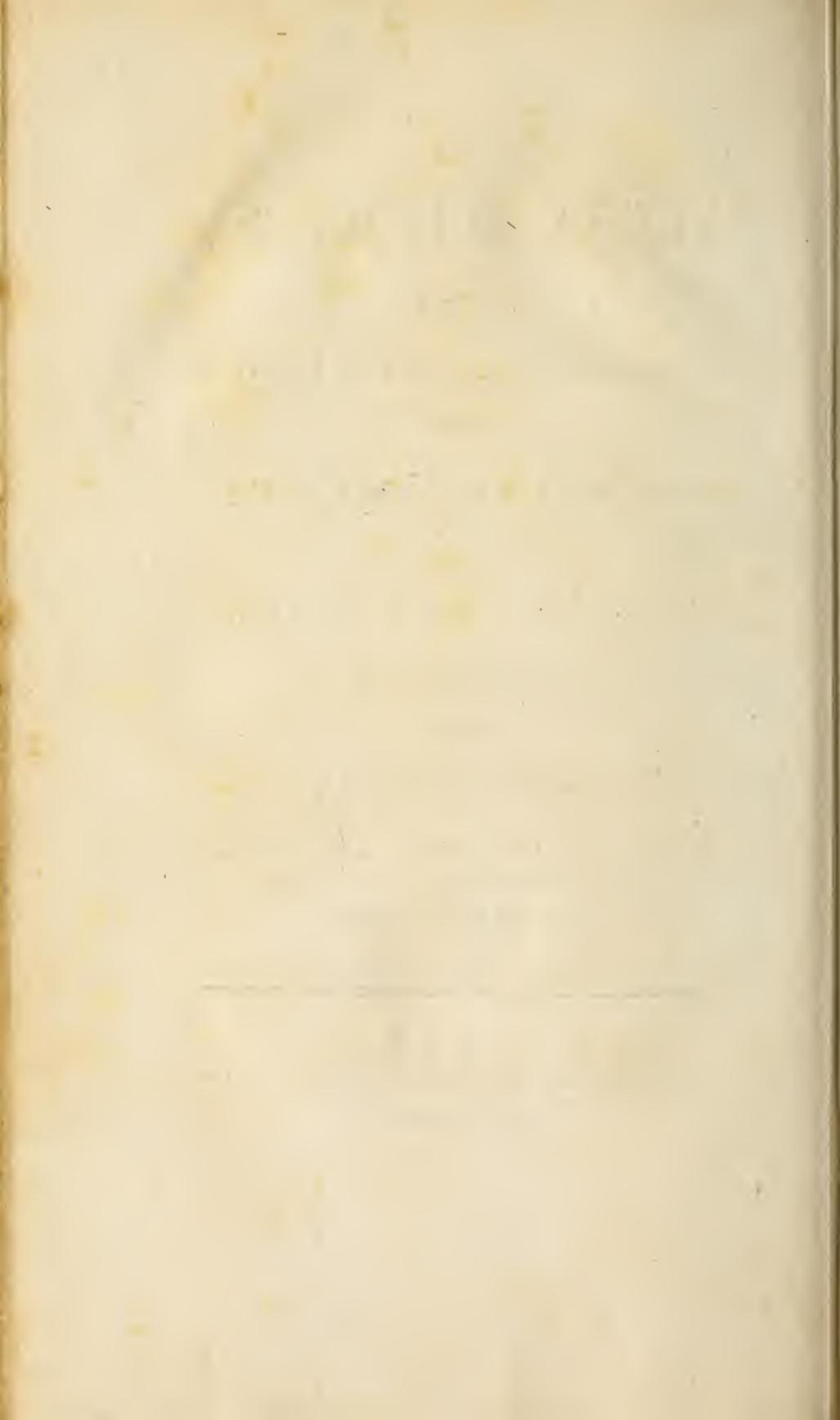
APPOINTED BY THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF
CONNECTICUT: ON THE TUESDAY BEFORE
THE PUBLIC COMMENCEMENT.

Timothy Dwight

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY GEORGE BUNCE, & Co.

M,DCC,XCIV.



A D V E R T I S E M E N T .

THE testimony, adduced in the following discourse, was taken principally from Dr. Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*. Several other valuable articles of testimony, collected with an intention to insert them, were omitted, on account of the length of the discourse; as were also some additional arguments.

A little more than half of what is now published was delivered from the desk. If the writer is not deceived, the remainder will be found to be pertinent to the principal design. He believes the testimony to be justly represented; but, if in the hurry and anxiety, occasioned by a long continued sickness of his family, and of his parishioners, any mistakes have been committed, he presumes they will be pardoned.

T. DWIGHT.

Greenfield, July 19th, 1794.

E R R A T A.

PAGE.	LINE.	FOR.	READ.
8	20	<i>principle</i>	<i>principles.</i>
12	15	<i>complete</i>	<i>complex.</i>
17	30	<i>authenticity</i>	<i>authority.</i>
22	10	<i>Mariron</i>	<i>Marcion.</i>
25	24	<i>of</i>	<i>to.</i>
52	<i>last</i>	<i>four</i>	<i>few.</i>
53	16	<i>of taxing</i>	<i>of the taxing.</i>
54	<i>note</i>	<i>(at the end)</i>	<i>add Lardner.</i>
59	19	<i>new entirely</i>	<i>new and entirely.</i>
62	2	<i>ignomy</i>	<i>ignominy.</i>
64	20	<i>preferred</i>	<i>preserved.</i>
65 & 67	<i>note</i>	<i>Jevell's Boyl. Lect.</i>	<i>read Twells's Boyl. Lect.</i>
67	18	<i>lhaken</i>	<i>shaken.</i>
<i>ibid</i>	29	<i>after Jerom dele</i>	<i>, and write . .</i>
72	12	<i>successors</i>	<i>successors.</i>
73	1	<i>destrines</i>	<i>doctrines.</i>
<i>ibid.</i>	14	<i>Romans</i>	<i>Roman.</i>
74	22	<i>after publicly dele</i>	<i>,</i>
76	18	<i>dele old.</i>	
<i>ibid.</i>	23	<i>after observed</i>	<i>write ,</i>

Errata corrected.

A
DISCOURSE
ON THE
GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY
OF THE
NEW-TESTAMENT.

JOHN XXI. 24.

This is the Disciple, who testifieth these things, and wrote these things; and we know, that his testimony is true.

THIS passage asserts the book, in which it is found to have been truly written by St. John. Should the assertion be fairly proved by the highest evidence, applicable to subjects of this nature, the Genuineness and Authenticity of the whole New-Testament would, probably, be, by most persons, acknowledged to be also proved. As the gospel of St. John contains Narrations, and Doctrines, as surprising and improbable, as any which are contained in the other books of the New-Testament; as the admission of these will be generally allowed to be an admission of those also, and

will involve difficulties, in the eye of human faith, of the same nature, and the same magnitude ; and as the same evidence will support both alike, few persons, who are wholly persuaded, that the gospel, attributed to St. John, was written, and truly written, by him, will hesitate to receive the whole New-Testament as an authentic account of the life, death, and resurrection, the instructions, institutions, and precepts of JESUS CHRIST.

SHOULD these observations be allowed to be just, it will follow, as the unavoidable consequence, that, if the Gospel in question can be proved to be a genuine and faithful record of St. John, the New-Testament is the Word, and Christianity the Religion, of the SON of GOD. For the authors of the New-Testament have declared themselves to be inspired by the Spirit of GOD, with the unerring knowledge of his holy pleasure, in all things pertaining to life and godliness.

To the scheme of discourse, hinted above, the text most naturally leads. It may however be advantageous to extend my observations beyond these limits, and to examine the authenticity of the whole volume of the New-Testament. All the books in this volume stand on the same ground, and are supported by the same arguments. The text may, therefore, be fairly viewed as a proper theme of a discourse, designed to authenticate the whole. This purpose I shall at-

tempt to accomplish, in the following manner.

1. I SHALL endeavor to shew, that the several books in the New-Testament, particularly the Historical books, were written by the persons, whose names they bear.

2. THAT the writers were neither deceived, nor deceivers.

3. THAT their writings have descended, without any material alterations, to the present time.

THE first of these propositions includes the first declaration of the text, extended to the several writers of the New Testament. The other two propositions, if true, will evince, that the present state of the testimony, ascribed in the text to St. John, perfectly accords with its original state; and thus enlarges the last declaration of the text into a solid ground of faith, for mankind, at the present time.

IN support of the first of these propositions-----That the several books of the New Testament, particularly the Historical books, were written by the persons, whose names they bear; it may be observed in the first place---That the state of the Jews, and of the Romans, as also of other nations, so far as it is either directly declared, or alluded to, in these books, is abundantly attest-

ed by other writers of undoubted authority, and is, therefore, truly represented.

PARTICULARLY there were, at the times specified, such persons in Judea, as Herod the great, his four sons, Herodias, Pontius Pilate, Cyrenius or Quirinus, Felix, Portius Festus, Annas, Caiaphas, Lyfias, John the Baptist, and Drufilla ; who had the characters, and situations in life, testified by the Evangelists.

SUCH writers have also attested, that, at the times, and in the places mentioned, there were such persons, as Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, Nero, Gallio, Sergius Paulus, Cornelius, and Aretas ; living in the stations, and characters, here assigned to them : And,

THAT there were such classes of men, as Pharisees and Sadducees, Scribes and Lawyers, Herodians and Samaritans, of the same characters, for principles and conduct, as are here ascribed to them.

THESE customs of the Jews are also abundantly evinced to have existed, at this time ; viz. That they came from the different countries, where they lived, to the feasts at *Jerusalem* ; daily frequented the temple ; prayed, at the third and at the ninth hour ;* fasted until the morning prayer was

* Hence the force of St Peter's reply, Acts 2 15.

ended ; were greatly zealous for the law, and for the temple ; worshipped in synagogues ; read stately portions of the Old Testament ; practised the vow of the Nazarite, shaving their heads ; inflicted forty stripes save one ;* allowed and exercised furious acts of private zeal for Religion ; payed tribute to the Romans, and esteemed it a grievance ; had publicans of their own nation, and abhorred them, for being in this office ; hated, and vehemently persecuted the Christians ; were zealous for the Sabbath, circumcision, &c. even to bigotry ; and considered the rest of mankind, as odious and contemptible, with an unexampled detestation.

It is also clearly proved, that their high priests rent their clothes, on extraordinary occasions ; that the Pharisees and the Sadducees were steady and bitter enemies to each other ; that the Jews and Samaritans hated each other, to a degree wholly singular ; that, out of Judea, the Jews prayed customarily by the sides of rivers, and seas ; that they laboriously made proselytes ; that they were astonishingly corrupted in doctrine, and in manners ; and that they and the Samaritans, at this time, universally and strongly expected the coming of the Messiah.

With equal clearness are we certified, that the Roman Governor had, in Judea,

* Such as that, recorded Acts 23, 12.

the power of life and death; that public notifications were in Jerusalem, customarily written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; that criminals, under the Roman government, always carried their own crosses; were customarily scourged, mocked and abused, as CHRIST is said to have been; that, among the Jews, persons were put to death without the city; that burial was not always allowed to malefactors; but that Roman governors might, and usually did, allow it; and that the Jews usually embalmed their dead, in the manner recorded by the Evangelists.

WITH the like certainty are we also taught, that the Romans examined prisoners by questioning and scourging, excepting Roman citizens, who could lawfully be neither bound, nor scourged, especially when uncondemned; that the Roman Government gave the power of life and death to such officers as Lyfias; heard no accusers, in the absence of the accused; kept accused persons in custody, as Paul was kept; sent prisoners from the provinces to Rome, and delivered them to the Captain of the guard; and, at that time, generally treated all nations, particularly the Jews, and the Christians as being Jews, with mildness and equity.

IT is also entirely established, that the temple was forty-six years in building; that

Judas of Gallilee and the Egyptian mentioned by Lyfias, Acts 21, 38, existed, and did the things ascribed to them ; that Herodias was first married to Philip, and then to Herod, his brother ; that John, the Baptist was put to death by the same Herod ; that the Emperor Claudius banished the Jews from Rome ; and that, in his time, there was a famine throughout the land of Judea.

OF the facts and persons connected immediately with the purpose of the Gospel I shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

THE writers who have singly testified to some, and collectively to all, the things above-mentioned, are Josephus, Philo, Cicero, Tacitus, Ulpian, Hermogenian, Marcian, Tertullian, Celsus, Petronius, Dio, Suetonius, and several others.

THE two first of these writers were Jews ; the rest, except Tertullian, were Heathens ; and there is not one instance, in these testimonies of Jews, or Heathens, in which either of them at all intended to witness any fact, in favor of the gospel, or of christians. All of them, who knew any thing of christianity, were decided enemies to the christians, and their testimony, therefore, especially when we take into view their personal reputation, and their advantages for knowing the things, which they assert, is completely satisfactory.

IN few methods, could the genuineness of the New-Testament be more certainly proved, than in this. It is utterly impossible for a writer, dealing largely in allusion to the customs, and in assertions concerning the facts, and persons, of a preceding age, not to be betrayed into many mistakes concerning them. It is not a little difficult for any writer to possess the knowledge, necessary to avoid such mistakes; and far more difficult for him to form his mind into a train of thinking, exactly suited to the circumstances of a preceding age, and to keep his attention invariably fixed on so complex an object, as not frequently to wander from truth and propriety.

VIRGIL, a man of primary abilities, and vast industry, has, in his *Æneis*, attempted to present the world with the manners, proper to the several personages, mentioned in that work; and undoubtedly designed, that they should, as much as might be, suit the age, in which those personages lived. But it is obvious to every attentive reader, that the manners of that poem much better suit the age, in which the writer lived. Yet a careful and just representation of manners was probably one principal object, in the eye of that ingenious poet throughout his work.

JOSIPPON, or Joseph Bengorion, a writer of the tenth, or eleventh century, has undertaken to write a History of the Jews;

in which he professes to have lived, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. This writer, notwithstanding the very great pains he has visibly taken, to pass for the character which he professes himself to be, has, in many instances, betrayed himself; and that so far, as to speak of several things, which existed, some centuries after the time, in which he pretends to have lived.

WRITERS of the first talents, art, and information, have ever found this difficulty insurmountable, when they have made attempts of this nature; but it must have been peculiarly insurmountable by the writers of the New Testament, had they been impostors. Their character, education, and information, could, in no degree, qualify them for a successful imposition of this kind. The truth and accuracy with which they have evidently written, on the subjects above specified, even in a vast number of very minute articles will, to every person, qualified to judge, appear to be an unanswerable argument of the genuineness of these writings.

2. THE books of the New Testament have been quoted by both Catholic and Heretical Christians, and also by Heathens, at such periods, and in such a manner, as to put their genuineness beyond every reasonable doubt.

The four Evangelists, and the Acts of the Apostles, are quoted, in the two first centuries, by Justin Martyr, Clemens of Alexandria, and Tertullian :

Mathew, Mark, and Luke, by Clemens of Rome :

Mathew, Mark, and John, by Polycarp, and Athenagoras :

Luke, and John, by Theophilus of Antioch, and the Epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons, and Mathew by St. Barnabas, and the Acts by the above mentioned Epistle.

BESIDE the above Christian writers, all the Evangelists are quoted by the Emperor Julian, a man every way qualified, and inclined, to expose the falsehood of these writings, if it existed; and are quoted with the fullest proofs, that he had not a doubt of their authenticity.

ALL these books are referred to by Hermas, and the Recognitions of Clement, and by the Heathen Philosophers Celsus, and Porphyry :

Mathew and Mark by Papias, and the Epistle to Diognetus; as John also is by the last mentioned work :

Mathew, Luke, John, and the Acts, by Ignatius, the Acts of Paul and Thecla, and the Testaments of the twelve patriarchs :

Mathew, Luke, and the Acts, by Hegesippus, and Polycrates :

Mathew, Mark, John, and the Acts by Athenagoras :

Luke, and John, by Tatian .

Luke by Theophilus of Antioch :

John by the Heathen Philosopher Amelius :

And the Acts by Justin Martyr, and Polycarp.

THE several quotations, here referred to, are made in the very words of the Scriptural writers, as they have descended to us. The references frequently contain several of their words, and always the facts, or sentiments, recorded by them; and are made, in a manner so plain, that the reference is usually of equal evidence and authority with the quotation; and always, at least in my opinion, too evident to allow of a reasonable doubt.

To the genuineness of the Gospels of Mathew and Mark, Papias, within fifty-three years from the date of the first Gospel, bears express testimony; asserting them to be the production of the writers supposed. To the Gospel, at large, Justin Martyr, within 77 years from its first date, gives the like full testimony; declaring it to consist of authentic narrations, of CHRIST and his Apostles. Tatian composed a Harmony of the four gospels, 109 years only, af-

ter the first in order was written ; as did * Basilides, the Heretic, a commentary, about 60 years after the date of the earliest Gospel. Irencæus, within 115 years, Clement of Alexandria, within 132, and Tertullian, within 137 years from the same date, yield a full and ample testimony to the genuineness of all the books under consideration ; as full, I conceive, as can be desired or expressed.

UPWARDS of seventy other persons, many of them of great and deserved reputation for wisdom and integrity, are to be numbered, as additional witnesses to those, whom I have now mentioned : all flourishing within 140 years after the writing of St. Luke's Gospel. Most of these witnesses yield their testimony by quotations and references, too express to be denied, or doubted ; while others, in numerous instances of high character, spent much of life in furthering the progress of Christianity, and sealed their testimony with their blood.

IGNATIUS, also, within 44, and the Epistle to Diognetus, ascribed to Justin Martyr, within 77, Melito Bishop of Sardis, within 115, and Clement of Alexandria, within 132 years from the above date, inform us of a Volume, in which these books were collected.

* Basilides declared, that he was instructed by Glaucias, who was taught by the Apostles themselves.

By these writers, the books in question are spoken of in terms of the highest respect; as the word, the preaching of CHRIST; as the scriptures; as the Word of GOD; and as divinely inspired. Thus, for instance, Irenæus declares, that they were written by the will of GOD; that they are to mankind the foundation of faith; and that those who wrote them, were inspired with infallible knowledge of truth, by the HOLY GHOST. Hence he concludes, that to despise them is to despise GOD himself. Athanasius also, at a later period, after recounting the same books of the Bible which we now possess, says; "These are the fountains of salvation; in these alone the doctrine of religion is taught: let no man add to them or take any thing from them." In general, the sentiments of the ancient Christians, in the ardour of respect for the Scriptures, appear on almost every page; and visibly exceed even the high reverence, in which they are now held by those, who expect from them everlasting life.

IN the mean time, it is to be carefully remarked, that the books of the New Testament, are the only books, of which they ever speak in this manner. All others, they uniformly consider, as the mere efforts of men, and of no authority in Religion. This subject they often discuss; and their decision is but one, and deliv-

authority

cred in terms of undoubting confidence. As a full justification of this confidence, they inform us, that they received these books, by most authentic tradition from the Apostles themselves; the whole of which tradition they were able to trace, and to prove. Tertullian particularly asserts, in the fullest manner, that, in the several Apostolical Churches, the clearest evidence of this authenticity might be obtained; as it had been, by himself, in the church at Rome.

ALL these writers flourished, and wrote, within one hundred and fifty years after the date of the first written book of the New Testament; and were born 20, 30, 40, 50, and in some instances 60 years, before the date here ascribed to them. Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, it is generally agreed, were hearers, and companions, of the Apostles themselves; and most, if not all, of those named, as of the second century, conversed with those, who had lived and conversed with the Apostles. These writers were also of very different educations, views, interests, and prejudices; and were inhabitants of Asia Minor, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Crete, Greece, Africa proper, Italy, and Gaul. At a time, when the formation of books was so laborious, and the acquisition of them so difficult, and expensive, it is only to be accounted for, from the pecul-

iar zeal and reverence of the early Christians for the Scriptures, that the New Testament should have been so widely spread, at this early period: Nor could the first Preachers of Christianity have left a fairer proof of their candor, piety, and benevolence, than the singular pains, with which they multiplied, and diffused, the copies of these venerable Oracles.

IN the third century, begining at less than 150 years, from the date above mentioned, these testimonies, both by quotation and reference, are so multiplied, that they cannot be particularly alluded to, in this Discourse. It ought, however, to be observed, that Caius, Julius Africanus, Origen, Dionisius Bishop of Alexandria, Cyprian, Victorinus Bishop of Pettaw, on the river Drave, and Methodius Bishop of Olympus, in Syria, beside many others, all men of talents and integrity, have, together with Firmilian Bishop of Cæsarea, borne a very full and decisive testimony to the existence, authenticity, facts, and doctrines, of the New Testament. Several of these men were born, in the second century; and some of them, particularly Origen and Dionisius, were possessed of the greatest advantages, for knowing the whole traditionary, as well as written, History of the Gospel, and of its authors, of the facts, which they have recorded, and of the doctrines, which they have left, for the benefit of succeeding genera-

tions. The testimony, which all these writers have given to the books in question is as decisive, as words can express; and the quotations, which have come down to us, although made for other purposes, and never at all designed for this, and although a part only of the works of these writers is, in any instance, extant, and although in very many instances there is nothing remaining, but a few small fragments, are yet so numerous, that a large part of the whole New-Testament might be collected from them. In the remaining writings of Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Irenæus alone, as Doctor Lardner has observed there are more quotations of the little volume of the New-Testament, than those of the whole works of Cicero, greatly, and justly, as he has been celebrated for his superior talents, which are now to be found in all the writers of several ages.

