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SERMONS.

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DOCTRINE

OF

UNIVERSAL PARDON

CONSIDERED AND REFUTED,

IN A

SERIES OF SERMONS,

WITH

NOTES, CRITICAL AND EXPOSITORY.

BY ANDREW THOMSON, D.D.

MINISTER OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH.

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WILLIAM WHYTE AND CO.

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TO THE

KIRK SESSION AND CONGREGATION

OF

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH,
EDINBURGH,

THIS VOLUME OF SERMONS

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE PASTOR,

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

When I began the following course of Sermons, I certainly had no intention to publish them; nor was it my purpose to enter so largely as I have ultimately done, into the discussions with which they are occupied. But finding, as I advanced, that the sentiments which it is their object to refute, were more prevalent than I at first suspected, and anxious to guard my congregation against such erroneous doctrines, and such perversions of Scripture as were afloat, I felt myself called upon to enlarge my original plan. After all, I perceive that I have omitted many topics which it might have been profitable to consider.

Although Mr. Erskine had published his Essays on the Unconditional Freeness of the Gos-

pel, which seemed to be used as a sort of text book, by the supporters of his dogmas, I did not confine myself to what is there advanced, but thought it right to take notice of the opinions and practices known to exist among his party, though not acknowledged in any printed record. But instead of running any risk of misrepresenting them, by adducing what was only rumoured, I have even abstained from bringing forward some circumstances, of whose truth I could scarcely entertain a doubt, and which would have still more strongly demonstrated the delusions and the extravagance, in which the sect think proper to indulge.

It was not till the very conclusion of my series, that I obtained Mr. Erskine's Introductory Essay,* in which he has given, if not a more ample, at least a more explicit statement of his views. Like his former volume, it is extremely rambling in its observations, and altogether in-

[•] This Essay is introductory to "Extracts of Letters to a Christian Friend, by a Lady." In referring to it, I find that I have once or twice called it "Preface." I mention this, to prevent the reader from thinking that there are two treatises of the kind by Mr. Erskine.

capable of being analysed. I have endeavoured, however, in my notes, to make such remarks on what is contained in both productions as to show, that their author's reasonings are as inconclusive, and his interpretations of Scripture as perverse, as his opinions are unsound and mischievous. A minuter and more lengthened exposure of his blunders might have been expedient; but enough has been said, I flatter myself, to deprive his oracular sayings of that influence which they appeared to be exercising, over ignorant and inconsiderate minds.

I refer my readers to the following publications which have been recently produced in the controversy about Assurance and Universal Pardon:

Remarks on Certain Opinions recently propagated respecting Universal Redemption, by Dr. Hamilton of Strathblane.

The Gairloch Heresy Tried, in a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Campbell of Row, by Dr. Burns of Paisley.

A Treatise on the Forgiveness of Sins, as the Privilege of the Redeemed, in Opposition to the Doctrine of Universal Pardon, by the Rev. Mr. Smith of Glasgow.

A Sermon on Peace in Believing, by Dr. Barr of Port-Glasgow.

Strictures on "Notes and Recollections" of Mr. Campbell's Sermons, by Mr. Barclay of Irvine.

A Letter to Mr. Erskine, containing Animadversions on his "Unconditional Freeness," by the Rev. Mr. Buchanan of North Leith.

Two Reviews in the Christian Instructor for June 1828 and February 1830.

The Way of Salvation, a Discourse by the Rev. Mr. Russel of Dundee; with Notes and Illustrations, containing Remarks on the Doctrine of Universal Pardon.

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SERMON I.

PSALM CXXX. 7, 8.

" Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

The Psalmist laboured under convictions of sin, and under the pressure of those distressful feelings which these convictions naturally produced. And so great was the affliction which he suffered that he represents himself as having been in "the depths." He had sunk so deep in "the horrible pit, and in the miry clay," as not only to be involved in much wretchedness, but to be beyond recovery, either by the exertion of any inherent energies of his own, or by the interposition of power and skill on the part of his fellow-men. Although the strength of the creature, however, was utterly unavailing for his deliverance, he did

not despair. He directed his regards to that Being whom he had offended, and by whose " wrath he was troubled;" and in the character and promises of God, he found all that was sufficient for his emancipation, and all that was needful for his comfort. The God of holiness whom he had provoked, was also a compassionate God, in whose willingness to forgive he might take encouragement to trust, because it had been both proclaimed and experienced. And, therefore, he applied to God for salvation, with the spirit and in the language of heartfelt penitence-lifted up to him the voice of earnest supplication-and, with assured, because warranted confidence, as well as with intense and longing desire, waited for those divine communications which the wants and the exigencies of his condition required.

The course which the Psalmist adopted was attended with the consolation which he needed. It was not merely right and becoming in itself, but it was the means of procuring relief and solacement to him, in the midst of those calamities to which he had been subjected by sin. And sympathising with all those of the church of Israel, or of the people of God, who were placed in similar circumstances, he recommends to them the remedy which he had found so suitable and so efficient for himself—exhorting them to "hope in the Lord," as he had done, and detailing the

grounds upon which that hope might confidently and securely rest. "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." These grounds of hope we propose to illustrate in discoursing from the words of the text. And may God give us his Holy Spirit to open our minds to the lessons of his word, and to the influences of his truth.

I. Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy.

Mercy is that attribute in the divine character upon which the sinner's hope must ultimately depend. In every regard, indeed, that can be justly and safely paid to the divine character, there must be a becoming reference to all the attributes by which it is distinguished, because every one of these attributes is concerned in its perfection and its glory, and no dispensation can be true, whatever benefits it may hold out, in which any of them are violated or disregarded. But the sinner being in such circumstances as that all the attributes of God, if mercy is excluded, would conspire to destroy and not to save him, it is the attribute of mercy to which the sinner's eye must look, and on which the sinner's reliance must be built, as a source of comfort or as a foundation

of hope. It would be disrespectful to God, and dangerous for himself, were the sinner to limit his views to the divine mercy, and leave out of his contemplation, the divine holiness, or the divine veracity, or the divine omnipotence. These, and all the other divine qualities with which they are associated in the Supreme Being, must be duly honoured, in being duly acknowledged by him. Only it is essential that he recognise mercy as one of them, and that to it he must principally have recourse, if he would be justified in cherishing any expectation from that God whose law he has transgressed, and for the transgression of whose law he is condemned, and miserable, and lost.

We say mercy, and not goodness merely. Mercy is not synonymous with goodness. It is a specific exercise of goodness, and not a necessary but a sovereign exercise of it. Goodness is manifested towards sentient creatures in general,—but mercy, towards those who are in sin, in danger, or in suffering. Before our first parents fell, God was good to them; and as they were created with capacities of enjoyment, and as he saw reflected from them the unsullied image of himself, and as they had done nothing to forfeit his favour, or to awaken his displeasure, his goodness emanated in liberal contributions to their happiness, as naturally as did his holiness dis-

play itself in giving them a law, written in their hearts, or communicated by external revelation, for their guidance in moral and religious duty. But when they broke the covenant of life, and became obnoxious to God's anger, and liable to the miseries consequent upon disobedience, they had no longer any claims on the divine goodness. They stood in a totally different relation to Him, whose responsible creatures they were. They became objects of his aversion and indignation. They had so changed their character and their state, that his justice demanded from them a penalty which they were unable to pay. It would have been no unrighteousness in him, to have actually doomed them to the destruction which they had merited by their apostacy. And the question came to be, if we may so speak, in the councils of heaven, whether, and in what way, fallen man, who had been at first the worthy recipient of the divine goodness, should still be so dealt with as to participate in its bounties, to be rescued from the degradation and ruin into which he had plunged, and restored to that high and happy estate which he had deservedly lost.

Now it seemed meet to the adorable Godhead to settle this question in favour of our apostate race,—to determine that the innate goodness of Deity should be extended to them, all unworthy as they had made themselves,—to accommodate

its operations to their altered nature and their altered circumstances, -to make them still the objects of its care and of its liberality, -and thus to exhibit it under that new, and appropriate, and attractive modification, which is denominated mercy, which is so peculiar in its bearing on the government and the destinies of our fallen world as almost to wear the aspect of a distinct and additional attribute, and which, at any rate, provides as richly and effectually for the redemption of the sinner, as, in its original actings, it provided for the felicity of his first progenitors, while they were yet pure and holy in paradise. And whenever that attribute by which God is prompted to be kind or beneficent to his rational offspring is spoken of as a ground on which they may confide in him, when they have contracted guilt by breaking his commandments, it is right and expedient that, instead of regarding it under the general and vague appellation of goodness, which is more applicable to the angels that surround the throne of the Eternal, than to the polluted inhabitants of this polluted earth, they should view it, and have recourse to it, under the appellation of mercy. This appellation, more precisely, and certainly, and emphatically conveys the truth, that while it is impossible for us to appear before God in any other light than that of criminals, pronounced to be such by his law, sentenced to the punishment which it has threatened, and actually and helplessly lying under its curse, still he is not relentless and implacable, but has revealed himself in the attitude of compassionating our case, and as possessing an excellence which, but for the existence of our sinfulness, we should not have known, which teaches us to look to him without despondency or distrust, and which may embolden us to prefer the petition, equally indicative of humility and hope, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

We have already asserted the propriety and necessity of taking a comprehensive survey of the divine character. Even though it is the mercy which resides in it, that bespeaks and demands our chief attention, as being in a situation which especially requires its exercise, still our due homage is not rendered to the divine character, nor can we account ourselves sufficiently safe in our contemplation of it, as possessing the attribute of mercy, unless we consider at the same time those other attributes with which it is connected. indeed, having ascertained that it does possess mercy, so far from being afraid of meditating on the other attributes with which it is adorned, we should engage in that meditation of them, in order to have our ideas of its mercy confirmed, and exalted, and accompanied with hope.

Had we looked to God as just, powerful, wise,

faithful, and good, we should have discovered nothing calculated to relieve us of the apprehensions created by guilt, but every thing calculated to strengthen, to rivet, and to increase them. For the goodness which lavished so much honour and blessedness on our first parents ere they lapsed into rebellion, and which cannot fail to watch over the well-being and happiness of all God's intelligent creatures who have never sinned against him, does not necessarily embrace those who, by transgression, have at once forfeited the blessings which it would have otherwise bestowed, contracted a debt to the justice with which it stands united, and are incompetent to liquidate the debt by any resources of their own. And if the goodness of God is withdrawn from the sinner's view, or if no declaration is made of its being extended to the sinner's case, then the exactions of his justice must be satisfied in our punishment, his faithfulness will secure the fulfilment of every evil he has threatened, his wisdom will contrive and his power will execute the most effectual methods of inflicting the wrath that has been incurred, while his very goodness, from the abundance of the gifts which it conferred, and the ingratitude and disobedience with which it was requited, will only serve to render his vengeance more certain and more awful.

But the moment that we substitute mercy

for goodness, and introduce it into the divine character as an essential ingredient, and as an object of believing contemplation, the whole complexion of that character is changed to the sinner's eye. The attributes which formerly created and enhanced his terror, assume, from their alliance with mercy, a friendly bearing on Each of them now acts its part in his fate. seconding the exercise, and securing the awards of mercy in his behalf. And, in their combined operation, he sees a perfect and indubitable pledge, that whatever mercy designs for him will come into his lot, without failure and without deficiency. From the mercy of God, as now working in that system of divine administration under which he is placed, he may anticipate deliverance instead of ruin; and his anticipation does not rest on the mere insulated position that with God there is mercy, but on the glorious harmony which subsists among all the attributes of the divine character, and in pursuance of which they are all united in giving to that mercy its proper direction and its full effect. The mercy of God must and will extend to communicate to him the blessings that are suited to his state. And nothing can occur to frustrate that gracious purpose, or to detract either from its extent or its efficiency. On the contrary, the wisdom of God must provide most skilfully for the full execution of it: the power of God will overcome all obstacles and all opposition that may come in its way: the truth of God will guarantee every effort that may be required for its fulfilment: and the justice of God, which, by itself, is so terrible to the transgressor, will be put forth to realize every thing that it has engaged to confer, with as much strictness and rectitude, as it would have exhibited in inflicting punishment on the guilty, had no mercy interposed for their salvation.

If then we would hope in the Lord as possessing the attribute of mercy, let us not limit our view to that attribute, but let us regard it as inherent in a God of infinite perfection, and with whom therefore it will have its perfect work. Let us consider well the nature and operation of the attributes with which it is indissolubly linked in the divine character, and the effect which they will have on its manifestations in favour of sinful men, both as to their individual and their com-And let us derive from this bined influence. comprehensive consideration of that which makes God the sinner's refuge and the sinner's hope, all the encouragement, and confidence, and consolation which the necessities of our spiritual condition as fallen creatures so peremptorily and urgently need.

But, while we hope in the Lord because he is merciful, and while we look to the rest of

God's attributes as aiding in the exhibition of his mercy and in the accomplishment of its designs, it is necessary for us to take the same extended view of God's character, in order that our hope may not degenerate into presumption, but be preserved within safe and legitimate bounds. If we were to think of the divine power, and justice, and wisdom, and faithfulness, as mere auxiliaries to the Divine mercy, as having no other office than to contribute to its demonstration, as employed for the single purpose of rendering it more ample and more efficient,-we should be giving it an undue ascendancy, and thus not only destroying the symmetry, and proportions, and mutual dependance that reign in the character of God, and constitute its supreme virtue and glory, but introduce the most mischievous errors into our faith, and our sentiments, and our practice, in reference to it. It cannot be that his mercy should be exerted at the expense or to the disparagement, in any the least degree, of one excellence which beautifies his nature, or upholds his government, or speaks his praise. His mercy is sovereign and gratuitous; and therefore it can only be displayed, when every other quality that belongs to him is fully maintained, and there is no sacrifice of the honour that is due to each, and of

the consistency which pervades the whole. Whenever his mercy cannot be exercised without refusing the demands of his justice, or without bringing into question the immutability of his faithfulness, or without denying the irresistible energy of his power, or without impeaching the infallibility of his wisdom, or without throwing suspicion on the absolute purity of his naturein these cases his mercy cannot be exercised at all, for the exercise of it would involve some shortcoming in his perfection, which is necessarily unqualified and unlimited. It is only of this attribute that it can be said, " He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy;" of every other attribute, it is requisite that we predicate positive and peremptory operation. He must be holy; he must be wise; he must be powerful; he must be just; he must be true; he must be each and all of these whatever betide his universe; and if we, his apostate creatures, cannot be the objects of his mercy except by some surrender of the homage due to them, or some violation of the harmony that reigns among them, his mercy cannot save, and cannot reach us. But this is our comfort, that choosing to manifest his mercy, we may be quite assured that he will form such arrangements as to effectuate its most liberal purposes, and, at the same time.

to make it entirely compatible with all that is perfect and glorious in his character; and this is our duty, to defer to these arrangements, whatever they may be, as necessary alike for his honour, and for our welfare, and never to think of his mercy, and never to seek for it, and never to expect it, without directing our contemplation to all his divine excellencies, and to regard it only in its combination with these, as the ground of that hope which we are exhorted to repose in God.

Thus shall we be prevented from looking for the blessings of salvation from Him, in a way or to an extent, in which they cannot possibly be granted. Thus shall we be prepared for giving that tribute of humble and rational submission which every scheme that he may reveal for our deliverance or our consolation, deserves from such helpless beings as we are. And thus shall it be, that, relying on God, according to what he has declared himself to be, as not only merciful to sinners, but altogether perfect in his dealings with them, neither will our prayers for compassionate treatment be undutiful, nor will our expectations of receiving it be finally disappointed.

Notwithstanding all the qualifications that we can suppose to be imparted to the mercy of God by the existence of his other attributes, and

notwithstanding the necessity, and the wisdom of keeping these qualifications continually in view, when we rest upon it, still it is presented to us in such a light, and celebrated in such strains, and recommended by such facts and examples, throughout the whole volume of inspiration, that we can scarcely appreciate it too highly or depend upon it too assuredly. The Bible is just a divine record of it-a continued testimony to ita bright and cheering emanation from it. From the beginning to the end of this sacred book; from the account which it gives of the first promise, down to the gracious benediction with which its Canon closes; amidst all the truths which it proclaims, and all the providences which it relates, and all the prospects which it unfolds; at every successive period, and through every successive generation, whose history it sets before us,-God is represented to our faith as speaking, and working, and ruling in our fallen world, and this is his unceasing and unchangeable memorial, that he is merciful, and merciful in all the variety of which that character is susceptible, and according to all the circumstances of those upon whom it is made to operate. We see many a manifestation of his other attributes; but amidst them all we see his mercy held forth to our admiration, and working its way, either in faithful promise or in actual application to the heart of the

guilty—to the condition of the miserable, that it may console, and purify, and save.

Only observe what an endless diversity of terms and figures are employed by the sacred writers to illustrate its excellence, and to delineate its extent. They call it "great," "manifold," "tender," "abundant," "higher than the heavens," and "everlasting." The Lord is said by them to be "rich" -to be "plenteous"-and to "delight in mercy." We read of the "multitude of his mercies"-of "the earth being full of his mercy"-of "all his paths being mercy"-of his "tender mercy being over all his works." His mercy is described as exceeding in permanency those objects whose permanency is proverbial. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy upon thee." It is compared to those affections which actuate the heart of a Father, when he looks upon the offspring whom, though erring and perverse, he still bears with and loves; "Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth their frame, and remembereth they are but dust." is exalted above those tenderer and more ardent feelings with which a mother regards the weeping infant that hangs upon her breast. "Can

a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea; she may forget; yet will not I forget thee," saith God to Zion in the season of her calamity. And to bring the subject still nearer to us, and to make it bear still more impressively on our feelings, God condescends to have himself represented as actually sympathising with us—as partaking largely of our sufferings—as afflicted in all our afflictions— "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together."-" Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still. Therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord."

My friends, do not you perceive in all these things such proofs and illustrations of God's mercy as should determine you to place your hope in him, as a being who never can look upon you with indifference, and never can treat you with neglect—who will take an interest in your well being, amidst all the saddest vicissitudes of your lot—and who will withhold nothing that is needful, when as sinful, and miserable, and helpless, you cast yourselves upon his

But if such instances and such compassion? descriptions of his mercy, as we have been setting before you, are calculated to produce such an impression on your minds, what may you not be expected to feel when we make mention of that marvellous and emphatic token of it which he has given in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, which you are this day assembled to commemorate?* This is such a token of it as surpasses not only all the knowledge of God's character which you could have derived from any other source, but all the conceptions which your imagination itself could possibly have formed of its condescension and its adaptation to the circumstances of fallen humanity. God could not show mercy to us without satisfying the demands of his justice, and vindicating the authority of his law, and magnifying and honouring all the perfections of his nature. And it should seem that these necessary ends could not be attained, without the substitution of some one in our stead, who should endure the suffering that we could not endure, and render the obedience that we could not render, and by a scheme of divine workmanship, executed by a being of divine perfection, procure

This Discourse was preached on the morning of a Communion Sabbath.

for us, and bestow upon us, every thing which our complete recovery and restoration required. And though he in whom all this fitness resided, and who alone possessed might and sufficiency to save, was none other than his own Son, he spared not his own Son, -his only begotten Son-his wellbeloved Son,-but "freely delivered him up for us all," that we, " believing in him, might not perish but have everlasting life." He delivered him up to humiliation,-to sorrow,-and to death; -to humiliation, involving an assumption of our nature and of our transgressions ;-to sorrow, unparalleled in the history of suffering humanity; -to death, implying not merely the dissolution of soul and body, but the burden of a world's guilt, and the wrath of an avenging God. And he thus delivered him up, that he might rescue us from misery which he could have inflicted upon us, and received for it the adoration of his universe, and that, after ministering to our manifold wants, and cheering our afflicted hearts, and guiding our wandering steps in this desert place, through which we are doomed to travel for a season, he might take us, who were children of wrath, and heirs of hell, into his heavenly presence, and there rejoice over us for ever as the trophies of his redeeming love.

The mercy of God, therefore, lays a foun-

dation for hope that is deep, and broad, and stable; and he that builds upon it can never be confounded or put to shame, but is as sure of being effectually helped and abundantly satisfied, as there is perfection in the character of God, and truth in the mission of his Son, Jesus Christ.

I call upon sinners, therefore, who are still "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity," to look to this mercy that their hearts may be melted into contrition by its greatness and its tenderness. It is so great, and so tender, and so ready to pour out its beneficence on the chief of sinners, that if you will but accept of it, and confide in it, as it is made known in the gospel, you shall obtain forgiveness, fully, freely, and for ever; and be your transgressions ever so aggravated, and your pollutions ever so multiplied, and your wretchedness ever so deplorable, here is a remedy for them all,—and even for you there is deliverance provided now, and even for you there will be a crown of glory hereafter. But if you refuse to acquiesce in the dispensation by which it is appointed that these blessings should be conveyed to you, and persevere in the ungodly course you have been hitherto pursuing, this mercy, which is so liberally offered to you, will only add to your guilt and your condemnation, and it will be one of the bitterest recollections in the place of punishment, that you neglected, and despised, and put away from you, the mercy that was manifested for the salvation of ruined souls.

I call upon the "prisoners of hope" to take refuge in this divine mercy which we have been holding forth. You are sensible of your spiritual bondage,-and you not only long, but in some measure expect and wait for deliverance from its chains, and for a return to freedom, and purity, and blessedness. Let your desires grow stronger -let your expectations be encouraged; for the mercy on which you rely, and which has already taught you to hope, is ready to do for you all that you need, and to receive you into its generous embrace, and to bless you with "the glorious liberty of the children of God." "Turn ye then to the stronghold;" lose no time in casting yourselves upon Christ; commit all your interests into his hands; and you will find in your immediate, in your continued, in your everlasting experience, that the divine mercy, as manifested in him, is a fountain of blessedness-full, and overflowing, and inexhaustible.

And, finally, I call upon the Israel—the people of God, to continue stedfast and immovable in their dependance upon his mercy, and free and fearless in their applications for its promised exercise and its needed blessings. You already know its inestimable value-its ample and ever-during sufficiency; and you have experienced the happiness of a habitual recourse to it for supplies of spiritual and temporal comforts;—and it is too much endeared to you, to be ever forgotten, or to be ever disregarded. This day it is again announced in your hearing—it is presented to your faith—it is ready to sustain all your hopes—it bids you welcome to whatever can contribute to your safety and your consolation, to your peace and your joy. It is embodied, and most affectingly represented, and most liberally urged upon you, in the holy ordinance of which you are invited to partake. Come, then, to God, with the confidence that is warranted and emboldened by the manifestation of his mercy here brought night to you. Come with your prayers and supplications, that they may be preferred and answered. Come with your sins, that they may be forgiven—with your corruptions, that they may be subdued,—with your fears, that they may be dissipated,-with your wants, that they may be supplied,-with your miseries, that they may be exchanged for joy. Come as you are, that the God of mercy may shower down upon you, and send into your very hearts, all the rich benefits

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of Christ's purchase, and give you such renewed tokens of his loving kindness as will comfort and gladden you in time, and be a pledge and prelude of the felicities of the eternal world.

SERMON II.

PSALM CXXX. 7, 8.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

In discoursing on these words, we proposed to consider the three grounds on which David here invokes Israel to hope in the Lord. The first, that "with the Lord there is mercy," we have already illustrated.

II. We are now to consider the second reason mentioned by the Psalmist for hoping in the Lord. "Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with him is plenteous redemption."

God is not only merciful, but he has actually exercised his mercy for the benefit of sinners, and he has done so by forming and executing a plan for securing to those who are the objects of it, whatever is necessary for their deliverance and

their happiness. This plan is neither more nor less than the gospel-which is just a revelation of God's mercy to guilty men; for though God appears in it as possessing all the perfections which can be supposed to distinguish an infinite Being, and though all these perfections are exhibited, not in accidental connexion with it, but as essentially conducing to its excellence and its efficiency, yet mercy is its characteristic feature, and pervades its purposes, its arrangements, and its fulfilment, as that which makes it at once suitable and acceptable to the creatures for whose advantage it was originally contrived. In looking to the character of God, as adorned with the attribute of mercy, we see that mercy put forth, practically realized, substantially embodied, irrevocably pledged, in a well ordered scheme, and finished work of redemption. Provision is made in it for our rescue and our restoration. adapted to our peculiar character, and to our peculiar circumstances, as transgressors. And all that it intends to bestow upon us is so insured, that none of the perfections of the Deity will be infringed or tarnished by that bestowal. these perfections are so demonstrated, and so honoured by it, as not merely to allow God's redeeming mercy to expatiate upon our condition as a condition of sin and misery, but even to contribute to its manifestation in all the freeness and fulness which our necessities demand

The redemption which is asserted to be with God is called a plenteous redemption. This character may be considered as necessarily belonging to it. Whenever we are assured that God is merciful, and that he is pleased to exercise his mercy towards sinners, we are entitled to anticipate liberality in its display, because it is liberal in its very nature, being an extension of goodness to those who deserve no expression of favour or of friendship, and because being the operation of an absolutely perfect being, and altogether consistent with his honour and glory, we can see no reason for its being niggardly in the bounties that it communicates, or in the mode of communicating them. It no doubt essentially involves the divine sovereignty, so that God is not under any peremptory obligation, or any compulsory motive, to redeem certain individuals, or any certain number of individuals; but then this very sovereignty, having made its choice and its determination, forms a pledge that the mercy will go forth upon its objects without let or hinderance, and that, every obstacle being thoroughly removed, and every warrant afforded for its acting in a manner corresponding with the innate benignity of the Godhead, completeness and abundance will distinguish the redemption which it has provided. In short, it will be a plenteous redemption.

Now, when we look to that redemption itself, as unfolded in the gospel, we find all these anticipations of it verified and realized. There is nothing defective in it, nothing stinted, nothing reluctant, nothing inadequate. It is accommodated to all the features of our character, and to all the varieties of our lot. It embraces the whole range of our present state, and the whole extent of our future prospects. We cannot say that there is a want which it is not competent to supply, or that there is an evil which it is not sufficient to remedy, or that there is a benefit which it is not intended, and has not power, to confer. It is a system of recovery; and amidst all the direful calamities in which our apostacy has involved us, there is not one to which it would leave us subject, while, of all the blessings of which our apostacy has deprived us, there is not one to which it would deny us a new and inviolable title. So that the change which it is fitted to effectuate, in all that concerns us as spiritual, and responsible, and immortal beings, is such as to justify all the conceptions we could have formed of the mercy of Him whom we had offended, and to be an ample foundation for our hope in him, however guilty, however wretched, and however helpless we may be.

But let us take a somewhat nearer and more particular view of this plenteous redemption, as a ground of hope for all those who will accept of it, as it has been wrought out and offered. 1. In the *first* place, it implies deliverance from the punishment due to us as transgressors.

To that punishment the law of God, in consequence of our violation of it, had justly doomed us; and but for the interposition of his mercy, we must have endured it without mitigation, and without end. His mercy, however, having interposed, this is its first and leading achievement, to make atonement for human guilt, so that the penalty of the law may be remitted, and its condemnatory sentence recalled, as to all those who obtain an interest in the redemption of the gospel. To them there is no condemnation here, and there will be no condemnation hereafter. Their sins are so thoroughly forgiven, that though each one of these sins merits the wrath of God. not one of them remains in the book of his remembrance, as that for which suffering will be inflicted. The debt which was due to inflexible justice has been paid, even to the uttermost farthing: the debtor walks abroad from his prisonhouse; and his surety who has laid down the price, is pledged to maintain the freedom from bondage which has been effected in his behalf, and to answer every demand that may henceforth be made upon him by his lawgiver and his judge. It cannot, indeed, be literally affirmed concerning him, that the expiatory death of Christ has procured the actual pardon of all the iniquities which he may yet commit, as well as those with which he already stands chargeable, so that he can look upon himself as, in his existing state, equally freed from both. Such a doctrine is unscriptural -it is as absurd as it is unscriptural-and it is as dangerous as it is unscriptural and absurd. A man, though justified, is still exposed to temptation, and liable to be overcome by it; and every day that passes over his head will find him breaking the commandments, and incurring the displeasure of God, so that he continually needs renewed forgiveness for renewed transgression. But herein consists the plenteousness of the redemption provided for him, that, while God pardons him by an act of justifying grace, so that the law no longer can prefer any valid claim against him for punishment, God continues to pardon the sins which he continues to commit. The absolution he has received remains unmodified and untouched. Divine mercy perseveres in granting remission for his trespasses on account of which Divine justice has been satisfied by the vicarious death of his substitute. And this gift of God is without repentance—it is never withdrawn, and never ceases to be bestowed-it extends throughout the whole course of his life-and at the close of it, the handwriting that was upon the wall against him, is, every sentence, and every word, and every syllable of it, blotted out. Whenever he is jus-

tified through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, he is safe, and his safety remains unaffected by those aberrations into which he is seduced by external allurements, or by inherent infirmity -for there is the same unchangeable mercy to pardon him, and the same all-sufficient surety to satisfy every demand that can be made upon him. Conscience speaks no terror to him; for the guilt which filled it with remorse is all taken away by the blood of sprinkling. He can look up to God without fear, for the frown of righteous vengeance has been removed from the Divine countenance by the offering of a perfect and acceptable sacrifice. And he can look forward, without one painful apprehension, for that unbending justice, which had kindled up the everlasting burnings, having been fully and for ever appeased, hell has no place in the anticipations of his eternity, and the Judge before whom he is to appear is that very Being who has effected this plenteous redemption for him, and must, as a part of it, pronounce upon him the sentence of acquittal.

2. In the *second* place, the plenteous redemption mentioned in the text implies emancipation from the dominion of sin.

This emancipation is not perfect and entire in a present world. Even where it is most real, most visible, most unreserved, there are many remains of unmortified and unsubdued corrup30

tion, much prevalence of the passions and habits of the old man over the principles and affections of the new, numerous instances in which sin is practically preferred to duty, the creature to the Creator, and earth to heaven. But, in the midst of these shortcomings and imperfections, the man who partakes of the redemption which is with God, is rescued, truly, vitally, consciously, and perpetually, from the reigning power of iniquity. Formerly he was its slave, in all the members of his body and in all the faculties of his mind-he willingly wore its galling chains-he actively performed its meanest drudgery—he implicitly surrendered himself to its tyrannical sway-it said to him, Go, and he went, Do this, and he did it. As soon, however, as the redemption of the gospel is extended to him, the fetters of his spiritual enthralment are broken off-sin no longer rules in him as one of the children of disobedienceits servitude provokes his resistance, and he escapes from it-and, in whatever way, or through whatever channel, its ascendancy was wont to be maintained, it ceases to retain his ready homage, or to command his habitual submission. enmity of the carnal mind is slain, and deprived of its power to lead him in hostile defiance against the authority of God. The blandishments of the world fail to engage him in its service, by promising to reward him with its pleasures, and exerting their thousand influences on the corrupt propensities of his heart. And even to the wiles of Satan, who had long led him captive at his will, he is enabled to set himself in decided opposition, to throw off the yoke of bondage under which he had been kept by that arch-enemy of his soul, and to resist his manifold and artful attempts to keep him attached to those employments, and pursuits, and gratifications which degrade the character, and lead to endless perdition.

In all these respects, he finds, that the redemption to whose privileges and benefits he is admitted, is a plenteous redemption. There is not a partial reform, but a total revolution in the government of his heart and life. "Old things are done away-all things are become new" in his moral state. The supremacy which sin had possessed over him by nature, and more firmly secured by practice, is overturned. The victory is decisive in the feeling and experience of his own mind. Even when in an unguarded moment, or from the strength and the suddenness of temptation, he is drawn aside from the path of righteousness and prevailed upon to indulge in forbidden joy, he is sensible that this is but a temporary though criminal dereliction of the conquest that has been won for him by the mercy and the Spirit of God; and in the promise that sin shall not now have dominion over him, he recognises a security and an encouragement by which he is animated to maintain that liberty wherewith Christ has made him free. And though he may still find "a law in his members warring against the law of his mind," and occasionally "bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members," yet there is a provision in the scheme of salvation for upholding him in the mastery he has acquired over the devil, the world, and the flesh; there is a rich assurance that this merciful and necessary provision will be carried into full effect; and there is the certain prospect of the triumph being completed and matured, when the believer to whom it has been vouchsafed shall enter into that holy and happy region, where nothing that defileth can ever enter, and where the plenteousness of redemption from the dominion of sin shall be experienced in its literal sense, in its full value, and in its uninterrupted perpetuity.

3. In the *third* place, this plenteous redemption implies deliverance from the common distresses of humanity.

These are the effects of sin; and in proportion as the power of sin is subdued, and the prevalence of sin circumscribed, will their severity be diminished. As sin, however, still maintains its ground and works its mischief, in a present world, bodily and outward affliction continues to cleave to the lot even of those who have embraced the

redemption of the gospel. Enjoying all the benefits which that redemption brings to them, in this imperfect state, they are yet "born to trouble," and have to sustain it through life, in all its multiplied forms, and in all its various degrees. But they are redeemed even here from whatever renders the sufferings of mortality intolerable. Having been forgiven and accepted, they no longer regard these as the tokens of God's avenging wrath, but as the chastisements of his parental discipline. They are no longer called to endure them unsupported and unsolaced, for strength and consolation are communicated to them, suitable to the nature, the extent, and the duration of every calamity with which they can be visited. And they are no longer doomed to bear them as unconnected with the prospects of a better state, of an unsuffering kingdom, for the gospel opens up to them the scenes of immortality, where no disease shall invade their bodies, where no sorrow shall wound or oppress their spirits, where no misfortune shall ever cloud their view, and where death with all its anxietics and agonies shall be known no more.

Herein, therefore, is the redemption of the gospel plenteous, even as affecting our present outward circumstances, that though it does not exempt from temporal afflictions, it plucks out their sting and mitigates their pressure; it secures beyond all

doubt, not merely their termination, but their termination in a state of existence, forming a perfect contrast with that which they now so darken and deform; it converts them into blessings by making them the instruments of God's paternal kindness, and subservient to the progressive improvement and everlasting welfare of those upon whom they had been inflicted. And while the contemplation of them, as treated and influenced by the gospel, cannot fail to give us a strong impression of the abundance of the redeeming mercy which God exercises with respect to them, that impression must be strengthened and confirmed by recollecting the experience of all to whom the redemption has been revealed in its power, and its preciousness, for they have been brought to rejoice in tribulation of whatever kind, to triumph over death in its most horrible shape, to welcome the trials and the pains from which unsanctified nature shrunk with instinctive aversion and alarm, as the best blessings which heaven had to bestow, and to glory in them as conducive to their moral perfection, and as preparatory to their future blessedness.

4. In the *fourth* place, this plenteous redemption implies, that provision is made for the entire restoration and perfect felicity of those for whom it is prepared.

The views we have hitherto taken of it have

been almost altogether negative. And these have been illustrative in their own place, and to a certain extent, of the fulness of that salvation which the divine mercy has wrought out for sinners. But if we rest satisfied with these, and do not go forward to the consideration of the positive blessings with which they stand connected, or to which they are essential preliminaries in the economy of the gospel, we shall have a most defective idea of the plenteousness of the Christian redemption. We must take into consideration all those absolute benefits, to which the mere deliverances we have been speaking of are only preparatory, that we may see from their nature, their certainty, and their permanency, whether as bestowed on this world or to be enjoyed in the next, what a ground of hope is afforded by the great truth that " with the Lord is plenteous redemption."

For example, this redemption implies our deliverance from the wrath of God and the pains of hell. And every one who understands these terms, and is alive to any considerable portion of their import, must be aware that it is incalculably important to escape from the evils which they describe. But how is the importance of this enhanced, and how rich and precious must that scheme of mercy which makes such a discovery be esteemed, when we recollect that deliverance from the wrath of God is accompanied with re-

storation to his favour, and that deliverance from the pains of hell brings along with it a new title to the blessedness of heaven—that while rescued from the heaviest calamities which can lie upon the fate of human beings, we are also put in possession of the most exalted benefits that can be enjoyed by them, either in time or in eternity!

This redemption implies deliverance from the reigning power of sin; and doubtless it is of unspeakable consequence that sin should no more have dominion over us and keep us as its slaves; but see what additional worth is imparted to that emancipation from spiritual bondage, by the relative blessing of being invested with "the liberty of the sons of God"-of being " made partakers of a divine nature"-of being sanctified throughout the whole of our intellectual and moral frame, -of having holy principles, holy affections, holy habits, established in our heart and character-of being thus qualified to hold present communion with our heavenly Father, to whom we have been reconciled, and after honouring and serving him, and walking in the light of his countenance, and partaking of the communications of his love upon earth, to be admitted to the angelic employments, and the seraphic joys of his celestial presence!

This redemption implies deliverance from the ills that are incident to mortality, inasmuch as it

gives us support and consolation under them, and finally takes them all away for ever; and to those who have suffered long or suffered much, this is a mighty boon. But how greatly is its worth magnified by the fatherly kindness which is mingled with every one of the distresses to which we are subjected by the anticipation of that happy result in which they are ere long to terminate, and for which they are to prepare us, by the reflection that we are chastened for our good, that the furnace of affliction, by its refining power, raises us to a higher and more divine purity, and that death is not more certain than is a final resurrection to glory, and an immortal existence in the paradise above!

So abundant, in short, is the mercy that has appeared in the scheme of the gospel, and so fully has this scheme provided for the well being of those on whose account it was devised, that not only are all the mischiefs involved in the fall, or consequent upon it, entirely done away, but all the blessings which had been forfeited are regained and made over to the redeemed in their original excellence and in their largest measure—not only shall the sinners who come to be interested in it "never perish," or be subjected permanently to any thing comprehended in that awful doom, but they "shall have everlasting life," as comprising all that is most worthy and most desirable in the destiny of

man—not only shall every want essentially existing in their nature and their condition be amply supplied, but they shall be raised to honours, and to privileges, and to enjoyments, greater by far than their hearts can desire or their imaginations conceive.

And so plenteous is the redemption here spoken of, that there is not a doubt or an apprehension or a suspicion respecting either its fulness or its security, which can arise in the mind, and for which in some corner of it there may not be found what is more than sufficient to subdue or to dissipate it, at once and for ever. Whenever any thing of this kind occurs, it is only necessary to have recourse to the gospel, as delineated in the word, in order that the mind may be satisfied, encouraged, and built up. Indeed, this one truth, that the author and giver of the redemption is the Son of God, is more than enough to convince the most sceptical and distrustful, that boundless hope may be safely rested upon it, as perfect in its efficiency and overflowing in its benefits. The unspeakable gift of Christ Jesus gives a demonstration of the mercy which sent him, that forbids us to set any limits to its exercise in behalf of those whom it has determined to save, and it is itself a pledge that the beneficent fruits which accompany it must be such, in number, in variety, in fitness, and in intrinsic worth, as to raise

them to all that is perfect in the nature, and to all that is happy in the condition, of restored and regenerated men. For "He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up to the death for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" The Son of God is our Redeemer, and seeing that he is "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," it cannot be that he should fail in any part of the work he has undertaken, or that he should not put us in complete and unalienable possession of all that he has purchased for us at the infinite price of his own life. We have only to cast an eye on what he is, and on what he has undertaken to do, and on what he has actually accomplished, to have our minds settled in the assured belief, that his redemption must be a plenteous redemption. His blood is of such atoning virtue as to cleanse from all guilt-his power rescues from all hostility-his merit purchases all happiness-his Spirit infuses and cherishes and matures all holy meetness for it-and every attribute of his divine character is pledged to introduce us into that land of vision, where we shall indeed be "filled with all the fulness of God." And whatever trials may befal those who have embraced the salvation which he has wrought out,-whatever weakness may cleave to them -whatever enemies may assail them, -whatever dangers and difficulties may surround them, they may rest in the persuasion, that "neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus their Lord."

Surely then sinners may hope in the Lord, that since there is with him this plenteous redemption, he will in no wise cast them out if they come unto him, and will in no wise withhold it from them if they seek for it in faith, and repentance, and prayer. But if such redemption has no charms for them, and if the mercy which has purchased it fails to affect, and to allure, and to persuade them, what can their insensibility lead to but certain, aggravated, everlasting destruction? O let them look to God and come to him, and throw themselves upon his covenanted but rich and saving compassion, while yet his redemption is offered, and the ear of his mercy is open to the cry and the supplication of his penitent offspring.

And let those who have already fled to the divine mercy and embraced the redemption of the gospel, admire and rejoice in its plenteousness. Let this sustain their faith whenever it begins to fail; let it renovate their hope when despondency is stealing upon their minds; let it increase their

comfort when affliction visits their hearts or their abodes,—let it inspire them with holy resolution when temptation offers to lead them astray,—let it be the song of their pilgrimage as they travel through the wilderness of life; and when they come to the threshold of eternity, let it tune their souls to that anthem of praise which they are to join all the redeemed from the earth in singing through the ages of eternity; "To him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father, to him be glory and dominion, now and ever. Amen."

SERMON III.

PSALM CXXX. 7, 8.

Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

In discoursing on these words, we proposed to consider the grounds on which the Psalmist invokes Israel to hope in the Lord. There is, first, the ground that with the Lord there is mercy; there is, secondly, the ground that there is plenteous redemption with him; and there is, thirdly, the ground that "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." To the consideration of this last particular we now call your attention, having already illustrated the two preceding ones.

It is not merely true that God is merciful, and ready to extend his mercy for the deliverance and the happiness of his apostate creatures; his mercy has led him to form a plan by which redemption is provided for all such as are the objects of it, in perfect consistency with the other attributes of his nature, and with the honour and authority of his moral administration, and by which no blessing whatever is excluded that can contribute to the comfort and well-being of those upon whom it is to be bestowed, or that can entitle it to be held out and recommended as possessing the character of plenteousness. And not only has his mercy led him to form a plan of redemption so abundant and complete, but an assurance is given that this plenteous redemption will be actually conferred, applied in all its extent, and finally and everlastingly enjoyed.

This might have been anticipated from the mere existence of mercy as an attribute in the character of God; for we could not have supposed that while there was such a multitude of beings on whom it might appropriately operate, it would have all consisted in sympathy for their sufferings and their fate, either silently cherished in the divine mind, or verbally expressed in the divine revelation. And still more confidently might it have been anticipated from the scheme of redemption, as actually devised and unfolded in the gospel, for it could not be imagined that such a wonderful apparatus of means as that scheme presents to us, would have been contrived, that such manifestations of divinity as it exhibits would

have been made, that so much virtue and efficiency as it contains would have been wrought out, and yet that the whole was 'to remain as a subject of curious speculation, or adoring wonder, and to leave mankind in all their natural degeneracy and helplessness. Every rational view that could have been taken of it must have led us to expect that it would be brought into immediate contact with the circumstances of our fallen race; that it would accomplish, in some good measure, those ends which it was so admirably calculated to promote; that it would give a practical demonstration of its power to redeem, in such a measure and to such an extent, as to glorify him by whom it had been prepared and executed.

This purpose, indeed, it clearly and expressly contemplated, in its original formation, and throughout its whole process. It was designed—not to give an idle display of what might be done for the salvation of sinners, and to mock with the discovery of what they were never to partake of—but to effectuate the real emancipation of those who, in God's eternal councils, were chosen to be the vessels of his mercy, and ordained to eternal life. With regard to them, it has a definite and specific aim, which cannot be frustrated by any mistake on the one hand, or by any opposition on the other. It was framed for their benefit—so

that their benefit is just as certainly to be realized, as it has had a place in the measures of God's administration. The very same perfections which invested it with all its excellence and all its capacity, are pledged to secure their participation in whatever good it was intended to communicate. And we may as well think of its utter annihilation, as of their failing to experience that saving efficacy which necessarily belongs to it. The two things are but parts of one whole-both resulting from the same sovereign decree, linked together by indissoluble ties, and terminating in triumphs as real as is the mercy of God or the misery of man. The Lord "shall redeem Israel." No dubiety hangs over their redemption. Not one of them shall be lost. Neither their own perverseness nor the machinations of their enemies can possibly defeat that purpose which embraces their deliverance. And nothing can occur to detract in the very least degree from the certainty of all that blessedness to which they are ultimately destined. For it is the same unerring wisdom. the same Almighty power, the same inflexible rectitude, and the same unchanging faithfulness that laid and executed the plan of redemption, to which the Great Being in whom all these attributes centre bids us look, for carrying it out into the practical results which it was intended to produce, in rectifying the disorders of our fallen

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state, and bringing us back to the state which we primarily occupied in the universe of God.

And while we can rest our belief of this truth on the simple fact, that the plan of redemption as to its inherent sufficiency, and its actual application to the individuals whose interests it comprehends, is one and indivisible, and in neither department susceptible of change, or liable to be frustrated, there is this additional reason for taking that view, that God has promised that it shall accomplish all his good pleasure concerning an apostate world. He has not left us to reasoning or to inferenceand far less to speculation and conjecture. He has declared in explicit terms, and in oft repeated statements, that the gospel shall have its full effect in the salvation of his people-that they shall be brought out of all the tribes, and kindreds, and people, among whom they are scattered, to feel its power and to enjoy its blessings-that it shall be effectually applied to each one of them in whatever corner or in whatever age of the world his lot may be cast-that without a single exception, and beyond all controversy, and in spite of all difficulty and opposition, they shall be rescued from the wretchedness of their condition as sinners, and restored to the purity, and honour, and happiness of their primeval state. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken this; and shall he not perform it? The assurance is given by him for whom it is

impossible to lie or to deceive—to whom truthfulness is as essential as his existence itself—and who, in the history of his church, has already "magnified his word above all his name;" and on that assurance, therefore, we may rely with as implicit confidence, as we can rely upon the continuance of his being, and the stability of his throne.

Nor does this certainty attach merely to their redemption in general. It may be applied to their redemption as to all the various particulars of which it is composed. "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." "Iniquities" is a term of comprehensive import-implying every evil that is connected with, or results from, the first apostacy of man. He who has committed iniquity is under the wrath and curse of God. But his guilt or obligation to punishment does not stand alone-it is allied to the moral corruption of his nature; and his guilt and moral corruption combined, entail upon him, either by judicial sentence or by natural consequence, the manifold temporal distresses and the more awful miseries of eternity to which he is subjected and doomed as a transgressor. Now the gospel does not propose to relieve him from any particular portion of the judgments that thus burden his fate-it proposes to relieve him from them all; it is competent to do so, and it will do so. The

deliverance may not, and it will not be accomplished all at once: but sooner or later it will be realized in every the minutest circumstance. In the end, not one penalty will be left unremitted; not one moral stain uneffaced; not one painful feeling unremoved. Sin, in all its aspects, in all its influence, and in all its effects, shall be totally and for ever taken away. As those to whom this privilege belong, acquire a title to it in its most unqualified sense while sojourning upon earth, so when admitted into heaven, which is its ultimate object and issue, they shall leave behind them every thing that has tarnished its purity or marred its enjoyment, and not a single vestige of evil, of any kind, shall be either felt or feared by them, as they rejoice in the undisturbed possession of it through everlasting ages. And this minuteness of their redemption is not more a result from the constitution and provisions of the gospel scheme, than it is the subject of specific declaration and faithful promise on the part of Him by whom that scheme has been revealed; for you cannot condescend on the most inconsiderable ingredient in that cup of sin and sorrow of which it is their fate to drink, to which there is not a corresponding assurance in that word on which we are taught to hope, that it will be wholly abstracted and

destroyed, either in this world or in that which is to come.

We have said that the redemption here spoken of includes deliverance from all the evils in which sin has involved its victims. But it is evident from the context that it has a special reference to that branch of redemption which is denominated forgiveness. Indeed in other passages of Scripture, redemption and forgiveness are used as synonymous; for example, "In Christ we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." And in the passage before us, the Psalmist, after having intimated strong, and humbling, and distressful convictions of guilt, consoles himself with the belief that "with God there is forgiveness," and takes encouragement to hope for it, from its being announced in the divine word, as a gift ready to be bestowed on those who ask it in the appointed way. And cherishing this belief himself, and the hope founded upon it, he calls upon Israel to entertain the same sentiments, and of course to expect the same blessing. "Let Israel hope in the Lord"-"for he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities," or, he shall forgive Israel all his iniquities.

Now it is obvious from this that the doctrine of forgiveness, being the instantaneous fruit of Christ's death, not to be sought for, because it is already received, is not true: for if it were true the language and conduct of the Psalmist would be in-

consistent and absurd. Why should Israel be told to expect forgiveness from God, if this forgiveness was at that very moment in his possession, in virtue of the great atonement to be made hereafter by the Messiah, and at this time prefigured by the ceremonial law, and in all ages the only foundation of hope? What sense could there be in his asking for that which had been really given? And how could there be any rational consolation arising from the prospective view of what was not a matter of anticipation, but an existing benefit previously made over, and inalienably secured to him?

Similar questions may be asked with respect to David himself. He had committed sin. But why should he have thought of the terrible infliction of God's displeasure, if that displeasure was removed, as it must have been, in the act of forgiveness, which, we are told, is involved in the expiatory sacrifice of the Saviour? should he speak of a thing as yet to come, which on that supposition was truly past and fully realized? And why should he virtually praywhich he does in this psalm—as in another psalm he literally prays, "O Lord, Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great," when this great iniquity was at that very time divinely and wholly pardoned, and could not therefore be made the subject of such a petition? Was David, indeed, so ignorant of the great doctrines of atonement and forgiveness as to fall into such a foolish and hurtful mistake? And was he, though the man according to God's own heart, yet left uninstructed of God in a point of faith and duty so essential for regulating his devotions, so deeply affecting his regards towards the Being whom he worshipped, and so closely connected with his spiritual comfort and happiness?

Nay, but it is not David alone that is concerned in this topic. All the servants of God who are exhibited before us in the Scripture history are placed in the same predicament; and even those who had the advantage of being instructed by our Lord himself, and were supernaturally illuminated for the express purpose of instructing others, will be found, like the Psalmist, proceeding on the ground that God is ready to forgive, and that forgiveness is a blessing that must be sought for, and supplicated as absolutely needed, and not reposed in as a blessing already obtained, and so obtained as to render all future applications for it unnecessary and improper. Did not our Saviour say to the sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee?"* Did not he pray thus for his murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?" + Was not he "exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins"? Did not he commission

^{*} Matt. ix. 2. † Luke xxiii. 34. ‡ Acts v. 31.

Paul to preach to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive* forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Christ?"+ Did not Peter say to Simon the sorcerer, "Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee?" Does not James say, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him?" Does not John affirm that, "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness?" And are not all these passages, and many more that might be adduced, utterly at variance with the idea that the death of Christ is not merely a meritorious cause of forgiveness, or a ground on which Israel may apply and hope to receive that blessing, but is really itself the conveyancer of the blessing, in such a sense as that the moment we think of Christ's death, as an atonement, we ought to think of forgiveness actually bestowed, and of that forgiveness as extending to our whole course of disobedience, from its earliest, down to its remotest period?

Were such an idea founded in truth, is it

^{*} Note A. † Acts xxvi. 18. ‡ Acts viii. 22. || James v. 15. ¶ 1 John i. 9.

possible to conceive that the prophets and saints under the Old Testament dispensation, and that our Lord and his apostles, as promulgators of the New, would have used language, and that too under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so directly and uniformly calculated to enforce upon us a different and an opposite doctrine? If we adopt their phraseology according to its plain and palpable meaning, and if we follow the example which they have set before us, every conviction of sin that we may experience will lead us to ask of God the forgiveness of that sin-not to thank him for the forgiveness of it, as a boon long since conferred, but to be eech him for it, as that which is still wanting, and which he is ready and disposed to grant "to them that ask it in prayer believing?" And while we do this in respect to our own case, will not we do the same thing in respect to others, when we look upon them as transgressors of the divine law, or as going on in a course of wickedness,-not expressing gratitude in their behalf, or seeking that they may be filled with gratitude, as being previously and actually pardoned for the iniquities which they are hourly committing-but expressing gratitude that there is hope for them, founded on the "plenteous redemption," revealed in the gospel, and on that ground imploring God to have mercy on them, and to blot out their trespasses, which if not

blotted out, must terminate in their perdition? Are not these the views which have been held and acted upon by prophets and apostles, and by him who was wiser and greater than them all? And can we entertain different views, or follow a different course, unless we either mean to set their authority at nought, or put upon their language and conduct an interpretation which no rule of interpretation ever adopted by the learned or the unlearned, by saint or by sinner,

can be quoted to justify or support?

But the absurdity and mischief of the doctrine against which I contend are still more extensive. It breaks in upon the established order and moral fitness of God's administration of the gospel, as that is disclosed and explained in his word. I appeal to the whole strain, and to the express declarations of that word, if the forgiveness of sins do not stand in immediate connexion with faith, with repentance, with holiness? It is not meant that these are represented to be conditions of forgiveness, but only that these graces are uniformly announced as understood to constitute the character of those whose sins are forgiven. Is it any where, on any page or in any corner of this record of God's truth, ever insinuated or implied, that any man who is not a believer, who is not a penitent, who is not leading a holy life, is yet in a pardoned state, and has no occasion to apply for

that privilege? No, but the very contrary position is carefully and everywhere inculcated. "He that believeth not," is said to be " condemned already," that is, the sentence of condemnation under which he lies as a sinner is unrecalled—he has not obtained the forgiveness of his sins. " Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon;" an exhortation evidently presupposing, that those who have not returned to God by repentance, have not had the pardon of their sins vouchsafed to them, and are still in a state of guilt, the objects of God's displeasure, and the heirs of hell. And it would be to suppose you altogether unacquainted with your Bible were I to adduce passages, for it is full of such passages, to show, that so long as men are going on in a course of rebellion against God, breaking his commandments, despising his ordinances, leaguing with his foes, his wrath abideth upon them; that they are truly and individually liable to all the penalties which his law ever denounced against them; and that living and dying in this state of alienation, they must be "punished with everlasting destruction" in a future world. And yet, according to the opinion I am combating, it is quite possible that a man may be an unbeliever—that he may be an impenitent

person—that he may be rioting in all the excesses and abominations of profligacy, and habitually violating every law, human and divine; but that all this time, even while he is cherishing that evil heart and exhibiting that wicked character upon which God has pronounced a damnatory sentence-he has obtained from that very God the forgiveness of it all, and may feel just as safe from punishment on account of it as if he had truly believed, and repented, and obeyed the gospel! Why, really, my friends, if such an opinion, an opinion so contradictory to the first principles of practical religion, so inconsistent with the scheme of the gospel, or its warranted application to the objects of divine mercy, and so repugnant to all that the Scriptures contain upon the subject it refers to, if such an opinion can find refuge in the mind of one thinking and intelligent Christian, I can figure no absurdity, however unscriptural and extravagant it may be, which may not be greedily swallowed, and doated upon as a precious and consolatory truth.

I have not yet presented to you the doctrine in question in all its extent, nor have I yet made all the remarks upon it which a full exposure of it requires. But I find that I must reserve what I have farther to say respecting it for future consideration. In the meantime, I trust you have heard enough to satisfy you, that even in the li-

mited shape in which we have made it the topic of discussion, it is neither true, nor rational, nor safe. And why, let me ask, are we called upon to embrace what is so destitute of these estimable and essential properties? For no other reasonthat I can perceive than this, that it supports a new hypothesis that has been got up on the point of a sinner's justification by faith. Many of us thought that this point had been known and settled ages ago. But this is a little age of novelties and wonders. Our ears hear strange things, our understandings are confounded with absurd things, and our hearts distressed with sad and fearful things. And without all doubt, one of the most extraordinary and affecting things of the present era is, the discovery that till now the people of God have not known what justification means-that the saints who, in what were accounted the best and brightest days of the church, rejoiced in that blessed truth, rejoiced in that of which they were entirely ignorant,-that the redeemed who surround the throne on high, and praise the Saviour who brought them there, have reached heaven by a pathway very different from the one pointed out by himself in the gospel,-and that we are still in gross and perilous darkness concerning the method and the ground of a sinner's acceptance with God, in spite of all our advantages, of all our information, and all our

experience. To maintain and vindicate the novel discovery, we are to admit, it seems, that the forgiveness of sins is a blessing already received, and not to be asked for in prayer, as no longer needed, and that when forgiveness is mentioned in the Bible, whether under the idea of redemption or any other equivalent word, it does not mean forgiveness as the word is universally understood, the remission of sins, but only a sense of forgiveness, or a feeling, conviction, knowledge, that forgiveness became ours the instant that Christ's atoning work was finished on the cross. So that when our Saviour prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do,"-he did not pray that his murderers might receive from the mercy of God the actual pardon of the crime they were only then perpetrating, but merely a sense or feeling that this sin was already blotted out, and would not be remembered against them any more! And when, in the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer, we say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," we must hold ourselves as saying, "Give us a sense of the forgiveness of our trespasses against thee, as we give to them who trespass against us a sense of the forgiveness of their trespasses!"

It is almost impossible to treat such a tenet and such a mode of construction as what we are now dis-

proving with the gravity that is due to sacred subjects. Yet this is pressed upon us every day as that which has been found out by theological adventurers, or imagined by well meaning visionaries. and hailed and welcomed by the simple ones who follow in their train; and which is recommended by the delusive and groundless notion that it attaches more glory to the salvation of the gospel, by investing it with greater freeness and greater fulness than it can possess on any other supposition. Whatever it may do in that way, it is unsound, it is untrue, it is dangerous, it is inadmissible: for it involves this monstrous proposition, that a man may be forgiven, and is to be considered as forgiven-as having that forgiveness, which is the richest blessing in the treasury of divine grace, and which is so important as to stand in holy writ for the whole of redemptionthat a man may possess this blessing, though he has never fled to the Saviour who alone can confer it-that he may possess it, though he has never yet felt one regret or shed one tear for any one of the sins, which notwithstanding are all completely pardoned and washed away-that he may possess it, though day after day, and year after year, he is persevering in all those pollutions which distinguish the unregenerate nature, and "for which thing's sake," we are expressly told, "the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience!"

My friends, let me state to you the old, the tried, the scriptural, the rational, the true doctrine on this all-important topic as it is contained in our Confession of Faith, which has this at least to distinguish it from the fanciful theories to which it stands opposed—that while we deem it consistent with the Bible, it is at all events and most indisputably consistent with itself.

"God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did in the fulness of time die for their sins, and rise again for their justification. Nevertheless they are not justified until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are justified. And although they can never fall from the state of justification; yet they may by their sins fall under God's fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance."*

^{*} Chap. XI. Sec. iv. and v.

SERMON IV.

PSALM CXXX. 7, 8.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

In discoursing to you on these words, we have been considering the grounds on which Israel is exhorted by the Psalmist to hope in God. And last Lord's day we were employed in illustrating the third ground of hope here mentioned, namely, that the Lord shall "redeem Israel from all his iniquities." This contains an assurance that the plenteous redemption provided in the gospel will be actually conferred, applied in all its extent, and finally and everlastingly enjoyed. In discussing this part of our subject, we took occasion to combat and disprove the erroneous tenet which has been held by some, and which consists in maintaining that the death of Christ not only secured but

conveyed the blessing of forgiveness, and that this blessing being already possessed by sinners of mankind, it is unnecessary for them to ask it in prayer.

We drew our argument from various scriptural statements. And, in the course of our observations, we hinted at the interpretation put upon the term "forgiveness," in order to get quit of the reasoning founded upon such statements as those that we quoted from the Bible. The interpretation alluded to is, that "forgiveness" means a sense or feeling of forgiveness. But we demonstrated to you, by texts of Scripture, that this is utterly inadmissible, and that such a mode of interpretation converts the dictates of the Spirit of truth and wisdom into palpable falsehood and utter nonsense. We shall see more proofs of this as we advance with our subject. I think it expedient, however, at this stage of our argument, to call your attention to the point as one of most material moment. To say that "forgiveness" means a sense of forgiveness, is to beg the question-it is to take for granted what remains to be proved -it is to assume, as the foundation of a system, what is not only unsupported by any sound and valid reasoning, but what is inconsistent with and contrary to the Divine testimony, as contained in the volume of inspiration. Just take your Bibles, and read all the passages in which forgiveness of

sins is mentioned, and see, from the nature of the subject, and the circumstances that accompany it, and the kind of phraseology employed in speaking of it, whether it means forgiveness as commonly understood, or only a sense of that forgiveness-whether it means forgiveness as a blessing already possessed, though not attended with the feeling or persuasion of its being possessed, or as a blessing that is still needed, and for which application must be made in faith and prayerwhether it means remission of sins, so that the punishment due for sin will not thereafter be inflicted, or a mere consciousness that this remission was long ago made over to the individual, and such a satisfaction as that consciousness is calculated to produce. Let me again adduce the two instances which I formerly referred to, as at once affording evidence themselves of the absurdity I am exposing, and furnishing you with the method by which I would have you try all the other passages in which the term occurs.

When Christ was upon the cross, he prayed thus for his murderers: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Now, if our Saviour knew that the crime which his enemies were in the act of perpetrating when he offered up this prayer, was already forgiven, would he have couched his prayer in such terms as he is here said to have employed? Would not he

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have, some how or other, intimated that this was the existing fact, and only asked that the guilty Jews might be visited with a sense or conviction of this, hitherto unknown, blessedness on their spiritual lot? And supposing that their transgression, not yet completed, was not yet forgiven, and that his petition meant to implore a remission of the penalty to which it subjected them, could he have made use of language to express his meaning different from that which the evangelist has put upon record? It is clear, beyond all controversy, that, if the import of forgiveness be what our antagonists assert, our Saviour could not have selected phraseology for giving vent to the desire which, on that hypothesis, he intended to offer up, more calculated to mislead all who heard it, or more opposite to what such a hypothesis would naturally have suggested, and absolutely required. He is alleged to have merely wished that God would impress the minds of his murderers with a sense of the forgiveness of the murder, as a blessing previously and independently of all prayer, conferred upon them; and yet he speaks, when intimating this wish, exactly in the same words as if he knew that the forgiveness was not yet vouchsafed, and that, if it were to be withheld, they could not escape the punishment due to such a heinous and aggravated offence ! And then he adds, as an extenuation of their offence, "for they know not what they do,"—a circumstance which might be naturally and consistently pleaded when imploring a remission of punishment, but is really quite preposterous and senseless when urged with a view to enforce any suit for awakening in the minds of the ferocious and blood-thirsty multitude a comfortable feeling that the horrid guilt they were at the very instant contracting, had been pardoned of God for his own sake, even before they had begun to commit it!

Again, there is the following petition in what is commonly called the Lord's Prayer :-- "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Now, it is said that our trespasses against God are already forgiven-and that, when we are required to pray for that forgiveness, we are required to pray for a sense or internal conviction that the forgiveness actually belongs to us, it having become ours solely in virtue of Christ's death, and altogether irrespectively of any thing in our character or conduct. But, to say nothing of such an arbitrary mode of explaining the word, how does this tally with the second and qualifying clause of the petition, "as we forgive them that trespass against us?" Forgiveness must have the same substantial import in the second clause that it has in the first-that is, we are supposed to exercise towards our fellow-men the very same thing in relation to the injuries they have done to us, that we beg God to exercise towards ourselves in relation to the injuries that we have done to Him-to his character, his law, his glory. And can we really speak of giving to our fellow-creatures a sense of the forgiveness of those wrongs which we have suffered at their hands, without violating all the proprieties of thought and of expression? Even though we could speak of this with any measure of correctness, does not the phrase presuppose that the forgiveness is bestowed upon our offending fellow-men? And yet where is this mentioned or whence is such a meaning to be extracted? And if the second clause of the petition truly and necessarily bears that we do not subject others to the retribution which they deserve and have provoked by their cruel or unjust treatment of us, the first clause must as truly and necessarily bear that we pray God not to subject us to the retribution which he might justly exact from us, on account of our violations of his righteous command-If we make forgiveness to mean a sense of forgiveness in both clauses of the petition, we shall utter a gross absurdity when we offer such a prayer to God, for it will then be, "Give us a sense of forgiveness of our trespasses against thee, as we give to others a sense of the forgiveness of their trespasses against us." And if we make

forgiveness to mean a sense of forgiveness in the first clause, but attach to the word its commonly understood meaning, as it occurs in the second clause, we shall then deprive the petition of all propriety and consistency, for our prayer will run thus, "Give us a sense of the forgiveness of our trespasses against thee, as we give to others the actual remission of all the evil that they merited and had incurred by their trespasses against us." But if, adopting the plain obvious common sense construction of the words, we attach to them the meaning which they have been always believed to contain, till the rage for new theories of the gospel commenced, the petition will be perfectly intelligible, one part of it will completely harmonise with another, and the whole will be agreeable to the analogy of Scripture. It will be this, " Remove the displeasure which we have incurred, inflict not the punishment to which we have become obnoxious, by reason of our unworthy and injurious deportment towards thee our God, as we suppress the displeasure that we justly feel, and remit the punishment that we might justly award, to those of our neighbours who have done wrong to us; and if we are relentless and vindictive towards them, we imprecate upon ourselves all the indignation and penalties which we have deserved at thy hand, and which would otherwise have been mercifully averted."