It is scarcely necessary to observe, that, in the succeeding century, the testimonies, both by quotation and reference, multiply to such a surprising degree, that we find numerous catalogues of the books of the New-Testament left on record; generally the same which we have now; and that not only great numbers of men of high reputation have singly borne this testimony, and in every conceivable method; but several Councils have also given us their united voice, in

support of their authenticity, and inspiration.

I SHALL now beg leave to call your attention to testimony, in some measure, of a different kind: the testimony of those, who have been generally esteemed Heretics. These men, who more, or less, departed from the opinions of the Catholic Church, concerning several scriptural subjects, were under various temptations to lessen or to deny, the authority of the New-Testament, and particularly that of the Historical books. As they embraced their peculiar opinions, principally from preconceived doctrines of Philosophy, the primary source of error, among those who have professed Christianity, they were under much the same temptations to sacrifice the whole New-Testament, as to sacrifice the particular parts, which they actually rejected. Nevertheless we have sufficient assurance, that, even amidst the heat of vehement and ill-conducted controversy, they all regarded the greater part of this Volume, with the highest reverence; and have left behind them valuable attestations of its genuineness and authenticity.

OF these men, in the first Century, or the beginning of the second, Basilides with his followers, and the Carpocratians; in the second Century, Heracleon, Cerdon, the Sethians, Artemon, Hermogenes, Theodotus, Montanus, Praxeas, Cassian, and the

*Manichees, appear to have received the whole of these sacred writings. Basilides and Heracleon commented largely on them; and the five last, in the list here given, quoted them; three of them largely; and all of this number appear to have received them with a respect, probably not inferior to that of the Catholics.

MARK with the Marcians his followers, Cerinthus, Marcion, Leucius, Apelles, Elxai, and the Paulicians, received, as of divine authority, the greater part of the New-Testament. The Paulicians received all, except the two Epistles of Peter; and these they rejected, merely because he had denied CHRIST. In the mistaking conduct of these men, we have a striking attestation to the genuineness of the sacred books; for, even when hardly pressed in controversy, they acknowledge the great body of them; and, for the rejection of a part, assign, as reasons, their own preconceived opinions, and not any proofs of corruption in the books, which they reject. Even Marcion, the general corrupter of the Bible, and Leucius, the general forger of false scriptures, have exhibited that there were, in their time, the former part of the second Century, genuine and authoritative Scriptures. Otherwise the First could not have acted the part of a corrupter; nor

* With regard to these Heretics, I have followed Dr. Lardner, in preference to Dr. Mosheim.

would the Laſt have acted that of a forger ; it being impoſſible, on any other ſuppoſition, that either means, or temptations to this conduct ſhould exiſt. It ought here to be remarked, that Origen, who probably knew better than any other man, and who has unqueſtionably declared what he knew, aſſerts, that, ſo far as his knowledge extended, the Marcionites, and Valentinians, and perhaps Leucius, or, as he is ſometimes called, Lucanus, were the only perſons, who had ever corrupted the Scriptures. At the ſame time, it ought to be remembered, that this conduct of theſe Heretics was highly advantageous to Chriſtianity ; as it induced the early Chriſtians to ſcrutinize with ſingular care, and to watch with extreme jealouſy, the writings of the Apoſtles.

THIS investigation may, perhaps, be conſidered as more cloſely confined to the Hiſtorical books of the New-Teſtament, than was originally propoſed. As reaſons for this method of treating the ſubject, my Audience are requeſted to obſerve,

1ſt. THAT the ſubject would have been otherwiſe, too extenſive, to be at all fairly handled, on this occaſion :

2d. THAT the very ſame proofs of quotation and reference, as well as almoſt all the other evidence, by which the Hiſtorical

books are supported, are the support, and, as I conceive, equally, of the remaining books. No person, therefore, who admits the validity of this evidence, for the Historical books, will dispute it, as applied to the others.

3d. THE Historical books are the foundation, on which the others wholly rest. In a theological view, therefore, the only view, in which any of them ever became the subjects of controversy, he, who receives the Historical books as genuine, will find no occasion to question the rest.

ON the evidence, here suggested, it may be useful to remark, that the state of things which I have represented, cannot be accounted for, unless the genuineness of these books be acknowledged. That, in so short a time, so many persons, of so many, and so distant countries, of so different educations, habits, prejudices, and views, of so fair a character, of so much understanding, without a selfish end to aim at, without concert, without a design of giving testimony to this point, and without an apprehension that the genuineness of these books either was, or would ever be called into question, should yet, in so many instances, to so great an extent, and with such high and uniform reverence, have thus quoted and referred to them, and thus professedly distinguished them from all others; that they should have

renounced religions, to which before they were habitually attached, even to bigotry, and adopted, from these books, a religion totally new, and singular; and finally that upon a faithful conformity to them they should have thus placed all their hopes of salvation, and have persisted, through life, in a steady and unexampled adherence to them, and to the religion founded on them, against every earthly hope, and with every earthly discouragement; is not only incredible; but, in my apprehension, impossible; on any other supposition, than that these books are the genuine productions of the Apostles, and authentic Narratives of the Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, of JESUS CHRIST, and of the labors of those Apostles, in propagating the Religion, which he taught to mankind.

To the observations, already made, it ought to be added, that, considering the contempt, in which the first Christians were held by the Roman Empire, the testimony to the genuineness of these books, which appears in the remaining works, and monuments, of Heathens, during the above mentioned periods, is as great, as could be reasonably expected. Many are the indubitable testimonies which they have left, not only to facts of the utmost importance to this question, but to the very books themselves. Celsus, particularly, is a witness of the greatest weight, and in a degree, grea-

ter than could fairly be hoped from the smallness of his remaining fragments. His undeniable references to the Historical, and several other, books of the New-Testament, are numerous, and made, within one hundred and thirteen years from the date of St. Luke's Gospel. He was a man of sense and learning, a professed enemy to the Christian Religion; and a laborious and inquisitive champion for Heathenism. His attestations, therefore, will not be disputed. Those of the Emperour Julian, who, after having received a Christian education, and made a Christian profession, publicly declared himself a Heathen, are of the same nature, and in some respects of equal importance. It is true, he did not possess so found an understanding, nor live at so early a period, as Celsus; but he had, from his education, the fullest opportunity to become acquainted with the books, and the worship, of the Christians, and a sufficient one to learn the facts, which were their declared foundation, and evidence. At the same time, he had all the advantages possible at the period in which he lived, to know, and the utmost disposition to declare, all the defects of that evidence, and all the real, or imagined, weakness in that foundation. Yet he has not, in the least, impeached the facts, or weakened their influence. On the contrary, by acknowledging the books, because their authenticity could not be disputed, and confessing the facts, because their

reality could not be questioned, he has added his own name to the list of valuable witnesses for that Redeemer, whom he wickedly denied, and for that system of Religion, whose doctrines he has childishly labored to overthrow. On these, and other similar testimonies, I shall hereafter make some further observations; and shall only add, in this place, that the edict of Dioclesian, which, in the year three hundred and three; two hundred and forty years after the date so often mentioned, ordered, on the severest penalties, all Christians to surrender the Scriptures, that they might be burned, proves at once that the copies of them were exceedingly numerous, and widely dispersed, and that this sagacious Emperour, and his Court, were fully convinced of the total impossibility of exterminating Christianity, by tortures, however numerous, protracted, or distressing, unless they accomplished the destruction of the books, on which it was founded: a proof of the first magnitude, that Christianity rested originally on the New-Testament.

2d. THE testimony of the Historical Writers of the New-Testament, was true: They were neither deceived, nor deceivers. The two parts of this proposition, I shall take the liberty to consider either separately or together; as may best conduce to their elucidation;

THAT they were not deceived, with regard to the facts, which they have related, is evident, in the first place ; because they were, in every respect, competent judges of them : they had sufficient faculties, and sufficient opportunities.

THE facts, related in the Gospels, may be all comprised under the Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, of JESUS CHRIST ; and those, related in the remaining Historical book, under the title of it--- The Acts of the Apostles.

THE faculties, necessary to form a competent judge of all these facts, are the usual senses of men, and that degree of understanding, which we customarily term Common-sense. It will doubtless be understood, that I assert these to be the only faculties, necessary for this end. Superiour genius, or great attainments of science, are not only not necessary to enable a man perfectly to judge of these subjects, but would, in no wise render him a better judge, than any other man, possessed of the faculties above mentioned. A plain man, thus qualified, would, as perfectly as Aristotle, or Sir Isaac Newton, know whether CHRIST lived, preached, wrought miracles, suffered, died, appeared alive after his death, and ascended to Heaven. The testimony of the senses, under the direction of Common-sense, is the deciding, and the only testimony, by which the

existence of these facts must be determined. No man could, better than the Apostles, judge whether a man were leprous, and restored from his leprosy, by a command; whether Lazarus were dead, and raised to life; and whether CHRIST walked on the waves. Nor could any man with more certainty determine, whether CHRIST, after being dead, and buried, appeared again alive, talked, moved, ate, instructed, comforted, and directed them, rose up from the earth, in a cloud, and disappeared; or whether, at their command, the lame were restored to soundness, the sick to health, and the dead to life. They could, also, as well as the greatest men living, know whether CHRIST taught them the singular precepts, and doctrines, recorded in the Gospels; and whether he lived in that perfectly holy manner, which they have described. It seems, sometimes, to have been imagined, that persons of superior talents would have been better judges of the facts, related in the New-Testament; but the idea cannot be seriously entertained by any person, who has attended to human life. On the contrary, plain men, accustomed to active life, usually judge of facts, with less prejudice, and more accuracy, than philosophers, whose unfortunate disposition to theory and system commonly and greatly warps their judgment from truth.

THE opportunities, which the Apostles had of observing these facts, were also such, that it is difficult to conceive how they could have been better. The Apostles were, for more than three, probably for more than four years, the constant companions of CHRIST, in his most retired, as well as in his most public, hours. They saw, they heard, they knew, every thing concerning him, so far as respects the present subject. Had they discovered the least failing in him, it must have destroyed his whole character, in the eye of persons, who thought him the Messiah; and had there been the least failing in him, they must have discovered it.

THEY were the daily witnessers of his miracles; not of one, two, or twenty; but of multitudes; accomplished invariably; as often as occasions presented themselves; and with as much ease, and certainty, as accompany the most ordinary occurrences of life.

AFTER his resurrection, they had every advantage, which could exist, for knowing whether he appeared alive. Nine times, he appeared to some, or other of them; and twice, to the women, who went to his sepulchre. He ate, he conversed with them, and instructed them, and gave various other proofs of his resurrection, which no man, in his senses, and in the like circumstances, either would, or could dispute.

THE power, which he promised them, of working miracles, was, in that promise, extended through life. Of the fulfilment, they had all possible opportunity, as well as capacity, to judge. If the promise failed of fulfilment, the charm was in a moment dissolved, and the dream at an end. This, it is to be remembered, must have happened, whether they were disposed to it, or not. For, as they published the promise to mankind, at an early period, they put their own character, and that of their master, wholly at hazard; and if the promise were not publicly and evidently fulfilled, the imposture, whether acknowledged by them or not, must have been easily detected by their fellow men.

2d. THEY believed in CHRIST, against all those motives, which usually govern mankind.

WHEN the Apostles first addicted themselves to CHRIST, they possessed, in a riveted degree, the Jewish ideas of a temporal, glorious, conquering, reigning Messiah. This prejudice they plainly held, until the day of Pentecost. It is most wonderful, that, with this prejudice, they should have listened to him at all; for nothing could be more contrary to his real character; nor could any thing more unfit them for believing in a Messiah lowly, despised,

and persecuted. The only rational method of accounting for this fact, is, that he shewed himself to be a person, as extraordinary, as he is described to be in the Gospels. This induced them to attach themselves to him, at first ; and the strong persuasion, which they cherished, that he would assume his proper character, of secular splendour and dominion, contributed to prolong their attachment. In his true character they believed, from necessity and irresistible conviction only, with a slow progress, and a reluctant submission to evidence. All their prejudices were visibly and steadily at war with his declarations, and, from time to time led them to neglect, or to disbelieve, many of his most important communications.

BUT, on the day of Pentecost, this mystery was unfolded to them, at once. From that period, all their preceding hopes vanished. From that period, they cheerfully assumed to themselves the lot of poverty and shame, coolly prepared for uniform opposition and contempt, and advanced to meet persecution, danger, and death, with a constancy, which no enemy could alarm, and no power destroy. Could we so far forsake every dictate of reason, as to suppose them deceived at first, it is wholly impossible, that they should not have awaked from the delusion, at the rousing calls of obloquy and infamy, of the prison and the cross.

IT is here carefully to be remembered, that all these evils were uniformly predicted to them, by their master. From him they learned, and believed, that, in following him, they must give up every earthly expectation; must bid adieu to friends, and country, to peace, and competence, to the hope of a settled home, and the pleasures of an affectionate family; must wander through the world hated, afflicted, and tormented; and must end this gloomy career of life with all the miseries, devised by ingenious and malignant persecution. With this melancholy prospect, often called up to view, their ministerial life was begun; and by the severe sufferings, which filled up this prospect, it was accompanied to the end.

ENTHUSIASM has been often objected to the Apostles, as one method of accounting for their adherence to CHRIST, and of lessening the force of their testimony. This, it is presumed, has been done, merely because it was the only method of filling a chasm in the system of Infidelity; for there is not the least appearance of enthusiasm in their character, as it is given to us, either by themselves, or by others. Never were persons less fairly exposed to such an objection. There is nothing in the nature of CHRIST'S life, preaching, or miracles, which could be the object of enthusiastical belief, or which could furnish a ground for

enthusiastical attainment. On the contrary, as has been already observed, to receive him, as the Messiah, required, on their part, a complete sacrifice of every prejudice, and to adhere to him, of every interest. --- Throughout their whole attendance upon his ministry, they discovered a continual opposition to all the peculiar characteristics, which, as the Messiah, he discovered, and were almost daily, with the greatest justice, reprovèd by him, as being of little faith.

BUT Enthusiasm is weakly alledged, for the purposes of infidelity, even if we should against plain certainty, allow the Apostles to have possessed this character. Enthusiasm would, in no respect, account for the things, for which it is alledged. Enthusiasm could not possibly make its votaries believe, that a man was born blind, and lived blind for twenty years, and then, at a command, received his sight; that men were encrusted with the leprosy, *white as snow*, and, in a moment, were changed into the usual healthful appearance of the human person; and that themselves, with eight or ten thousand others, had eaten to the full of five, or seven loaves, and a few little fishes. Enthusiasm could, in no wise, persuade any person, otherwise possessed of common-sense, that CHRIST daily and always performed these, and the like, wonderful works, at his pleasure, in the most

public manner, and so as to convince and alarm the whole country of Judea ; that he taught things, different from all, which had been before taught, and wholly superiour to all preceding doctrines of men ; and at the same time, enable that person actually to remember the things themselves, and the words, in which they had been communicated, and to record them for the inspection of others. In a word, to say nothing of the total insufficiency of Enthusiasm to bear men above a whole life of uniform suffering, opposition, want and wretchedness, it could never persuade any man, that, through a long period, he himself was able, with a word, to heal the sick, to restore the lame, and to raise the dead, in the name of JESUS of Nazareth. For these, and the like effects, the cause assigned is wholly inadequate ; and, but for a peculiar spirit of opposition to Christianity, would never, even in the present case, have been suggested by any man, who had the least acquaintance with the human character.

THUS it is, I presume, sufficiently evident, that the Apostles were not deceived.

THAT they were not deceivers, or impostors, will, I trust, be rendered equally evident, by the following considerations.

1st. HAD they been inclined to deceive, it was impossible, that they should ever have

accomplished such a design. The facts, which constitute the sum of their information to mankind, and the foundation of the whole Christian system, were, according to their own representations, of the most public notoriety. They directly declare to the Jews, that they, in numerous and successive instances, were witnesses of these facts, equally with themselves. To the knowledge, which their countrymen possessed, of these facts, as having been eye, and ear witnesses of them, they boldly and steadily appeal; and on this knowledge ground those arguments of conviction, and persuasion, which produced such effects, as never were before, or since, produced by arguments. This is, indeed, very singular conduct for impostors to pursue, and may with confidence be asserted to have existed in no other case of imposition. Nothing is more evident, than that, if the Apostles designed to impose on their countrymen, they could not have adopted more obvious, or more effectual means to defeat the design, at its very commencement. In a word, if the Apostles are believed, in such conduct as this, to have aimed at imposition, they cannot, by those who entertain this belief, be vindicated from the character, either of idiocy, or of phrenzy; and one of these must probably, in the eyes of all persons who deliberately attribute to them such a design, be their real character.

2d. IF the Apostles were deceivers, they were deceivers, against all those motives, which, in cases of this nature, have hitherto influenced the human race.

ALL men, who are not wholly deprived of reason, invariably act, with a view to some good, which they expect by acting to obtain. This maxim is as certain, and as acknowledged, as that all bodies gravitate. Arguments are therefore founded on the first of these truths, as firmly, as on the last. The Apostles, then, if deceivers, undoubtedly expected some good from the deceit. But what good could men expect, in the present life, from opposing, without any foundation to rest on, the religion of their country, which, at the same time, they acknowledged to be enjoined by GOD? What, from opposing the religions of the whole human race? What, from asserting a despised and crucified man to be the Son of GOD, and the author of a new and most interesting Revelation of his will; when they knew that themselves, and all who had been acquainted with him, also, knew, that he had given no probable evidence of meriting this character? What good could they expect from asserting themselves to be possessed of the power of working miracles in his name, and from professing their ability, and readiness, to work miracles, of the utmost importance, and publicity, when they

certainly knew, that they possessed no such power?

ADMITTING, however, this palpable absurdity, is it possible, that they should expect any good from this profession, after they had made the experiment, and had in every instance failed? For, in this case, they must have failed in every instance. What could they expect, what could they receive, but uniform contempt, and entire infamy?

IT is in vain, here, to assert, that there have been parallel instances. Until Infidels shall produce at least one parallel instance, it may be confidently asserted, that none has existed. As to those, which they have hitherto alledged, they ought to blush whenever they recollect them; for, it is presumed, that, with all the extravagant and singular prejudices, manifested by them against Christianity, they cannot but see, both from the nature, and the publicity, of the miracles of the Gospel, an entire and irreconcilable difference between their own workers of miracles, and the Apostles.

IN the future world, the Apostles, if deceivers, could certainly expect no good. In this case, they cannot be supposed to have believed in either the character, or the declarations, of CHRIST. All his promises to them of future and eternal happiness, if he be supposed to have made any, must, in

their view, have been idle tales. Hence, if they expected any good in the future world, they must have expected it, merely as the reward of their deception. But can it be imagined, that any man could expect future, everlasting happiness, especially in that future world, and from the hands of that GOD, whom they have described, as the reward of a lye, or rather of a life spent in lying? Can a Jew have formed such expectations, with the Old-Testament in his hands? Above all, can those men have formed such expectations, who forbade to *do any evil, that any good might come, on pain of damnation*; and who declared, that *whosoever loveth or maketh a lye shall be cut off from all future good*?

It is unnecessary to add any thing, under this head, further than to observe, that arguments of this nature are allowed, by Mr. Hume himself, to have the same force with those, which are founded on natural causes. In his Essay on Liberty and Necessity, he observes---“When we consider how aptly natural and moral evidence link together, and form only one chain of argument, we shall make no scruple to allow, that they are of the same nature, and are derived from the same principles.”

3. It is incredible that wicked men, such as impostors of course are, should have

aimed at the objects, visibly aimed at, throughout the New-Testament.

THE whole end singly aimed at in the New-Testament, is manifestly to make mankind virtuous. The History, Doctrines, Precepts, and Ordinances, unitedly urge men to nothing, but piety to GOD, a reasonable government of themselves, and justice and benevolence to each other. Can an impostor be imagined to aim at this end? On what grounds, can he be supposed to labor, for this purpose, through a life, encircled with daily and extreme distress, and voluntarily, and with undoubting preference, to meet a violent and ignominious death? I leave to infidels to explain the mystery, to unfold the principles, and to reconcile the purpose with the character.

4th. THE Apostles lived so as no deceiver ever lived.

THE Apostles not only appear to have been virtuous men, but have been generally acknowledged fairly to claim high distinction, in the list of the virtuous. To establish this distinction nothing more is necessary, than to compare them with Philosophers in general, particularly with Infidel Philosophers. Let them be compared, for instance, with Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, and Rousseau, and there will be found not a near resemblance, but, in most

respects, a striking contrast. Nor are they totally superiour to Infidels alone; but to men of virtue and piety. In the most exact, sublime, refined, and enduring virtue, they stand alone; and very remote from any rival. How is such a character to be reconciled with a life of imposture?

5. An imposition committed to so many persons could not have escaped detection.

THE number of the Apostles, including Matthias and Paul, was thirteen, and that of their coadjutors, though unknown, was evidently much greater. Seventy were commissioned, as preachers, by CHRIST; and many more by the Apostles. Perhaps there never was any plot committed to such a number of persons, without detection; even where it respected a single action, existed for a little period, and was not extorted by any distressing acts of violence. But here the secret, if we suppose a secret to have existed, was a design, the most complex, and the most extensive, which ever entered into the human mind; and the prosecution of it was extended through life and embittered with opposition, hatred, want, and infamy. Yet no one of the number ever discovered it, although they had frequent and zealous contentions, and although none gained, and all suffered by the concealment. Not a hint of this nature is given, nor a suspicion warranted, by the

whole testimony of antiquity. Would an opinion fraught with such incredibility, as attends that, which is here combated, be admitted, or even suggested on any other subject?

At the same time, it is to be remembered, that their understanding, and information, in human policy was too confined, to allow of such concealment, even if, in other circumstances, it had been possible.---- They were all plain men; like the farmers and mechanics of this country; only far less informed. Such men, limited wholly and of necessity, to their own narrow circle of business, to provide subsistence for themselves and their families, cannot be believed, in that business, to have imbibed so profound a policy, or arts of such complete and sagacious imposition.

From these arguments it appears incredible, that the Apostles were deceivers. It may, however, not be improper to suggest the following reasons to prove, that they were neither deceivers, nor deceived.

1st. They published the prophecy of CHRIST, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, several years, before that event took place.

THE three first Gospels, in which that event is predicted, were published as early, at least as the year sixty-four; and Jerusa-

lem was taken, by Titus, on the eighth of September, in the year seventy. This prophecy contains so minute and explicit a description of the event, under consideration, with regard to persons, time, and circumstances, as to exclude the possibility of any material mistake. The Evangelists, therefore, in giving this prediction to mankind, put their Master's character, and their own together with the whole Christian cause, on the issue. If the prediction were not exactly fulfilled, all fell at once. This they could not but know; and plainly, therefore, could not, unless they fully believed the prediction, have published it to the world. But, if they were deceivers, they could not have believed it. The consequence is obvious, and undeniable.

THAT they were not deceived, with regard either to the prediction, or the character of CHRIST, is, with like evidence, proved by the fulfilment of the prediction: a fulfilment so exact, and entire, as to remove every doubt; especially when it is remembered, that the Historian, who, from his own knowledge and presence, has confirmed this truth, was a Pharisee.

2d. THIS proposition is evidenced by their total inability, of themselves, to form, and to fill up such a character, as that of JESUS CHRIST.

To form a perfect character, and to fill it up with such traits, as to make it appear like a real, living, acting being, or like one, who has really lived, and acted, in the world, and to give it proper and characteristic sentiments and manners, is perhaps, as hard a task, as was ever undertaken by the human genius. Virgil, one of the greatest geniuses, and one of the wisest men, of Heathen antiquity, has attempted it, in his *Eneas*.---With his success this Audience are sufficiently acquainted. *Eneas*, in the hands of this great master of fine writing, is not only a spiritless and unamiable person, but is tinged, throughout, with grossness and immorality. The Heathens, indeed, have not, in their poetry, exhibited one amiable character, because, as is justly observed by the Author of the *Rambler*, they were unacquainted with Revelation. They had no virtuous models, from which to copy ; and like other men, were wholly unable to form such a character by mere imagination. --- Their morals were so gross and their conceptions of virtue so imperfect, that the proper features of such a character appear not to have entered their conception.

BUT what Virgil could not perform each of the four Evangelists has in the most finished manner performed. The character of **JESUS CHRIST** is wholly that of a real, living, acting person ; as distinct as that of

Hamlet, or Achilles. At the same time, it is a character of finished perfection. All the parts of it are suited entirely to each other, and, united, constitute, beyond comparison, the fairest image of pure, uniform and exalted virtue, which ever entered into the human mind. The piety, the benevolence, the wisdom, the integrity, the loveliness, of the Redeemer have had no rival, no second, even in the highest efforts of the noblest imagination. His Doctrines visibly excel all other doctrines; his precepts triumph over all other moral rules; and his conduct leaves out of comparison every human example. Notwithstanding the best and wisest of mankind have laboriously imbibed his wisdom, and studiously formed themselves by his precepts, he still stands alone; the meridian sun, in whose presence every little luminary "hides its diminished head."

ON this subject, there is no dispute; as there can be no doubt. Almost all the wise men, who have lived, since the Christian æra, and all the virtuous, have united in this sentiment; and far more of such men than the whole earth has produced besides, have diligently studied the books, in which the History of this glorious person is contained; and they have, with one voice, agreed, that the wisdom manifested in them is from Heaven, and that the Author of it is the SON OF GOD. In the meantime, his

instructions and character have wrought in the world, the greatest change, which it has ever experienced, and become the source of almost all the just, moral sentiments, and amiable moral conduct, which have existed, since this History was first published, in the Gospel. The excellence and preeminence of his Character is, therefore, fully established, and has been acknowledged by many Infidels, beside Rousseau.

COULD such a character be the result either of enthusiasm, or of deceit? Whence had the Apostles such ideas? How were mechanics and fishermen enabled to accomplish what none of the human race, beside them, has ever accomplished? Can we suppose the fishermen of Judea to have been so totally superiour not only to the fishermen, but to all the wise and learned men, of every other country?

3d. If we allow this absurdity to have existed, we shall still be wholly unable to account for their forming such a Character, as that of CHRIST.

THE Apostles have given us the Character of the Messiah. This Person they, with their whole nation, expected to appear, in circumstances of the highest temporal grandeur and dignity. With this preconception firmly riveted, the Apostles cannot be supposed to have departed, without some

adequate cause, from all their preceding ideas of this splendid Personage, and to have formed a character of him so greatly reversed, as that, which they have actually formed. Nor can any cause be conceived to be an adequate one, unless of equal magnitude with that, which themselves have left upon record. Nothing, less than the evidence of their own eyes and ears, will account for this fact. They must have thoroughly known the person, to be able to describe the character, and by irresistible conviction have been forced to renounce all their former prejudices, to be willing.

4th. THE truth of the Apostles testimony is evinced by the attestations of their Enemies to the principal facts, which they record.

THE testimony of Judas to the whole character of CHRIST, especially his moral character, may be fairly esteemed decisive.

JUDAS had every advantage for knowing the whole character and conduct of CHRIST, and every conceivable temptation to publish whatever was defective in it. If he preached not the wisdom, if he wrought not the miracles, if he practised not the virtues, professed by himself, and attributed to him by others, Judas could not have been ignorant of the failure, nor have neglected to

publish the imposition. But, while his temptations operated in the highest degree, he has not only accused him of nothing, and directly declared him innocent; but by accomplishing, at this trying period, his own death, has given the clearest proof that, in his view, CHRIST was what he professed to be; a preacher of truth, a perfect example of holiness, the author of the most wonderful miracles, and, in a word, the SON OF GOD.

THE Jews were generally most bitter enemies to CHRIST. His miracles and life were exhibited to them daily, in such a manner, as to enable them competently to judge, of both. If it could have been done with a shadow of pretence, they must therefore, have denied his miracles, and aspersed his character. A few instances of such aspersion are recorded in the Gospel; I need not mention how groundless, or how contemptible. Similar aspersions, if possible more groundless, and more contemptible, are handed down in the || Mishna, and in the Talmud. Generally they dared not to call his character at all in question, until long after the establishment of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire; as I shall soon evince, by a passage from Origen,

|| Mishna, a Collection of Jewish traditions made by Rabbi J. Juda, about the year one hundred and eighty:—Talmud a Commentary on the Mishna. There are two Talmud's, the Jerusalem Talmud, and the Babylonian.

which I conceive fairly to decide this question. His miracles they denied neither in the Gospels, nor in the Mishna and Talmud; but acknowledged their existence fully; attributing them, in the one, to a concert with Belzebub, and, in the other to magic, which they assert him to have learned in Egypt. In the mean time, these last mentioned books, written with the most malignant opposition to Christianity, give attestation to the existence of CHRIST, as the Author of a new Religion, and as a Worker of miracles; to the state of the Jews, as described in the Gospels; to his Disciples, as having followed him, and wrought miracles in his name; to the destruction of Jerusalem; to the rise, and the prevalence, of Christianity; and to the constancy of the Christians, in its early periods.

AMONG the Heathens, whose hatred to Christianity needs not to be specified (beside the testimony asserted, by Justin Martyr and Tertullian, to be contained in the Acts of Pilate, the existence and authenticity of which cannot, it is presumed, be fairly disputed) Tacitus, the Rōman Historian whose character, as a writer, requires no remarks, and who flourished about the year one hundred, thirty-six years after the Gospels of Mathew and Mark, were written, declares the time, name, country, and character, of CHRIST, as the Author of the

Christian Religion ; bears witness to his trial, and death under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, and to the expectation of the Messiah by the Jews ; and records the destruction of Jerusalem, together with the principal events which attended it ; the great numbers of Christians, at this early period existing in Rome, Judea, and other places ; and the terrible persecution of them, by Nero.

THE same things, generally, are testified by Sulpicius, Anno four hundred.

THE banishment of the Jews, from Rome, by Claudius, is asserted by Suetonius, Anno one hundred and ten ; as is also the destruction of Jerusalem.

THE Emperors Trajan, Anno one hundred and seven, and Adrian, Anno one hundred and seventeen, testify several interesting things concerning the Christians ; particularly their great numbers, innocence, and constancy.

PLINY, Anno one hundred and seven, beside the things just mentioned, informs us, that the Christians steadfastly opposed Idolatry ; worshipped, in Assemblies, on the Lord's day ; sung hymns to CHRIST, as a GOD ; held agapæ, or feasts of charity ; had church officers ; and engaged, by oath to commit neither theft, robbery, nor adul-

tery, nor ever to falsify their word, nor to betray any trust.

CELSUS, the famous Epicurean philosopher and bitter champion for Heathenism against Christianity, Anno one hundred and seventy six, one hundred and thirteen years after the first written Gospel, testifies beside the things already mentioned, that there were books, written by the Disciples of CHRIST, containing an account of his life and actions, his own discourses and words; particularly several predictions of his; his Name Logos, or the Word of GOD; his genealogy, and that of Mary, his mother. He further testifies, that he was born of a Virgin, and was reputed to be the son of a Carpenter; that the Chaldeans were reported to have come, and worshipped him, when he was an infant; that Herod the Tetrarch, being informed of this, ordered all, who had been born in that village, about that time, to be killed, intending to kill him, lest he should afterwards take the government; that he was carried into Egypt, lest he should be killed; that Angels were sent, on his account; that he was baptized by John; that the HOLY GHOST descended on him, in the shape of a Dove; that a voice from Heaven, declared him to be the SON of GOD; that he was very poor; went about from place to place; took to himself ten or eleven, abjects, or low people; healed diseases; and

raised the dead ; fed multitudes with a few loaves, of which large fragments were left ; was called a Nazaræan ; represented himself as sent to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance ; forbade the anxious pursuit of riches ; exposed the difficulty of obtaining immortal life by the rich ; was called upon to show a sign in the temple ; was deserted, denied, and betrayed, by his companions ; was derided, clad in a purple robe, crowned with thorns, had a reed put into his hands, thirsted, and had gall and vinegar given to him ; that blood flowed from his side ; that he died a shameful death, and was reviled at his death ; that he foreknew, and foretold his sufferings ; rose again from the dead ; shewed himself to a woman, and to several others ; shewed the marks of the nails ; breathed on his Disciples ; was the first Author of the Christian persuasion ; taught the doctrine but a few years before Celsus wrote ; was at that time esteemed superior to Angels, reckoned to be the SON of GOD, and called a GOD ; and that one Angel, and, in another place, two, were said to appear at the sepulchre of JESUS. Celsus, also, testifies further that the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body, and of a future, Immortal Life, founded on the life, death, and preaching, of Christ, was recorded by his Disciples ; that many Jews believed on him, and forsook the worship of their own country ; that his followers were, at first, few in num-

Jew

ber, and of one mind ; that they afterwards became numerous, spread abroad, and were divided in opinion ; that they customarily met together, in assemblies, and there taught things agreeable to their sentiments ; that they were forbidden to partake in idol-feasts, and refused to join in idol-worship ; and that the Jews were punished for the crucifixion of JESUS.

JULIAN, who was possessed of most of the learning of his age, who had the education of a Christian, and the malice of an Apostate, and whose testimony, therefore, will not be suspected, declares that CHRIST was born, in the reign of Augustus, and at the time of ^{the} taxing, or enrolment, made by Cyrenius, or Quirinus ; that the Christian Religion arose, in the time of Tiberius, and Claudius ; that the Historical books of the New-Testament were genuine, and authentic ; that they were the only Historical books, acknowledged, as of sacred authority, by the Christians, and the only authentic memoirs of CHRIST, and his Apostles ; that the Gospels were written as early, as is generally believed ; and particularly, that John's, the last, was written, soon after the death of Peter and Paul. He also testifies, that CHRIST cured the blind, the lame, and the possessed, rebuked the winds, and walked on the waves ; that there were multitudes of Christians in Greece, and in Italy, before John wrote his Gospel ;

that, beside persons in humble life, Cornelius and Sergius Paulus were Christians; and that Peter and Paul were the great preachers of Christianity.*

THE testimonies of Porphyry and Hierocles are also, in several respects, of considerable value. It is greatly to be regretted, that so small a part of their works, especially of those of Porphyry, is now remaining. From the scope of them, so far as we are informed, they would have furnished a highly interesting testimony to the Scriptures. A minute account of their remaining testimony cannot now be given; but it ought to be observed, that they, together with Celsus and Julian, acknowledge the genuineness and authenticity of these books; and miserably evade the force of the argument, from the miracles of CHRIST and his Apostles, by attributing them to magic.

THERE are, also, still remaining, many other useful Heathen testimonies, which cannot now be particularly mentioned.

FROM those, which have been mentioned, the conclusion appears to be fairly drawn, that the Apostles have given a true testimony to Mankind. From Celsus, es-

* Julian aimed to overthrow the Christian Religion, but has confirmed it. His arguments against it are perfectly harmless, and insufficient to unsettle the weakest Christian.

Lardner.

pecially, do we derive decisive evidence of this truth. It is not here designed to represent this Philosopher, as receiving these things, in the manner, in which we receive them. In this case, he must have been a Christian. But he considered them, as the acknowledged representations of the Evangelists, eye and ear witnesses of the things which they declare; representations, in his own time, universally received by Christians, and never impeached. It ought, however, to be here observed, that Origen declares Celsus to have, by insinuation, aspersed, in some degree, the character of CHRIST, though with nothing infamous; and to have been the only person, of whom himself had ever heard, as having aspersed him at all. This declaration of Origen may be esteemed a full proof of the perfect spotlessness of CHRIST'S Character, from his death to the time of Celsus: for Origen could not but know, and has undoubtedly declared, the truth.

5th. THE truth of the Apostles, testimony is proved in a peculiar manner, by several important institutions, and memorials of interesting facts, which they have recorded. These institutions and memorials are,

1st. Baptism, introduced in the room of Circumcision:

2d. The Lord's Supper, instead of the Passover :

3d. The First-day Sabbath, instead of the Seventh day Sabbath :

4th. The Christian-worship, instead of the Temple-worship :

5. The Christian Church, instead of the Jewish :

6th. Invocation of CHRIST, as GOD ; and also Invocation in his Name.

ON these it is to be observed generally, that the first Christians, among whom these institutions and memorials were originally established, were Jews, and were also numerous ; as the New-Testament, and Heathen, Jewish and Christian Antiquity unitedly declares. By Jews, therefore, they were first received. This being premised, I would further observe,

1st. THESE Jewish institutions were established in the Law of Moses, acknowledged by all the Jews, by the Apostles, and by CHRIST himself, to be the Word of GOD ; and were, therefore, of unquestioned, divine authority.

2d. THEY were sanctioned by the example of their prophets, priests, and kings ; and by a National adherence of many cen-

turies; even from the commencement of their National existence, to the time of the Apostles Mission.

3d. THEY were sanctioned by the penal laws of Moses; so that to fail of the commanded adherence to them was punished with excision.

4th. THEY were sanctioned by CHRIST'S uniform observance of them, and by that of his Apostles.

5th. THEY were established in the minds of the Jews, by pride and bigotry, in the extreme.

6th. THEY, with the rest of the Mosaic system, were universally considered, by the Jews, of that age, as designed to be perpetual.

BUT notwithstanding all these high sanctions, and the unprecedented attachment of the Jews to these institutions, as the means of personal, and national distinction, the Christian institutions above mentioned were introduced in their place, and to their annihilation.

IN the year forty nine, or fifty, the whole Church at Jerusalem, consisting of the Apostles, Elders, and Brethren, decreed, that the Gentiles, whose membership in the Jewish Church, when profelyted, had be-

fore depended, equally with that of the Jews themselves, on an exact conformity to these Mosaic institutions, should not be under any obligation to observe them. This event may be considered as the annihilation of these institutions, in the Christian Church; for, though the Nazaræan Christians appear with some others, to have continued Jewish observances, after this period, yet a blow was then given to them, from which they never recovered. Many of the Jews appear to have totally neglected them, from this period, and, in spite of their former most bigoted adherence, to have viewed them as done away.

On what principles can we account for this singular event? The Mosaic Institutions were considered by all Christians, as being of divine authority; and were publicly asserted to be so, by the Apostles, and by their Master. Could others be introduced into their place, which were not acknowledged to be of at least equal authority?

BAPTISM and the Lord's Supper were professed to be memorials of CHRIST's Death and of the cleansing of sin, by the effusion of his blood, declared to have been shed publicly, at Jerusalem, and on the feast of the Passover, by the Roman Government, and the Jewish Sanhedrim. Is it possible, that CHRIST should not have been known thus to have poured out his blood; or that his

Sufferings should have been thus commemorated by those, who being constantly appealed to, as eye witnesses of his death, yet did not know, that he had thus died ?

THE First day Sabbath was instituted, immediately after the day of Pentecost, as a memorial of CHRIST'S Resurrection from the dead. Could Jews be supposed to unite in observing this institution, upon such an appeal, if CHRIST had not been on the best grounds believed to have risen ; and if circumstances, less extraordinary than those alledged, had accompanied his Death and resurrection ; or if either were less convincingly attested, than is asserted in the Gospel ?

Is it possible, that the Apostles could be even listened to, when proposing a Form of worship, new, & entirely different from the splendid ritual of the Temple ; a Form of worship, of which the Aaronic Priesthood, sacrifices, and purifications, were no part ; and in which all men were placed upon a level with the Jews, all places made equally sacred with the Temple, and all persons with the Priests ; a Form of worship, in which universal humbleness and spirituality were substituted in the room of unequalled pomp, and of services rendered venerable and affecting by the most forcible exhibitions to sense and imagination ; unless CHRIST had been certainly known to have

appeared, with proofs of a character, not equal only, but superiour to that of Moses, and of an authority, fairly qualifying him to change what GOD himself was confessed to have once established ?

THE same observations are, with the same force, applicable to the substitution of the Christian Church in the place of the Jews.

COULD the Invocation of the name of JESUS CHRIST, which, from Acts 7. 56. is proved to have existed, and from 1 Cor. 1. 2. Acts 9. 14, 20, 21. and from various other passages, is proved to have existed so extensively, as to become a designation of Christians in general, have been adopted even by the Apostles themselves, and, much more, by other Jews, unless facts, as extraordinary as those recorded in the Gospels, had evidenced his character and mission, and proved him to be the SON of GOD, sent into this world to establish a new and perfect Religion, and to accomplish the Salvation of mankind ?

ALL these institutions were professedly built on facts, publicly appealed to, and wholly uncontradicted, for ages ; facts of the most singular nature, and of the highest conceivable importance ; facts, professed to have existed as proofs of a most wonderful Mission of the most wonderful Person, ever heard of in this world. The adoption

of these institutions, therefore, by those among whom these facts were declared to have existed, and who were appealed to as eye and ear witnesses of their existence, while these facts were alledged, as the obligatory and only reasons for such adoption, appears to be an unanswerable proof, that the facts themselves existed, and of course that the Apostles have given a true testimony concerning them. At the same time, the adoption of them by Jews, so circumstanced, and directly charged with being the enemies, and, in some sense, the murderers, of the Person who was thus commemorated and honoured, a Person who appeared always in the humblest life, and in a character so opposite to that of their expected Messiah, adds such a degree of weight to this evidence, as, one would imagine, must, if it were possible, even silence gainsaying.

6th. THE only remaining proof of this point, which I shall now mention, is the apparent Integrity of the Narration itself; and this, because it is so obvious, and so generally and easily understood, I shall consider in a summary manner.

THE Integrity of this Narration appears in the first place, in the frank manner, in which the writers record the low condition of their Master, the contempt and opposition, with which he met from the Jewish

innocent
 Government and Nation, his sufferings and death, and the ignomy, with which it was attended. Nothing was ever more unlike design, than this account, considered in all its parts.

2d. IN the like frank exhibition of their own humble state and character, their errors and faults, their prejudices and debates, and the numerous instances in which they deservedly received reproof from the mouth of CHRIST.