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These two instances we conceive sufficient to settle the point. But we must add this general remark, that if such a groundless and gratuitous mode of interpreting the words of Scripture be admitted, we have no record of divine truth on which we can place reliance, and any sentiment, however ridiculous and false, may be extracted from the Bible. The speculatists in our eye must be allowed to hold that forgiveness means only a sense of forgiveness; and on that assumption, in part at least, they straightway build up their system. Why, then, let me be allowed to hold that holiness means the idea of being holy, and that heaven means the confidence that we will get to heaven; and I will prove to you in two sentences that the most wicked men are the most holy, and that heaven will be the portion of those of whom God has said that they shall never see it. Away with such arbitrary and dogmatical construction of language! Away with such arrant trifling in matters of faith and salvation! Away with such shameful perversion of all that is plainest and most important in the word of The danger of this may be seen in the very case to which we are referring; for those who are pleased to affirm that forgiveness means a sense of forgiveness, are going from one erroneous opinion to another, are daily multiplying their delusions, and find nothing too extravagant

or too monstrous for their belief. We have seen that they maintain remission of sins to be a blessing actually secured and made over by Christ's death; and they maintain this not only with respect to those who shall be finally saved, but also with respect to every individual of the human race. Yes, my friends, they do hold, and they do urge it upon us, and they do make it a fundamental doctrine of the gospel, that every man's sins are already pardoned, and that in this respect there is no difference between him who lives as a saint and him who lives as a sinner—between him who dies in rank infidelity* and him who dies in the faith of Jesus Christ.

Let us now proceed to the exposure of this gross and perilous error. And may the Spirit of truth give in his direction and aid!

1. And in the first place, I refer you for this purpose to the statements of Holy Writ. Take your Bible in your hands, and go along with me while I demonstrate to you how much it is sinned against by the doctrine we are rebutting. The passages I might adduce are numberless. I shall, therefore, select a few, from which you will find the inference irresistible.

(1.) The first I mention is the text on which

^{*} Final unbelief, we understand, is the only sin that remains unforgiven. Of that more hereafter. But all the sins that precede final unbelief are forgiven.

we are discoursing, "And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Had the Psalmist, who spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, known and believed that all men were pardoned, would he have used such language as this to induce Israel to hope in the Lord? Would not he have simply and strongly stated that fact as a part of their history, and as a part of the history of all preceding generations of the children of men? And would not he have avoided any expression that had the appearance of limiting the bestowal of the privilege to a future period, and to a peculiar character? But how differently does he announce the ground of expectation and encouragement! He speaks of himself as having committed grievous sins, and he speaks also-not of his conviction that they had been formerly or lately pardoned-but of his hope that they would be pardoned, because with God there was forgiveness, and God would be faithful to his word of promise. And he immediately exhorts Israel to entertain the same hope on the same grounds. Israel had committed transgressions, but says the Psalmist, do not despair of having these forgiven,-for God, whose indignation you have provoked, is merciful, and there is plenteous redemption with him, and he is ready to redeem Israel from all his iniquities, or, according to the context, to forgive them all. At the moment he said

this, neither he nor Israel thought that the sins referred to were actually pardoned; they were only eucouraged to believe and hope that God would pardon them; and he does not say or insinuate that the Israel whom he comforts, and all human beings besides, were on a level in this respect; but it is to Israel as possessing some peculiar character,-and that word, you will observe, does indicate the possession of such a character in contradistinction to the rest of the world,-it is to Israel as possessing some peculiar character that he addresses the consolation that arises from the prospect of obtaining needed forgiveness. So that, according to the lesson taught in the words of our text, not only are sinners not forgiven in advance or beforehand, but this forgiveness is limited to a certain specified class, and not bestowed indiscriminately on the whole human race. "God shall redeem, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities;" and on the ground of this assurance, Israel may hope to receive a full and a free forgiveness.

(2.) Look next to John's gospel, chap. iii. ver. 36. There you find this declaration, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Now, my friends, are you prepared to admit that a man who has the wrath of God abiding on him, is ne-

vertheless pardoned of God? Would not that involve a contradiction? Do not you perceive that a sinner may either endure the wrath or receive the forgiveness of God, but that both of them cannot exist at the same time? The wrath of God is that which is due to the sinner, which is threatened against him, which must fall upon him in such inflictions as the righteousness of the great Lawgiver has prescribed. And what is, or what can be, the removal of that wrath, but just the blessing which is denominated forgiveness? Or what can be the continuance of that wrath but the withholding of forgiveness? The two things are obviously equivalent. And, therefore, it follows, of course, that those who are unbelieving have not obtained the pardon of their sins, it being explicitly declared, that on them "the wrath of God abideth."* And as all men do not believe, the conclusion is undeniable, that all men are not forgiven. Those only are forgiven who do believe. The privilege is attached to the character -and as the character does not belong to all, so neither does the privilege belong to all.

Consider, in connexion with this, the 18th verse of the same chapter: "He that believeth on him"—Christ—" is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." Sin is a transgression

^{*} Note B.

of the law of God: and the sinner, having transgressed the law, is condemned to suffer the penalty with which it was sanctioned. words we have quoted most distinctly assert, that there are some with regard to whom the penalty is remitted, and others with regard to whom the penalty remains. The former are not condemned -they are no longer obnoxious to punishmentthey are judicially acquitted—in other words, they are pardoned; and they are thus pardoned, as believers in the only, the appointed Saviour. But the latter are in a different predicament—in the very opposite state. They are condemned already—not already pardoned, but already con-demned—their transgressions have subjected them to the primitive sentence denounced by the law, and passed upon them by the Judge; and this is their unavoidable fate. They are not pardoned, because they have rejected him, through faith in whom alone they could be pardoned; and they cannot be pardoned so long as they persevere in their unbelief, which, indeed, aggravates as well as confirms their guilt and their condemnation, because they obstinately refuse the interposition and mediation of the only-begotten Son of God.

This is the only meaning of which the verse that we have quoted is fairly susceptible. It connects forgiveness with the possession of faith in the Son of God; and as it is only some that possess this faith, it cannot be that all men, whether they have faith or not, are actually and truly forgiven.

(3.) The next Scripture, to which I would direct your attention, is the 32d Psalm, at the beginning. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven-whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Observe now the various terms employed to express the spiritual condition of him who is here said to be blessed. The privilege that constitutes his happy state, is not merely called the forgiveness of his transgression, but also the covering of his sin, and the not imputing iniquity to him-which expressions cannot by any means be understood to signify a sense of forgiveness—but forgiveness itself, the act of not looking as it were at the sinner's guilt, but treating it as if it were not seen and did not exist, and the act of not charging it against him, and making him responsible for it, but cancelling the obligation to punishment which it imposed upon him, according to the award and the demand of divine justice. And then take notice that the forgiveness thus described is limited as to the objects on whom it is bestowed-for if it had been conferred upon all without exception, blessedness would have been predicated of all, instead of being mentioned as belonging to a certain privileged number. And this appears in a

still stronger light when we find the privileged number who are blessed in consequence of being forgiven, represented as those "in whose spirit there is no guile"-a moral quality which unquestionably is far from being universally prevalent. Nay, in the fifth verse, we have a still more conclusive proof of the fact-for there the Psalmist adduces himself as a specific example of the persons by whom the privilege of forgiveness and its accompanying blessedness are exclusively possessed. And he thus expounds his case, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." He was a true penitenthe made an ingenuous and sorrowful confession of his guilt before God-and it is with this grace that the divine forgiveness stands connected, and all the safety and felicity involved in that precious gift. But surely repentance forms an exception to the general character of mankind; it is not exercised by all men; and consequently the forgiveness, from which it is evidently inseparable, is not communicated to all men.

(4.) In Acts ii. 38, you read thus:—"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost." The Jews had crucified Jesus,

notwithstanding the proofs he gave of his Divine mission. In doing so, they had contracted heinous guilt; and the apostle accused them of that crime, and set it before them in a strong light, by introducing the divine testimony which was afforded to his innocence and his mediatorship, by his being raised from the dead and called to the right hand of God. And what is the object of the apostle in thus addressing them? Is it not to make them sensible of the danger in which they were involved, and to persuade them to escape from it in the only way by which their deliverance could be effected? He is anxious that they should experience the remission, not only of this particular sin which was so aggravated, but of all the sins with which they stood chargeable in the sight of God, and which made them liable to the wrath to come. Had their sins been already remitted, he would not have used language which made that event future, and taught them to consider it as an object of desire and pursuit. still less would he have pointed out the way by which they were to attain it, and without which it would not be bestowed on any one of them. Could a single individual to whom the exhortation was addressed understand it to mean, that his iniquities were now blotted out-that he stood acquitted in the judgment of heaven-that he had no reason to apprehend the infliction of punishment? Or if he could have supposed by any uncommon sagacity and acuteness, that the apostle meant to express or to insinuate such a thing, yet what could he next make of the repentance and the baptism that were pressed upon him with an evident view to the remission of his sins? On the ordinary construction of the phrase, " remission of sins," he could have had no difficulty in perceiving that unless he repented and was baptized, or embraced the gospel, he must continue in a state of guilt and condemnation-but if his guilt was so pardoned as that he was as free from it, as though he had been already in heaven, what power of intellect could enable him to perceive the connexion between what he was required to do, and the privilege alleged to have been possessed?*

The same strain of remark is applicable to the exhortation given by Peter on another occasion, (Acts iii. 19.) "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out—." The exhortation plainly and necessarily proceeds upon the fact that the sins of those to whom it is given, are not yet pardoned—that pardon will be granted to them only if repentance and conversion takes place—that if they do not experience the change implied in these terms, their "deny-

^{*} See Note C.

ing the Holy One," and "killing the Prince of life," along with every offence they had ever committed, must remain as causes of certain and awful condemnation. Again we disclaim the idea of ascribing merit or causality to repentance and conversion. What we simply and singly assert is, that repentance, conversion, and the blotting out of sins, are so conjoined, that the one cannot be separated from the other. And, consequently, as every man does not repent and is not converted, so every man has not his sins blotted out, or, in other words, is not pardoned.*

(5.) Turn now to Matthew's Gospel, chap. vi. verses 14 and 15, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." This is an explanatory comment on the petition for forgiveness in the Lord's prayer, which we formerly considered; and we then showed that forgiveness here cannot possibly mean a sense or feeling of forgiveness, but only the act of forgiveness or the remission of sins itself. Well then, there are two classes of men specified by our Lord,-men that do forgive others, and men that do not forgive others. And his specification is not hypothetical—for we see it realized every day in the world. But he tells us distinct-

[·] See Note D.

ly, not merely that both of them are not already forgiven of God, but that both of them never shall be forgiven. Those who refuse to forgive their offending brethren, cannot be forgiven of him so long as they are guilty of cherishing such unhallowed dispositions. It is not meant that we can merit or purchase forgiveness of God by exercising forgiveness towards others. Such a meaning is neither consistent with gospel truth, nor is it in the least degree essential to our argument. We have only to do with the simple and most intelligible statement of our Lord-that there is a class of sinners, from whom God is pleased to withhold the blessing in question. On whatever ground, or for whatever purpose, he makes the distinction, it is quite certain that the distinction is made by him. While our forgiveness of the injuries done us by our fellow men, is to be honoured or attended with the forgiveness of our own offences from our heavenly Father, every one of the children of men in whom that virtue is not found, is shut out from any expectation of the privilege, and must be considered as still under the curse of the divine law, and still needing actual deliverance from it. And this being the case, surely no man who believes what Christ says can ever reconcile it to his understanding, his conscience, or his piety, to believe also what those say who so strenuously maintain that the whole human race have been really and absolutely forgiven by the death of the Saviour, that they do not need to hope or to pray for that blessing,—being already in possession of it, and that all which they require now is only a sense or feeling that all their sins are indeed and for ever pardoned.

(6.) I request you next to look at Matthew ix. 2-8, compared with Luke v. 20-25, there we have an account of a cure performed by our Lord on a man who was "sick of the palsy." forming the cure, Christ said to the poor man, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." The question here is, whether Christ actually forgave his sins at this moment, or whether he only announced a forgiveness which previously existed. But the circumstances of the story make it clear that the former is the idea conveyed to us by the inspired Evangelist. our Saviour immediately proceeded to work a miracle of healing on the paralytic, by making him instantly to arise and take up his bed, and go away to his own house. And he did this, not merely to restore the man to health, but to establish his right to forgive sin,—a right which he has just exercised, and his pretensions to which the Scribes and Pharisees, denominated blasphe-This could not possibly mean a right to announce to the man that his sins were alreadybefore he spoke, and before he exerted any volition on the subject-blotted out and forgiven. His enemies understood him in a different sense :

they understood him as actually on the instant pardoning the man's transgressions, and in that view it was that they censured him; they said, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?"-plainly meaning that he was then affecting to exert a power, and was pretending to possess a knowledge, which belonged to God only. And our Saviour, instead of saying any thing to indicate that they mistook the matter, proceeded on the supposition that they were quite correct in their conceptions of what he had been doing, and effectuated the man's instantaneous and complete recovery-not to show that this man was pardoned before, but that he had authority to pronounce that sentence of absolution which had so much excited their displeasure. "That ye may know," says he, "that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." And then if the man's sins were already forgiven, just as all the sins of all the people present, and of all the inhabitants of the earth were forgiven, what propriety could there be in our Lord saying to him, "Son, be of good cheer?" Was there any thing that peculiarly called on him to be joyful, when he had only what was common to all, and was still a paralytic besides? Or why was the universal fact of men's sins being already pardoned, applied to him and nobody else? Or how came it that he and the persons in company were kept in ignorance of a doctrine in which they were

all equally concerned, and left, from what our Saviour said and did on the occasion, to conclude that no such thing existed as universal pardon? Nothing, in short, can be more distinct and intelligible than the meaning of this narrative. Christ performed two acts. He performed them upon a paralytic man. He performed them on the same occasion, and before the same company. He performed the one to prove that he had a divine right to perform the other. He performed the act of miraculously curing the sick of the palsy, and he did so avowedly that he might vindicate what he had been accused of blasphemy, for pretending to do a little before—for giving to the sick of the palsy the pardon of all his sins.

(7.) The only other portion of Scripture that I deem it necessary to adduce at present, is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, viii. 10—13. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the House of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people; and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord; for all shall know me from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no m ore." The apostle is employed in proving that

Christ is the Mediator of a better covenant than that was which was managed by the ministration of the Jewish priesthood: And for this purpose he produces a prediction from Jeremiah, which shows not only the promise of God concerning this matter, but points out the peculiar nature and properties of the new covenant which was thus predicted and promised. He describes God's covenant with the true Israel-those properties of it at least which go to demonstrate its difference from, and its superiority over, the covenant he had made with the ancient Israel. And observe, that while this covenant is made with a chosen people, to the exclusion of all others, so the properties which he ascribes to those who are within its pale, must be considered as characteristics of it in contradistinction to what marks out those who are left without its pale. Now, look at the passage, and you will see that one great distinguishing property is the infusion of sanctifying grace, or of. personal holiness-consisting of knowledge of God's will, love to it, and observance of it—as contained in the tenth and eleventh verses. And then you will see that the other great distinguishing property is the conveyance of pardoning mercy: "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness"or as the clause is in Jeremiah, "I will forgive their iniquity,"-" and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Can any thing, my

friends, be clearer or more conclusive than this? The privilege of forgiveness—so expressed here as to take away all colour for calling it a sense of forgiveness—the privilege of forgiveness is mentioned as a thing hereafter to be bestowed-it is to be conferred upon a chosen, peculiar, covenanted people-and whether it comes before, or follows after, or goes along with sanctification-that. is of no consequence to our present argumentit is to belong to those who are at the same time walking in the ways of holiness. In order, therefore, that forgiveness may be justly accounted the privilege of all men, it is requisite that all men be walking in the ways of holiness-which is notoriously untrue; and it is requisite that all men be a chosen, peculiar, covenanted people-which is a contradiction in terms; and, moreover, it is requisite that I will forgive Israel, be held equivalent to I have forgiven all men-which is altogether absurd.

It will not do to say here that the forgiveness of the true Israel is not incompatible with the doctrine of universal forgiveness, and that, indeed, the forgiveness of all men necessarily includes the forgiveness of that particular class. This may be true as an abstract proposition, for, indeed, nothing can be more palpably true than that if all are forgiven, then every one of that all is forgiven. But the proposition is not true as applied to the

case under consideration. The incompatibility of the two statements is almost self-evident. For the forgiveness here mentioned is mentioned as the characteristic peculiarity of those who constitute the true Israel, chosen out of the world, and distinguished from the world by a certain definite character. And if it is their characteristic peculiarity—that does effectually, and in terms, exclude all others from any participation in it. Nothing can be the distinction of one which equally belongs to all. And if it be, as it assuredly is, the doctrine of the Bible that forgiveness of sins belongs only to the true Israel, as described by the Prophet and the Apostle, then to maintain that it belongs to those who do not come under that description, or that it belongs to all men, while it is confessed and undeniable that a great proportion of men have the very opposite characteristics, is to contradict the doctrine of the Bible, and to confound distinctions which the authority of God has established, as important and essential in the dispensation of his mercy, and in his government of the world.

Passages of Scripture, to the same effect, might be indefinitely multiplied;* but enough has been adduced to overturn and expose that principle of universal pardon, against which we are called to

[·] See Note E.

contend as one of the prevailing heresies of the present day. And we may now ask whether those who maintain and inculcate it, can bring forward any distinct statement, or any explicit declaration, in which it is either directly taught, or plainly and necessarily implied. We challenge them to instance a single verse, or a single clause of a verse, in the whole compass of revelation, that gives any countenance to their dogma. It is not gratuitous assertions respecting God, as a God whose very name is love, that we want. It is not abstract reasonings on his character and administration, that we want. It is not finely-constructed and attractive theories of what the gospel is supposed to be, that we want. Even on these grounds we have no fear of meeting our opponents triumphantly. But what we desiderate, in this stage of our progress, is any scriptural declaration which they can produce, and set in opposition to those which we have been submitting to your attention as indisputably, out and out, hostile to their sentiments. Such they have not found, and such they cannot find. We appeal "to the law and to the testimony"-and we know where it is said, " If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." From the Scriptures which we have set before you, it is evident that they not only do not speak according to this word, but that they flatly contradict itnot willingly we grant-but really and continually-and, therefore, they are in darkness on this most momentous article of faith-deluded themselves, and wholly unqualified to be the guides and instructors of others. It is not the plain written record that they look to, and walk by as their oracle-but a mere theory spun out of their fancies and feelings, referring to the record in some general points, but entirely at variance with it as to the fundamental point in question, and constructed with the view of giving to God a glory which he does not assert for himself, and a richness to the gospel which its own divine and authoritative testimony entirely disclaims. On this ground alone, were there no other-on the ground that it is opposed to a multitude of Scriptures on the one hand, and not sanctioned or supported by a single affirmation of Scripture on the other, we hesitate not to reject it as unsound, untenable, and dangerous.

Perhaps it will be said that every thing in the Bible which speaks of Christ having died for the world or for all men, is favourable to the doctrine of universal pardon. No such thing. Even supposing that these expressions are to be taken literally, and that they are not justly and necessarily limited by the context or by the indisputable truths with which they are associated, still they do not amount to any thing like an authority for

the doctrine we are combating. In that case the death of Christ is nothing more than a provision made by the mercy and wisdom of God, which is capable of securing, and may be made available for the forgiveness of every sinner or of all men.* But there is not a syllable, declaring or implying that every sinner, or that all men are actual partakers of its pardoning virtue; and that is the position that is to be proved. Christ during his life had a power given him that was adequate to the healing of all the sick throughout the land. But all were not, therefore, healed-those only were healed on whom he chose to put forth his miraculous strength, and who came to him or were brought to him in the exercise of faith. And in like manner the death of Christ having in it such a worth as is equal to cancel all the guilt that ever was or ever will be committed by the human race. and possessing this worth by the constitution of grace which appointed it as essential to the expiation o sin, as well as from the inherent, infinite dignity of the Saviour, does not therefore imply that all the transgressions of all men have actually been washed away by it. And while the one is not on any sound maxim of reasoning a necessary consequence of the other, we are assured by the word of God, that it is not a consequence at all-but,

^{*} See Note F.

on the contrary, that the death of Christ operates that effect on those only who are distinguished by a particular state and character-all which is clearly evidenced by such passages as say that " whosoever believeth shall receive the remission of sins"-that they who "repent and are converted shall have their sins blotted out"-that the Lord shall grant forgiveness to Israel, or "redeem Israel from all his iniquities."* And if pardon is limited to such as are thus specified and characterized in the sacred volume, this honour and privilege cannot upon any conceivable ground, and cannot without stultifying the oracles of truth, and cannot without making the Spirit of God deny himself, be extended to every individual of the apostate family of man. This is what we hold on the authority of that book, from which all our knowledge of the Gospel is to be derived, on the sayings of which all our hopes must be founded, and out of which we are all at last to be judged by him who has inspired and given it.

My friends, I am dwelling long upon this subject. But I am influenced by a conviction that its importance, both intrinsic and relative, demands for it a full and lengthened illustration. And in commenting on so many passages of Scripture, I have had it in view not only to expose the error under consideration, by throwing upon it the

light of God's own word, but also to point out the mode of correctly interpreting the Scripture, and thus to prevent you from being so easily misled by those who, in labouring to imbue your minds with their opinions, either pervert the truth before they offer it to your acceptance, or so fill you with amiable prepossessions, and so charm you with beautiful theories, that you never see or arrive at the truth at all.

SERMON V.

PSALM CXXX. 7, 8.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy; and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

The Psalmist exhorts Israel to hope in the Lord on certain grounds, or for certain reasons, which he specifies. The last of these consists in the assurance given, that the redemption which God in his mercy has provided, he will most unquestionably bestow upon Israel. In the illustration of this particular, we noticed the connexion here stated between privilege and character. The correlative term to redemption is not every sinner or all men, but Israel. He shall redeem,—not mankind at large, but only Israel, every one that is included under that denomination, from all his iniquities. And here we were called upon to notice the heresy of universal pardon,

which has been lately revived,-for though some of our would-be theological guides seem to speak of it as if it were a recent discovery, it is in truth of very ancient origin, and is one of those monstrous things which the human heart, ever fertile in error, did not wait till now, to gender and to propagate,-we were called upon, I say, to notice the heresy of universal pardon which has been lately revived, and modified by its composition with other heresies as bad as itself. And, in the course of what we took occasion to say upon it, we showed you, first, that forgiveness, as used in Scripture, does not mean, according to the modern universalists, a mere sense or feeling of forgiveness, but the actual remission of sins, or deliverance from obligation to punishment on account of sin; and, secondly, we showed you that forgiveness, or the remission of sins is, according to scriptural statement, connected with the possession of certain qualities of character, and so connected as clearly and necessarily to exclude from the benefit all to whom these qualities do not belong. The passages to this effect that are to be found in the Bible are numerous, unequivocal, and explicit. Some of them we produced and applied to the subject, -showing you, as we went along, how fatal they are to the tenet of universal pardon.

We followed up our references to these Scrip-

tures by challenging the assertors of universal pardon to produce a single passage of the Bible, which affirms their proposition. When we made this challenge, we did not mean to say that they can produce nothing from that volume which they so interpret as to answer their purpose, or which may not in its insulated state, and to a superficial eve, have the appearance of favouring their views. For there never was, since the Christian record existed, an opinion, however extravagant or impious, for which its abettors did not appeal to Holy Writ. We are quite aware that our opponents have their texts ready on demand; that they have a considerable number of them; that they can expatiate and dogmatise upon these most fluently; and that could they but shut out all the rest of revelation from our view, and prevent us from exercising the powers of common understanding, they might be wonderfully successful in puzzling and confuting us: and in all this, they do but practise the very tactics which Socinians and unbelievers have always practised in their warfare against the truth and the doctrines of the gospel. We do not intend to blink the scriptural authorities with which they have attempted to back their heresy. On the contrary, so far as they are known to us, we shall occupy ourselves by and bye in pointing out their total insufficiency to prove an iota of what they are so confidently advanced to support. In the meantime, we aver, that there is not one of them; nor is there a single syllable in the volume of inspiration, declaring that every sinner, or that every individual of the human race, is an actual partaker of the pardoning virtue of Christ's death. This we shall illustrate at some length when we discuss the scriptural proofs, as they are called, which have been adduced on the other side. But we cannot help submitting it even now to your consideration, as of paramount and vital moment.

We bring many, many passages from the word of God which do not seem to imply, and which do not leave us to infer, but which declare expressly, and in so many words, that forgiveness of sins is bestowed on those only who are distinguished by certain specified characters, and that all who are destitute of these characters are denied that boon. But we repeat it, there is not a sentence, nor a clause of a sentence, in any part of the divine record, which asserts, that every sinner is really and already pardoned in consequence of Christ's death, or in consequence of any arrangement or dispensation whatsoever. If there were, you must see at once that there would be no escaping the conclusion, that, on this infinitely important point, the Bible contradicts itself, and is thus deprived of its most essential claims to our belief. But there is no such inconsistency in the sacred

volume, and there is no such unrighteousness in its divine author. We owe the allegation to that partial view of things, to that love of theory, to that passion for something new, to that pride of maintaining what has been once professed, from which even good men are not always exempt, and which leads them to indulge in the most senseless paradoxes, or even to sacrifice the authority of God's word, by making it deny in one place what it has affirmed in another. But we reiterate the position, that while the Scriptures often announce in explicit terms, that only a certain number of sinful men, marked and designated by definite characteristics, shall obtain forgiveness of their sins, and that the blessing cannot, and will not be extended to those in whom these characteristics are wanting, the Scriptures nowhere announce in explicit terms, or in terms at all, that each individual transgressor may lay his account with receiving it, or may consider himself as one on whom it has been already bestowed. And in such a case, it is not difficult to determine on which side of the controversy the truth is to be sought for and found.

2. We now proceed to show you, that the doctrine of universal pardon necessarily leads to the doctrine of universal salvation, meaning by salvation the sinner's final admission into heaven, together with every blessing, such as acceptance,

sanctification, and so forth, which that issue pre-

supposes or pre-requires.

It is not our intention at present to prove that the doctrine of universal salvation is unscriptural and unsound, nor does the discussion in which we are engaged call, upon us to do so. will venture to maintain such a tenet who have any belief in the Bible as an inspired document, and any knowledge or comprehension of its con-If there are persons who hold it, still it is not with them we are contending. Those with whom we are contending profess to reject, and to deprecate, and to abhor it, as much as we can do. And, therefore, with them, and with all who are of the same opinion on that point, the argument we have announced is a fair one, and must be held to be conclusive as it is fair. If the principle of universal pardon is such as to establish the principle of universal salvation, or necessarily to infer it, and if you are satisfied that the principle of universal salvation is false and inadmissible, then you cannot possibly or consistently adopt the principle of universal pardon. This is self-evident and needs no illustration.

Now what is the forgiveness which is said to be bestowed upon every sinner? It is the remission or the cancelling of that penalty to which he had become subject in consequence of breaking the divine law, -- a penalty consisting in the loss of God's favour, and in liability to the infliction of God's wrath. He who is forgiven is no longer exposed to this punishment, but is entirely and for ever delivered from it. And who does not perceive at one glance the vast importance, the unspeakable value of such a blessing? So important and so valuable is it accounted in the book of inspiration, that it is there spoken of as equivalent to the whole of redemption, forgiveness and redemption being used as synonymous words. They are so used in the passage where our text lies, and they are so used repeatedly by the Apostle Paul, who says, that we have "redemption through the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of sins." And yet in a scheme clearly and avowedly devised for the salvation of sinners, the salvation of multitudes proceeds thus far and goes no farther! They are forgiven, but they are not accepted, they are not sanctified, they are not made happy, they never get to heaven, they are still to suffer misery! Had the scheme which in this manner gives them so much and still withholds so much, been of mere human contrivance, we could not perhaps have wondered at such an appearance of imperfection and inconsistency. But the marvel is, that it is a scheme of God's device and of God's accomplishment. It is a scheme which in Scripture is called "the power of God and the wisdom of God," and the very privi-

lege which, unaccompanied with any other, it is alleged to bestow upon so many of the children of men, the forgiveness of sins, is ascribed to the riches of his grace, and said to be " according to the riches of his grace."* Nay, those who put that limitation on the effects of the gospel, are fain to represent God as altogether love, as having no anger, no wrath towards his offending and degenerate creatures. And notwithstanding they will have us to believe, that God who is love and nothing else; who at any rate along with other attributes is distinguished by rich grace in the communication of forgiveness, and from whose grace and love the scheme of salvation has emanated, is so stinted in his mercy towards those for whom it is intended, that though he will, in virtue of it, pardon all their sins, he will leave them destitute of every thing else! He pardons them in the freest and the fullest manner, through means of a dispensation which is framed to manifest the unmixed, the unqualified love which constitutes his essence and his character, and having pardoned them, he stops short in the career of his beneficence, as if he grudged to give them any more, or as if the dispensation had been formed so unskilfully, or as if the strength put forth to render it efficacious had been so feeble

^{*} Ephes. i. 7.

and inadequate, that the one portion of the work of salvation being done, the other and finishing portion of it had to be left undone!

We deny not the sovereign right of God to convey to sinful men, who deserved no bounty from him, a part of salvation, and not to convey the whole: and had it pleased him to act in this manner, and to announce the fact, we should have humbly acquiesced in his arrangement, and adored him for it. But such an arrangement is so much more like the doing of imperfect man, than it is like the doing of the all-perfect Jehovah-it bears so little analogy to all that we have been able to conceive of the character and administration of God -it has so little resemblance to the general aspect and features of the gospel, as these are delineated in his own word, that we cannot bring ourselves to give it any credence, unless it be clearly stated and palpably set forth in some page of Holy writ, or in some department of the Christian scheme. And no such evidence can we any where discover. None of the divine promises give assurance of pardon, and of pardon alone. There is no prediction of the Messiah, and no prefiguration of him, as a mere Redeemer from punishment. We can see no example of a man being forgiven all his trespasses, and receiving no other token of God's mercy. No instance presents itself of any individual in the history of Christianity being pointed out as pardoned, but not saved. And so far as eternity is opened up to our view, we cannot recognise any one who, in giving in his account, or in having his portion allotted to him, stands released from all obligation to penal suffering without being invested with honour and felicity.

These things being so, we have a strong presumption at least that forgiveness is uniformly followed or accompanied by all the other benefits which are included under salvation. The presumption arises from the incalculable worth of forgiveness, from the awkward predicament in which they are placed who get no other boon along with it, from the character of God connected with the plan of the gospel as proceeding from his mercy and designed for the advantage of the very persons who are pardoned, and from the apparent defects and incompleteness by which it is marked in leaving the objects for whom it professes to come, as it were half redeemed; and it is a presumption which, arising from all these very significant circumstances, is unopposed and untouched by a single fact in the gospel plan, or by a single announcement in the gospel record. So far then as all rational probability goes, if all are pardoned, all are likewise saved.

But let us advance a little farther, and attend to the connexion between the death of Christ and the various blessings of salvation.

The forgiveness of sins, we are told truly, flows from the death of Christ; but we are also told that they flow directly and necessarily from it to all mankind without exception, so that all mankind without exception, whatever they do, and wherever they are, partake of that blessing in its full extent. But the death of Christ was just as certainly the cause of all the other benefits of salvation as it was of forgiveness. It was appointed and suffered in order to secure them. It did not work out one blessing, or several blessings, or a variety of blessings insulated from each other; but all the blessings which the sinner needs for his complete recovery, and his complete restor-And these are so connected together as to their origin in the death of Christ, and as to their constituting in that united form the purpose and object of Christ's death, that we cannot separate one of them from the rest, with respect to its destination, without dividing the work of the Redeemer, and doing violence to the unity and perfection by which it is distinguished. Christ died that he might procure for us the pardon of all our sins. But he also died that he might " redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."* He also died that he "might deliver us from

^{*} Titus ii. 14.

this present evil world, according to the will of God, even our Father."* He also died that he might "destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."+ He also died that he might "make reconciliation for the sins of the people," and bring us into a state of "peace with God." He also died, that he might " redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." And he died that "we might never perish, but have everlasting life." By his death-his once offering of himself, he not only intended but effectuated all these achievements. His obedience to the death of the cross accomplished every one of them as well as every And what authority is there for saying that the blessings of forgiveness only went forth from that fountain of every blessing into the lot of all for whom it was opened up, and that it left all the rest behind, though these were equally provided and equally needed? It would be just as legitimate to say that a sinner may be sanctified and get to heaven without being pardoned, as to say that a sinner may be pardoned without being sanctified and getting to heaven. If it be true that a sinner is forgiven in virtue of the di-

Gal. i. 4. † Heb. ii. 14, 15. † Heb. ii. 17. Ephes. ii. 16, 17. § Gal. iv. 4, 5. ¶ John iii. 14, 15.

rect and necessary operation of Christ's death, then must the sinner be renewed and accepted and glorified in virtue of the same operation, for Christ's death provided in the same manner and with the same efficacy for all the necessities of the sinner's fallen condition. And on the supposition that it was intended to do more for some sinners than it did for the remainder, surely we shall be instructed in the reality of that distinction by some explicit declaration, or some peculiar and obvious arrangement. If no such instruction is given us, we are necessitated, on the very allegation that the death of Christ procures forgiveness for all sinners, and absolutely conveys it to them, to conjoin with it every other blessing as proceeding from the very same cause, and existing in the very same scheme of mercy, and as procured for them and conveyed to them, with the very same certainty.

It will not do to say that Scripture speaks of pardon as universal in its application, but of salvation as partial in its application, though both are ascribed to the death of Christ: for the assertion is not correct. The application of the one is as extensive as is that of the other. Our opponents quote triumphantly that passage from John's first epistle,* which says, that Christ

is a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world," by which they understand that Christ's death as a propitiation secures the forgiveness of the whole world. This text we shall afterwards consider and explain; but, taking them at their word, it is enough for our present purpose to say, that terms as universal are used in Scripture in speaking of salvation. In this very epistle* it is said, that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." The Apostle Paul says,† that "the grace of God hath appeared unto all men bringing salvation." And our Lord himself is represented as saying, ‡ "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth."

Neither will it do to affirm, that while forgiveness is bestowed upon all men, the other blessings of salvation are bestowed upon those only who believe. This statement is as incorrect as the other. The other blessings of salvation, we allow, are bestowed on those only who believe. But we positively deny that forgiveness is bestowed upon any who do not believe. "To Christ," said Peter, § "give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." "If ye believe not that I am he," said Christ, || "ye shall die in your sins." And John the Baptist has said, \(\Pi \) "He that

John iv. 14.
 † Titus ii. 11.
 ‡ Is. xlv. 22.
 § Acts x. 43.
 || John viii. 24.
 ¶ John iii. 36.

believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth upon him."

Since, then, the death of Christ procures sanctification and eternal life as certainly and as effectually as it procures forgiveness; since they are spoken of in terms of the same enlarged and general import that it is spoken of; since all of them are equally annexed to the possession and exercise of faith; and since there is no other circumstance to distinguish among them as to the extent of their application and enjoyment, it follows, without a doubt, that if the forgiveness of sin is universal, universal also must be every other blessing which Christ died to secure-in other words, every individual of the human race shall be saved. And so, if you reject with abhorrence such an unscriptural tenet as that of universal salvation, you must reject with no less abhorrence the tenet of universal pardon.

Let us now attend for a little to the light thrown upon this subject by what is said of justification.* This privilege stands opposed to a state of condemnation—to our being subject to divine wrath—to our needing the remission of sins. Now, it is very possible to conceive that we may be delivered from a state of condemnation—that the divine

^{*} Note H.

wrath may be taken away—that our sins may be remitted, and yet that we may not obtain all that is usually comprehended under justification: for all these expressions mean strictly what is called forgiveness, whereas justification means not only forgiveness, but such a treatment as we should receive were we personally righteous according to the law. But such is the relative position which justification bears to the unpardoned state, that not merely does the fact of our being justified imply that we are pardoned, but the fact of our being pardoned infers that we are justified. This is the actual view of the subject that is set before us in the gospel. Pardon does not stand by itself in its negative form-it stands in close and inseparable alliance with acceptance on the same common ground—the death or obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ; and thus if we are pardoned we are received into favour, or, in one word, we are justified; and being justified, peace with God, the gift of the Spirit, and heavenly blessedness become ours. They become ours, in consequence of our being pardoned-for pardon insures whatever there is more than itself in justification, and justification ensures every thing else that the love of God prompts him to bestow, because it is essentially connected with faith in every one that receives it, and the proclamation of the gospel is, that "whosoever believeth in the Son of God shall never perish but have everlasting life." So far as justification is concerned, we know of no case in which the least countenance is given to the idea that any one may be invested with a part of that great privilege, while he fails in obtaining the whole of it. We never find that, of the general description of those who are under condemnation or under wrath, some are taken to be pardoned merely, while others are taken to be justified wholly. We never find any thing like an approach even, to such a division of sinners in the communication to them of spiritual mercies-any notice that it has taken place, or any intimation that it ever will take place. But it uniformly happens that all of them, upon whom a change is effected, are said to be justified,-thus making the distinction that is occasioned by the change to consist in their being persons who enjoy that fulness of blessing which is comprised in justification, contrasted with their former selves, or with others who still remain as they once were, under a sentence of condemnation, or unforgiven.

Jews and Gentiles were equally included under sin; the law found them all guilty; the penalty incurred by transgression was due to them without exception. Very well, but say our opponents, these were all forgiven through the blood of atonement at the very time that the apostle

was proving and declaring them to have been, at one period, at least, in a state of guilt or condemnation. Indeed! Then, to say nothing of this being the happy fact, and yet of the Apostle who was always glad of an opportunity to celebrate the riches of Divine grace, most studiously and unaccountably omitting to make the remotest allusion to it; how comes it to pass, that when he speaks of the method of deliverance which had been propounded both for Jews and Gentiles, and of their profiting by it, he speaks of their being "justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past?"* The very mention of "remission of sins" here, being conferred by the act of justification, shows the absurdity of the opinion we are combating, for if these sins were already remitted or pardoned, of what use was an act which repeated their pardon or remission, as if they needed to be blotted out a second time, or as if by mistake they had been forgotten or intentionally left out when the former general absolution took place? I refer to the passage quoted, however, chiefly for the purpose of showing you, that when the apostle teaches

^{*} Rom. iii. 24, 25.

the doctrine of "remission of sins," he employs the term justification, and that by employing that term in such a case, he clearly inculcates this truth, that the remission of sins does not stand alone in the case of any one, be he Jew or Gentile, who receives that benefit, but that, at the same time, on the same ground, and in the same way, he receives Divine favour, the gift of eternal life, and whatsoever else is included in the condition of those who are justified "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This it proves clearly and conclusively. And again, I say that if pardon be universal, salvation is universal also; so that if the doctrine of our antagonists is true, all men having obtained impunity, must be admitted into heaven.

These views are greatly corroborated and fully established by various passages of Scripture, some of which I must now bring before you. We formerly quoted the thirty-second Psalm, to prove that forgiveness is limited to persons possessing a certain character. We now refer to it, as a proof that the forgiveness of which it speaks infers a participation in the other blessings of the gospel. And for this end we quote it, not from the book of Psalms, as before—but from the Epistle to the Romans, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works; saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."* Don't you see, my friends, that "not imputing sin," is made equivalent to the "imputing of righteousness,"-that in the gospel dispensation, pardoning the ungodly is tantamount to justifying the ungodly, -that every man whose sins are covered, whose iniquities are forgiven, is accounted righteous, and treated, and blessed, and saved, as faithful Abraham was? True, it is said to be through faith: but that is nothing to the purpose, because, not to reiterate the proof that forgiveness itself is limited to them that believe, all that we have to do with at present is the inspired statement we have adduced, from which it undeniably appears, that in the economy of the gospel, forgiveness is identified with justification, and that all the ungodly who are forgiven, are just as safe with respect to their spiritual and eternal interests, as was the patriarch Abraham, the friend of God, and the father of the faithful. Faith no doubt is necessary: but that does not alter the fact. If God has settled and appointed that every pardoned sinner

^{*} Rom. iv. 5-8.

shall be also justified and saved, he will take care that neither faith nor any other circumstance be wanting, which is requisite for completing the work of his grace. The grand truth is, that whomsoever he pardons, he also saves with an everlasting salvation.

Again, you will perceive the same doctrine taught in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, 10, 11, and 12th verses, which we formerly quoted on the subject of forgiveness being associated with character. We now allude to it with the view of showing how God's forgiveness of any number of sinners is a pledge of his entire salvation of them. In the 10th and 11th verses he promises to be to them a God, and to make them his people, to instruct them, to guide them, and, sanctify them wholly, that thus they may have the character, and partake of the happiness to which his people are destined. And then he adds in the 12th verse, as the reason why he would so treat them, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Forgiveness is here represented by God himself, as the spring and foundation of all other blessings-as of such a nature, and so important, that it would be inconsistent in him to refrain from granting the other benefits that are specified

—as of itself an indication and a purpose founded on the very fitness of things, or on the perfection of his character and government, that having bestowed pardon, his truth and honour would be impeached, if he did not bestow all other gifts and graces that might serve to constitute or to insure a complete salvation.*

Look also the 9th chapter of the same Epistle, at the 11th verse. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" Here you observe the eternal redemption obtained for us by Christ, must mean the expiation of our guilt or the forgiveness of our sin, as analogous to the expiation and forgiveness of ceremonial offences procured by the

[&]quot; See Note I.

sacrifices and intercessions of the priesthood under the law, of which our Lord's sacrifice and intercession are the antitypical fulfilment. And yet the same apostle speaks of it as implying at the same instant our sanctification, by which we are disposed, enabled, and encouraged to engage in the service of him from whose service and from whose favour our transgressions had alienated us. He speaks of it as implying this-not because there is a transition from sinners at large to the ungodly who believe in Jesus, but because the atoning death of Christ is equally productive of both blessings, and whoever is privileged to obtain the one does by fixed engagement and necessary consequence obtain the other. Whoever is interested in the eternal redemption that is wrought out, so as to be no longer under sentence of condemnation, is simultaneously and inevitably rescued from the bondage of corruption, made a new creature, and fitted both for the service and the enjoyment of God.*

Consider also Romans viii. 33, 34. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." The Apostle had said, that "he that spared not his own

^{*} See Owen on the Hebrews, in loc.

Son, but freely delivered him up to the death," would unquestionably bestow " all things" upon those for whom the gift of his own Son was intended. And here he triumphantly asserts the safety of such persons, referring specifically to the grounds on which he makes this assertion, "It is God that justifieth." God himself is pleased to justify the elect, to deliver them from condemnation, and treat them as having an acceptable righteousness. And being in this justified state, by the judicial sentence of God, " who is he that condemneth?" There is none that can discover a single sin of which to accuse them as still subjecting them to the curse of the law, and to send them back into the condemnation from which they had been rescued by the doing of God himself. That would render fruitless and set at nought the whole contrivance of the gospel. "It is Christ that died." Christ the Son of God, agreeably to the Father's own appointment, was "delivered for their offences," and to doubt the efficacy of his death would be to doubt "the power of God and the wisdom of God." But Christ not only died for the elect,-" yea rather he is risen again," risen again for their justification, as it is expressed Romans iv. 25. Nor does the security of the elect stop even here. For the Apostle adds as a still higher step, though as a matter of course, in the economy of redemption, "who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." This intercession is a part of his priestly office, and is grounded on the merit of the blood which he shed for "the remission of sins," and which he took with him when he "passed into the heavens," into "the holiest of all." He makes intercession for the very persons in whose behalf and in whose stead he died. And his intercession, which is prevalent, has respect not merely to one part of their condition, but to every thing connected with their redemption and happiness,-to the "all things" which the apostle had previously asserted that God would "freely give," because he had given his only begotten and well beloved Son to humiliation, suffering, and death. The issue of the whole is and must be a complete salvation, for "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. vii. 25. And accordingly the apostle adds, in a tone of assurance and exultation, " Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" We can have no doubt, then, that whoever is so interested in the love of God and in the work of Christ as to obtain forgiveness, must necessarily have every thing else which the love of God can bestow, or which the work of Christ can secure. There is no getting rid of this conclusion without attributing to the scheme

of the gospel unaccountable shortcoming and fatal inconsistency.*

The only other passage I would produce in elucidation of the point at issue is to be found in Cor. ii. 18. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Now, according to our opponents, the world here must signify all men, and to none of these are their trespasses any longer imputed. But the non-imputation or forgiveness of their trespasses stands side by side with their reconciliation to God, which reconciliation surely can be exclusive of nothing that is essential to the perfect happiness of those who enjoy it. And lest it be said that the forgiveness is mentioned as a fact already existing, while reconciliation is spoken of as a thing only recommended and urged-though the words, being both in the present participle, may be properly understood as both in the predicament of carrying on a work which is to be hereafter finished, or at any rate in the very same predicament whether the thing spoken of is doing or done-lest this be said, let us look forward to the 21st verse, and all dubiety will

^{*} See also 1 Peter ii. 24; iii. 18, 22; Ephes. i. 3, 13; v. 25, 26, 27; Heb. x. 14.

be removed. It says, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," or might be regarded and treated by God as righteous persons, on account of the righteousness of Christ, brought in when he became obedient to the death of the cross. Hence it is obvious and indisputable, that if those to whom their trespasses are not imputed, receive that benefit directly from Christ becoming a sin-offering for them, they are also made the righteousness of God in Christ. There is no allusion to faith or to any other circumstance, as intimating a distinction which would make others more abundantly blessed by Christ's sacrifice than they. They are spoken of as having their iniquities forgiven, and in the same statement they are spoken of as those who are made the righteousness of God,* by the identical cause to which their forgiveness is ascribed. So that here again the gospel method of redemption is declared to be such, that whosoever is pardoned is likewise saved, and therefore the dogma of universal pardon involves in it, or draws after it, the unscriptural and pernicious dogma of universal salvation.

What we have now advanced gives reality and authoritative truth to the general presumption

See Note K.

which we brought forward at the outset-namely, that if God so loves us as to grant us the pardon of sin, at the expense of Christ's humiliation and decease, we cannot but expect that he will go farther, and proceed all the length of a complete deliverance and a complete salvation. This expectation is dictated by the value of what he has already done, and the value of the sacrifice he has made for doing it. And the same mode of judging is used by the Apostle Paul,* when looking to the manifestation of divine mercy given in the atoning work of Christ, he exclaims in confident and impassioned language, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" If God delivered up his own Son literally for us all, and if all of us literally and truly derive from that act of condescension and mercy, the full forgiveness of our offences, how can it be imagined—how is it possible—how will it be reconciled with any ideas of the divine character, that he should not perfect the gift, by making us partakers of that abundant blessedness for which pardon is the suitable preliminary, or of which it forms an essential part, and that after leading us, in the "riches of his grace," to the very threshold, as it were, of the heavenly

^{*} Rom. viii. 32.

world, on the ground of Christ's atoning merit, he should, instead of actually admitting us, leave us to rebellious and despairing wonder that there—even there, the "riches of his grace" should cease to be beneficent, and the atoning merit of Christ should fail to accomplish our salvation!

In short, every survey that we can take, and every account that is given us, of the gospel scheme, prove to demonstration that pardon is enjoyed by none but those who are also savedor, in other words, that universal pardon is equivalent to universal salvation—that our opponents, whatever they may think or allege, cannot stop short at the stage where they seem to set up their rest-that they must advance in the career on which they have entered, till they have carried every one of the children of men to the regions of glory-and that if they do not choose to proceed so far, they are at least showing the way to others, and only stop short themselves, because they are alarmed at the consequence and result of their favourite principle.

Why, my friends, if we needed any thing more to convince us of the unsoundness and fallacy of that principle, than what has been already adduced, we have only to look at the scene of future retribution, as that is disclosed and presented to us in the inspired volume. We there see—whatever varieties may appear or be imagined to

exist in a present world-we there discover just two descriptions of persons that are to be judged, the righteous and the wicked; just two sentences that are to be pronounced, "Come ye blessed of my Father," - " Depart from me, ye cursed;" and just two conditions, in one or other of which men are for ever to be placed, " everlasting punishment,"and "eternal life." But where amidst the characters, the sentences, or the conditions that are set before us, do we recognise any trace of the semi-redeemed-of those who are pardoned but not saved? Where do they stand on the great day of reckoning? Surely they are neither on the right hand, nor on the left. What is the decision that is passed upon them? It is neither recorded nor alluded to. Where is it that we are to find them throughout the vast expanse of eternity? They occupy no place; their voice is not heard in joy or in sorrow; their forms are invisible even to the eye of fancy; they have no existence in heaven or in hell; and even the intermediate and purgatorial state of popery seems to have no room for them.

But, as an attempt to remove difficulties, we are bravely told that sinners are not to be punished hereafter; that they are only left to the distress which will naturally flow from a sense of their distance and separation from God; and that nothing like a positive penal doom will be assigned them. And this is all that is meant by "departing into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"-by being "punished with everlasting destruction"-by being in "torment whose smoke ascendeth for ever and ever!" Granting, however, that the suffering is not of the kind alleged; that it is not external or material; that it consists in the bitter reflections of a lost and hopeless soul; what then? Is it not still punishment? Is not that punishment, appointed and fixed of God as the award of a guilty and unbelieving, unredeemed apostate? Is it not hell, whether its pains are inflicted from without, or from within, or from both? And is it by such arrant quibbling as this that we are to be discomfited, when arguing for the vital doctrines of Christianity?

O but those who once thought that there was to be no positive punishment inflicted, are now of opinion that there will be such punishment. What oracles of wisdom! What trust-worthy guides! What safe and enlightened interpreters of the Bible! With the Bible in their hands for years, and with their attention turned closely to its contents, and with faculties for ascertaining its meaning, they discovered yesterday that God had so much love in his nature that he would never punish his rebellious, impenitent subjects; but they have discovered to-day, and are equally

dogmatical both times in announcing their discovery that, after all, God will punish the wicked!

Well, let them take it either way. If the wicked are not to be punished hereafter, let us be told what is to become of them, and what mean the denunciations of God's vengeance against them; and what we are to make of the proposition that a pardoned sinner may yet be "cast, soul and body, into hell fire for ever?" Or, if the wicked are to be punished, which is the latest opinion, what is to be made of the great doctrine of universal pardon? Are we to tax our credulity, and to degrade our understanding so far as to believe that a sinner who is pardoned of God, will yet be punished by God?—punished and pardoned at the same time, and for the same things, by the God of infinite mercy and infinite rectitude! Or must we assent to the statement, that after Christ has, by God's own appointment, and by suffering in his own person, on account of the sins of mankind, got all these expiated and forgiven, God is to recal his act of amnesty, and punish over again in a future world, the guilt which has been so completely punished, and so freely cancelled in this? Is there, indeed, unrighteousness with the Holy One?

Still, however, we are pressed with another discovery—namely, that men are to be punished for nothing except final unbelief. But this con-

tradicts Scripture, for, are not we told, "that every one is cursed that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them?"* Are not we told that the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men ?+ Are not we told that "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be rendered to every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile? And is it not evident that unbelief is produced by the cherishing of sinful dispositions and immoral habits? § And how is it that the wickedness which leads to unbelief will be pardoned, but that the unbelief itself will be punished? Into such inconsistencies will mengood men,-pious men-holy men, plunge themselves, when they are resolved to build up and to defend a theory, be it what it may, and to make converts to the cause they have espoused.

This notion of unbelief only being a damning sin, introduces another distinction into the virtue of Christ's death. It of course avails to the pardon of all their sins except unbelief, of all the sins even which generated and nourished this unbelief—but it does not avail to the pardon of that particular sin, without the pardon of which the pardon of all the rest is of no use or conse-

^{*} Gal. iii. 10. † Rom. i. 18. ‡ Rom. ii. 9. § John iii. 19.

quence whatsoever! And this is held forth as a grand illustration of the wisdom, the power, and above all, the love and mercy of God!

But we are wearied with winding through such labyrinths; and therefore we conclude at present with exhorting you to meditate on the argument which we have brought before you this evening, and on the passages of holy writ by which we have supported it throughout—and to pray that God by his Spirit would preserve you from those gross and vital errors which are afloat in the Christian world, and that he would guide you into all the truth that maketh wise unto salvation.

SERMON VI.

SAME SUBJECT.

WE have been employed for some Sabbaths in exposing the heresy of universal pardon. And we concluded our last discourse with noticing the qualification which its advocates put upon the doctrine—namely, that Christ's death does not take away the guilt of final unbelief. On this point we must be allowed to offer a few remarks before proceeding to the principal object we have in view, in the present discourse.

Final unbelief, then, is the only sin that is to be punished—for punishment of transgressors in a future world is at length admitted; but all other sins are pardoned or blotted out by the atonement.

1. Now, in the *first* place, this is contrary to numerous declarations of sacred Scripture. For example, we are told that "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." We are told

that "the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men." We are told that "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish will be rendered to every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." We are told that "uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness" are things "for whose sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience."* We are told that those who have not given meat and drink and clothing to the needy disciples of Christ shall "go into everlasting punishment."+ We are told that the Judge of the quick and the dead will say to the wicked at the last day, "I never knew you; depart from me, "ye that work iniquity." We are told that even the merely "unprofitable servant shall be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." But time would fail me to quote the many passages of holy writ which put it beyond all controversy, that every sin, as well as that of unbelief, is liable to punishment, and that all who die under the guilt of any sin whatever shall be punished for it in a future world. Their distinction therefore is most unscriptural.

2. Then, in the second place, observe what an

Col. iii. 5, 6.
 † Matt. xxv. 41, &c.
 ‡ Ib. vii. 23.
 ‡ Matt. xxv. 30.

imperfect and mutilated work this idea makes of the atonement. The atonement, it is said, procures and confers pardon, but not complete pardon. It blots out all the sins of an individual, except one; and that is one without which, the blotting out of all the rest is a boon which can be of no worth or moment at all. Nay a man may live for three score years and ten in unbelief, and all that unbelief is forgiven, but if he lives one moment longer in unbelief and then dies, that moment's unbelief, unpardoned and unpardonable, nullifies and renders useless all the previous forgiveness of his unbelief, by dooming him to the place of torment. Christ was a substitute for him on the cross only as to a part of his guilt. He bore in his own body on the tree the sin of unbelief committed by the individual for seventy years, but he did not bear the self same sin as committed for a single instant longer. His love and his merit failed at the critical point of deliverance; and after cancelling the sinner's obligations to punishment up to the very moment of his departure into the eternal world, abandoned him to a fate which annihilates all the benefit he had received, and stultifies all the scheme that had taken him under its redeeming care. Don't you see in this, my friends, an incongruity that is dishonourable to Him who devised the method of salvation, and to him by whom it was execut-

- ed? And are you aware of any thing in the Bible which gives the faintest colour to such a representation of the saving work of the Son of God?
- 3. On the contrary, as may be remarked in the third place, is it not evident that Christ is held out uniformly as a complete Saviour, leaving nothing undone in behalf of those for whom he died?—that there is no exception made in the case of any person on whom he had set his love, and for whose life he had given his flesh in sacrifice?—that so far as these are concerned, every stain of guilt is washed away in virtue of that sacrifice, and nothing reserved that could bring them into condemnation?
- 4. And finally, this view necessarily results from the mode of interpreting Scripture adopted by those against whose errors we are contending. For they support their doctrine of universal pardon, by appealing to the universality of the terms in which the intention, and efficacy, and application of Christ's atoning death are described. They tell us, for instance, that he is a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world." Very well—let them be consistent. One of the sins of the world is unbelief—alas! final unbelief is one of the worst and most prevalent of all the sins with which apostate men are chargeable. Surely, then, if the universal terms are to be interpreted literally and rigidly, unbelief, final unbelief, as well as every

other sin is atoned for and pardoned! And of course every man must be freed from punishment, and every man must be accepted and saved! But they make the exception of unbelief; and where is their authority for this? since the Bible says that Christ is not only the propitiation for the sins of the whole world," but that he has " made an end of sin, and finished the transgression, and brought in an everlasting righteousness!" Their authority is founded on such passages as declare that on him that believeth not the wrath of God abideth. Be it so; and it is just to that, and a multitude of passages of similar import, that we have recourse in order to prove that Christ's death does not convey the pardon of all the sins besides unbelief, which all men have committed. And how comes it that they should be privileged to employ a rule of interpretation, the use of which must be denied to us? I say again, let them be consistent. Either the universal terms used in Scripture on this subject are to be taken strictly, or they may be qualified by other declarations that occur in the same record. If they are to be taken strictly, then our opponents have reduced themselves to the necessity of maintaining that even the sin of final unbelief is atoned for, and will be pardoned, and so all men will get to the promised land. But if they allow that the universal terms in question may be qualified, then we claim the benefit of that admission, being as well entitled to it, as they are; and we affirm, in virtue of it, that whatever other reason they have for maintaining their position, it cannot be derived from a rigid construction of what is said by the sacred Scriptures as to the death of Christ, and its actual and absolute effect in pardoning sinners. Thus we come to common ground. Still, however, there is a difference between them and us, and it is just this; -that by the help of the confession which they have found themselves necessitated to make, in order to avoid consequences, the prospect of which caused even them to tremble, the proof of our doctrine becomes easy, while their argument falls to the ground, and their theory falls down along with it.

I have only farther to notice, on this point, that we perfectly agree with them in maintaining, that final unbelief is unpardonable. But we say that they are quite inconsistent in maintaining that final unbelief is unpardonable, and that all other sins are actually pardoned, seeing that their reason for asserting the latter part of the proposition is at variance with their reason for asserting the former. And we hold up our doctrine as forming a triumphant contrast to theirs. Because, while they represent Christ as pardoning sinners for whom his death was endured, but only as pardoning them partially, and stopping short

where the "unlimited mercy" which they ascribe to God, would have naturally magnified its riches and its power, by finishing the redemption so much of which it had accomplished and applied,—we represent Christ as pardoning all the sins of all the sinners whom he undertook to save, as in no case beginning a work of deliverance which he did not carry on to its perfect completion, as forgiving, regenerating, glorifying, every individual for whom he shed his infinitely precious blood, as not losing, nor leaving in a state of half-salvation and half-perdition, even one of the multitude whom the Father gave him to redeem, but conducting them all in the appointed way to heaven and to happiness.

The second branch of our argument against the doctrine of universal pardon, you will recollect, consisted in showing that it necessarily leads to the doctrine of universal salvation—a doctrine which is altogether contrary to the plainest intimations of the Bible, and which our opponents themselves, so far as the present state of their opinions is publicly known, profess to reject with abhorrence. We showed you that this is its legitimate consequence from the nature of forgiveness as connected with the revealed character of God, from the relation in which all the blessings of redemption stand to the death of Christ as their procuring cause, from the account given of

justification in Scripture, which makes pardon and acceptance to go together in constant fellowship, and from various passages of the word of God, which corroborate these views in the most distinct and unequivocal manner, and which are unsusceptible of any other meaning, without doing violence to every rule of fair and just interpretation.

But I would particularly remind you of the first part of our reasoning, in which we referred directly to the authority of Scripture, and produced a multitude of texts expressly restricting the benefit of pardon, so that to receive them, and vet to hold the doctrine of universal pardon, is to assent to the truth of what becomes in that case a contradiction in terms. We proved that forgiveness is not bestowed upon all men indiscriminately, but only upon such as possess a certain specified character. It is expressly said, that he that believeth on the Son of God is not condemned—or is delivered from condemnation but "he that believeth not is condemned already, and has the wrath of God abiding upon him:" It is expressly said, that if we repent, our sins shall be blotted out; but that except we repent we shall perish. It is expressly said, that they who forgive men their trespasses shall be forgiven of God; but that they who forgive not men their trespasses shall not be forgiven of God. And it

is expressly said, that forgiveness belongs to them who being a chosen and covenanted people, are walking in the ways of holiness, but that on such as are living addicted to vice and to the world, the wrath of God cometh, they being the children of disobedience. We do not say that forgiveness is conferred upon men because they believe, or because they repent, or because they are merciful, or because they are holy. Such a doctrine is not essential to our argument; nor, if it were so, durst we avow it, for it is not true, and we utterly reject it-with somewhat more consistency, as we shall hereafter see, than our opponents. But we state it as a Scripture fact, clearly taught, and undeniably true, that there is an inseparable connexion between the forgiveness of sins and certain qualities of character-a connexion so inseparable that no man who is destitute of these qualities can consider himself as forgiven, unless he disbelieves the explicit testimony of God himself. And from this it unavoidably follows, that as these characters are wanting in the case of multitudes, both of past generations and of the present, there are multitudes of men to whom the death of Christ has not conveyed pardon, but who have died or are still living under the burden of all their sins. Unbelieving, impenitent, unmerciful, unholy men are all classed under this description. The point is

settled by the declarations of the divine Spirit. It is settled both positively and negatively. They who have the specified characters are forgiven; they who have not these characters are not forgiven. And, therefore, neither are all sins nor all men pardoned.

Now, my friends, observe the bearing and effect of this. Of itself it is perfectly sufficient to overthrow the doctrine of universal pardon, as so zealously taught, and so joyfully received in these days. But we wish you to mark it, and to take it along with you, and to give it its proper weight, as you consider those Scriptures which have been quoted in support of the opposite side of the question. It furnishes, if not a solution of every apparent or real difficulty that may be started, at least a satisfactory reply to any argument for the opinion of our antagonists that may be founded on such difficulties. Something may be adduced from the Bible which seems to favour or countenance their views; but you are sure that there is some mistake or misapprehension in this, for you have already ascertained, beyond the shadow or possibility of doubt, that pardon is bestowed only upon persons of a certain description, and that all others are unpardoned. And this reply is equally intelligible and irresistible. though various expressions, and various incidents, and various illustrations may be referred to,

which are perplexing and inexplicable to you on any other supposition than that of universal pardon? Still, on every principle of piety and common sense, you take refuge in this, that God has, in language which has no ambiguity, and no obscurity in it-language which cannot be misunderstood by any one-excluded from that blessing a vast number whom he has designated and described as those upon whom his curse continues to lie, and on whom he will at length inflict the penalty that he has already threatened. Let men propound what theories they will-let them recommend their notion as much as they can, by giving it all the aspect of glorifying God more than any thing else-let them put whatever ingenious and plausible glosses they please on the phraseology of certain parts of the inspired volume-it must all go for nothing when you recollect that He whose word that inspired volume is-He whose glory it is intended to consult and promote-He from whom all redemption proceeds, and by whom its method, and its extent, and its application have been all determinedthat He has assured us, in words which admit of no other meaning, that, on the one hand, those who are possessed of a certain character, which, we see with our own eyes, belongs to some only, shall receive the pardon of their sins, and that, on the other hand, those who are possessed of the

contrary character, which, we see with our own eyes, belongs to a vast number, shall not be forgiven, but shall abide under the wrath of God and the sentence of condemnation.

This consideration is the stronger when we attend to the way in which the statements now alluded to are given in the Scripture, as contrasted with the way that the statements, to which they are thought to stand opposed, are presented to us by the sacred writers.