3d. IN the peculiar simplicity and impartiality, with which they record facts.--- Their Narrations are mere narrations of facts, whether favorable or unfavorable to their cause. In neither case do they utter a comment, unless for mere explanation. There is no opinion pronounced, a single instance excepted; no praise given by them to CHRIST; no blame charged upon his enemies; no expression of wonder at his miracles, nor of abhorrence, at the injustice of his murderers; nothing aggravated; nothing diminished; and, in a word, no appearance of those feelings, which could not but be excited by the events, which they relate. On the contrary, they appear to have sacrificed every human feeling to the cause of Truth, and to the obligations of Duty.

4th. In the entire harmony, which reigns throughout their writings. They wrote, at

different times, and in different countries. The three first Evangelists appear never to have seen the Gospels of each other; and John wrote more properly a supplement to their Gospels, than a formal narrative of the Mission of CHRIST. That they wrote without any concert is certain from what they have written; and that their writings entirely harmonize was never denied, unless from the love of the denial. In time, place and circumstance, in the characters, conduct, and manners of those, whom they mention, there is an agreement, which cannot be paralleled. Had the Gospels been fabricated by imposition, such could not have been their character. Truth is always consistent; Falshood never. It is also to be observed, that all of them wrote several years, after the facts, which they have recorded, took place. Such an agreement is, therefore, high and convincing evidence of the truth of their testimony.

3d. THE testimony of the Apostles has been handed down to us, uncorrupted.--- This I will endeavour summarily to evince, in the following observations.

1st. THE passages quoted by the ancient Christian writers, and by the Heathen also, are generally quoted in the same words, and almost always have the same sense, which we find in passages now in the New-Testament.

A LARGE part of the New-Testament, and particularly of the Historical books, might be obtained from these writers, in the very words contained in our printed New-Testaments. This, it is evident, would have been impossible, had not all quoted from the same original writings.

IN many instances, however, their quotations are made in words differing, more or less, from those, which are acknowledged by us. On this subject it may be observed in the

1st. PLACE, that these writers often intentionally give only the sense of the passage, as they severally understand it. Of course, judging differently, as we do, they necessarily wrote their different interpretations, in terms somewhat differing. Most of the acknowledged terms are frequently preserved; although in the instances now referred to, they are preserved rather to express the meaning happily, than to accord exactly with the words of the Scriptural writers.

2d. HENCE they differ, not unfrequently, from each other, in the terms which they use, although generally and easily reconcilable in the meaning. As this is done by those, who visibly used, and acknowledged, the same Scriptures, and har-

monized in their theological sentiments, it is evident, that their differences sprung from the source, to which it is here attributed.

3d. As they knew, that those, to whom, and those, for whom, they wrote, had the New-Testament, as well as themselves, and as the *Authenticity of these books was not then called in question, they quoted securely, from memory knowing, that, if they made any mistakes, their readers, as well as their correspondents, could easily correct them.

THESE quotations are often made merely to illustrate a doctrine, or to enforce an exhortation, reproof, or consolation; and hence cannot be expected to possess verbal exactness; it being unnecessary to the purpose in hand.

4th. AMONG those who thus quoted, some were of more, and some of less accurate characters; and hence they quoted more or less exactly.

5th. THEIR OWN works, having passed through the hands of many transcribers, are now doubtless less exact, in this respect, than they originally were; so that we may well be surpris'd to find their differences so few, and so small.

* The Authenticity of the New-Testament at large was never called in question, until the sixteenth Century.

6th. STILL they are of trifling importance, and such as do not materially affect a single doctrine, or fact.

PERHAPS it may be thought that most of those, which are here called quotations, ought rather to be termed references. I have used the term quotations, because it has appeared to me, that the writers aimed to quote, but did it imperfectly, for the reasons which are suggested.

ON this subject, it ought further to be mentioned, that many of these writers differed much in opinion, and disputed warmly, concerning several doctrines of high importance. We may, therefore, well be astonished, that the writers, of almost all sects, should so far agree in their quotations. So general was this agreement, to the time of Origen, that, though possessed of more information, concerning this subject, than any, perhaps than all men living, he had never heard of any person (Marcion, his followers, the Valentinians, and perhaps Leucius, excepted) who had corrupted the Scriptures.

NOR ought it to be here forgotten, that these very differences are a standing proof, that there was not the least concert among Catholics, or Heretics, with respect to this matter, nor any design formed, or even thought of, to impose these books on the

belief of mankind. On the contrary, they plainly considered the books, as standing firmly on their own evidence; and left men to receive, or to reject them, as they should think proper.

2d. THE singular reverence, with which the ancient Christians regarded the Scriptures, forbids even a suspicion, that they wilfully corrupted them.

Of this reverence some notice has been already taken. A few additional observations may however be advantageously made.

THE Scriptures are now in every hand, are used as a school-book, quoted in ordinary conversation, and are questioned, opposed, and ridiculed by Infidels. Hence good men, although not at all shaken in their faith by these means, appear yet to regard these writings with less profound veneration, than is observable in the ancient Christians. By them the Scriptures were viewed with some such reverence, as would naturally be rendered to GOD himself, manifested in this world, with glory becoming his Character. * A remarkable specimen of this reverence, in the members of an ancient Church, is recorded in a letter, from St. Austin to St. Jerom, Jerom translated the Old-Testament. The Bishop of

* See *Twell's Boyl. Lect.*

the Church mentioned, used this translation, in divine service. In the prophecy of Jonah, Jerom had rendered the Hebrew word, translated *Gourd*, by the Latin word *Hædera*. In the former Latin translation, originally used in this Church, the same Hebrew word was rendered by the Latin word *Cucurbita*. When the Bishop read the passage, the people, perceiving the word changed, were alarmed, and would have finally left the Bishop, if he had not consented to restore the original word. Such was their watchfulness, and jealousy, for the preservation of the purity of the Scriptures, even where no fact, doctrine, or precept, was materially concerned.

SITUATED among persons of such a character, few men would dare to misquote, or corrupt; and few would be inclined to do it, if they dared. Such corruptions also as existed, would be immediately detected, and regarded with the utmost detestation. Thus the corruptions of Marcion were founded throughout the Christian church, and his name consigned, for his villainy and impudence, to perpetual infamy.

3d. THE Christian sects were numerous; and each watched over the conduct of the others, with a careful, jealous, and prying attention.

IF there were at any time, an especial temptation wilfully to misquote the

Scriptures, we easily see, that it would peculiarly respect those passages which were the favorite ones of particular sects, and which were supposed most to befriend their characteristical opinions; but we also see that these would, by each sect, be watched with an eagle eye, and a continual apprehensiveness of danger. Hence arose an extreme difficulty in accomplishing a design of this nature, even if it were formed: a difficulty, greatly increased by the warmth of strenuous controversy, and by the desire, and the pride, of victory.

THESE considerations will furnish us with an easy and sufficient explanation of a fact, otherwise very difficult to be explained; viz. the general and surprizing agreement among so many persons thus differing and thus contending, found in their quotations of the Scriptures.

4th. THE very great number and diffusion of the copies of the New-Testament, rendered such corruption, in any great degree, evidently impossible.

COPIES of this volume were, at an early period numerous in Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Macedonia, Africa proper, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor, Armenia and Persia. The general, apparent agreement of these copies is a demonstration, that ve-

ry little corruption has ever taken place in these books.

5th. THE New-Testament was early translated into several languages.

THE Old Latin translation was made most probably in the first * or very early in the second Century. Tertullian expressly declares, that there was a Latin Version of the Gospels and Epistles existing in his time.

JEROME'S Version was done in the fourth Century, and with great care, learning, and exactness :

THE First Syriac probably in the Fourth :

THE Second Syriac, and the Armenian, in the Fifth : and

THE Coptic in the Sixth Century.

ST. AUSTIN declares, that all attempts to corrupt the Scriptures were in vain, because they were then translated into so many languages ; were in the hands of people of every age and character ; and were so known, so esteemed, and so celebrated.

* Michaelis affirms that no man of learning, Dr. Mill excepted, denies this Version to have been done in the first Century. See Travis's Letters to Gibbon ; from which this account of the Versions here mentioned is taken.

Anno Dom. three hundred and ninety-five.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM also declares, Anno Dom. three hundred and ninety-eight, that they were, in his time, already rendered in the languages of Britain, Syria, Egypt, Persia, and India: and in the languages of all people in general, whether barbarians, or others.

It may, perhaps, be both agreeable and useful, in this place to recite a passage from Theodoret, in which he refers to this subject. Anno Dom. four hundred and twenty three.

“ I WILL compare the most celebrated law-givers of the Greeks with our Fishermen, Publicans, and Tent-makers; and shew the difference between them. The Laws of the former were forgotten, soon after the death of those, who enacted them, but the laws delivered by Fishermen have flourished, and prevailed, and have been received, not only by Greeks, and Romans, but also by Scythians, Persians and other Barbarians. The Heralds of truth were not, indeed, masters of the Greek eloquence; but, filled with wisdom, they have carried the divine doctrine to all nations, and have filled the whole world with writings, containing instructions concerning religion and virtue. All men, leaving the dreams and speculations of Philoso-

phers, now nourish themselves with the doctrines of Fishermen and Publicans, and study the writings of a Tent-maker. The seven Wise men of Greece are forgotten; nor do the Greeks themselves certainly know their names; but Mathew, Bartholomew, and James, Moses, David, and Isaiah, with the other Prophets and Apostles, are known to all men, as well as the names of their own children. Whom did Xenophanes, Parmenides, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, or Speusippus leave as their successors in Philosophy? What city follows the Laws of Plato's Republic? You can shew none who now teach those doctrines; but we can shew the power of the prophetic and Apostolical doctrines; for the whole earth is filled with their words."

"THE Hebrew writings (of the Old and New-Testament) are translated not only into Greek, but into the Latin, Egyptian, Persian, Indian, Armenian, Scythian, and Samaritan; in a word, into all the languages used by the nations. Our Fishermen, Publicans, and Tent-makers, have persuaded not only Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians, but all nations of the earth. Nor are our doctrines understood by those, only, who preside in the Churches, but by smiths, wool-combers, taylor, and artificers of all sorts, by women, and maid-servants. Nor do those only, who dwell in cities, but the country people, also, understand, and are

able to discourse concerning our doctrines; they practise virtue, and shun vicious actions."

Doctrines

"GOD had before tried other methods. He taught all men by the wonderful frame of the universe. The Jews he reclaimed by the Law and the Prophets. But a more effectual remedy was wanting; and experience has shown the benefit of it. The whole world has now been enlightened, and idolatry abolished. Greeks, Romans, Barbarians, acknowledge a crucified Saviour."

"COMPARE these Fishermen and Publicans with the Greek and Roman Lawgivers. You will find, that those Lawgivers could not persuade even their own neighbours to live according to their laws; but these Galilæans have persuaded not only Greeks and Romans to embrace the Law, and the Doctrine of the Gospel, but the subjects of the Roman Empire in general, together with Scythians, Sarmatians, Indians, Ethiopians, Persians, Britons, and Germans. Indeed they have brought all nations, and men of all sorts, to receive the Laws of a crucified man; and that not by arms, soldiers, or Persian violence, but by reasonings and arguments, shewing the usefulness of those Laws. People, whom Augustus and the whole power of the Roman Empire could not induce to receive their

laws, venerate the writings of Peter, Paul, John, Mathew, Luke and Mark, as if they had been sent down from Heaven."

6th. THESE books were also publicly read, in all the Christian Assemblies, throughout the world.

THIS practice began, when the books were just received by the Christian Churches. * Paul laid the Pastors of the Church at Thessalonica under an oath to cause his first Epistle to that Church to be read to all the holy Brethren, and directed the Colossians both to read the Epistle from Laodicea, and to cause the Epistle to the Colossians to be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans. And, with an immediate view to this purpose, several of the Epistles appear to have been inscribed; one to the Churches of Galatia; another To the Church of Corinth, and to all them, who, in every place, call upon the name of JESUS CHRIST.

THIS practice of publicly reading the Scriptures, originated by Moses, and sanctioned by Apostolic authority, has continued to the present day. When we consider the character of those, before whom they were read, men who so revered them as to be ready to lay down their lives for them, who proportionally studied them, and who

* See Dr. Mucknight's New Translation of the Epistles, Prel. Essay. 2.

were to the last degree jealous of their purity, we cannot but see the corruption of them, even in one instance, rendered, by this practice, extremely difficult. Beyond all computation must the difficulty be increased of corrupting them so generally, as to produce any important effect. To induce so many persons, so remote in place, differing so much in character and opinion, and agreeing so entirely in the highest reverence for the Scriptures, to consent to any supposable set of corruptions, or to impose such corruptions generally on a body of men so circumstanced, must have been too evident an impossibility, to be seriously undertaken by any man, or men, however visionary or wicked.

7th. THE number of Manuscripts of the New-Testament, at present, or lately existing, is very considerable; and these so generally agree, as to forbid all apprehensions, that these books have been materially corrupted.

AN accurate account of the Manuscripts of the New-Testament cannot be expected from one, who is both removed from the places of their existence, and unpossessed of such books, as contain a just exhibition of their number and character. At the same time, the following observations cannot be unacceptable to this audience.

1st. THE * Alexandrian MS is unquestionably of very great antiquity. This MS was given by Cyril Lucaris, Patriarch of Alexandria, when translated to the see of Constantinople, to Sir Thomas Roe, the British Embassador at the Porte, Anno Dom. sixteen hundred twenty eight, and was declared by the Patriarch to have been written early in the Fourth Century, by Thecla, a noble Egyptian Lady. By Dr. Grabe who has published a particular account of it, it is believed to have been written in the fourth, and by others in the fifth Century.

THIS MS. contains all the Canonical books of both Testaments, and a catalogue of them all. It contains also several books of the Apocrapha, and a few other writings of the like character; such as the ~~old~~ ancient Christians esteemed useful, and read at times, in their public assemblies: as we sometimes read the sermons of eminent Divines in ours. There is not, as has been already observed, in all antiquity, the least evidence, that any writings, but those now esteemed Canonical, were ever so esteemed. On the contrary all others are placed in a totally different list and Character. Yet many books of the fathers were, and very justly, accounted useful and edifying.

* Lardner Vol .5.

MS. — Manuscript.

MSS. — Manuscripts.

† 2d. THE New-Testaments of Erasmus, Robert Stephens, Beza, and the Editors of Complutum, were collated with a great number of MSS; and with a care and integrity which generally does the Editors the highest honour.

† 3d. THAT of Wetstein was formed from a consultation of sixty five MSS. All of them did not, however, contain the whole New-Testament.

|| 4th. THERE are now remaining in public and private libraries, in Europe, more MSS. of the New-Testament, of different ages, than of any other ancient writings whatever. Many of these are of great antiquity.

THESE MSS. may be considered, as having, by their general agreement, decided this question; and as proving the opinion of St. Augustine to be just, that it was impossible materially to corrupt the Scriptures.

THUS have I finished the arguments, which I proposed to produce, in support of the Genuineness and Authenticity of the New-Testament.

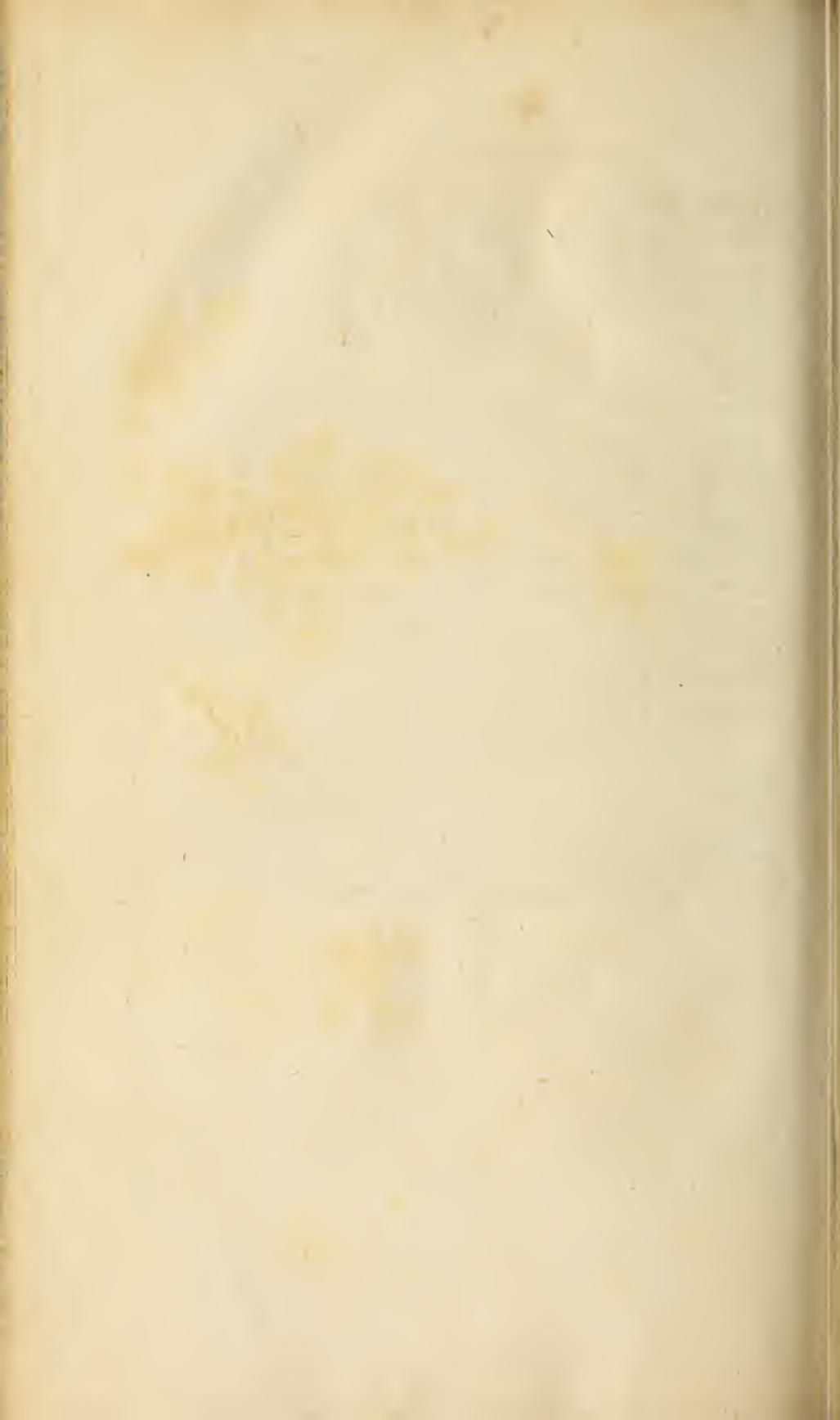
† See Travis's Letters to Gibbon.

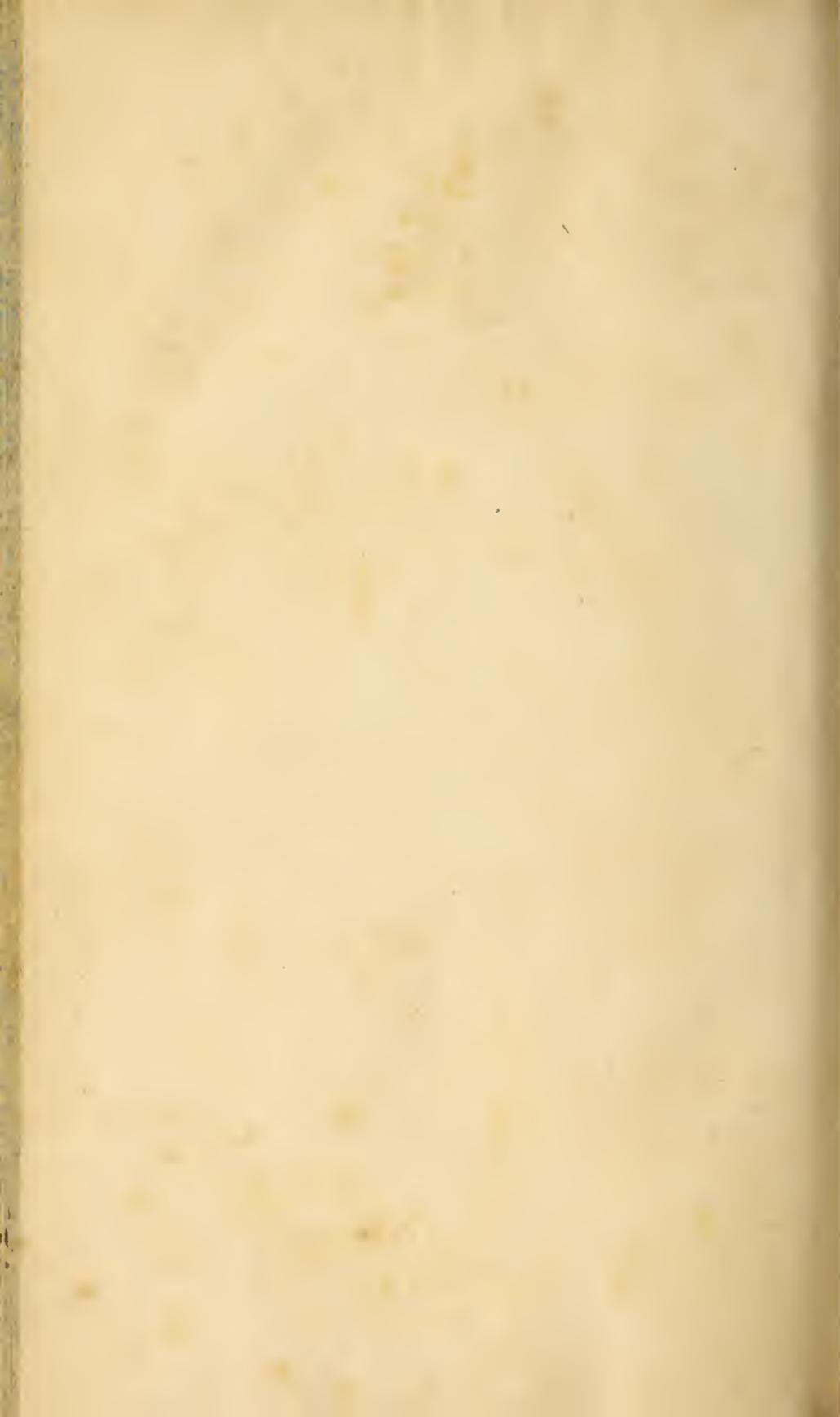
|| See Dr. Macknight's New translation of the Epistles Prel. Essays, 2.

No question, perhaps, can be of more importance to the divine Authority of the sacred Volume, than this. If its Genuineness and Authenticity be established, its Authority is also established.

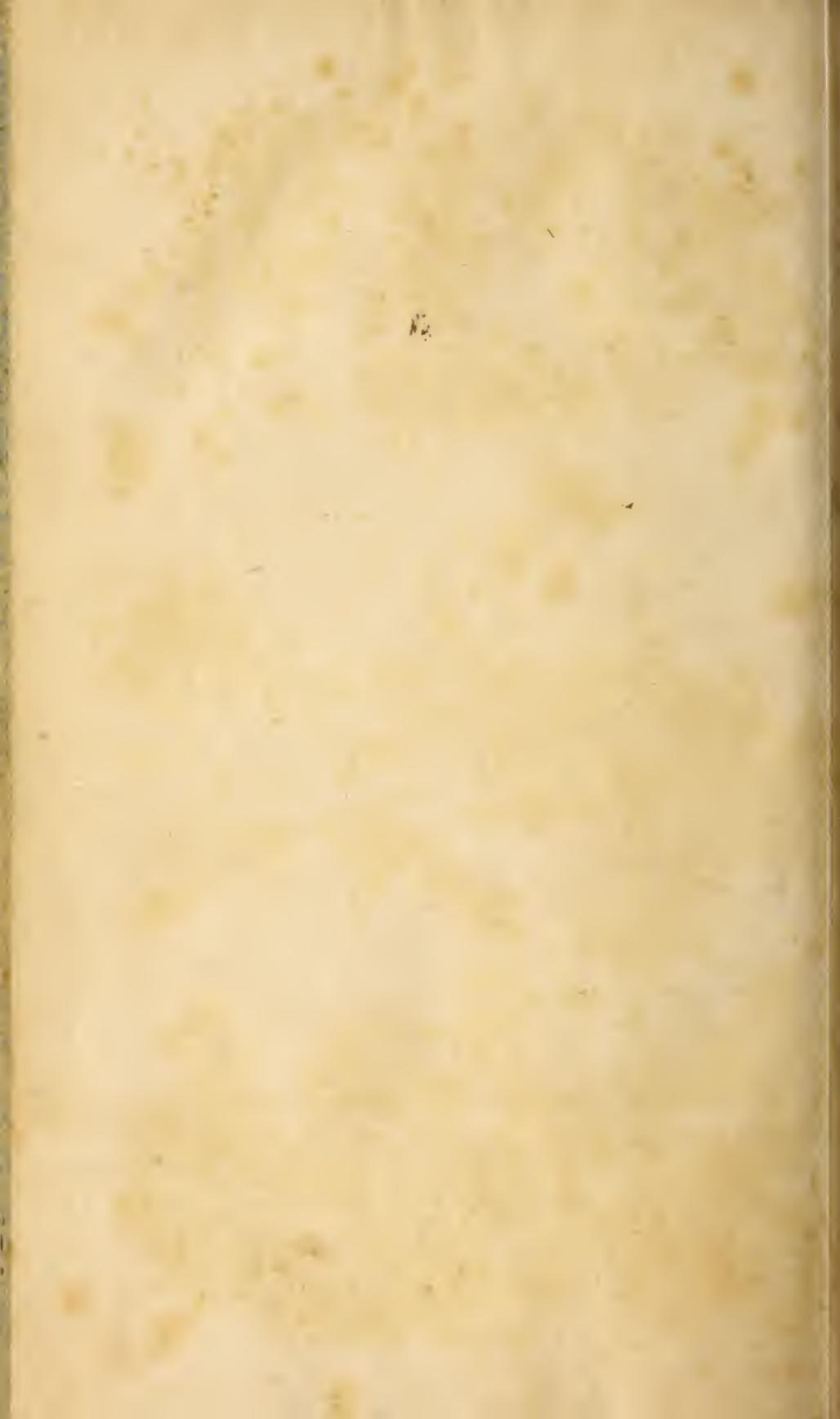
IF there was such a person as JESUS CHRIST; if he was so born; if he so lived; if he was so attested; if he so preached, wrought miracles, died, rose from the dead, ascended to Heaven, commissioned his Apostles, and enabled them to preach, work miracles in his name, and erect his kingdom through the world, in the manner which they have related; then he was the SON of GOD; his Doctrines were true; his Apostles were inspired; and his Religion is of Divine Original, and of Divine Authority. Mankind are, of course, bound to receive, and obey it. Those, who reject it, reject it at their peril; and those, who sincerely embrace it, are secured, beyond a hazard, in the certain future possession of its invaluable and immortal blessings.

 * 1794. *
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A
S E R M O N,
ON
DIVINE DECREES,
AND
MORAL NECESSITY,
RECONCILED WITH
FREEDOM OF THE WILL,
IN OPPOSITION TO
FATALISM AND NATURAL COMPULSION,
ARGUED FROM
SCRIPTURE, REASON AND COMMON SENSE,
BY DAVID PORTER,
PASTOR OF A CHURCH OF CHRIST IN CATSKILL.



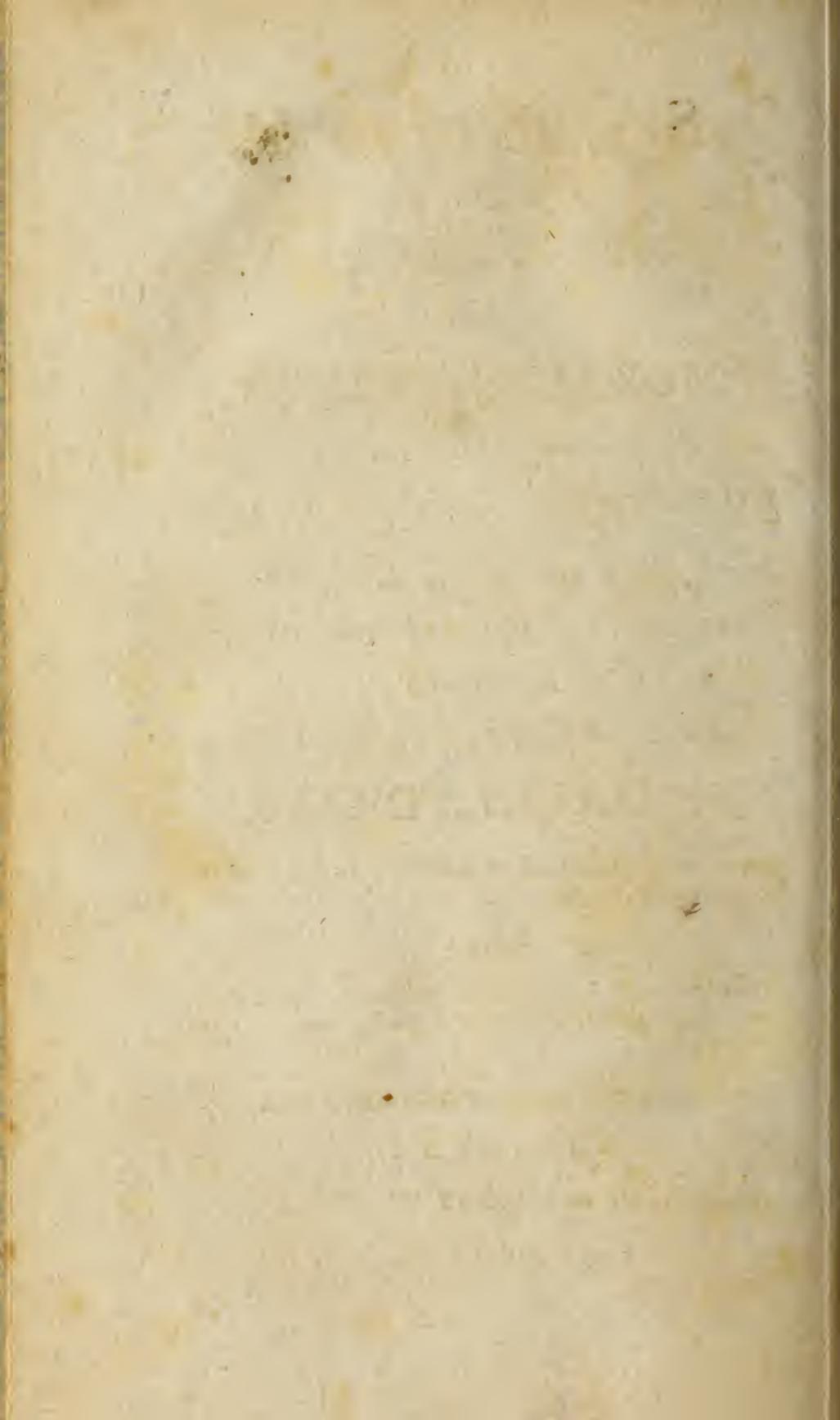
*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine,
whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. JESUS
CHRIST. JOHN VII. 17.*



C A T S K I L L :

PRINTED BY MACKAY CROSWELL.

1804.





SERMON, &c.



JEREMIAH VII. 8, 9, 10.

Behold ye trust in lying words that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other Gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name and say, we are delivered to do all these abominations.

THE human heart has always been studious to shield itself from blame and danger. To rise above these two things has employed the talents and intent application of artful and designing men in every age. The wicked are leagued together; and yet they have adopted different plans to accomplish the same end. Some to rid themselves from blame and danger, have attached to God's character a sort of good nature, which more highly regards sinful felicity, than punitive justice. They have extenuated culpability by softening down the divine law, and triumphed over danger by working themselves into the belief, that God will more readily save the wicked in their sins, than glorify him in their overthrow.

OTHERS have taken different ground, and imagined themselves so far independent of God, as to be able to control their wills and become holy at any time, with little assistance beside their own.

OTHERS again, actuated by similar motives, have rushed into an opposite extreme. They have changed the decree of God into fatal necessity, and plead compulsion in the midst of their enormity to the utter exclusion of accountability. Of this latter class are those brought into view by Jeremiah in the text.

THESE men did not pretend they had not committed the whole catalogue of crimes alledged against them. They

met the charge in its full extent, and then to free themselves from sin and danger, they substituted compulsion for moral necessity, and fate for divine decree, and said they were delivered to do all these abominations; or, in other words constrained to do them by a compelling power, which utterly excused them from blame, and consequently freed them from danger.

JEREMIAH perceived this evasion of truth and calls it, in the first verse of the text, "a trusting in lying words which can not profit." The inspired penman did not tell them, God had no plan of operation and decreed nothing. He did not intimate as though they were independent of God in their actions; and yet their scheme was a false one, which could not profit, or avail any thing to free them from guilt or lessen their danger.

THESE wicked Jews took a different stand from many others, who make God's decrees conditional and themselves morally independent in acquiring a holy temper. They shot over the mark as far as others come short of it, and quieted themselves in the vain imagination, that they were compelled to commit sin, and therefore were not accountable agents, nor in hazard of punishment for their abominations. This appears to be the amount of their reasoning and conclusion.

To elucidate and set this subject in a fair and scriptural light; I shall attempt to point out,

I. THE difference between fatality and divine decree.

II. THE difference between natural compulsion and moral necessity.

III. THAT fatality and natural compulsion, when applied to mind and morals, are grounded in the grossest falsehood and error, and are a perversion of God's decrees and moral necessity.

I. I shall attempt to point out the difference between fatality and divine decree.

THIS being a very interesting subject, it is hoped the audience will be candidly attentive to what shall be humbly

offered at this time. The ideas affixed to fatality and divine decree have often been blended in people's minds and supposed to be synonymous. Those, who have undertaken to advocate and defend the decrees of God have been opposed by men who could not be made to perceive any difference between decree and absolute fatality. Most of those who have denied divine decrees have drawn the same conclusions from them as would flow from the fatal system. If all events are decreed, say they, men are not to blame for committing sin, nor in any sense accountable, because they do just as God would have them do. The wicked Jews mentioned by Jeremiah went into the same false reasoning, and drew this very conclusion, viz. that they were delivered to do all the abominations they had committed, and therefore, were not at all culpable or blame worthy. It is readily granted that such construction and inference are deducible from fatal principles; and yet it is denied that the decrees of God admit of any such consequences. If so, there must be a very wide difference between fatality and decree. To point out this difference is the object before us.

IN showing the difference between any two objects, it is necessary to have a clear and distinct view of each.—To see all the difference, they must be defined with accuracy, and the inferences must be fairly drawn from the premises.

BEFORE I proceed to a direct definition of divine decree; I would just observe, that it is difficult to conceive of an infinite intelligent spirit, infinitely wise, powerful and good, without choice and plan of operation. An infinitely perfect being can never act in character, nor like himself, if all things do not take place according to his wise disposal. For, if God be infinitely wise and knowing, he must choose wisely; if he be infinitely good, his choice must be the best possible; and if he be infinitely powerful, he can not be frustrated in accomplishing the purposes of his infinite mind. This is evident, if such perfections exist in the God-head. The light of nature and scripture both conspire in attributing to God these perfections. How can we account for the world and the things which are in it, except in this way, that they had a cause infinitely wise, powerful and good? If we should say, that God is not possessed of these attributes, how could we account for the effects which are visible and manifest? this would be

impossible. If we should say, God is possessed of such perfection we must suppose he has choice and plan of operation respecting all events. If God's plan does not extend to all things, it must be, either because all things are not his to superintend and dispose; or that the whole universe is too vast for his management. If all worlds and beings are so many effects caused by God, he must so dispose of them as to answer the ends for which they were first designed. And if God's mind be infinite, the whole universe can not be too vast for his superintendence and management. We can in no way conceive of an infinite being without his having plan and design in all things through the wide extent of nature. Should we say his choice is limited and is not exercised respecting all events; that many occurrences are beneath him because so small compared with others, we should betray an inconsiderate mind. Who can say those objects, we term small are not of infinite importance in relation to the great whole? In machines formed by art, all would be rendered useless by removing or misplacing some small wheel or spring. And why not the great system of nature sink to nought, if each and every part were not so managed and disposed as to answer their respective ends?

THAT the great first cause had plan and choice respecting all his works, and all events, ever to exist, agrees with common sense and observation. God acts in the great sphere. Men act in small spheres; and yet they have plan and choice, how and when they shall accomplish their several ends in their respective occupations. The merchant has his calculations. Artificers in wood, iron, brass, silver and gold have their work all laid out when they go about it. And how shall we conceive of God so far beneath creatures as to have no system or scheme in his mind respecting the events taking place in the natural and moral world!

THE system of natural philosophy, proved true by actual experiment, perfectly agrees with the idea of God's having a fixed plan of operation according to which every thing is subordinated and managed. The heavens declare God's glory in this respect. The planetary system is exactly poised. These vast bodies move through the ethereal expanse in the exactest order and harmony; so that the astronomer can give us correct information of their appearances in years to come. And does not this show us that the former of this vast system of nature must have acted

from choice and plan? Could all this order have sprung from unmeaning and blind chance? certainly not. The face of this earth wears marks of choice and plan in the mind of him who hath fashioned it. The almost innumerable species of creatures evidence the same thing; so that we are forced by every dictate of reason and common sense and experience, to conclude that the eternal God must have a perfect plan worthy of his infinite mind, agreeably to which he governs and disposes all events in the universe. Having premised these few things and shown, that it is necessary that a being of infinite perfection should have choice and plan of operation respecting all things, I shall now give a concise definition of divine decree.

DIVINE decree is not God's purpose respecting any events future to himself; because all things are intuitively before him, and present to his infinite mind. Divine decree is God's present and eternal purpose respecting events which, at any given period, are future to men and angels. On this definition I shall rest, presuming it to be both just and accurate. It may now be queried as before, whether we can conceive of an infinite being, possessing the attributes above named, without his decreeing all things in the sense defined. Here let it be observed, that God's thus decreeing does not destroy creature agency nor effect it in the least degree. Creature agency consists entirely in voluntary choice. If then, moral agency which belongs to creatures, consists entirely in voluntary exercise or choice of the will, it can not in any degree be made up of something antecedent or subsequent to choice. If choice constitutes the perfect liberty of moral agents completely, then nothing can effect or destroy such liberty which does not effect or destroy choice. If it were possible for a moral agent to loose his liberty, it must be because he ceased to choose. Nothing can in the remotest sense interrupt the liberty of moral agents, which does not prevent their choosing or interrupt choice. It is necessary in gaining a clear view of this very interesting part of the subject that this point be fixed and riveted in the mind. Men will ever be free so long as they choose, and nothing can effect their free moral agency which does not in some degree infringe on choice.

Now it is easy to see that the decree of God does nothing towards destroying the free moral agency of creatures, if the foregoing be true. For if liberty consists simply in

choice of the will, no act of God, whether in decreeing or causing choice can have the least effect on liberty; because no part of liberty consists in decreeing or causing choice; provided the whole of liberty be made up of choice itself. There is a difference between volition and its cause, and as wide difference as there is between any other cause and effect. Volition is an effect of which God is the efficient cause. If we should say, we are not free agents, because God causes our volitions, we should be under the necessity of denying that free agency consists in choice, for on this ground we must suppose liberty to be constituted by something prior or antecedent to choice. Those who have opposed the divine decrees on the ground of their inconsistency with human liberty, have contended that free agency is a power in the creature to originate choice, and not in choice itself. They conceive that moral agency is in the originating cause of volition and not in volition itself. But if it can be made to appear, that free agency consists altogether in choice, then those who oppose the doctrine of decrees for the reason above mentioned must relinquish their system as untrue and perceive that the decrees of God do not at all clash with free agency. If all free moral agency in creatures is constituted by choice or exercise of the will, decreeing or causing such exercise has nothing to do with the liberty of creatures in curtailing it in the least degree whatsoever. And this is abundantly evident when we distinguish between God's acts and those of the creature. It is God's act to decree and cause;—it is the creature's act to choose and exercise his will. The creature's act in exercising his will is not God's act. It is his own act and constitutes him a free moral agent. Neither is God's decreeing or causing volition any part of the creature's act. This is divine agency or divine action.

It ought to be kept in mind, that in every volition of moral agents, two distinct agents are concerned viz. God's agency in causing volition and the creature's in exercising it when caused. Both agents are equally free—God in causing and the creature in exercising. There is, however, this difference. The creature is a dependent agent. God is independent. Man is both dependent and active. God is active and independent. Should any object and say, that the creature's agency is no agency at all, if he be dependent on God for his volitions—To this it may be replied; if there be no such thing as dependent agency,

then it must follow, that all finite beings are independent of God in their volitions. And if they are independent of God in their volitions, then they must cause or give existence to all their volitions, let them be what they may. On this ground, they must cause their first exercises. They must cause their own existence and moral birth. If this be true, Adam, before he had being, must have put forth power and caused his first holy exercise. If independence is essential to agency, all christians must cause their own holiness of heart. They must beget and regenerate, and sanctify themselves, and independently of God fit themselves for heavenly glory. But this is directly contrary to the plain language of scripture. God is represented as drawing men—regenerating, sanctifying and making them holy, and by his spirit preparing them for heaven. All must see, that this could not be true, if men were independent agents. And yet men are free agents and their liberty is perfectly consistent with absolute dependence. Agreeably to what Saint Paul said; “work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Here man is considered as active and free in working; and yet God works in him. Both the dependence and liberty of the creature is pointedly asserted. We are brought safely on then to this conclusion. If man be entirely free, and yet dependent, and God can work in him to will and to do in changing his will without effecting his liberty, then it will follow, that God’s decreeing to work in him or even causing his volitions cannot interfere with his free agency. If God can actually renew the heart, and yet man be free, it is easy to see, his decreeing to renew it, can never destroy the liberty of the creature. It is certain on this ground, if free agency consists in choice, that decreeing and causing his choice cannot effect liberty in the least degree whatsoever.