The terms in which pardon is predicated of certain characters, and condemnation is predicated of certain other characters, are discriminative, determinate, and precise. There is an individuality and specification which prevents us from misapprehending what is meant, or from confounding the two classes so as to confer upon the one what is specially appropriated to the other. And occasionally the language of condition is used, not to intimate any thing meritorious, but to point out the distinction more definitely and more forcibly. "He that believeth on the Son of God is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already."* "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile."+ "Repent and be converted that

^{*} John iii. 18.

your sins may be blotted out."* " Except ye repent ye shall all perish."+ "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." " " Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees! hypocrites!"|| "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them,"-are "set forth for an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." "Woe unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" "it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you."** We might furnish you with many more examples of the very same kind. But where do you find any thing resembling these to uphold the position of universal pardon? In order to have passages which will neutralise those that we have been quoting, our opponents must produce such as declare that every individual of our fallen race is forgiven by the death of Christ-that speak of each and all of them as in that blessed condition-that accompany general declarations of pardoning mercy with the assertion that they are not qualified by any one exception-that leave no person what-

** Matt. xi. 21, 22.

ever, be he saint, or be he sinner, to doubt that all his iniquities are covered, and blotted out, and will not be remembered any more. But have they produced, or can they produce, even a single scriptural statement couched in such exact and particular phraseology? Not one. Observe, if they did so, it would not so much disprove the doctrine we have established, as a doctrine taught explicitly, and in so many words, by the Spirit of God, as it would ascertain the existence of palpable and vitally important contradictions in the rule of faith which has come to us from heaven. But what we affirm is, that passages of the description that we require are nowhere to be met with in the Bible-not one occurs in it, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse. There are such terms and phrases as the world, the whole world, all, all men; and there are expressions and statements from which universality may be inferred, and from which, unless modified by other expressions and statements, universality should be inferred. But there are no terms or phrases—no expressions or statements in the word of God, which tell us that every man is pardoned—or that no man is unpardoned. And let it be remembered that language which is merely general and comprehensive, can never be allowed to supersede language which is individual and distinctive and expository, when they apply to the same subject, and when the explicit import of the latter stands opposed to the apparent import of the former: and that a mere inference, though a possibly, and in ordinary circumstances, an obviously correct inference, can never be received for the purpose of overturning a proposition which is stated positively, clearly, and unequivocally, and is wholly incapable of having any other meaning attached to it.

any other meaning attached to it.

It is to be observed, besides, that the general terms which occur in Scripture respecting the purpose or the objects of Christ's interposition, must have a much more extensive meaning than what our opponents attribute to them, if that meaning is to be admitted at all. These general terms do not relate merely to pardon-they relate in many cases to salvation at large. For instance, "The grace of God hath appeared unto all men bringing salvation." "God sent not his own Son into the world, to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." Now, do our opponents mean to insist that all men are saved? No; they do not go this length. But why not? If their argument is valid for universal pardon, it is equally valid for universal salvation. It is nowhere said that all men are pardoned-but only that Christ died or gave himself as a propitiation

for the sins of all men. And, in like manner, though it is nowhere said that all men are saved, we read that Christ died or gave himself that he might be the Saviour of all men. The Arminians are quite consistent, for they maintain that both as to pardon and all other blessings comprehended under the general term salvation, Christ gave himself for every man, so that every man, on the condition of his repenting and believing, shall receive all these blessings as well as pardon. But our opponents have not courage enough to follow out the reasoning which they ground on the universal language of the Bible to its full and fair extent, or they have not consistency enough to apply the same rule of construction to the subject of salvation which they apply to the subject of pardon, though it is just as applicable to the one as to the other. They must either give up their position, that every man is pardoned, because the Scripture says that Christ's death was a propitiation for the sins of the world; or they must be prepared to maintain that every man is also saved, because the Scripture says that Christ died for the salvation of the world. One of the alternatives they must adopt; and either of them will suit our purpose.

Supposing, now, that the subjects of some earthly sovereign had rebelled against him, but that he was willing to extend mercy and pardon,

and had for this purpose sent forth a proclamation among them; supposing, that he had inserted in it the strongest and most generous assurances of his clemency towards them, and that these assurances, taken by themselves, looked as if he had passed an act of unlimited amnesty or oblivion, and would with respect to them all, refrain from the infliction of deserved punishment: and, supposing that he added certain clauses to this effect, "whosoever of you lays down his arms shall be forgiven, but whoso continues to wield them in hostility to me shall not be forgiven"-" if you petition for the extension of my mercy I will extend it, but if you do not so petition I will withhold my mercy from you"-" if you come into my presence and swear anew the oaths of allegiance and fidelity, I will take care that no penalty shall reach you, but if you refuse to pay me that homage, I pledge my word that you shall certainly suffer for your crimes upon a scaffold;"-supposing a proclamation in such terms as these to have come from a sovereign to his rebellious subjects, how should they, and how would they interpret it? Should they, think you, or would they content themselves with looking to the first part of the document, and dwelling upon that alone, and congratulating one another on their absolute and individual safety, as already secured to all of them, and gifted to all of them ?

And were some benevolent friends wiser than themselves to step forward and point out the restrictive clauses which it contained, as worthy of their serious regard in determining its just construction, would they or should they get the better of all these by still having recourse to the universal terms in which it announced the merciful purpose of their sovereign, and by eliciting from certain portions of it, inferences favourable to their views, which are formally legitimate, but not at all necessary? Would they or should they adopt this mode of proceeding? No man of sound judgment will venture to say so. Every one must see that the purpose, the declaration, the offer of mercy is to be fixed, not as to its reality, but as to its extent, by the restrictive clauses-that these form the true and correct explanation of the manifesto, with respect to those for whose benefit it is framed and issued-that such as do not lay down their arms, such as do not petition, such as do not swear allegiance, have no lot or part in the pardon which is proclaimed-and that for these persons to overlook the limitations which have emanated from the same authority as the general assurance of mercy and forgiveness itself has done, is the height of folly and of danger, and can only aggravate the offence that has been committed, and insure the condemnation that has been incurred.

The application of this to the question before us is abundantly obvious. It is of no consequence how general or how universal soever the declarations of divine forgiveness may be. Had God been pleased to give no other declarations, we might have affixed to them all the latitude of meaning, which is so much pleaded for, though the state of the moral world and the melancholy facts which it everywhere exhibits, had presented to us inextricable difficulties. But it is not by such declarations alone that God has thought proper to instruct us on this interesting theme. He has made other declarations in his word by which he has limited the efficacy and application of that forgiving mercy which is manifested on the death of Christ. He announces that forgiveness is conferred upon those who possess certain characters which he has taken care to specifyand that wrath and condemnation still abide upon those in whom these characters are not found. And to know his real will concerning the pardon of sinful men, we must look to the whole of the record in which it is revealed, and qualifying his comprehensive assurances by the conditions, or exceptions, or limitations, which he has decreed and published, ascertain exactly the truth which he would have us to believe. Though he says that Christ died for the world or for all men, yet it would be both undutiful to him and irrational

in itself, to say that every man is forgiven, when he has told us that no man is forgiven who is revengeful, or impenitent, or unholy—but that the very contrary is the fact. The particular exception modifies the general affirmation. And so we proceed to the interpretation of the passages containing the general language, with a conviction founded on the information of God himself, that they must mean something different from the proposition strictly and absolutely understood,—as meaning that all the sins of all sinners are already pardoned by the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

But, indeed, those with whom we are contending are obliged to allow the justice and submit to the operation of this rule. For they acknowledge, as we formerly noticed, that final unbelief constitutes a limitation to the pardoning mercy of God, and the pardoning virtue of Christ's sacrifice. The principle being once admitted by them, the great foundation of their argument is overturned. They not only grant that all the sins of all men are not pardoned, but they grant that the Scripture passages which seem to give universality to the pardon effected by the death of Christ, and on which they have rested their doctrine so confidently, may be taken in a limited sense. And, therefore, when we assert that the sins which precede final unbelief are also unforgiven, and that the sins of all the impenitent men upon earth are

unforgiven, and that the sins of the revengeful man are unforgiven, and that the sins of every person who is going on in a course of wilful disobedience, ungodliness, and profligacy, are unforgiven, and that all the sins of all men are unforgiven, till that very moment when God is pleased to make the sinner the subject of a justifying act, or to forgive him and cancel his guilt for the sake of Christ, to whom he is then brought in the exercise of a true faith-when we assert these things, as we do most positively and unhesitatingly on the authority of the Bible, we can no longer be met by a reference to those passages which, when taken literally and rigidly, embrace the forgiveness of the whole sinful family of mankind. These are allowed to bear no such signification. They cannot be brought forward to prove the dogma of universal pardon. And consequently, our opponents have nothing for it but to produce scriptural evidence, contained in explicit terms, that such characters as we have just now adverted to are not merely the objects of God's mercy, but have truly and actually received from him, or derived from the death of Christ, the blessing of forgiveness.

Under the impression of these remarks, let us now go on to the consideration of those passages which are quoted or referred to, as proving that every sin that has been or may yet be committed by men, is already, completely, and for ever pardoned.

1. The first passage we would consider is Paul's first Epistle to Timothy, verses 5 and 6:

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

"Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

That is, it is said, every man is ransomed from guilt, or delivered from going down to the pit, or obtains the forgiveness of his sins, through the virtue of that price which Christ paid—of that sacrificial death which he endured.

But our opponents are as much concerned in vindicating the words from this interpretation as we are; for they hold that from this statement must be excepted those who are chargeable with final unbelief,-that being a sin which does subject to condemnation and punishment. By whomsoever this text may be advanced against us, it cannot be advanced by them. If the construction put upon it contradicts our doctrine, it also contradicts theirs. And as it is with them that we have the present controversy, we are not called upon to explain it. Moreover, it is said in the fourth verse that God our Saviour "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." And here the advocates of universal pardon will be involved in equal difficulty, for if it

is the will of God, who alone can produce the effect, that every man should be sanctified,—that being the meaning of the word saved in their vocabulary—and to come to the knowledge of the truth, how does it happen that such a vast number die in ignorance of the truth, and amidst the pollutions of iniquity? The real fact stands in opposition to the verbal statement.

It appears to me, however, that the Apostle's language is susceptible of an explication quite consistent with a limited view of the effect of Christ's ransom. For the better understanding it, let us look to his epistle to Titus ii. 11, where he affirms that "the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men." Now, it was not correct, in point of fact, that the saving or sanctifying grace of God had appeared to all men, if by "all men" is meant every man on the face of the earth,-it had not appeared even to a majority of mankind,-it had appeared only to a comparatively small number. This, therefore, could not be the Apostle's meaning. But his meaning may be clearly discovered by attending to the context. He was telling Titus to exhort servants to be faithful in discharging their peculiar duties, that by their minute and conscientious performance of these, they might "adorn the doctrine of God the Saviour in all things." And he enforces the exhortation by asserting the practical tendency, the sanctifying design of the gospel: for, says he, the grace of God, that bringeth the salvation which they have embraced by faith, and by which their spiritual condition is blessed, has appeared to servants as well as to masters—to all classes and conditions of the people, teaching every one, who does not receive it in vain, to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

Now this may help us to comprehend the meaning of the Apostle in his address to Timothy. The members of the Christian church were exposed to much persecution. They suffered this unjust and cruel treatment chiefly from the civil rulers under whom they were placed. And it would naturally excite in their minds feelings of disaffection and resentment, which, if unrepressed and unsubdued, might lead to a neglect of the duties that they owed to the constituted authorities. In order to prevent or counteract such a mischief, Paul exhorted Timothy both to inculcate and to practise the lesson of offering up prayers and supplications, and intercessions, and thanksgivings for all men, whatever might be their station, their office, or their conduct,—even for the kings and magistrates who stretched out upon them the arm of barbarous oppression,—even for those who set themselves against the anointed of

the Lord, and his believing people; because this did not put them beyond the pale of his favour, who was merciful to "the chief of sinners," or beyond the reach of his merit, who died for enemies, and would bring the trophies of his cross from all descriptions of character, and all conditions of life. On this account, as well as on account of the security it might obtain for the preachers of the truth, as alluded to in the second verse, he urges the duty of Christian ministers and Christian worshippers every where, praying for all in authority-(verse 8.) "without wrath" against those of them even who wronged and harassed them most, and "without doubting" that their intercessions would be instrumental in gaining the object of their labour, by bringing out from the midst of their very foes, and adding to the church, such as should be saved. And this restricted interpretation corresponds exactly with what is said in other parts of Scripture, on the same topic. As for instance, when our Lord said to his disciples that "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"-and also when he instituted the sacrament of the supper, on which occasion he declared, "this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins."

2. The next passage I would direct your attention to is in 1 John ii. 2:

"And he (i. e. Jesus Christ) is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

The world, when spoken of as benefited by Christ's interposition, does not mean every inhabitant of the world, or even every man in Christendom. Thus, when in the gospel by John, our Saviour says, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved," he immediately qualifies his statement, by limiting the privilege to a certain class, and excluding from it the opposite class; "He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already." And though John the Baptist exclaimed, " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away, or beareth the sin of the world!"-vet, as if to guard against the idea that he meant the world to signify every man in the world, he is recorded as having shortly after said, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth upon him:"-as he had said before to the Pharisees and Sadducees that came to his baptism, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"-evidently speaking on the supposition that the Pharisees and Sadducees, who surely formed a part of the world, were not yet delivered from the wrath to come, or had not yet obtained the forgiveness of their sins.

Now the phrase in the. Epistle is subject to the same limitation; and though it is here called the whole world, which implies intensity of meaning, the intensity of meaning is applicable to the phrase in its qualified acceptation. Whatever modified import the "world" is found to bear, with THAT the "whole" is associated to give it force and emphasis, and not with the "world" in its literal sense. John addresses this Epistle to believers; "these things," says he, towards the end of it, " have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." And, in the first verse of the 2d chapter, he thus exhorts them, " My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not"-a useful and necessary admonition, even to the most eminent Christians. knew that as they were exposed to manifold temptations, so they would in all likelihood be overtaken in faults, and break the commandments of And to prevent them from falling into despondency when such deviations occurred, he directed their thoughts to the permanent provision that was made for the expiation and the for-

giveness of their sins-even to the atoning sacrifice and prevalent intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." That is, if any of you, or if I, or if such as have obtained like precious faith with us, shall sin, after having received the forgiveness which is included in the act of justifying grace, let us not despair as if we were again hopelessly brought under condemnation; let us remember that we have the same advocate with God to plead our cause, even Jesus Christ, and that he pleads it on the same groundhis perfect righteousness and expiatory sacrifice; and let us, renewing our application for pardon, in a renewed dependance on the merits of our great High Priest, doubt not that it will be as freely bestowed upon us as when God first said to us, "Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven you." Then the Apostle adds, "and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." But were he to be understood as meaning all transgressors whatsoever, he would be understood as departing totally from his subject, for the comfort he had suggested arose from their being believers and in a justified state, and having thereby a settled interest in the finished work of the Redeemer; and how could he have mentioned that as a peculiar reason for their not being despondent when they fell into sin, if he could go on to affirm that the propitiation of Christ was available to the pardon of every man, and that every man was already pardoned by it, even though he had neither heard nor received the Gospel? In another part of the Epistle he says that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." that consistent with the idea of the whole world being delivered from its guilt by the blood of atonement? Attend also to the connexion here stated between Christ's propitiation and his intercession. His intercession is employed in behalf of those with respect to whom his propitiation becomes efficient. And what superior advantage had the Apostle and his fellow believers, or how could he say, "we have an advocate with the Father," if he ascribed the same privilege to every body else? And does not Christ himself say, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me?" In short, the broad construction put upon the clause we are considering, deprives the clause which precedes it of all its meaning and power, and makes the Apostle stultify himself by representing him as first suggesting an appropriate ground of consolation and hope to believers, and then speaking of it as equally possessed by all those to whom the gospel was still unknown, or by whom it was still despised.

But our opponents must confess that "the whole

world" here is exclusive of those that die in final unbelief. Then they agree with us in maintaining that the phrase the whole world is not intended by the Apostle to be taken literally, but only denotes a portion of the whole world; and of course the extent of this abatement is to be ascertained by considering the circumstances of the case so far as they are calculated to affect the language made use of. And, recollecting that the term "the world"—as used in other places of Scripture—does not necessarily signify every human being, methinks there is no difficulty in the passage before us, except what is created by the determination of certain persons to uphold a favourite opinion.

The Apostle in the first verse, and in the first clause of the second verse, as indeed throughout the whole Epistle, addresses himself to believers only; and when he says "if any man sin," he must be held as having in his thoughts and in his eye those believers whom he had just exhorted as his "little children," not to sin. If any of you, or if I, who am speaking to you in the bonds of our common faith, be guilty of transgressing God's law, let us not be dejected as if the recovered favour of our heavenly Father were again and utterly taken from us. Remember for your satisfaction and your comfort, that he in whom we have trusted, and who made peace by the blood of

his cross, still is and will continue to be our advocate with the Father, whose will we have disobeyed, and that this disobedience will be forgiven, like all the other sins that are past, for the sake of that infinitely meritorious propitiation which Christ has taken with him into the holiest of all, and in virtue of which it is that God justifies the ungodly that believe in Jesus. But let it not be thought that such an invaluable privilege is confined to you and to me. It belongs to all who are placed in similar circumstances. It belongs not to Jews only, but to Gentiles also. It belongs not merely to such a small company as we constitute, but to each and all of those who constitute the churches of Christ throughout the world. It belongs not solely to existing believers, however numerous they may be, but to all who shall believe in every quarter and in every successive age of the world. In all places and in all generations, even to the remotest corner and the latest period, they who can be addressed as "little children" who "believe on the name of the Son of God"-if they sin, may "come boldly to the throne of grace," and expect to obtain renewed tokens of that mercy which they have already experienced, and will ever continue to need; for the propitiation by which their guilt was cancelled when they first believed is still efficacious to procure their forgiveness, and that Redeemer to whom they committed themselves is still "at the right hand of God," and

"ever liveth to make intercession for them." He is the Advocate and the propitiation for the whole world—there being "in him neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free"—such distinctions have no place in the regards, and operations, and results of his mediatorship; but he "is all, and in all."

3. Another passage brought against us is in the second Epistle of Peter, ii. 1.

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift-destruction."

The argument deduced from these words, is to be found in the clause "denying the Lord that bought them." These false teachers were bought or redeemed by the death of Christ; and therefore, say our opponents, pardon is bestowed upon all men for all their sins.

Now, were we to be as rigorous in our treatment of the language of Scripture as our opponents are, we would, though admitting their interpretation, reject their inference, and fix them down to the precise number of individuals to whom the Apostle is said to refer as bought by the Lord. But believing such a mode of reasoning to be utterly absurd, and to be a great barrier in the way

of our getting at the truth, we shall grant that if the false teachers were so bought, the Lord has also bought every one of the children of men.

We cannot but marvel, however, that any such meaning should be discovered in the Apostle's language as has been affixed to it. sons he speaks of were false teachers,—they were perverting the truth, they were hostile to it, they made it the instrument of their ambition, of their worldly policy, of their personal aggrandisement. They brought in damnable heresies—doctrines different from, and contrary to, the doctrines of the gospel, doctrines that were hateful to God, doctrines that were ruinous to the souls of those that taught, and of those that believed them. And while they continued to be false teachers, and to bring in and propagate damnable heresies,thus guilty of the most aggravated crimes that mortals can commit, and leading their misguided disciples into eternal perdition,-at that very time, all criminal and all impenitent as they were, it could be said of them that they were actually pardoned by the Lord Jesus Christ!

Nay, but the case is worse than this—for on account of their profane, wicked, cruel conduct, they were to be *destroyed*, and this destruction was inevitable, and just impending over them, and yet though thus devoted to future punishment by the just judgment of the great head of

the church, and on account of all the sins implied in their false teaching—in their introduction and diffusion of damnable heresies—in denying the very Redeemer himself as to the most essential parts of his office—notwithstanding all this, they were actually forgiven every thing they had done, every thing they were doing, every thing they might thereafter do, and formed a part of the purchased possession of Christ, against whom they were engaged in a warfare that was speedily to terminate in their awful and everlasting misery!

And there is still another element in the case. These false teachers—these authors of damnable heresies-these denicrs of the Lord the Redeemer-these vessels of wrath fitted for destructionwere bought-and at what price? The blood of Christ-called also the blood of God, as shed by him who had the divine nature, united with the human, when by his obedience unto the death of the cross, he purchased eternal redemption. And yet they who were bought with this price, were at the very moment loaded with guilt unutterably great, and ere long allowed to sink irrecoverably into ruin! The love of Him who is love itself, let go its hold of those to whom it had actually secured a title, by paying down a price which was infinitely costly, and accepted in solemn covenant! And that atonement which is the theme of the redeemed in heaven, when they

exclaim, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast bought us to God by thy blood," goes for nothing in the case of the very persons who are yet affirmed to have been delivered by it from all their guilt, and they are left to the strange and agonising reflection that they are at the same time pardoned and punished for ever!

My friends, don't your understandings and your hearts revolt from such a proposition as this? And must not they, think you, be ready to make vast sacrifices both of reason and of Scripture, who, to bolster up any theory whatever, can set their face to the maintenance of any thing so monstrous—so fraught with irreconcilable contradictions, and so diametrically opposite to the whole strain of the Bible, and to the whole analogy of the gospel?

And is there any difficulty in the passage to warrant or to require such a strange hypothesis for explaining it? For my part I can see none. The matter is simply this: False teachers, such as are here described, had appeared in the church. They did not preach the truth, but heresies of the worst and most dangerous kind. They preached Christ indeed—they pretended to set him forth as he had been revealed—they urged him upon men as a Saviour and as one who had become a Saviour by suffering and dying upon a

cross for sinners. This was a part of the system of doctrine which they professed to have embraced for themselves, and pressed upon those whom they got to listen to them. And such was their perversity, their want of sincerity, their contempt of principle, that they trampled upon the gravest and most important of the truths which had a place in their ministrations. Avowing belief in the atoning death of Christ-glorying in that as the foundation of their hopes—and labouring to inculcate it upon the faith of others-they did, at the same time, so mix it up with gross and damning errors, and were so disobedient to the will of Christ, whom all the while they affected to follow as teachers of his religion, that they are strongly said to have denied-to have dishonoured-to have rebelled against him whom they proclaimed as the Lord that had bought them with his blood. All this resembles a method not uncommon with our Saviour himself and his prophets and apostles, who argued with opposers on their own principles, and on their professed tenets, as if their principles had been just, and their professions sincere. And it is a mode of reasoning, and judging, and censuring, which men have recourse to continually, and in adopting which they are neither considered as offending against propriety and truth, nor incur any risk of being misunderstood by the intelligent, or misrepresented by the candid.

Your time is too far spent to allow me to proceed with our expositions, till another opportunity occurs. In the meanwhile, I trust that this plan of replying to the abettors of universal pardon, will not only enable us to put down their most pernicious heresy, if it has got any footing in your minds, and to guard such of you as are in danger of being imposed upon by its palatableness and its plausibilities, but will profit us by fixing more clearly, and more effectually in our minds, both the real meaning of the passages commented upon, and the correct mode of discovering and ascertaining it. I shall direct your attention, in our next discourse, to various other passages, and hope to convince you that holy writ must be altogether dreadfully perverted before it can be made to give a statement, or to utter a word in support of the dogma of universal forgiveness. And let us all pray for the effectual teaching of the Holy Spirit; and according to the light, which through the medium of the word he sheds upon our minds, let us work out our own salvation, guide our brethren in the path of truth, and labour for the glory of Him who came into the world to call sinners to repentance, and to give himself an offering and a sacrifice unto God, that whosoever believeth may not perish, but have everlasting life!

SERMON VII.

SAME SUBJECT.

We are contending against the doctrine of universal pardon. And after showing its direct and palpable contradiction to the plainest declarations of the word of God, and its necessary result in the final and complete redemption of every man, a result which our opponents themselves hold to be most unscriptural—we proceeded to the consideration of those passages of the Bible which they quote in support of their opinion. Three of these we explained—pointing out at the same time how much they had been misunderstood and perverted, and what inconsistencies arose from the interpretation put upon them, in order to maintain the opposite side of the question. We now go forward in the work of exposition.

4. And the next passage to which we would call your attention is in 1 John v. 8—13.

- "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.
- "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.
- "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.
- "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son.
- " He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.
- "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

We are told that the doctrine of universal pardon is proved by the record which God is said to have given of his Son, since our disbelieving that record could not be to make God a liar, unless he had really conveyed the gift of life to us, and since every man who believes this record must of course be held to believe a divinely attested truth.

But it must be very evident to you all that this interpretation of the words goes much farther than they who adopt it can possibly approve—that it makes the Apostle assert what they cannot admit, because it is contrary to Scripture—that, in short, by proving a great deal too much, it really proves nothing at all, and must be rejected by themselves

as well as by us. For observe what the blessing is which it is alleged God has bestowed upon every one of us, and to the bestowal of which he is affirmed to have given such a decisive testimony? It is—not pardon merely, but "eternal life." "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

We cannot allow that this phrase means nothing more than a removal of the curse, so that the sinner. has his existence prolonged, and is freed from the positive punishment to which the law had doomed him for his transgression. This is not the meaning of "eternal life" in the New Testament. There it invariably means the felicity of heaven, embracing, of course, all the privileges and blessings which constitute that felicity, or which contribute to it. It is described as the grand and ultimate object of Christ's mission. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting (eternal) life. God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."* Thus Christ makes salvation and eternal life equivalent, as the intended issue of his redeeming work. And is every man saved? Or has every man eternal life actually conferred up-

[•] John iii. 16, 17.

on him?-Again, we are informed, that Paul and Barnabas said to the Jews in the synagogue of Antioch of Pisidia, when they were contradicting and blaspheming (Acts xiii. 46.) was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting (eternal) life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." But how unreasonable all this on the hypothesis of our opponents! For if eternal life means only pardon, and if pardon belonged to the Jews already, and belonged to them whether they would or not, why should the apostles have reproached and abandoned them because they would not accept of it? And see also from the conclusion of their address, that salvation and eternal life are identified in their estimation. " For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles. that thou shouldst be for salvation to the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."-Once more, after the account given us by our Lord of the transactions of the judgment day, this is stated as the grand result of the whole; "These (the wicked) shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." And are we really to suppose that this is nothing more than the pardon which the righteous and the wicked were equally in possession of, in virtue of Christ's death, while they tabernacled upon earth? Or is it not clear, beyond the reach of doubt, that it signifies all that is to be enjoyed in the heavenly state, implying not merely the blessedness of that state, but the sanctification, the victory over death, every thing that is necessary to prepare for the attainment and the fruition of it?

And in the passage we are considering, it cannot denote any thing else; for although it is called simply life, in the 12th verse, yet that is merely an abbreviated mode of expression,-the full character of the life alluded to being given in the 11th verse, and repeated in the 13th verse, so that both the preceding and the subsequent context ascertain it to be "eternal life." And then, as it is the privilege, according to the apostle's assertion, of those only who believe on the Son of God, it must be something more than, or different from, the pardon which we are told belongs to all, whether they believe or not. be said, that the faith here mentioned is just the taking and enjoying the pardon already conferred, we reply, that this is inconsistent with the declared object of the apostle, as intimated in the 13th verse, which is to satisfy those to whom he writes, and who are asserted to be believers, "that

they may know that they have eternal life," as true believers, and to state the grounds on which they may acquire that knowledge, and have no doubts of its reality, and take to themselves all the comfort and advantage which it is fitted to afford. And if any stress is laid upon this, that we are said to be in actual possession of, or to have, eternal life, which could not be the case if eternal life meant the happiness of heaven, we answer, that it is common enough in Scripture to speak of blessings to which we have only acquired a title, and of which we have only the prospect, as our present property, as for instance, " all things are yours, whether things present or things to come."* And in this very epistle,+ its inspired author declares, "this is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life," so that in one place eternal life is spoken of as a promise of something yet to come, and the very same blessing is spoken of in another place as something which is already come, just because it is secured beyond all possibility of its being lost, and they to whom the promise is made, may regard it as indubitably certain, and enjoy it in the full assurance of anticipation, as they experience that character to which the word of the unchangeable God has irrevocably annexed it; for

^{* 1} Cor. iii. 21, 22.

^{+ 1} John ii. 25.

"being justified by his grace they are made heirs," as Paul expresses it,* "according to the hope of eternal life."

The eternal life, therefore, here mentioned, denotes the happiness of heaven, as it does in all other parts of Scripture where it occurs. And, consequently, this declaration of John, does not support the doctrine of universal pardon, unless universal pardon is tantamount to universal, final, and complete salvation. Let our opponents either admit or reject that equation. If they admit it, then it follows that in their opinion no man, be he a believer or an unbeliever, shall ever be condemned or fail of everlasting felicity, and this should be known, that the simple may be fully aware of what they really embrace when they embrace the tenet of universal pardon. But if they reject it, as they profess to do, methinks with great inconsistency, then it is clear as a sunbeam that John is no auxiliary of theirs in this boasted passage, and that his meaning, let it be what it may, is altogether at variance with theirs.

Even though we should admit that the eternal life here mentioned is not the state of felicity in heaven, but only that state of pardon to which the sinner is said to be restored by the atonement of Christ, this will not serve the cause or assist in establishing the views of our opponents. Nay, it will be found to do the very contrary. For the apostle says in the 15th verse of the third chapter, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." The maintainers of universal pardon say, that every sin, and of course, murder, and all that is justly denominated hatred of a brother, is already forgiven, or that every person guilty of it has "life." But the inspired writer, whose words we have quoted, affirms expressly, that no man who commits murder or cherishes hatred is forgiven, the term " eternal life" as used by them, being synonymous with the term forgiveness. They hold that eternal life or pardon is given to every one of the children of men, and that the divine record testifies this. And yet the apostle most distinctly declares that all murderers and haters of the brethren are destitute of that blessing. This latter statement is plain, literal, explicit, and must be taken as the exponent of the former, which is not a positive averment of the apostle, but an interpretation put upon his language—that language being certainly such as not necessarily to include each and all of the guilty race of man. On the hypothesis of our opponents, the two views are irreconcilable. Whereas on ours they harmonize completely. Murderers and haters have not as yet pardon or

eternal life, and they cannot obtain such a privilege so long as they are unbelieving persons. But let them believe on Jesus Christ and then they shall obtain forgiveness, for "this is the record, that God hath given to us" who believe "eternal life," or forgiveness, "and this life is in his Son."

Having proved that this passage gives them no assistance at all in making out their case, it is no more our concern than it is theirs, in the present controversy, to give the true explanation of it. But as the explanation of it is to my mind abundantly easy, and as it has an important bearing on the subject of assurance, it may not be im-

proper to expound its import.

Observe then that the apostle is writing to believers, to "them that believe on the name of the Son of God." Observe also that he writes to these believers with this view, that they might know that they had eternal life, and also that they might be encouraged to remain steadfast in that faith which they had placed in Jesus Christ. This is set forth in the 13th verse, and must be borne in mind. Observe, moreover, that the original word which is rendered "record," in the 10th and 11th verses, is the very same word that is translated "witness" so frequently in the preceding context, and that it would have made the meaning plainer had the translators kept the same rendering all along, or perhaps it will become

more intelligible if instead of witness, we use the more appropriate word testimony, which is equally agreeable to the Greek.

Now, in order to persuade those believers to whom he addresses himself, that they had eternal life, and to establish them in the faith with which this persuasion was connected, he reasons thus, v. 9, "You have the testimony of God to this great truth, that Christ is the Saviour. And surely if you believe the testimony that fallible and sinful men give to any fact, much more will you believe the testimony of God, who cannot be mistaken, seeing he is omniscient, and who will not deceive, seeing he is infinitely holy and true. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the testimony of God in himself; you believe on the Son of God, and therefore you have in your own minds God's testimony to Christ being the Saviour, or the author of eternal life. Were it possible to suppose that any of you did not believe this testimony of God to Christ, that would be to make God a liar by discrediting his solemn word. I say this to show you the folly and inconsistency of believing on the Son of God, and yet not applying to yourselves the comfort and the benefit of the fact testified of God, that his Son is indeed your Saviour. For as you cannot be guilty of any thing so absurd as to disbelieve God's testimony, since you are actually believing on him

to whom he has given that testimony, so you are in this manner shut up to the belief, that salvation or eternal life is yours,-the testimony being this, that God has given, not to him that makes Godaliar by his unbelief, butto you, and to me, and to all of us who believe, eternal life, or the promise of eternal life, or a title to eternal life, or the possession of eternal life, so far as it can be possessed in a present world, even that eternal life which is in his Son, for he is altogether eternal lifehe is the author of it-he is the proprietor of ithe is the giver of it. And so closely and inseparably is it connected with him, that it may be affirmed without exception, that whoever hath the Son hath life, and whoever hath not the Son hath not life. But you have the Son; he dwells in you by faith; you do really and consciously believe in him; and therefore know and doubt not that you have eternal life, and in obedience to the testimony of God, continue to believe with unwavering confidence on the name of the Son of God, through whom it is that this great privilege is indubitably yours, either in possession or in reversion.

Such appears to me to be the real meaning of the passage we have been considering.* It is conformable to every fair rule of interpretation;

^{*} See Note L.

it is agreeable to the express design of the sacred penman; it is suggested by the character of those whom he reasons with, and it is consistent with the terms and tenor of the whole epistle. Its only misfortune is, that it excludes the doctrine of universal pardon, and gives no countenance to the notion that assurance of personal salvation is of the very essence of saving faith. But, at any rate, and independently of our construction of its import, we have demonstrated that the Apostle does not teach here that every individual sinner of mankind is absolutely pardoned by the atonement of Christ; and it is with that point only that our present discussion is concerned.

5. Another Scripture authority, which our opponents appeal to in behalf of their opinion, is derived from the Epistle to the Hebrews, where it is said—

"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace."—Heb. x. 28, 29.

It is alleged that this represents those who have trodden under foot the Son of God, and done despite to the Spirit of grace, and counted

the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, as having been sanctified with that blood, and that it therefore affirms the actual efficacy of the atonement in behalf even of such as were to become apostates, and for that crime to be visited with a terrible condemnation.

- (1.) Now it is to be remarked, in the first place, that sanctification here cannot mean that process by which the Divine Spirit delivers the sinner from the power and pollution of his iniquities, infuses into him holy principles and dispositions, and causes him to "delight in the law of the Lord, after the inward man." For if the persons spoken of were fully pardoned, and if they were also sanctified or saved-these words being synonymous in the judgment of our opponents-what more was requisite to constitute their safety? What should have hindered him by whom they were both justified and sanctified, from also glorifying them, according to the tenor of his word? Or, how could the God of love and faithfulness leave such to perish for ever under the guilt of apostacy? The thing is ut-terly incredible, and is not, we believe, insisted upon by the advocates of universal forgiveness Well then. themselves.
- (2.) We remark, in the second place, that if external sanctification be meant, if designating and setting apart to sacred service, which indeed

is the true import of the word in this place, be what the Apostle intended, still it will not necessarily follow that the individuals so separated, had all their sins forgiven them. For their separation to the service of Christ, consisted in their being subjected to the rite of baptism, which had been administered to them when they made a public profession of faith, and in their partaking of the Lord's supper, which it was customary for converts to do, as soon after their baptism as circumstances permitted. In the case of baptism, the water that was sprinkled upon them, or in which they were immersed—for both modes of baptising prevailed-signified the blood of Christ, which cleanses the soul from moral defilement, as water cleanseth the body from natural defilement; and as the sign derived its meaning from the thing signified, nothing could possibly be more natural for the Apostle than to use the thing signified in place of the sign itself. The water had, in its own nature, no more virtue to consecrate outwardly to a sacred office, than it had to consecrate inwardly to the real love and service of God, but had all its efficacy for the one as well as for the other, from the precious blood which it was by divine appointment employed to represent. Whatever, therefore, did violence to, or poured contempt upon the baptismal consecration, was by necessary consequence, and in the

intention of all who understood the subject, to offer the same violence and the same contempt to the blood of Christ, by which that consecration was invested, either with meaning or with efficacy. And in this view it was not only most natural for the Apostle to speak of the blood of Christ in place of the water of baptism, but he was called upon to do so by the object he was aiming at, which was that of pointing out the aggravations of the guilt of apostacy, and which could not have been so effectually done by merely stating the renunciation of a Christian profession, as by stating what was implied in that profession-by merely alluding to the external designation of the persons concerned, to the maintenance of the faith and character of disciples, as by bringing prominently forward the sacrifice, a belief in whose divinity had been once solemnly avowed, and a profane disregard to whose divinity was now openly manifested. All which will appear in a still stronger light, if we recollect that the apostates had renewed their baptismal profession, and confirmed it by partaking of the Lord's supper, in which the wine represented the blood of Christ expressly as the blood of the covenant, and by their symbolical drinking of which, they were again, by their own act, and in the bosom of the visible church, consecrated to a life of obedience, as God's devoted and redeemed people.

(3.) In the third place, it is called the blood of the covenant wherewith they are sanctified. Now, if they were really sanctified with the blood of Christ, and derived substantial benefits from it, these benefits are to be ascertained surely by looking to the terms of that covenant which the blood of Christ was appointed to ratify, and which could be no other than the new covenant which God made with the house of Israelspoken of in the prophecies of Jeremiah, and repeated in the 8th chapter of this Epistle to the Hebrews. And which of all the benefits specified there had the apostate Jews been favoured with at the time they were sanctified? There is forgiveness of sin-there is knowledge of the Lord -there is moral renovation-there are all the privileges included in the state and character of God's people. By what rule of interpretation shall we fix upon one or more of these in preference to the rest, as conveyed to those who are said to have been sanctified? And if this sanctification gave to its subjects all the character and all the blessings that are secured and made over by the blood-sealed covenant-which is the only consistent idea-what more could be desiderated to constitute their complete salvation, and how was it possible to regard them as visited with a much sorer punishment than was awarded to those who, for their crimes, were doomed by the law of Moses to die without mercy?

(4.) But perhaps we shall be told, and indeed it is insinuated by our modern universalists, that the sanctification by the blood of Christ was altogether external and ceremonial; and in connexion with this it is said, that expiation by the blood of Christ was also of the same ceremonial description, so that the whole economy of Christian sacrifice is a mere ceremonial institution, intended simply and solely as a manifestation of God's mercy and love to sinners. In this way, one ceremonial system is typical of another ceremonial system-the relation of the Old Testament dispensation to the New Testament dispensation is only that of a figure to a figure-and both are shadowy and unsubstantial. If such be the notion of any of our opponents, it would be well for them fairly and fully to avow it, that we may see exactly to what issues their peculiar principles lead, and how far it is safe to give any heed at all to their speculations. At any rate it is plain, that such a notion overturns not a part only but the whole of our faith respecting the end, and operation, and efficacy, of Christ's shedding his blood or laying down his life for the redemption of the world. And it is needless to trouble ourselves with disputes about the doctrine of universal or partial forgiveness, since the blood of Christ cleansing from all sin cannot mean that there is virtue in that blood either to

cancel guilt, or to remove moral pollution, or to secure any one spiritual privilege whatever, but only that there is so much benevolence in the divine nature as to bestow all these privileges on such of his creatures as stand in need of them.*

But since our opponents quote the passage I am commenting on to prove the dogma of universal pardon, I may with equal propriety quote another passage from the same epistle to show that they are quite wrong both in their interpretation and in their doctrine.

It is in the 9th chapter, 13th and 14th verses, " For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifieth to the purging of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, purge, (cleanse or purify) your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God." In the 13th verse, the efficacy of the legal sacrifices for taking away ceremonial offences is asserted. In the 14th verse, the efficacy of the blood of Christ for removing moral transgression and sinfulness is also asserted. The former, according to the whole strain of the epistle, were typical and prefigurative of the latter. And from the virtue and efficiency of the one, the Apostle argues to the

[·] See Note M.

virtue and efficiency of the other—the legal sacrifices, however, doing nothing more than delivering from outward ceremonial offences, while the bloody sacrifice of Christ avails to the deliverance of the soul from the spiritual and permanent evils to which it is subjected by sin, and it being still more certain in accomplishing its purpose than those sacrifices which were merely typical of it could be in accomplishing theirs.

Now, the legal sacrifices sanctified or consecrated those on whose account they were offered up so far as external purification went, by the blood of bulls and of goats being offered in atonement, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, that ceremonial guilt and ceremonial impurity might be taken away. And in conformity to that view, the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God, had the double effect of cancelling the guilt and rescuing from the power of sin. Every one for whom that blood was shed, to whom it is applied, and who has recourse to it by faith, is at once pardoned and purified. Its virtue, one and indivisible in its operations and its achievements, leaves no part of his salvation unaccomplished, if it is really brought into contact with him. It is mighty to emancipate his conscience from the condemning power of sin, and from the inherent pollution of sin, so that not

being any longer under the burden of dead works—of works which keep him in the thraldom both of judicial and spiritual death, he enjoys at once the right and the freedom of coming into the presence of the living God, and serving him all the days of his life. It accomplishes this change in his condition and in his character, more assuredly and effectually than the blood of bulls and of goats, or the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, under the Mosaic economy, ever sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, and enabled offenders against that economy, by expiating their transgressions and making them ceremonially clean, to mingle again in the worship and service of their divine lawgiver.

And if this be that sprinkling of the blood of Christ wherewith the apostates here described had been sanctified, where is there any room left for that damning guilt which the apostle charges home upon them, or for that awful and superlative punishment with which he threatens them in a future world? Does not this show clearly and conclusively that Christ's death has never been at all brought home to their case in its redeeming power and prevalence? And does it not compel us to draw the inference that the sanctification which is said to have passed upon them was nothing deeper, nothing more spiritual, nothing more connected with their state in the sight

of God, than what consisted in their being dedicated by baptism, voluntarily and formally to the service of him whom they professed to believe in, and embrace, and follow as their God and Redeemer.

(5.) We have been proceeding on the supposition that the person referred to, as having been sanctified with the blood of the covenant, was the person guilty of apostacy. And, on this supposition, we have proved to you, that it gives no aid whatever to our opponents in their views of universal pardon. But we are inclined to believe that the person referred to was no other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Without all doubt the grammatical construction admits of this meaning. The antecedent, so far as correct language goes, may be "the Son of God," as well as "he that trampled on the Son of God." But the former hypothesis seems to be the most probable.

The Apostle is describing the guilt of those who apostatized, and he states the circumstances which rendered it peculiarly heinous and deserving of condemnation. In apostatising they "trampled under foot the Son of God." They had professed to receive him in that character, and in that character they honoured him and did him homage. They admitted the Divinity of his nature and of his mission. They listened to him as one who came from heaven with a message to the

children of men. They embraced for themselves, and they taught to others the doctrine which he revealed. They acknowledged him as the great head of the church whom all were bound to obey. They enlisted in his service. They observed his ordinances. They rendered an outward submission at least to his commandments. They associated with his people. And they proclaimed their obligations to live to his glory. But when they apostatized, their conduct implied that they now refused all subjection to his authority, all belief in his mission, all respect for his character. They denied his title either to reverence or to love. They broke off all connexion with him, as degrading to their understanding and hurtful to their interests. They held him out as a fit object of ridicule and contempt. They blasphemed him in the terms of reproach that were dictated by the most inveterate enemies of his name and of his cause. And, treating him in this impious manner, they might be justly said to "trample on the Son of God."

But they went farther than this. The Son of God was sanctified and set apart to the office of Redeemer, by the appointment, and under the sanction of the Father. He became the Highpriest, by whom that sacrifice was to be offered up, which was to take away the sin of the world, and reconcile men to God. And it was necessary

that he should be regularly consecrated to such a sacred and important function. The priests of old were consecrated by others, their fellowmen, as Aaron and his sons, before they offered up any sacrifices, were consecrated by Moses. But the Son of God could not derive such a designation from the greatest of men, or even from the highest of angels. He was set apart by the Father as giving him his commission, and investing him with power and authority to save his people from their sins. But he was the priest himself, and it was by the blood of his own sacrifice that he was dedicated to the work, and sanctified for accomplishing it, not merely by bearing the sins of many, but by going into the holiest with his expiatory offering and there presenting it at the mercy seat of the eternal in their behalf. Now the blood wherewith he was thus sanctified, the apostates, in question, counted an unholy thing. Having at one time speculatively or professedly allowed and depended upon its infinite merit, they now denied its virtue to consecrate or to qualify him for the duties of his priesthood: they reckoned it of nothing more than common value; they treated it as an unclean thing-as equally worthless with the blood of a criminal who had been made to suffer the punishment he had justly deserved. Thus they deprived Christ of the chief and paramount glory of his mediatorial undertaking. They rejected him as unable to rescue men from perdition by the virtue of his cross. They would not even allow him to possess any right to offer himself as a propitiation for sin. And they held him out to the world as pretending to take away the sins of all men, when he had neither official nor inherent ability to save even one soul.

And to this aggravation of the guilt contracted by these apostates, there was added that of doing despite to the Spirit of grace. The Holy Spirit acted an important and essential part in relation to Christ as a Saviour. The Spirit descended upon him and filled him without measure. By the Spirit it was that those mighty and miraculous works were wrought, which attested the truth of his mission and of his doctrine. It was through the Spirit that he offered himself without spot unto God. The power of the Spirit cooperated in his resurrection from the grave, for the justification of those for whose offences he had died. When he conveyed the necessary gifts to his disciples and apostles, it was by the effectual ministry of the Spirit. And all the graces, all the comforts, all the joys of those who were converted to the faith of his Gospel, were the first fruits of the Spirit, who was sent forth to dwell in their hearts; to communicate to them all the benefits of his purchase, and to prepare

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them for the heavenly inheritance. But to this Spirit of grace the apostates did despite. They had rendered thanks to God for all these his holy and merciful operations. They had prayed to be made the subjects of his agency, and to receive more abundant supplies of his influence. They had ascribed to him Divine honours; they had witnessed the signs and wonders which he enabled apostles to perform; and they affected to regard him as necessary, according to Christ's promise, to lead them into all the truth, and to give efficacy, and diffusion, and triumph to the Gospel in all future ages. But now they made light of the doctrine concerning him which they had hitherto maintained. They ascribed his work, whether of miracles or of grace, to satanic agency, or to delusive imagination. They derided every manifestation of his presence and his power as deceptious or visionary. And they taught others to expect no good thing through such a medium, seeing that Christ had no authority to send the Spirit, and that whatever had seemed to come from the Spirit, was the result either of mere fancy or of mere artifice.

In this way these apostles did indeed cast off all allegiance to Christ, and treat him with thorough and blasphemous contempt. They treated him thus in his great original character as the Son of God, who came from heaven to save the

world. They treated him thus, though he had shed his blood for the remission of sins, and was divinely consecrated to be High Priest over the house of God. And they treated him thus in regard to the Holy Spirit who acted such an important part in establishing the truth of his gospel, and giving efficacy to his redeeming work. Were we to understand the Apostle as referring to the sanctifying of the apostates themselves, it would break in upon the obvious train of his reflections, and diminish, what it is evidently his design to increase, the weight of his indictment against these guilty and unhappy persons. when we understand the sanctifying to refer to Christ, there is greater consistency in the Apostle's criminative argument against those whom he is speaking of; the aggravations of their sin, which he is called upon to state in all their magnitude, come out more clearly and forcibly; and in short, it squares more with the intention of the author, and the analogy of the passage, to take this view of the clause in question, than to adopt that view of it which we formerly assumed to be the true one. But whichever of these views is correct, we have seen that the language and sentiment of the Apostle furnish no ground at all for holding the doctrine of universal forgiveness-a subject to which they have not the remotest alliance.

- 6. The next passage I shall speak to is in the Gospel of John xv. at the beginning; where Christ, under the parable of the vine, gives some illustration of the connexion subsisting between him and his disciples.
 - " I am the vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

" Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

" Now ye are clean through the word which I have

spoken unto you.

" Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

" I am the vine; ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit;

for without me ye can do nothing.

" If a man abideth not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

Now, from this it is inferred, that all men are in Christ, as all the branches are in the vine; that though in Christ, they do not necessarily derive from him spiritual nourishment, just as there may be some branches in the vine which get no nourishment from that union, and consequently bring forth no fruit; that being in Christ, they are alive, freed from the punishment of death, and only unholy on account of their not having faith, and opening their hearts for the reception

of those influences by which he would make them abound in righteousness, exactly as the branches of the vine are all possessed of vegetable life, but some of them are unfruitful, because there is a certain defect in that communication with the stem, or the root, which is requisite for the production of grapes. So say the maintainers of the doctrine of universal pardon.

Now here, as on other occasions, their argument goes too far to be of any use to them. They draw their argument from the similitude, and from the phraseology employed in expressing it. But the similitude and the phraseology employed in expressing it, being taken literally, go much beyond their purpose; and as explained by other passages of Scripture, lead to the total overthrow of their opinion. Let us refer to one or two of these.

In Romans viii. 1. it is said—" There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." This language evidently supposes that there are some who are not in Christ Jesus. It is only those who are in him, to whom there is no condemnation: those who are not in him are already condemned and left in that state.

Moreover, the test of their being in Christ, and therefore not under condemnation, is that they "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" and what is this but bringing forth the fruits of righteousness? So that their being in Christ Jesus, and being delivered from condemnation, and being truly holy, are all inseparably combined in the same individuals.

Besides, according to Paul, those who are in Christ Jesus are delivered from condemnation or punishment; but, according to the construction put upon our Lord's figurative language by our opponents, those who are in Christ Jesus, are to be condemned and punished, for the unfruitful branches of the vine are "cast forth and wither, and men gather them, and throw them into the fire, where they are burnt." (v. 6.)

Again, we read in 2 Corinthians v. 17, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." Now surely nobody will affirm that all men are "new creatures," yet, say our opponents, all men are in Christ Jesus, and here the apostle identifies being in Christ with being new creatures. He plainly affirms that every man who is in Christ is a new creature, has undergone the moral change indicated by that strong and emphatic phrase, is so revolutionized and transformed in his principles, dispositions, and habits, that all "old things are passed away, and all things are become new," and

exhibits this thorough renewal in his conduct, for he is said in another place to be " created again in Christ Jesus unto good works." And yet with all this, he may be cut off, cast away, and burnt, like the unproductive branches of the vine! Nay he may be fruitful and unfruitful in righteousness, condemned and saved, happy and miserable at the same time! For all men, say the advocates of universal pardon, are in Christ as all the branches are in the vine; and some of them may be like the branches that were cast away and gathered to be destroyed by fire, because they brought forth no fruit, while the Apostle says expressly, that whosoever is in Christ is renovated in his nature and character so as to be adorned with "the beauties of holiness," and to be qualified by his purity and attainments for the kingdom of the just above.

I may also quote from 1 Corinthians i. 30, 31, which says, "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." Here it is impossible to misapprehend the Apostle's meaning so far as not to perceive, that to them who are in Christ Jesus he ascribes the various privileges which he enumerates. The persons to whom he writes, and he himself, are in Christ Jesus. For this they were

indebted to the free grace of God, and not to any ability or merit of their own. And while to this union with Christ, effectuated by divine grace, and still the medium of divine grace, they owed all the spiritual blessings of their lot, which were wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, they looked to it as the certain source of these blessings, so that whoever was in the Saviour was sure of possessing them all. I do not at present enter into any particular explanation of these several blessings, but it must be most evident to every one, that they are of such a nature as to be altogether inconsistent with the idea. that those to whom they belong are in the bondage of corruption any more than they are in danger of punishment. Whatever else they have obtained in virtue of their being in Christ, they are at least made holy, and cannot be numbered with such as in figurative language bear no fruit, and are therefore cut off, and withered, and burnt.

To be in Christ, therefore, is equivalent, from the passages now quoted, to being both pardoned and sanctified; and really to talk of a man who has had such blessings bestowed upon him, as resembling the branch of a vine, which is cast off and burnt, by reason of its unfruitfulness, is to trifle at once with our common understanding, and with the most sacred truths of the Bible. We see clearly that being in Christ expresses a vital

union with him; it is the object of ambition to every awakened sinner, who is acquainted with the gospel; it is the peculiar and distinguishing privilege of the true Christian; it is the source and the security of all he enjoys or hopes for; it is maintained on his part by faith, which uniformly produces purity as well as peace, and it is maintained on the part of the Saviour by the indwelling of his Spirit, who "is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth;" and it is as inconsistent with final condemnation, or with unholy character, as light is with darkness, or heaven with hell. Yes, my friends, if you are really in Christ you have nothing to fear, for "all things are yours"-forgiveness, reconciliation, holiness, eternal life. But if you are not believing in Christ, and if you are not devoted to him in heart and life, and if you are not glorifying him by your active obedience to his will, as well as by your unlimited trust in his merits, you are not truly in Christ, and are as much unforgiven as if he had never come into the world for the salvation of sinners.

If I am now asked what means this parable of the vine and its branches? I answer negatively that it cannot possibly mean that all men are pardoned; and I answer positively that it is intended to point out the difference between the nominal and the real disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our Saviour teaches this difference, according

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to his usual method, by a similitude which furnishes him with sufficient illustration, and is well calculated to convey and to impress the instruction that he was desirous to communicate. in using that similitude, he could never intend it to be understood and applied in every minute particular, because in that case he might have been found teaching error, when it was of course his sole object to inculcate truth, and because such a mode of treatment would render figurative language, in almost every instance, so dangerous, that it could not be innocently or wisely employed. For example, Christ likens himself to the sun in the firmament, when he says, "I am the light of the world;" and every one comprehends the design, and perceives the beauty and the aptness, of the metaphor. But would it be any thing but utter absurdity to found upon that metaphor the position that Christ regularly withdraws himself from his people, and leaves them in all the gloom, and discomfort, and peril of a spiritual midnight, because the natural sun, to which he had compared himself, in order to assure them that he is the fountain of all the knowledge of God and of salvation, which men can ever possess, ceases every evening to shine upon us, and abandons us to the shades of thick darkness? Why, from the very parable of the vine itself, we may learn the folly of such a method of extracting religious doctrine, or moral lessons from every, the minutest, capability of any simile that a teacher or writer may make use of. It is well known that the branches of the most vigorous and productive vine do not bear fruit in all places and in all seasons. But how would it do to argue from this, that our blessed Saviour does not expect his people to be always and everywhere abounding in the work of the Lord? Yet that would be just as rational and sound as the particular interpretation of the parable, against which I am now contending.

Christ is inculcating upon those whom he addresses, this most important truth, that he is the source of all spiritual influence and blessing, and that it is necessary for them to be in him, and to abide in him, for the purpose of obtaining whatever is needful for their salvation. He knew well that there would be many to assume his name-to profess his religion-to wear the outward badges of discipleship to him-and not only to appear to others, but to be in their own estimation, his real and devoted followers. Against this fatal delusion he is anxious to guard them; for this end he brings forward the parable of the vine; and he puts it upon record for the warning and tuition of all successive generations. By this he assures us that mere external attachment to him is of no avail; that we may seem to cling to him as closely as the

branches of a vine do to the stem; that we may have the leaves, and the blossoms, and all the ordinary aspect of a good profession; that we may be so like his people as to be mistaken for them; that we may hold an outward and constant fellowship with him, and adhere so closely as not merely to escape detection, but to be accounted and denominated his, admitted to the privileges of his visible church, and ranked among those who are entitled to look forward to eternal life;—that all this may be the case, and still that we may have no lot or part in hisredemption, and that in the end we may be destroyed, like an unfruitful branch that is cast forth and withereth, and is burnt.

But, on the other hand, he assures us that if there is a vital union between him and us, our spiritual welfare is secure. This union will be demonstrated in our experiencing the secret and holy influences that he sends forth into the hearts of his people,—in the practical godliness which he disposes and enables us to cultivate—in the care which he employs in cherishing our growth, and improving our graces—and in the joy which he imparts to us as his believing and obedient servants. And it is by these and similar circumstances that we are to have the evidence in ourselves, and to afford evidence to all around us, that we are Christ's redeemed ones; that we are of those for whom he died,

and who, being "washed and justified and sanctified in his name and by his Spirit," shall glorify his Father while they live, and be at length admitted to those mansions in heaven, of which he had been speaking to the disciples for their comfort and encouragement, and into which he promised to introduce them at his second coming.

The error of our opponents with regard to the parables of the Prodigal Son* and the Marriage Feast,+ proceeds from the same principle of interpretation which they have adopted in the case of the Vine and its branches. They lose sight of the main design and scope of the parables, and they fix their attention on certain facts and circumstances which are merely introduced to give connexion, and verisimilitude, and interest to the story, and which neither were, nor could be, designed to convey religious instruction or to establish Christian doctrine. And I repeat it, that if you follow out this principle to all its extent, you will prove what is false, and bring out what is ridiculous. Make the experiment in the course of your private studies, and you will soon discover and be convinced of the correctness of my remark. Much could I say to you on both the parables I have alluded to, in proof and in illustration of it. Let me only remind you that in the parable of the Prodigal Son, our Saviour's

^{*} Luke xv. 11.

⁺ Mat. xxiii. 2.

object evidently is, to show the readiness of our compassionate God to receive back into his favour all-even the most ungrateful, the most rebellious, the most profligate-who will return to him as true penitents, and that those who have continued in his service, with whatever fidelity, and however long, should rejoice, rather than murmur at such a manifestation of his condescension and paternal love. And on the parable of the Marriage Feast, our Saviour's object is to represent the guilt and danger of the Jews in rejecting the salvation that was offered to them by the preaching of his Gospel, and the Divine purpose of calling the Gentiles to a participation of what the Jews had so madly put away from them, the better reception that it would experience from these despised outcasts, and, at the same time, the necessity of a certain character, shadowed forth by the wedding garment, in order to be warranted to appropriate present blessings, or to hope for an entrance into the eternal recompenseall which would establish the fact, that though " many are called, few are chosen."

These views make the whole of the two parables, plain, intelligible, and instructive. But if you endeavour to elicit from every incident, and from every particular, a doctrinal truth, you will involve yourselves in the strangest and most fatal errors. For instance, you will

learn from what is said respecting the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son, that there are some of the children of men who have never transgressed at any time the commandment of God! And you will learn from the parable of the Marriage Feast, that the church, which is the spouse of Christ, is something altogether different from those who obey the call of God and accept of the gospel, and are admitted with wedding garments to partake of the entertainment that is prepared for them! But there is one thing that you cannot learn from either of the parables,-you cannot learn that the death of Christ forgives any whom it does not also save. The prodigal son returned in the exercise of that repentance which is invariably connected with forgiveness, and with forgiveness he obtained all the other blessings which paternal affection could bestow. Though once dead, he was now alive again-though once lost, he was now found; and his Father rejoiced over him. And the Gentiles who were afar off from God, in idolatry and sin, and came at his invitation to the gospel feast, found there, beyond all controversy, forgiveness of their worst abominations, and whatsoever other benefits they needed to make them even as the redeemed of Israel, and to render their "fruit unto holiness, that the end might be everlasting life."

In my next discourse I shall consider other

passages of Scripture adduced by the abettors of universal pardon, in support of their doctrine.

Believe me, my friends, I would not dwell so long upon the subject, did it not appear to me of vital importance. I wish to guard you against a heresy of the very worst and most pernicious description, and to enable you, with a good conscience, and in a decided manner, to lift up your voice and your testimony against it. I wish to vindicate "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," from an abuse which is founded on the perversion of all Scripture, and the dereliction of all reason. I wish to arrest, as far as I can, a dogma which may be very harmless on the few established Christians, by whom, as yet, it is mainly supported, but which must open all the floodgates of licentiousness, when it shall speak to the most abandoned and profligate of our race in this wise, "All the sins you have already committed are freely and fully forgiven; if you commit murder and every other iniquity to-morrow, these also were long ago forgiven; if you persevere in the most heinous sins to the last hour of your lives, these too are all forgiven: faith and repentance are not necessary to your being forgiven for the most aggravated transgressions; and, if you should die unbelieving and impenitent, still your only punishment will be, that you will be destitute of that sense of the favour of God which constitutes the happiness of heaven."

May the Lord himself give us understanding in these things; may he keep us from such awful delusions; and may he send forth his Spirit to lead and guide us in the way everlasting.

SERMON VIII.

SAME SUBJECT.

WE have been engaged in the consideration of those passages of Scripture which those who hold the doctrine of universal pardon refer to as supporting their opinion. Such as we have examined have been found quite inapplicable or inadequate to the purpose for which they are adduced. We showed you, that they are either wholly misunderstood, or perverted from their true and original design, or that they prove nothing to the point, by proving a great deal more than either party can possibly admit. We now proceed to what remains on this branch of the subject.

7. Great stress is laid upon the 5th chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and particularly upon the 18th verse, which says,

"Therefore, 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. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

The argument deduced from these words is, that those who are involved in the offence of Adam are declared to be the very same with those who participate in the benefit of Christ's death,—that as all men, without exception, are subjected to condemnation in consequence of Adam's transgression, so all men, without exception, are delivered from that condemnation, or pardoned, in consequence of what Christ suffered to remove the curse,—that just as certainly as every individual of our race is actually affected even unto death by the disobedience of the one, so certainly must every individual of our race be affected even unto life by the obedience of the other.

(1.) Now, in answer to this, we have to observe, in the *first* place, that though Adam is said, in the 14th verse, to have been a figure or type of Christ, it does not necessarily follow that he was a type of him in every particular of his character or his condition. If this were to be held true of the relation subsisting between all types and their antitypes, it is needless for me to expatiate on the errors and absurdities which such a mode of viewing the subject would constantly produce. Adam was a type of Christ; but it is not said that he was so as to the number of those who were injured by the fall of the former, and benefited by

the interposition of the latter. Though it is very evident, both from scriptural statement and historical fact, that Adam represented all his posterity, as well as acted for himself, the Bible nowhere informs us that Christ represented the whole of mankind, any more than that he had a personal responsibility. And while it cannot be denied that the first Adam, as a public person, did bring into a state of sin and misery each one of his descendants, whether finally saved or finally destroyed, we know not one passage of holy writ which asserts, nor can we avoid being startled by the assertion, that the second Adam, as a public person, redeemed not only those who were ultimately carried to heaven, but those also who had gone to the place of punishment before he died, and who continued in the place of punishment after he had died and "finished the work which his father had given him to do."

(2.) In the second place, if the reasoning which our opponents found upon the passage quoted be good for any thing, it is, like very much of their reasoning from other passages, good for a great deal too much—much more than they themselves would admit. Supposing the parallel between Adam and Christ to hold true, then we must insist, that whatever was lost to all men by Adam, is regained to all men by Christ. There is no express qualification mentioned by which we are

entitled to say, that while all whom Adam represented were alike overwhelmed by the threatened penalties and consequences of his transgression, all whom Christ represented, being the very all whom A'dam represented, were favoured only with a part of the salvation he wrought out to repair the ruins of the fall, and that only a certain proportion of them were restored by him to the whole of the blessings which his type had forfeited. And as there is no such express qualification, the conclusion is inevitable, that if the effect of Christ's death is co-extensive as to its objects with the effect of Adam's fall, every human being must obtain from Christ deliverance from all the evils which Adam entailed upon him, and restoration to all the blessings of which Adam denuded him. And will any one venture to set his face to such a conclusion as this.—a conclusion so inconsistent with the doctrine of God's word, and so contradictory to the records, the aspect, and the fortunes of our degenerate world? Even in this general view, the alleged similitude between the type and the antitype cannot be sustained as either probable or true. *

(3.) But its want of justness and of truth will be still more apparent, when we look to the descriptions here given by the Apostle, of the bene-

^{*} See Note N.

fits derived by the all spoken of, from the virtue of Christ's merit. Remember that this all is, we are told, the very identical all that suffered from Adam's apostacy, and means, therefore, every person that has sprung from our first parents. And of every such person, therefore, the inspired writer must be understood as affirming that he has received "abundance of grace," and the "free gift of righteousness," and "justification," and is "made righteous" by the Redeemer's "obedience," and is the subject of "grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life." And can these things be really predicated of every one of the children of men? Are all who suffer from Adam's first transgression really and actually invested with the privileges now enumerated? When we look around us, even on what is called the Christian world, can we fix our eyes on no one who has not abundance of grace, who is not made righteous, who is not justified here, and will not (continuing to be what he is) enjoy eternal life hereafter? Nay, must we believe, when we think of the world of retribution, that though those who, as the fallen offspring of a fallen progenitor, are there irrecoverably condemned, are yet justified by the obedience of an all-merciful and all-powerful Mediator, and that, while enduring the terrors of the second death, as their everlasting portion, they have received the free "gift of God, which is eternal life by Jesus Christ?" Yet to this extent—to the admission of these horrible incongruities must our credulity go, and to the assertion of them must the courage of our opponents be equal, if their interpretation of the term all in this chapter is to be received as expressing correctly the meaning and intention of the Spirit. Nothing more, surely, is requisite to establish the illegitimacy of that interpretation; and yet we may proceed a step farther—

(4.) For, in the fourth place, the blessings here specified as secured for the all, and conferred upon the all, upon whom the miseries of Adam's apostacy have fallen, are invariably connected with faith. They have received "abundance of grace:" and can we really say that " abundance of grace" is a privilege of unbelievers, when it is "by grace that we are saved," and "through grace" that we have "good hope?" They have been favoured with "the gift of righteousness"but this "righteousness is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe." They have obtained "justification"-but we are "justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his They have " eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord;" but "God gave his only begotten Son, that whoso believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life." And have all men faith? Are there not multitudes who, with a profession of faith in Christ, are entirely destitute of its reality? And are there not multitudes who have neither the reality nor the profession, but reject Christ as their Saviour openly and altogether? And yet even these must be included among the *all men* who possess the blessings which, by the plan and the language of the gospel, are inseparably connected with faith!

It is of no consequence whether we adopt the common acceptation of faith, or whether we adopt that acceptation of it which is given forth by the maintainers of the high assurance doctrine. Nay, the latter acceptation will make the case more unfavourable if possible to our opponents. For there are far fewer believers, according to their definition of faith, than there are according to ours; and, consequently, it is still more absurd to suppose that the phrase all men here comprehends every one individual of the race of Adam, although the spiritual privileges ascribed to them are the property of none but believers, of whom notwithstanding there is but a very inconsiderable number in the world.

But, however that may be, as the all men referred to by the apostle as receiving benefits through the death of Christ, must clearly and undeniably have faith in him, this faith and

those benefits being indissolubly allied together in the constitution of divine grace, and as an immense number of mankind are utterly devoid of faith, the inference is irresistible, that the all men so benefited by Christ are not identical or co-extensive with the all men injured by Adam, who are confessed on both sides to comprehend every one of human kind, whatever be his age, his condition, his country, or his character.

It is not incumbent upon me to comment at greater length on the passage we have been considering. I have shown you from its own statements that it gives no countenance to the doctrine of universal pardon, but rather operates directly against it. And that was the the sole purpose for which it was made the subject of discussion. Yet it may be satisfactory to glance at what we conceive to be its true import.

Although Adam is called a type of "him that was to come," we are not to regard him as an instituted type of Christ, in the same sense and manner as the sacrifices under the Old Testament dispensation were types of the one great sacrifice under the New. There is merely a resemblance between the two recognised, and this resemblance is made use of to illustrate on the one hand the evils of the fall, and on the other hand the blessings of the restoration. The apostle speaks as a believer, and he addresses himself to believers, and

it is for their mutual instruction and consolation that he dwells upon that recovery from moral and eternal ruin, which originated in God's marvellous love, and was accomplished by Christ's meritorious death. And in the course of his argument he draws a contrast between the destructive work of Adam and the saving work of Christ, or he compares Adam, as to the effect produced by his apostacy upon those who suffered from it, with Christ, as to the effect produced by his atonement upon those who were restored by it. His purpose evidently is, not to intimate the extent to which, in respect of its objects, the beneficial results of that atonement were to be carried, but to affirm its certainty and its efficacy in making its objects partakers of the great salvation. What comfort could it have been to himself or to the believers to whom he writes, and who as believers were separated both in character and in privilege from the rest of the world, to state that the privileges conferred upon them were privileges that all mankind possessed as well as they? How could he and they, in the capacity of believers, be said by him to "joy in God through their Lord," in consideration of that which was common to believers and to unbelievers? And if he really intended to be understood in the unlimited sense, why should he have used language which, in itself, and in connexion with the rest of the

epistle, obliged the church at Rome to understand him in a limited sense—as meaning, not literally all the children of men, but only all who were justified, and were heirs of eternal life? But all difficulty is removed by considering Adam and Christ in relation to those whom they severally represented. Adam was the federal head of his natural posterity. Christ was the federal head of his spiritual seed. All men forming the company for whom Adam became sponsor, as it were, in what is called the covenant of works, became subject to sin and death in consequence of his violation of its terms. And all men constituting the company for whom Christ was made surety, are delivered by him from the sin and death under whose dominion they must otherwise have eternally remained. Not more inevitable were the evils arising from Adam's apostacy to every one of the all or the many that descended from him by ordinary generation, than the blessings wrought out by Christ's obedience, were the assured and inalienable property of every one of the all or the many that had been given to him to be redeemed to God.

And then, there was this important difference between the two cases—which shows how the apostle was paying peculiar attention to the greatness and glory of the deliverance effected in behalf of Christ's people—that this deliverance was 212

more abundant unto many, than the destruction from which it rescued was abundant unto many, (see v. 15.) Its superior abundance consisted in In the first place, as is stated in two things. the 16th verse, the sentence of condemnation was passed in consequence of one offence, namely, the first act of Adam's disobedience-his other acts of disobedience having no more influence on our fate than those of any intervening progenitor-whereas the free gift justifies those who receive it from many offences-not merely from the one offence, which brought a curse upon the world, but from all the multiplied personal offences with which every man stands chargeable on his own account in the sight of God. And, in the second place, as you have it in the 17th verse, as death, or the privation of that life which God gave or promised to man, resulted from the failure of Adam to fulfil the condition on which it was suspended, so they-not all men, or all who have become liable to that deathbut "they who have received abundance of grace and of that gift of righteousness" which is "unto all and upon all them that believe," shall not only be emancipated from the death incurred. but shall be so restored and so revivified as to reign in the possession and enjoyment of a life, much nobler, much more perfect, much more glorious than that which was lost by the sin of paradise. Nay, the very introduction or entrance of the law of Moses, as you find in verse 20th, had for its ultimate purpose the manifestation of the riches of divine grace to all for whom it had prepared salvation. For as it rendered sinful what were formerly matters of indifference—as it aggravated what had been always sinful, by affording a clearer rule of duty, and rendering more inexcusable every instance of transgression-as it assumed a more scrutinizing inspection of the heart, and a more extensive sway over the character of man-and as it accordingly caused offences to abound more than ever, so a more abundant exercise of grace was called for to cancel all the heinous and manifold guilt that was thus contracted. And that grace was exhibited and put forth so richly, that where sin abounded. grace super-abounded, as the original word expresses it; and as the sin of the first Adam had reigned in such manner, and with such power as to subject all his descendants to the penalty of death, so the grace of God, operating through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, the last Adam, or through his obedience unto death, reigns in such manner and with such power as at once to deliver his spiritual children from the accumulated penalties of the first apostacy and of their own innumerable iniquities, and in spite of all these to raise them to a state of existence, which is far more exalted and blessed than the one that was forfeited by the offence of Adam, and in which they shall be able, from experience, to sing a louder song of praise, and joy, and triumph, than ever could have been sung in the garden of primeval innocence, or even by the angels that surround the eternal throne—" Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." *

8. Allied in some respects to the passage we have been considering, is that other in 1 Cor. xv. 22.

" For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Our opponents allege, that as death was the penalty of sin, which was introduced by Adam, and "death passes upon all men, for that all have sinned," so the resurrection of all, which happens through Christ, can only be owing to sin having been, through Christ, pardoned in the case of all.

But who that reads the chapter in which this verse lies, can possibly suppose that the apostle is speaking of the resurrection of all the dead? Is it not demonstrably evident, that he refers to the resurrection of believers, and of believers alone?

^{*} See Note O.

In the beginning of the chapter, he asserts Christ's resurrection, and states the evidence by which the fact was established. He then adverts (v. 12.) to the opinion started by some, that there was no resurrection of the dead,-that is of those who died or fell asleep in Christ, and who were accounted foolish if they adhered to Christ and his cause at the expense of all worldly comforts, and were yet to receive no recompense hereafter. Against this false and injurious opinion he strenuously contends. He argues, that if this opinion were true, then that which he had testified and proved, and which they themselves professed to believe, namely, the resurrection of Christ, was false; and in this case, both the believers who had died in Christ, and the believers who still lived in him, were lost and undone. (v. 16.) "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised"-these persons being so united to him as members of his mystical body, that the fate of the one necessarily inferred the same fate to the other-"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins"-it being the fact, as the apostle states it in his epistle to the Romans, that he "died for your offences, and rose again for your justifica-"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ"-in the faith of Christ, and that faith united to him,-" are perished," as ye also must

do when ye die, however assured your faith, and however confident your hope. And "if in this life only we-not all men, but we believers in Christ, and suffering the severest persecutions on account of our attachment to him,-" if in this life only we have hope in Christ, then we are of all men most miserable,"-more miserable than the men of the world, who by reason of their unbelief, or their indifference, provoke against themselves no hostility, and escape all those cruelties and wrongs which we are exposed to, for our adherence to a leader, who, after involving us in misery in a present world, neither will nor can give us any compensatory happiness in the world to "But now (v. 20.) is Christ risen from the dead"-this is an ascertained fact-" and become the first fruits of them that slept"-athing that cannot be affirmed surely of unbelievers and reprobates. "In Christ all shall be made alive, but (v. 23.) every man-or each in his own order: Christ the first fruits." He himself has already risen as the first fruits of them concerning whom he said, " he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,"-and these persons-" they that are Christ's"-that belong to him by right of purchase-" afterward at his coming," when he shall appear to call his redeemed people "to the resurrection of life," and to conduct them into glory.

Then go on to the 42d verse, and you will perceive from the nature of the resurrection described, that it can apply to none but believers. The bodies of those whose resurrection is mentioned, are to be raised in incorruption, in honour, in power, in spirituality. And though, as we learn from the 40th and 41st verses, they shall differ in their degrees of glory, yet every one of them is to be invested and adorned with some glory,—which assuredly they who are to "awake to everlasting shame and contempt" can never hope to possess.

Then again proceed to the 50th and four following verses, and you will perceive that the all who are to be made alive at Christ's coming, are to "put on incorruption" and "immortality," that they may "inherit the kingdom of God," which flesh and blood, or the earthy frames which their spirits here inhabit and animate, are quite incapable of doing; and who can inherit the kingdom of God, but those who believe in his Son Jesus Christ?

And lastly, look to the exulting apostrophe of the apostle at the 55th verse, and the exhortation by which it is followed up, and say if it could be employed truly and consistently by any but those who believed in him who raised up Christ from the dead, and in him, who, though he "was dead, is alive again, and liveth for evermore," and anticipated the resurrection that Paul had been descanting upon as the introduction to celestial felicity, "O death where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

From this detailed exposition it is abundantly manifest that the *all* who die in Adam, are not the *all* who are made alive in Christ—but that while the former comprehends the whole human race, the latter includes none but those who are united to Christ by faith, and who are partakers of his conquest over death, so far as that they are to be by him admitted into the blessedness of immortality.

I may be asked, indeed, if the wicked and unbelieving are not to be raised as well as the others? And I answer, Yes, undoubtedly they are. But surely it does not follow from this, that their resurrection must be alluded to in the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. The Apostle was a perfectly competent judge of what particular subject he should discuss, and of the manner in which he ought to treat it.

And it is too much that he should be held as forgetting or wandering away from the topic he had selected and fixed upon, merely to extort from his inspired pen, sanction and authority to a doctrine which the whole strain of his writings repudiates and condemns.

Again, if I am asked whether all who are to be raised, the righteous and the wicked, shall not be alike raised in Christ: I answer, undoubtedly they shall not. They shall be raised by Christ, but not in him. They do not live in Christ; they do not die in Christ; they do not sleep in Christ; and they shall not, they cannot, be made alive in Christ. To be in Christ, whether in this world of living men, or when mouldering amidst the corruptions of the grave, or when the last trumpet shall sound, is a mighty privilege, or rather the source of all privilege, and we may as well say that the wicked are in heaven, as that they are in Christ. In pressing the verse we are commenting on into their own service, our opponents seem to imagine that mere resurrection from the dead is of course an advantage. But that altogether depends on the character of those who are raised. Our Saviour has most emphatically said,* "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of

^{*} John v. 28, 29.

the Son of man, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." They that have done evil-are they in Christ, as well as those that have done good? Is there so little difference between life and damnation that they are both purchased by the same sacrifice, and both emanate from the same mercy? Can any man in his right mind congratulate himself on the prospect of being rescued from the death brought upon him by Adam, when that is to be effected by an event which ensures his everlasting misery? And would he not infinitely rather be for ever forgotten in the grave than be taken from it, even though death's dominion is thus broken down and set at nought, only that he may endure the gnawings of "the worm that never dies," and the torments of "the fire that never shall be quenched?" Christ will, indeed, raise the wicked as he will raise the righteous. He will raise them by virtue of that power which his own triumphant resurrection, as preceded by his own meritorious death, procured for him. In this act of his regal administration towards them, may be traced the distinguishing attributes. and prerogatives of him who was appointed to work out the salvation of a lost world. But still when he raises the wicked, it is not that any part of the curse which sin brought upon them

may be removed, but that he may finally separate them from the righteous; that he may bring them to his judgment seat; that he may there condemn them as impenitent criminals; and that he may "punish them with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." And this being their fate, and their resurrection taking place for the very purpose of securing its infliction, it must be evident to every one that their resurrection is no expression of Divine mercy-that it indicates any thing but the forgiveness of their sins, or an interest in the redemption of the gospel-that they cannot therefore be numbered among those who are to be made alive in Christ-that these are and can be none but believers and saints, while those who have died in Adam comprise his whole offspring-and, in fine, that this statement of the Apostle, so far from teaching or supporting, puts a direct and conclusive negative on the doctrine of universal pardon.

9. Another passage founded on is Heb. ii. 9.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."

Here the Apostle expressly says, we are told, that Christ tasted death, or died for every man, without any exception.

But if this apparent meaning of the expression be the true one, the abettors of universal pardon must show cause why the effect of Christ's death is to be limited to that blessing. Every blessing which the sinner needs, or to which the true Christian is ultimately raised, is ascribed to the death of Christ. And what is there in the language of the Apostle that should entitle us to make Christ's sacrifice productive of one only, to the exclusion of all the rest? If Christ died for, or in the room and stead of every man whatever, then every man whatever must be wholly saved as well as pardoned-that being the real design and necessary result of his vicarious sufferings-unless, indeed, they mean to say with the Remonstrants that Christ did die for the complete salvation of all men. but that its actual attainment depends in each case upon the individual repenting and believing, which are represented to be the conditions of the But this they will not and cannot do. seeing that in another part of their system they treat with absolute horror every thing that has the name or wears the form of a condition. Well then; they must either show how Christ's dying for every man means only that he died to the effect of procuring pardon merely-a conclusion for which this verse certainly will not serve themor they must allow that their mode of proving the

dogma of universal pardon from Scripture leads directly and unavoidably to the still more unscriptural dogma of universal salvation.

Let us look, however, to the context, and we will find the Apostle explaining his own meaning. He does not here say, every one of the human race, or every single descendant of Adam-which would have put the matter out of dispute: but he merely says every one *-or be it every man. Now the question is, since the phrase he makes use of is indefinite, to what class does he refer? What body of men has he in his eye, when he says that Christ died for every one of them? Is it every one of the whole family of mankind together? Or is it every one of a certain company or proportion of them? The Apostle himself settles this point, in the five verses immediately following the one we are expounding, and these verses are connected with this by the particle " for," to show more closely and clearly what description of persons the every man for whom Christ died alludes to.

In the 10th verse, they are marked out as the "many sons," whom he was appointed to "bring unto glory," and for bringing whom unto glory, he was "made perfect through sufferings." In the 11th verse, they are described as "sanctified" by

^{*} The Greek word is marros, every.

him. In the 11th and 12th verses, they are mentioned as standing in the relation of "brethren" to him, of whom "he is not ashamed." In the 13th verse they are presented under the title of "the children whom God has given him." And in the 14th and 15th verses, they are those whom he delivers from the fear of death, as having on their account "destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil," and thus rescued them from a galling bondage.

Now surely, every man is not favoured with deliverance from the fear of death, in consequence of Christ's victory over Satan. Every man is not related to Christ as a child or a brother. man is not sanctified or made holy by Christ. Every man is not brought by him unto glory. And therefore when the Apostle says that Christ died for every man, it is impossible to understand him as meaning to say that Christ died for each and all of the human race. His death is limited in its object to a certain class. And, therefore, this declaration, when taken in its proper connexion, and interpreted according to its author's obvious purpose, so far from teaching universal pardon, teaches the very contrary, and allows no man to consider himself as benefited by Christ's death, unless he possess a certain delineated character as well as enjoy certain specified privileges.

10. The only other passage we shall adduce at

present—and it will not detain us long—you will find in 1 Tim. iv. 10.

"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

The latter part of this verse is quoted as evidence of what we have denominated a half-salvation. Christ is the Saviour of all men—so as to deliver them by his death from guilt and punishment. But he is in an especial manner the Saviour of them that believe. When they believe, they obtain all the blessings of his purchase. Thus opening their eyes, they behold all the glories of redemption—thus opening their mouths, they are filled with all the good things of God.

How easily are people led away and deceived by a mere sound—particularly when that sound favours their own theory! The language of the Apostle does not refer to Christ at all—nor to his death—nor to his redemption. It refers to God; and it refers to him, not as the justifier of the ungodly, or as the source of spiritual and eternal salvation, but as the God of Providence—on whom his creatures continually depend for sustenance, and protection, and deliverance, and whose kindness they are ever, in one degree or another, experiencing. The Apostle and his brethren in the ministry laboured and toiled much in the cause of the gospel—they were exposed to many re-

proaches, to many privations, to many dangersand had they looked only to their own resources, they must have been discouraged, and sunk into despair. But they persevered in the work assigned them, difficult and perilous as it was, because they "trusted in the living God." They trusted in him as the wise, and righteous, and beneficent governor of the world, who would not unnecessarily permit them to be overwhelmed by the evils that menaced them. And they trusted in him in an especial manner, as that God whose children they were by faith in Jesus Christ, and whose own cause, and whose own glory, they were engaged in promoting; and could have no doubt that if he exercised a vigilant and compassionate superintendance over men in general, even the unthankful and the unholy, much more would he care for them, who were serving him with so much zeal in the gospel of his Son, by fortifying them against danger, delivering them out of their troubles, providing for their wants, and preserving them for the vigorous and successful prosecution of that benevolent enterprise in which, by the appointment of his own authority, and the callings of his own grace, they had willingly embarked.*

We have now finished our expositions of those

* See Note P.

passages of Scripture, which are most confidently appealed to as proofs of the doctrine of universal pardon. And these, taken in connexion with those passages, which we brought forward as containing and inculcating the very opposite doctrine, must appear, I think, to every unprejudiced mind, more than sufficient to demonstrate that the opinion of our opponents has no foundation in truth whatever.*

There are various points connected with this matter, which are most important for bringing it to a right and settled conclusion in your minds, and to which I feel it a duty to call your particular attention. But it is impossible to overtake any considerable portion of them in the present discourse. And therefore, deferring the discussion of these to another opportunity, I conclude, in the meantime, with setting before you the following views:

1. In the *first* place, the dogma of universal pardon is grounded upon an unwarrantable and most injurious treatment of the Holy Scriptures. Those who hold it, *force* the Scriptures to give a testimony to it. They take an insulated passage—an insulated verse—an insulated clause of a verse, and, disconnecting it from the context, and from the rest of the Bible, they draw from it a meaning which never entered into the writer's

^{*} See Note Q.

mind, and urge it upon us as the dictate of inspiration. If any word or phrase comes in the way, which fair construction would render hostile to their views, they remove the difficulty, in the most unceremonious manner, by arbitrary definitions, and gratuitous assumptions. And, forgetting or disregarding the interpretation they have put upon what they read in one place, they put a different interpretation upon what they read in another place, though they have no reason for changing the interpretation-what they read in both places being the same-excepting its expediency for getting aid to their favourite hy-And thus they are continually falling into inconsistencies; which would be of less consequence, so far as they are concerned, were it not that contradictions and confusion are thereby palmed upon the word of God itself. Of this you must have observed several instances as we proceeded in our course, and many more might have been pointed out, had there been time or necessity for it. But I would press it upon you that a doctrine is not likely to be sound which requires such a mode of handling and explaining Holy Writ, and whose advocates dare not look at the scope and purport of the sacred author, when endeavouring to ascertain his meaning, but must content themselves with detaching his sentences from one another, and dealing with his writings,

as they would not be allowed to deal with the writings of any profane author, without being found guilty of unfairness or of folly. And I would also press it upon you, that this method of treating the Bible-of making it say any thing we like-however palatable to those who, by this means, get authority for all the vain fancies and strange tenets they may choose to adopt, to patronise, and to propagate, cannot fail to produce the most disastrous effects on the many whom, ignorant as they are of religion, or regardless of it, we direct to the Scriptures as God's faithful word, and as the only and infallible rule of saving faith. It holds up the oracles of truth to ridicule and contempt; and while it gives to heresy a greater licence and a wider range, it goes directly to gender scepticism, and to promote infidelity.

2. In the second place, observe how the doctrine we are contending against, may mar the salvation of sinners. We say the doctrine is false. We have proved it to be so. We have exhibited its contrariety to the revelation of God's will. We have knocked from under it every prop it was supposed to have in the divine record. But suppose it to be believed, and what is the consequence? No man who so believes will ever pray for pardon. It would be utterly absurd, and a mecking of God for him to do so.

He is already pardoned. And he is taught to look on any application for that blessing at the throne of grace, as not only a work of supererogation, but as an indication of distrust in God's mercy, and as an act of ingratitude and offence. Now supposing that he is not pardoned; that every sin he commits needs forgiveness from the Holy Being against whom it is committed; and that prayer is the constituted means of obtaining what is thus needed,—is he safe in neglecting to pray for it? Is not prayer the method which God has appointed for getting from his unmerited benignity every blessing that our situation requires? If prayer for such blessings is restrained, from whatever motive, or under whatever pretext, have we any warrant, either in reason or in Scripture, for expecting them? On the contrary, is it not in the very nature of a system of means and ends, and is it not a lesson taught by all the maxims, and precepts, and examples, which the Bible furnishes for our guidance, that if the means be disregarded the ends cannot be attained? This being the case, in what peril are those involved, who, by listening to teachers of strange doctrines, and especially of the doctrine of universal pardon, are persuaded that it is not requisite, nor becoming, nor even innocent, to supplicate from the giver of all good, that which if not received and enjoyed, must sink the soul

into everlasting perdition! No wonder, then, my friends, that, viewing the subject in this light, I should feel earnest, and labour strenuously in warning and guarding you against an error so serious and so fatal as that to which I allude, and of which I must say, whatever offence it may give to the ignorant, and the fastidious, and the gentle, that, in the language of an inspired Apostle, it is a "damnable heresy." And I must. be allowed to add, that I know no presumption. greater or more reprehensible than that of young, raw, inexperienced Christians, going at once and headlong into a theory, such as we are speaking of, respecting the momentous subject of the pardon of sin, and on the strength of that theory, refusing to ask God for forgiveness of their trespasses, although they have for their direction, the example of the most eminent of the saints-the precept of inspired teachers of the truth-and even the authority of that Saviour whom they profess to believe in, to love, and to obey. Be not led astray, my friends, by such delusions, practised by such novices-recommended and inculcated by such dreamers. Go on to pray for forgiveness-pray for it as that which is essential for your well-beingpray for it as a multitude of believers have done before you-pray for it in the name, and under the sanction, and according to the pattern, of your Lord Jesus Christ. If you have ever yielded to

the suggestions of those who have been urging upon you a different doctrine, let it be the first and the most fervent petition you prefer, that your iniquity in following their unhallowed advice may be blotted out from the book of remembrance. And beseech God to pardon the iniquity of those who, misled themselves, are so industrious in misleading others, and so resolute in standing between the unforgiven sinner and the throne of a forgiving God. And implore, without ceasing, the pardon of all the guilt you are from day to day contracting, so that you may experience mercy from the High and Holy One for the sake of that Mediator, " in whom you have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of vour sins."

3. Finally, I would denounce the doctrine of universal pardon as the certain and the fruitful source of all manner of iniquity. This I have already done—I do it again—and I will continue to do it, with all my might. Don't let it be said that the doctrine has produced no such effects on those who hold it most firmly, and teach it most unweariedly. Be it so: that is very likely—it is most true—and therein we have a fact which has attended the history of antinomianism in almost all ages of the church. We do not say that the tenet in question will immediately corrupt good men who embrace it, or lead them at once into the abomi-

nations of immorality. But what can its influence be on the mass of mankind, but an influence of the most demoralising and pernicious descrip-Tell them that their past offences are all forgiven-tell them that the very vices in which they are at this moment indulging, are all forgiven-tell them that the most heinous crimes they choose hereafter to commit, are all forgiven-tell them that for not one of these is God any longer angry with them, and that for not one of these will God inflict any punishment upon them-tell them this, and get them to believe it-and you instantly deprive them of all sense of future responsibility, and annihilate the sanctions of eternity, and open the sluices of libertinism, to whose desolating torrent our opponents will in vain present the barrier of recondite love and sentimental contemplation, and whose destructive effects may be felt and exhibited in the guilt and wretchedness and despair of thousands who have been taught that their worst sins need neither forgiveness nor prayer, when they who have been instrumental in producing the calamity, shall have no power to check it, or may have gene to give their account to the Judge of all.

SERMON IX.

SAME SUBJECT.

In considering the doctrine of universal pardon, which has of late been publicly taught and zealously propagated, we showed you that this doctrine is contradicted by many passages of Scripture, in the most distinct and unequivocal manner. We showed you that it directly and necessarily leads to the doctrine of the complete and eternal salvation of the whole human race, which its broachers themselves do not, in the present stage of their religious opinions, believe in or admit. And we showed you that those parts of the Bible to which they appeal as proofs of their peculiar tenet give them no countenance, except by being grossly perverted or strangely misunderstood; and that a great proportion of these, instead of being for, are decidedly against them. We concluded our last discourse, with alluding to the mischievous mode of interpreting the

word of God to which they have had recourse to the injurious influence which their notion is calculated to exercise over the Christians who embrace and act upon them—and to the encouragement which these must give to licentiousness and crime among the great mass of mankind.

We are now to submit to you a variety of considerations, which it seems very necessary for you to be aware of, and to bear in mind, during the course of those discussions which you may be called upon to listen to, or to engage in, on the main subject in dispute. Some of them do affect its substantial merits, and need to be specially noticed, while others are more remotely connected with it, but yet so important as to the way in which it is usually managed and regarded, that they deserve particular attention. And if I speak freely on the different topics I am to bring under review, it is also my design to speak candidly—to speak without giving unnecessary offence, but at the same time without fear, or favour, or compromise.

My first remark has relation to the charge brought against us, that we are persecuting the advocates of universal pardon, by representing them in an odious light, stirring up enmity against them in the public mind, and treating them with a degree of harshness or of obloquy to which we would scarcely subject those who are avowed enemies to the religion of Christ.

This mode of endeavouring to defeat or to deter from opposition to an unworthy cause-of awakening sympathy where there is no substantial merit to ensure respect and countenanceand of gaining proselytes in the absence of sterner and more rational means, has been often resorted to in cases like the present, and has sometimes been much more successful than it ever deserved to be. It seems very hard to be condemned for openly stating what is conscientiously believed. Nothing looks more harsh and cruel than to speak against such as are merely pretending to a greater insight into the mysteries of faith, and to a higher measure of spirituality and godliness, than generally prevails around them. One can scarcely deem it any thing else than desperate intolerance and oppression, that those should be disliked, or shunned, or ridiculed, whose great characteristics are, that they are devoted to the Bible and to prayer, that they are perpetually conversing on their own views of religion, that they compass sea and land to make converts to their peculiar tenets, that they never have a doubt or a fear respecting their personal salvation, and that they are always full of joy. To be visited with such sore trials for such holy practice, naturally makes them interesting to every ingenuous observer. Something more than ordinary of what is good, must reside in them, since all others combine in

keeping them down, or in keeping them at a distance. The truth can hardly fail to be with those, by whom so much patience and meekness are displayed in enduring what they are thus made to suffer. And being the smaller and the weaker party, it is but fair to listen to their statements with the tenderest indulgence, and there being no unwillingness on their part to press upon all who hear them, the new lights which have broke in upon their minds, and made them so pious, and so peaceful, and so happy, the idea of persecution is worth a thousand arguments in procuring currency and advancement for their doctrine.

Now, my friends, I wish to put an end to this delusion, and to deprive our opponents of an advantage and an influence over the susceptible, the ignorant, and the unwary, which they are not entitled to possess. And I take the liberty to affirm, without qualification or reserve, that in the resistance which is made to them, as the disseminators of certain principles, there is no persecution, nor any thing that approaches it. may call it by that name-and they may complain of it-and they may pray about it-and they may persuade superficial thinkers that they are really suffering from it. But when we come to examine what they mean, and to ascertain the circumstances referred to, it amounts to nothing more than this, that we set ourselves to withstand

what is in our conviction a pernicious heresythat we warn the simple and unsuspecting against the danger of giving heed to their enticing words -and that we employ all legitimate means of frustrating the efforts which they every where, and unceasingly make, to increase the number of their sect. We do nothing, all the while, to injure their character-we do nothing to affect their worldly fortunes-we do nothing to coerce them into silence—we do nothing to encroach on their freedom of conscience or of speech-we do nothing, in short, which has either the reality or the appearance of that hateful thing, by the imputation of which they stigmatise our conduct towards them, and attempt to excite interest, and to secure favour, where they might not otherwise have been able to produce any impression. On the contrary, when the matter is sifted and both sides of the question are looked at, it will be found that they have been made to bear incalculably less than they have provoked, and that if the spirit of persecution has been working at all, which we are far from saying, that spirit has been working with them, and not with us.

The doctrine that they teach is that of universal pardon,—meaning by it, that unbelievers, impenitent persons, hardened profligates, have all their sins, including those they may hereafter commit, already and actually forgiven. And is it

really to be supposed, that a doctrine which we hold to be so contrary to the Bible, and so destructive to the interests of morality, and so ensnaring and ruinous to immortal souls, shall be regarded by us with unconcern-that we shall see it spreading over our land without striving to arrest its progress-that we shall wait till it has established itself in the bosom of our community before we put forth our energies to crush it-or that, if we do make it the subject of animadversion, we shall speak of itself and of its abettors in courtly and indulgent phrase, as if we secretly favoured them, or in doubtful and ambiguous phrase, as if after all we suspected that the truth might be found to lie on their side. This indeed might be supposed, and might be expected, had we been as unacquainted with Christianity as our opponents seem to have been, till very lately, even by their own acknowledgment, and had the views of it which are now propagated, interfered with no clear and settled convictions regarding its vital tenets. But really it is too much to be told, that we are persecuting, when we only reprobate sentiments with regard to whose heterodoxy and mischievous tendency we have long ago made up our minds, with fully more advantage for that purpose than their advocates possess, and only point out the sophistries, and fallacies, and ignorance, and absurdities, which these employ and

manifest in the course of defending them. If we have erred on this point at all, our error has consisted in being too tardy and too cautious in bearing our testimony against the heresies that are afloat, and too forbearing and commendatory towards those by whom they are disseminated. And I am inclined to think, that in refraining from a greater degree of promptitude, decision, and severity than we have displayed, we have not been sufficiently impressed with a sense of our duty, and have not been sufficiently forward and active in performing it.

Consider, besides, how far that species of persecution with which we are charged, may not be fairly attributed to our opponents. Why, if what they say of us without scruple or ceremony be true, we should be contemned, distrusted, and abandoned by every one who desires to be right. ly instructed in the way of salvation, and studies his spiritual and eternal well-being. They represent us all as in profound ignorance of the essential principles of the gospel-we neither know the truth nor declare it. The ministers of religion among us, even the most sound and zealous of them, with one or two marvellous exceptions, are misleading the people on the point of life and death. The people, including those whom we have been always accustomed to honour as ripe and experienced Christians, are

willing to be thus misled-all of us, in short, are in thicker darkness than that of Egypt, and groping in the broad way that leadeth to destruction -and they, who have pronounced such a fatal sentence upon us, will alone survive to tell this tale of death and desolation. * They say all this to our disparagement—but nevertheless we must be quite peaceable and contented; and if we bestir ourselves to throw off the calumnies, and rebuke or expose those who utter and circulate them, then for sooth we are guilty of persecution! Because we will not allow them to assert without a very flat contradiction, that almost all the pastors of this church and country are preachers of false doctrine-because we laugh them to scorn, when they accuse us of being wholly blind to the elements of Christian truth, and of leading our hearers astray-because we will not permit them to wean away the members of our flock, on such a ground, without struggling to retain thembecause we will not take this in good part, or even feel grateful for it as one of the perfect gifts which come from above, but hold it up to public disapprobation as characterized by presumption and folly-we are to be branded with this additional stigma, that we are guilty of persecution! We see them perverting the holy oracles of God

^{*} See Note R.

in support of wild and untenable theories-we see them sporting with the best interests of their fellow creatures, by rashly impugning and sturdily denying what has been the faith of God's people for ages-we see them introducing with oracular dogmatism a new gospel, a new form of belief, a new plan of redemption, as if Scripture had been heretofore a sealed book to the best and the wisest that ever adorned the Christian church -we see them teaching, with the zeal of apostles, what makes the word of God a bundle of inconsistencies, mutilates and misrepresents the atoning work of our Redeemer, under the pretext of glorifying God, and giving comfort to man, and throws a loose rein on human passions, and gives licence to the "wickedness of the wicked"-we see them engaged in this illegal and unholy enterprise; and because we unfold its unworthiness and its dangers, and lift up a loud voice against those who are embarked in it, and warn and beseech you not to "come into their secrets" nor to be "united to their assembly"-therefore, we violate the spirit of our religion, and are guilty of persecution!

And who are they, whose unscriptural and pernicious speculations we must not expose—whose wholesale condemnation of our ministers we must not reprove—whose attempts to unsettle the belief and to alienate the attachment of our people,

we must not repel with eagerness or with indignation, if we would avoid the charge of being persecutors? Show me that they are persons who from their knowledge, their judgment, their consistency, their standing in the church of Christ, their services to the cause of pure and undefiled religion-of their personal piety, and personal holiness, as connected with doctrinal error, I shall speak hereafter-show me that from their peculiar and appropriate gifts, they are qualified, in any tolerable measure, to be the instructors, the censors, and the guides of all other men, and though I cannot yield my convictions to their tuition, or change my creed at their bidding, I will at least listen to their dogmas with more patience, and treat their exertions with more reverence. But what are their claims on our respect or our indulgence as the teachers of novel opinions in matters of faith? I know of none that they possess, and none that I can sustain. On the contrary, I perceive in them all that is calculated to create suspicion and distrust as to whatever lessons they inculcate, and to excite surprise and amazement that they should have the courage to demand attention, and that they should so frequently get the ascendancy over those at whose conversion they aim.

They are persons who did not come into existence for many years after those whom they de-

liberately proclaim to be in gross spiritual darkness, had themselves come to the knowledge of a reconciled God, and been instrumental in bringing others to the belief and obedience of the truth, and in upholding the grand interests of vital and practical Christianity in the world.

Or, they are persons who are not only young in years, and of immature understanding in every thing, but who as Christians-for we deny not their sincerity—are but of yesterday, and know nothing as they ought to know it, and who notwithstanding assume all the prerogatives of experienced age, and all the airs of conscious infallibility, in announcing their newly discovered principles to those little circles in which they move, and hesitate not to decide, even to unsparing proscription, on the character of a whole church—aye, of that very church, perhaps, in which they drew the first breath of their spiritual life; in whose temples they lisped the praises of their divine Redeemer; by whose pastors they were fed, and guided, and comforted, even till they lifted up their voices to curse them; and whose services to their souls they are grateful enough to repay with unreluctant desertion, and relentless anathemas.

Or, they are persons who, having been in search of God's will concerning the salvation of sinners for a longer period than I choose to define, have not yet made up their minds as to what that will really is-who have flitted from speculation to speculation with unceasing restlessness, and rioted as it were in the exhibition of human mutability-who reject to-day what they maintained yesterday, who may be expected to hold to-morrow what is essentially different from the opinions both of yesterday and to-day, and who at every successive era of their wanderings are alike assured and alike dogmatical-who have so perplexed themselves with hypothesis, and got so entangled by their struggles to make the Scripture speak according to their own exigencies, and not according to its real import, that they may be safely challenged to give a positive and consistent statement of their present belief-and who, with all this changeableness and uncertainty, affect to look upon us with compassion or disdain because we have a settled system of doctrine, in some parts of which they have not been able to acquiesce, and scruple not to unchristianize us because we cannot consent to follow them through all their changes, or account ourselves quite safe and happy amidst all their bewilderments.

Or, they are persons who, though office-bearers in our church, and pledged by solemn, and public, and recorded vows to abide by her standards, and to maintain her doctrine all the days of their lives, yet—such is the awful delusion which has blinded their understanding, or blunted their moral sensibi-

lities—unblushingly eat her bread and betray her cause; retain authority in her bosom, and declaim against the essentials of her Confession; partake of all the immunities she confers upon her sworn defenders, and enjoy all the influence they can derive from the high places of her communion, and yet openly, and avowedly, and constantly, through the whole length and breadth of her domain, and in defiance of all that is essential for securing respect and confidence to her ministry, join with her declared foes in holding her up as ignorant of what constitutes the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and as, even in the very articles of her creed, hostile to the character of God, and to the salvation of souls.

Or, they are persons in whose minds imaginativeness, or sentimentalism, or the romantic in religion, or the love of novelty, is so predominant, that sober and established truth has no chance of a kind reception, or a permanent abode,—with whom, whatever is wild, or new, or mystical, or removed from ordinary thought, and ordinary feeling, and ordinary belief, finds a ready and exclusive welcome,—by whom, every notion that is propounded to them, marked with these characteristics, and especially if recommended by the oracles of their school, is instantaneously embraced as if by instinct, cherished as a sort of fresh revelation from heaven, and immediately pressed upon others with as much confidence as

it could have been, had it resulted from the inquiry and the meditation of a thousand years,—
and who, because we look more steadfastly "to the law and to the testimony," and will not be "carried about with every wind of doctrine," and prefer "the faith once delivered to the saints," to the extravagant fancies and perilous errors of the abettors of universal pardon, banish us all, by one sweeping sentence, from the pale of salvation, and unceremoniously shut us up in "outer darkness."

These are the persons,-I know of no other,whom we blame for the rashness and the forwardness of their zeal, for their want of due respect to the authority of those Scriptures which they profess to expound, and for the arrogance with which they treat all who differ from them, by standing up for the old doctrine of justification-of pardon and acceptance by faith only in the Redeemer's perfect righteousness. These are the persons, whose sentiments we repudiate and condemn, as equally contrary to evangelical truth, to sound speech, and to holy practice, and to whom therefore, to their influence, to their labours, to their work of proselytism, we do set ourselves in broad and uncompromising opposition. And when we do so, our consciences not only acquit us of every thing that partakes of a persecuting spirit, but we feel it to be our duty to give this explanation of our grounds of acting, so as at once to vindicate our

own conduct, in the estimation of those before whom it is arraigned, and to deprive our opponents of all that sympathy which the plea of persecution, and even the very idea of it, is so apt to secure for them in generous and unsuspecting minds, and of all that adventitious and unmerited patronage, to which they would be thereby indebted for no small portion of their success, in ensnaring the hearts and misleading the footsteps of our people.

Well, but though there may be no persecution in the case, still we are accused of giving to that difference of opinion which has occurred, the form of a controversy, which may not speedily terminate, and which may nourish evil tempers and produce evil consequences. Our opponents find fault with this as indicative of a contentious spirit, as unbefitting the sacred and peaceful nature of the subject, and as unlikely to advance the prosperity of the gospel, or the cause of personal godliness. And even some of our friends, while they allow that our views are correct, and that it is important to maintain them, would yet have us to maintain them without a struggle, and let them find their own way, without running the risk of kindling up the flames of strife, and provoking angry words.

Now we grant that it is wrong to enter into

controversy, when the subject is of trivial moment; a trifle will not justify eager or lengthened debate. We grant, that in the mode of conducting a controversy, all violations of the royal law of charity ought to be avoided; the exercise of charity is not incompatible with the maintenance and vindication of truth. We-grant that it is neither wise nor good, to carry on controversy for its own sake, or to prolong it after its legitimate ends are answered; in that case it has not the glory of God, and as little has it the welfare of man for its object, and therefore it is unlawful and injurious. We grant all this, but we grant nothing more. Controversy is not in itself an evil; circumstances may render it indispensably necessary for upholding religion and virtue; and when managed under the government of Christian principle and Christian feeling, it may, by God's blessing, serve the best and noblest purposes. And, therefore, I have no sympathy with that delicate and morbid sensibility, which shrinks from controversy as a mighty and unqualified mischief, and would suffer error to spread ever so far, and to prevail ever so much, rather than have its demerits exposed, and its progress arrested, by the instrumentality of dispute.

Why, my friends, if we are real Christians, controversy is our daily—our continual occupation. We have a controversy with the preju-

dices of our own understanding, and with the corruptions of our own hearts. We have a controversy with the world around us, that "lieth in wickedness," and amidst whose allurements and hostilities we are doomed to dwell. We have a controversy with the great enemy of our souls, who "goeth about, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." We have a controversy with all these as our spiritual foes, who are perpetually assailing us, with whom it is our duty to wage a good and vigorous and persevering warfare, and in contending with whom, victory is recompensed with heaven—defeat has its issue in hell.

And shall our contendings have no larger or more extended object than our own personal and individual safety? Is there no other good than what belongs to ourselves in jeopardy, from the prevalence of error and of evil? Can we be so selfish as to see any thing done to impair the character or to mar the prosperity of religion, without being ready to strive much and to sacrifice much in its behalf? Shall we make no resistance to doctrines by whose influence the truth of God is obscured, "unstable souls are beguiled," and the sinful propensities of mankind encouraged? Is it right that we should see all this perpetrated at our very door-that we should see the divine honour affronted, the work of the Saviour made the sport of fancy, and the high destinies of our brethren put in peril—is it right that we should see all this, and remain passive and peaceable—wrapt up in our private meditations, and careless of the danger that impends, and of the interests that are at stake?

If this be right, the lesson which teaches so, has not been learnt in the school of Christ; for a great proportion of his public ministry was employed in controversy with the Pharisees and the Sadducees, not as to their moral deportment merely, but as to their perversions of the law of Moses and of the language of Scripture, the ungodly maxims which they held and acted upon, the corruptions of religious doctrine which they cherished, the opposition which they gave to what he revealed for their instruction. It has not been learnt from the inspired Apostles, who, while they lived and laboured as ministers of the Prince of Peace, found their chief employment in guarding the precious message, which they delivered with all fidelity, from the false interpretations put upon it, and the false opinions mixed up with it, by the ignorant, the designing, and the self-sufficient whose Epistles are almost a series of controversial writings on topics of greater or of lesser moment, with regard to which mistaken or heretical ideas were making their way into the minds of the simple-and who, from that very circumstance, which is so much deprecated in our case, were led

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by the Spirit to give a more precise statement of the points in dispute than could otherwise have been expected, and even to furnish us with arguments that are directly and conclusively applicable to the unscriptural dogmas, which we are in these days called upon to notice and disprove. Neither has the lesson been learnt from any of the gifted and eminent Worthies who have been raised up from time to time by the great Head of the Church, to plead his cause when endangered by the follies and delusions of misjudging friends, or by the assaults and the stratagems of inveterate foes; -not from those men of lofty enterprise and of holy warfare who originated, and carried forward, and accomplished the glorious work of the Reformation, and who, amidst struggles and controversies, the very thought of which would make our modern sentimentalists tremble, rescued the sacred Scriptures from the grasp and the guile of priestcraft, and the doctrines of salvation from the manifold corruptions with which they had been adulterated and overlaid; -and not from our forefathers, to whom it was "given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake," whose lot fell upon those evil times which called forth the spirit of " resistance unto blood," who declined not the contest, arduous and trying as it was, and who, by means of controversy, far more difficult and

hazardous than any that we are required to engage in, asserted for us those civil liberties, and those religious privileges, in which we, their ungrateful posterity, so selfishly rejoice.

No, my friends, the lesson can be derived from no competent authority. It is in the nature and reason of the thing—it arises from the character of Christianity, as contrasted with the state of the moral world—it follows from every enlightened consideration of the history of the church, that error is to be subdued, and truth maintained, by controversy; and that could the friends of religion be persuaded to proscribe controversy, nothing but the intervention of a miracle could preserve that which should be dearer to us than life itself—"the truth as it is in Jesus." Away, therefore, with the cry against controversy in the present question!

But, indeed, who are they that have stirred the controversy in which we are engaged? Not we, who were preaching, and inculcating, and believing, and acting upon, what had been long, and after mature consideration, deemed the doctrine of God's word;—not we, but those who have come forward to broach and to propagate the tenet of universal pardon, and its accompanying dogmas. They attack what they themselves allow to be the common, the almost universal belief of the Christians in this land; and

so serious and vehement is their attack that the Christians in this land who will not think as they do, are declared to be no Christians at all. only repel their attack, and withstand the attempts which they are industriously making to overturn the doctrine of the gospel, and to substitute in its place their own imaginary conceits. Far be it from us to deny their right to hold and to diffuse whatever they believe; they are indeed responsible for that, but not to us? On our part, however, we claim the same unfettered right to expose, to the utmost of our power, the erroneousness of their belief, and to warn others against opinions which come home to our convictions as contrary to God's word. And if their mode of going to work has less of the aspect of controversy than ours has, so much the more imperative is our duty to be explicit in our condemnation, and active and decided in our endeavours.

They put forth publications, which, under the appearance of being little more than effusions of fervent piety, and meek benevolence, and experimental feeling, are really levelled against some of the fundamental articles of our faith, and really intended to press upon the reader's attention, and recommend to the reader's affections, conclusions at which, were they fairly avowed, and stripped of the drapery by which they are so beautifully

disguised, he would startle, as not only novel, but irrational and false.

Or, they preach these things under restraints, which oblige them to give their discourses the air and character of ordinary instruction, and they preach them to people who rather yield to the fervid zeal and affectionate earnestness with which the speaker urges his peculiar views, than trouble themselves with demanding the arguments and the proofs by which these can be substantiated, and are thus imbued, before they are aware, with sentiments which, in a broader form, they would in all likelihood have at once rejected.

Or, they get themselves invited to domestic parties, which are pervaded by religious excitement, and ready to receive every impression, if it is only conveyed to them in an interesting tone and in spiritual language, and if it only carries them to sublimer heights of faith, and devotion, and joy than they ever reached before; and there, to a willing audience, linked together by intimate and endeared companionship, and panting with expectation of some better and sweeter tidings than what the common herd of teachers are able to convey, and eager to penetrate still farther into those mysteries which have been hid from all beside, they deliver, as the oracles of Divine love, what better informed and more intelligent hearers would, by a process of catechising and reasoning, have speedily demonstrated to be an emanation of their own misguided and mystic fancy.

Or, they lay hold of susceptible individuals, whose religion is more a matter of feeling than of faith, and, sympathizing with the dark and distressful state in which their ordinary pastors leave them, and dwelling on the insufficiency of all that they yet know to make them what they should desire to be, they lay before them the chart of that royal road to heaven which they have discovered, and, by the help of a few disjointed texts, arbitrary definitions, and loving exhortations, they convert them to the belief of universal pardon, and straightway employ them as disciples for the support and the diffusion of that baneful heresy.

And so much is there of seeming contrivance in all this—so much does it look like a systematic plan for gaining proselytes—so much has it the face of intentionally profiting by the constitutional weaknesses, and the amiable dispositions, and the peculiar circumstances of those whose conversion is aimed at or accomplished—that were it not for our conviction of the integrity of those by whom it is practised, we should regard it as the result of a deliberate design, artfully formed and incessantly pursued, to effectuate, by the help of private and cunning influence, what

formal discussion and open contending would have rendered chimerical and impracticable.

For us, therefore, who view the matter in that light, and who are so situated, nothing remains but to convert, what it would well suit our opponents to have continued, a field of peace, into a field of controversy, and to strive, openly, and honestly, and firmly, against the errors which are so zealously disseminated among our population. We act thus, because our Christian and official obligations constrain us to adopt this course. We act thus, because we have no other habile method of counteracting the mischief; we cannot go where its abettors go-we cannot do what they do. We do this, because, in our solemn conviction, the errors they are spreading are deep and deadly. We act thus, not merely because they teach universal pardon, but also because, from the evident connexions and dependencies of that doctrine, they will be tempted to teach other errors, still greater, if possible, and more pernicious -and because they are already far gone in the road that leads to Socinianism. The leaders themselves may not advance so far; but many of their followers will run headlong to Socinianism-acting more consistently than their masters-and beyond that it is but a short and easy stage to infidelity. And we act thus, because were we to remain silent on the subject, and were any of

yourselves, or any of your families, or any within the sphere of our influence to become, through that silence, the victim of those delusions which are abroad in the Christian world, how could we be watching for your souls, as they that must give an account? and how could we answer to him who has appointed us to that office, that we may warn you of your danger? and how could we be free from your blood, and "from the blood of all men?" I beseech you, therefore, to bear with me, not only as to what we have already done, but also as to what we still find it necessary to do, in order to bring to its right issue this controversy that we have with the apostles of some of the worst heresies that have ever deformed the face of the church.

SERMON X.

SAME SUBJECT.

THE heresies we have been considering are not new in the Christian church. We have occasionally called them novel opinions, because, to a great proportion of those who have embraced them, they were absolutely so, and even recommended by that supposed quality, and also because they were unknown as matters of actual belief in our day-though well known as matters of ecclesiastical history—till sent forth by those against whom we are contending. Hundreds of years ago they were more prevalent than they are now-in what circumstances, and with what effect I will state to you presently. But I mention this now, to undeceive those who, when they have listened to their propagators, have been struck and attracted by the novelty of their sentiments, and partly on that account adopted them-fondly persuading themselves that it was a light from above which had in these days made an extraordinary development of divine truth, instead of being aware that it was a meteor which appeared of old, and which, after bewildering, and misleading, and destroying its thousands, vanished away, and left the errors it had disclosed in the darkness that befitted them. In a volume which has been printed for nearly two centuries, I read the following as statements of certain religious tenets which were held in those ancient times; and on hearing them you will judge how far they resemble what are now admired as wonderful discoveries, and embraced as truths, which have been hid from all former generations, and whether the resemblance is not so strikingly exact, that we may well be excused for suspecting that the one has been borrowed from the other. In the book referred to, these are stated as rampant opinions at the time; -

"That by Christ's death, all the sins of all the men in the world, Turks, Pagans, as well as Christians, committed against the moral law and first covenant, are actually pardoned and forgiven; and this is the everlasting gospel."—"That no man shall perish or go to hell for any sins but unbelief only."—"That Christ died for all men alike, for the reprobate as well as for the elect, and that not only sufficiently, but effectually—for Judas as well as Peter—for the damned in hell as well as the saints in heaven."—"That God's children are not to ask the pardon and forgiveness of

their sins; they need not, they ought not, and 'tis no less than blasphemy for a child of God to ask pardon of sins; 'tis infidelity to ask pardon of sins, and David's asking forgiveness of sins was his weakness."-" That there is no hell but in this life, and that is the legal terrors and fears which men have in their consciences."-" That the promises belong to sinners as sinners, not as repenting or humbled sinners."-" That sanctification is not an evidence of justification; and all notes and signs of a Christian's estate are legal and unlawful."-" That true faith is without all doubts of salvation, and if any man have doubts of his salvation, his faith is to be noted with a black mark."-" That the doctrine of repentance is a soul-destroying doctrine."-" That God was never angry nor displeased with man; for if he were ever displeased and pleased again, then there is a changeableness in God."-" That Christ Jesus came into the world to witness and declare the love of God to us-not to procure it for us, or to satisfy God (as some say). Christ was a most glorious publisher of the gospel-he was sent to preach the gospel, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives; in all that Christ saith to be the end of his coming, is not a word mentioned of any thing done by him in the way of satisfying God. coming was more like a conqueror to destroy the enemy in our nature, and so to convince us of the love of God to us, by destroying in our nature that which we thought stood between God and us."—" It is not suitable to God to pick and choose amongst men in showing mercy; if the love of God be manifested to a few, it is far from being infinite; if God show not mercy to all, to ascribe it to his will or pleasure, is to blaspheme his excellent name and nature."—" That there shall be a general restoration, wherein all men shall be reconciled to God and saved—only those who now believe and are saints before this restoration, shall be in a higher condition than those that do not believe." *

You cannot have failed, my friends, to observe how like these statements are to the opinions upon which we have been animadverting. In the material points there is a perfect identity; in other respects the similarity is very close; and we might have even quoted more to show you, that not only an universal pardon and its cognate heresies are not new, but that the very same antiquity belongs to certain opinions more extravagant still, of which there are symptoms and examples at the present day, and among ourselves.

Now, what were the circumstances in which the notions we have referred to were produced and professed? It was in the time of the Commonwealth that they sprung up—a period when

^{*} See Note S.

much evil was mixed with much good-when along with some of the most admirable specimens of Christian Theology that the Church has ever seen, there were produced a multiplicity of notions vying with each other in absurdity and impietywhen the human mind was let loose from its customary restraints in every department of life-when, on subjects of the most sacred moment, imagination took its wildest flight, in defiance both of reason and Scripture-when every illiterate fanatic thought himself entitled to teach, and poured forth his crudities over his village or his neighbourhood, as if he had been a messenger from heaven-when the great contest seemed to be. who should be most extravagant and most daring in deciding on the things of God-when unacquainted with the Bible, or disregarding its contents, or using it as a partial counsel, men did not so much attend to what God had spoken as to what they themselves thought proper to allege and promulgate—and when the voice of sober, learned, evangelical divines was drowned amidst the Babel anarchy that was created by stupid ignorance, blasphemous error, and reckless, ungodly speculation.

It was in such perilous times—"times of liberty and error," as 'Dr. Owen calls them—that the heretical opinions we are speaking of had their birth, and their nourishment, and their maturity. They proceeded—not from any of those eminent men who then flourished, and whose memories will always be venerated as being some of the brightest ornaments of the church of Christ—but from the meanest of the multitude, who had neither talent, nor knowledge, nor gifts of any kind, but who, acting under the mad inspiration of the day, thought themselves qualified to prophesy and to preach in the name of the Lord.

Such was their parentage at that extraordinary zera. We do not say that it proves them to be heretical. But it certainly gives us no prepossession in their behalf—it rather affords a presumption against them. And this presumption is strengthened when we recollect that they sunk in repute and died away, as men awoke from the delirious dreams in which they had mistaken visions for reality, and substituted their own fancies for the dictates of the Spirit, and as they returned to that grave, unprejudiced, enlightened, and prayerful consideration of the Scriptures by which alone we can ever correctly ascertain what God would have us to believe and to do that we may be saved.

Nor must I forget to state, that these Antinomian doctrines did not fall into oblivion, without having first demonstrated their ungodliness in the practical effects which they produced. It might have been easily foreseen that they would lead to immoralities of every kind. To believe them, and yet to continue holy, was a state of

character not likely to be realized. It could not be supposed that where impunity was positively annexed to every transgression, the passions of our fallen nature would abstain from indulgence. or submit to be controlled. And the fact corresponded with the probability. Those who imbibed the heresy, took occasion and encouragement to They felt that there could be no hazard in committing the iniquity which was already pardoned, and which, let it be as gross and as heinous as it might, could never subject them to condemnation. And the fear of consequences being thus removed, and the path of sin having been cleared of all its ruggedness and all its terrors, they gave themselves up to every vicious gratification, and did "work all uncleanness with greediness." Habits of moral depravity, added to the daring freedoms they had taken in interpreting the will of God, led to a dereliction of religious principle; and the wickedness of their lives, combined in unholy alliance with the impiety of their minds, made Christianity, as a Divine revelation, hateful to them, and sooner or later dragged them into infidelity. We do not say that this was the case with all of them. Some had such strength of faith as to resist the natural tendency of their errors, and others were reclaimed before they had proceeded far on their career. But it was the fate of many, under the government of those

principles which included universal pardon, first to become abandoned profligates, and then to degenerate into hopeless and accomplished infidels. I utter no predictions; but the experience of the past is intended to read lessons on the events of the future; and it may be useful to consider whether we have any greater security than they had in former ages, if indeed we have not less, against the natural tendency of the same causes to produce the same disastrous effects.

But then we are told, in answer to the allegation of such dangers as we have now adverted to, that the leading advocates of universal pardon at present are wise, and pious, and holy men.

To their wisdom as teachers of divine science, I must refuse to give my testimony. I demur to that being considered as one of their characteristics. Most unequivocally do I deny their possession of it. All that I see, and hear, and know of them in this respect, gives me the irresistible impression that as to the matter in hand they are unwise—they neither clearly comprehend, nor do they "rightly divide, the word of truth."

But when piety and holiness are ascribed to them, I cheerfully concur in the commendation. If all the tribute that is claimed for them have respect to their personal and spiritual worth, that is a tribute which is justly due, which I pay down at this moment, and which I pay, not merely without reluctance, but with pleasure. And I only wish that they could be prevailed upon to cast away the heresies to which they are so eagerly attached, in order to make our esteem unqualified, and that many who censure their zeal in propagating these, would imitate them in their heavenly conversation, their devotedness to God, and their benevolence to men.

The truth is, that, had we deemed them other than men of God, and not deserving of the respect which they receive, we might have been tempted to let their errors pass away-as, in that case, they would quickly have done-into contempt and forgetfulness. Absurd, unscriptural, and dangerous as their peculiar opinions are, these could only have been buoyed up and acquired distinction by those moral qualities with which they are associated. And while I am anxious to make all requisite acknowledgment of the latter, I would insist upon separating them entirely from the former, that your minds may not be unduly influenced and biassed, in pronouncing judgment on the existing subject of dispute. Granting to the individuals who are the chief patrons and promoters of the obnoxious tenet, all the amiableness and all the respectability that can be predicated of them, still I do not see what it has to do with the truth or the falsehood of the doctrine of universal pardon—farther than this, that you are extremely apt to be deceived into an easy reception of the one by your cordial admiration of the other, and that your attention should be directed to the essential difference that subsists between the two.

Could you ascertain that their excellence had been created by their doctrine, this connexion might furnish a plausible argument for embracing the doctrine, though its truth must still be determined only by its conformity to the volume of inspiration—there being no other legitimate and conclusive test of Christian principle but that sacred record. But such a connexion cannot be established, the excellence having, in point of chronological order, preceded the doctrine. And then though the order had been different, and though we had found the two co-existing harmoniously in the same persons, any argument deduced in favour of the doctrine from that circumstance, would have been met and neutralized by the far broader and more multifarious fact, that thousands and tens of thousands, who have held and are holding the opposite doctrine, have made the highest attainments in Christian godliness and virtue, and demonstrated themselves to be eminent saints as well as sound believers. If such reasoning is entitled to have any weight at all, the abettors of universal pardon must give way

to those who maintain the doctrine of Justification as taught in the pages of our ecclesiastical standards.

We have to remark, however, that in certain cases, doctrinal error is not incompatible with most fervent piety and most exemplary conduct.*

Such combinations, indeed, do not exist in general. In general, the mind and the deportment will have their moral complexion decidedly and habitually affected by the nature of the creed that is embraced, and of the opinions that are entertained. We are taught to expect this from the constitution of human nature, and from the statements of holy writ; and we find it realized in experience.

And, therefore, let no one underrate the importance of sound opinions, or feel contented with any kind of sentiments respecting gospel truth, provided only these produce no deleterious effects on the temper and the practice. Independently of their practical influence, correct notions of what God has revealed are most honourable to him, and, on that account, are things which should not be regarded with indifference. But it should never be forgotten that mistakes in one department of the system of belief are apt to gender others where they will be of still greater moment, and will do still greater mischief. And it should

[&]quot; See Note T.

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as little be forgotten that a wrong faith must more or less, in one respect or another, tend to occasion some defects, or to create some faults, in the dispositions or the behaviour, the worship or the morality, of those who sincerely maintain it. So that you cannot be too careful to acquire for yourselves, and to inculcate upon others, the most accurate conceptions of all that the Spirit of God has been pleased to promulgate for your instruction in divine things. In every case this should be subject of solicitude. And it should be more especially and minutely attended to, where the points at issue have a near and influential relation to the more immediate principles of human conduct and of Christian character.

But still, though the rule is as we have now stated it to be, there are exceptions to it. We sometimes see individuals far wrong in their doctrinal views, and yet "walking in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless," and especially remarkable for their spirituality and devotion. So much are they under the influence of sanctifying grace, and so peculiarly balanced and disciplined is their spiritual frame, that the natural tendency of these views is restrained; what they contain of evil motive is removed to a distance, as it were, from the springs of action, and the sound and healthful principles of the divine life are kept so continually present to the thoughts, and in such close contact with the affections, and in such vi-

gorous and unceasing exercise, that they overpower all the counter working of what would otherwise lead to ungodly and unrighteous living. Examples of this have actually occurred. I might mention one,* whose piety and holiness can scarcely be questioned by any candid mind, and who yet held opinions which must be deemed extremely erroneous-maintaining, for instance, that "man rises again immediately after death, and is then a real substantial man in perfect human form,"-that "the general judgment has been already accomplished"-that "the sacrifice of Jesus Christ did not consist in his suffering the punishment due to sinners,"-and that "he himself had communications with the spiritual world and revelations from heaven, as the Apostles Paul and Peter had." And surely it will not be denied that many a Roman Catholic has spent his days in close and devout communion with his God, and has abounded in godliness and good works, and walked steadfastly and perseveringly heavenward, though all the while he had not renounced his belief respecting transubstantiation, and the infallibility of the Pope, and the power of the priest to grant absolution, and the propriety and efficacy of extreme unction. We say that these and similar instances which might be no-

^{*} Baron Swedenborg.

ticed, give proof of the possibility of being pious and holy, and yet having the mind possessed with opinions, which, if they are allowed to take practical effect, will lead directly to enthusiasm, superstition, carelessness, presumptuous sins, and prove hostile to the cultivation of that character which the Bible is intended and calculated to form in all who put themselves under its guidance. God's overruling and sovereign grace has interposed to put an arrest upon the natural course of what would otherwise have operated to the production of manifold evils.

But would it therefore be right to give your countenance to the errors which pervade either of the systems alluded to-or to regard them with indifference—or to refrain from opposing those who are active in giving them extensive circulation? No more can it be right to treat with unconcern or indulgence the heresy of universal pardon, or to abstain from withstanding to the very face, such as give their days and their nights to the dissemination of it, however consecrated they may be to the service of God, and however animated by good will to men. Their doctrine contradicts the word of God, and brings ridicule on the gospel of Christ, though they mean it not, and though they know it not; and that is a commanding reason for our giving it no quarter, and showing its authors no deference. It is inimical

to the cause of piety and virtue, for though they themselves, from having been previously grounded and settled in the faith which "purifies the heart," and having had their minds previously trained to the exercises of godliness, are proof against its demoralizing influence, yet its influence is such as to hold out direct encouragement to the gratifications of appetite and passion. It will assert its native mastery over those who are constitutionally weak, and mingling much in the world, and exposed to strong temptations; and when it gets among the crowd whose predispositions are already on the side of licentiousness, it will be found an overmatch for all the restraints which have been hitherto employed to awe them into the decencies and honesties of conduct. And being thus inimical to the cause of piety and virtue, we should be the worst enemies of our kind, if we did not proclaim war against it, and struggle manfully and relentlessly for its extermination.

It is on these accounts that I am anxious to break asunder that tie by which it is bound in your conceptions to the Christian graces of those who take the lead in pressing it upon the credulity of the young, and the ignorant, and the simple, who come within the sphere of their attraction. This alliance is an alliance in fact, but not in principle—I should rather say in appearance, but not in reality. I would have you to look at

the doctrine of universal pardon apart from the character of its authors, with which the right or the wrong that may be in it has nothing to do. I would have you to look at it in the light of Scripture, which is no respecter of persons, and which condemns it in every page. I would have you to look at it as bearing upon the principles and propensities of our fallen nature in all its diversified conditions, that you may see how necessarily it genders those things for "whose sake, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." And if you will but contemplate it in these points of view, I trust you will allow no degree of heavenly-mindedness, and no sanctity of deportment with which it may happen to be associated, to prevent you from regarding it with abhorrence, and resisting it with firmness.