To set this matter in clear light, the only point to be proved is that free agency consists altogether in choice or exercise of the will, without regard to any thing antecedent or subsequent. I am not insensible that many theories have been attempted to be supported from the scriptures; and yet in regard to what constitutes free agency, all men in ordinary life have been very much agreed. Men of every age, nation and sect, practically acknowledge, that all virtue and vice in creatures consist in exercise or choice of

the will. When little children are playing together and one happens to injure another; the injured one immediately enquires, did he choose or mean to hurt me? If it appears from circumstances, he chose or meant to do the injury, the injured one, views him as vile and blame-worthy. If on the contrary it should be made evident, the one who did the injury, did not choose or mean to hurt his companion, he is at once acquitted as innocent and treated accordingly.

WERE a man indicted for murder, and summoned to appear before the judge for trial, the judge in examining the testimony, would look to this single point; viz. whether the criminal had malice propense or murderous inclination or choice, when he committed the act. If it be found, that the exercise of the will was in the murderous act, the judge views him as criminal and gives sentence accordingly. All rulers and heads of families proceed in the same way. They all agree that virtue and vice consist in volition or choice. The judge does not pretend to search into the originating cause of such choice to know whether the man be guilty. He views blame to consist in choice itself and not its efficient cause. Should the criminal plead, that he did not cause his own sinful existence, that his bad dispositions were inherent in him from the beginning, and that he had nothing to do in originating his murderous inclinations, this plea would not exculpate him in the least degree in the mind of the judge. The judge would not go so far back to find blame. He would predicate blame on choice simply without regard to any thing prior or subsequent. This perfectly agrees with Christ's words. "This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men choose darkness rather than light." Choice of darkness or sin was that for which Christ blamed the obstinate Jews. Now if all praise and blame exist in the will or choice of the creature, then his free agency or liberty must consist in exercise of the will or choice. It is impossible that praise and blame should exist in exercise of the will; and yet moral agency be constituted by something distinct from the will. If we should fix blame in the will and liberty, in that which is distinct from the will, we should be led to this conclusion, that men are culpable in choosing and not free and active in choosing. Nothing can be more certain than this, that if virtue and vice exist in voluntary choice or in exercise of the will, free agency must be seated in the

will wholly. And if so, neither the decree of God, nor divine agency in producing choice can interrupt liberty in any sense or degree whatsoever. And hence, the wicked Jews, mentioned in the text, could not exculpate themselves on the decreeing system. They must have had a very different theory, to plead, that being delivered to do all these abominations, they were not to blame. To glide over guilt and danger, they went into the fatal system, and did not admit they were free agents in any such sense as to constitute them criminal for their actions; and this leads me to give some definition of fatality and the difference between it and divine decree.

THE system of fate was adopted by many of the ancient philosophers, and was in vogue in Persia in the time of Jeremiah. If I am correct in my observations on the writings of the Old Testament, the text presents us with the first account, of any adopting this system, who were favored with the light of revelation. As all hearts by nature are totally depraved and selfish, they all lie open to error, and are inclined to adopt plans to shield themselves from blame and danger. By what means this sentiment first crept into the minds of God's professing people we cannot at this time determine. It is probable it was borrowed from the heathen philosophers with whom they were contemporary, and to whom they lived contiguous. Be this as it may, the wicked Jews, alluded to in the text, were settled down in this system, as appears from their own statement. They plead excuse, that, "they were delivered to do all these abominations."

THE system of fate, plead by the wicked in the text, goes on the denial of any agency in the creature distinct from the agency of God. It supposes the soul acted upon in such a sense as to preclude the possibility of its having any distinct acts of its own. It makes all souls a part of God, so as to render their agency his, and him pleased with their actions, as with those of his own infinite mind. And hence fatality may be thus defined;—It is the action of an infinite mind, producing and exercising as its own, all thoughts and volitions, of angels, men and devils. It annihilates all creature existence and leaves but one mind in the universe to choose and act. Settled on this ground, they are obliged to hold, that the soul is an emanation from God, and really constitutes a part of his essence; and in this be-

lief, they rise above all responsibility for their actions however vile and abominable. The scheme, in fact, disclaims all distinction in the mind of God between moral good and evil. Because it supposes, all intellectual and moral existence to be one soul, acting through different organs and diverse ways; that the mind of man, is a part of God in him thinking and acting, and that man is no more accountable for what he does, than the wheels of a clock for their motions.

THE futility of this system is easily exposed. For if the soul be a part of God, constituting a portion of his essence, it must be equally true of all souls. Now if all souls are parts of divine essence, then God must consist of parts. If God consists of parts, he cannot possibly be infinite; because parts always suppose the whole which they make to be limited. Half of any whole is not infinite, neither does it approach any nearer to infinitude, than the very smallest part imaginable; and if so double the half, and it will still be as far short of infinite as when divided. A line reaching round the globe is no nearer infinite length, than one a yard long. This notion destroys divine perfection, and of course carries us into atheism. For a God imperfect is no God at all. Beside, if the soul be a part of God, then all souls are one, and if one, why are they not acquainted with each other's thoughts? If all men and angels are one spirit, why can they not look into each other's minds as easily as into their own? On this ground, how can some weep and others rejoice; some delight in objects which others view with abhorrence? The absurdity is too glaring to dwell upon. Relying on what has been said to amount to a full definition of fatality, it is easy to see a very wide difference between fatality and divine decree. The decrees make God an infinitely perfect being worthy of supreme love and respect.—Fatality destroys the moral excellency of God's character and leads to the denial of every perfection of his nature.—Decree is perfectly consistent with moral agency in creatures, and does not at all clash with their liberty or accountableness.—Fatality makes all finite beings entire machines, and confounds all distinctions between virtue and vice. Decree does not at all militate against the use of means; but includes means as necessary to gain certain ends.—Fatality includes means as of no use and supposes men so acted upon, that his actions are not his own in any such sense as to effect his happiness or misery.—Di-

vine decree corresponds entirely with all God's work, with experience and with the system of philosophy proved true by actual experiment. Fatality contradicts nature, experience and all true philosophy.—Decree, as defined in the foregoing statement, does not at all clash with the sense of right and wrong in every man's breast, nor with the pain in reflecting on sinful actions, nor with the happiness realized and felt by good beings, to which all will testify.—Fatality is directly contrary to the known feelings of men, of all ages, nations and sects.—Decree does not preclude the propriety of attaching blame to bad, and praise to good, characters, which all men are inclined to do.—Fatality considers this improper and without grounds. In short, decree comports with God's word, with the momentous transactions of the final judgment, and with a future state of endless rewards and punishments.—Fatality makes the whole unmeaning, frivolous and not to be regarded, or suffered to have influence on men's lives and actions.

II. I proceed to point out the difference between natural compulsion and moral necessity.

LIKE fatality and decree, these are often blended in people's minds, as meaning one and the same thing. But I conceive they are wholly different. The one is founded in truth; the other in the grossest falsehood and absurdity. Let us attend to the difference. By moral necessity, I mean a certainty of pursuing a course of action, which certainty arises out of the disposition of the agent or actor. All moral beings, up to the infinite God, most certainly act from such necessity. It is certain God will pursue a course of holy action, which certainty arises from his holy nature. Hence, it may, with propriety be said, God is under moral necessity to be such an holy, good being as he is. The scripture declares it. "It is impossible for God to lie." It is morally certain he will eternally be that infinitely just and holy being he has always been. Finite moral agents are under the same kind of necessity. It is certain that all holy beings, remaining in their present character, will continue in holy pursuits. It is impossible they should cease loving God in their present character and views. Sinners are under the same moral necessity to do wrong and hate every thing which is morally excellent and lovely. This arises out of the temper and disposition of the heart, and remaining sinners, it is morally impossible they should do

otherwise than sin without cessation. Christ speaking of Judas said, "It is impossible but that offences come, but woe unto that man through whom they come." With the wicked heart Judas possessed, and circumstanced as he was, it was impossible but that he should betray Christ. The impossibility of his doing otherwise arose out of his sinful heart. He had that disposition in him, which necessarily led him to prefer thirty pieces of silver to the Lord and saviour of the world. This was the case with the ten sons of Jacob in selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites. With their jealousy and hatred towards him, they were necessarily led to embrace the opportunity of disposing of him as they did. It was just so with Pharaoh king of Egypt. He was under the same moral necessity of refusing to hear the solicitations of Moses in behalf of the Israelites. He had a hard heart, and chose to keep them in bondage; and so long as he had this hard heart, it was morally certain he would act according to its dictates. Christ represents the same matter by the corrupt and good trees. A corrupt tree would of necessity yield evil fruit; whereas a good tree would yield fruit like itself. Necessity of this kind does not destroy free agency in beings any more than decree. Who would say, God is not free, because it is impossible for him to lie? God is under absolute moral necessity to be good, and does this destroy his liberty? certainly not. If then God can be under moral necessity without forfeiting his free agency, certainly creatures may be under the same necessity, and yet have perfect liberty. Perhaps it may be objected, that creatures do not cause their own exercises of heart and that this makes a material difference. To this objection it may be replied. God does not originate or cause his exercises or volitions. They eternally existed unchangeably the same in his mind. And if God be under a moral necessity to be good, and is yet free, and does not originate or cause his own volitions; then creatures may be holy or sinful, and yet be free, though they do not cause their own holy or sinful volitions. The objector may go on still farther and plead, that God made creatures under such necessity to act, and their disposition to act is not of their own production, and that this destroys their liberty and makes them machines. Granted that God made creatures under such necessity to act, and that their disposition to act is not of their own production; yea, grant more, that God's agency is really concerned in producing their volitions; still their liberty remains entire; and for this plain reason,

on which we have already enlarged, that liberty consists in volition wholly, and not in the cause of volition, in any sense or degree whatsoever. Hence moral necessity appears to be true, and consistent with accountableness in rational agents.

NATURAL compulsion is widely different. This allows of no agency in creatures; that they are acted upon, but do not act. If one man by compelling power be forced against another to his injury, the man thus forced does not act in any other sense, than a tree cleft from the stump in falling to the ground. Wherever compulsion takes place, the creature is no longer an agent in the actions produced by such compulsion. A man walking for his amusement is a free agent in that exercise, though God upholds him and "directs his steps;" but if he be knocked down by an assassin, he is not a free agent in the act of falling, any more than a stone let fall from the hand in passing to the ground. Beside, the will is that faculty which never can be compelled. By arguments, terrors or by motives of various kinds, men may choose what they otherwise would not have chosen; but this choosing differently is free under existing circumstances. The will is determined in view of the greatest apparent good. A man to day may not choose to expose his life in the field of battle. To-morrow such circumstances may turn up, that he will prefer exposing his life, rather than to abide the consequences of avoiding the encounter. An indolent servant may not choose to work; and yet when terrors are exhibited, his will in view of such terrors may be altered; and yet he be perfectly free in the exercise of his will in the very act of changing. In these cases, and in no other which could be named, is this the least compulsion on the will. Hence all will see, there is a material distinction between moral necessity and natural compulsion; the former is perfectly consistent with free agency, while the latter is wholly subversive of it. Judas and Paroah were under moral necessity of doing as they did, and their actions arose out of the nature of their choice; and yet they were not compelled to sin by any exterior force contrary to their choice.

AND this leads me to observe,

III. THAT fatality and natural compulsion, when applied to mind and morals, are grounded in the grossest

falsehood and error and are perversion of God's decrees and moral necessity.

FATALITY and compulsion have been invented by wicked men, as the best contrivance they could devise to shield themselves from blame and danger. The wicked will fall on different plans to accomplish the same ends. Some will take a man's life for his money; others by art and dissimulation will induce him to consent to let them have it for a thing of no value. It is not strange, therefore, that sinful men should fall on different schemes to rise above a sense of guilt, and hazard of punishment. Thus they have done, and thus they continue to do. And hence, many sinners, though not all, rush into the fatal system.

It is to be observed, that the wicked are not a little desirous to screen themselves by theories pretended to be in the bible. It gives them ease when they can so construe the scriptures as to excuse themselves from blame and danger. Hence many have endeavored to confound distinctions between fatality and decree and between natural compulsion and moral necessity.

SATAN, in tempting Christ to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple, suggested that let him do what he would, God would give his angels charge concerning him, and not suffer any injury to befall him. This was done by an artful omission in a quotation from the old testament, leaving out such a part of the text as would wholly alter the sense of it. Satan thought to deceive Christ by substituting fate for divine decree. It was God's decree and purpose that Christ should be kept from falling into sin; but not that he should be kept except in the way of his duty, as will appear by a perusal of the passage to which there is here an allusion. He was to be kept in all his way, viz. in a constant attention to the great ends of his mission into the world. But Satan endeavored to insinuate into the mind of Christ, that even though he should comply with the temptation, there was no kind of danger; because God would keep him, let him do what he would. Satan's whole device in this instance, was grounded in an artful substituting fatality in the room of divine decree. Could he have made this plan succeed, he would have gained his object and the plan of redemption must have failed. But Christ saw the fatal scheme to be as remote from truth, as

fatan from goodnefs, and faid get thee behind me fatan ; “ for it is written, thou shalt worfhip the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou ferve.” Similar perversion to that of fatan is in the mouths of multitudes. They fay if all things are decreed, “ do what we will, we are obeying God.” They draw their conclufions from the fatal fyftem, fubftituted in the room of decree, and excufe themfelves under a pretext of a warrant from God, for fo doing. But is it not eafy to fee, that in this bafenefs there is the moft grofs perversion ; and that the decree of God does not in the remoteft fenfe countenance fuch an inference ?

SAINT Paul and thofe with him on their voyage to Italy were overtaken with a violent tempeft. They were driven to the extremity of momentarily expecting to be fwallowed up in the fea. At this awful crisis, it pleased God to reveal his purpofe concerning them. God firft made known his defign to an angel ; the angel difcovered it to Paul, and Paul to thofe who were with him in the veflel. The words of Paul are thefe. “ Now I exhort you to be of good cheer ; for there fhall be no lofs of any man’s life among you but of the fhip. For there ftood by me this night the angel of God, whofe I am and whom I ferve, faying fear not Paul ; thou muft be brought before Cæfar : and lo, God hath given thee all them that fail with thee. Wherefore, firs, be of good chser : for I believe God that it fhall be even as it was told me.” It appears to have been the fixed purpofe of God that Paul and his companions fhould get fafe to land. The decree of God refpefting the event was abfolute. The purpofe of God refpefting their deliverance could not be frustrated. But this decree was effentially different from fatality, as appears from what follows. For foon after, the failors perceiving an opportunity to make their efcape, betrayed their defign. No fooner was this defign difcovered by Paul, than “ he faid to the Centurion and the foldiers, except thefe abide in the fhip, ye can not be faved”. It was decreed they fhould arrive fafely to the fhore, but not without the fkill and exertion of the failors. The means by which they were to be faved were all decreed as well as the end. The decree made it neceffary, that the feamen, who had the art of managing the veflel fhould employ their united wifdom to fecure an efcape. Neither could they obtain the object without. Beaufe, they were not only decreed by God to be faved from the fea, but they were decreed to be faved in this particular

way, or by these particular means. Had Paul been a fatalist he would have told them they would certainly arrive to the shore, in all safety, even though they should be wholly inactive, and indifferent to means; yea, even though they should try ever so much to sink themselves in the bottom of the ocean. But Paul did not go on fatal principles. He understood the decrees of God, and distinguished between these decrees and fatality as all will clearly perceive. If Paul's ideas of divine decrees were accurate, then those pervert these decrees, who substitute fatality in their room, or consider them as synonymous. Some perverters of the decrees of God will tell us, that there is a certain number of men to be saved, and another certain number to be lost let them do what they will, viz. the number to be saved, will be saved, even though they continue impenitent and unbelieving to the last; and the number to be lost, will be lost, even though they persevere in holiness to the end of life. The decrees of God do not give the least countenance to such conclusion. Decree supposes means necessary to be used by those who shall be saved, and that use of means is included in the decree and essential to gaining the end. On the decreeing system, it is not true that there is a certain number who will be saved, let them do what they will; because this supposes, that this number will be saved, however abominable in character and life to the end. God decreed, or determined to save a number of people in Antioch; but how—in what way? Did he determine to save them, let them do what they would? No. Paul was commissioned to go and preach to them. They must receive instruction, and repent of sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If it had been true, that those in Antioch, who were ordained to eternal life, would be saved let them do what they would, it was of no service for Paul to go and preach to them, or to use any means with them; because they must be saved at any rate, however much opposed to the gospel salvation. The truth of the matter was, God was determined to save some of that people, and to effect their salvation, Paul was sent to preach the gospel to them. God set home the truth on their hearts and they believed on the Lord Jesus, and were saved. Though it is said, they were ordained to eternal life, yet the preaching of Paul was necessary. It was necessary also for them to believe and persevere in holiness, as will be readily granted. But if ordaining to eternal life was the same as fate, Paul's preaching was of no use, nor

their repentance, and turning to God. Hence to substitute fatality for decree, or to consider them as synonymous is gross perversion. Like iron and clay, they can never join in one theory. Decree and fate belong to systems wholly different—as different as light from darkness. But it is the way of some wicked men thus to pervert the doctrine of God; and having done this, they go on in sin. Like the wicked Jews, they will live in all manner of abomination, and at the same time bolster themselves up with the excuse that they are not personally blame-worthy nor exposed to evil. They plead they are delivered by God to do as they do, and are therefore in no danger from sinning. But the foregoing distinctions, it is conceived, are sufficient to make it clear to candid enquirers after truth, that such perversion is as false as vain, and as ruinous as untrue.

IMPROVEMENT.

1. FROM the foregoing discourse, we may clearly infer, that errors in opinion are very closely connected with errors in practice.

PRACTICAL religion will never prevail to any considerable degree, while men's sentiments are not in conformity to the doctrines of God. God's character is learned from the works of nature and revelation. The doctrines of the Bible exhibit the divine character. And hence, incorrect ideas of the doctrines of scripture, imply an equal degree of erroneous conception respecting God and his attributes. Every erroneous conception of Deity tends to confound in the mind of him who embraces it, that eternal and unalterable difference, there is between virtue and vice. If our doctrinal views be incorrect, we shall have partial views of God's law and the evil of sin. This removes restraint from the mind, and immoral conduct succeeds. Hence overt iniquity will abound, very much in proportion to man's inconsistent views of God, his law and the penalty thereto annexed. The depraved heart is studious to ascribe to God nothing which renders him an object of fear; and having done this, all dread of punishment subsides, and loose reigns are given to sinful gratification. This idea is confirmed by the conduct of the rebellious Jews mentioned in the text. Their ideas of God were absurd. They argued themselves into the notion, that God fatally com-

pelled them to sin, and was the responsible actor of all their crimes; that for him to be displeased with them would be to be displeased with himself; and therefore that they had no danger to apprehend from sinful pursuits. No sooner is the truth of God changed into a lie, than men will worship and serve the creature more than the creator. Those heaven-daring crimes, such as theft, highway robbery, dueling, and murder, are committed by men who have no just view of God's character, government and law, nor of the nature of sin. Just conception of God is the most powerful restraint upon men. Without such conception there are no lengths of iniquity to which they will not go. The friends of moral, good conduct overlook the grand incentive to virtuous action, unless they consider the knowledge of God of primary consideration in securing men from the arms of vice. The unadulterated truths of God's word set before men, will do more for the happiness of society, than all the moralizing of philosophers a thousand fold. The idea that some bible truths are prejudicial to morality is without foundation. The doctrine of universal divine agency, and decrees, clearly exhibited, instead of corrupting men, is calculated and tends to restrain them from sinful out-breakings. The friends of good order are invited to weigh and realize the importance of discountenancing errors in opinion as directly tending to errors in practice.

2. We may infer the inconsistency of those who oppose the doctrine of divine decrees with arguments which operate only against the fatal scheme. Much of this has been done. By this class of disputants, it is often alledged that absolute decrees in God cannot be true, because they destroy free agency in men and make them machines. If the foregoing distinctions are just, decree has no such tendency. Fatality may—and if so, let the argument be set where it belongs. Let it go against a system, for which the friends of truth are not contending—let it be set against fatality for there it will operate. But remember that fatality is not decree. It is a different thing wholly.

If any, thinking to overthrow the doctrine of election, should say, if this be true, men have nothing to do. A certain number are to be saved, let them do what they will, and another certain number to be lost let them do what they will. Let this class consider that in this contest, they are doing

nothing that touches the doctrine of election in the least ; because election admits no such consequence. Those who thus contend, are not warring with election, but with something they have substituted in its room. If men are opposed to divine decrees and election, as undoubtedly many are, let them make use of the proper arguments for the purpose. Let them advance to the fortress they would lay in ruins and make a direct attack. And if they will do this, they will come forward boldly and say ; God has no fixed plan of operation ; the mind of the infinite God does not know with certainty how the affairs of the universe will terminate ; things are left contingent ; they may terminate in this way or in some other ; there is no fixedness in God but what may be altered.—If these ideas, and others similar, can be maintained and proved true, the doctrine of divine decrees and election must fall. But till that be done, which never can be, these doctrines will stand a firm barrier against the whole torrent of opposition which may be raised against them. Their truth, it is conceived, is as plain as the light of day. They have arguments from every quarter to corroborate. The scriptures are explicit. The religion of nature lends her aid. Reason, common sense, and all true philosophy, offer their combined support, and not one iota of weight is in the other side of the scale. This is the system in which the ancient saints gloried ; for which multitudes have bled and died, and in which the humble will eternally rejoice. It sets God on the throne. It assigns the creature his place. “ The Lord reigns let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.”