Many of our opponents are rather fond, and apparently somewhat proud, of referring to the personal excellence of those who have been most forward in propagating their tenets. But is not this inconsistent with their renunciation of all human authority in matters of faith? The inconsistency is the greater, that the authority here relied on derives its weight chiefly from those qualities, which do not constitute a man's peculiar fitness for expounding the Scriptures, and giving a correct and consistent view of the truths of the

gospel. A man does not make any approach to infallibility of judgment, merely because he is much given to prayer, and is adorned with many of the beauties of holiness. The Bible lays great stress on knowledge and wisdom and spiritual understanding, even for private Christians. And much more must these be requisite for such as venture to say that all the Christians that have gone before them, and all the Christians that are around them, have mistaken the meaning of the Scripture on the most essential points of faith, and that they have discovered, and explained, and made indisputable, that which was dark and unintelligible to all besides. So that, here, any appeal to their chief men on the mere ground of moral worth is especially inappropriate and inadmissible.

But still it is a leading maxim with them, that in such concerns, human authority is not to be allowed or submitted to. And truly, if they only mean that we must not permit any of our fellow-creatures to dictate to us what we are to believe, and thus denude ourselves of our independent right, of our protestant privilege, to search the Scriptures for ourselves—if they only mean this, we cordially agree with them, and would exhort them to "stand fast in that liberty." But if they mean that we are not to take assistance from others in our efforts to understand the word of

God-that we are not to take assistance from any one who is capable of rendering it—that we are not to take it in a particular manner from those whose endowments, and studies, and experience, all fit them 'for throwing light on what is obscure, in the sacred volumeif this be their meaning, I must dissent from it as at once foolish, hurtful, and unscriptural. That this, however, is the import of their maxim we are inclined to believe from what they say when we refer to certain commentaries from whose writings, I am sure, both you and I have often received much comfort and instruction. When in order to aid us in settling any disputed point, we would consult good Matthew Henry, or good Mr. Scott, or good Dr. Doddridge, we are cut short in our appeal by being reminded that these are but human authorities—and we are moreover told that one and all of them were ignorant of the truth—and it is even insinuated as a matter of justifiable doubt, whether they are now, where in our simplicity we have always believed such holy men to be!

And yet their practice does not always square with their maxim. If the authority happens to be against them, then they resolutely reject it, and interpone their own ability, by the help of the Spirit, whose illumination they claim to enjoy in as liberal measure as any of the departed saints

that we have named, to understand what the passage of Scripture which is under discussion signifies. But if the authority happens to be in their favour, its explanations and its statements are listened to with the utmost readiness, and received as from "the excellent glory." Were not this the case, why do they listen so complacently and so submissively to the commentaries of the living, whom they employ to edify them; as if these could have any more of the divine sanction than the commentaries of the dead, who were honoured to win many souls to Christ, and whose praise is in all the churches? Why should they recommend pilgrimages to that temple in which alone, of all the temples in our favoured land, the true doctrine is preached, and the true worship is performed? Why are certain books and tracts circulated, as containing or unfolding what the initiated must abide by, and the uninitiated must receive? Why are particular individuals spoken of, resorted to, and quoted as expounders of the system, as oracles of the truth, as discoverers of the gospel?

Nay, we find, that when it answers their purpose, they can attempt to prop up their arguments by calling in the aid of foreign churches, and foreign divines. And even here it appears to us that the authorities are misquoted, and their opinions misrepresented. We care not much what the Protestant churches of France, or even

what Luther himself held on the subject of universal pardon, so long as we have the Scriptures from which they derived their creed, and can judge for ourselves. But, in justice to both of these, who have been dragged in to give countenance to a doctrine so palpably at variance with the doctrine of revelation, we must openly state, that when their confessions and writings are impartially perused, and fairly interpreted, they will

be found guiltless of any such heresy.

And, in particular, we apprehend, that the great Reformer has been much misunderstood and uncandidly dealt with. Even though he had favoured the doctrine of universal pardon, let not our opponents take refuge in his name, unless they will also consent to adopt his views on Consubstantiation, and on whatever other point he may have been unscriptural and unsound. think it clear, when one part of his statement is compared with another, and the whole system which he embraced is considered in connexion, that he did not distinctly entertain the opinion so willingly imputed to him. There are expressions in his work on the Epistle to the Galatians, which seem to intimate that opinion, and which, when taken in an insulated form, do perhaps plainly enough contain it. But it should be recollected that when he wrote, his grand controversy was with the church of Rome as to the ground of a

sinner's acceptance with God, and that as his antagonists maintained the doctrine of that acceptance resting on human merit, which Luther justly considered as striking at the very root of the gospel as a scheme of divine mercy, and making the work of Christ of none effect, so he in maintaining the opposite doctrine, which he looked on as of the last importance, as the essential article which served as a touchstone to a standing or a falling church, he was tempted to yield to the natural vehemence of his temper, and employ language much stronger and more unlimited in its literal meaning, than was at all necessary for conveying what he thought and wanted to express. Let it be recollected, moreover, that in the very book in which he is said to teach the doctrine of universal pardon, he states sentiments and uses phraseology which are at complete variance with it; as for example when he says, " The 32d psalm witnesseth, that the faithful do confess their unrighteousness, and pray that the wickedness of their sin may be forgiven." "Moreover the whole church, which indeed is holy, prayeth that her sins may be forgiven her, and it believeth the forgiveness of sins."*

Above all, let it be recollected, that even in those confessions in which the principles of the Re-

^{*} See Note U.

formers are embodied, and from which we may best learn the sentiments which they had clearly and deliberately formed on every essential topic of Christianity, we have that very account of pardon and justification which is given in the standards of our church, and which, as it stands there, finds no favour from our opponents. In a confession sanctioned and recommended by Luther, we meet with the following statements.

"Justification takes place when in the just judgment of God, our sins and the eternal punishment due to them are remitted, and when clothed with the righteousness of Christ, which is freely imputed to us, and reconciled to God, we are made his beloved children and heirs of eternal life." And again,-" There is nothing whereby men can deliver themselves from sin, and escape deserved punishment, except Jesus Christ, who alone is able to rescue all the elect from sin, the wrath of God, eternal condemnation." again, "True penitents, though altogether destitute of every righteousness of their own, yet in dependence on the righteousness of Christ, they flee to the throne of God's grace, and there implore his mercy and the remission of their sins, and that on account of the merit and satisfaction of his only begotten Son."*

[·] See Note X.

Was it possible, my friends, for Luther, to entertain such sentiments as these, and at the same time to entertain the sentiments ascribed to him on the subject of universal pardon? It cannot be: and therefore, when he is represented as holding the latter, he has either been wholly misapprehended, or his inconsistency is such that any appeal to his authority is quite nugatory and vain.

It is evident, indeed, that had Luther's attention been turned to such a doctrine, it would have shared richly in that indignation with which he attacked the system of indulgences that was practised in the church of Rome. It is the worst species of indulgence. The indulgences of the church of Rome depend upon the good pleasure of the Pope, and he may be pleased to withhold them from every one, or to any extent he thinks proper. But the indulgence that flows from the doctrine of universal pardon, as maintained and taught by our opponents, cannot be withheld from any man. It comprehends all sinners within its wide embrace. It is already granted for the past, the present, and the future-gifted by divine mercy-written by the finger of God in his immutable word-sealed by the blood of his incarnate Son-and the irrevocable privilege of every profligate that infests the world, as well as of every saint that adorns the church!

Such is the doctrine of our opponents, which, I will venture to affirm, is supported by no established authority from which they would be willing to profess much reverence; to which the authority of the best and wisest of themselves can afford no recommendation, if we may judge by the knowledge of Scripture, and powers of reasoning, which they have yet been able to exhibit; and whose inherent contrariety to the first principles of moral government, and moral obligation, all the human authorities in the world are insufficient to alter or annul.

On the subject of authority in matters of religion, I do not think it necessary to expatiate. I have ever told you and urged it upon you, that so far as authority, strictly and properly speaking, is to be submitted to, that authority belongs to the word of God, and to the word of God alone. On points of Christian faith and practice, you are to call no man master upon earth. You are to consult the oracles of truth, and by these you are to be exclusively guided, as to what you are to believe and do for your eternal salvation. This is a principle which should not only be admitted, but have a fixed residence in your mind, and a practical influence over all your judgments and actings. In every case your watchword should be "to the law and to the testimony."

But though this is a position of indisputable truth, and of primary importance, it does not supersede the propriety and necessity of your taking assistance from such of your fellow-creatures as are qualified to give it, in order that you may more fully and clearly comprehend what God has revealed. In every important concern of life, we need help; and we ask it, and we take it, from such as are wiser and abler than ourselves. And it is neither rational nor scriptural that we should refuse such help in our attempts to understand God's word,-our right understanding of which is the most important of all the concerns that can engage our attention, or affect our well-being. Why has the great Head of the Church appointed an order of men to be teachers and expounders of Christianity, if yet it is unlawful or unsafe to take any human help whatever, in any circumstances, or for any purpose? And what would the great bulk even of our reading and more intelligent population have been, had they not received edification from the works of departed worthies, and from the labours of living instructors? They might have been an easier prey to the preachers of universal pardon; but they would neither have had that extent of knowledge, nor that holiness of practice, by which so many of them are distinguished. The idea of a man setting up for himself as altogether in-

dependent of his more gifted fellows, and not only refusing all aid from them as unnecessary, but rejecting it as mischievous, is pure and rank fanaticism-condemned alike by reason, by experience, and by the Bible. Attend to these monitors, and you will find them telling you with one voice, that while the word of God should be exclusively your authoritative standard, and should be continually and implicitly reverted to, as given by inspiration, and profitable for every thing, you should employ all the means that providence has placed within your reach, and among others, take advantage of the talents, the information, the attainments of your Christian brethren for enabling you to acquire a more accurate and more thorough acquaintance with the gospel and its record, than you can possibly obtain by your own isolated efforts.

It is requisite, however, that you be careful and cautious in your choice of the auxiliaries you apply to for this purpose. And I will take the liberty of warning you against certain persons who, in spite of all their contempt of human authorities, are yet very willing to be ranked among them, and from whom it will be your wisdom and your safety to turn away.

Refuse all aid from those who, instead of looking in the first instance to the Bible, and drawing their religious sentiments from that in-

fallible source, form a theory of their own, and then go to the Bible in order to find countenance and proof for what they have previously fancied, or previously determined, to be the truth.

Refuse all aid from those who, without any appropriate gifts or any suitable preparation, set about "searching the Scriptures," that they may work out of their pages something simpler and better, than what has yet been seen in them since they were first penned, and be able to give forth to a wondering world, what is different from, or additional to, all that has ever been uttered by "the voice of the shepherds." Trust them not, for they are like inexperienced and unfurnished navigators, who sail over the wide ocean on a voyage of discovery, and, if they escape destruction from rocks of which they had got no chart, and from storms for which they had made no preparation, come back with intelligence which amounts to this, that they mistook in one case, trees for giants, and in another, clouds for islands: for the more skilful navigators who have pursued the same tract, to test the observations of their predecessors, have ascertained that the giants are all stationary, and still more stately than before, and that the islands have all melted into thin air, and become altogether invisible.

Refuse all aid from those who decry the ablest,

and most godly, and most experienced divines, as totally unworthy of your reverence, and straightway plant themselves in that chair of instruction from which they have just displaced those whom you had been accustomed to regard as masters in Israel, and insist upon your receiving their interpretation of holy writ as the truth,—cease not to whisper their peculiar opinions in your ear with all the tone of infallibility—and give you up as irrecoverably lost, if you will not consent to be their humble and obedient disciples.

Refuse all aid from those who, affecting to be guided by the Bible, to resort to it for every thing they inculcate, and to understand it much better than all other commentators, fix your attention upon certain passages and certain phrases, till these have assumed a meaning, and till the ideas which they are thus made to convey have swelled into a magnitude, which certainly do not belong to them when viewed in their proper connexion, and explained by the analogy of Scripture; and who in this manner either destroy those fair proportions which give strength and beauty to the fabric of the gospel dispensation, or introduce into it principles and materials which have received no sanction from the Spirit of God, and which can have no other effect than that of weakening and deforming it.

And refuse all aid from those who, young in years, and indigent in knowledge, and slender in capacity, are bold enough to place themselves, as interpreters of holy writ, on a level with the most aged, and the most practised, and the most intelligent explorers of the sacred writings, and assert an equal competency with them to determine the import of what those writings contain, merely because they have the same Bible in their hands, and the same Spirit to enlighten their minds-forgetting all the while that the Spirit does not equalise the intellectual powers, and the external means and opportunities of those with whom he dwells,-that acquaintance with the original languages in which the Old and New Testaments were given to the world, long and laborious study of the Sacred book, and liberal endowments of the understanding, whether natural or acquired, must confer a superiority in this respect over such as are destitute of these advantages, -and that the very appointment of a ministry, to whom belong no miraculous gifts, recognises the doctrine that is now so arrogantly put aside by the merest Tyros in divine science, and teaches us that even where there is no security from regular and official training for the qualifications that should be possessed by a trust-worthy interpreter, one man may far excel another as to the degree in which these are possessed, and that with a common portion of that divine grace which is needful for all, learning, ability, experience, and industry, should never be set at nought by those who, so far from being distinguished by such properties, have them in a very imperfect measure, or have them not at all.

SERMON XI.

SAME SUBJECT.

ONE great recommendation of the doctrine of universal pardon, is said to be, that it glorifies God far more than the common notions on this matter do, by investing him, in the very highest degree, with the character of love. Let us examine this idea somewhat closely.

1. In the *first* place, though it were admitted that the tendency of a doctrine to glorify God is not merely a recommendation of its excellence, but an evidence also of its truth—still, before we receive it, we must be satisfied that the tendency of the doctrine under consideration is really such as has been asserted. Now, if it is said that the doctrine of universal pardon goes to promote God's glory, we deny the proposition, and affirm

that it goes to do the very contrary. Here then is human opinion opposed to human opinion. And how is the contest to be settled? Why, by an appeal to the Scriptures, which are the only rule to direct us how we are to glorify God. But do the Scriptures say, that the doctrine of universal pardon glorifies God? They say no such thing. Do the Scriptures contain the doctrine itself as revealed to our faith? We have proved that it has no sanction from them-that it is utterly repugnant to them. Do the Scriptures warrant us to glorify God according to our own conceptions of things? No; they give us no such licence or liberty, but plainly require us to regard him just as he has made himself known to us, and to believe concerning him, and to act towards him, in conformity to the disclosures of his will which he has given us in the Bible. The argument we are speaking of proceeds on the principle of will-worship, which is unwarranted, sinful, dangerous. And it behoves our opponents to take special care that, in the present instance, while they flatter themselves that they are glorifying God, they are not, in fact, dishonouring him, by misrepresenting his perfect character, and bringing contempt on his moral administration.

2. In the second place, there is a fallacy in the

view that is taken of the connexion between the doctrine of universal pardon, and the transcendant love of God, and in the reasoning founded upon it, which must be pointed out and attended We are sometimes told, that God's being love is deducible from his bestowal of universal pardon, and at other times we are told, that the doctrine of universal pardon is deducible from the fact that God is love. Now let us not be deceived by such sophistry. If both statements are found in the word of God, then they are both true, and may be taken as mutually connected, and mutually illustrative of each other; but the truth of the former does not prove the truth of the latter, nor does the truth of the latter prove the truth of the former. And, therefore, we are again driven to the Scriptures, where both subjects are treated, and where alone the truth of each can be ascertained. But we have already disproved the doctrine of universal pardon by reference to Scripture testimony; and we now go on to dispose of the other point by reference to the same conclusive and divine authority.

3. We have to observe, in the third place, that God is not merely love, according to the Scripture statement, but that he has other attributes as essential and as precious to him, as the attribute of love. Our opponents may theorise as much as they please about the amiableness of the divine

nature-and labour to simplify our views of it by considering it as one undivided essence-and speculate as they will on the necessity of clothing it with "unlimited mercy," in order that our intercourse with Him to whom it belongs may be comfortable and confident. And they may mistify the subject by telling us that "pardon is just another word for the compassion of God," and talk, in incomprehensible phrase, of such a thing as the "holy love of God against sin."* And they may even astound us by discovering in the general deluge, and in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, a manifestation of God's mercy to the very victims of these awful judgments,-to the world that, being "overflowed with water, perished," and to the cities of the plain that are "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." But after listening to such things with wonder and with pity, we just appeal to the manifold declarations and most intelligible language of that inspired book which God has put into our hand for giving us all the information respecting himself, which we are either capable of receiving, or which it is necessary for us to possess. And there we find, if our senses have not failed us, and if our understanding is not altogether in fault, that while goodness, mercy, compassion, love, are ascribed to God, holiness, justice, purity, are as-

^{*} See Note Y.

cribed to him with equal plainness, and with equal emphasis; so that if we do not believe him to possess the latter as well as the former, we are not believing in the one living and true God, but in a God whom we have made for ourselves after the imaginations of our own hearts.

This is not answered by saying, that when we understand those expressions literally, which speak of God as angry, wrathful, avenging, we attach to him the imperfection and even the sinfulness of human passions; for we do not understand these expressions literally, and whatever meaning we affix to them, it is always exclusive of every the least degree of frailty or of sin. In truth we have, and can have no accurate conceptions of any of the divine attributes, abstractly and metaphysically, as the attributes of an infinite, eternal, and immutable Being. But his love is in this respect as incomprehensible as his justice. His love is as unlike the love of fallen mortals, as his justice is unlike the justice of fallen mortals. As to their intrinsic nature and excellence, we may affirm of each of them that it "passeth knowledge." And shall we therefore infer, that God is distinguished and made glorious by none of these attributes? The inference is legitimate according to the argument of our opponents, but it is foolish and false, according to the Bible, which assures us that he has them all—in full perfection.

dependent of his more gifted fellows, and not only refusing all aid from them as unnecessary, but rejecting it as mischievous, is pure and rank fanaticism-condemned alike by reason, by experience, and by the Bible. Attend to these monitors, and you will find them telling you with one voice, that while the word of God should be exclusively your authoritative standard, and should be continually and implicitly reverted to, as given by inspiration, and profitable for every thing, you should employ all the means that providence has placed within your reach, and among others, take advantage of the talents, the information, the attainments of your Christian brethren for enabling you to acquire a more accurate and more thorough acquaintance with the gospel and its record, than you can possibly obtain by your own isolated efforts.

It is requisite, however, that you be careful and cautious in your choice of the auxiliaries you apply to for this purpose. And I will take the liberty of warning you against certain persons who, in spite of all their contempt of human authorities, are yet very willing to be ranked among them, and from whom it will be your wisdom and your safety to turn away.

Refuse all aid from those who, instead of looking in the first instance to the Bible, and drawing their religious sentiments from that in-

fallible source, form a theory of their own, and then go to the Bible in order to find countenance and proof for what they have previously fancied, or previously determined, to be the truth.

Refuse all aid from those who, without any appropriate gifts or any suitable preparation, set about "searching the Scriptures," that they may work out of their pages something simpler and better, than what has yet been seen in them since they were first penned, and be able to give forth to a wondering world, what is different from, or additional to, all that has ever been uttered by "the voice of the shepherds." Trust them not, for they are like inexperienced and unfurnished navigators, who sail over the wide ocean on a voyage of discovery, and, if they escape destruction from rocks of which they had got no chart, and from storms for which they had made no preparation, come back with intelligence which amounts to this, that they mistook in one case, trees for giants, and in another, clouds for islands: for the more skilful navigators who have pursued the same tract, to test the observations of their predecessors, have ascertained that the giants are all stationary, and still more stately than before, and that the islands have all melted into thin air, and become altogether invisible.

Refuse all aid from those who decry the ablest,

Could they but be persuaded to submit to the counsel of God, and to think of him as he has manifested himself in his word, and to resolve whatever difficulties may occur to them in the contemplation of his character, and of his dealings with his creatures, into that will of his for the exercise of which he is not accountable to his universe, we should have less theory from them and more humility, and they would find themselves necessitated to admit that God is at once holy and merciful and sovereign, and as thus perfect, entitled to all godly fear, and child-like confidence, and profound adoration, from the highest, and from the lowest, of his intelligent offspring.

In the fourth place, it is to be noticed, that if God be all love, and if he has not the other attributes we have ascribed to him, except as the handmaids of his love, universal salvation should be maintained, and not universal pardon merely. It might be asked in that case, why did God allow sin and misery to enter into his creation at all? Or if this was requisite for the fuller manifestation of his glory, that is, his love; why then was not all the sin and all the misery, which the fall introduced, completely swept away by the work of Christ as the Redeemer of apostate men? If this is the result which our opponents anticipate, let them confess it and be judged of ac-

cordingly. And if they anticipate no such result, then let them reconcile, if they can, the guilt and the wretchedness, which are still to remain under the Divine administration, with those exhibitions, which they so confidently set forth, and on which they so delightedly expatiate, of the character of God, as exclusively, or almost altogether, adorned with the attribute, the excellence, the glory of love.

I know not how the advocates of universal pardon can take their ideas of the love of God from Scripture, and yet confine it in every case to that one blessing. Those declarations which express the ardour and intensity of God's love, have no reference to the universality of its application -but to the riches by which it is characterized, and to the fulness and abundance of blessings which all those experience from it, on whom it actually and individually operates. The assurances and delineations of its exceeding greatness are intelligible, when we look to the overflowing measure of benefits which it delights to lavish upon them towards whom it is directed, and to their total destitution of whatever could deserve its exercise, and to the condescension and sacrifices with which it has gone forth to accomplish its purposes. But they are altogether incomprehensible, or they lead in the most direct and necessary manner, to the eternal blessedness of

every sinner, if they are to be considered as referring to the multitude of objects for whose well-being it provides, because in that case it is so vast and unbounded, that we do not see how a single individual can be excluded from its fondest embrace, and from its largest bounties. And, indeed, the very language of Holy Writ implies so clearly the doctrine that all who are interested in God's redeeming love, receive from that source whatever can sanctify, and comfort, and guide them upon earth, and bring them at length to the felicities of heaven, as to render it impossible for any one who admits the dogma of universal pardon, to doubt for a moment that every man is sure of eternal salvation. If the love of God is consistent, and if the word of God is true, how can we explain or understand the following passages, on any other supposition? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."* "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some will even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were

^{*} John iii. 16, 17.

yet sinners, Christ died for us.* "He that spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him to the death for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things. + "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.‡ "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ; who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." § "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "Unto him that loved us, and

washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, even his Father; to him be glory, and dominion for ever, and ever. Amen."* All these, and many other passages of a similar kind, that might have been adduced, are employed to extol and illustrate the love of God, as manifested in Christ Jesus dying for sinners of mankind. And I put it to every man who is capable of drawing conclusions from the plainest premises that can be set before him, whether he would not infer from what has now been quoted from the Scriptures, not only that God pardons those whom he has so loved, as to send his Son to be a propitiation for their sins, but that he also gives them to partake of every other privilege that they need, for their complete and ultimate happiness. is quite easy to distinguish between the pardon and its concomitant blessings-to contemplate them apart—to give them a separate illustration. But if the former flows from God's unbounded love in Christ, it is impossible to avoid uniting the latter with it as equally secured, and equally bestowed, and regarding every individual whose sins are forgiven, as "an heir of God, and a jointheir with Christ," of the incorruptible and neverfading inheritance.

^{*} Rev. i. 5, 6.

5. But in the fifth and last place, we aver that the system of our opponents shows no greater, it shows less love to sinners than ours does. According to the views which they give of the issue and effect of Christ's sacrifice, there are fewer that will be carried to heaven, than there are according to the views that we maintain, so far at least as we can judge from their doctrine and from experience. To get to heaven, we must all believe as they do; there is otherwise no hope for us. On the contrary, we hold no such exclusive doctrine. We maintain that all will get to heaven who believe in such sort as that they are new creatures, and are devoted to God, and living habitually under the sanctifying influences of his Holy Spirit. And then, though they do secure pardon for all, it does not appear that they have secured exemption from future punishment for all. Every unbeliever-every one that will not submit to Christ-becomes subject to that sentence which says, "As for these mine enemies. which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." So that this theory of divine love, of which universal pardon is curiously at once the cause and the effect, instead of providing for the salvation of every one, does, after all, provide for the salvation of a smaller number than the doctrine maintained by the old-fashioned Christians of our church; and

while in its treatment of those who are not saved, but only pardoned, and yet scarcely pardoned, since they are to be punished, no tribute is paid to Divine mercy, the Divine wisdom is impeached, and the Divine glory tarnished and obscured.

Nay but there is something more than this in the view which our opponents give of the love of God as exhibited in pardoning every man. They tell us gravely, and they seem to lay stress upon the proposition, that the sinner can derive no possible benefit from his pardon except by believing it!* This I must confess is somewhat startling.

For, in the first place, it is not and it cannot be true. If a criminal who was condemned to be publicly and ignominously put to death, has received a pardon from his sovereign, will this pardon be of no use to him merely because he takes it into his head that no such expression of royal clemency has taken place? Must he still be executed according to his sentence? And must he have all the shame and agony of that dreaded fate? The appointed period for his enduring the penalty of a violated law arrives, but the penalty is not inflicted. Year after year elapses, and still he is in life. Is all this nothing? Has no boon been conferred. Is no evil escaped? Is no good enjoyed? And how is it otherwise with the sinner who has been condemned, but is now pardon-

^{*} See Note Z.

ed of God? He was condemned to bear some specific suffering. We need not decide in what it was to consist. It is enough to know that the suffering was real and to be endured as a penalty. Well: through the virtue of Christ's death, the sentence which adjudged the sinner to that suffering is recalled and cancelled. But he does not choose to believe this fact; and because he is obstinate in his unbelief, he is not, it seems, to be benefited by it! Is the suffering then still to be inflicted upon him? Or are we to consider infliction of suffering and exemption from it to be one and the same thing? And will it be so in his expe-Is it the same thing to a man whether rience? he be cast into hell, or snatched from it? There may be little difference to his feelings while he remains in the world of probation; but the question is, will there be no difference in the world of retribution? Our opponents may have failed to convince him here that he has been pardoned, but there where the threatened punishment was to be endured, when no such endurance is laid upon him, can he fail to be convinced of the fact? Or if it should be a part of the new doctrine that his conviction of the fact, if taking place in eternity instead of taking place in time, will not be able to make the fact available, must it not still be true that from the suffering to which he was doomed as a transgressor he will be entirely and for ever free? And will it be contended that no benefit accrues to him from his being delivered from awful, unconceivable, and everlasting destruction?

But, in the second place, if it be still maintained that pardon is conferred upon the sinner, but that the unbelieving sinner derives no advantage from it, then I ask, how does all this square with those views of God's love which are entertained on the ground of universal pardon? God has such strength of love to a fallen world, we are told, that he could not fail in giving his own Son to death for it, to deliver every individual from the curse of the broken law. Or-for we have it both ways-every individual sinner is pardoned, and this gives an affecting and conclusive demonstration of the infinite greatness of God's love to his apostate children. Take it either way; but how is the love of God manifested in bestowing that which yet is of no use or benefit whatever to those on whom it is bestowed? He works out an actual deliverance from the greatest possible evils, and yet this actual deliverance is of no service to those for whom it is effected! Some how or other they have it-but some how or other, they are as if they had it not! It rescues them from all the pains of hell, and yet they feel as if not one of those pains were removed or mitigated! The undying worm is never to gnaw them-the unquenchable fire is never to burn them; and yet they will be as miserable as if they were to be subjected to both! The love of God is thus magnified by giving much, and yet it ends in giving nothing, where it might have been expected to perfect its operation by giving all! How is this paradox to be explained or solved?

Our opponents may say that the love of God abounds in giving pardon to all, but a sense of pardon, moreover, and sanctification and all other blessings, to them that believe. But can sinners believe of themselves? If that be a part of the system we are combating, let it be confessed, and then the men who hold it must no longer arrogate to themselves the distinction of taking away all merit from the sinful, dependent creature. If not-if sinners can only believe when it is given them of God-then what proof is afforded of the divine love to guilty men, though pardon be conveyed to them, and yet that very thing withheld which is indispensable for giving to their pardon the least degree of value? According to this view, the condition of sinners is not changed from that of danger to safety-of misery to happiness, till they believe. And we affirm exactly the same thing. They that believe, we say, and none but they that believe, are pardoned. They that believe, say our opponents, and none but they that believe, derive the slightest benefit from the par306

don which they received independently of believ-Is there the least substantial or tangible difference between the two statements? And yet we are told that the latter affords a far richer display of the love of God to sinners than the former -with what incorrectness this is asserted, I need not occupy your time in showing, for the bare announcement of it is sufficient to satisfy any one that to talk of a difference here, is to talk of a nonentity. But there may be some difference perceptible when we remark that, in the one case, there is attributed to God a show and a communication of pardoning mercy which has yet no actual existence and produces no sensible effect, while, in the other, there is nothing attributed to him in his dealing with sinners, which is not realized; and that as the whole result depends upon faith, and that as the faith inculcated by our opponents is incalculably more exclusive than that which is inculcated by us, their doctrine must furnish a much smaller tribute than ours to the glory of God as a God of mercy and love.

But, whatever there may be in this, I cannot help reverting to what I formerly observed respecting the necessity of attributing love to God no farther than his own word has warranted, and no farther than is consistent with that revelation of his character which he himself has given us. A greater snare cannot be laid for your piety and

your judgment, than that which consists in making love his paramount or his only perfection. For whenever there is a consciousness of guilt, and a dread of responsibility, it must be comfortable to have a God who is divested of all that is frowning and indignant towards transgressors, and clothed with all that is compassionate and kind. And whenever there is a soft or a sentimentaltemperament at work, that representation of the Divine nature must be peculiarly pleasing and acceptable. And whenever men wish to have a religion which will be without any rigorous exactions of self-denial and of duty, and without any tendency to excite apprehension and alarm, the same predilection must exist for a Supreme Ruler, in whose benevolence all other qualities are absorbed and lost. And, accordingly, not only is this partial and unscriptural view of the character of God adopted as the leading principle of certain systems of theology, but it is held, and cherished, and acted upon by multitudes, whose sole concern in matters of faith is to have, not what is true, but what is agreeable, and who find in the tenet we are speaking of, the most soothing and satisfying of all persuasions,-that God loves every one of his creatures with such an affection as is depicted in the gospel. I warn you against the delusion-so dishonourable to the Holy One, the Everlasting Father—so ruinous

to all who have surrendered themselves to its influence-so inconsistent with what you read in the book of inspiration—so destructive of that mystery of godliness and of grace which has been made known to us in Jesus Christ. And I warn you with 'the more earnestness, because the advocates of universal pardon push forward this false but fascinating statement of the Divine character, as a leading feature and chief recommendation of their scheme, - and carry their heresy to such an extravagant length as to say, that while God loves guilty men so much, that for Christ's sake he forgives every one of them, whether they repent and believe or not,-he also loves the devil, that arch enemy of his throne and of his people, though this love is so anomalous as "not to spare" its devoted object, but to "deliver him into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," and then to cast him "into everlasting fire prepared for him and his angels." How melancholy that such jargon should be given forth and tolerated as precious doctrine! How necessary that we abide by the teaching of that "word whose entrance alone giveth light!" How important that "we pray without ceasing," to be kept from vain imaginations, and unauthorised thoughts, respecting the all-perfect Jehovah, and to have all our ideas of his nature, his attributes, and his administration conformable to revealed truth!

We now proceed to consider the allegation, that while the doctrine of universal pardon gives a peculiarly illustrious display of the love of God on the one hand, it completely demolishes the plea of human merit on the other.

Now, supposing that this were true, it would be no argument for the truth of the doctrine in Though the extent of God's love to sinners might be better exhibited by his pardoning them all, whether they believe or not, than by his only pardoning them that believe, this circumstance could not prove that such universal pardon has taken place, unless we knew beforehand that God's love was literally unbounded; and, in like manner, allowing that the doctrine of universal pardon made the sinner more passive in his regards to the Saviour than the ordinary doctrine on the subject, that circumstance could not more fully establish its truth, unless we were previously convinced that man must be altogether passive, and never think, nor feel, nor will, nor act as a moral being, in any respect or in any degree, towards him who is appointed to redeem, and by whom the pardon has been secured. But this would be to take for granted, what not only remains to be proved, but what is contradictory to the system of our opponents themselves; for they admit, that if men are not pardoned, they are at least saved, by faith on the part of the

sinner. And surely as faith is commanded, the exercise of faith must be obedience to that commandment. It is confessed, indeed, that the henefit annexed to the saving faith may be considered as less in quantity and in value, than the benefit annexed to the faith that is connected with both pardon and salvation. That, however, is of little consequence, unless it is insisted upon that the faith which saves requires less effort and less sacrifice, than the faith which both pardons and saves. And then, if we are to reason in this way, and to regard the inferences as legitimate which flow from such reasoning, another class of religionists may go a step farther than our opponents, and maintain that everlasting salvation is bestowed upon all sinners, whether they are believers or unbelievers, because this not only manifests more strongly the great love of God, but more completely strips man of every possibility of deserving any thing, by wholly breaking up all relationship between the character that he possesses and the blessing that he receives. Nay, by parity of reasoning, the more wicked and ungodly any individual is, at the moment of his departure into eternity, the more overpowering will be the display of divine love and the more perfectly excluded and annihilated will be all idea of human merit, if he be carried straightway and triumphantly to heaven.

From such a supposition your minds will at once and decidedly revolt: but though an extreme case, and sufficiently startling, it is a fair and legitimate application of the principle we are endeavouring to expose. And I have introduced it to show you that the alleged tendency of the doctrine we are controverting, to humble the pride of man, by depriving him of every thing like a ground in himself, on which it can be asserted that he is pardoned, is no good reason for giving it a place in our creed, and that we must adopt some other sounder and safer mode for ascertaining its title to be received. That mode consists in a reference to the Bible. We have made this reference. And we have found it fatal to the dogma of universal pardon.

But still as the particular tendency we have noticed is urged, and with some success, on the minds of simple people, I deem it requisite to examine the point a little more closely and minutely.

Now, in the business of man's salvation, our opponents and we coincide in holding that faith is absolutely necessary. The only difference between them and us respects the meaning we severally attach to the term—the place we assign it—the part we give it to perform—in that scheme of mercy to which both parties agree that it indispensably belongs. They accuse us of regard-

ing, recommending, exercising it, as a meritorious cause of the redemption that is proposed to us in the gospel; and plume themselves on divesting it entirely of that character, and reducing it to a state of perfect conformity to the dispensation of free grace.

Whether this be a correct view of their own opinions, we shall see presently; but I must, without delay, enter my protest against the view which they have given of ours. When they allege-as those of them do who should know best what we maintain, from having studied and subscribed the standards of our church,-that in affirming pardon to be obtained only in the way of believing in Christ, we mean that we obtain such pardon, because we so believe—they exceedingly and grievously misrepresent us. For the language of our confession is this; "They whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of

themselves, it is the gift of God." The Larger Catechism thus explains how faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God; "Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it; nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but only as it is an instrument, by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness." The Shorter Catechism gives the following definition of faith; " Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvavation, as he is offered to us in the gospel." And what can be the "common phraseology"* of this country, in which the people get their religious instruction from these very summaries of Christianity from which we have now quoted, but a phraseology implying—though it may be, in many cases, vaguely and inaccurately used-that the faith through which the sinner is justified and saved, is not only destitute of all merit, but is itself a disclaimer of all merit on his part, and rests his whole reliance upon a sacrifice, an atonement, an obedience, a righteousness, that is totally independent of any thing in himself, and is previously wrought out and provided for all them that believe on the Son of God? It is not our doc-

^{*} See Note AA.

trine that we are forgiven, or that we receive any blessing whatever, because we believe. We hold that no one is forgiven unless he believes, and that his believing is the mere instrument by which he receives Christ and his benefits, and which is itself furnished him by divine grace, the exclusive source of all his good. These two statements are expressly, wholly, obviously, and indisputably different—the former asserting a title established by the sinner's own doings, and the other disavowing and renouncing all such title, as what the sinner neither has acquired nor can acquire by personal worth in any conceivable shape. What do our opponents themselves say? They say "that all men are forgiven, and that each man's salvation arises out of the belief of his own personal condemnation having been removed by his own personal forgiveness." 'And supposing that we should translate the words, " man's salvation arises out of the belief of his own personal forgiveness" into, "man is saved or sanctified, because he believes that he is already forgiven," would that be accounted fair or candid? Or would we be justifiable in founding upon such an arbitrary rendering of their language, the charge of their attributing good desert to saving faith, and forgetting that it is the God of peace that sanctifies believers, and that they are saved through sanctification of the Spirit? And who conferred upon the new school of theology, the partial privilege of being exempted from that treatment, as to the construction of language and the imputation of meaning, which they so unceremoniously give to us, and upon which they build so many sentences of excommunication? In both cases the treatment would be unjust. We give it not to them; they deal it out to almost all the Christians in this land.*

Let us see how far they can vindicate their own declarations in this respect. They say that a man's saving faith consists in his believing that all his sins are already and freely forgiven. But surely they allow that this faith admits him into the possession and enjoyment of privileges, which without it would have been denied him. Yes, their position is that, remaining in unbelief, he is, though previously pardoned, not saved, or sanctified, or happy; but that, in consequence of believing, all that constitutes salvation, over and above mere pardon, becomes his in property and fruition. Nay, they allow, that though pardon is actually bestowed upon him previously to his believing, and independently of it, yet this pardon is of no use nor benefit to him except he believes. The position is absurd, as we

^{*} See Note BB.

formerly showed you. But it is one of their positions; and it implies the necessity of faith for pardon, so far as pardon can be of any service, as well as for salvation. Not to press this, however, against them, I shall only argue on the supposition that they hold faith to be essential to salvation. Well then, to faith they annex the holiness, and felicity, and glory of the saints here and hereafter. Now, this faith which they maintain, as a necessary inlet to the spiritual and eternal blessings conferred by the love of God on those who are in the exercise of it, is unquestionably a personal quality of those whose faith it is. It is not a quality external to them—it is no part of the forgiveness whose existence it realizes and acknowledges-and it does not reside in him by whom that forgiveness was procured for them. Let our opponents simplify it as they will. Let them illustrate it by what operations of the bodily organs they think best. Let them describe it as resembling the opening of the eyes to see the light, or of the mouth to breathe the air.* If they can find any similitude more indicative still of the idea of simplicity and ease, which they evidently wish to convey, let them adduce it. After all, must not faith undoubtedly be considered as an act of the individual of whom it is predicated? Does it not imply some assent of the understand-

^{*} See Note CC.

ing?-some outgoing or movement of the heart?some acquiescence on the part of the whole man? Does not a man do something when he believeswould not he omit or refuse to do something, if he did not believe? In short, is not the faithwanting which he knows not that he is pardoned, and obtains not the advantages flowing from such knowledge, and possessing which, he has both the one and the other—is not this faith characteristic of him as a rational being exerting his moral and intellectual faculties in that particular way which results in, or which is denominated, believing? With all the refinements to which our opponents are so fond of having recourse, they cannot explain away faith as if it formed no essential part of the believer's character.

We have then to ask them, whether they regard this faith as the independent effort of the sinner, or as a grace wrought and maintained in him by the Holy Spirit. They must hold the one or the other of these views; and the question is, which of them it is that they do hold. Let us consider both alternatives, that in either way we may make a proper estimate of their pretensions to superior orthodoxy.

1. Supposing them to say that the sinner believes "of himself," then, they immediately asscribe to the sinner the power of acting worthily without divine help, they trace his interest in the

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privileges which follow upon faith to his own efficacious working, they give him occasion of boasting as if he had merit in accomplishing the most important part of his soul's salvation, and an encouragement to the hope of becoming holy, and reaching heaven, by his inherent and unaided ability. Of such an idea, and of every approach to it, our system is utterly abhorrent. We maintain, that the redemption of sinners, is, from first to last, and throughout all its departments, a work of free and sovereign grace. Not only is this grace the sole origin of the blessings, external to man, such as forgiveness, and acceptance, and eternal life, and of the apparatus of mercy by which these were provided—it is also the sole origin of that union with Christ without which we can have no interest in any one of them, and of that faith by which our union with Christ is formed and maintained. and of those convictions and feelings which lead to our reception of Christ as the only Redeemer, and of all the holy conformity to God's will, and cordial devotedness to God's glory, and joyful experience of God's favour, which distinguish those who "believe with the heart unto righteousness." According to the doctrine that we profess, every believer, whether he thinks of his forgiveness or his faith-of his holiness, or of his hopes, must say with the apostle, "By the grace of God, I

am what I am." And surely this presents a striking and triumphant contrast to the opinion of our opponents, if they make faith such a light and facile matter as that every man may exercise it when he chooses, and by his ordinary and natural strength. It ill becomes them to blame others for an error of which others are guiltless, while that error cleaves to themselves, and is moreover held up as a recommendation of their peculiar and favourite dogma. We say not only that our faith does not and cannot purchase pardon, which like all the other gifts of God to sinful men is an entirely free and undeserved gift, but that the faith which so links us to Christ as that pardon is bestowed upon us for his sake, is as gratuitously wrought in us as the pardon is bestowed upon us. But on the supposition we are now making as to their notions of faith, although the pardon is said to have been at once provided and conferred while we were yet living in impenitence, unbelief, and profligacy, still the faith which brings to us the sensible comforts produced by the knowledge of pardon having been received, and the sanctification and the happiness to which we are consequently advanced, is regarded as something which any one is capable of exerting by his own energies, and which he may found upon as investing him with a right to the blessings connected with it in the ordinance of God.

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Nor think, my friends, that the supposition now made is uncandid, or got up for the purpose of exciting prejudice. It is naturally suggested by the manner in which our opponents have thought proper to illustrate their own opinions on the subject. And assuredly were we to interpret their meaning as they have laboured to interpret the meaning of the Scriptures, and consider every figure or allegory to be tantamount to an argument, we should not forego the advantage which they have afforded us. For how is it that they endeavour to give us accurate conceptions of faith? Why, they say that as light is common property which any man, by simply opening his eyes, may be enabled to see, and as air is common property which any man, by simply opening his mouth, may breathe, so pardon is the common property of all, and a sinner has only to believeto open his spiritual mouth or spiritual eyesthat he may receive the comfort of the fact, and find his way to the many blessings which the God of love is ready to communicate. And is it any violent construction of such a statement, to imagine that its authors meant to teach and persuade us that it is as much within the compass of a sinner's power to believe, as it is within the compass of any man's power, to unclose his eyes or to open his mouth? The two things are, indeed, radically dissimilar, as we shall find immediately; still, as the one is set before us for the purpose of expounding the other, we are guilty of no unfairness in arguing on the hypothesis that they hold the act of believing to be parallel, in point of facility, to the organic motions to which they have so fondly and confidently likened it.*

2. But we shall allow that the intended import of their language attributes no merit to the belief by which the sinner comes to know that he is pardoned, whether he has faith or not. then? His belief is "the gift of God;" and is such a belief in the least degree more affirmative of divine grace, or more exclusive of human merit, than the belief which we inculcate, and which is also in its formation, and in its exercise, and in every thing belonging to it, "the gift of God?" The belief that we inculcate gives credit to God's testimony respecting his Son, and relies upon Christ solely as Redeemer, and receives forgiveness and whatever else is needed, as mere gratuitous benefits, conferred by God through his mediation. The belief that they inculcate, if we understand it aright, is of the very same description, so far as the bountiful giver, the unworthy recipient, and the only channel of communication are concerned. The single point of difference lies in the period and the circumstances of the actual

^{*} See Note DD.

conveyance of that pardon which Christ has secured and which God bestows. Both admit that it is altogether undeserved, and that even faith has no part in obtaining it, as if it were given on account of faith. But our opponents hold that it is bestowed not only before faith is wrought in the sinner, but bestowed on him whether faith is ever wrought in him or not, and that faith is the admission of this important fact in his spiritual condition; -while we hold that, in the order of dispensation settled by the wisdom of God and revealed in his word, pardon not only comes after the formation of faith, but is never the portion of any one who lives and dies without the faith that is required, and that faith accepts of pardon and its concomitant blessings as expressions of God's unmerited mercy, manifested through Christ. The difference that exists between us, therefore, does not at all affect the question respecting the share that the sinner has in procuring the pardon which is revealed in the gospel.

If, however, the faith which our opponents teach be thus devoid of all alliance with the sinner's own doing or deserving, they have been very unfortunate or very negligent in the method which they have adopted for explaining its true nature. They seem to flatter themselves that they get quit of the very appearance of such an error by

employing the similitudes to which we have already alluded, whereas by employing these similitudes, they have exposed themselves to the charge of doing what is directly calculated to mislead the minds of others, if not to deceive their own. The similitudes they make use of are extremely incorrect. For example, they say that believing is like opening the eyes for the admission of light.

Now, in the *first* place, this is to compare an operation which is in every man's natural power, with an operation which, by their own acknowledgment, no man can perform except it be given him from above. And from the purpose for which the comparison is introduced, we are entitled to infer that it is intended to ascribe to faith, considered as the act of the sinner's mind, a virtue which it does not possess.

In the second place, as the mind of fallen man is corrupted and enfeebled by sin, so as to render divine grace absolutely essential for the acquisition of every good principle, and the cultivation of every good affection, they should have adduced the case of a man whose eye is greatly diseased or altogether blind, and tried how the analogy would succeed in that predicament. The analogy would have been exact, but then it would not have succeeded in answering the purpose which they seem to be aiming at. Every one would have felt that

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the same species of divine interposition was as requisite for making the sinner believe as for making the blind man see. The hand of God would have been equally desiderated for giving faith to the mind in the one case, and for giving sight to the eye in the other. And the imposing theory of its being merely necessary to receive the fact as being indisputably applicable to each, because it was affirmed to be common to all, would have failed to satisfy any one of its being so hostile, as it is alleged to be, to the idea of human merit.

But observe, in the third place, what is the probable and almost inevitable influence of such illustrations as those on which we are commenting, on men's notions respecting faith. They are informed that pardon is laid at every man's doorthat the veriest profligate has a right to it-that it does not belong to the believer merely, but that it actually belongs to all mankind alike-and that it is as much theirs as the air or the light in the natural world. And they are, moreover, informed, that as they have simply to open their eyes, in order to enjoy the beauty and the advantages of the light, and simply to open their mouths, in order to enjoy the freshness and vivifying effects of the air, in like manner they have simply to believe that they are pardoned, in order to experience the consolation of the pardon already conveyed to them, and all the manifold and important benefits which are implied in the great salvation. So that well knowing how easy a thing it is to open the eye and the mouth, so as to see and breathe-an operation which every one who has these organs in a sound and healthful state, performs thousands of times in the course of every day that he lives,-they must conclude that there can be no great difficulty in believing-that they can do it at any time hereafter, when they may deem it useful or find it convenient-that any morning when they open their eyes to behold the light of the sun, they may, at the same moment, and with the same ease, open the eyes of their minds to behold, to acknowledge, and to rejoice in the fact, that all their sins are long ago forgiven, and that it is discrediting the truth of God, to be in any alarm about the condemnation which sin deserves. Thus by being taught to consider faith as a work at their own command, and of their own accomplishment, they are tempted to be careless, and procrastinating, and presumptuous in their dealings with the "one thing needful." The feeling of pride and self-conceit is gendered by the thought that they can so readily effectuate the mighty achievements ascribed to faith, and at the same time, the anxiety of which they might otherwise be conscious, to have that grace formed, and settled, and stablished in their minds, is greatly diminished, or altogether suppressed.

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Nor will these evils be lessened or counteracted by the doctrine itself, that the fact to be afterwards believed, is their existing freedom from the penalties of the law which they have transgressed, and in the transgression of which they are still living, and may continue to live, without dread from the denunciations of that law. Such a doctrine is calculated to prevent the law from acting as a schoolmaster to bring them unto Christ. Recurring to the similitudes brought from the air and the light, they may perceive, without the help of much sagacity, that these similitudes have very little power to hasten their belief. It is true that they cannot see the light without opening their eyes, and cannot breathe the air without opening their mouths, and therefore they never fail to perform both of these necessary functions. But the resemblance does not apply to their case. For they are told by our opponents, who, of course, look for their assent to the statement, that whatever other purposes believing may subserve, assuredly it has nothing to do with getting them pardon-that there is no necessary connexion between the two —that the latter is theirs, even though they should never practise the former—that they are as much freed as ever they can be, from that penalty which God's justice denounced against the breakers of his commandments. And, there-

fore, while the opening of the eyes and of the mouth is indispensably requisite for their seeing and breathing, or having any benefit whatever from the light and air, common property though they be, faith is not requisite at all for their possessing pardon, that being a common property to every individual of our race, be he a believer, or be he an unbeliever. To say that without believing, they cannot know that they are pardoned, and cannot therefore be comforted or sanctified, is little or nothing to the purpose. If they are really ignorant of this, so far at least as not to be influenced by it to be at ease in Zion, it is owing to no want of zeal on the side of our opponents, who labour hard to give them a speculative, if they cannot produce in them a saving conviction of the fact. And as a man may believe in the existence of God, though his belief in that proposition does not persuade him to love and serve and glorify God, so they may be brought to believe that their sins are already pardoned, though their belief may go no farther than to give them encouragement to persevere in sin.

SERMON XII.

SAME SUBJECT.

We shall now direct your thoughts to some of the causes which have chiefly operated in producing and spreading the deadly heresy that we have been so long employed in exposing. Our discussion of this part of the subject, however, must necessarily be very limited and imperfect.

1. And first, I am more convinced than I was when I first announced it to you, that the doctrine of universal pardon has originated in a great measure, in the high doctrine of assurance of faith.

The doctrine I refer to consists in making the assurance of a man's own personal salvation to be of the very essence of his faith. A considerable time ago I explained to you what I conceived to be the sound and scriptural view of the subject. The first thing that a true believer does is to give credit to the divine testimony concerning Christ

as the Redeemer of men. The next thing is that, in accordance to that testimony, he receives Christ and trusts in him as all-sufficient, and commits his salvation entirely into his hands. And then, as a consequence of this belief in Christ, he is assured of his being pardoned and saved, a child of God and an heir of heaven-not that such assurance follows immediately and necessarily, for as our Confession says, "a true believer may wait long and conflict with many difficulties before he be partaker of it," but it is a practicable attainment by the use of ordinary means; it is what many disciples of the Saviour have been privileged to enjoy; and it is what every real Christian will be studious to reach, seeing it is his duty to "give all diligence to make his calling and election sure," if he would have his comforts or his graces to abound. With this view, however, of saving faith not a few have been dissatisfied. They have considered it as coming short of the truth. On looking at certain passages of Scripture, they have been led to conclude that, according to the import of these, assurance of personal salvation is a constituent quality of faith, so that in believing on Christ, they have an undoubting conviction of their own actual interest in God's favour and of their own actual right to eternal life. Or, they have been led to take this strong view of the matter, by engaging in keen and controversial opposition to the Romish divines who have contended

vehemently for a "vague and doubtsome faith," as it has been called, in order to leave room for their penances, and works of supererogation, and indulgences, and other destructive errors; and by stretching the arguments which they employed in hostility to these antagonists, farther than perhaps they would have done, had they been able to consider coolly and dispassionately what the word of God contains, in relation to the topic in dispute. Or, they have been put into circumstances of trial and persecution, which gave a high excitement to all their religious feelingswhich hedged them in to a closer communion with the Saviour, for whom they suffered, and a more realizing anticipation of that immortality. which he had purchased for them-which necessitated them to keep their faith in Christ in constant and vigorous exercise, and habitually to connect his love to them with their dependence. upon him, their duties to him, their endurances for him: and thus feeling the full assurance possessing and influencing their own minds, they were induced to speak of it as the distinguishing privilege of every one who had like precious faith with them, though placed in situations less trying, and therefore less favourable to the loftier and more perfect operations of that divine prin-But it seldom happened that any of these—even such of them as went farthest, broached the doctrine of universal pardon. In some cases we have observed them using language which so implied it that they could not have consistently explained what they had advanced, if they had been called to do so, without perceiving that it was involved in their statements. And in other cases it was so obviously taught by what they argued in support of their opinions or assurance, that they were reduced to the necessity of disclaiming it, and vindicating themselves from the suspicion of entertaining it as an article of their faith. But with a few exceptions, it was held to be unscriptural by all the more respectable writers on theology, and where there was any danger of being successfully accused of holding it, ingenious distinctions were devised, and no little sophistry was employed, to rebut the charge, and to throw off an imputation which was deemed discreditable to the understanding and the orthodoxy of those who were liable to it.

It appears to me, that they were right as to universal pardon, and wrong as to the full assurance of faith. Their present followers, in maintaining the latter doctrine, have refused to imitate them in rejecting the former. They insist upon both. And although they are egregiously wrong in both, they are certainly entitled to the praise of consistency, which those are not, who hold the one but repudiate the other. Not only have they found it difficult, but they have found it impossible, to make the believer's assurance of

his personal salvation, essential to his faith in Christ, without being previously satisfied that his sins were pardoned. And the difficulty, or the impossibility, may be very easily expounded. A short and simple statement will make it quite intelligible.

Bear it in mind, then, that in the opinion of our opponents, when a man believes in Christ he has an infallible assurance of his own pardon,that this is not a sequence to his believing, but an essential ingredient in it, and wholly inseparable from its nature,—that if he has not this certainty of actual deliverance from all condemnation, he has no belief at all-and that, possessing it, his faith is a true and saving faith. Such being the case, suppose that ungodly men are not yet pardoned, and that I were to go to one of them and say to him, " In the name of the Lord I bid you believe in Jesus Christ," is it not obvious that he could not rightly comply with my exhortation? He is not pardoned, and yet I require him to believe that he is pardoned, that is to say, I require him to believe what is manifestly a lie; and that a man is to be saved under the administration of a holy God, by believing a lie, or that it can be said of God that he commands any of his creatures to believe a lie, is a great deal too much to be admitted by any rational or pious mind. Nor is this all. It is sufficiently bad to be enjoined to believe a lie, but moreover, if the individual can

be only persuaded to believe the lie, this lie undergoes a marvellous transformation, and instantly assumes the character of a truth, for he thereby becomes a real believer, and, of course, his sins are all pardoned! Thus it is that if sinners are not forgiven before they believe, it must be exacted of them, that on the divine authority they believe a lie, and that by this believing of theirs, a falsehood is immediately converted into a truth, and so by this extraordinary process, and by this extraordinary process alone, sinners of mankind are to be saved!

But keep the same definition of faith, and make the supposition that sinners are already pardoned, then observe how the difficulty now adverted to as so startling and so insuperable, altogether evanishes. Whenever I ask a sinner to believe, meaning by that, to believe that he is forgiven, I ask him to believe no lie, but a certain and established truth. His iniquities are all in fact blotted out by the death of Christ, even if he should refuse to believe, and therefore he is acting a right and dutiful part when he gives his assent to this proposition, so indubitable as well as so momentous. He is then, without any violation of a moral principle either on his own side or on the side of that authority which he obeys when he believes, a real believer, and shall be saved. For this, we are told, constitutes the only difference between a believer and an unbeliever, that while both are equally forgiven, the former knows or is sensible of it, and the latter does not know or is not sensible of it.

You will not now wonder, my friends, that the rigid and extravagant maintainers of assurance are also the maintainers of universal pardon. They are driven to this doctrine as a refuge from a gross and palpable inconsistency in which they must otherwise be involved. Without holding that all men are actually pardoned, the work of evangelizing or making proselytes to the faith of the gospel, as they count faith, must inevitably stop, it being altogether out of the question that God should lay it upon an unpardoned sinner, or a reprobate, to believe that he is indeed and irrevocably pardoned, or that a belief of this falsehood should be the instituted method of salvation. But the moment that the doctrine of universal pardon is brought into play, the doctrine of assurance, as understood by our opponents, takes full effect. It has then a broad and secure foundation on which to rest, and they are able to inculcate it in the strongest terms, and without the slightest embarrassment. They can say to the most obdurate and impenitent transgressor, "Believe without all doubt or hesitation that thou art forgiven," and in doing this they ask him to believe a proposition just as consistent with fact and verity as the proposition is that he is a living man. To those, therefore, who entertain such notions respecting faith as that it essentially implies a most confident assurance that he is personally freed from condemnation, the doctrine of universal pardon is not merely useful, it is indispensable. They cannot get on without it; and, right or wrong, they must have it as a part of their system. Reason may reclaim against it as absurd; revelation may refuse it any sanction, and even distinctly contradict it—no matter, it cannot be wanted. Without it, assurance is utterly untenable, and, therefore, cost what sacrifices the adoption of it may, adopted it must be, and held fast as one of the truths of God.

We have already shown you, at great length, that the doctrine of universal pardon is at variance with the scheme of the gospel, and the express language of Holy Writ, and that it leads directly and necessarily to the most absurd and pernicious consequences. It therefore falls to be rejected, however essential it may be found for upholding the favourite tenet of assurance. And if this tenet depend upon it, as the only solid basis on which it can be placed, the superstructure must of course share the fate of its foundation. Both must be considered as overturned and ruined. So long as the doctrine of assurance requires me to admit the doctrine of universal pardon, I can see nothing in it but what is repulsive and dangerous. For if all men are not pardoned, which I hold to be demonstrable, and to have been demonstrated from Scripture, then I am commissioned to urge sinners to believe that they are pardoned when they are not pardoned, and this is a contradiction in terms—it is a contradiction in thought—it is a contradiction in morals—it is a contradiction in the system of pure, unmixed, divine truth—it is a contradiction which insults the character of God, and the understanding of man,—and it is a contradiction which, both in its contrariety to the Bible, and in the immoral tendency which cleaves to it, and especially as requiring the hypothesis of universal pardon to extricate and cure it, amounts to a gross, wicked, and pestiferous heresy.*

2. In the second place, I attribute the obstinacy and zeal with which the doctrine of universal pardon is maintained, to what may be justly called a passion for whatever is very much away from sober ordinary modes of thinking, and feeling, and acting, in matters of religion.

There are certain persons who cannot be restrained within the bounds which have heretofore limited even the best of Christians. They must be as much as possible excited. A doctrine being merely true is no sufficient recommendation of it to their esteem—it must be also invested with something of novelty and extravagance; and, indeed, if it only possesses the latter property in

[·] See Note E E.

any attractive form, or in any considerable degree, they are not very rigid in requiring that it shall be distinguished by the former. The pastors from whom they were wont to receive spiritual instruction are quite stale and insipid; and if changing from one pastor to another, will not procure for them what is more delectable to their new-born taste, they supply the defect by reading every fanatical tract, and listening to every upstart theologian, that makes up for want of knowledge and experience, by bold assertions, chimerical fancies, and an odious mixture of spiritual and sentimental disquisition. They distinguish themselves from the common throng of what we have been accustomed to denominate sincere believers, and exemplary Christians, by being more confident about their own attainments, and more dogmatical and unsparing in their censures of others-by talking incessantly and wildly about experience, of which they can have had but little, and that rather of a doubtful kind-by running about from house to house, and from meeting to meeting, as if the very existence of Christianity depended upon all this restless, and unwearied, and unseemly bustling of theirs-and by never dreaming that they are right, or safe, or happy, unless they are exalting their own peculiar views, to the disparagement of all that the wise and the good have held sacred for

ages, and unless they are taking an intrusive and dictatorial inspection of other people's souls, instead of being "keepers at home," and meditating on what may be faulty in themselves, and attending to the practical details of personal godliness and social duty. And though they pray, their devotions must be characterized by something peculiar, such as omitting confessions of sin and petitions for pardon; and though they peruse the Bible, it is chiefly to the more mysterious parts of it that they have recourse, and with the view of discovering such passages and such expressions as they may afterwards quote in defence of their favourite fancies; and though they go to church, it is to spy out the nakedness of the land, and to gratify themselves with proofs of their being now "wiser than all their teachers," and to give them an additional relish for those more pungent and imaginative entertainments, of which they partake in their mutual intercourse, and in their private associations.

Such is the spirit which is abroad in the present day—and such are the materials which the propounders of assurance and universal pardon have to work upon in getting currency, and making proselytes to their favourite opinions. They may go much farther, and still theywill find willing audiences, and devoted disciples. They may vary as much as their caprice shall dictate—there will

nevertheless be abundance of credulous and admiring followers. They may turn the whole gospel into an airy speculation, in which our understanding shall perceive no wisdom, and our hearts shall find no comfort, and our footsteps shall be favoured with no moral direction-in spite of it all, there will be a busy running after them, and a greedy acceptance of their every folly, among the people of this perverse generation. We cannot doubt it, when we consider what is daily taking place around us, and what we have had to encounter in our ordinary commerce with society, and in our controversy with the more intelligent whom we have felt it our duty publicly and frankly to oppose. The youngest and the rawest in their ranks now thinks himself entitled to say to every one who resists his dogmas, and to contend for the faith which has heretofore upheld, and consoled, and sanctified him, "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" The saints of past times who have fought the good fight, who have enlightened the church by their teaching labours, who have adorned it with their virtues, and guided it by their example, and of whom the world was not worthy, are unceremoniously proscribed by both leaders and followers of the new sect, as if they had not known the gospel, and were not now in the joy of their Lord. We are gravely told, and the story gains credit where we should have expected it to meet with rejection and rebuke, of miraculous cures being performed, and of equally miraculous answers being given to the prayers of the initiated. And as to the licence that is taken in interpreting the word of God, and in altering the nomenclature of divinity, and in affixing arbitrary meanings to words and phrases whose import has been long established—why it is unbounded, and altogether incredible, were not specimens of it accessible to the observation of every one who has curiosity to look into their publications, or patience to listen to their arguments and expositions.

Nothing, perhaps, can better demonstrate the wildness and perversity which prevail in their mind than the paradoxes, the inconsistencies, the absurdities, which their leaders scruple not to propound with all solemnity, and dogmatism, and which the best and the worst, the strongest and the silliest, of the crowd of followers, seem to think it a duty to receive with the most implicit credulity, and maintain with the most perfect coolness. According to them, heaven is not a place of recompense, but merely a character which, being holy, makes those who have it happy: and therefore the judge—if indeed there be any judgment—will say to such, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the holy character prepared for you

from the foundation of the world." Hell is not a place of punishment; it is only a wicked character, which makes all who maintain it uncomfortable and wretched. And of course the judge will say to them, "Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting wicked character, prepared for the devil and his angels." God no doubt hates sin; but it is more correct to say that he has a "holy love against sin." Pardon, instead of bringing an acquittal or deliverance from merited penalties, is "just another word for the compassion of God." Justification is a totally different thing from pardon-justification being a sense of our having obtained the pardon; and yet pardon and justification are exactly the same thing, being each of them a sense of pardon or a sense of the "divine nearness and love." It is said that justification sometimes signifies a sense of pardon, and thereafter it has always that signification. To repent is to believe, and it is to give praise and glory to God-but it is not by any means to repent. Humility is sometimes confidence,—at other times, assured hope-at other times spiritual order-at other times it is the spirit of dependence-at other times it is nothing but truth-but it is never humility itself-and the world, with all their sage explanations, "does not know what humility means." The sinner can derive no possible benefit from pardon unless he believes that it has been bestowed, and yet pardon even to the unbeliever is such a benefit as to show forth the marvellous and unspeakable love of God to him. At one time mankind are dead and yet alive-at another time they are reconciled and straightway they are enemies. Now they are freed from penalties-then they are subject to penalties. In this breath they are forgiven, and in the next they are under condemnation and encompassed with wrath. They are even pardoned and punished at one and the same instant, and in both cases the love of God to them is equally manifested. When they ask pardon, they do not ask pardon, but only a sense of pardon; and the saint who asks pardon, has a full, confident, and undoubting assurance of the fact that the very iniquities for which he asks pardon are all blotted out, and that he has no reason at all to fear God's displeasure; and yet he is to confess sin and to ask pardon for sin, which pardon he does not need, because he has got it already, and which sin was actually cancelled, washed away, forgiven, long before he was born or was capable of committing it. And such is the definition given us of "eternal life," that when our Lord, in describing the last judgment, says of the righteous that they shall go away into life eternal, he means that they shall go away into "the communication of the life of God into the

soul," or into "the knowledge of God as revealed in Christ."*

These contradictions and absurdities are scattered in endless profusion over the system of our opponents. They are found in their books and tractstheir public sermons—their half-private, half-public expositions; and are either stated in these so plainly, that no reader or hearer of ordinary sagacity can fail to perceive them, or so easily as well as justly inferred from what they have taught, that every child of tolerable intellect is able to make the deduction. Can any thing prove more conclusively the low ebb to which theology has fallen among us, when men who send forth such crudities, are listened to or tolerated by the intelligent? And can any thing be more demonstrative of the extravagant excitement which pervades certain classes of the community than the greedy reception and all-devouring belief of what is so utterly ludicrous, so insulting to reason, so devoid of any portion of that ingenuity which sometimes makes error look inviting-recommended though it be with a large accompaniment of piety, and worth, and love?

Were there not a most unnatural appetite for the marvellous and excessive in matters of faith, would not the very pretension set up by some

^{*} See Note FF.

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persons of having only now discovered what the gospel really is, excite aversion and disgust? This truth, of such vast and essential moment, has not only been hid from the inhabitants of Christendom during those dark ages when the fountain of sacred knowledge was shut up from the people of all ranks by the hands of a bigoted and tyrannical hierarchy, but even during the centuries that have elapsed since this fountain was opened up and made accessible to all, and resorted to by the wisest, and most learned, and most holy men whom the world ever saw. But to none of them was it ever revealed in its just nature and character, -at least, any of them by whom it was perceived, had only a feeble and momentary glimpse of it, while it was wholly concealed from all besides. And if it ever came to be more generally known, it was only by such as were remarkable either for their ignorance or their immorality. But now it is put forth as the grand discovery of these days, a discovery made in the pages of a volume which men, both of power and prayer, had perused during a lifetime without seeing a vestige of the doctrine in any corner of it, and made by individuals who, compared with them that went before, are as nothing and vanity. And though coming in such suspicious circumstances, it is received without inquiry, as infallibly true, hailed as the richest boon that heaven has vouchsafed to our degenerate days, and made to supersede all that was wont to instruct, and sanctify, and gladden, the church of God!

But there is nothing which shows in a stronger light the violence of that spiritual fever which rages among so many of the present day, as the freedom which our opponents use with the Bible in order to make it speak their sentiments. It is quite revolting; and it gives us reason to apprehend that from those for whose illumination it is practised, and to whose shame it is practised successfully, piety has for the time departed as well as sense. For if they really "trembled at God's word," and felt reverence for him who spoke and inspired it, it is difficult to imagine how they could endure the uncourtly treatment which it receives from the modern and new-fangled interpreters of its pages. These interpreters set aside and trample upon all the plainest and most necessary and most indisputable rules of explication, and give us as the import of the Bible, not what it really teaches, but merely what they would wish it to say.

They don't attend to the scope of a passage, or to the obvious design of the inspired author, but catch at a word, or a phrase, or the very shadow of one, and distort it to the purpose in hand with the most provoking coolness. If a passage makes against them they pass it by as if it were no part of God's word. They see it not though it is

staring them in the face. Point out the statements in it which contradict their doctrine, they just wink the harder, and will not look at them. Dwell upon these with whatever force and solemnity you can employ; it is all in vain, for they will recognise nothing, and will attend to nothing, and will be influenced by nothing, that would rob them of their theory, or disconcert them in their attempts to build it up. They pick and choose from the Bible at their own discretion and for their own ends; of course they conveniently exclude from their regard and from their expositions all that would overthrow or shake the fabric of error which they have so industriously reared, and which they so fondly and doatingly contemplate; and there is nothing that they dread so much, or to which they have so great an aversion as controversy. They rather confide in the silent and progressive influence of positive, reiterated, persevering asseverations, poured into the ears of those who are too timid, too ignorant, or too peaceable to withstand them, and who, by degrees, will be gained over to opinions which would have been annihilated by the word of God and the operations of reason, in the hand of a competent antagonist.

I would give you just one example of their misrepresentation of Scripture, which I confess has struck me forcibly. They say, in order to un-

dervalue the importance of faith, " The gospel is not 'He that believeth shall be saved,' but it is God gave his Son to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world." There is here obvious and unworthy artifice; I can call it nothing bet-Properly speaking, the gospel is neither the one nor the other. If the author of such a statement had been determined to be fair and candid in the matter, and to let Scripture speak for itself, and to expound the gospel in a single declaration, why should he not have taken the account of the gospel that was given by the Author and Finisher of our faith himself, who says, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotton Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life?" But the truth is, that for an account of the gospel, for knowing precisely and fully what it is, we must not go to any single verse or to any detached expression—that is the way to get the gospel made any thing that we please-but take into view the whole record in which the gospel is revealed, and from its various parts to collect the doctrines which God has offered to our belief, and from which we are to learn the method whereby we are to be saved from our sins, and to lay hold on eternal life.

3. I may mention, in the *third* and *last* place, that separation of privilege from character—of principle from practice—of one part of the gospel

scheme from another, in which men are so apt to indulge, as another and a fertile source of the errors whose prevalence we so much deplore.

This is a theme on which I might expatiate at great length; and it is certainly deserving of a full discussion as well as of serious consideration. But it is necessary that I should confine myself to a very few remarks.

Although the religion of Christ is not presented to us in the regular form of a system, yet a system assuredly it is. It consists of various parts. These parts, indeed, may be separately examined, and separately illustrated; and from each one of them we may deduce what is both true and useful. But they are linked together. Every one of them is not merely related to all the rest, but has a distinct bearing and throws a certain light upon them all. And when put into their proper places, and kept in their proper connexions, they constitute one harmonious whole, and exhibit a full and correct development of the will of God concerning human redemption. So that while we learn most completely what that will is, and feel its intended effect on our belief and conduct only when we take a comprehensive view of it as it is embodied in the Christian system, so it follows of course, that when we neglect or overlook any portion of it, if we substitute one principle for another, or allow any feature which it possesses to

engross, or occupy an immoderate share of, our attention, there must be a corresponding misapprehension of its import, and a corresponding defect in its practical influence. Much, indeed, will depend on the intrinsic or relative importance of that which has been either altogether detached, or inserted in a wrong station, or made of too great or of too little moment. But let this be as it may, there must still be some mistake in our understanding of the gospel, and in the homage which we render it, and in the effects which it produces on our comfort and our character. And, therefore, though it may be difficult to deduce from the sacred record, that system which it undoubtedly contains, and impossible to give its component parts with that perfect adjustment, of which, however, they are capable, it must be that, on the one hand, the nearer we can approximate to this the more honourable is it to God, and the more beneficial to ourselves; and, on the other hand, the less successful we are in such an attempt, the more likely are we to have erroneous conceptions of saving truth, to err in our submission to its power, and to come short in the benefits which it is intended to convey.

Now, in this respect, ignorance and carelessness are prevalent. Christianity is not known by some, who should from their education and their profession, have been well and minutely ac-

quainted with it, as a system. By others it is accounted injurious to study or to regard it in that regular and connected form. And in general its various doctrines are attended to as if they were totally insulated from one or other, and as if it were of no consequence what degree of consideration they severally claimed, or what positions they severally maintained. Hence one man dwells almost exclusively on this tenet, and another man dwells almost exclusively on that tenet. Neither of them inquires or determines what place his tenet should hold, or what power it should exercise: but he just gives it that weight and operation which pleases his own fancy, or comports with his own prejudices and feelings. Unrestricted by system, which perhaps he has been taught to despise, or which he finds it convenient to set at nought, or unrestricted by those principles which give birth to system in every science as well as in that of religion, he recognises no order and subordination in the gospel scheme, but takes it up and treats it as if there were no skilful arrangement or fixed continuity in it, as if it were just a heap of disjointed fragments, and as if it were either impracticable or undesirable to discover in it any thing like philosophical consistency. Thus it is that when any theoretical notions occur to a man's fancy, he does not see how it affects the gospel system; but finding that it agrees with some doc-

trine or other which he had been accustomed to believe as belonging to Christianity, he straightway embraces it, and doats upon it, and makes it every thing; whereas, had he been well instructed in the kingdom of God, and not only known all that has been revealed, but had his knowledge so ordered as that he saw the dependence of one department upon another, and the relative position and value which divine wisdom had given to each, he would have easily discovered that his theory was inadmissible, or that it must be subjected to certain modifications before it could be safely received into his creed. Examples of this will occur to every attentive observer, in reflecting on the various opinions that have been lately broached in the province of theology, and on the facility with which they have been adopted by persons whose intelligence would otherwise have afforded a perfect security against their approach and their prevalence.

But the same general remark may be made with respect to the mode that too much obtains of reading and regarding the Scriptures, out of which alone the Christian system is to be evolved. The Scriptures are perused as a set of detached, incoherent, rambling sentences, on one or more of which we are entitled to fix our attention, to the exclusion, or at least the comparative neglect, of the rest. They are not viewed as proceeding

from one infinite source—as intended to promote one great end-as sanctified and enforced by one divine authority-and as consequently having this to characterize them, that every one portion of their contents agrees with every other, and that their meaning is to be ascertained by a due and a comprehensive consideration of the whole. It is indeed their peculiar excellence, that though they do not exhibit a scheme of Christian doctrine laid down in that order which is observed in a Confession of Faith, they yet contain the scheme as really as if they did give that exhibition of it. And it is so diffused over their pages as to serve more than the purposes of a regularly digested creed, by having all its articles recurring frequently, in every variety of form, and with every variety of accompaniment, and interwoven with each other in such a manner, as that the knowledge and belief of one may infer the knowledge and belief of all the rest. To illustrate this more fully, it would be necessary to go over the whole of the sacred volume. But if you have perused it with any care, you must be sensible that there are examples of what I have stated occurring in every page; and that a man who is well furnished with religious information, gathered by him from a diligent and frequent perusal of its statements, and used by him in the connexions in which it is found there, is most likely to be

preserved from the inroads of error in his attempts to learn the will and the truth of God. Only think for a moment of what you have read in his word, that you may be convinced of this. mercy or compassion to sinners is often spoken of, is not his anger and indignation against impenitent sinners spoken of with equal emphasis, and perhaps in the very same passage? Do not you find privilege and conduct so closely combined, as that eternal happiness is sometimes annexed to the exercise of a single virtue? If in one clause of a sentence you find the safety and happiness of believers asserted, is not the next clause sometimes employed in awfully depicting the danger and the misery of unbelievers? Have not we occasionally a great and all important truth taught in the course of inculcating a relative or personal duty? In short, is it not obvious, that while great blessings are held out to us to receive, a great work is at the same time given us to do-that the richest and freest benefits are associated with the utmost diligence in duty, and the most rigid abstinence from sin-that doctrinal truth and practical godliness, that peace and purity, that God's love to us and our love to him, are constantly and inseparably united-that we must at once know, and believe, and accept, and feel, and do, as our Father in Heaven has been pleased to communicate his mercies, and his promises, and his will, in order

that we may be the true Israel, that we may enjoy peace, that we may be sanctified for his service, that we may honour him upon earth, that we may be admitted into his presence in heaven, and partake of the glory which is hereafter to be revealed.*

Of all this every person must be satisfied who has ever attended to the strain and structure of the Bible as the records of Christianity. And yet in despite of all this, the teachers of strange doctrines come forward with their texts to prove them, as if these texts, torn away from the connexion in which they were placed by their infallible Author, and presented as the only thing given to regulate our judgment, were to be held decisive of the points in question. They state, and reiterate, and urge incessantly these texts, as if they constituted the whole of revelation, and admitted of no other explanation, and had no other meaning, than what they are pleased, on such limited premises, to affix to them. All opposition is unavailing, all doubt is unscriptural, all disbelief is sinful,—for still the texts, isolated and naked as ever, are pressed upon us with the most unwearied and offensive pertinacity. Let them enter into a conversation with you, or give an exposition, or preach a sermon, or publish a little

^{*} See Note GG.

book, their theme, their illustration, their proof, their all, consists in ringing changes on these texts, so that as certainly as they begin to speak or to write on the all-engrossing subject, so certainly may you expect the texts-sometimes in one order, sometimes in another, and sometimes in no order at all—but still the favourite texts, without weariness and without end. To whomsoever they address themselves—though it is chiefly to the feeble, and the ignorant, and the inexperienced-to whomsoever they address themselves, their great object is to get their victims, on whom they have fixed their eye, allured within the magic circle of the texts-away from the fine, large, comprehensive field of Scripture document, and from all that might break the spell of these texts, and set the enchanted free. So constantly, in short, do they chime over their texts, and so much are the texts identified with the men who have selected them, and who make them the beginning, the middle, and the end of their discussion, that you cannot look at or think of the one without having the other realized in your imagination. And the result with many is, that an impression in favour of the opinions which it is wished to propagate is gradually and insensibly made by the unceasing, solemn, and earnest repetition of the texts, while every thing is forgotten by which that impression might have been

prevented from taking effect, or again enfeebled and effaced; and that, by the indefatigable tuition of their masters, the disciples, having got the *texts* fixed in their memory, and intertwined with all their thoughts, deem the production of them a sufficient answer to any objection that may be stated, and an unfailing instrument for gaining proselytes to the dogmas of their sect.

Of these texts I may specify a few, that, by quoting along with them other texts, by which their import is modified, you may see how dangerous it is to make such partial use of the sacred writings. "God is love," is one of them; but it is also said that God "hates all workers of iniquity"-that " the Lord revengeth, and is furious"-that "his wrath cometh on the children of disobedience"-that he will "render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil."-Another of them is, that Christ is "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world"-but it is also stated "that God has set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood."-Another of them is, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses"-but the apostle who says so, adds, almost immediately, that his commission was to address sinners in these terms; " Be ye reconciled to God."-Another of them is, that "God

hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son"-but our Saviour is recorded by the very apostle who makes that statement, to have declared, that "whoever believeth in him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life." Another of them is, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world"-but he of whom this was said, held this language to the Pharisees, "If ye were blind ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth;" and again, "I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins:" and again, "I say unto you, Capernaum, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."-Another of them is, that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us-" but Paul, who announces that truth, occupies himself in the chapter where it is found, and in the whole of the Epistle, in proving that all the blessings of the gospel come to the sinner through faith and not by the law, and expressly says, "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."-Another of them is, "he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life." But the Apostle,

who lays this foundation for assurance, also says, "these things have I written unto you that believe, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." And again, "we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." And he elsewhere says, "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name."

Time would not fail me to enumerate those texts which are brought forward by our opponents; but time would fail me to enumerate all the other texts by which these are so explained as to have a meaning not only different from, but directly hostile to, and destructive of, the meaning which they assign to theirs. And I have adduced some specimens, merely to point out to you what I consider as one prolific source of the heresy in which they indulge, and as one great cause of the ready reception which it has experienced. According to the mode of treating Scripture to which I have been adverting, I know not any error whatever that I could not deduce from its pages, and establish by its statements. There is not, indeed, a false doctrine that has been taught since the commencement of the

Christian Church, in support of which, its propagators have not referred to the Bible :- but, in referring to the Bible, they have only attended to single expressions or detached passages in it. and not to its general strain and phraseology; and among those who have imbibed such doctrines, there has been almost always an exclusive regard to the portions of Scripture pressed upon them by their teachers, and a great ignorance or studied neglect of every thing else in the sacred volume. And so it is with the dogma of universal pardon. There are the texts-the convenient texts-the consecrated texts-the ever-recurring texts,-brought in at all times, in all forms, and in on all occasions—there are these texts—and there are no more. Let the view of Scripture testimony be extended—let the believing eye travel over the whole territory of revelation-let the understanding of the Christian be exercised in impartially comparing one part of it with another, and his heart be laid open to all the impressions which that wise and faithful dealing with it is calculated to produce-and the bubble will immediately burst, the charm will be straightway dissolved, the theory of universal pardon will be dissipated as it has been before, and there will stand revealed to the conviction of every unprejudiced mind, the solemn truth at once delightful

and awful, so obviously contained in these words; "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth in him."

I could almost appeal to our opponents themselves, and ask them whether, as they talk on this subject, in the house or by the way, when they lie down or when they rise up, or as they meditate upon it at even tide, and at noon, and in the morning-for they seem to meditate and to talk upon nothing else-they do not shut out from their view and their conversation every thing but the fondled texts, and dwell upon them as if there were nothing else worth heeding-whether, when they have recourse to the Bible, that volume "all of which is given by inspiration, and profitable for doctrine, and reproof, and correction, and instruction in righteousness," does not open at the very places where their texts are situated, as if it had been used to open at these places alone-whether, when turning over its leaves, if any passage which wears an unfavourable aspect to their texts happens to meet their eye, it does not affect them with disappointment and pain, and does not occasion a speedy retreat to some of their chosen positions-and whether, having shut the depository of every saving truth, these are not almost the only texts which adhere to

their memories, and which they can quote with accuracy and facility, in assailing the orthodox creed, and in defending their own peculiar opinions.

At any rate, my friends, whatever they may confess, or whatever they may deny, I think you must have observed the fact, and I am sure you have heard enough to convince you of it, that in maintaining the doctrine of universal pardon, they have been studious to overlook a large proportion of the inspired volume, that they have scrupled not to put asunder what God has joined together, and that instead of receiving the plan of salvation, simply and submissively as it is revealed to them, they have selected certain parts of it, and omitting the rest as if it were useless or non-existent, have given to these a meaning and an influence, altogether different from what they really possess in that connexion which they hold in the divine system and in the divine record. And hence have arisen, in a great measure, those absurd and ruinous errors which we have been endeavouring to expose; hence the delusion in which their leading and more active advocates are pertinaciously abiding; and hence no small degree of that success with which, "creeping into houses," and fastening upon the weak and the half-informed who have been so unfortunate as to listen to them when they unfolded their little bundle of texts, they have propagated doctrines which belie

the word of God most odiously—which reason repudiates as inconsistent and mistaken—which break the constitution of the gospel into pieces, and substitute for it freaks of fancy and unwholesome paradoxes—which introduce into religion all that is silly and bigotted and presumptuous—and which add to all their other evils, that worst of all evils—saying peace! peace! to the worldling and the sinner, when there is no peace.

I trust, my friends, that none of you have embraced the dogmas whose unscriptural nature and mischievous tendency, I have been attempting to demonstrate. My object, indeed, has been not so much to cure those who are already labouring under the malady-for with such, argument, however appropriate and strong, seems to make the disease more inveterate—as to guard the young, the unwary, the inexperienced, who are still sound in the faith, against the danger of infection, and to provide them with adequate means of safety. And I hope that enough has been stated to convince you of the folly and the falsehood of those opinions which have recently risen from their graves, and haunted us in our going out and our coming in, and to guide you to such a mode of receiving and of checking these disturbers of your tranquillity as should render them either hateful or harmless. What remains, but that I should be eech you to search the Scriptures more and more, that you may increase in solid wisdom, and in dislike to novelties and speculations in matters of eternal moment—to pray diligently for the Holy Spirit that he may keep you from the encroachments of heresy, and lead you into all the truth—and to mind the exhortation which says,* "Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls."

[#] Jer. vi. 16.

ANDE

APPENDIX.

Note A, p. 52.

I po not find that Mr. Erskine has made any comment on this verse. But he has given a comment on Acts x. 43. which I presume he will, as he may with equal propriety,

apply to this.

"To him," said Peter, "give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth on him shall, through his name, receive the remission of sins." "The word receive here," says Mr. Erskine, "has the same sense that it has in John i. 11. which has been already quoted, 'He came to his own, and his own received him not,' or accepted him not. He had come to them whether they received him or not, and so had the remission of sin; but those only who believed in his true character, viz. that he had come as a destroyer of the works of the devil, and a propitiation for the sins of the world, would in that very character of him, read and receive their own forgiveness."*

1. Now, in the first place, on what authority does Mr.

^{*} Unconditional Freeness, p. 181.

Erskine assert that receive here means accept? Is that necessarily or uniformly the meaning of the original word λαμβανω? Is it the meaning of the word in Matt. xxi. 22. "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive (\lambda n \psi e \sigma \text{the meaning of} the word in Acts viii. 17. "Then laid they their hands on them, and they received (ελαμβανον) the Holy Ghost?" Is it the meaning of the word in Rom. v. 11. "by whom we have now received (EL a Bouss) the atonement?" Is it the meaning of the word in 1 Cor. ix. 24. " Know ye not that they which run a race, run all, but one receiveth (\aubaver) the prize? so run that ye may obtain (καταλαζητε)?" It is not the meaning of the word in these, nor in a multitude of other passages that might have been adduced. And why is it to be rendered accept in the passage under consideration? Merely because Mr. Erskine thinks it more agreeable to his theory. The common meaning of λαμβανω in the New Testament, is simply to get, in whatever way, that which was not previously possessed. And I am entitled, so far as the Greek phrase is concerned, to insist that the rendering in our authorised version shall be retained as the correct one.

2. But, in the second place, I really cannot see what advantage Mr. Erskine gains by the alteration which he so arbitrarily proposes to make. I have no objection to say accept instead of receive, if he is very anxious for it. But let it be observed, that by using the word accept, he gives the act which it expresses more of a conditional character than the word receive indicates. What has no will at all may be said to receive a thing; to accept a thing supposes will in the accepter. I could say, that purse will receive whatever money you put into it; not, will accept the money. We hear of a bill being accepted, not received. Now the idea which Mr. Erskine is anxious to

explode as quite unscriptural, is that of a sinner being active in obtaining, or doing any thing, or exerting any wish to obtain pardon, because pardon is already obtained, and belongs to the sinner, whether he is active or passive in reference to it. But does he not perceive that by substituting accepting for receiving, he is encouraging the idea which he is so desirous to abolish? When a sinner is said to receive pardon, it may mean that he gets that which is freely given. But when he is said to accept it, this implies that he might refuse it, if he had chosen to do so, and consequently, it could not previously and absolutely have been his. And truly let it be taken either way, receive or accept, nothing can be plainer than that the thing which is thus got, was not beforehand in the possession of the recipient, but only becomes his when the act of receiving or accepting takes place. And it still holds true, that, according to the declaration of Peter, none can hope to receive or accept of the remission of sins, except those who believe on Christ.

3. The passage in John to which Mr. Erskine refers, does the very contrary of what he intended—it proves him to be wrong. "Christ came to his own, but his own received, or accepted him not." The Jews, that is to say, rejected him—would not have him to be their Redeemer—cast him out as unworthy of their confidence and submission. True; but how can it be said that, in like manner, any sinner may refuse to receive or accept pardon? How can he refuse that boon which is already his; and whose existence in him is wholly independent of his belief or his unbelief? Christ came to the Jews and presented himself to them as the Messiah, but they would not have him in that character, and the consequence was, that they "died in their sins." But pardon, according to Mr. Erskine, does not come to us in that

way; it is not presented to us for our acceptance; and it does not fail to belong to us, because we have refused it. All our guilt is cancelled, and we can never be punished for the sin, to which that act of amnesty referred, in whatever way we may treat the message or the messenger of God. Christ offered himself to the Jews, and they refused the offer. Pardon, Mr. Erskine maintains, is not, and cannot be offered to us, pardon being already bestowed in the very atonement itself which was made for sin. Here then Mr. Erskine is altogether inconsistent. And to regain his consistency he must either allow that Christ was actually the Redeemer of the Jews, in spite of their rejection of him, which would broadly contradict the Scripture testimony respecting the matter of fact, or he must allow, that as the Jews would not accept Christ, though they might and should have accepted him, so we may accept or reject the pardon which comes to us as provided, though not yet conferred-which is proposed to us, and therefore not yet possessed. Mr. Erskine may say that accepting the remission of sins means believing that this blessing is already ours. This is perfectly absurd; and a most unwarranted explanation of terms. But, admitting it-then when it is said that the Jews would not accept Christ, it imports that they would not believe that all the blessings, implied in his Messiahship, belonged to them; that, of course, these did belong to them, notwithstanding their rejection of Christ; and that, therefore, their eternal salvation, which was certainly the grand object of his coming as the Messiah, was as secure as if they had believed on him with all their heart.

4. Finally, see with what ease Mr. Erskine can give up his case. Christ "had come to the Jews whether they received him or not, and so had the remission of sin." Very well so far; both had come—Christ as a person, par-

don as a blessing; both of them offered, but neither as yet accepted. "But those only," adds Mr. Erskine, "who believed in his true character, viz. that he had come as a destroyer of the works of the devil, and a propitiation for the sins of the world, would, in that very character of his, read and receive" (why not accept?) "their forgiveness." And add to this what Mr. Erskine says in p. 178. as a comment on John i. 12. "but as many as received him, to them gave he the privilege of becoming sons of God, even to them who believed in his name. He came to the world, and pardon was, and is contained in him. Those who receive him, receive pardon in him; those who do not receive him, do not receive pardon." What more can we desire from Mr. Erskine, than such concessions as these? Accepting or receiving Christ, and believing in his name, are convertible phrases in the passage quoted. Be it that Christ came to the world; still though he came to the world, and though "pardon was and is contained in him," which I would be sorry to gainsay, it is admitted-distinctly and unequivocally admitted by Mr. Erskine, that those only who receive, accept, or believe in Christ, receive pardon in him; and that those who do not receive, accept, or believe in him, do not receive pardon. What more, I repeat it, can we desire from Mr. Erskine? He has granted that they who do not believe are not pardoned. And yet his book is written for the very purpose of showing that sinners are pardoned, whether they believe or not!

Note B, p. 72.

Mr. Erskine is exceedingly perplexed by the inconsistency of "a man being pardoned and yet condemned after

He explains himself by saying, that man " is not condemned for the offence which had been pardoned, but for a new one; is not condemned for breaking the law, but for rejecting the gospel."* This gentleman has the art of as easily, though not quite so successfully, getting out of a dilemma as he has of getting into it. He gives an explanation of the absurdity he has broached, and his explanation is as unsupported as is his absurdity. He just calmly and simply avers what he thinks necessary to his purpose, and supposes his readers will implicitly receive whatever he is pleased to stamp with the imprimatur of his opinion. An example of this ipse dixit style of his is afforded by the passage I have now quoted. He wilfully and obstinately shuts out from his view all the Scriptures that represent unbelieving men as under the condemnation of the law. If these are not under the condemnation of the law, how could our Saviour have said to the Jews,† "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" And how could James have said, t "that whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," " if thou kill thou art become a transgressor of the law," and that " he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy?" And how could Jude & have said that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah " suffer the vengeance of eternal fire" for certain specified violations of the moral law, and of judgment coming upon all who are guilty of similar offences? And how could the apostle Paul say of certain acts of immorality which he enumerates,

^{*} Introductory Essay, p. xlvi. † James ii. 10, 11, 13.

⁺ Mat. xxiii. 33. § Jude 7, et seq.

^{. ||} Ephes. v. 6.

that "because of these things, cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience?"*

The very text (John iii. 36.) to which this note is appended, gives a decisive proof of the unsoundness of Mr. Erskine's doctrine. We read in Ephes. ii. 2, that we are all "by nature the children of wrath." And, indeed, it is a truth pervading the whole of Scripture, that as transgressors of God's law we are all subject to his wrath, and that one great object of the death of Christ is to deliver us from it, and that for this purpose it is absolutely requisite. Well; John the Baptist says, that if we believe not, the wrath from which Christ died to redeem us, " abideth upon us." Does that mean that it cometh upon us for the first, or rather for the second time? Is it the same thing to come to a house and to abide in it? The original word is usua, which signifies, not the simple fact, nor the commencement of the fact, to which it refers, but the continuance of that which has already begun, or which already exists.

For example, "After this Christ went down to Capernaum, he and his mother, &c. and they continued—iminum—there not many days." John ii. 12. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue—in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." John viii. 31. "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide—in—with you for ever." John xiv. 16. "If the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained—invare—until this day." Matt. xi. 23. "And

[•] The original word may be rendered "unbelief" as well as "disobedience." But that rendering is even more favourable to my argument, as showing that faith in Christ is necessary to the sinner's deliverance from the wrath of God, which he has merited by his breaches of the divine law.

now abideth—μενει—faith, hope, charity." 1. Cor. xiii. 13. "His righteousness remaineth—μενει—for ever." 2. Cor. ix. 9. "All things continue—διαμενει—as they were from the beginning of the creation." 2. Peter iii. 4. "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining καταθαινον και μενον upon him, the same is he," &c. John i. 33. "That their bodies should not remain—μεινη—on the cross." John xix. 31.

These are but a few of the numerous instances that might be adduced of the proper, and, I may say, invariable meaning of the word that is translated abideth. It refers to the continuance and permanency of something which previously had an existence. And, therefore, in the declaration of John the Baptist, it intimates, that the wrath of God had not been removed, that sinners were still subject to it, and that by rejecting Christ they must remain under its burden.

Had the Spirit, speaking by the mouth of John the Baptist, intended to declare that the disbelieving of the Son of God was an offence committed by those who had no previous offence to answer for, he would not have used a word which presupposes guilt not yet cancelled, and which traces to the act of disbelieving, the continuance of that guilt, and of the penalty connected with it. He would have employed phraseology which at least was capable of the opposite construction-which admitted of the sin of unbelief being considered as the only sin for the sake of which the persons committing it were to endure God's The language adopted is the very language which would have been adopted to convey the truth that till faith was exercised on Christ, sinners were under the divine displeasure, and that it would remain upon all who did not by that faith embrace the appointed Saviour. And,

therefore, the import of this declaration is clearly against the notion of universal pardon, and, indeed, fatal to it.

And this appears the more evident when we attend to the language which the Baptist had been addressing to the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to him to be baptized. He did not speak to them as persons already pardoned, and for whom, had they died then, there would have been no future punishment. On the contrary, he said expressly, " O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"* And he said this when they were coming to him to undergo the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,+ which he preached. and administered. His phraseology on this occasion is an exact counterpart to the phraseology that he afterwards made use of when he spoke of the wrath of God "abiding on" unbelievers. And the doctrine he states is still farther illustrated by his exhortation to the professed proselytes, to bring forth fruits meet or worthy of repentance. because while a true repentance and a sincere submission to the rite of baptism, as significant of internal cleansing, was inseparably connected with the forgiveness of their sins, so unless their repentance was genuine, unless their baptism was a real sign of inward purification, unless they brought forth good fruit, unless they resembled the good and sound wheat, instead of being mere empty chaff, they would not be found to have been forgiven as they flattered themselves, but would be " burned with fire unquenchable." t

^{*} Matt. iii. 7.

[†] Luke iii, 3.

[‡] Matt. iii. 12; Luke iii, 9.

Notes C and D, pp. 75, 77.

Mr. Erskine refers* to Acts ii. 33, and iii. 19. as susceptible of an explanation that tallies with his views. Even though these passages could not be fairly or conclusively adduced against him, enough remains to deprive his theory of all scriptural foundation. And if he had succeeded in proving that the meaning commonly attached to them is not the correct one, I should have frankly said so, and dispensed with their aid. But I am satisfied that he has completely failed in his endeavour. His new exposition is neither founded on the contexts nor on just criticism. And I feel it a duty to point out whatever demonstrates him to be a most arbitrary commentator, and a most unsafe guide to the Holy Scriptures.

I begin with Acts iii. 19. which Mr. Erskine paraphrases thus, "Leave, therefore, your false notions of God, and be converted to that true view of his character which blots out sin and assures of the forgiveness of sin."

1. Now, in the first place, this has no connexion with the preceding context, though it must be considered as an inference from what Peter had been just saying to the people—"Repent ye, therefore," &c. Peter had not accused them of having "false notions of God," or of being destitute of that "view of his character" respecting forgiveness and assurance which some half dozen of half-formed theologians are propagating in Scotland at the present day. He was charging home upon them—not erroneous opinions or heretical doctrines concerning any thing, but a specific crime of the most aggravated description, which they had but lately committed, which was itself suffi-

^{*} Unconditional Freeness, p. 178, 180.

cient to condemn them as a transgression of the moral law, and which barred the forgiveness of all the other sins they had been guilty of. They had "delivered up" the Son of God, and "denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them" in preference to him, and "killed the Prince of Life." Hitherto they had felt no regret or contrition for such a violation of justice and humanity. They had flattered themselves with the idea that they had only put to death a seditious person, a deceiver, a blasphemer. But proofs were now afforded them of the heinousness of the guilt they had contracted: for he whom they had crucified and slain was now "glorified by the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of their fathers;" he was "raised from the dead," and it was "this name, through faith in his name" that had accomplished the miracle of healing on the lame man who sat at the gate of the temple, which now attracted the notice and excited the admiration of the assembled multitude, whom the Apostle took the opportunity of addressing on the subject of their having put to death such a divine person. These are the premises of the Apostle's discourse to the murderous, guilty, impenitent, unbelieving Jews, And Mr. Erskine would have us to think that the Apostle concluded with exhorting such men to "leave their false notions of God," and to be "converted to the views of his character," which would embolden them to assure themselves that their putting the Son of God to death was already pardoned, that they were in no danger of being punished for it, that they had only to believe that their sin was blotted out without any change of mind or any conversion of heart on their part, and all would be well with them !

Had the Apostle been telling them that their sinful conduct proceeded from their not knowing and acknowledging God as the pardoner of impenitent and unbelieving

men, I could have understood the propriety of the gloss that Mr. Erskine has put upon his exhortation. And what is of far greater importance, the Jews could have understood its meaning and application. But really I cannot see what meaning they could attach to the words of the preacher, when he said, according to Mr. Erskine's fancy, "You have been guilty of the great and aggravated crime of crucifying the Lord of glory, of killing the Prince of life; therefore, renounce your erroneous and groundless notions of God, as a God who will punish murder, injustice, cruelty, impiety, and be quite satisfied that your guilt, though it be of crimson die, and though you feel no regret for it, has been already washed away, and that should you go on to break all the commandments with a high hand, even to the last moment of your lives, no penal doom will befal you on that account in an eternal world!"

According to the common acceptation of Peter's language, his exhortation is intelligible and appropriate. "You have committed a horrible crime-you have, by the sacrifice of every principle of morals and religion, murdered the Christ of God, and were God relentless, and had no provision been made for the expiation of guilt, your condition and your prospects would have been hopeless; but God is merciful, and he has promised forgiveness for Christ's sake to all sinners that turn to him. Turn to him, therefore, and even you shall be pardoned and saved. But if you refuse to do so, your sin remains, and you must go into everlasting punishment." This would have corresponded with all the ordinary ideas of the Jews respecting our forgiveness, penitence, &c. and would have been at least quite level to their comprehension, however much it might have failed to influence their heart and conduct. Whereas, the import which Mr. Erskine gives to the exhortation of the Apostle is so recondite, so remote from

any thing that could have possibly been conjectured as what he intended to convey, and so totally destitute of reference to the previous part of his discourse, from which it is nevertheless deduced by a "therefore," that they would have as easily apprehended him had he spoken to them in Galic.

Nay, what Mr. Erskine will deem far worse, the Apostle, while intending to convey to them the doctrine which his new commentator is so industrious in diffusing as the only doctrine of the gospel, did really convey to his hearers the doctrine which is declared to be utterly false, and to "make the cross of Christ of none effect." For,

2. In the second place, the original language will not bear the interpretation put upon it by Mr. Erskine, and can mean nothing else than what I have stated in the discourse to which this note is appended.

It is somewhat curious, that Mr. Erskine does not exercise his critical powers on the verse in question. He had just employed himself in attempting to show that the Greek of Acts ii. 33. did not warrant the translation given in our common version. But he glides over Acts iii. 19. without the slightest allusion to the Greek, except in as far as to approve of Schleusner's interpretation of the remaining part of the passage, which is of no consequence as to the matter in dispute. On this he expends a paragraph, but as to the proper meaning of the original text of "Repent, therefore, and be converted, &c." he is altogether silent. There is some wisdom in this, if there be no ingenuousness; for the original text is out and out hostile to his annotation, as I shall now endeavour to show.

The original is Μετανοήσατε εν και ἐπιτρέψατε, ἐις τὸ ἰξαλειφθηναι ὑμῶν τας ἀμαρτιας.

I do not think it of any consequence here to fix very precisely the meaning of μετανοησατές, or to contrast μετανοιώ

My opinion is, that though, according with μεταμελομαι. to the etymology of the word, μετανοίω signifies properly, "to change one's mind," and though it might originally be used in that sense exclusively, yet in process of time it came to signify those affections of the heart, and that alteration in the conduct, which are comprised in the term repentance. And though μεταμελομαι strictly refers to those feelings of regret, anxiety, and distress, which the conviction of having done what is wrong ought always to produce, yet it is perfectly well known that the two words are employed indiscriminately to express the same thing-that which we call penitence-both by the writers of the New Testament, and by the best profane authors. All that I desiderate is, that ustavongats be understood to imply something that was to be felt or done on the part of those to whom it was addressed.

I make the same remark on $s\pi \cdot \sigma \tau_{\ell} s \cdot \psi_{\alpha \tau s}$. It is of no moment here to ascertain what that word means in the various passages where it occurs, or what is comprehended in the general character which it denotes. Nothing more is requisite than the admission that it refers to some change, some turning or other, which the apostle inculcated upon those for whom his exhortation was intended.

But while I desire nothing more respecting the import of these words, than that they be understood to intimate some movement on the part of the individuals to whom they were spoken, it must be borne in mind, that they were not introduced into a discourse on general topics—did not form one of a series of admonitions designed for mankind at large. They were delivered to persons who had been guilty of a particular act of transgression, or rather of many acts of transgression, terminating in, and consummated by, one great crime—who were specifically and emphatically charged with the guilt in which

such conduct involved them, and who had hitherto neither confessed, nor regretted, nor been made sensible of it. And they specially and expressly referred to it as requiring the assembled crowd to exercise the temper, or to undergo the change, whatever it might be, which Peter recorded or enjoined.

Now one would naturally suppose, that as in these circumstances the apostle had an end in view, which was to be subserved by the compliance of the people with his advice, and that as a preacher of righteousness and mercy to persons who knew well the connexion between sin and punishment on the one hand, and repentance and forgiveness on the other, according to what was taught in their law and history, and according to what was the uniform and universal understanding among the Jews, he would be solicitous to put them on the right way of procuring the pardon of those crimes which he had been laying to their charge, and which had made them obnoxious to divine wrath. And in exact conformity to this supposition is the tenor of his exhortation. It is not merely, "repent and be converted"-it is not merely, change your minds and your ways, as to your treatment of Christianity-it is not merely, take a different view of the pretensions of Christ, and of your obligations to God, and of the deportment you have maintained towards a once crucified, and now risen and exalted Saviour-it is not merely, do any of these things, or do them all, as becoming and dutiful-but it is, " repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted ου :" Μετανοησατε και επιστρεψατε, ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΕΞΑΛΕΙΦΘΗΝΑΙ ΎΜΩΝ ΤΑΣ 'ΑΜΑΡΤΙΑΣ.

The end here mentioned is forgiveness—or the blotting out of sins. Various expressions, it is well known, were used in the Old Testament, and have been used among every people, for the act of forgiveness. And one of the most significant is the one employed on this occasion by Peter. God is supposed to keep a book, or record, in which the transgressions of men are registered. And when sins are pardoned, they are said to be blotted outerased—obliterated, as effectually as we would expunge any word or sentence that is written. So that the apostle connects the act of forgiveness as it relates to God, who alone could forgive sins, or the privilege of forgiveness as it relates to those who were forgiven, with the transgressions for which he had indicted the Jews at the bar of their own conscience; and, accusing them of the latter as subjecting them to just condemnation, he directs their view to the former, as that without which, the condemnation they had incurred must continue to lie upon them.

But then their condemnation and their forgiveness were not connected by such a mere sequence as that, without any thing intervening, the forgiveness was already obtained, and the condemnation already removed. Peter's language is ретаченовать, как выстрефать ыз то, &c. It was incumbent on the Jews to do what is implied in the two words, which in our common version are rendered repent and be converted, in order to their being forgiven. The vinculum between what they were required to do, and what they were eventually to receive, is EID TO. The phrase is not sus αφεσιν, in which case I doubt not Mr. Erskine would have amended our translation in this way, "Change your mind, and be converted to the doctrine of the remission of sins. as a thing already granted to all the transgressors of God's moral law." The phrase is εις το εξαλειφθηναι ύμων τας άμας-TIME, and from the force of this Mr. Erskine cannot possibly escape. Indeed, he seems to be aware, that it is too much for him, and therefore he does not meddle with it, though abundantly willing to be critical wherever it can be of any apparent use to his cause. The preposition us

with τ_0 and an infinitive, links the antecedent and the consequent as means and end. This mode of expression occurs at least forty-seven times in the New Testament. The places where it is to be found are enumerated below*, that Mr. Erskine may examine them if he pleases. And in all these it invariably and undeniably means that the thing towards which it looks, is a purpose, an effect, an object aimed at, a result contemplated, for which the actions or circumstances previously stated and referred to, are preparatory and pre-requisite.

Mr. Erskine may say that this is making forgiveness conditional. Be it so; but if the word of God makes it conditional, what title has he or any man to make it unconditional. And after all, he is just using an obnoxious word, to excite a prejudice against the palpable meaning of the Bible. If by conditional, he means that forgiveness is merited, I agree with him that this cannot be a correct interpretation of the verse, because the whole scheme of the gospel is a scheme of free grace. But if by conditional is meant, that the one thing is not bestowed without the

* Matt. xx. 19.—Mark xiv. 55.—Luke iv. 29.—Acts vii. 19.—Rom. i. 11, 20.—iv. 11 (bis) 16, 18—vi. 12.—vii. 5.—viii. 29.—xi. 11.—xii. 2.—xv. 8, 13.—1 Cor. viii. 10.—ix. 18.—x. 6.—xi. 22, 33.——2 Cor. i. 4.—iv. 4.—Eph. i. 12, 18.—Philip. i. 23.—iii. 21.—1 Thess. ii. 12, 16.—iii. 2, 5, 10.—2 Thess. i. 5.—ii. 2, 6, 11.—iii. 9.—Heb. ii. 17.—ix. 14, 28.—xi. 3.—xii. 10.—xiii. 21.—James i. 18, 19.—1 Peter iii. 7.

This list will be considerably increased if we take those instances in which εις το is omitted, but necessarily understood; such as Matt. ii. 2. ηλθομεν (εις το) προσχυνησαι αυτω.—Luke xix. 10. Ηλθε γαρ ὁ υἰος τε ανθρωπε (εις το) ζητησαι και σωσ το απολωλος, &c. &c. &c. In every one of these cases the same idea is manifestly involved, that occurs in the other examples.

presence, or the doing of the other, there is not only nothing in this that is inconsistent with the doctrine of free grace, but there is something in it analogous to the whole of God's moral administration. The farmer does not merit from the God of Providence a harvest, by ploughing and sowing his fields; and yet unless he ploughs and sows his fields, he cannot expect a harvest. A poor man does not merit the blessings that he asks from the God of grace, by praying for them, and yet if he does not pray, he has no right to look for them. And so, if the Jews did not repent and were not converted, there was no ground for anticipating the blotting out of their sins.

It is easy to see that by the repentance and conversion urged upon them by the Apostle, he meant such a revolution in their character as consisted in renouncing their unbelief of the Son of God, whom in their unbelief they had crucified, and in casting themselves upon God's mercy as ready to receive all who return to him by "the true and living way." But I do not insist upon any particular exposition of the word at present. All that I maintain is, that as the Jews had to do something which preceded the forgiveness of their sins, the proof is clear and conclusive that their sins were not previously, independently, or really forgiven-that between them and that blessing there yet lay the step, which is described by "repenting and being converted,"—that if they took that step, forgiveness would unquestionably be the result—that if they refused to take it, they would not, and could not be forgiven-and therefore, that the doctrine of universal pardon, as taught by Mr. Erskine, not only has no warrant from that passage of Holy Writ, but is utterly and irreconcilably at variance with it. Upon this single text I could safely stake the whole of the controversy. Our opponents may declaim and dogmatize as long as they

please on the subject. They may frighten some by talking of the alleged condition of a pardon not yet bestowed; and they may please others by talking of the benefits of a pardon already received. They may mislead the ignorant by concealing what they know, and torturing words to make them express what they do not signify. They may impose on the imaginative and superficial, by advancing one conjecture to build up another, and substituting a pleasing hypothesis for a stubborn fact. But their attempts to establish, in the conviction of any man of common sense, biblical scholarship, and of reverence for the declarations of God's word, must ever be unsuccessful, while they can be confronted with this one exhortation of an inspired apostle, Μετανοησατε και επιτρεψατε, εις το εξαλειφθηναι ύμων τασ άμαρτιας -correctly rendered thus, " Repent and be converted, for this end, that your sins may be blotted out."

The exhortation in Acts ii. 38, cannot fail to be considered as having the same general meaning with the exhortation in Acts iii. 19. The circumstances in which the former was given, were precisely the same as those in which the latter was given. Peter accused the Jews of having committed the heinous crime of murdering Jesus of Nazareth, whom God had certified by miracles, and whom he had raised from the dead. And when they were convicted of guilt in their own minds, and felt the remorse and the terror which such conviction had produced, they " said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and Brethren, what shall we do?" What could they mean by this question? What, but that Peter and his brethren would direct them to the means of obtaining the forgiveness which they so greatly and urgently needed? And the means they are directed to use are repentance and embracing the faith of the gospel. " Repent," says Mr.

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Erskine, "or, rather, change your mind," that is, according to the explanation which he gives of repent in Acts iii. 19, " Leave your false notions of God." False notions of God they did entertain. But these were not the subject of Peter's discourse. He spoke of one great and aggravated violation of God's law which they had committed, and from the guilt of which, moved by his representations, they inquired as to the way of deliverance. This was the exact and simple point as to which they put the question, "What shall we do?" Mr. Erskine seems to think that they put a question as to one thing, and that the Apostle answered them as to another. On the contrary, the rational and just construction of his words is, that he answers them as to that, and that alone, which had excited their anxiety, and produced their appeal. And the answer was correct and appropriate. He told them to repent of the atrocious sin that they had perpetrated, and to apply for pardon and acceptance from the God whom they had so grossly offended, by application to that very person, Jesus Christ, whom " with wicked hands they had crucified and slain," but who was the Saviour of sinners, and through whom, even they might obtain redemption.

Mr. Erskine flatters himself, that because the original words will bear the signification he attaches to them, therefore that signification should be adopted. But this is as much as to say, that in interpreting a passage of Scripture, we are not to attend to the occasion on which it was spoken, and to its connexion with the preceding context, and to the various circumstances which determine the import of what we wish to explain, but that, in defiance of all these, we may come forward with our doctrinal theory, and if the passage will only bear the grammatical construction that suits our view, we are therefore entitled and bound to regard this as its legitimate import. On the con-

trary, it is by ascertaining the scope and design of the writer, and by this alone sometimes, that we are enabled, not only to discern the meaning of a particular passage, but to fix the meaning of those words and phrases which would otherwise have perplexed us, for the interpretation of other passages where they may happen to occur. there is an obvious propriety in doing so, except where the original language is undeniably such as not to admit of the interpretation which the context suggests. The meaning of the passage under review is settled by the circumstances in which the exhortation was given, and if the original will grammatically allow it, that is the meaning which must of necessity be adopted. And Mr. Erskine knew well enough, that the original does admit of the common translation, though he appears to forget that μετανοποατε is allied to sis afton as well as Bartiofntw is; that sis may be rendered not only into, but also for, or with a view to; that ear, with the dative, does sometimes signify in; that by the analogy furnished by Acts iii. 19, εισ αφεσιν may be considered as an ellipsis for 210 to day faven aproir; and that his arrangement of the different clauses of the verse is forced and unusual.

Note E, p. 85.

The reader's attention is requested to 2 Chron. vii. 13, 14; Jerem. xviii. 23; 1 Kings viii. 33, 34; Dan. ix. 19; Ps. xxv. 11, 18; Numb. xiv. 19, 20; Matt. xviii. 21—end; Josh. xxiv. 19; Mark xi. 25, 26; 1 John i. 9; Ps. lxxxvi. 5; Levit. iv. 20; Mark iii. 28, 29; Exod. xxiii. 21; Neh. ix. 17; 2 Kings xxiv. 4; 2 Chron. xxx. 18; Exod. xxxiv. 8, 9; Jer. xxxiii. 8; Ps. li. 1, 9; Mark iv. 12; Matt. xii. 31, 32; &c.

Note F, p. 88.

This is the Arminian scheme; which, though we conceive it to be unscriptural, derogatory to the grace of God, and chargeable with inconsistency, is yet far preferable to the scheme of universal pardon—a scheme that does much greater violence to the Bible, and to the integrity of the Gospel dispensation, and is much more indefensible on the ordinary principles of reason.

According to the former scheme, Christ accomplished a complete redemption for all men, and every man may accept it, and will enjoy its benefits to the uttermost, if he will only repent, and believe, and obey, and thus implement the conditions which are said to be prescribed. So that if all men, in the exercise of their free will, fulfil these terms, all men will actually be saved, and if all men, in the exercise of their free will, refuse or neglect to fulfil these, all men will remain under condemnation and be punished. On the supposition of either alternative, there is at least a completeness in what is prepared for the sinner; and there is a correspondence between his conduct and his fate; and there is no practical solecism in his condition, whatever it may turn out to be. grand defect seems to be, that according to the possible decision of the sinner's free will, no man may be saved at all, under a dispensation which, it is maintained, was intended for all, and where mercy is illustrated by the Son of God giving himself to death for all.

But according to the latter scheme, fallen men are delivered from all the penalties due to them for their transgressions of the moral law, whether they repent of their sins or not, and whether they despise the love of God in Christ or not, and whether they reject the revealed method of redemption or not. Nevertheless, their having peace of mind, their being sanctified, their reaching the felicity of heaven, will depend upon their faith in Christ, and upon their believing that they have been freely and fully pardoned in virtue of Christ's death, and in despite of impenitence and unbelief. And thus while some may get to heaven, some will be sent to hell—or if any are sent to hell, they are sent there only for not believing that God hath pardoned them, and will exist there in the double capacity of pardoned and punished transgressors! And all this under the government of an infinitely wise, holy, and merciful Being!

Note G, p. 89.

I might produce all the passages which speak of Christ being offered, or sacrificed, or given, for such classes or descriptions as do necessarily exclude the idea of universality. When it is said, for instance, that he gave himself for the church, for the elect, for his people, for his body, for his sheep, for those whom the Father had given him, for his children and brethren, &c.*—when such language is used, a restriction is stated or implied which forbids us to place each and every person among the objects of his interposition. It is not the mere phraseology that is concerned here; it is the essential idea conveyed by the sacred writer, or by our Saviour himself, and I do not see it possible to get quit of the idea by any rational

^{*} See Matt. i. 21.—Heb. ii. 10, 12, 13.—Acts xx. 28.— Ephes. v. 23, 25.—Rom. viii. 32.—Ephes. i. 3—8.—John x. 11, 12, 14.

construction of the words in which it is embodied and expressed.

"His people" is an expression which cannot be extended to all mankind. No stretch of charity, and no intimation of Scripture, will entitle us to think that all mankind are the people of Christ. He has a people whom he shall save from their sins. They are denominated a "peculiar people." And for this people he gave himself.

The "church" also is a term of limited meaning. Nobody would think of calling the whole world by this name. There is a body of men called the church; and there is a body of men, in contradistinction to them, called the world. And we are told that "God hath purchased the church with his own blood;" and that "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it."

The term "elect" is equally decisive of the point. It is of no consequence here, whether the election be considered as absolute, or as conditional; still election circumscribes the number of those regarding whom it is predicated. All cannot be partakers of the privileges which belong to an elect portion. And since forgiveness of sins is one of the privileges conferred upon the elect as the fruit of Christ's death, it is impossible that all can be said to be forgiven.

I beg to call my readers' attention to a passage* in which Mr. Erskine gives an exhibition, not only of his peculiar opinion, but also of the method by which he tries to gain his object, which I do not think very creditable to his candour. It is as follows: "The names and titles of Christ are all relative. He is the shepherd of his sheep: he is the head of his body: he is the high priest of his

^{*} Uncond. Freeness, p. 219.

church: he is the saviour of sinners: he is the propitiation for the sins of the world."

True, Christ is the shepherd of his sheep; but why did not Mr. Erskine add, that his sheep form a "little flock," and "hear his voice," and "follow" him, and that for these sheep the "good shepherd giveth his life?" True, Christ" is the head of his body;" but is not his body the very church, of which he is the high priest? And why did Mr. Erskine forget to state that Christ "loved the church, and gave himself for it?" And then how comes it, that along with Christ's sheep, his body, his church, Mr. Erskine makes mention of sinners and of the world, which in Scripture are contradistinguished from the others? But granting that he could with propriety confound these opposite classes, though the confusion tends unquestionably to deceive an unwary reader, still why did not Mr. Erskine notice, in order to prevent mistakes, that as certainly as Christ is the saviour of none but of those who believe, so certainly is he a propitiation for the sins of the world, "through faith in his blood?" By withholding these things, and giving his statement apart from them, Mr. E. holds out a false view of the doctrine of Christ's relationship to the objects of divine mercy, misrepresents the Scriptures, to which he notwithstanding refers, and misleads the minds of ignorant and unreflecting men. And for this I do seriously blame him.

But, in his enumeration of the relative names and titles of Christ, why is election so completely and carefully omitted? Was he afraid of "the common phraseology," which speaks of the "Redeemer of God's Elect?" But he should not have been afraid of telling the whole truth. And if he had told the whole truth, he would have told that Christ forgives the elect of God through the sprinkling of his blood.

Arminians may affirm, that all might have been forgiven, and would have been forgiven, if they had fulfilled the conditions on which that blessing is suspended. it so: but that does not affect the present argument, for those with whom I am at present contending, maintain that all sinners are pardoned without any condition being imposed, and even before any condition can be performed-that is to say, that all sinners are actually forgiven, though the Scripture says that this blessing is bestowed upon those only who belong to that electionwho are predestinated to be thus redeemed. And that the Scripture says so, is evident from a variety of passages, particularly from the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, where the Apostle mentions one of the privileges of those whom God "hath chosen" or elected (the original word is «¿ελεξατο) in Christ," that they have "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins;"from the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians. in which Paul exhorts " the saints and faithful brethren in Christ," in the following terms, "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, &c .- even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye;"-from Isaiah liii. 10, where the prophet thus connects the sacrificial death of Christ with those who were given him to be his spiritual offspring, "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed;"-and from 1 Pet. i, 2. where election and the atonement are inseparably united, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

The doctrine of election is a stumbling-block to Mr. Erskine. He cannot deny it; and yet he does not know well what to make of it, he is greatly at a loss where to

bring it in, and he thus disposes of the whole subject. "Where then is the election? It is here, that when this love was poured upon all, and this forgiveness sealed to all; and the power to believe it conferred upon all; and yet no man would believe it; when all loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil; when all with one consent began to make excuses; then the electing word came forth, saying, 'compel some to come in.' And thus is the creature condemned throughout, and God is glorified. And he who believes, believes because he has been compelled to come in."*

To this most extraordinary theory of election I have three objections, which probably never occurred to its author, but which, though they had occurred, it is as probable would have had little effect on his statement. Reason has no chance in contending with vagaries. It may be useful however to let the reader see how unsafe it is to

take Mr. Erskine for a theological guide.

1. In the first place, the theory is wholly gratuitous on his part. He does not support it even by the shadow of an argument, though he must be aware that on such a subject argument is necessary. He does not venture to quote the Bible, though he cannot deny that the Bible distinctly speaks of election. He does not give any ground at all for his opinion, though he cannot but be sensible that he is contradicting the "common phraseology," and trying to subvert the system of many able divines, and the faith of thousands of Christians upon that important point. No: he merely introduces it that he may not seem to blink a question which had no doubt been often put to him; and having introduced it, he utters a gratis dictum-he brings forth a position, and is pleased

^{*} Essay, p. lxix.

to give us his own warrant for its truth! Of all the writers I have ever met with, Mr. Erskine is the very last whose warrant I would be inclined to take for any thing of that kind: for he is ever and anon indulging in fancies and conjectures, and puts forth absurdity and sense with equal gravity, when it comports with his main doctrine. On the present occasion, he assigns no more reason for asserting that "then the electing word came forth, saying, compel them to come in," than he could assign for asserting that election is to take place at the last day, for "then the electing word will be spoken, Come ye blessed of my Father." The one hypothesis is just as unsubstantiated as the other; and Mr. Erskine's sanction would be equally good for both—that is to say, it is good for neither.

2. But, secondly, while Mr. Erskine's notion is entirely gratuitous, it is in opposition to the word of God. Not only has it no countenance, but it receives a direct and explicit negative, from that sacred authority. He supposes, or rather affirms, that God's election of those who were to be finally saved did not take place till he had made an experiment, for the purpose of ascertaining whether any man would believe that he had loved all, and forgiven all, and given to all the power of exercising faith in this fact! It was not till God had made this experiment, and till the experiment wholly failed in his hands, that he chose out of the unbelieving world certain persons whom he compelled to believe, and thus to embrace the salvation he had provided! I will venture to say, that however ancient some of Mr. Erskine's speculations may be, his view of election has all the merit, and may have all the praise, of perfect novelty. Of the myriads who have read the inspired volume, I am quite safe in asserting that, to not one of them did it ever so much as suggest such an odd fancy on the

subject of election. If there be any thing clearer than another, it is this, that the election was made before sinners could be subjected to any trial as to their willingness to accept of that manifestation of redeeming love, which is set before them in the gospel. The persons so distinguished are said to have been "chosen or elected before the foundation of the world,"*-to have been "predestinated according to the purpose of God,"+-to be saved "according to the purpose and grace of God, which was given them before the world began," t-to have been "chosen of God from the beginning to salvation," |-to be " elect according to the foreknowledge of God," \-- to have had a kingdom "prepared for them before the foundation of the world," T-to have been "promised eternal life, before the world began."** These passages-and others might have been quoted—sufficiently prove that election is from eternity, or precedes every thing like that state of probation to which Mr. Erskine alleges sinners to be subjected before the " electing word comes forth," as he chooses to express it. And I should really like to know how he attempts to reconcile them with his opinion.

I have heard and read of conditional election—that is, that certain persons were elected to eternal life, on the foreseen condition of their believing and repenting. But Mr. Erskine introduces a new species of conditional election. And it is this, that certain men are selected from among the crowd—not of sinners at large, but of sinners who will not believe that God has already loved and pardoned them—and the election takes place on the condition that all have been guilty of such unbelief; for if any had believed

^{*} Ephes. i. 4. † Ibid. i. 11. ‡ 2 Tim. i. 9. || 2 Thess. ii. 13. § 1 Peter i. 2. ¶ Matt. xxv. 34. ** Tit. i. 2.

the fact alluded to—and all got the power of believing it—these would not have been elected, having no need of such a boon, because they themselves had done what precluded the necessity of God's interference to elect them. So that, as all have the power of believing, it is not improbable that some will be pleased to exert that power, and require no compulsion to come in, and then heaven will be peopled partly by redeemed sinners who have been elected, and redeemed sinners who have not been elected—partly by those whose redemption has been wholly owing to God, and partly by those who can arrogate a portion of that destiny to themselves!

Mr. Erskine says, that "God's love does not flow through the channel of election, neither does the gift nor the atonement of Christ." This assertion he finds in his own interpretation of such texts as "God so loved the world as to give his Son"-Christ "tasted death for every man"-and is "the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." But his interpretation of these has been demonstrated to be erroneous. If universality is really to be predicated of the death of Christ, or of the redeeming love of God, it is that universality which consists in providing a salvation out of which every man may be supplied with forgiveness and eternal life. And the very text that he quotes, but quotes partially and unfairly, from John iii, 16, may be adduced to show this; for it says, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here God's love to the world, and the gift and atonement of his Son, are all linked to the grace of believing, and he who is destitute of this grace must of necessity be excluded from those benefits, which yet Mr. Erskine affirms to belong to all without exception. But as to election, is it not evident from Scripture, that he goes egregiously

wrong in separating election from the love of God, the gift of Christ, and the atonement made by him for sin? The people of God are saved according not only to his purpose, but his grace, which was given them before the world began.* They were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world,† and God has predestinated them unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.‡ And they are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father—through sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." I recommend to Mr. Erskine's attention, or rather to the attention of those who are in danger of being deluded by him on this point, Ephes. i. 3—13, where the true doctrine is particularly and fully stated by an inspired writer.

3. In the third place, although Mr. Erskine does not expressly refer for his authority on the subject of election, to Scripture, which is all against him, he makes a correct and artful reference to it, which I cannot allow to pass unnoticed. In the passage of his Essay that I am commenting on, it will be perceived that he has in his eve the Parable of the "Great Supper" mentioned in Luke xiv. 16-25, and that he uses as much of the phraseology of that parable as to give the reader an impression that he speaks according to the book of God, though he is careful not to use so much of it as would prove it to be not at all to his purpose. His statement of the case is at variance with the circumstances narrated in the story. He says that it was after all had been loved and forgiven, and empowered and enabled to believe, and all had refused, that the compulsion which he makes tantamount to election was resorted to. So does not our Lord say in his parable.

All those who were originally invited, refused the invitation, and none of them were to be allowed to "taste the Supper." But of those who were in "the streets and lanes of the city,"—of "the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind," there was evidently "brought in" a great number, for the servant who had been sent to bring them in, said, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." Were these none of the elect? Were the elect such only as were found in "the highways and hedges" and "compelled to come in," that they might occupy the small space that still remained for guests, and that the "house might be" thus completely "filled?" Or rather, did not the elect consist chiefly of the second class of people mentioned, who had taken their places as guests before the "electing word went forth?"

This is one among many instances of the improper freedom which Mr. Erskine takes with the word of God. He does not seem anxious to be taught by that word as it is. but to make it teach what he has otherwise adopted. The parable of the Great Supper is neither intended nor fitted to give instruction on the subject of election. It has nothing to do with that topic. And when a writer has recourse to it for propping up his hypothesis as to "what" or "where is election," nothing more is necessary to convince us, that he knows the Bible to be against him, though he will not acknowledge it. The parable was delivered by our Saviour to illustrate the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles,—the former being represented by the persons who were first invited to the feast, and the latter by those who were brought and pressed or constrained to come, in consequence of the first refusing. And, even in this view, we may observe how absurd it is-an absurdity, however, of which Mr. Erskine

is often guilty-to take every particular of a parable as strictly inculcating some truth or fact apart from that which it was merely or solely designed to illustrate. Are we to conclude, for example, from this parable, that there are three classes of men-one besides the Jews and the Gentiles-to whom the gospel is addressed, although these two are the only classes specified in Scripture, and known in history? Are we to conclude that the ministers of religion ought to use compulsory means for getting men to embrace Christianity, instead of acting like the apostles, who addressed themselves to the reasoning faculties and the moral susceptibilities of those whom they applied to? And are we to conclude, that of the Jews not one was permitted to taste or partake of the privileges of the gospel, though it is matter of recorded fact, that thousands of them were converted to the faith and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ? Impossible; and yet this is Mr. Erskine's mode of going to work, whenever he finds a parable which, in any of its incidental circumstances, or a figure which, in any of its possible applications, can be made to say any thing in support of his favourite theories. This, indeed, enables us frequently to overcome his arguments and illustrations from Scripture by a kind of reductio ad absurdum. But it is painful and injurious to be dealing in this manner with any thing that seems to wear the authority and the sacredness of inspiration. At the same time, it is Mr. Erskine, and such as he, that necessitate us to adopt this method of defence; and we must either employ it, or allow the grossest errors to take shelter under the language of God's word, and fix themselves in the minds of uninstructed persons as essential tenets of the Christian religion.

I cannot conclude this note without remarking, that the

slight notice Mr. Erskine has taken of election, and the strange out-of-the-way corner he has assigned it in his system, afford sufficient proof of his dislike to the doctrine. In this opinion I am confirmed by the strain of those Letters which he has employed his pen to usher into the world; for the antipathy which the Lady-who is raised out of her tomb, where she might have advantageously been left to slumber, in order to plead with her young sisters for universal pardon—has to election, is apparent throughout; and no man could have been instrumental in giving her sentiments publicity, who was not likeminded with her on that important topic. To what denomination the fair writer belonged it is not very easy to determine. The "common phraseology" of Scotland evidently did not please her more than it pleases Mr. Erskine. I should conjecture that she was a Scotch Episcopalian converted into a Wesleyan Methodist; and that her zeal was rather an overmatch for her knowledge. about as confused as her reviver, and rather more consistent. But she is houest enough to avow her utter aversion to election, which the other only disclaims by giving it a place in which it is equally useless and ridiculous-in which, indeed, it is called by the name, but has lost all the reality and meaning of election.

Note H, p. 105.