3. We may infer from the subject the entire depravity of the human heart, and in what this depravity consists,

MEN would never have invented excuses for living in sin, excuses too which reflect the highest dishonor on God, had not their hearts been destitute of any degree of moral excellence. The conduct of the wicked corresponds with scripture statements, and gives evidences to the truth of God's declarations respecting the nature and extent of human depravity. From this subject we learn in what this depravity consists. It consists in an entire selfishness which is directly contrary to that charity which seeketh not her own. This entire selfishness, natural to all men, in their fallen state, is none other than the carnal mind, which is

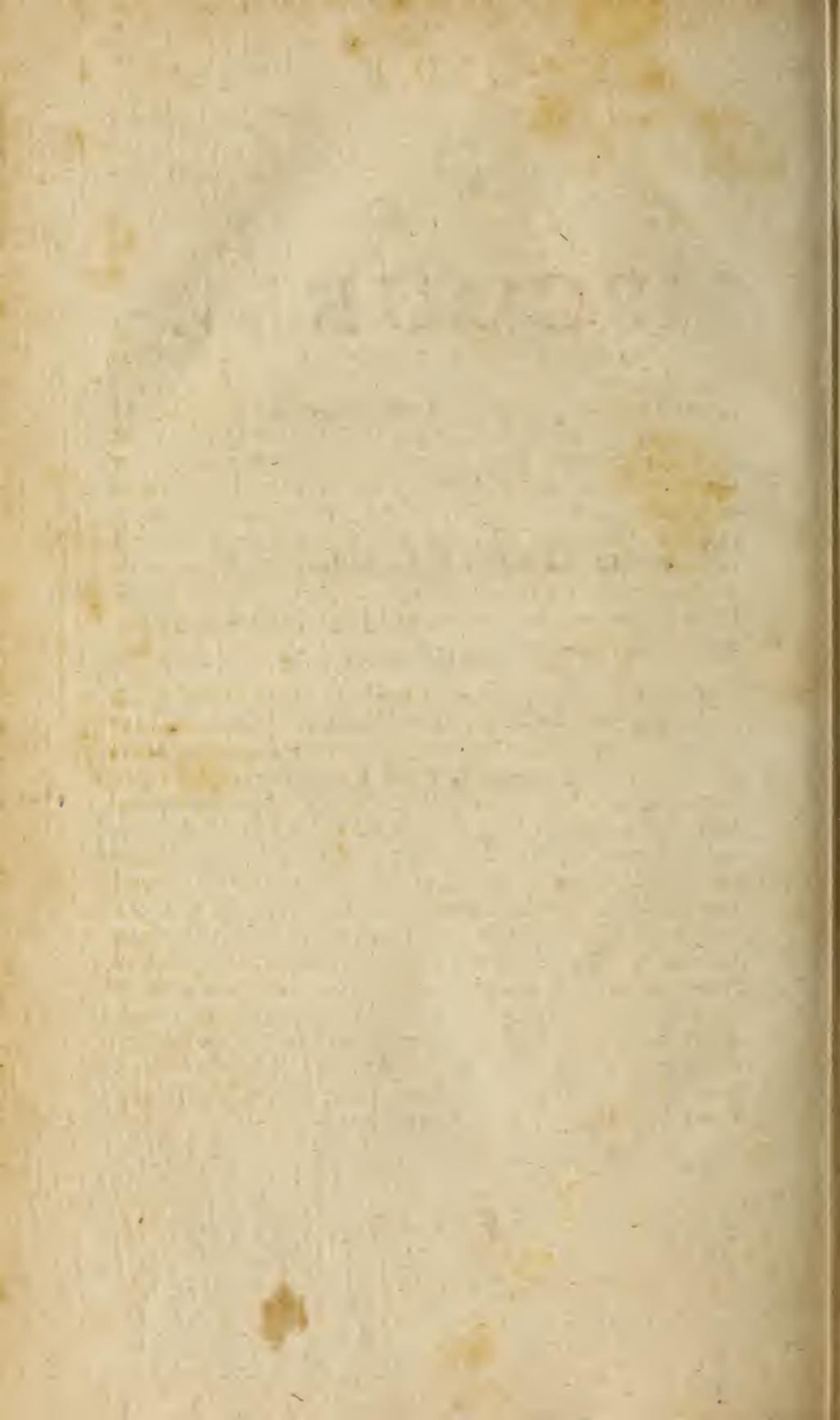
enmity against God, and not subject to his law. So long as this remains unsubdued, men will remain under the dominion of sin and act it out accordingly as they are circumstanced. They will oppose every doctrine of God, and every duty he requires, so soon as perceived, not to correspond with their inclinations. They will invent means to evade divine threatenings, and frame to themselves such ideas of God, as will give them the least disturbance in their sinful career. Multitudes are secure and at ease respecting their character and prospects, not considering, that God will bring every secret thing into judgment. Let sinners tremble, knowing, that all excuses for sinfulness of heart and life, will give way, when they shall stand before God. They may now vainly alledge, that they are delivered or compelled by God to commit sin, and are hence unamenable for their actions; but God will let them know, that this is a lie in their right hand. Without repentance their iniquity will find them out. Human depravity is not capable of an excuse, it is the crime itself. The depravity of sinners is the sum of their blame-worthiness.

4. It is important for christians to give the most earnest heed to the doctrines of the bible. Error abounds. The artful and crafty are busily employed in sowing the seeds of delusion. The enemy come in like a flood and truth is attacked on every hand. Some plead in favor of sinning without hazard of punishment. They vainly presume on God's mercy, and shield themselves with hopes of being happy though they live a bad life and spend their days in the vilest abominations. This they do by false construction and gross perversion. How necessary and vastly important it is for those who are on the Lord's side to take their proper stand and "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." Nothing does greater honor to the cause of truth, than for the people of God to be able by sound arguments to convince gainfayers. To do this, they must be expert in the scriptures. They must have a clear view of the bible doctrines in their connection. And this supposes that they must study and search for knowledge as for hid treasure. Christians consider, that the enemy is on every side of truth. Some deny divine decrees and moral necessity, and view God's purpose conditional, and thereby take the power into their own hand. Others will endeavor to explain away all threatenings a-

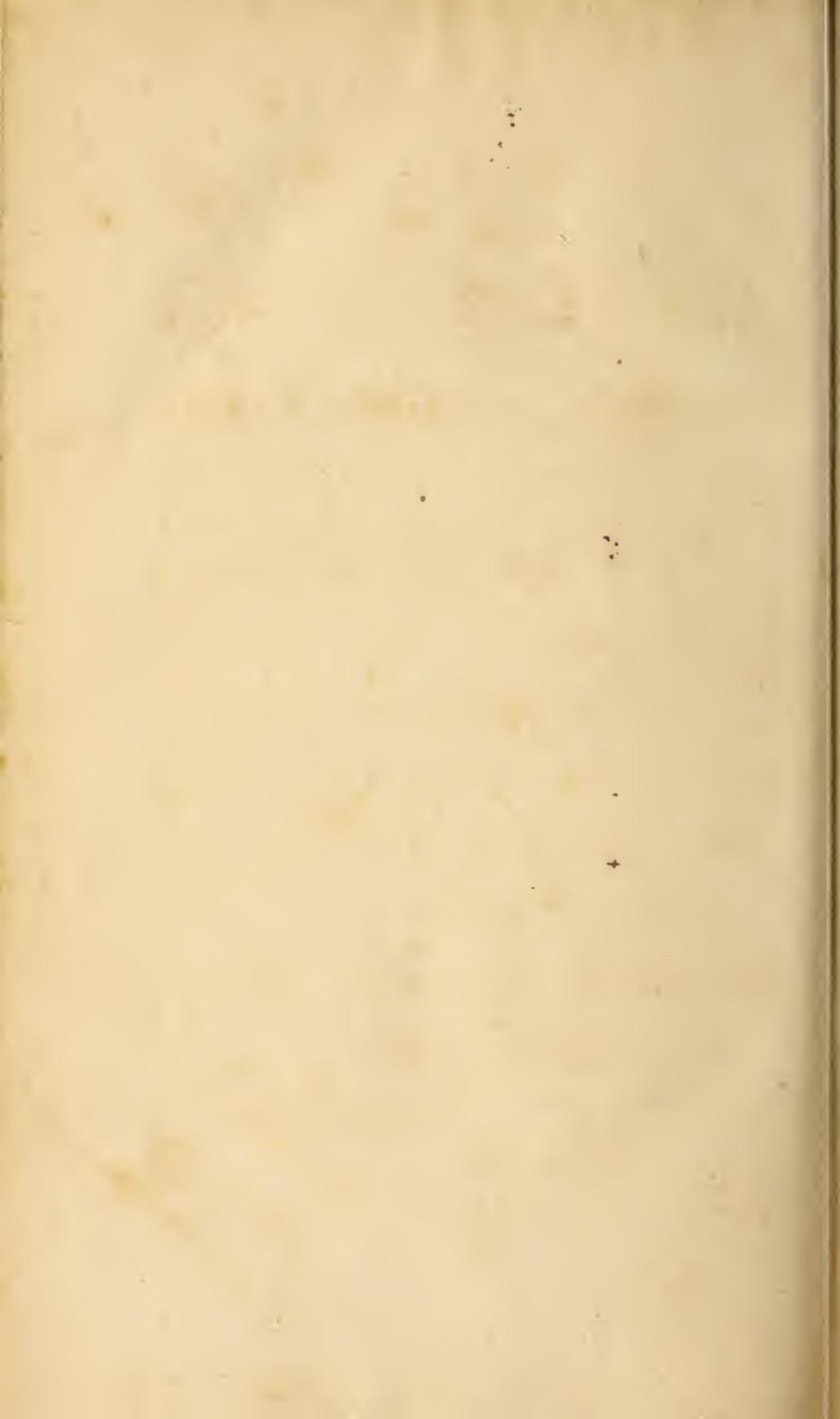
gainst the wicked as insignificant and unmeaning. Others will put all power out of their hands in such a sense as to destroy their own agency, and of course nulify sin and danger. Hence christians are to be on their guard not only against one error, but errors innumerable. They should look in every direction and be able to meet and confront error in all its specious and flattering forms.

5. If the above be true, ministers of the gospel, instead of avoiding hard and difficult subjects should bring them into view, and make all those distinctions necessary in exhibiting all the doctrines of the bible. Instead only of talking about doctrines, they ought to be able to tell, what they are, point out their harmony, and show where they will terminate. False doctrines are to be unmasked and exposed in their native deformity; and truth must be set in an undisguised light or it will never shine in its full radiance. Close and deep study, is, therefore, necessary in those who hold the ministerial office. Let them give themselves to reading, meditation, and prayer, that their profiting may appear.

6. ALL who hear the word ought to examine and think closely and for themselves. You cannot be too cautious how and what you hear. You are flattered by error gorgeously attired; but, remember, there is only one straight and narrow way which leads to life. The thought may come into your mind at times, there is no danger in sinning because of decrees, but there is no rest for the soal of your foot here. Your thoughts, and actions are your own and you cannot throw the culpability on another. If you love vanity and sport with things divine, your iniquity will prove your ruin. Do not for the price of your life, turn aside to lying words. These may charm you for a moment; but at the last they will bite like a serpent and sting like an adder. Your souls are too valuable to hazard on the sand, especially as you are invited to that rock which is higher than you. Instead then of trusting in lying words, trust in the living God and you shall be saved.







D.P.,

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE INSTALLATION
OF THE

Reverend DANIEL MARSH,

TO THE PASTORAL CHARGE OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN

BALLSTON AND STILLWATER,

October 30, 1800.



BY DAVID PORTER,
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN SPENCERTOWN.

Printed at Stockbridge,

By H. WILLARD, at the Office of H. JONES & Co.

MAY, 1801.



THE Northern Associated Presbytery in the State of New-York, convened at Ballston, voted unanimously, that they do approve of the Sermon this day delivered by the Rev. DAVID PORTER, at the Installation of the Rev. DANIEL MARSH, and that it is their desire it should be printed.

A TRUE COPY.

ATTEST—

JESSE TOWNSEND, *Scribe.*
Ballston, Oct. 30, 1800.





A S E R M O N, &c.

EZEKIEL XXII. 26.

THEY HAVE PUT NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE HOLY AND THE PROFANE, NEITHER HAVE THEY SHEWED A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CLEAN AND THE UNCLEAN.

GOD estimates men by their moral worth, and not by their occupations and professions. In the words read, you perceive blame reflected on the priesthood. Their high and sacred calling could not extenuate their guilt. They had been solemnly consecrated to their work. They had a literal footing on Jerusalem's spiritual wall; and yet they deceitfully glided over the doctrines of God. Setting aside system, they blended characters which were distinguishable. What they exhibited was mutilated and maimed, and not calculated to apprise the sinner of his sin and danger, nor to promote the spiritual welfare of the saint. Their fault seems rather to have been a crime of omission. There were then existing in the Jewish nation many unholy and profane men. The priests had not pointed them to the awful hand writing, nor exposed to them their dreadful condemnation. They had withholden the children's bread from the devout worshippers of God.— Corresponding opposite characters, they counteracted

the commandment of God, and consulting their own ease and popularity, they would forego duty and hazard the souls of men, to gratify base propensity.

WHAT proportion of the priests had degenerated agreeably to the above description, we are not particularly informed. The charge being indiscriminate, we need not hesitate to believe, that not a few had departed from their high and holy calling.

THE text not suggesting every branch of their enormity, a detail of every feature of turpitude in their character will not be expected. This particular part, it is supposed, will afford an ample theme for a discourse, and invite the mind to a train of sentiment and reflection, pertinent to the momentous and important occasion on which we are convened.

IN discussing and elucidating the subject, I shall firstly notice the grounds of the charge, brought against the priesthood, stated in the text. The testimony of God renders it indubitable that there were grounds for such a charge. The Holy Spirit pointedly expresses the result of their official business. They had put no difference between the holy and the profane, neither had they shewed a difference between the clean and the unclean. And hence the propriety of the charge, and what was the effect of their instructions must be clearly apprehended by every mind. Though we may proceed thus far without hesitancy; yet the grounds themselves for blame thus reflected on the priests, need some statement and special explanation.

HERE it is worthy of notice, that these priests avoided bringing into view the divine character, in their public instructions. Previously to this period, God had revealed himself other ways than by his works.

To Moses he had displayed all his glory, when he proclaimed himself the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and that he would by no means clear the guilty. In the character of I AM that I AM, he went before Israel from Egypt to the promised land, and in the holiest of all, into which the high priest went once every year, not without blood, all the attributes of the infinite majesty of heaven and earth stood like the unclouded sun over the mercy seat. Nevertheless, the priests in the days of Ezekiel, whose office obligated them to spend and be spent in the interesting business of instructing men into the knowledge of Jehovah, utterly failed in this important point of duty. Their advantages to know God augmented their criminality. With the best means of information, they did no more than blind and deafen men to a discovery of that being, an acquaintance with whom is life eternal. The slightest reflection on the subject, will evince them to have been wretchedly culpable in this thing. As they put no difference between the holy and the profane, they must have been wholly defective in those statements, which would have resulted in obviating such difference. If in their attempts to teach men, they had clearly exhibited the character of God, a striking disparity between the saint and the sinner, would have been the consequence. A glimpse of his character realized by the wicked, will make them tremble at their sin and danger. A discovery of the same character to the saint will inspire him with joy unspeakable. This exhibited draws a dividing line between the holy and profane; and hence a part of the ground of the charge must be obvious to every mind.

FURTHER these priests were deficient and superficial in maintaining the law of God and defining its penalty. By the law is the knowledge of sin. This skilfully and accurately unfolded, will reach the case of every moral agent, weigh every exercise of heart, and ascertain, without the least deviation, the exact merit or demerit of rational creatures. Like the refiner's fire, and the fuller's soap, it is searching, penetrating and distinguishing, and leaves no passion or bias unexplored. It separates the chaff from the wheat, the adulterated from the pure coin, and sets virtue and vice at an infinite remove from each other. This is the effect of the divine law, when exemplified and enforced with energy. But the priests had put no difference between the holy and the profane, therefore they must have omitted the weightier matters of the law, and substituted those superficial addresses in its stead, the tendency of which was to blend opposites and reduce good and evil to a common level. Accordingly, as they glided over the law of God without entering into its merits, so the penalty of it must have escaped their notice. The law and its penalty are adjoining links in the same chain, and therefore any omissions of the priest's must have respected the latter as well as the former. True it is, they might have alledged a penalty to be inflicted on sin or the sinful character of the sinner; but this is as nonsensical and unphilosophical, as it is unscriptural. It is in fact making crimes moral agents, and criminals mere cyphers.

IN addition to the preceding observations, a little attention to analogy will set the whole in a clear and convincing light. Since these priests were superficial and inadequate in exhibiting God's character, his law and its penalty, they must have been

equally defective in their conceptions and treatises respecting the mediator, his atonement and claims. An error in one material point, implies an equal degree of error in every other. The mediator is God; his atonement establishes the law; and its claims imply the penalty in the full extent. And hence the argument is conclusive, that they were deficient in regard to the whole assemblage of the leading doctrines of revelation. Did the priests pass over the doctrines of God with heedless and criminal delinquency? In these things were they to a high degree indefinite, superficial and partial? Then they were not distinguishing in their discourses on experimental religion. The doctrines of God and experimental religion are nearly allied. The latter is exercised in view of the former. Experimental religion consists in a cordial approbation of all the doctrines and duties stated in the bible. It is not to be supposed that men can be thorough in explaining the nature and effects of religion in the heart, and draw a distinguishing line between it and all disguises and counterfeits, and yet be superficial in treating on those very objects towards which it is exercised. Hence it is easy to see that the priests were wholly inadequate in every thing they said upon experimental religion. To this part of their fault, the text has immediate respect. They had put no difference between the holy and the profane, neither had they shewed a difference between the clean and the unclean. That is, they talked alike to saints and sinners. They as readily applied the promises to those who were dead in sin, as to those who were alive unto God. The fact was, they did not make a difference where God had made a difference. They approved and disapproved without any discrimination of character. In short, it might

have been gathered from a complex view of their official employment, that there was no material disparity between the converted and the unconverted, that they were alike pleasing to God, and might hope with equal assurance for a happy immortality in a future state. From this short sketch, may at least be discovered some outlines of the grounds of the charge brought by God against the priesthood stated in the text.

THE object which in the second place claims attention, is a statement of a summary of those doctrines which are distinguishing, and are directly calculated to shew a difference between the holy and the profane, the clean and the unclean.

BLAME being reflected on the priesthood for confounding distinctions between the holy and the profane, makes it evident, that to draw an accurate dividing line between the two characters, is a duty; and therefore not impracticable. And if so, there must be ways and means to come at the difference. This leads to observe that the doctrines contained in the Holy Scriptures are exactly suited to produce this effect. It would exceed the limits of a single discourse to state all these doctrines or more than just glance at those which are the principal and most material.

THE doctrines on which I shall remark as distinguishing, may be summed up in the following:—The existence of one God in three persons; his decrees, foreknowledge, and universal government; human depravity, the atonement, salvation by sovereign grace, and the nature of holy submission.

THAT there is an infinite being at the head of the universe is evident from our existence, and the innumerable objects about us. If any thing doth now exist, God must be the author of its existence,

or it must exist independently of any cause. Where there is an effect, there must be an adequate cause to account for that effect. Here the inquiry presents itself, what cause is adequate to the production of the effects which are within the sphere of our observation? Did they assume existence by their own energy? On this hypothesis they must have had agency and design prior to existence, which is absurd. Beside, these existing objects could not have been the fruit of blind chance, because there is as great evidence of knowledge and design in the cause of them as there is that they do exist, and mere chance can have no knowledge, no design. The term chance expresses no more than our ignorance of the manner in which certain matters take place. Beside, if chance ever had agency, it has now, and do we find men and worlds assuming existence by chance? Nothing of this have we ever seen—but on the contrary, the harmony and order subsisting in this lower creation, confronts the foregoing hypothesis as vain and nugatory, and establishes the existence of God. Is there one supreme, self-existent being? Then it is certain there is *but* one. To suppose two or more infinite beings is a contradiction, since this would imply a perfect identity and sameness, and therefore excludes plurality. Thus far we may reason conclusively from the light of nature. With the help of revelation we are further instructed, that this one God exists in a trinity of persons, known by the appellations, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These persons are one in essence, each of whom are called God.—Isaiah speaking of the Son, calls him the mighty God, the everlasting Father. In the Acts it is expressly said, that Ananias and Sapphira had lied unto the Holy Ghost, and this is called lying unto God. The whole Christian dispensation is built on the principle of a trinity of persons in the Godhead.