I am quite aware of the sense in which Mr. Erskine and others understand and employ the term justification. They cannot deny that it is used in Scripture to denote that act by which God pardons the sinner and re-instates

him in the divine favour—treating him as if he were righteous. But then it strikes them, that, on some occasions, the word signifies, not this act on the part of God towards the sinner, but the sense or feeling on the part of the sinner that he is actually pardoned. And to what account do they turn this notable discovery? They do not confine the application of it to those passages in which the word occurs, as they think, with this meaning; but they straightway affix this meaning to the word wherever it occurs, and, by this most extraordinary proceeding, labour to support their theory of the gospel. Can any thing show more strongly their determination to make the Scripture speak in their behalf, whether it will or not?

Let us try a few passages, as interpreted according to this new meaning of the word justification, recollecting, at the same time, that *faith* is defined to be the belief of the sinner that he is pardoned.

Rom. viii. 33, 34, will run thus—" Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that gives the sinner a sense or feeling that he is pardoned; who is he that condemneth?" What becomes of the antithesis plainly intended by the Apostle between the act of justification passed by God on behalf of the sinner, and the act of condemnation supposed and challenged to be passed by any created being against him?

Gal. ii. 16, would be thus translated—"Knowing that a man has not a sense of pardon by the works of the law, but by the belief that he is pardoned of Jesus Christ, even we have had a belief that we are pardoned in Jesus Christ, that we might have a sense of pardon by the belief that we are pardoned of Jesus Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh have a sense of pardon."

Rom. iv. 5, must be rendered thus-" But to him that

worketh not, but believes that he is pardoned by him that gives a sense of pardon to the ungodly, his belief that he is pardoned is counted for righteousness."

Rom. v. 1, must be read thus—"Therefore having a sense of pardon by a belief that we are pardoned, we have peace with God," or being at peace with God by a belief that we are at peace with him, we have peace with God!

Could our opponents prove that justification in any case means a sense of pardon, it would be quite fair to employ it with that signification in the particular case. But it is a most unwarrantable freedom, not merely with the language, but with the essential truths of the Bible, to suppose, that in all cases the word is to be held as denoting the same thing. Such a mode of interpretation shows neither critical knowledge of the sacred writings, nor pious reverence for them as the word of God. But it gives abundant proof of a dogged resolution to maintain the opinion which such a lawless mode of proceeding is deemed requisite to uphold.—Another example of this unworthiness is suggested to me by the very point I am considering.

Mr. Erskine is exceedingly anxious to impress upon his readers the difference between pardon and justification. No wonder; for if pardon forms a part of justification, his theory is gone. But while he labours hard to fortify his scheme on that side, it is exposed to imminent danger on another side. For, if pardon is already obtained, there is no occasion to pray for it; and yet our Saviour instructed his disciples to put up that petition, "Forgive us our trespasses." Well, there is no help for it; great exigencies demand great daring. And, accordingly, with the same hardihood and recklessness of exposition by which he struggles to extricate himself from other difficulties, he attempts to surmount this by attaching a new import to

the word forgiveness or pardon. It now means a "sense of pardon!" I have shown, in my fourth discourse, how absurdly this tells on the ear and to the understanding of any man whatever. But it may be useful to quote a passage in which the terms believe, pardon, and justification, all occur together, that my readers may see what havoc Mr. Erskine and his school are making on the phraseology and doctrine of inspiration.

Acts xiii. 38, 39. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men, and brethren, that through this man (Christ) is preached unto you a sense of the pardon of sins; and by him all that believe that they are pardoned, have a sense of pardon from all things, from which we could not have a sense of pardon by the law of Moses."

I agree in the position that there is a difference between pardon and justification, though that position is abandoned by Mr. Erskine when it answers his own end, and when he finds it inexpedient to make them one and the same, thing, by making each of them to signify a sense of pardon or of forgiveness. But the difference is just that which exists between a part and the whole of any thing: justification implying pardon, and, moreover, acceptance unto eternal life. And it is not a little strange, if any thing can be accounted strange in the production of such an inconsistent and imaginative writer, that Mr. Erskine himself admits this. He allows that when a man is justified by faith, he has "the sense of pardon and acceptance before God.* that he has "a sense of God's acceptance and favour," and that he has the "eternal life" which is in the Son of God.+ See now what his doctrine amounts to. He makes pardon. acceptance, favour with God, and eternal life, to go together. They form parts of the same great boon. They

^{*} Unconditional Freeness, p. 158. † Ibid. p. 160.

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are inseparably united. Just as certainly as the sinner is pardoned, he is accepted, and has eternal life. And as it is not his faith that secures the pardon, so neither is it his faith that secures the other accompanying benefits. The one and the other, and all of them were already common property, and the sinner had only to believe the preexisting fact of their being actually his, that he might know and enjoy the knowledge of his having been already pardoned, accepted, and invested with eternal life. not believing, or not knowing, or not being sensible of the fact, can never surely deprive him of the pardon, the acceptance, the eternal life which had been conferred and made his, long previously to, and altogether independently of, his exercising faith. And what more than these blessings can any being desire for his complete safety and felicity? If any thing else is requisite, undoubtedly, on Mr. Erskine's theory of divine love, it will not be withheldespecially such a simple gift as that of letting the sinner know, and making him convinced that God has been so gracious as to bestow all these things upon those even who will not repent of their sins, and will not believe the gospel.

Though Mr. Erskine thus betrays his own cause—no uncommon thing—and is convicted on his own admissions, I must not be supposed as for one moment giving countenance to his notion about the proper meaning of justification. On the contrary, I hold it to be one of the greatest absurdities that ever was attempted to be palmed upon the religious world under the form of criticism and principle. Throughout all Scripture, to justify is to pronounce or account righteous—applied to such as have transgressed, and forfeited favour, as well as incurred a penalty, and conveying to them deliverance from that penalty, and restoration to that favour. This is the radical meaning of the word; it is so used in the sacred volume wherever God's

dealing with his rebellious creatures is spoken of; and to say that it signifies the sinner's sense or conviction of what had been done before, is to pervert the plainest language from its obvious, established, necessary meaning, and to attach to it a meaning which could never have occurred to any sober mind that was not seeking for support to a pre-conceived and extravagant opinion. We may just as well maintain that when a human governor reverses the condemnatory sentence that had been passed on a criminal, this criminal should not say, or it should not be said of him, that he is acquitted, forgiven, and restored to his forfeited privileges, but that he is only favoured with a sense or knowledge that such things have taken place. Who does not see that the two things are quite distinct? And when God, as the great moral governor of the world, reverses the condemnatory sentence passed by him on the sinner, it is the act of his conveying to the sinner what the sinner did not previously possess-whatever there might be in God's decree, or in Christ's merit-and it can only be affirmed of him, after the act which has been denominated with great propriety, justification, that he is acquitted, forgiven, and restored to his forfeited privileges. The sense or knowledge of this must be subsequent to the act communicating it; God discovers the change of state to the sinner after the change has taken place; and the sinner is enabled to improve the discovery for his comfort, his sanctification, his encouragement, and his hope.

Really it is difficult to argue with a man who so confounds things as Mr. Erskine does, by introducing gratuitous definitions of words, and proceeding upon the idea that because the new meaning which he adopts, without Scripture warrant, or any warrant but his own authority, dove-tails with tolerable exactness into his own system, therefore it is the true meaning, and must be admitted. But this affords a test, and a pretty good test, of the sound-

ness of his opinions. For whenever a man is pleased to give us, not the original meaning of the passages he quotes from the Bible-not the meaning as fixed by the contextnot the meaning as ascertained by the analogy of Scripture-but the meaning which, in defiance of all these standards and criterions, suits the necessities of his argument, and is somewhat as arbitrary as if he should say that two and two make five, we may conclude that he is wandering from sound doctrine, and deserves not to be trusted or followed. This is exactly the predicament in which Mr. Erskine is perpetually involved. He cannot get on without compelling the word of God to agree with him. And the freedom he uses with the term justification, is the freedom which he remorselessly uses with every other term, or phrase, or passage, that interferes with any hypothesis he undertakes to support. We shall see multiplied proofs of this as we advance in the discussion. These indeed are so numerous and so very revolting, that were it not for the strain of piety which pervades his books, and which seems to break forth most ardently when scriptural statement and common sense are most grossly violated, we are confident his books would be thrown away with dislike by nine-tenths of those who begin to peruse them, and with a feeling of wonder that any one should be imposed upon by such fanciful and outré divinity. " This may appear a harsh and presumptuous saying, but I feel it to be the kindest thing that I can say, because I am persuaded it is the truth."* And though quoted from Mr. Erskine's own tirade against the men whom he can only calumniate. "it proceeds now also from the voice of one of those shepherds,"+ whom in his excessive piety and love, he has held up to the country as "preaching a false gospel," and "mak. ing the cross of Christ of none effect."

^{*} Essay, p. xxi.

We have already seen how unsound and inconsistent Mr. Erskine is on the subject of justification. I will give another example, and I give it the more readily, as the Scripture declaration to which it relates seems to have an important bearing on his theory of universal pardon.

The declaration I allude to is Rom. iv. 25, upon which text Mr. Erskine comments in the following manner:*

" Now what is the import of the expression, 'raised for our justification?' Does it mean raised in order that we may be justified? It may appear at first sight to have this meaning, but it is not the true meaning, as a moment's consideration will discover. The meaning of the preposition for, here, must be determined by its meaning in the first clause of the sentence. The whole sentence is, 'who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.' Now, when it is said that he 'was delivered for our offences,' it cannot mean that he was delivered in order that we might offend; it evidently means that he was delivered because we had offended. And so, in the last clause of the sentence, the for must have the same signification; 'he was raised again, not in order that we might be justified, but because we were pardoned.' Jesus never could have been raised, unless we had been pardoned; for he was put into the prison of the grave because of our offences, and, therefore, whilst these offences remained unexpiated, he must have remained still in the prison. Why is a man put in prison? because he is an offender. Why is he let out? because the penalty has been sustained and exhausted."

Now, in the first place, it is curious to observe how plastic the language of Scripture is in the hands of Mr.

^{*} Essay, p. lxiv.

Erskine. No matter whether it be Greek or English, he puts it into his critical crucible, and by a strange sort of process, it comes forth whatsoever he is pleased to make it. In the last verse of Romans iv. he makes justification (δικαιωσις) to signify pardon; and in the first verse of chapter v., he makes justified (Sinaiwbirres) " having obtained a sense of pardon." Were he consistent, or would he allow the Sacred writers to be consistent, he would either make justified in the latter place pardoned, conformably to what it is in the former, -or he would make justification in the former place, a sense of pardon, conformably to what it is in the latter. The more especially should he study this conformity, seeing that the statement in Rom. v. 1. is a deduction from Romans iv. 25, pointed out by our, therefore. But then Mr. Erskine sees that if he converts justified into pardoned in the one case, he loses one great prop of his theory on assurance and universal forgiveness -and that if he converts justification into a sense of pardon in the other case, it would make such nonsense as he could scarcely set himself to utter, for the assertion would then be, that, according to his mode of interpretating the for, Christ was raised again because we had got a sense of pardon! It would surely be edifying to receive from Mr. Erskine's pen some canons of interpretation and of criticism. The first and last of them, I suspect, would be, " Always criticise and interpret in such a manner, as just to serve the purpose in hand."

2. Secondly, Mr. Erskine has no title to say that "Jesus never could have been raised unless we had been pardoned." He confounds the expiation of guilt with the pardon of the guilty—the securing of pardon with the application of it to individuals. He goes on the supposition that a sin may be actually pardoned, before it is actually committed—that a thing may be pushed out, before it is taken

in, annihilated before it is created, possessed before the possessor has any existence. A right to pardon is not identical with the reception of pardon. The purchase of a gift is not the same with the bestowal of the gift. He who promises a benefit will perform his promise if he be faithful, but the promise and the performance are two different things. When a man by endurance of penalty, or by any other service, works out deliverance for another, it does not follow of course that the deliverance wrought out is equivalent to the deliverance conferred. The gospel feast, as shadowed forth in Mr. Erskine's favourite parable of the Great Supper, was all provided; but those for whom it was provided did not partake of it till they were " brought and compelled to come in." Jesus Christ undertook to save sinners-he did and suffered what was necessary for this end-he finished the work which the Father had given him to do-he "obtained" by his meritorious obedience, "eternal redemption" for us-and having obtained eternal redemption for us, he passed into the heavens, and is exalted to the right hand of God, "to be a Prince and a Saviour"-let Mr. Erskine note this-"for to give Repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins."* This is a sufficient answer to all Mr. Erskine's quibbling-it is nothing more respectable, -about putting into prison, and letting out of prison.

But, thirdly, Mr. Erskine totally perverts the plain and obvious meaning of the passage in question. Christ "was

^{*} Acts v. 31.—It may be thought by some that if the pardon is secured, there can be no great harm in saying that we are pardoned. There is just the harm of saying what is not true in fact, or sound in doctrine. And it is not only destructive of that connexion which is established between forgiveness and faith, but gives additional countenance to the dogma of universal forgiveness.

delivered for our offences," that is, says this commentator. "he was delivered because we had offended." And to make his meaning look the more plausible, he introduces it with averring that the expression "cannot mean, he was delivered in order that we might offend." And so his argument is, that since it has not the one meaning it must have the other! I must take the liberty of asserting that neither meaning is the correct one. Doubtless the apostle does not affirm that Christ was delivered that we might offend: nobody ever said so, and why Mr. Erskine should have imagined any such thing, he himself can best tell. But if Christ was not delivered that we might offend, it is as true that he was not delivered merely because we had offended. Our having offended, and his having suffered death, are not necessarily connected. Though we had offended, we might have been left to suffer death for it in our own persons. Christ suffered death because we had offended, and because he undertook to redeem us, and because his suffering was essential to the accomplishment of his undertaking. That is the right state of the case. And hence we see that the object, or end, or final cause, of Christ's being delivered, was the expiation of our guilt, here elliptically expressed thus, - "for our offences." Christ was delivered for effectuating that purpose. in like manner, he was raised again for our justification. Justification was the end or object for which his resurrection took place. If there is a "because" in the case, it means that our justification was the final cause of his rising. Unless he had risen, our justification could not have been accomplished or manifested; or, he rose in order that our justification might be accomplished, or in order that its accomplishment might be proved and evidenced.

The original word rendered for in our version, is due;

and it is not an uncommon thing for dia to occur twice in the same sentence, in reference to two different clauses, and though it has the same general import, to require modification according to the word or phrase which it go-For example, in John xii. 30. our Saviour, in reference to the voice that came from heaven, said "This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes." ou di εμε-αλλα δι' υμας, not for me, but for you; not to convince me of my Father's love, but that you might believe in me, as the Son of God; -in Rom. xi. 28. " As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sake—δ' ὁμας; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sake—δια της πατερας"—i. e. The Jews by rejecting the gospel, were held as enemies to God, and this has been overruled for the calling and the benefit of you Gentiles; whereas in respect to the election of that people in Abraham, they are yet destined to experience much kindness and mercy from God, for the sake of their fathers, who had been so distinguished :- and in Rom. xiii. 5. "Wherefore you must needs be subject not only for wrath, dia The opene, but also for conscience' sake, dia The our duridates:" or, you must be subject unto the higher powers, not only in order to avoid their anger and resentment, but also in order to maintain a good conscience towards God. In all these instances, dia means, on account of, for the sake of, in order to; but the precise modification of that general meaning, is to be ascertained by the nature of the subject which is affected by the preposition. And so in Rom. iv. 25, "Christ was delivered for our offences," or, in order to expiate them, and "he was raised again for our justification." or in order to secure and manifest it.

Note I, page 112.

"In the prophecy of the new covenant by Jeremiah XXXI. 33," says Mr. Erskine,* "the blessing promised is, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts.' And look also what the instrument is,—what the pen is by which the law is to be written on the heart; 'for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.' But the great blessing itself is to have the law written in their heart."

I wonder that Mr. Erskine does not see how directly and conclusively this very passage that he quotes bears against his theory of universal pardon. In his eagerness to prove that holiness is "the great blessing," he overlooks every thing else, and adduces language that condemns himself. In the first place, what title has he to say that, "in the prophecy of the new covenant by Jeremiah, the blessing promised is, I will put, &c.?" Does not the other sentence he has put down show that forgiveness of iniquity is also a blessing, promised as distinctly as the one to which he would direct our exclusive regard? It is not, I have forgiven the whole race of Adam, but I will forgive those with whom the new covenant is to be made. In the second place, is the forgiveness of iniquity mentioned as already past? Or is it not mentioned as a thing yet to be bestowed? Is not the phraseology in both cases the very same? Is not the future tense employed throughout the whole prophecy? Is it not "I will put my law in their hearts,"-" I will be their God,"-" they shall all know me," and " I will forgive their iniquity?" And, thirdly, are not all these blessings united together? Are not they

in the same well ordered and sure covenant? Are not they the subjects of the same faithful promise? Is not renewal and sanctification to be granted, for or because forgiveness is to be granted? Is not the one as certain as the other? Is not the writing of the law to take place just as surely as the pen or instrument for preparing the operation is to be provided? And, therefore, if forgiveness is a blessing of the new covenant, does it not inevitably follow that, if forgiveness is the privilege of all men, all men must be sanctified and saved—so that universal salvation, necessarily flows from universal pardon?

Note K, p. 117.

The passage to which this note refers is considered by some of those who maintain universal pardon, as very strongly in their favour; on what ground, I am greatly at a loss to discover. In my opinion, it is clearly and decisively against them. They say, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," &c. and therefore, the reconciliation was already effected and past. And so it was as it respected the apostles Paul and Timothy, who therefore say of themselves, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself and Jesus Christ." But God did more than reconcile them to himself-he made them ministers of the reconciliation-of that gospel whose great design was to reconcile sinners to God by Jesus Christ the Mediator, and Peace-maker: and therefore, they add, "and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." Now, what was the ministry of reconciliation? It rested on this great fact, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." The world had not yet

been reconciled, otherwise the Apostle would have stated it as a perfected work, and said that God had reconciled the world to himself, and that he was commissioned to declare this truth. But it was the great end of his ministry to bring about this reconciliation, acting as a messenger from God, as an ambassador for Christ. And, accordingly, he says, "now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech* by us, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." What! if all men were already reconciled to God, would God yet send his Apostles to speak and preach and exhort, as if no reconciliation had taken place? The thing cannot for a moment be sup-The commission given to the Apostles proceeds necessarily on the fact that there was still enmity between man and God, that the ministry of reconciliation was requisite, that those who were appointed to it should use all entreaty to prevail upon sinners to be at peace with their Maker, and that the doctrine of Christ's meritorious obedience to the death in their stead should be held out as the ground on which they might be successfully urged. And the commission given to Paul and his fellow-labourers, is the very commission which is still given to those who are raised up or sent forth to proclaim the gospel; they are to be eech sinful men to be reconciled to God through the blood of an accepted atonement and righteousness; and it is only such as yield to the exhortation that can hope to be actually reconciled unto God, and not to have their trespasses imputed unto them-all who re-

^{*} You is in our authorized version, but it has no corresponding word in the original; and should not have been inserted, for the apostle is announcing what he was authorized and appointed to say, not to the Corinthian converts, but in general, to them that were afar off, and encmies to God, and still in their sins.

ject the message and turn a deaf ear to the invitation remain in their sins, the wrath of God abideth upon them,

they are unforgiven.

How absurd is it in Mr. Erskine to quote the 19th verse in this form, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses!"* Does he really mean to say that the world signifies in Scripture every one human being? When the Pharisees said of Christ, "Behold, the world is gone after him," did the Pharisees allude to the people on the other side of the globe as well as the people of Jerusalem? And when Paul told the Roman converts, that their " faith was spoken of through the whole world," did he intend to be understood as saying that every man, woman, and child upon the face of the earth made mention of their faith? But if the Apostle's object was to assure the Corinthians and others that all men are actually pardoned, is it possible to suppose that he would have used the phraseology he here employs? Would he have said that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them?" Or would be not have rather said that God hath in Christ reconciled the world unto himself, and will never impute their trespasses unto them-just as he had said a little before (v. 18,) " God hath reconciled us" (i. e. himself and his fellow Apostles) "to himself by Jesus Christ?" And then why did not Mr. Erskine quote the rest of the passage, that it might be seen how it contradicted his interpretation of what went before, seeing that the Apostles were to be eech the world to be reconciled to God-which they were surely not so foolish as to do, if reconciliation had already taken place, and which, on that supposition, God would certainly have never commissioned them to do?

I may add, that Mr. Erskine is never restrained by the

^{*} Introductory Essay, p. xxvi.

meaning of a passage—for if it has not, he coolly gives it, the meaning that suits him. Thus because it is said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," he very gravely gives an amended edition of the words by making them say that Christ hath taken away the sins of the world. And even if it be said that Christ hath made an end of sin, what warrant from Scripture, or from reason, or from fact, has Mr. Erskine to understand that expression in its strict literality? Is it the fact, that sin exists no more in the world, and that when we call murder and robbery sin, we are guilty of a misnomer, every kind, degree, and vestige of sin having been washed away by the blood of atonement? Then let transubstantiation be admitted. But if it is not the matter of fact that Christ has literally made an end of sin-does not reason reclaim against any one, who would construe such a declaration in such a way as to make it nullify the evidence of his senses? And is it not profane to apply to the language of Scripture, a mode of verbal construction which is equally inconsistent with all that we see around us, and with the manner in which we treat similar statements of men in similar circumstances? But what is all this to Mr. Erskine? He is determined to uphold his dogma of universal pardon; and there must be no hindrance or obstacle to his course of assertion-proof is out of the question-even in all that we are accustomed to hold both rational and sacred.

I may here notice Mr. Erskine's Socinian idea of reconciliation. "I ought to observe," says he,* "that the word reconcile has a sense in the New Testament somewhat different from what is usually attached to it in ordinary language. The Bible never speaks of God being reconciled, but only as reconciling: to reconcile is the act of

^{*} Unconditional Freeness, p. 174.

an injured party who forgives; to be reconciled, is the condition of one who has committed an offence, and has obtained forgiveness. See Matt. v. 23, 24. 'If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee (hath ground of complaint against thee,) leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, (obtain his forgiveness) then come and offer thy gift.'"

Here Mr. Erskine, as usual, is wrong in his doctrine, and, once more, he yields up his dogma of universal pardon.

1. First, he is wrong in his doctrine. It may be true that the Bible does not speak, totidem verbis, of God being reconciled; but it follows not that the Bible does not countenance and inculcate the idea contained in that phrase. Mr. Erskine knows this, and he should not have concealed it, whatever attempts he might have made to explain away what he could not deny, and what he should have been candid enough to confess. God is represented as "angry with the wicked," *-as "hating the workers of iniquity," +-as threatening to "render indignation and wrath against every soul of man that doth evil." # And he is also represented as "turning himself from the fierceness of his anger, and taking away all his wrath," \(\)—as "pacified towards" his people "for all that they had done," |-as being "merciful to their unrighteousness, and remembering their sins and their iniquities no more. T" What is, and what can be, the meaning of all this, but that God's being reconciled to sinners is a doctrine taught in the Bible? And in many places the death of Christ is stated to be the method by which that reconciliation is

brought about. "We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins,"—which forgiveness is the expression of his being pacified, or reconciled. And in the very passage on which Mr. Erskine lays so much emphasis, as favourable to his views, though it is said that God was in Christ "reconciling the world to himself," the reconciliation there spoken of is a reconciliation of God to sinners; for it is immediately explained in these words—"not imputing their trespasses unto them,"—it being perfectly evident, that whoever is reconciled to another that has offended him, declares and effects it by forgiving his offence. *

2. Mr. Erskine, in the extract I have made above, gives up his doctrine of universal pardon. The passage he quotes from Matt. v. 23, 24, might be used to show that reconciliation may signify the regard which God has towards sinners, when he pardons them for Christ's sake; for though the bringer of the gift is exhorted to be reconciled, the meaning evidently is, that he should be reconciled to the offended brother, by getting the offended brother to be reconciled to him. But I refer to it especially as explained by Mr. Erskine in the second parenthesis that he has inserted-" first be reconciled to thy brother, (obtain his forgiveness,) then come and offer thy gift." This he brings forward as an illustration of the import of the passage in 2 Cor. v., "the expressions of which he begs the reader to consider attentively." Now this is one of the expressions, and a most important one it is-" be ye reconciled to God." If Mr. Erskine is true to his own illustration, the Apostle must unquestionably mean, "aim at obtaining from God the forgiveness of your

^{*} See Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice, vol. i. pp. 26, 202, 3d edit.; and Whitby's Commentary on Rom. v. 10.

sins." For once he is right. That is precisely the commission given to Paul and his fellow-labourers. Man had violated God's law, and there was, in consequence of this, enmity between God and man. But God provided an atonement. He sent Christ to "make reconciliation for iniquities;" and to his Apostles he committed the ministry of reconciliation, and he commanded them to say to sinners who had forfeited God's favour, "Be ye reconciled to God,"-that is, says Mr. Ershine, "obtain his forgiveness." Now, as it would be utterly ludicrous to exhort our fellow-men to set themselves to obtain what they already possessed, and as it is impious to suppose any such exhortation to proceed from God, we are shut up to the conclusion, that all sinners are not yet pardoned; and for this conclusion we have Mr. Erskine's own explicit authority!

Note L., p. 172.

There is another exposition of this passage which many persons prefer. It proceeds on the supposition that the word observe, translated "given," does not mean an absolute gift, so that the thing given is accepted and becomes ours; but that it is offered, proposed, laid down to us, and that we may either take or reject it. That the word did we has sometimes this signification, I would not positively deny, though I am not quite convinced by any examples I have yet seen. But my objection to it arises from this, that the Apostle, speaking of himself, and of those to whom he wrote, speaks of such as do already "believe on the name of the Son of God;" and, therefore, have actually obtained the life to which observe refers, as being "in the Son" whom

they have taken by faith into their spiritual system. Both interpretations, however, are alike unfavourable to universal pardon, and to that belief which every man, it is said, may entertain that he has been truly and fully forgiven.

Note M. p. 179.

I do not find in any of Mr. Erskine's pages a distinct avowal of what is here alluded to. But there are many passages which lead to it, and give it countenance. And among the disciples of his school, some are found to indulge in speculations and to sport opinions which attach little or no permanent value to the mediation of Jesus Christ. Christ died to procure pardon: but that work is over, and every one who believes-not every one who believes in Christ, and is united to him by faith, and regards him as the channel of all communications from the eternal source of good-but every one who believes that his sins are pardoned, has obtained the talisman by which he may secure every other blessing that can tend to make him either holy or happy. And the privileged few who have exerted their power to acquire this belief, seem to look upon the Christian system as a sort of vail or curtain between God and men, and to suppose that if this were but drawn aside, men would get freely in upon the divine essence, and feast, without interruption, upon the divine love. Where this folly may end, or how far it may be carried, it is impossible to tell. But it is working with individuals who scruple not to say that we may hold intercourse with God without the intervention of a Mediator: and when I look to the writings of Mr. Erskine, I am struck

with the elements of this mystical heresy, and must hold him accountable in a great measure for the mischief which it may produce.

Notes N and O, pp. 205, and 214.

It is not a little extraordinary that, though Mr. Erskine maintains that the forfeiture produced by Adam's first transgression was altogether done away by the sacrifice of Christ, and appeals to the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans as his principal proof, he yet holds language respecting the import of that chapter, which wholly destroys it as a proof of his doctrine. For he says,*

"In the preceding chapter, (i. e. chap. v.) the Apostle had been explaining the nature of the analogy which subsisted between Christ and Adam, as the representative heads of their respective families."

Now, if the whole human race constituted the family of Christ, as well as of Adam, how could he speak of their respective families? Or how could he speak of each of them being a representative head of these families? According to his general doctrine, the family of Christ is precisely, and without an exception, the family of Adam. And yet here he pronounces them to be two families—each of them represented by a different head! The two families are identified, and yet not identical! They are but one family—notwithstanding which they are two "respective families," the one having Adam, and the other Christ, as its "representative!" Here is some strange confusion of ideas—which Mr. Erskine does not extricate by the fol-

^{*} Unconditional Freeness, p. 37.

lowing sentence, which comes immediately after the one I have quoted.

"He (the Apostle) had been speaking of the universality of the sentence of death which has fallen upon the descendants of Adam, in consequence of their federal connexion with him, as illustrative of the restoration that is derived through Christ. Then there was one great restoration opposed to one great forfeiture," &c.

What! "One great restoration," a "universal restoration" by Christ-not of his own family-not of the family of which he was the "representative head"-not of the family with which he had a "federal connexion"-but of another family-of a family of which he was not the representative head-and with which he had not a federal connexion! This needs an explanation which I profess myself unable to give on any consistent principle. Nor is the difficulty lessened by the care with which Mr. Erskine avoids expressing the federal connexion which Christ has with the family that is not his, but Adam's. That must be considered as necessarily, though not palpably, implied in the sentence. And if Christ has taken every man into a federal connexion-if he is closely and indissolubly related to all the race of Adam as Adam himself was, by special or divinely appointed covenant—how comes it that he goes no farther than certainly conferring upon them all, restoration to animal life? Are any of Christ's covenanted family to live for ever unsanctified and miserable? Are a large proportion of them to suffer such a fate, and to be left to suffer it, by the short-coming of their divine parent, their federal head? Is this the honour that Mr. Erskine puts upon God and Christ, and the work of redemption which he is so anxious to magnify? Is it come to this, that many of those whom the God of love had given Christ to redeem, and whom Christ died to redeem, and who were taken into covenant for that purpose, shall yet finally perish? Or is Mr. Erskine, by these "ambiguous givings out," leading on his readers to a more easy reception of the doctrine of that "one great and universal restoration," which is taught in the Unitarian School of theology? He may not intend this—but if such were his intention, I do not see that he could more effectually accomplish it, than by adopting the style of language, and the reasoning, to which he has had recourse.

The reasoning of Mr. Erskine, however, is not more faulty than his criticism. In reference to the point at issue, he brings forward a new interpretation of Rom. vi. 1, as bearing on what is contained in the 5th chapter, and supporting the dogma of universal pardon. The verse stands thus in our common translation—"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" And Mr. Erskine thus paraphrases it—"Shall we continue under condemnation until grace be also multiplied, until the acts of atonement equal the number of the forfeitures? Not so; how shall we who have already died under the sentence of sin, yet continue under it, now that we are restored to life?" This paraphrase labours under three capital defects:

1. It takes for granted that Adam's sin lost nothing for his posterity but life temporal, and that Christ's death procured the reversal of the penalty for all. The idea of temporal death being the only penalty of Adam's transgression, Mr. Erskine more explicitly brings out in his preface, though, as usual, it is all ipse dixit. He says,

"The penalty, according to the record, is this—'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt [why omit surely?] die.' Men, by their traditions, have converted this penalty into threefold death—death temporal, death spiritual, and death eternal. But death spiritual is nothing more or less than

the sin itself—for sin is the shutting God out from the heart, and that is shutting out spiritual life. And, therefore, if I am told that spiritual death is the punishment of sin, I might answer, Then sin is the punishment of spiritual death, for they are one and the same thing. And death eternal is not a punishment under the law, but under the gospel. The death denounced by the law was just the separation of soul and body. This does not, however, make the penalty nugatory, for the soul which had shut out God must have been miserable in its state of separation from the body. This was the sentence on the whole race," &c.—Pref. p. xlvii.

Mr. Erskine does not seem to be aware that his opinion about the penalty of Adam's transgression was held ages ago, and ages ago refuted; and he does not seem to be aware that any thing more is requisite to gain admission for it, than his own unsupported averment. " Death eternal," says he, "is not a punishment under the law, but under the gospel." I assert the very contrary, and I appeal to Scripture-both to its explicit declarations and to the views which it every where gives of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin." But what does Mr. Erskine mean by saying that "death spiritual is nothing more or less than the sin itself?" He does not appear to understand either the subject in general, or the terms which he is himself employing. "The sin" by which the first covenant was broken-the sin committed by Adam as the "federal" head of his posterity-was his eating the forbidden fruit, or disobeving the special commandment, on which his own welfare and that of his posterity were made to depend. But the "spiritual death" which followed was quite a different thing, and consists in the moral corruption with which the nature of man was thereby and thenceforth so pervaded, as to be at enmity with God, and only evil con-

tinually-and necessarily involved in this state of alienation and depravity, till restored by the regenerating energies of God's Spirit operating in virtue of Christ's sacri-Supposing that Adam's first sin was "the shutting God out from the heart," how could that shut God out from the hearts of all his descendants, unless, according to the "common phraseology," they "sinned in him and fell with him?" Was not this a consequence of the fall, as well as the dissolution of soul and body was? And what good reason can be assigned for calling the former a natural consequence, and the latter an appointed consequence, when each of them resulted from the same dispensation, and followed the same breach of the same covenant? They were both penal: the penalties were fixed and determined by God; and whatever evils flowed from the transgression, must come under that title,—unless we can suppose that evils were produced which God did not foresee, or that, foreseeing them to issue necessarily from the transgression of Adam, he did not mean that any such evils should be inflicted on the human race.

2. Mr. Erskine dogmatises on the meaning of the 5th chapter, and holds it as proved, though his proof is not given, that the restriction or removal of the penalty inticted for Adam's transgression was universal. It is abundantly evident that more is included in the Apostle's statement than what Mr. Erskine alleges. And although doubtless all, both believers and unbelievers, righteous and wicked, shall be raised by Christ at the last day, yet it is most certain that the resurrection of the wicked is never said to be a resurrection unto life. It deserves not the name, and it is not honoured with it. It is "the resurrection of damnation." The resurrection, therefore, mentioned in the 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, is the resurrection of believers—of the spiritual seed of

Christ—of the people of whom he is the federal head and representative. And the restoration there spoken of, comprising what never is, and never can be, predicated of the wicked, is not the restoration of *all* men to life,—in other

words, does not intimate universal pardon.

3. But Mr. Erskine's interpretation of Rom. vi. 1, depends very much on a critical emendation of our common version. But such a criticism! "Πλεοναζω," he affirms, " relates to number and variety; Tigistive relates to quantity and extension." And then he applies this dictum to the verse in hand, saying, "The original word here translated abound, is not περισσείω, but πλεονάζω. It ought, therefore, according to this theory, to be translated 'multiplied." Yes, according to Mr. Erskine's theory it ought to be so translated, but not according to the real meaning of the word as used in Scripture. His own view of the 20th verse of the 5th chapter might have taught him otherwise. He expounds it thus-" But law entered to the effect of increasing the number of forfeitures, but where the condemnation was thus multiplied grace abounded over them all," as oil out of one cask covers a pond nourished by a hundred springs!" This is directly in the teeth of his translation of chap. vi. 1. For in the latter case he maintains that \(\pi \lambda \epsilon \alpha \a it relates to a number of acts of grace, thought to be necessary for removing a number of acts of forfeiture. And so in the former, the word should also be πλεουαζω, because it indicates the abundance, or great number of acts of the grace to take away the numerous acts of forfeiture occasioned by the introduction of law-and yet it is not \$\pi\lefta_{\infty} \Z\omega but περισσευω. Though Mr. Erskine has chosen to fix each of these Greek words down to a particular diverse meaning, he translates them so as to give them both the same signification, and make them both mean multiply. The abundance of grace in both verses refers to the multiplication of offences as the cause of its exercise and the object of its application—and yet in one case the Apostle uses are large and in the other also also what is equally unwarrantable—give an arbitrary paraphrase to pervert the meaning of the sacred writer, and convey his own!

Thus he is found wrong by considering the very passage on which he has employed his critical powers. But is he really so ignorant of the New Testament Greek, as not to know that he errs egregiously in saying that " = > 500 = 7 or relates to number and variety; περισσεύω relates to quantity and extension."* These words are used indiscriminately. Πιρισσευω relates to number, for example, in Acts xvi. 5. " And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily—επιρισσευον τω αριθμω καθ' ήμεραν." According to Mr. Erskine's notion, the sacred penman should here if any where, have used the word TA:012 (2number being the very idea that is expressly intimated .-Phil. iv. 17. "I desire fruit that may abound-- TAEOVAζωτα-to your account." 1 Tim. i. 14. " The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant-ύπερεπλεονασε-&c." 2 Thess. i. 3. "The charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth-πλεοναζει."-2 Pet. i. 3. "For if these things"-certain virtues mentioned-" be in you, and abound—\$\pi\left\tau\zeta_0\pi\ata.\tag{20pta.}\tag{20 same thing. 2 Cor. viii. 14, 15. "But by an equality that now at this time your abundance-- περισσευμα-may be a supply for their want, that their abundance - περ. σσευμαalso may be a supply for your want, that there may be equality; as it is written, He that had gathered much had

^{*} Mr. Erskine might have added quality.

nothing over— 3z επλευν zσε*—&c." 1 Thess. iii. 12. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound—πλευν zσει zσει σερισσευν zz. in love one toward another—&c."

In short there is no ground for Mr. Erskine's rendering of the words in question. It is just one of his subordinate fancies for propping up the more important errors in theology which he has brought forward with so much dogmatism. Scripture testimony is against him, if he takes it as it is; and therefore he tries his scholarship upon it, to convert it to his own purposes. But he is as unsuccessful in biblical criticism as he is illogical in reasoning. And truly if his efforts on Rom. vi. I .- be a correct specimen of that new translation of the whole Epistle, which he is said to have prepared for publication, and the very existence of which has given him some influence over the opinions of the ignorant and the simple, I have no hope that this claborate and long promised work, will add any thing either to his reputation as a man of Bible learning, or to the stores of orthodox theology. At the same time, I long for its appearance. If it does not profit the Christian world in one way, it may do good in another.

I shall not enter into any further discussion of Mr. Erskine's new translation of Rom. vi. 1. A single remark is sufficient to set it aside as totally inadmissible. The original Greek will not by any means tolerate it. His translation is "Shall we continue under condemnation, until grace be also multiplied?" The Greek word, here rendered until, is ivz. I know not Mr. Erskine's attainments in Greek scholarship. But I have often heard them praised, as far as the New Testament is concerned, by respectable authorities; and they are lauded to the skies by the herd

^{*} This is the word used also by the LXX. Exod. xvi. 1.

of his every-day admirers and followers. But really, if his translation of Rom. vi. 1. be a specimen of them, I must say that they are limited indeed; or rather, I should say, that his rage for theory prevents him from doing justice to his knowledge of the language. Can Mr. Erskine point out a single example of wa signifying until? Is he not aware that no such example exists? Must be not acknowledge that he has here committed a great and fatal error? And when the error is corrected, and iva translated aright, will he maintain that his rendering of the other parts of the verse does any thing else than make the whole a piece of unintelligible nonsense, seeing that it must run thus-" What shall we say then? Shall we continue under condemnation, that grace may be multiplied," or, " that the acts of atonement may equal the number of the forfeitures?" Again, I say, let us be favoured with Mr. Erskine's new translation of the whole Epistle. And, till it makes its appearance, let the samples of it which we already possess teach us to place no great confidence in its author's qualifications, either as a translator or an interpreter.

Note P, p. 226.

I am not surprised that persons who take up the subject hastily, and talk about it without consideration, should fall into the mistake mentioned in the text. But I cannot easily account for Mr. Erskine committing such a blunder. He had surely considered the Scripture referred to, for he actually quotes it.* But how? After stating with his usual dogmatism that the penalty of this law is reversed

^{*} Preface, p. xlix.

with regard to every man, he adds "thus we see the meaning of the text"-giving one text after another, till he concludes the list with the one in question; " and of that other, Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all men, especially of those whe believe." He might have been startled by the occurrence of the word "Saviour," for according to him to save is to sanctify, and surely all men are not sanctified, or if all men are not sanctified, what could he make of the term "especially" as applied to believers, except it had been that believers are only somewhat more sanctified than unbelievers? But the extraordinary thing is, that he should have omitted God and substituted Jesus Christ! Even though it had been Jesus Christ, the context and circumstances of the Apostle would have satisfied any candid reader that Christ was here mentioned, not in his mediatorial capacity, but in that character which he assumed when he sent out his disciples to preach the gospel, and promised to watch over and protect them; for he exercised that providential care after, as well as before, his departure from the world. But it is. the "living God" in whom the Apostle expresses his "trust," and therefore Mr. Erskine should have been careful not to alter the record, and to introduce a name which, as connected with Sariour, is calculated to convey the impression that Christ half redeems some men, and wholly redeems others!

Note Q, p. 227.

The case of our Lord's visit to Simon the Pharisee, mentioned by the Evangelist Luke,* is adduced by Mr.

^{*} Luke vii. 36-end.

Erskine* in support of his theory; and, in his usual way, he disregards every thing in the passage that makes against him, and, by one of the most arbitrary and unfair interpretations I have ever met with in any commentator, extracts from it what it certainly does not teach. He insists that the parable of the two debtors, introduced by our Lord, contains the doctrine that all men without exception are forgiven. He affirms that Simon and the woman represent the two great classes into which the human race is divided, believers and unbelievers: that as both debtors are said to have been frankly forgiven, so both classes of mankind must be held to have received the same blessing; and that the only difference between them is this, that unbelievers are ignorant of the fact for want of faith, while believers are by their faith brought to the knowledge of it.

I can with great difficulty bring myself to believe that Mr. Erskine did not perceive the fallacy of his annotation. His own statement condemns himself. For he says, "The believer, or those who believe that their many sins are forgiven, live, i. e. they are saved; the unbelievers, or those who believe not that their many sins are forgiven, do not live, i. e. they remain unsaved." Now according to this, it must be perfectly evident that Simon believed, and that he was saved, as well as the woman. Both debtors-meaning thereby both Simon and the womanloved; only, while the woman loved much, Simon loved but a little. This is clear from the 47th verse, "Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little." The contrast is stated between the two debtors; these two debtors are considered as

^{*} Unconditional Freeness, p. 51.

meaning the woman and Simon, in the first instance, and more generally, the two classes of mankind, believers and So that whatever is asserted of the debtors unbelievers. must be understood or asserted of those whose character and condition they are used to signify. This is Mr. Erskine's principle in explaining the parable; and unless he is to be allowed to take as much of the parable as suits his own end, and to reject the rest as inadmissible, he is reduced to a strange dilemma. For if Simon loved at all, however little, he was as truly saved, and did as much believe, as the woman who is said to have loved much. They both loved,* that is, according to Mr. Erskine, they were both saved; and that is, according to Mr. Erskine, they both believed .- " each man's salvation (or loving) arising out of the belief of his own personal condemnation having been removed by his own personal forgiveness." See now what our commentator has extracted from the passage in question. It really and undeniably amounts to this, that unbelievers, represented by Simon, who, he says, "was most assuredly an unbeliever," do yet believe; and that they are saved, though they are not saved; and that belief and unbelief-being saved, and not being saved,

^{*} This indeed is admitted by Mr. Erskine, when he says, "It is quite evident that Jesus means by it, (the parable) to tell Simon that both he and the woman were equally forgiven, when they had nothing to pay, and that the difference of Their love towards him, arose from their different appreciations of their forgiveness." Pref. p. xlii. And again, "There can be no gratitude at all, if the debt is not supposed to be forgiven, and the gratitude will be small, if the debt be supposed to be small." Do. p. xli. The same thing he allows in p. 51. of "Unconditional Freeness," where he says, "The one (debtor) had the sense of a great forgiveness, the other of a small one, and their gratitude was in direct proportion to their sense of forgiveness."

are one and the same thing. And all this mass of contradiction is to be palmed upon our blessed Saviour, for the purpose of upholding Mr. Erskine's nostrum about faith and forgiveness!

"I do not see," says Mr. Erskine, "how any other interpretation can be given of this parable, than that which I have given." When, I may ask, will Mr. Erskine learn to open his eyes to the simplest facts of the Bible, and to the simplest processes of reasoning? And if he is unable to give any interpretation except one that is so utterly at variance with itself, and that makes Christ speak palpable inconsistencies, would it not be right to be somewhat more modest, and to wait till greater light be vouchsafed to him, since he does not choose to be indebted to other men for an explanation of what he evidently does not himself understand? But no; he does not seem to care what consequences follow to the Scriptures, if he can only and in any way, get them to appear favourable to his idle and mischievous speculations.

If Mr. Erskine would remember what the veriest tyro in Bible interpretation can tell him, that a parable is never intended to be doctrinally understood and applied as to every incident or particular in the story, it would often save him from the "great transgression" of distorting God's word. His theory, indeed, would suffer, but true religion would gain incalculably by his attention to such a lesson.

It is impossible, also, not to remark that a better specimen of Mr. Erskine's great dogmatism cannot be wished for, than is to be found in his commentary on the passage of Scripture we have been considering. One affirmative succeeds another, as if it were pervaded by infallibility. Never does a suspicion seem to arise that any thing either will or can be disputed. All is advanced so

smoothly and peremptorily, that we can easily see how exclusively it is intended for implicit believers in the author's leading doctrine. And no wonder that he dislikes, or more

properly speaking, is afraid of controversy!

There would be no difficulty in showing that the sense commonly attached to the passage is the just one—that the woman's sins were forgiven her in connexion with her faith in Christ the Saviour—that forgiveness could be truly predicated of her, she being a believer, but not of Simon, he being an unbeliever—and that the salvation annexed to her faith was salvation from the guilt she had committed, or, in one word, the forgiveness bestowed upon her by our Lord. But all this is unnecessary—it being beyond doubt that Mr. Erskine's method of interpreting the parable, is incompetent, and overturns his own position. If it proves, as he says, that all men are forgiven, it proves also, and on the same ground, that all men believe, and that all men love, and that all men are sanctified and saved.

Another of the passages on which Mr. Erskine founds his peculiar notion, is that which gives an account of the woman taken in adultery.* Here, in his customary way, he either strangely overlooks, or intentionally withholds from view, the scope and meaning of the narrative, and fastens upon a corner of it on which he most coolly puts his own arbitrary construction. His language is,—

"And when our Lord says to the woman taken in adultery, 'Go and sin no more;' he grounds the admonition on that word of life, 'neither do I condemn thee.' And lest the woman herself, or any other should suppose, that this word had any exclusive application to her more than to others; he immediately adds, 'I am the light of the world,'—not of this woman only, John viii. 11, 12. These two

^{*} John viii. 1-12.

verses ought not to be separated."—"When this Son (Jesus Christ) whom the Father sent, spoke to men, he just said, 'neither do I condemn thee.' This was the language of the light, who came to condemn sin in the flesh; and it was on this ground that he said, 'Go and sin no more.'"*

What a perversion of Holy Writ! I had almost said, what an artful concealment of the key to the whole passage! At any rate, what an instance of the gross delusion into which zeal for a theory will betray its author or abettor!

In the first place, Christ, in these words, " neither do I condemn thee," does not express the woman's exemption from future punishment, nor does he refer to her moral guilt at all. She was brought before him by the Scribes and Pharisees, his enemies, who "said unto him, Master, this woman was tallen in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou? This they said tempting him, that they might have to accuse him." The object of the Pharisees was, to get an accusation against Christ: and the method they took to procure it was to submit an important case to him, that he might be tempted to decide upon it in the capacity of a judge, and thus furnish them, whatever way he decided, with the means of accomplishing his destruction. If he had assumed the office of a judge, and acquitted the adulteress, they would have represented him to the people as a despiser of the law, and a patron of its most infamous transgressors. And if, acting as a judge, he had condemned her to death, they would have represented him to the Roman government as assuming a power which was inconsistent with their authority, and amounted to an act of rebellion. In these circumstances.

^{*} Introductory Essay, p. liv.

Christ counteracted and defeated the invidious design, by refusing to exercise the judicial function. He first, by charging home such guilt on the persons who had come forward to accuse the woman, as, he foresaw, would make them stand convicted in their own minds, got quit of their presence as her accusers. And he next said to the woman, "Hath no man," none even of those who, in similar cases, possess and exercise the office which would entitle them to pronounce sentence, "condemned thee? Neither do I condemn* thee." I assume no such prerogative; and I do not, whatever I may think of the criminality of thy conduct, take it upon me to declare judicially the penalty of the law, and adjudge thee to suffer it. And this will still more obviously appear to be the true meaning of the transaction, when we look to the 15th verse of the chapter, where Christ says, in evident reference to what had immediately before occurred, "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge+ no man." In fact, Christ uniformly disclaimed any such magisterial authority as he was, in this case, artfully called upon to assume and put in practice. And hence he evaded the snare that his cunning adversaries laid for him, by uniting the wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove.

To hold, then, as Mr. Erskine does, that when Christ said, "neither do I condemn thee," he spoke "the word of life," or intimated that the sin of the woman was already pardoned of God, is to attach to the expression a meaning for which the nature and circumstances of the occasion give not the slightest colour or pretext, but which, on the contrary, they show to be altogether absurd and inadmissible. Had Christ intended to convey such a meaning, he

^{*} Karazena-I adjudge to punishment.

⁺ Keiva-I act as a judge.

could not have chosen a more inapposite phraseology. It neither denotes nor implies past forgiveness. And the admonition which accompanied it is not grounded upon, but only suggested, by the fact, that the woman had been guilty, and expresses Christ's benevolent concern for her future reformation and spiritual welfare.

2. Mr. Erskine says of the 11th and 12th verses, that they "ought not to be separated." So I think; and it would have demonstrated more candour or more skill in interpretation, had he extended the maxim, and not separated one part of the story from another, so as to conceal from the ignorant reader, and perhaps from himself, what is necessary for the right explanation of the whole. practice of detaching one thing from another is habitual in him: and no marvel, for connected views of Scripture are destructive of his theory. But he can indulge in exceptions to his general rule, when it promises to be more advantageous to him, to take two verses together, than to take them separately. And there is an example of this before us. By taking as much of the passage as suits his purpose, and attaching to it after all a most fictitious meaning, he flatters himself that he has got the pardon of the adulteress established, though she had not exhibited one symptom of penitence or belief. And then, in order to prove that this pardon is a universal privilege, he makes it a point of conscience that the 11th and 12th verses should not be disjoined, but considered in connexion. But how does he accomplish this object? He accomplishes it thus. According to him, "neither do I condemn thee," means, Thou impenitent and unbelieving adulteress, I declare that thy crimes are all pardoned,-not only this crime in which thou hast been detected, but all the other crimes thou hast ever perpetrated, or may hereafter perpetrate! "I am the light of the world," means I am come to enlighten not this woman only, but all human beings, and to assure them that

all the sins of every one of them are freely and everlastingly forgiven just as hers are!! And as the connexion between verses 11th and 12th of the eighth chapter is not sufficient, these two verses are to be also connected—not on account of juxta position or on any other account but that of Mr. Erskine's good pleasure—with the 9th and 29th verses of the *first* chapter, and the 17th and 19th verses of the *third* chapter of the same Gospel; and thus by local connexion, and fanciful connexion, and arbitrary connexion, it is proved that every man is already and complete-

ly pardoned!!!

By all means let the 12th verse be read after the 11th; but let the whole narrative be also read, and then Mr. Erskine, or at least every unprejudiced person, will be convinced, that he has sadly misrepresented the passage in question. It will be found (verse 2) that our Saviour was teaching the people in the temple, when the Scribes and Pharisees interrupted his discourse, by bringing before him the woman taken in adultery-that having in the manner we have stated, disposed of the case that was so treacherously submitted to him, he resumed his discourse, "speaking again unto" the people-and that as it was " early in the morning" when he taught in the temple, the probability is that he took advantage of the rising of the sun to represent himself as the "light of the world" in a spiritual sense,-as the only one who could lead ignorant and sinful men to the possession of eternal life. And it is not unworthy of remark that the warning which our Lord gave to the Jews in prosecuting the address which he was delivering to them when the interruption took place, he uses language which cannot be reconciled with Mr. Erskine's doctrine. says, (verse 24,) " I said therefore unto you that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not I am he, ye shall die in your sins." It cannot be maintained that he refers here to unbelief merely-for that is but one sin, and according

to our opponent, it is the only sin for which men shall be punished, or which shall remain unforgiven at death, or for which the second death shall be inflicted upon them. Those who believe not in Christ, we are here expressly told, shall die-not in that sin, but in their sins-in all the sins they have ever committed, and which have not been blotted out, because they have not accepted of him by whom alone they can be saved! Strange! that any man whatever, who has the least mental perspicacity, or who has the least portion of fairness, should overlook a declaration so expressive as this on the subject he is treating of, and not merely give out as a supposition, but as a certain and infallible statement, that when Christ said "neither do I condemn thee," he told the woman that her adultery and every other sin she had committed were pardoned, and that when he exclaimed, "I am the light of the world," he intended to announce that all ungodly persons of every country and of every generation were possessed of the very same privilege !!! Really Mr. Erskine should not only connect the 11th and 12th verses, but the whole chapter of which these form a part, before he gives forth his evil crudities as wholesome truths.

One of the choice texts which Mr. Erskine and his fellow-labourers are continually pressing on our notice is John i. 9. "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And what do they understand by this, or how do they explain it, so as to make it subservient to their theory? I question very much if those who repeat it so incessantly have any distinct idea of what it means. It looks, indeed, like an assertion of universality, but the universality of what?

1. Do they imagine that "light" denotes pardon? For such a meaning of the word they cannot produce a single authority. $\Phi \omega_5$ has various significations, but pardon is

not one of them. In this verse it represents Christ as the fountain of spiritual and saving knowledge-showing men their real condition and character as fallen creatures, and pointing out the way by which they are to be redeemed. And accordingly, when, as in the third chapter of the same Gospel, our Saviour is accounting for the prevalence of unbelief, he ascribes it to the evil deeds of men which makes them choose the darkness rather than the light. "For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved" or discovered, "But he that docth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." And in that sense of the word, Christ frequently held himself out to the Jews as "the light." As when he said, "Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." Even were it granted that light may be taken to represent pardon, in John i. 9, it will not answer the purpose for which it is adduced; for Christ said to the people, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness." It is only believers that obtain the pardon, so that it cannot be affirmed that every man is pardoned by Christ, unless it can also be affirmed that every man believes in Christ. But no person, whose mind is not wofully warped and perverted by prejudice can fail to see that light, in the passage, under consideration, refers to the character of Christ as the revealer and teacher of his Father's will respecting the salvation of the world.

2. Well then, will universality belong to the proposition as thus explained? It is sufficient to answer, that the fact precludes the possibility of so understanding it.

^{*} John xii, 35.

For every man that cometh into the world is not enlightened. The proposition clearly intimates-not the actual effect produced-but the design of Christ's coming, or the official character which he sustains. He is the true light; there is no other from whom the knowledge of salvation can be derived, and every man that cometh into the world, or every human being who is favoured with that light or knowledge, gets it from him and from him alone. He came as "a light to lighten the Gentiles," but though that was one object of his advent upon earth, who would venture to conclude that the Gentiles are all instructed by him? And when it is said that "the grace of God hath appeared unto all men bringing salvation," who will be bold enough to assert that to every man on our globe God's grace has actually appeared, and that it has brought salvation, or, as Mr. Erskine explains it, sanctification and happiness to the whole human race?

Another text is, I Cor. viii. 11. "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" Here we are told, it is taught that a person for whom Christ died may ultimately perish, and that this may be maintained on the hypothesis of our opponents, but must be rejected on ours. In truth, it agrees neither with ours nor with our opponents'; and they should be as anxious as we to repel such an interpretation of the verse.

The person alluded to by the apostle, it must be noticed, is a brother—that is, he is a believer. He is "weak in the faith;" but still he has the faith, and is accounted one of those who have truly embraced the Saviour. This will be seen by looking to the context, and comparing it with what Paul says in his epistle to the Romans, xiv. 1, &c., when writing and exhorting on the very same subject.

Now, will Mr. Erskine or his friends say that a true believer will finally perish? An Arminian may say so, and

he does say so, because he holds that election is conditional, and that the believer may fall away. But Mr. Erskine cannot acquiesce in such a position, because he maintains the doctrine of unconditional election, and that necessarily infers the perseverance of the saints. He cannot, therefore, think or insist that the individual supposed by the apostle can ever perish in any sense of that word. The individual was always pardoned; being a believer, he is saved; and having been individually elected, he can "never perish, but must have everlasting life."

But I deny the interpretation given to the verse on a still broader ground. For this weak brother Christ died; therefore I conclude, on Christ's own express authority, that it is impossible for him to perish-meaning by the word perish, whatever is different from the attainment of heaven. In the fourth chapter of John's Gospel, Christ says, " I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." "Ye"-unbelieving Jews-" believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my father's hand." this language teaches any thing, it teaches the following truths :- that the sheep of Christ are not all men, but individuals selected and brought from among all men-that these are distinguished by having been given to Christ by the Father—that they are the objects of a love and of a care on the part of Christ which he does not manifest to

others—that as the good shepherd he gave his life for them—that they hear his voice, that he knows or approves of them, and that they follow him—that he gives them eternal life—and that none of their enemies shall ever be able to snatch them from the possession of their God and Redeemer. This is altogether at variance with the idea of any one perishing for whom Christ died. He died for his own—his sheep; he gives them eternal life; and it is impossible for any thing whatever to destroy them, or to tear them out of his divine embrace.

There would be no difficulty in the verse in question, were not the theory of universal pardon in need of support. Some of the Corinthian converts had a clear and distinct knowledge of the difference between the meat employed in sacrifice to idols, and that same meat as used for food; and, on the strength of that knowledge, they partook of the sacrifices even in the idolatrous temples. Against this the apostle remonstrated; because, although they who did it might not be injured by the practice, there were others who had not sufficient discernment, or force of mind, or vigour of faith, to guard against the very natural association of eating meat sacrificed to idols, with rendering worship to the idols to whom it had been offered, and who were therefore in danger of committing idolatry, or giving homage to false gods, or holding fellowship with devils. This was a sin: every sin merits God's anger, and leads to condemnation; and, if unforsaken and unforgiven, must terminate in destruction. Now, the apostle speaks of the sin of a weak brother as having this tendency-not of its actually and necessarily involving the person guilty of it in ruin; for surely it was not the unpardonable sin-the sin which was neither to be prayed for nor to be forgiven -but a sin which, by a sincere and thorough repentance, would be washed away like other sins. And he merely speaks of its ultimate result if divine grace did not prevent, in order to represent more strongly and more effectually the mischievous conduct of those who, by indulging in the practice adverted to, wounded the weak conscience of their weak brethren, and caused them to offend against their God and Saviour. There is an example of similar phraseology in this very epistle.* We know the attainments, and the privileges, and the experience of the apostle-his assurance of his personal salvation-his certain hope of eternal life. And yet he proposed to himself the possibility of his being irrecoverably lost, as a motive for his exercising temperance and self denial. "I keep under my body," said he, " and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." And this is the very same sort of argument that he brings to bear against the Corinthians, to whom he addresses his expostulation. He does not advance the abstract doctrine, that a true believer, one for whom Christ died, could finally perish. But he uses the supposition of such a thing in the particular case before him, as a ground on which to dissuade from eating meat offered to idols, in the presence of weak brethren, lest they should be tempted to do what, in its own nature and tendency, was calculated to involve men in perdition. And surely he might thus reason with the Corinthians, whom he addressed as to the government of their conduct towards one for whom Christ died, when he reasoned in the same way with himself as to the government of his passions and appetites, and talked of the contingency of his being a cast-away, although he could also say, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

The only other passage I think it of any consequence to examine is, Matt. xviii. 23, to the end. It is a parable spoken in answer to Peter's question, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" and is clearly intended to teach the necessity of cherishing a compassionate and forgiving disposition towards our offending brother. But the abettors of universal pardon. who have the art of extracting poison from the most wholesome viands, discover in it a divine authority for their favourite doctrine. It shows, they think, that God, represented by the "certain king," may pardon, and yet finally condemn those whom he has pardoned for the very offences that were pardoned. Now, don't they perceive, in the first place, that the king forgave the servant indebted to him, only in consequence of a humble supplication for patient and indulgent treatment, which indicated sense of error, humility, regret, and dependence; and that, therefore, the forgiveness which followed was conditional?-Don't they perceive, in the second place, that the subsequent exaction of the debt proves the forgiveness to have been suspended upon continued good conduct on the part of the debtor, and on that account, also, to have been conditional?-Don't they perceive, in the third place, that the " delivering of the servant to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due," after he had been forgiven his debt, if taken as descriptive of God's conduct to sinners, represents him as changeable, and deprives believers of all wellgrounded assurance of personal forgiveness, and contradicts the Scriptures, which declare, that " the gifts and callings of God are without repentance," and that no one can ever condemn those whom God has pardoned, or "separate them from his love which is in Christ Jesus?"-Don't they perceive, in the fourth place, the great truth which this parable is meant to inculcate, and which implies, that pardon or freedom from condemnation is, in the case of every one, linked conditionally to a forgiving temper and conduct, as summed up in the concluding verse of the chapter, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses?"-And don't they perceive, in the last place, how destructive is this parableaccording to their mode of construing parables-of one important branch of their system, inasmuch as the servant who was in debt to his master, though he was forgiven, and could not but believe, and know, and feel it, seeing that he was "loosed," and that neither he, nor his wife, nor his children were to be sold, yet found it no medicine for curing the diseases, or promoting the health of his soul, as appears from the relentless and unsanctified deportment that he maintained toward his fellow servant, whom he "took by the throat" and "cast into prison till he should pay the debt" that he owed him?

Note R, p. 241.

I allude here to the language generally held respecting us by the disciples of the new school; and I particularly allude to what Mr. Erskine has published in his Preface to the Letters of a Lady. After giving a distorted account of the sentiments that obtain in this country on the subject of religion, which he ends with saying, "He," that is, the "serious man" has little or no confidence at all, and all that he has, is in himself—in his own faith," he goes on thus, "This is the leprosy which has overspread the land. And whence does it proceed? It proceeds from the voice of the shepherds, who tell the peo-

ple, that although the gospel is a proclamation of God's love, and of forgiveness of sins through Christ-yet that those only are loved, and those only are forgiven, who have faith in the gospel. I do not speak of the authorized standards of any church, I speak of the religion taught to the people. This is the fountain head of the leprosy; and let the shepherds look to it, and let the flocks look to it. This doctrine is the standing doctrine of the land, and it is nothing else than making the cross of Christ of none effect. It is a false gospel, which places the ground of confidence not in God, but in the creature. It is a false gospel, which mocks man with a semblance of good, but gives him nothing. It makes the whole matter a peradventure, &c." And again, "Let the shepherds look to it; let them look to the state of their flocks, and, whilst they do so, let them ponder that word, 'If they had stood in my counsel, and caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings,' Jer. xxiii. 22. And there is a word in that same chapter for the flocks, which they also would do well to mark. They must judge of the doctrine which they have, by the standard of the word of God. It is no excuse for their receiving false doctrine, that they have heard it from their teachers-they are called on to 'try the spirits whether they be of God.' They will be judged by the Bible-and God says, of the truth, that it is easily discernible from falsehood, for 'what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord; is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?' And let all look to that word- Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.' *

^{*} Introductory Essay, pp. xxiii. xxv. Harsher and more in-

The ministers and people of this country are really very much indebted to Mr. Erskine for his warnings, and rebukes, and exhortations, severe though they be, and ending though they do in a curse. I have no disposition to curse him in return; but I may use the freedom of reminding him, that after holding such language respecting the Christian inhabitants of this country, among whom he finds no exceptions, but himself and one or two more, it is utterly ludicrous for him and them to talk to their coteries of being persecuted, when we simply repel their slanders, deny their infallibility, reprove their presumption, and laugh at their nonsense. In his former production Mr. Erskine, though abundantly dogmatical, was comparatively mild-I don't like heresy and meekness combined-but he has got heated by finding that his prelections are not quite so successful as he expected, and that neither the shepherds nor the sheep are so submissive to his dicta as he expected them to be. In the passages quoted above, and in others of a similar stamp that might have been adduced, he betrays arrogance, acerbity, and disdain towards those who differ from him, which he has no title, from any endowments, either mental or moral, that are discoverable in him, to manifest even in the least degree. Whence did he acquire a right to lay the whole Christian world under his ban, because they will not go along with him and a few others, in a theory on the freeness of the gospel, for which they see no authority in the Bible, and which they believe to be hostile alike to the character of God, and the safety of men? I cannot help quoting from the pages of one of the dictatorial and self sufficient school to which he belongs, the follow-

tolerant language still is used by Mr. Erskine in a previous part of his Essay, for which see Note AA.

ing sentences, "It is not unworthy of observation, that those whose statements in this respect have been the highest, have often in their controversies assumed towards their opponents a tone of bitterness and contempt most unbecoming the Christian character. This looks like self-righteousness, and seems to mark that they are trusting rather in their own faith, which elevates them, than in the cross of Christ, which would humble them."*

Note S. p. 262.

These passages are extracted from Edwards' Gangræna. It is curious to observe that about the same period, there were affoat, notions respecting the Millennium and the human nature of Christ, very much resembling those which are now prevailing in certain quarters. I have not the means of ascertaining whether these notions and those I have been endeavouring to refute in this volume, were held by the same persons; but such is very much the fact in the present day. I find that, with some few exceptions, those who greedily receive the one set of heresies, as greedily receive the other. Those who have adopted the belief that all men are already pardoned, and that God is nothing but love, have also adopted the belief that Christ's humanity was such as it is represented to have been by Mr. Irving. And I know that, though the thing is not avowed, this latter doctrine is imbibed by such as have imbibed the doctrine of universal forgiveness, and cherished by them as an additional source of comfort and joy, and inculcated upon their companions and correspondents as a more clear proof of the divine mercy and condescension.

[·] Essay on Faith, by Thos. Erskine, Esq. p. 9.

Note T. p. 269.

This, I am aware, is a delicate and a difficult subject; and had my limits permitted, I would have entered into a little more explanation. But I have no doubt of the truth of the general doctrine which I have stated, though it is not very easy to apply it to particular cases, and though, perhaps. I might be found wrong in that respect by many whose judgment I revere. And I am sure that I shall not be deemed too indulgent in the opinion I have expressed concerning those individuals against whom I am especially contending. For with all the exceptions furnished by their mode of carrying on this dispute, and which I have not failed to notice and reprehend, I am impressed with a decided conviction of their personal Christianity, and only regret that their personal Christianity should serve as a passport to the fundamental errors that they are disseminating with such apostolic zeal.

Notes U and X, p. 279, 280.

The Confession from which I have quoted is the Bohemian, which was drawn up after conferring with Luther, and to which he wrote a recommendatory Preface.

I have given one or two short extracts from his Commentary on the Galatians. But it may be proper that I should exhibit more of Luther's sentiments as contained in that work, to show that he has been somehow or other much misunderstood, unless he has been himself altogether inconsistent. The reader's attention is requested to the following passages.

"Faith taheth hold of Christ, and hath him present, and holdeth him enclosed, as the ring doth the precious stone. And whosoever shall be found having this confidence in Christ apprehended in the heart, him will God account for righteous. This is the mean, and this is the merit, whereby we attain the remission of sins and righteousness. 'Because thou believest in me, saith the Lord, and thy faith layeth hold upon Christ, whom I have freely given unto thee that he might be thy mediator and high priest, therefore, be thou justified* and righteous." Page 180.

"Here, saith the Christian, this (the merit of congruence, and the merit of worthiness,) is not the right way to justify us, neither doth this way lead to heaven. For I cannot, saith he, by my works going before grace, deserve grace, nor by my works following grace, deserve eternal life; but to him that believeth, sin is pardoned and righteousness imputed. This trust, and this confidence, maketh him the child of God, and heir of his kingdom; for in hope he possesseth already everlasting life assured unto him by promise. Through faith in Christ, therefore, all things are given unto us, grace, peace, forgiveness of sins, salvation and everlasting life, and not for the merit of congruence and worthiness." Page 182.

"' Him that honoureth me,' saith God, 'I will honour.' Now God is honoured in his Son. Whoso then believeth that the Son is our Mediator and Saviour, he honoureth the Father, and him again doth God honour; that is to say, adorneth him with his gifts, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, the Holy Ghost, and everlasting life." Page 187.

"Christ, our instructor, is Lord over the law, sin, and death; so that they which believe in him are delivered from the same. 'Christ is the Lamb of God, that hath

According to Luther, justification included not a sense of forgiveness, but the blessing of forgiveness itself.

taken away the sin of the world.' Now, if the sin of the world be taken away, then is it taken away from me also, which do believe in him." Page 194.

"He, therefore, that will avoid the curse, must lay hold upon the promise of blessing, or upon the faith of Abraham, or else he shall remain under the curse. Upon this place, therefore, 'shall be blessed in thee,' it followeth that all nations, whether they were before Abraham, in his time, or after him, are accursed, and shall abide under the curse for ever, unless they be blessed in the faith of Abraham, unto whom the promise of the blessing was given to be published by his seed throughout the whole world." Page 269.

"Faith is a certain steadfast beholding, which looketh upon nothing else but Christ the conqueror of sin and death, and the giver of righteousness, salvation, and eternal life." "Moses commanded the Jews which were stung of serpents in the desert, to do nothing else but steadfastly behold the brazen serpent, and not to turn away their eyes. They that did so, were healed only by that steadfast and constant beholding of the serpent. But contrariwise, they died which obeyed not the commandment, but looked upon the wounds and not upon the serpent. So if I would find comfort when my conscience is afflicted, or when I am at the point of death, I must do nothing but apprehend Christ by faith," &c.* Page 357.

* Luther here refers to John iii. 14, 15. Christ said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." If the Old Testament provision for the saving of the people's lives is in any measure an illustration of the New Testament provision, for the saving of the sinner's soul—and for this very purpose it is introduced by our Lord—then faith in Christ is as necessary for the latter, as looking to the brazen serpent was ne-

"Now if they be servants, they cannot be partakers of the inheritance, but shall be cast out of the house; for servants remain not in the house for ever, (John viii. 35,) yea, they are already cast out of the kingdom of grace and liberty: "for he that believeth not is condemned already," (John iii. 18.) They remain, therefore, under the malediction of the law, under sin and death, under the power of the devil, and under the wrath and judgment of God." P. 425.

These passages sufficiently and amply prove that Luther did not maintain Mr. Erskine's doctrine, but that, on the contrary, he held faith and forgiveness—unbelief and condemnation by the law—to be inseparably united. I grant, that though he taught predestination, and election, and pardon by faith only, he did in some way or other consider the death of Christ as taking away the sins of the whole world. But I am not aware that he made any attempt to

cessary for the former. Nor is saving here used in Mr. Erskine's sense for sanctifying-it is for redeeming from death. the penalty of sin. The death occasioned by the bite of the fiery serpents was sent as a punishment on the murmuring and rebellious Israelites; and from that punishment, deliverance could be obtained only by looking to the serpent ;those who refused to look of course died. And so the death to which sinners are subjected, is a punishment inflicted upon them for transgressing against God; and from that punish. ment, deliverance can be obtained only by believing in Jesus Christ ;-those who refuse to believe, must, of course, pe-I cannot understand how Mr. Erskine gets quit of this scriptural argument, except by obstinately declining to The chapter from which it is taken, he is perconsider it. petually harping upon. It is one of his select themes for exposition. How does he dispose of verses, 14 and 15?

explain the consistency of this view with the other views to which we have alluded, and which are certainly incompatible with universal redemption as he himself seems to understand it. At all events he is no authority for Mr. Erskine—because he never affirms that all men are pardoned whether they believe or not. And as I have already hinted, it is probable that the discrepancy of his statements has arisen from the violence with which he opposed the Romish doctrine of merit, and the anxiety that he felt to be as far away as possible from that destructive heresy. The following passage from one of his Tracts, entitled "Martin Luther against the order of Pope and Bishops," at once states his own real views, and shows the abuse against which he was directing his efforts.

"The most atrocious and most mischievous poison of all the papal usages is that, where the pontiff, in his bulls of indulgence, grants a full remission of sins. Christ, in the 9th of Matthew did not say to the sick of the palsy, 'Put money into this box,' but "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." No words or conceptions can reach the atrocity and abomination of this Satanic invention: for, through this means, the people are seduced from the purity and simplicity of that faith which, by relying on the precious promises of God, alone justifies and obtains remission of sins; and they are led to put their trust in the pope's bulls, or in paying certain prescribed sums of money, or in their own works and satisfactions."

To the "Extracts from the Letters of a Lady," with Mr. Erskine's Introductory Essay, there are appended some quotations from Fraser of Brae's Treatise on Justifying Faith. The Publisher is pleased to say that these are a "suitable appendix to the Essay and Letters;" and so they are. For they contain the same unsound tenets; the same misapprehensions of Scripture, even as to 1 Tim. iv. 10; the same inconsecutive reasoning; the same frequent recourse to the petitio principii; the same sort of inconsistencies; the same strain of piety; and the same affectation of superfine orthodoxy. I wonder that Mr. Erskine did not look better about him before he allowed such an Appendix to appear under the sanction of his name—though, indeed, that need scarcely be wondered at, after he has given such a marked approbation to the epistolary effusions of the deceased Ladywhich are about as poor specimens of theology as any living Lady of his school is capable of producing. And so in spite of all that is said against authority in matters of religion, our opponents not only play off Luther against uswith what success I have endeavoured to show-but set before us what an aged sickly female wrote to her correspondents about 50 or 60 years ago, and what a Dr. W. wrote to a Mrs. G. at a still earlier period; and lest these should fail to convince the public, that God has actually pardoned the unbelieving and impenitent, and after all will punish them, they bring upon us the sayings of "that eminent and learned servant of Jesus Christ, Mr. James Fraser of Brae, sometime minister of the gospel at Culross, while he was prisoner on the Bass for the testimony of Jesus." The array brought against us is really formidable; for there are Reformers, Covenanters, old Ladies, and older Doctors. and if we add to these the author of the little books and penny tracts that are put forth so copiously in support of the heresies we have been considering, it may look as if we should be utterly overwhelmed. But I beg leave to remind the Gentlemen who are so busy with their authorities, that such a mode of settling points of faith is neither rational nor scriptural, and most inconsistently resorted to by those who reject the use of it even so far as mere assistance and

advice are concerned; that were it at all admissible, Mr. Erskine and his coadjutors must be fully aware that we could produce at least five hundred for one against them—for, indeed, by their own confession, their sect is small as well as despised, and they are fain to represent their peculiar notions as a sort of occult truths, revealed to them only, and unknown to all the world beside; and that, when we come to a particular enumeration of the masters and the mistresses in Israel, whom they muster in opposition to us, they are found to have sadly mistaken what they so confidently adduced, and to have been catching at a straw when they thought themselves safely floating in an ark. As to Mr. James Fraser of Brae, I have to offer a few remarks which deserve their notice.

- 1. First, are they quite sure that the work from which they have quoted was really from the pen of that persecuted individual? I should like to have their proofs of the fact, for I believe it to be the general opinion that he left no manuscripts such as that from which the Treatise on Faith was printed. That manuscript was not in his own handwriting, as the publisher falsely alleged, but in the handwriting of others, who must have been totally incompetent to judge of the genuineness of what they wrote. But, supposing the work to have been the composition of Mr. Fraser,
- 2. I observe, in the second place, that he did not entertain the same opinions that are held and propagated by Mr. Erskine. Mr. Erskine's doctrine makes no account of faith as to getting the pardon; but Mr. Fraser's makes faith absolutely necessary for that purpose, just as the propounding of a sovereign's act of forgiveness is essential in law to prevent the execution of the condemned criminal. Mr. Erskine makes salvation and sanctification the same; but Mr. Fraser includes pardon under salvation. Mr.

Erskine makes faith and repentance the same; but Mr. Fraser, more closely following the Bible, makes them different, and considers both as necessary to forgiveness and salvation, &c.

- 3. Thirdly, I must notice that the quotations from Fraser's treatise are mutilated and garbled;—those passages being left out which would have modified his meaning, and which, though they would not have proved him to be on our side of the question, would have shown that he is not so much on the side of Mr. Erskine, as the unfair representation given of his sentiments would lead us to suppose.
- 4. Lastly, why did not Mr. Erskine take care that the readers of the volume, containing the extracts from Fraser's Treatise, should see exactly the length to which this chosen authority on the subject of universal redemption has carried his doctrine? He maintains that Christ laid down his life for those that ultimately perish-in which Mr. Erskine agrees with him, though he does not agree with Mr. Erskine that pardon is actually bestowed, and individually applied, where there is neither faith nor repentance - but he goes farther, and maintains that Christ suffered and died for those who notwithstanding perish, " with this intention and purpose, that they might be made fit objects of gospel vengeance and wrath, wrath of a gospel kind, as a sorer and worse punishment, than law-wrath: for which end they were given to him and purchased by him!" How does this harmonise with Mr. Erskine's theory of redeeming love? What does he say to his new ally? Is there any thing in the "common phraseology" more revolting to him than this? But our opponents not only have no objection to human authority when it can be made to speak a word or two for their peculiarities, but seem to care very little about either the ge-

nuineness or the character of the authority which they bring forward in their support. They are as welcome to Mr. Fraser, whom neither Calvinist nor Arminian can acknowledge, as they are to the old Lady and the Doctor. The word of God is the standard of truth, and to that word we appeal, against the tenets, equally of Mr. Fraser and Mr. Erskine.

Note Y, p. 292.

This strange language occurs in Mr. Erskine's "Unconditional Freeness," p. 110. It is so very much away from correct phraseology, that I cannot refrain from suspecting it to be indicative of the Socinian belief, that God is altogether love. I see strong expressions in this volume indeed, respecting the holiness of God, and the evil of sin. But when I read those passages in which God's compassion is celebrated-when I observe the exceeding carefulness with which divine threatenings, God's sovereignty, and the punishments of hell, are avoided, or the studied and unscriptural softness with which they are mentioned-and when I mark the great tendency of the whole theory to make wicked men look for universal salvation, as well as to believe in universal pardon, I cannot help fearing that Mr. Erskine has some speculations at least, such as I have alluded to, floating in his mind, and that his disciples may be insensibly led to adopt the error, and to plead his tuition. Whatever excuses and explanations may be adduced, there is something too significant in God's "holy love directed against sin," to allow me to have any confident persuasion, that Mr. Erskine's views of God's nature and character are

as hostile as they should be to what has been taught in the school of Priestley and Belsham.

Note Z, p. 302.

The following is Mr. Erskine's statement on this subject.

"In the meantime, however, the pardon stands at the door, and the deliverer is in it, and knocks for admittance. The pardon is universal; and still it may with perfect propriety and consistency be said, that until man receives it into his heart, he is under condemnation. For he is excluded, or excludes himself from the only good and joy in the universe;—he is away from the God of love, and thus he is full of wrath, and encompassed with wrath;—he is away from the God of light, and thus he is in outer darkness; and this is, and must be his inheritance, until he admits the gospel into his heart. It is quite evident, then, that a man may be thoughtless and for ever miserable, although he has this pardon; and that he can derive no possible benefit from it, except by believing it." Unconditional Freeness, p. 143.

I know not how Mr. Erskine reconciles this passage with that other passage in which he tells us, that if we have Christ we have pardon, but that if we have not Christ we have not pardon. But contradictions are to be found often in his very confused treatises. I question much—nay I do not believe, that he is able to think systematically of the various opinions that he has given to the world. An attempt to do so, could he but be persuaded to make it, would probably convince him that his main positions are erroneous, or at least make him less confident of their accuracy and truth.

Note AA, p. 313.

Mr. Erskine says, "A very common idea of the object of the gospel is, that it is to show how men may obtain pardon; whereas, in truth, its object is to show, how pardon for men has been obtained, or rather to show how God has taken occasion, by the entrance of sin into the world, to manifest the unsearchable riches of holy compassion. And it is to present this most important truth (as I cannot but consider it) to some who may not have thought of it before, that I have published this book,-and it is for this reason that I have chosen to depart from the common phraseology on the subject,-because I have found the common phraseology liable to misinterpretation. Thus I have observed that even the phrase free offer of pardon is so interpreted, that the very existence of the freedom is made to depend on the acceptance of the offer. The benefit of the pardon does most assuredly depend on its being accepted, but the pardon itself is laid up in Christ Jesus, and depends on nothing but the unchangeable character of God." Unconditional Freeness, p. 130.

Here Mr. Erskine represents the "common phraseology" of this country as only "liable to misinterpretation." It is not in itself doctrinally unsound—it has only such a degree of ambiguity about it as that people are apt to put a wrong construction upon it. 'Indeed! And why should Mr. Erskine be so very anxious about such a matter? If the phraseology is not inherently heterodox, and if it be used by the people at large with an orthodox meaning, who were to be injured by its mere liability to misinterpretation? Not the people at large—but I suppose, such learned persons as Mr. Erskine! And he proposes to take away this liability to misinterpretation, by altering the

phraseology, so that it may convey the same meaning, but To whom? To himself in a much more distinct manner. of course, and a few more-for the people at large understood it well enough in its ordinary use. And was he not afraid that, by such a change in the " common phraseology," he might overset the people's ideas altogether, or at least introduce a great deal of confusion among them, by the uncommon phraseology that he was to substitute in its place? Was he really hopeful of mending matters as to mere diction or verbal expression, by calling justification a sense of pardon-and faith in Christ, a belief that we are pardoned whether we believe or not-and faith, repentance, and repentance, faith-and salvation, sanctification-and heaven, a holy character, and hell, a wicked character, &c. &c. &c.? Was there not reason to apprehend that the few would bamboozle and mislead the many, much more than the many could possibly have inflicted these evils on the few? Yet Mr. Erskine, in his great consideration and kindness to that small number whose principles were so unsettled, and whose intellect was so obtuse, set himself to publish some hundreds of duodecimo pages in order to amend the "common phraseology" which he found "liable to misinterpretation!"

In the course of a very short time, however, he made a discovery. He discovered that the fault lay not in the phraseology, but in the doctrine which it contained. And though I think there is some reason to conclude that he had made the discovery of unsound doctrine, when he affected to be puzzled with nothing more than obscure and doubtful phraseology, he very soon became more explicit in his charges, and arraigned the religious principles and character of those by whom the common phraseology was and is employed, in the following terms of bitter, and unsparing, and indiscriminate severity.

"Man's religion dishonours God, both in the attainment of its object, and in the means which it employs for attaining it. It considers God merely as a power that can inflict injuries, and bestow benefits. It does not consider him as in himself the Fountain of living waters. It does not make God's character to be a matter of any importance. It does not consider him as a Father. It denies both his love and his holiness. It tramples under foot the Son of God, and all that is contained in his incarnation, and death, and resurrection. This, I say, is man's religion, whether it assumes the name, and uses the phrases of that religion: or takes any other name, or uses any other phrases. And this I believe to be the prevalent religion of our land,-taught from the pulpits and received by the people. I don't speak of the worldly people, but of the religious people. This may appear a harsh and presumptuous saving, but I feel it to be the kindest thing that I can say, because I am persuaded it is the truth." Introductory Essay, pp. xx, xxi.

Of Mr. Erskine's "Unconditional Freeness," the third edition from which I have quoted, is dated in 1829; his Introductory Essay is dated 1830. So that in the course of a twelvementh or less, he has made wonderful progress in his perception and understanding of the evil against which he directs his efforts. His progress has been no less wonderful, in the arrogance and violence with which he has thought it necessary to deliver himself, against the objects of his hostility. Did he really not know that the prevalent doctrine in 1829, was exactly what the prevalent doctrine is in 1830? If he did not, with what decency can such an ignorant man take it upon him to become the censor, the instructor, the guide of his country and his age? If he did, why did he talk as if his anxiety was confined to the correction of the "common phraseo-

logy"—that being "liable to misinterpretation," and as if the opinions which it expressed had little or nothing erroneous in them? Let Mr. Erskine embrace either alternative, and then vindicate his conduct.

But, however that be, Mr. Erskine is now convinced that the prevalent religion is a false one,-and so false, as to deserve all the unmixed abuse that he has thrown upon it, and to call for that sentence of proscription which he has pronounced upon those who teach it, and those who attend their ministrations. I feel myself urged by a sense of duty, and a regard to justice, to speak plainly out on this subject. And I ask, is Mr. Erskine entitled to hold such language, and to expect either approbation or acquiescence? Even though he had been peculiarly gifted, the simple consideration, that, on points which had been deeply and duly discussed ages before he came into the world, he stood almost alone among thousands of learned theologians, and tens of thousands of Christian and holy men, should have filled him with diffidence, and brought from him humble inquiry, instead of unfaultering and prophetic denunciation. But, really, when I look to the proofs which he has given us of his capacity,—when I perceive in his works such inaccuracy in thinking, such feebleness in argument, such bluuders in criticism, such a destitution of all those high qualities of intellect and erudition, which authorize a man to come forward as a reformer in Biblical theology.—I cannot help expressing my astonishment at the tone that he has assumed, in holding up the religion taught by all the ministers, and received by all the people of this country, as deserving of that deep damnation to which he has consigned it, in his deliberate, solemn, and published judgment. Considering all the circumstances of the case, let him have that sincerity to the utmost, for which I willingly give him credit, there is a degree of presumptuousness in the attitude he has taken up for which I can find no apology. The very singularity of his dogma should have led him to suspect himself of rashness and error, as it should teach others to listen to his harangues, and to peruse his books, with the greatest caution and distrust. His pursuing the opposite course, and his example being followed by those, whose nonage should make them teachable and not dictatorial, is sufficient to show that if there be nothing in his system to fasten down upon it the character of intolerance, there is at least something in himself that should impair his credit—that should destroy his influence, as the propounder of a new theory of the gospel.

The magisterial style of Mr. Erskine in the passage under review is the more unbefitting, when we recollect the changeableness of his own creed. Many things are essential to a man before he can be at liberty to anathematize all his fellow Christians. But one of them unquestionably is consistency. And that is none of Mr. Erskine's characteristics. From the commencement of his Christian career down to the present day, it is notorious to all his acquaintance, and not unknown to many beyond that circle, that his religious opinions have been varying from time to time-that even on topics of importance, his views were always remarkable for their being singular, and as remarkable for their being unsteady—that in conversing on his peculiar notions with those who disputed their soundness, and referred to what he had himself formerly maintained, he scouted the idea of being now responsible for his former sentiments-and that his friends on whom he urged his theories, were not unfrequently tempted to promise submission, on the condition that he would engage to adhere to them himself for six months to come! Such things I should not have

thought it proper to mention, had his accusations been pervaded in any measure by a spirit of forbearance and modesty. But they are necessary, and I scruple not to state them, in order to meet that harsh invective which he has poured out upon the "religious people," and the Christian pastors of this country; that Vatican-like authority with which he has excommunicated them all, as enemies alike to God and man. Such treatment would have come with a bad grace from any individual, however staid in his principles, and however uniform in his progress: but it is only not thoroughly ludicrous, because it is deeply offensive and disgusting, when it comes from a man who has been a perfect Proteus in his travels through the Bible, and whom it is impossible to fix down for any length of time even to a Confession of his own making.

And then, is what we have quoted from Mr. Erskine's Introductory Essay, to be considered as a specimen of that temper with which the new gospel-the universal-pardon dogma, teaches its adherents to speak of those by whom it is not blindly and submissively received? Mr. Erskine and his friends are continually talking-I must now say, canting about love-that blessed word is never out of their mouths-and it is made the whole of salvation to love God and man. But is there really an exhibition of love to that God who, they say, has pardoned his impenitent and unbelieving creatures, and is there any love to man whom, though impenitent and unbelieving, the God of love has redeemed by the sacrifice of his own Son, in those uncharitable and damnatory sentences which Mr. Erskine has levelled against all who fill the pulpits and attend the churches of the land? He seems aware that his saying will be accounted harsh as well as presumptuous, and so it will by all but the relentless bigots of his own little sect;

but he "feels it to be the kindest thing he can say, because he is persuaded it is the truth;" and if this is the kindness of Mr. Erskine, what will be his severity, and if this is the native result of that truth, which he flatters himself he has discovered, what may we expect him to utter when he is so unhappy as to fall into error?

Let it not be thought that I express myself too strongly. When I look to the charges brought against us who are the ministers of religion, and against the people committed to our care, with the most indiscriminating and reckless vehemence, I cannot allow that my expressions are too strong-I even feel it necessary to repress the indignation which is justly awakened. Among other things, we are accused by him of preaching and believing a religion, which "does not make God's character to be a matter of any importance"-which "denies both his love and his holiness." -which "tramples under foot the Son of God, and all that is contained in his incarnation, and death, and resurrection!" Even if he had produced a much more able case in support of this calumnious dittay, and been joined by more and better coadjutors than he can yet boast of, I should have thought that his religion would have prompted a gentler and more moderate style. But really when I consider the number and attainments of his associates in the warfare he is carrying on against what he calls the "prevalent religion of our land," and when I read the treatises-full of perverse interpretations of Scripture, unsubstantiated averments, false representations, and confused, misty, unintelligible paragraphs, for which there is no name in our books of rhetoric,-by which he has laboured to uphold the doctrine of his newly discovered or newly invented plan of salvation, I cannot find any language which I should think too strong to convey the reprobation which his assault deserves, except I were to adopt and employ his own.

I would, however, separate his Christianity from his folly and arrogance, and refrain from saying all that I think, or all that is merited;—only let this forbearance be duly estimated.

After I read the tirade on which I have been animadverting, I fraukly own that I almost regretted what I had said in my Tenth Discourse concerning the personal worth of those who take the lead in advocating the new views. I do not mean to say that I would have denied them what they so unblushingly deny to us, the character of Christians; but certainly I would have modified my eulogium, so as to bring it nearer to what I now find to be the truth. The "Introductory Essay," containing such uncharitableness, such wrathful declamation, such narrow-minded bigotry, such assumptions of exclusive knowledge of the way of salvation, such attempts to render the ministers of religion odious in the eyes of their people,—the Introductory Essay containing all this, was not published or did not come into my hands, till I had nearly printed my series; and I have printed exactly what I preached in reference to the men whose peculiar views I was endeavouring to ex-But my readers will so far understand the qualifications with which I wish my opinion of them to be accompanied, as to make it unnecessary for me to enter into any further explanation.

"I do not speak of the authorized standards of any church," says Mr. Erskine, "I speak of the religion taught to the people. This is the fountain-head of the leprosy," &c. And why is it that Mr. Erskine does not speak of the authorized standards of any church? Or, rather, why does he say so? Is it possible for any candid man, writing as Mr. Erskine has done, to omit all reference, even in his own mind, to the standards of the church of Scotland? Is he not aware that these standards teach the very doc-

trines which he has been at so much pains to reprobate? Is he not aware that they are the standards, not merely of the Established church, but also of the Secession, Relief, and Cameronian churches, and that they, therefore, influence the religious belief of the greatest part by far of the Scottish population? Is he not aware that the children in all these communions are taught the Shorter Catechism, which gives definitions of justification, faith, repentance, &c. in direct opposition to what he calls the true doctrine of the gospel? Is he not aware, that of the other communions which exist in this country, as the Independents, the Baptists, &c. the great majority, though they reject our standards as standards, and oppose them as to baptism, ecclesiastical government, and other things of this kind, yet do hold them as sound and scriptural in all the points with regard to which he holds them to be fundamentally and grossly anti-evangelical? And, this being the case, again I ask, why has he disclaimed all reference to the authorized standards of the church of Scotland, while he proscribes the ministers that preach from them, or conformably to them, and the people that are taught at school and at church what they contain, as covered over with the leprosy of their doctrines on the pardon of sin? Was Mr. Erskine unwilling to censure or to frighten that individual friend, whom he represents as almost the only Clergyman in Scotland who preaches the gospel, inasmuch as he preaches what Mr. Erskine believes to be the gospel, and what is in obvious and broad hostility to the Confession of Faith, which in the most solemn manner, every Clergyman in the Established Church declares to be the Confession of his Faith? what other reason could he have for being so chary in meddling with, or alluding to the standards of our Church, when by attacking these, and proving their contrariety to

Scripture, he could have done more for the alleged truth, than he could by any sweeping indictment against the Christians or religious inhabitants of Scotland? Whatever individual ministers may do, nothing is more certain than that the great bulk of the clerical body in this land, whether in the establishment or out of it, do in their preaching agree with the standards, in altogether rejecting Mr. Erskine's dogma of universal pardon; and how it comes to pass, therefore, that Mr. Erskine should have deemed it either dutiful or expedient to leave these standards out of consideration, is a mystery of which I profess myself unable to conjecture any satisfactory or feasable explanation.

But though Mr. Erskine talked of the "common phraseology," as that which in his volume on the "Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel," he was desirous to correct, on account of its being "liable to misinterpretation," he did not seem altogether satisfied with the substantial doctrines that prevail in this country respecting the gospel. For he says, "a very common idea of the object of the gospel is, that it is to show how men may obtain pardon; whereas, in truth, its object is to show how pardon for men has been obtained." This is a good specimen of a style of remark in which Mr. Erskine often indulges. palms upon his opponents what they do not hold, and then contrasts it with something of his own-expecting that if we reject their statement, we must as a matter of course embrace his. The common idea of the object of the gospel is not that it is to show how men may obtain pardon. That is only one of its objects. Those whom Mr. Erskine thus represents, hold that the object of the gospel-if all its objects are to be comprehended in one-is to show how men may obtain every blessing that they need as rational, fallen, recoverable, and immortal beings. And as necessarily connected with that, and as preliminary to it, they

hold that the gospel shows how pardon has been obtained: meaning by that, the scheme of redemption, by which God has been pleased to provide pardon, and all other saving benefits, for the sinners who are redeemed. But what is Mr. Erskine's account of the object of the gospel? Why it is this-" to shew how pardon for men has been obtained." And is this the sole object of the gospel? Then its showing would be of very little use, even according to Mr. Erskine's own principles. For he has expressly told us that the pardon obtained is of no benefit at all unless it be believed in. Very well; and is it not essential, therefore, to the completeness of the gospel that it show us how we are to treat the fact of pardon having been obtained, so as that it may prove useful to us? Mr. Erskine's account of the object of the gospel is thus altogether imperfect. Ours is not, for it embraces both the fact of redemption being wrought out, and the means by which the fact is to be made available to our deliverance and happiness. The difference between Mr. Erskine and us is this-we hold that pardon is not bestowed upon any except those who believe, while he holds that pardon is already bestowed upon every man whether he believes or But then his pardon bestowed is, according to his. own acknowledgment, of as little use to the sinner, as our pardon not bestowed, till the sinner believes. Now we say that the gospel has for its object to show how the pardon is to be obtained and made beneficial; and he says that the gospel has for its object, merely to show how the pardon has been obtained, without alluding to the mode of its becoming the instrument of salvation and happiness.

Note BB, p. 315.

I have said in the preceding note that Mr. Erskine's disclaiming all allusion to the standards of the Church, when railing against " the prevalent religion of the land" is unaccountable. But I begin to suspect that his object was deeper and more artful than would have been supposed. He advances various charges which I have no hesitation in rebutting as unfounded. But by levelling them against what is thought and spoken only, he might be safer from any successful contradiction; for though others were acquainted with no particular instances in which the alleged error had been maintained, it might be supposed that he would not assert what he had not himself witnessed or had sufficient reason to believe-whereas had he fixed on the Confession of Faith or the Larger or Shorter Catechisms, or any book of acknowledged authority, we had only to look at the arraigned passages, in order to be satisfied at once whether the arraignment was just or groundless. Can this be the reason for Mr. Erskine's strange preterition of the standards? At all events I have to complain that his misrepresentations of our doctrine on faith are very gross-so much so, that did I regard their author. as a man of acute intellect, I would account them wilful. As it is, I must ascribe them to obtuseness and prejudice.

Mr. Erskine will have it, that we make faith a condition of pardon, in the obnoxious sense of that term. We deny this, without qualification or reserve. But no matter; it does not suit Mr. Erskine's purpose to take our denial; and if he does not ascribe it to intended concealment, he ascribes it to our not comprehending our own doctrine; for, in edition after edition, and in essay after essay, and in page after page, he insists upon it that we do mean what

he alleges, and that we do mean, and can mean nothing else. He says that we put faith and obedience on the same footing,that we look upon pardon as a reward for believing, or faith as the price of pardon-that we expect to be pardoned because we believe—that we earn pardon by faith—that we make faith the ground of a sinner's hope and confidencethat we betake ourselves to our own faith as our prop, &c. We disavow all such sentiments, as being equally unscriptural and dangerous, and at variance with all our views on the subject. Still, however, Mr. Erskine is better acquainted with our creed than we are ourselves; and such a representation being very necessary to render his lucubrations more needful, and the title of his book more significant by contrast, he will cram it down our throats, that, in our system, pardon is, in right mercantile phrase, the premium To quote proofs of his pertinacity in pressing this most gratuitous misstatement, would be to quote a great part of his books. But perhaps it may be enough to lay before my readers the following extract from the Essays on Unconditional Freeness, p. 123:-

"Now, what meaning is to be attached to such an expression as pardoned by faith? I can only conceive two meanings,—the one is, pardoned on account of faith, i. e. actually receiving forgiveness as a mark of God's approbation of faith; the other is, taking pardon for granted, or believing that we are pardoned. In the first of these meanings, pardon is really forgiveness; in the second, it is a sense of forgiveness, which is exactly what I understand by the term justification. In the first meaning, pardon is consequent on the faith, and secured by it; in the second, the pardon exists before the faith, and only becomes a matter of personal feeling in consequence of being believed. In the first case, there is a change on the sentence of the judge produced by the faith of the criminal; in the

second, there is a change produced by it only on the feeling of the criminal himself."

Mr. Erskine can only conceive two meanings that may be attributed to the expression pardoned by faith. But, happily, Mr. Erskine's powers of conception are not the standard of what is either true or possible. Of the two meanings supposed by him, the one which he has adopted is one of which the words are not susceptible; the other which he attributes to us we reject, because we deem it contrary to the mind of the Holy Spirit.

When a man is said to be pardoned, he is uniformly understood to get what he did not before possess. He must be either pardoned or unpardoned. If he is unpardoned, his being pardoned puts him into a new and different state. If he is already pardoned, it is absurd to speak of him being pardoned or as coming into a new and different state, for his state is exactly the same that it was. The question is not at all about a sense of pardon. Pardon and a sense of pardon are two distinct things. Pardon may exist where the individual pardoned has no sense or feeling of the pardon conferred. And he may have a sense of pardon,—that is, he may be under the delusion of thinking that he is pardoned, when he is still unpardoned. But to talk of pardon as a sense of pardon, is to confound both language and ideas,—and though it may suit Mr. Erskine's theory.*

[•] Mr. Erskine's love of theory is remarkably strong, and pervades his whole writings. He absolutely revels in conjecture. Plain truth lies before him; but he turns aside to feast on hypothesis. And the truth, when he does embrace it, is so mixed up with the hypothesis, that the inattentive or ignorant reader believes what he should reject, and rejects what he should believe. A most extraordinary instance of his ruling passion is to be found in "Unconditional Freeness," p. 92,

it is agreeable neither to Scripture nor to common sense. Pardon is pardon, or, as he phrases it, "pardon is really forgiveness."

But "pardoned," or obtaining pardon, "by faith," does not necessarily mean being pardoned on account of faith. When Mr. Erskine says that it means getting a sense of forgiveness by faith, is his proposition this, that a man gets a sense of forgiveness on account of his faith? No, assuredly: then why should he put an interpretation upon our language, which he will not allow to be put upon his own? He will say, that faith is the natural way of getting a sense of forgiveness. We say, that faith is the appointed way of getting forgiveness itself. And, since the two blessings are on a level, forgiveness being acknowledged by Mr. Erskine himself to be of no use or benefit whatever to the sinner without a sense of it, we differ from him only by ascribing to grace, what he ascribes to nature. But if he insists that he does not mean that the sinner gets a sense of forgiveness on account of faith, so we insist that we don't mean that the sinner gets real forgiveness on account of faith.

Still, however, pardoned * by faith, is a Scripture ex-

where he enters on a speculation regarding Adam and Eve, which is extended through two dezen of pages, and in the course of which he supposes what our first parents would think, and feel, and say, and do; and upon these fancies—considered by him as "conceivable and probable in their circumstances,"—he grounds an argument for his grand doctrine of universal pardon! Did not this strike himself as immeasurably absurd? I am sure it must strike every one else in that light.

"" Justified by faith," is strictly the Scripture expression; but as justification includes pardon, "pardoned by faith" is quite scriptural;—though the phrase justified by faith, or justifica-

pression, and it must have a meaning, both orthodox and rational. Nothing appears to me more easy than to discover that meaning, and were Mr. Erskine at a loss for it, I would be glad to help him in the search. But really it is strange that he should affect so much difficulty in the matter, when he himself has given a most sound and satisfactory explanation. "Christ' came to the world," says he. * "and pardon was and is contained in him. Those who receive him, receive pardon in him; those who do not receive him, do not receive pardon." And again,+ "if we would have pardon and eternal life, we must have Christ; for these gifts are, in reality, not separable from him."-"If we receive not him, we receive not them." Here the whole mystery of the case is unfolded, and I wonder how Mr. Erskine should have been so much perplexed by it, when he had the solution of it in his own mind and in his own book. Pardon is to be found in Christ alone, as all spiritual blessings are; of course if we have not Christ, we cannot possibly have pardon, but if we have Christ, then, by necessary consequence, we have pardon. So long as we reject Christ or do not believe in Christ, we are not pardoned, we are in a state of condemnation, we are exactly as we would have been had no Saviour been sent; but the moment that we exercise faith in Christ, or, according to the "common phraseology" of this benighted and atheistical land, " receive Christ and rest upon him alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel," that moment we are actually, fully, and for ever invested with the privilege, denominated pardon. And this is precisely what we find

tion by faith conveys the important truth, that pardon and acceptance are inseparably combined in the gospel dispensation.

^{*} Unconditional Freeness, p. 178. + Do. p. 121.

explicitly stated in the Bible. "He that hath the Son, hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."*
"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth upon him."

I have no objections to say that those who are really pardoned, were pardoned before they believed, if the language is properly understood. I have no objection to say that they were pardoned on the cross, or even that they were pardoned eternally-provided nothing more be meant than that God had from eternity decreed to pardon them, and that Christ, by his vicarious suffering, made it consistent with God's justice and glory to pardon them. But I maintain that the decree of God, and the death of Christ, had respect, both of them, to the exercise of faith. That is to say, God did not decree to pardon, and Christ's death was not endured to pardon, any who should reject the Saviour, or refuse to believe in him. The faith was decreed, and was a fruit of Christ's death, as much as the pardon itself was, each of them having its place in the great scheme of redemption. And, according to this scheme, God does not actually apply or bestow the pardon which he had decreed, and which Christ died for, until the sinner flees for refuge to Christ, or receives him, or believes in him. For this statement we have the authority of Mr. Erskine himself in the passages quoted above. And it would be just as proper and correct to say that the sinner had faith when Christ died, or that he had faith from all eternity, as that he had pardon, They are both the subjects of God's predestination; they are both the result of Christ's sacrifice; they are both gifted when it seems good to Him who is the author of

all gifts; and it is his wise, holy, and sovereign appointment that pardon shall not be bestowed till the sinner believes, or that the sinner shall not receive the pardon except in consequence of his receiving Christ.

Notes CC and DD, p. 316 and 321.

We give the following extracts from Mr. Erskine's writings as illustrative of what is said in the paragraphs to which this note refers.

" I am persuaded that faith in the gospel is always, and must be always, an appropriating faith, and that there is no true faith in the gospel which is not an appropriating faith. When a man opens his eyes upon the sun, he necessarily appropriates his share of its light, and he cannot look upon the sun without making this appropriation. In like manner, no man can look upon the sun of righteousness, which is the love of God manifested in the making and accepting of a propitiation for the sins of the world, without appropriating his own share of its blessed light." Unconditional Freeness, p. 137. "The gospel reveals to us the existence of a fund of Divine love, containing in it a propitiation for all sin, and a promise to destroy all the works of the devil,-the sin,-the misery,-the death, which he has introduced; and this fund is general to the whole race,-every individual has a property in it, of the same kind that he has in the common air and light of this world, which he appropriates and uses simply by opening his mouth or his eyes. Is it not clear, that as soon as any one really knows that such a fund exists, and that it is, indeed, the gift of God to the world, and the common property of all the individuals in the world, just as the material air or

light is, he will immediately infer his own particular interest in it, and enter into the enjoyment of it," &c. Do. page 116.

"But the language of the Bible, in inviting sinners to God, is so free, that we must either suppose that there is a deception in the Bible, or we must suppose that every man has the power of coming to God if he chooses." Do. p. 61.

"Where then is election? It is here, that when this love was poured upon all, and this forgiveness sealed to all, and the power to believe it conferred upon all—and yet no man would believe it," &c. Introductory Essay, p. lxix.

Another figure of which Mr. Erskine appears to be enamoured, from his using it very often, is contained in the following proposition, "the pardon is given to all, it is laid down at every door."* This is a very ambiguous account of the matter. Mr. Erskine's doctrine is, that every man is pardoned—that is, the penalty due for sin is remitted, and the sinner delivered from his obligation to suffer it. But how can this be, if the pardon is only at the door, and not taken into the house, and actually applied to the person for whom it is intended? If he is to be subjected to the penalty notwithstanding, of what avail is it that pardon is lying at the door? And if the penalty is removed, then must not the pardon be-not at the doorbut admitted and appropriated? A man is starving with cold and hunger in his cottage; will it warm him, or feed him, or prevent his perishing, that a basket of bread, or a hundred weight of coals, is laid at his door? Certainly not: his perishing is prevented by the coals and the bread being taken in, and personally applied to the perishing individu-And in like manner, a pardon laid at the door of a

Unconditional Freeness, p. 182.

condemned criminal will not prevent him suffering the award of judgment—it is in truth a nonentity till it is brought in, and pleaded in bar of punishment, and thus made available for his personal deliverance.

In one place,* Mr. Erskine says that "Christ is the gift which is laid down at each door," and in another place,+ he says, that "pardon is contained in Christ." Well then; not only is not every man really pardoned by having a pardon laid down at his door, but he cannot get pardon except by taking in Christ, in whom this pardon is to be found; and indeed Mr. Erskine himself elsewhere! affirms that "if we would have pardon and eternal life, we must have Christ; for these gifts are, in reality, not separable from him." So that after all Mr. Erskine's positive averments about every man being already pardoned, it turns out that pardon is only "laid down at every man's door,"-that this pardon is in Christ alone, and that without taking Christ, or in other words, without believing in him, the pardon is not obtained!

But while Mr. Erskine affirms that the pardon is in Christ, he also affirms that Christ is in the pardon; for, he says, if the pardon stands at the door, and the Deliverer is in it, and knocks for admittance." The deliverer—from what? Of course, from that to which the pardon refers—from the penalty to which the transgressor has become liable. This other metaphor, then, conveys the same idea—namely that there is no deliverance from guilt—no remission of sins—no pardon for the guilty, except by believing in Christ. And thus again Mr. Erskine's tropes have brought him unawares to the good old doctrine.

To complete this view of the inconsistency of Mr. Ers-

Unconditional Freeness, p. 121.
 † Do. p. 178.
 † Do. p. 143.

kine's tenets, let us attend for a moment to his notion of penalty and of pardon. He holds* that temporal death is the only penalty denounced by the law-that pardon is the reversal of a penalty—and that the resurrection of every man is a proof that every man is pardoned. Now, according to Mr. Erskine's former statement, nobody gets the pardon unless he takes in Christ, who is both in the pardon, and has the pardon in himself, and who stands at the door and knocks for admittance-agreeably, I suppose, to the declaration of John,+ " He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life;" that is to say, nobody is to be raised again except those who receive Christ, and have him, and believe in him. And yet every man is to be raised, because every man is pardoned, and the pardon consists in the resurrection, which is just the reversal of the penalty of death! From this most absurd conclusion, there is no way of escape for Mr. Erskine, except what may be found in his maintaining that as there is in his system a semi-redemption, so there is also a semi-believing :--that as every man is pardoned, but only some are saved, so every man believes effectually to a certain extent, but as effectually disbelieves with respect to all beyond!

Note EE, page 336.

I intended to have discussed at some length the doctrine contained in the "Marrow of Modern Divinity." But to do the subject justice, more room would have been required than my limits permit. And indeed it is of less consequence, seeing that whatever may be said for or against

^{*} Introductory Essay, p. xlviii.

^{† 1} John v. 12.

the views which that volume and its supporters have given of assurance, they differ toto calo from Mr. Erskine on Faith, Pardon, Election, Justification, Salvation, and every point almost that he has touched upon in his Essays. In my own opinion, the language used in the Marrow of Modern Divinity is frequently unguarded, and the doctrinal statements sometimes incorrect, unscriptural, and not accordant with the Standards of our Church. But I also think that the act of the General Assembly is liable to similar objections-that the alarm occasioned by the marrow doctrine was somewhat greater than was necessaryand that it led to declarations as unsound as any thing in the productions by which it was excited. The following sentence extracted from the writings of one of the Marrowmen as they are called, will show how contrary their sentiments were to Mr. Erskine's, "I do not say the first language of faith is, Christ died for me, or, I was elected from eternity; but the language of faith is, 'God offers a slain and crucified Saviour to me, and I take the slain Christ for my Saviour, and in my taking and embracing of him as offered, I have ground to conclude I was elected, and that he died for me in particular, and not before." "*

I beg to recommend, on the subject of assurance, as it was treated by Hervey, Marshall, &c. a small volume entitled "Letters and Dialogues between Theron, Paulinus, and Aspasio, by Joseph Bellamy of New England."

Note FF, p. 343.

I could have easily enlarged this catalogue of absurdities; but my readers may think it ample enough to convince

^{*} Eb. Erskine on Saving Faith.

any one that the author of the books which contain them, is little qualified to lead this erring generation back to the paths of wisdom and of truth. Indeed were I not convinced of his piety and reverence for sacred things, I should be inclined to suspect that he was trying to throw burlesque on the subject he is discussing, or to ascertain how many paradoxes he could get the public to swallow. A misapplication of Scripture-a flat contradiction, in one place, of what he had said in another,—these things and such things as these, instead of making him uneasy and afraid, seem to be the very element in which he finds himself at home. For example-I cannot resist the temptation of giving one or two additional instances of this which occur to me-he asserts,* "To every individual of the apostate family was it said, 'Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee,'" and he asserts it over again in another page, as if by reiteration an error would in his hands become a truth: he makes this assertion, though he knows-very well that the language which he quotes from the Biblet was not addressed " to every individual of the apostate family," but only to ancient Israel, and that the redemption mentioned is not the pardon of those sins which prevail in the world. but the removal of temporal judgments which Israel had deserved, if indeed it is not the original redemption out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage. This is an example of his misapplication of Scripture: the next is one of his sturdy endeavours to make one passage of Scripture contradict another. In one placet after giving out the proposition that "the gospel is the declaration to every creature that God loves him, and has washed away his sins in the blood of the Lamb," and that this "de-

Unconditional Freeness, p. 41. † Isaiah xliv. 22.
 ‡ Introductory Essay, p. xxvi.

clares to him something in God, which is an immovable ground of confidence,"-he adds, that this confidence " sets its seal to the record of the Father, that he hath given us eternal life in his Son,"-evidently making the record mean, that the sins of every creature are already washed away in the blood of the Lamb, or that, by the shedding of that blood, eternal life is in the possession of every creature. But, forgetting this broad and unqualified statement which he had made of every creature having eternal life, he afterwards coolly and gravely informs us, in despite of himself, that "as the eternal life consists in the knowledge of God, as manifested in Christ, those who have not this knowledge have not the eternal life." Such is Mr. Erskine's treatment of "every creature," that he will neither let him have eternal life, nor will he let him want it,-and all this on the authority, if we may credit Mr. Erskine, of the word of God!

Note GG, p. 354.

I refer to the following passages of Scripture as illustrations of my meaning:—1 Peter ii. 24; 1 John i. vi. 10; Ephes. i. 3—13; Rom. viii.; Matt. x. 32; John x. 27, 28, xiv. 23, xvi. 27; Heb. v. 9; 1 Peter iii. 12; 2 Peter i. 1— 12; Acts v. 31, 32; Philip. ii. 5—17; Col. i. 21, 22; Titus ii. 9—15; Matt. v. 3—13.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES.

Note H H.

Mr. Erskine is pleased to make salvation and sanctification synonymous. For this there is no authority but his own, and he evidently has recourse to it because his theory will not stand without such aid. But we must have Scripture warrant for it, else it is inadmissible. It is a subject of life and death. The glory of God and the safety of man are concerned in the present question; and let Mr. Erskine be as devout and holy as he may, he must not be allowed to trifle with such mighty interests, by inventing hypotheses at will, and building up one by the introduction of another. What sauction has he, I ask, from the word of God, for making salvation and sanctification convertible terms? I say he has none, and I challenge him to the proof. That proof I defy him to bring forward, because it does not exist. And were he not blinded by his passion for theorizing, and by his prejudice in favour of his own scheme of doctrine, his acquaintance with the Bible might easily convince him that it furnishes no support to the opinion in question.

Salvation is a term of general import, and means deliverance from evil. And so far as sanctification is deliverance from the power and pollution of sin, the terms may be regarded as equivalent. But even here sanctification is only a part, not the whole, of salvation. And to say that they

are so uniformly or so frequently the same, as that the one may, and should be, used for the other, is to speak in defiance of the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

Can there be a doubt that salvation implies pardon in all those cases where Christ is called our Saviour, or where the object of his mission is said to be to save? Mr. Erskine himself cannot consistently deny this: and whether he denies it or not, every man of common understanding in such things, must be fully satisfied, that when it is said that Christ "came to seek and to save that which was lost"*—that he "came into the world to save sinners"†—that "the Father sent him to be the Saviour of the world,"‡ &c. deliverance from punishment is included in the term, and cannot be separated from it.

The same thing is established still more precisely by those passages in which, from antithesis, the word salvation is fixed to be what we denominate forgiveness or remission of penalty. It is opposed to wrath, ||—it is opposed to destruction, ||—it is opposed to perishing,**—it is opposed to condemnation, ††—it is opposed to perdition. ‡‡—Will Mr. Erskine venture to maintain that sanctification is the proper or intended contrast to these terms, or to any one of them? Or is it not clear to every person that these terms intimate that penal fate—that punishment, from which salvation is the deliverance? And then see how faith is connected with salvation in that sense, so as to be essentially requisite for the attainment of pardon or freedom from the penalty. Take two of the pas-

^{‡‡} Heb. x. 39.

sages now referred to. Hebrews x. 39, "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of the soul." And again, John iii. 16, 17, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

As additional proofs that save and salvation are not convertible terms with sanctify and sanctification, but that they refer to condition rather than to character, I appeal to 1 Tim. iv. 16,—Jude 23,—Luke xxiii. 39,—Acts xxvii. 20,—Rom. x. 1,—Rom. v. 9,—Matt. x. 22,—Luke i. 71,—1 Peter i. 5,—Rom. xiii. 11,—Heb. ix. 28,—Heb. v. 9.

Note I I.

One grand objection that Mr. Erskine has to what he calls "man's religion" which is the "prevalent religion of the land—" "taught from the pulpits and received by the religious people," is, that it is pervaded and characterized by selfishness. Now it is freely granted that selfishness not only forms no part of true religion, but is at utter variance both with its doctrines and its precepts; and if any man preach selfishness, or if any man practice it, he is so far a recreant to the gospel. But really I am yet to learn from competent authority that selfishness has got any such hold, either of the ministrations of our preachers, or of the creed of our population. Much of it certainly prevails in practice. We are all too apt to yield to its influence. And Mr. Erskine's sect, I fear, are fully more beset by it, than are the many of whom they make it

characteristic. That, however, is quite a different thing from the religion which is preached and believed being selfish in its principles; and, I tell Mr. Erskine, that he blunders and misrepresents in this, as he does in almost every other part of his lucubrations.

The truth is, Mr. Erskine, with his usual indistinctness, confounds self-love and selfishness, as if they were one and the same thing. He finds self-love in the prevalent system. He calls it, or mistakes it for, selfishness. And then he takes the liberty of consigning the system which he has thus interpolated with his own blunders to deep reprobation. His disregard to the difference between the two qualities alluded to must be obvious to every, the most superficial reader of Mr. Erskine's volume, and no elaborate proof of it, therefore, is necessary.

He is inspired with such a hatred of selfishness that he not only would altogether sink self, but would absolutely get quit of it, by merging it in Deity. I consider the following as a piece of as raving mysticism as I ever met with. "There is something inexpressibly mysterious and solemn in the relation of the creature to the Creator. There is no parallel to it in the universe. When I think of it, I am overwhelmed by it. I cannot conceive how I have the consciousness of a separate existence distinct from my Creator. It seems to me that I am in regard to him as a ray of light to the sun, proceeding continually out of his substance, and having no individuality of my own." Why, truly, if this be the tendency of Mr. Erskine's thoughts, I should imagine that a little of the system of self would be the best counteractive for such a distemper as he has contracted, in the "sundry contemplations of his travels." He is in danger of believing himself an emanation of the Supreme Being-of mixing himself up with the Divine essence-of mistaking himself for a portion of the Divinity. How such a fancy could enter the mind of one, who, like him, had searched the Scriptures, I profess myself unable to conjecture. looks as if Plato had been more studied by him than Paul. Nothing is more distinctly and forcibly taught in the Bible than the infinite distance between the creature and the Creator; and it just shows how nearly piety and profaneness approach one another, when a taste for out-ofthe-way imaginations has been acquired and indulged. The wonder of Mr. Erskine's visionary speculation is increased by his going on, as he immediately does, to mention as the rampant sin on this subject, that instead of the creature dreaming that he is connected with the Creator as a ray of light is with the sun, he becomes independent in his spirit, sets up for himself, and substitutes his own prowess for the influence and help of God.

Mr. Erskine accuses the religious system, which prevails in this country, of being a system of selfishness, both as to the objects which its adherents aim at, and

the means which they employ to reach these.

1. First, as to the objects, he thus writes, "According to that religion God is sought not for himself, but for his gifts—not because he is the God of holy love, and therefore the fountain of life, but because he is the dispenser of rewards and punishments. But the man who acts in a particular way, in order to obtain heaven, or to avoid hell, is as thoroughly selfish (only on a larger scale) as the man who acts in a particular way to obtain a thousand pounds or to avoid the gallows. The one glorifies God just as much as the other. They are both evidently following their own interests."

If Mr. Erskine had only protested against a base, sordid, mercenary spirit in religion, and against neglecting the love and holiness of God, or the comfort and welfare of his fellow men, in pursuing individual happiness, I should have joined him in his protest, though I should, at the same time, have insisted, that such a representation of the matter of fact as he has given was to be attributed to his own imaginative brain or splenetic humour, rather than to an accurate acquaintance with the principles of those whom he has contrived to delineate in such dark and forbidding colours. But really when he condemns us for "following our own interests," for regarding God as "the dispenser of rewards and punishments," for being careful "to avoid hell" and desirous " to obtain heaven," he presumes a great deal too much on the stupidity of his readers, or on their ignorance of Scripture, if he expects any thing short of contempt or ridicule for such absurd censure. Constituted as man is, it is of necessity that pain should be the object of his aversion, and pleasure the object of his desire. would be rebellion against the Author of his nature if he did not consult his own safety and advantage. Nothing, indeed, but a distempered state of mind could possibly induce him to disregard and neglect what he believed to be his well-being. And in proportion as that end is overlooked or despised, will be the disorder of the whole plan, and success, and influence of his acting, as a moral being, as an individual, or as a member of society. God has recognised this, as a fundamental principle in the revelation which he has given, for the guidance and government of hurhan conduct. It is the second of those two great commandments on which "hang all the law and the prophets," " Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And in this commandment self-love is expressly enjoined, and made the measure of that love which we are to exercise towards our fellow-men, in fulfilling our social and relative obligations. Christ died that he might deliver us from the infliction of an awful penalty, and restore us to the enjoyment of infinite blessings; and are we at liberty to be indifferent to the happiness and the misery for which the incarnate Son of God shed his precious blood? Were not life and death set before our first parents, in their state of innocence, as motives to deter them from guilt, and to secure their obedience? Have not prophets and apostles uniformly enforced their exhortations to repentance, and conversion, and submission, by an address to hope and to fear -by an appeal to the sanctions of futurity? Did not our Saviour himself speak of the never-dying worm, to alarm the impenitent, and of an exceeding great reward, to cheer the persecuted and to animate the virtuous? Did he not speak of hell, and did he not speak of heaven, for the purpose of influencing those whom he taught? Did he not assert that the wicked should go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal? And, after all this, are we to be told that it is a wrong, and base, and selfish thing, in the business of religion, to dread the everlasting destruction threatened against the wicked, or to anticipate and long for the glorious recompense that is promised to the just?* Mr. Erskine would have us to be more disinterested than God would have us to be. And yet, with his usual inconsistency, he would have us to be

^{*} Mr. Erskine says (Unconditional Freeness, p. 167,) that "a man must renounce self before he says in earnest, 'I will arise and go to my father.'" Has Mr. Erskine forgotten that the prodigal son, to whom he alludes, only thought of returning to his father when he was in such circumstances as led him to say, "How many hired servants of my Father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" If self had no share in his movements towards home and his father's embrace, I know not what "self" means. But Mr. Erskine must always be singular and absurd in his interpretations of Scripture.

no such thing. For, in spite of this tirade of his against the selfish system, and at the very time that he is "breathing out threatenings and slaughter" against all regard to self, he is asking, with a pathetic interjection, if there be "any madness equal to the madness of neglecting the soul, and the favour of God, and spending our short uncertain hour here in treasuring up for ourselves regrets and fears against the hour of death, and misery for the life to come." *

Akin to Mr. Erskine's horror of a man pursuing his own individual and everlasting felicity, is his exquisite refinement as to the real and legitimate end of pursuit. He is offended at us for looking for any blessing beyond obedience, and very gravely maintains, that, "according to God's religion, obedience is itself the ultimate blessing." + But here again I must prefer the language and the doctrine of the Bible to those of Mr. Erskine. According to the Bible, obedience is not the ultimate blessing; else what are we to make of such declarations as these-"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,"1-" Christ became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him," \(\)—" God will render to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life," |- "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Mr. Erskine must be aware that many similar declarations might be added to these; and if he does not perceive that they contradict, in the broadest manner, his position about "obedience being the ultimateblessing," he must be blind indeed.

^{*} Unconditional Freeness, p. 206.

[†] Introductory Essay, p. lvi.

[‡] Matt. v. 8.

[§] Heb. v. 9. || Rom. ii. 6, 7.

[¶] James i. 12...

I do not mean to say that there can be happiness without holiness, or that one of the glories of the heavenly state is not the moral and spiritual excellence which will be possessed by its inhabitants; but I do mean to say, that happinessenjoyment—the pleasurable feelings which result from their sanctification, and from the right exercise of their faculties and affections, constitute the blessing which the nature of . man, and the appointment of God, and the doctrine of Scripture, teach them to look forward to as the grand object of their ambition and their hope. Neither do I deny that the glory of the Supreme Being, who has both made and redeemed them, and in whom resides all the perfection that can claim their highest admiration, and fill their hearts with the purest blessedness, should be a ruling object; but still I say, that the wisdom and goodness of him who made man what he is, not only authorize but require him to seek after present comfort and future felicity, and to consider himself, while aiming at these, as fulfilling the purposes of his existence. Mr. Erskine is for annihilating the happiness of self, because "the happiness of self, and the happiness of God, are two structures that cannot stand together." * In my opinion, they can stand together—they are both built by him who is infinitely wise—and each of them holds its place in the economy of the gospel. And, with Mr. Erskine's leave, I would wind up this part of the discussion with stating the view given of the subject in our Shorter Catechism, and in "common phraseology." It is this, " Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever."

2. But Mr. Erskine complains of self too as being idolised in the means whereby we pursue those objects, in which we are also accused of selfishness. He very conveniently

^{*} Unconditional Freeness, p. 208.

supposes that when we maintain that we must believe in order to be pardoned and accepted, we are driving a bargain with God. In illustrating this idea, he goes about and about it, till his movements grow absolutely tiresome and sickening. But it all comes to this that we propose a quid pro quo; that we exercise faith, and get forgiveness in return; and that thus we are guilty—all in the spirit of selfishness—of engaging in a mercantile transaction with him whose name is love, and who will not sell his blessings.

This is very unworthy misrepresentation. The views of faith which we entertain are such as to divest it entirely of what is meritorious. Faith, indeed, we hold to be essentially an acknowledgment of our utter unworthiness and destitution. It is a humble application to, and confident reliance upon, the appointed Redeemer alone, for all the spiritual blessings that we need. We know that in him is treasured up every thing which is necessary to our deliverance and salvation. And therefore, we cast ourselves upon his grace, and power, and sufficiency. In truth our faith has less of self, and looks less to self, than does the faith of Mr. Erskine. His faith has for its first or rather sole object, the proposition which predicates of his own state that it is a pardoned state. This is what he thinks of, and rests upon, and rejoices in. Our faith casts its regards away from ourselves altogether, because it can find no resting place in ourselves, and throws and fixes itself upon Christ that it may draw from him those mercies which he and none but he can communicate. Besides, how eften must I remind Mr. Erskine of his own confession, that the pardon is in Christ, and that unless he take Christ, which can only be done by believing, the pardon cannot be his? When, therefore, he believes in Christ, it is-it must be, with a view to the pardon, or he must be considered as indifferent to the pardon. And thus, in getting the pardon he has to use a means, he has to fulfil a condition, he has to do something, without which the pardon can in no sense or degree become his. What else can he affirm of our believing in order that we may be pardoned?

But granting that this were incorrect, let us only advance a step, and Mr. Erskine is beyond all question involved in the same predicament. He cannot be saved without faith. Though he is pardoned by Christ's death whether he believes or not, Christ's death does not give him That he may be saved or sanctified, he must exercise faith. And from the vast importance he attaches to sanctification as "the ultimate blessing" to be sought for, he cannot fail to aim at the acquisition of it by the instrumentality which is requisite to secure it. That instrumentality is faith. And, as we believe, in order that we may be pardoned, so he believes, in order that he may be saved. He is, therefore, in this respect as great a self-seeker, as Igreat a bargain-maker with God, as great a purchaser of the Holy Ghost with money as we are; and it is worse than preposterous to be comparing us to Simon Magus, while all the time he himself is as sacrilegious as was the sorcerer.

Mr. Erskine is quite slanderous when he says that our religion is "just an endeavour to obtain forgiveness." Our religion teaches us to aspire to the possession of every blessing that is provided for us in the Gospel. But he is labouring to establish the selfishness of the system; and therefore he must be indulged with some false colouring. And so he goes on, "if a man's religion continue to be of this kind, it really makes little difference what it is that he does in order to obtain forgiveness. One may build an hospital, another may indulge a penance, another may lead a sober and upright life, another may endeavour to do what he calls believing in Jesus Christ, but whilst the object is to obtain forgiveness, the whole acting of the man is a con-

tinued self-seeking—he is fawning on his father for his estate."*

Observe how slightingly Mr. Erskine speaks of believing in Jesus Christ-how he degrades it by putting it on a footing with penance-how he makes no account of it at all! And observe how he makes a sinner's anxiety to be forgiven by that holy and gracious God whom he has offended, one of the worst species and expressions of a selfish temper !+ And above all, observe how beautifully he condemns himself, while he thinks of nothing but pouring ribaldry and contempt upon those who differ from him! So a man who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the divine behest, that he may obtain "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," is characterised by all the meanness of a son "fawning on his father for his estate!" Be it so. And when Mr. Erskine asks of God, that he may receive what he needs, is he "fawning on his father for his estate?" When he observes any of the ordinances of his religion that he may profit thereby, is he "fawning on his father for his estate?" And when he believes the fact of his personal forgiveness, that he may be sanctified and made happy, is he "fawning on his father for his estate?" Let Mr. Erskine withdraw the charge that he has preferred against his opponents, or let him be content to stand convicted of all the sycophancy and baseness and impiety that are implied in making use of faith, to "fawn upon God."

^{*} Introductory Essay, p. xi.

⁺ Some very shallow disciple in Mr. Erskine's school has written a tract, which is industriously circulated, on the precept, "Be careful for nothing," and very strongly inculcates the folly and sinfulness of our being anxious even for the salvation of our souls!

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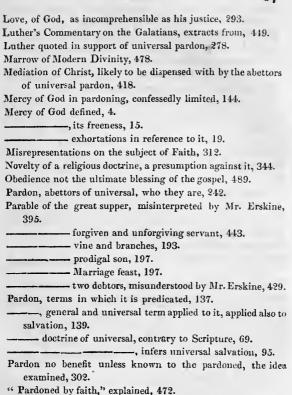
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