THE next point in the summary is the holiness or moral excellency of this one God in three persons. No sooner is there evidence exhibited of the existence of one supreme being, than the mind is led to a full assent, that he must be infinite in knowledge, power and greatness. So far the mind is necessitated to proceed without induction. Whatever may be said to the contrary, yet it is conceived, that the infinite goodness of God is clearly established both from the light of nature and revelation. It is the moral perfection of God which obligates men to love him. The heathen are under this obligation, and therefore they have an advantage from the light of nature to discover his goodness. The Apostle's reasoning in the first chapter of Romans and twentieth verse, confirms this point. The scriptures abound with the most substantial proofs of the goodness of God. The moral law is a transcript of his character. And this is holy, just and good.

ANOTHER important doctrine of revelation is the decrees of God. God's decrees may be argued conclusively from the perfections of his nature. With God all things are one eternal present, and therefore his decrees respect all events which are future to creatures, none of which are future to himself. On this pillar the Christian system principally rests. What is prophecy, but God's decree revealed? How do we know there will be a day of general judgment and a future state of rewards and punishments, only from the revelation of God's purpose and decree respecting these events? Erase this sentiment from the book of God, and you leave it a baseless fabric, ready to sink into total disuse and insignificancy. To this sentiment we are indebted for an acquaintance with the way of life, and it is interwoven with and constitutes the very nerves of that system, which brings immortality to light. He who strikes at this

sentiment, strikes the grand hinge on which the whole weight of revelation turns. Upon this are built the promises, the glory of God, and the hope of the saints.

ANOTHER material doctrine of revelation is God's perfect foreknowledge. Foreknowledge in God does not suppose there is any thing future to him.— Divine foreknowledge may be thus defined. It is his present knowledge of those events which are future to finite beings. The day of judgment is now present with God ; yet it is an object of his foreknowledge, because to us it has not yet taken place. If God did not now perfectly view all those events which are future to us, he would not be infinite ; therefore this point is materially concerned, in exhibiting his character.

THE universal government of God is a doctrine clearly revealed in his works and word, and of primary consideration in the Christian system. If God be adequate to the government of any part of his works, he must be adequate to the superintendence of the whole ; and any objection against his universal reign, lies with equal force against his government in a single instance. That God is adequate to universal government, will not be denied by any who hold to the perfection of his attributes, and that he does absolutely govern in this extensive sense, is as evident as that he has made the world. Is it supposable that a God of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, would create worlds and beings, and immediately on this, suspend his superintending agency over them ? If we give up the notion of chance and self-existence in things finite, we shall be under the necessity of admitting the universal reign of God. The scriptures are explicit in maintaining the reigning agency of God in things, humanly speaking, small and trivial,

as especially, as in those which are great and momentous. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. If God exercises his superintending agency over things so minute, then all other minute things lie within the sphere of his government. Not a material particle, not a spire of grass, not the least rustle of a leaf is in vain or extraneous to the government of God. The system of God's universal government is superior in point of excellency to any or all other possible systems. Infinite wisdom can devise the most eligible government, infinite power can execute it, and infinite goodness secures such execution without failure; and therefore all holy spectators will eternally adore God's holy government; and shout with rapture of joy; Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

ANOTHER leading doctrine of revelation is human depravity. Is this entire, or partial as it respects the heart? In the intellectual faculties, there is no direct depravity. The understanding is darkened; but this is through the blindness of the heart. The depravity of man consequent on the original apostacy is wholly of a moral kind; and that it is total as it respects the heart, is abundantly evident from the considerations of the provision made to save sinners, from divine declaration and from fact. From these sources justly contemplated, we have an assemblage of testimony, that the heart of man, in his fallen state, is destitute of the least degree of holiness or moral virtue.

THE atonement is a fundamental theme in Christian theology. This is the only ground on which God exercises pardoning mercy towards the ungodly. This was typified by sacrifices under the legal dispensation, and was effected by Christ's en-

during the curse, instead of the transgressor, on the cross. Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. Hence grow all our hopes of freedom from sin, and a participation of the immortal felicities of the heavenly state : for without the shedding of blood, there is no remission.

THE salvation of sinners by sovereign grace is a subject no less important than the foregoing. Salvation is not by works of righteousness which we have done. God bestows grace by his own sovereign act, without regard to any thing previously done by sinners to move his commiseration. The bestowment of sovereign, discriminating grace is, on characters in whom there was no previous goodness ; but it is guided by infinite wisdom and propriety according to God's holy purpose in Christ Jesus before the world began.

THE nature of holy submission needs the clearest distinctions, since it holds a most important place in the scriptures of the old and new Testaments. It is in union with the principle, that disinterested love constitutes the essence of true religion. While it seeketh not her own, it implies the accepting of the punishment of our iniquity, and a willingness of heart, that God should have the absolute disposal of us, and this without any conditions of our own. The language of this submission is, not my will, but thine be done. O Lord ! do with me as seemeth good in thy sight. With these doctrines, thus briefly summed up, there are others corresponding and systematically connected ; the whole of which, if duly and judiciously exemplified and elucidated, will amount to that distinguishing mode of handling the word of God, which will not fail of shewing a difference, between the holy and the profane, the clean and the unclean.

HAVING made some little statement of the leading and most material doctrines of the bible, I shall proceed *thirdly* to exemplify the manner in which these doctrines must be exhibited by the ministers of Christ, that they might avoid the censure reflected by God on the ancient priesthood.

1. THEY must exhibit these doctrines plainly. If men would study to be useful in conversing on any subject, it is necessary they guard against obscurity. Should a tutor in instructing his pupils in philosophy or mathematics, labor none to render himself intelligible, they could promise themselves very little benefit from his tuition. The great art of instructing is, to simplify and make subjects easily understood. To effect this, great plainness is necessary. Confusion in words, sentences, or method must be carefully avoided. Those who instruct in any science or mathematical art, cannot be too familiar with this maxim. But for men of no employment or calling, is plainness so important, as for those who hold the place of public instructors in divinity. The subjects of which they treat are of eternal moment. The character of the ever blessed God, the perishing condition of ungodly sinners, what they must do to be saved, and the grounds on which they may hope they are objects of divine favor, fall within their province. How necessary they speak of these things with plainness. Christ and his apostles used great plainness of speech. Upon every doctrine, their ideas were clear. Their reasoning was accurate. One thing followed another in most happy connection. All was plain, all was easy. And thus if ministers of the gospel, would avoid the charge alledged by God against the ancient priests, they must bring out to their hearers the doctrines of Gospel with the most studied plainness.

2. THEY must exhibit these doctrines definitely.

There is a loose way of harranguing on subjects, which reflects no light on them. Good words are selected, but they are so put together, as to convey no fixed ideas. Important truth is tortured by equivocal expressions. This indefinite mode of preaching is not calculated to improve the mind in the knowledge of the Christian system. It is very much like speaking in an unknown tongue. Saint Paul reproves indefinite preachers in these words; if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle. If it be a principal design of preaching to instruct, then those who are separated to the work of the gospel ministry incur just censure, in case they be indefinite in their discourses upon the doctrines of the bible.

3. **MINISTERS** to avoid the error mentioned in the text, must not only preach plainly and definitely; but they must preach distinguishingly. In exhibiting the Christian system, peculiar care should be used, that every doctrine be put in its proper place. Subjects in which there is a difference must be examined. The degrees of this difference are to be pointed out. Error which at first view, appears plausible, must be exposed. Truth which lies concealed from common observation, must be set in the light and distinctly explained. Each link in the grand chain must be distinguished from the next adjoining. And every part by itself must receive a fair elucidation, and then all put together, like unto a building fitly framed, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth. The preacher being thus distinguishing throughout, will prove himself a workman, who needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

4. **THE** ministers of Christ must exhibit the doctrines of God's word pointedly. Of this, Christ, in his public instructions, was a remarkable instance.

He was pointed in reproving sin, and in apprizing men of their wickedness and danger. Having an entire command of the conscience, he arraigned the sinner before God, made hell appear as without a covering, and represented the ungodly just about to leap the gulph and lift up their eyes in torment. Men are naturally braced against the truth. They are wilfully disinclined to see themselves condemned before God. It is not truth spoken any how, which moves their sensibility. And hence the most pointed manner of treating divine subjects is to be regarded. That kind of an edge ought to be given to every truth, which is best calculated to leave an impression. What pointedness in these expressions of Christ to the Jews? Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father, ye will do. Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

5. THESE doctrines must be exhibited thoroughly. In nothing, it is conceived, do public instructors in religion, fail more materially, than only just glancing at hard and difficult subjects in their discourses and leaving them unexplored. For instance, they will have a few loose sentences on divine sovereignty, decrees, or election; but will reflect no light upon either. This mode of procedure is not improving and edifying to the people of God; neither has it a happy effect on society. The tendency of it, is to lead people to doubt of the truth of the sentiments themselves. The mind which is opposed to doctrines, is always inventing methods to disprove them. If the ministers of Christ just hint at them, without any thorough investigation, the opposer takes occasion to triumph in his own boasted wisdom, in the rejection of doctrines, which he would pretend, have no stronger evidence to substantiate them, than mere positive assertion. But are these

doctrines investigated thoroughly, canvassed and explored to purpose, and brought fully into the light; and all plausible objections answered and utterly confuted, gainsayers will be silenced, and the enemies of truth will begin to hesitate, whether their own scheme may not possibly be fallacious. Perhaps, at first view, we should imagine, that if saying a few things, in public discourses, on these points of doctrine, would rile and disturb people's minds, to be more thorough, would break the bands and set all afloat. But such is not the tendency of preaching thoroughly. On the contrary, it is directly calculated to draw the cords of society, and tends to build up and establish it on a permanent and happy basis. But aside from every other consideration, the authority of God renders it obligatory, on those who are set for a defence of the gospel; to preach distinguishingly.

6. THESE doctrines must be preached impartially. For ministers to be always crowding at some certain favorite points is undoubtedly an error. To declare the whole counsel of God, or to exemplify every part of the system of revealed truth, in its proper place, is an enjoined duty. And if so, they must be extremely faulty, who bend their attention only to darling themes. And for this obvious reason, that it implies an omission of certain parts of that beautiful and glorious whole, each of which is profitable for doctrine, correction and reproof. Impartial investigations of religious subjects, are pleaded for, as best calculated to improve the mind in divinity. This mode contemplates each part by itself, and in its connection; it carries the mind forward, and leads to such inferences and reflections as are weighty, and friendly to the most rapid progress in things spiritual and divine. Impartiality, in religious discussions,

counteracts sinister views, excludes false inferences, and allows every idea its just weight, and no more. If punctually regarded, it is honorary to the priesthood, and challenges the minds of men to respect Christianity, even though they do not love it.

7. THESE doctrines must be exhibited constantly and uniformly. Occasional attempts to unfold the gospel system are not sufficient. Paul asserts in his charge to Titus these things, I will, that thou affirm constantly. If men, in any occupation, would promise themselves success, they must be constant and uniform in their business. Being duly arranged, they must drive it with a uniform, steady hand. They must not be off and on, sometimes one thing and then another; but always the same, and swallowed up with the duties of their calling. This does not suppose it necessary and required, that instructors in divinity be every moment employed in actually unfolding and elucidating these doctrines. This would militate against other duties which devolve upon them. But in their high and holy calling, and as frequently as Providence renders it suitable, they must come with willing minds, to the same delightful task, and make every obstruction bow, and every difficulty give way to their uniform and constant developement of the doctrines of God.

8. THESE Doctrines must be exhibited feelingly. Those who unfold and state sacred and eternal truths to the minds of men, must have hearts glowing with pious sensibility. Having the fear of God before their eyes, their hearts must be warmed, with the same benevolent affections, they would fain enkindle in the breasts of others. This is a feeling necessary in a work thus hallowed, thus sacred. The holy ardor to be alive in the soul, is exemplified in the instance of Elihu. I am full of mater. The

spirit within me constraineth me. Behold my belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak that I may be refreshed. Another instance is in Saint Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. O ye Corinthians! our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Thus I have subjoined a few things to describe the manner in which these doctrines must be exhibited by the ministers of Christ, that they might avoid the censure reflected by God on the ancient priesthood.

AN application will conclude the discourse.

IF the above statements be just and pertinent, then we may infer, 1. that those who undertake the work of the gospel ministry, must be men of good, natural abilities. To range the foregoing doctrines systematically, to shew their connection and mutual dependence, to draw inferences from complex 'premises with accuracy, and to distinguish, in every supposable case, truth from error, is not the most easy task to perform. For this, acuteness of thought, keen discernment, and soundness of judgment are requisite. No small proportion of those instructions which are necessary to be communicated are gained by induction and inference. Divinity comprises an assemblage of subjects, capable of affording endless improvement. Those, whose employment, is to instruct, are commanded to bring out of their treasure things new. They are not to consider themselves limited by the acquisitions of others. The themes are numerous, deep, and infinitely momentous. The more the field is explored, the wider it opens. One truth lies upon the back of another in endless succession. Looking into the mysteries of Godliness, and giving every consideration appropriate influence, who can imagine that men of narrow capacities are sufficient for these things? Paul was well informed, and

deeply impressed in regard to this particular. In describing an elder, among other things, he observes, he must be apt to teach; and hence it is extremely desirable, that those who enter into the work of the gospel ministry, be men of good, natural, abilities.

2. We infer, they must be men of good acquired abilities. The mind of man in its native state is like the diamond in the quarry. It needs the skilful hand of the artificer to bring it to perfection. From the method Christ took to qualify men for the work of publishing the gospel, we may be assured, that acquired knowledge is absolutely necessary. The apostles, when first called and chosen, were not destitute of a good share of solid merit, as men of sense and judgment. But this was not enough. Through a miraculous interposition, they were endowed with the gift of tongues, and other talents necessary to qualify them to argue, confute gainfayers, digest system, and evangelize all nations. The separation of Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles, is a fact which witnesses in favor of the inference. His acquired knowledge was inferior to none in the age in which he lived. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, an eminent instructor, and doctor of laws. Expert in all questions, he knew well the respective tenets of the various Jewish sects, and was not ignorant of the different systems of Philosophy then in vogue both among the Greeks and Romans. Such an education gave him surprising advantage. Acquainted with human nature, he was apprized of the biases and passions of men in all the different grades of office and occupation. And hence he could become all things to all men. That is, he could exhibit the whole system of doctrines contained in the two Testaments, and adapt them with ease to high and low, wise and ignorant, learned and unlearned. Moses was raised up by

teach

God to be the deliverer of his people from slavery, and to conduct them into a land flowing with milk and honey. To prepare him for this arduous and difficult task, he was early taught in all the arts and sciences of the Egyptians. By these and such like recorded facts, God instructs us to observe the necessity and importance of acquired abilities to qualify men for the gospel ministry.

3. We may infer, if it be requisite, for public instructors to exhibit the doctrines above specified in the manner we have been describing, they must be men of real piety. If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Is it to be rationally expected, that those who are strangers to vital godliness, will enter deeply into the Christian system, and pursue the business of publicly instructing men in the manner we have been observing? It is wholly incredible. Men cannot, and will not, serve two masters. They will not yield obedience to God and mammon in the same thing, and at the same time. Will those who are dead in sin and enemies to the cross, pray and beseech men, in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God? A greater absurdity cannot be imagined. He that is not for me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad. The unholy and profane will not preach all the doctrines of God, plainly, definitely, distinguishingly, pointedly, thoroughly, impartially, constantly and uniformly, and feelingly. Without religion no man is qualified for the hallowed employment. Paul thus instructed Timothy. The things, thou hast heard of me, the same commit thee to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others. In defining to Titus the character of an elder, he considers holiness essential. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no

striker, not given to filthy lucre ; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate.

4. If it be obligatory on those who are engaged in the work of the ministry to declare the whole counsel of God distinguishingly ; then it is the duty of those who partake of the fruits of their labors to aid and assist them to the full extent of their ability. Here it is worthy of notice ; they must take heed how, and what they hear. They are bound to hear with a discriminating ear, and cordially embrace the doctrines, which are humiliating and shew a difference between the holy and profane. It is encouraging to good ministers, to find, that the seed, sown by their labors, takes root downwards and bears fruit upwards.

PEOPLE are not only to assist their ministers by hearing and receiving the ingrafted word ; but by their prayers. To preach the gospel as described is difficult and arduous. Those who undertake it need a constant endowment of wisdom and prudence from on high. And if so, who, more than they, need the prayers of all who bow the knee before the mercy seat ? Prayers piously offered up for those whom Christ hath called to labor, in his vineyard, are availing and will assuredly reach his gracious ear. This is incense holy and acceptable unto Christ, and on every account reasonable, and indispensibly obligatory on those who are favored with his ascension gifts.

BESIDE, those who stand on Jerusalem's spiritual wall, to minister to the people in holy things, may expect, they, in return, will minister unto them in their carnal things. If they give themselves to their work, and preach distinguishingly, it is no small crime in people to see them straitened, and administer no relief. Do ye not know, that they, which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple,

and they, which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. They labor under a very great mistake, who imagine, that ministers can give themselves wholly to their work, enter deeply into all the subjects of theology, and preach distinguishingly, even tho' they withhold from them the means of subsistence. Should any be actuated by these narrow views; they will starve themselves. Yea, they will rob themselves and their children of the sincere milk of the word, and pine away for the want of that meat, which invigorates and makes men strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Ministers cannot explore subjects great and complicated, and entertain with beautiful and pleasing variety, if their time and attention are occupied in worldly cares. People who are wise will strive to fulfil the law of Christ, by contributing to the necessities of those who are placed over them in the Lord, and to such a degree, that their professions may appear in all their public performances. No large donations are pleaded for, neither is it desirable the clergy should become opulent, as under the reign of *Constantine*; but only that they should receive such a portion of friendly aid, as might free from embarrassment, and tend to the greatest usefulness. There is a happy mediocrity, in which, if ministers could be preserved, they would be liberated from many inconveniences on either hand. Which of the extremes comprises the greater evil, it is not for me to determine; but that mediocrity has a decided preference to either of its extremes, your judgments are already satisfied. And therefore what ought to be done in an affair of this kind, is no point of controversy or difficulty; but the whole is for people to bring their minds to a known standard of propriety,

and then if ministers do not bring beaten oil to the sanctuary, the fault is their own.

I SHALL conclude with some addressses ; and first to the Pastor elect.

MY affectionate and much beloved brother ; the solemn moment is drawing nigh, in which you are to receive one of the most weighy charges ever committed to man. You are to receive the charge of the souls of a great number who will witness for or against you at the great day. How solemn, how awful, how tremendous the scene ! Let your heart be now affected by the sad example of the ancient priesthood. Spy out all their deficiencies. Ponder their dreadful end. Let their portion in hell revive in your mental fight and dissuade, lest the blood of souls be found in your skirts, and the painful consideration of unfaithfulness, weigh you down in everlasting burnings. But, my brother, I am persuaded better things of you, tho' I thus speak. You will take this people down to the potter's house and arraign them before the bar of God. Hence you will carry them on your heart to the foot of the cross and point them to a bleeding Saviour. You will bring all the doctrines of God to a focal point, and drive every sentiment as a nail in a sure place. You will gather their little ones in your arms, and bring them to Jesus of Nazareth. You will build an altar to God, and fix your own seal to it, that you will never let him go without his blessing. This you will do, at the hazard of wordly ease and popular applause. For let me add, and be thou assured, to preach the foregoing system in the manner described, will make your bitter enemies. Every unregenerate sinner hates the light. Ye hate me because I have told you the truth. Was

your master hated because he was pointedly discriminating in his preaching? The disciple will be hated for the same. But remember, you have enlisted, and put on the harness, and will you fear to fight courageously for him who hath chosen you to be a soldier. Be not dismayed. The weapons of your warfare are not carnal. If God be for you who can be against you? You have a glorious captain, who will lead you to victory, and perfect his strength in your weakness. Be humble, be faithful; and may God Almighty bless you, that on the great day, you may stand in white at the right hand of Christ, and say with unspeakable joy, Lord here am I, and the Children whom thou hast graciously given me.

MY brethren and fellow-labourers in the vineyard of Christ. With you I include myself. What infinite mercy that God should allow such hell-deserving rebels so much as to open their mouths in his name! We deserve no better portion than to lift up our eyes in torment, and this for our sad deficiencies in the work to which we have been solemnly separated. How confounded and ashamed ought we to feel that our preaching has been no more pointed and distinguishing. Are we not ready to enter into a solemn renewal of covenant, that we will declare the whole counsel of God? If we walk by faith and not by sight, and in our preaching exhibit the truth in its undistinguished simplicity, Christ will set it to our account, and own us at his second coming. But should we tread in the footsteps of the ancient priests, he will laugh at our calamity and mock when our fear cometh.

THIS people in a few moments are to receive an ascension gift of Christ. You have just occasion to rejoice; but with trembling. We should not leave

our dear brother with the care of your souls and those of your children, if we had not gained evidence that he will preach distinguishingly. But tremble at the thought that this preaching while it is a favor of life to some, is a favor of death to others. This day is pregnant with consequences of eternal moment to you. Should you hear the truth and despise it, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you.

LET this whole assembly be as solemn as eternity, and let it be imprinted in their memories, as with a point of a diamond, that Christ will thoroughly purge his floor and gather the wheat into his garner; but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

FINIS.



