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PHILEMON'S LETTERS

T O

O N E S I M U S ;

U P O N

The Subjects of CHRIST'S ATONEMENT and
DIVINITY.

BY WILLIAM LAING, V. D. M.

*Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from
all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous
of good works. Titus ii. 14.*

*Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of
Israel. John i. 49.*

Christus tradidit. Quod autem? Semetipsam. Pro quo?
Pro nobis. Quomodo? Oblationem & Victimam.
Christiani Becmani exercit.

*Quisquis amat suam salutem, is debet Christum amare, illi cre-
dere, & totam in eo fiduciam collocare.*
Hieron Zanchius de tribus Elohim



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Mary Moody
& book



P R E F A C E.

IT is a duty incumbent on all that name the name of Jesus, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints. We will not find within the compass of divine revelation, a more odious character given of any church, than is given of the church of Laodicea; or a more awful judgment threatened. I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wert either cold or hot; so then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.* These Laodiceans had not returned to their ancient folly, in doing service to them who are by nature no Gods; but at the same time, they had little more of Christianity than the mere name. They wanted one particular ingredient in the Christian character, *zeal*. There is no prosecuting our religious profession to God's glory, or our own comfort, without a due sense of the importance of Divine truth; and wherever a due sense of this is impressed on the mind, it will natively lead out to a strenuous contention for the preservation of every article of divine Revelation. It must be matter of lamentation to every generous Christian, to see so much of a Latitudinarian, and lukewarm spirit prevailing and gaining ground in every religious society, at this day.

There is a certain maxim almost universally prevalent in this age, viz. no matter what a man's profession be, if his practice is good. If this be true, our Martyrs were all fools who shed their blood

* Rev. iii. ch. 15, 16. ver.

blood for the testimony of Jesus; all exhortations to stedfastness in the faith, once delivered to the Saints; to have our loins girt about with truth; to be stedfast, immovable, &c. are to no purpose. But have our religious principles no influence on our future salvation; will God save men, let their belief be what it will? If this be true, Paul the inspired apostle of the Gentiles, might have spared his pains in writing to the Galatian converts, to bring them back to the purity of the Gospel preached by him, but relinquished by them, through the influence of certain Judaizing teachers, who had perverted their minds with regard to the great capital Article of the justification of a sinner, in the sight of God by faith, without the deeds of the law. Why doth the apostle Peter, call certain errors from the truth damnable heresies? Why doth our Lord speak of false Christs, and false Prophets, who should arise, and if possible, deceive the very elect? The plain matter of fact is, truth is but one, as God is one, and every deviation from the truth, must be as odious in his sight, as an error in practice. “To the law, and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” But it may easily be made appear, what a vast influence our religious profession and principles, will have on our practice, either to render it good, or bad, acceptable, or unacceptable in God’s sight: For instance, if it be an article of our creed, that Jesus Christ the Son of God is not equal with the Father, and so, not possessed of those essential perfections of Deity, which constitute the formal reason of all our religious services, we are guilty of idolatry, if we pay him any religious homage, because we address an object, that is not a God by nature; in which consists the very essence of idolatry. Again, if the justification of a sinner in the sight of God, is founded entirely on the righteousness of the Son of God imputed to us, and received by faith alone; and yet, we go the round of all our religious services with this view, that God may accept us, either in whole, or in part for our works sake; it follows of course therefore, that none of all our religious services can be acceptable to God, because performed with a view to obtain that which God hath never promised. Let no man therefore account it a matter of indifference, what his profession and principles are, if he but thinks his practice is good.

It may be here asked, what is understood by a good practice? how strangely is the world divided on this head; how widely different are the ideas which men entertain of a good conversation? Some confine their religious moral conduct, within these narrow limits; if they are honest, hospitable, living in peace with all men, without injuring any; this mode of conduct engrosses

grosses the all of their religious character. Others again, from a certain innate propensity and disposition of heart, are merciful, compassionate and generous; their hand is never shut, when the necessities of the poor and needy call for relief; this is laid as the basis, and ground work of their acceptance with the Almighty. Others again, circumscribe their moral conduct, within the narrow circle of a few religious duties, inculcated by God's word, and neglect those relative duties, which they owe to their fellow creatures. A good practice and conversation includes in it, a conscientious regard to the whole moral law: a religious man, has a respect to all God's commandments: This respect and regard, flows from a heart purified by faith, and renewed by the Holy Ghost, and particularly influenced to the practice of every moral virtue, from a sense of the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart. "The love of Christ (says Paul) constraineth us." Let no man boast of a good conversation, whose conduct is not uniform. What although we never should injure our neighbour, yet if we can deliberately, and presumptuously, profane God's name, and pollute his sabbaths, can we in this case lay any claim to this most honourable title, sons of God. Again let us pray, and fast, let no filthy communication ever proceed out of our mouth, yet if we can, when occasion offers, cheat and defraud our Neighbour, we are in the same predicament with the others above specified. A truly religious man, will not neglect the duties he owes, either to God, or his fellow creatures. He will not willingly either injure his Neighbour, or provoke his Maker. A good conversation must always be founded upon the Scriptures; these must be the rules of our conduct, as well as of our faith. The scriptures define a religious practice thus, "a walking in all the commandments, and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

It seems to be an evil prevalent in our day, and a most ignoble trait in our character, ignorance of the Scriptures. For want of a scriptural knowledge, there is scarce an opinion that can be broached, however opposite to divine revelation but what finds abettors. We seem to be of a quite different stamp, from the noble Bereans, who would take nothing on trust; ignorant of the Doctrine of implicit faith, they searched the Scriptures daily, to see whether those things which the Apostles taught were consonant to God's revealed will or not. Our attachment to a party, is not so much owing to a thorough conviction arising from a scriptural enquiry, as to some other low unworthy motive, such as, our forefathers were attached to this mode of profession. and why should not we. "I gave them the great things of the law, and they accounted them strange things." A heavy complaint indeed.

It has been, and still is one of the principal stratagems of Satan, either to keep men in ignorance, or pervert their minds with regard to the great and leading articles of our holy religion. To blind the minds of men, how is it possible? We pretend not to define the manner, in which he draws the veil over the human mind, but that he doth so, is an incontroverted fact. The spirit of God authorizes the assertion, proves the position. 2 Cor. 4. 4. In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine unto them.

It was but a very short period after our Lord's ascension, when one of the capital articles of our holy religion was impugned, and blasphemously denied by Cerinthus. viz. the supreme Deity of the Son of God. Against this heretic the beloved apostle John wrote his Gospel, in which he proves in the clearest manner, the divinity of his and our Lord. Destroy this fundamental truth, and where, or how are we to build for eternity?

Various efforts have been made, and are still making to rob Christ of his eternal and essential Glory, and to subvert the foundation of our faith, hope, and comfort: But we have all the certainty that the scriptures of truth can afford, to believe that while Sun and Moon endure, there will remain a seed to assert his natural, and essential right to Deity.

According to a very learned, and ingenuous Historian, * the opinion of Cerinthus concerning Christ was as follows, he taught "that the Creator of this world, whom he considered also as "the Sovereign and Lawgiver of the Jewish people, was a *being* "endued with the greatest virtues, and derived his birth "from the *Supreme God*; that this *being* fell, by degrees, from "his native virtue, and his primitive dignity; that the *Supreme* "God, in consequence of this, determined to destroy his empire, and sent upon earth, for this purpose one of the ever- "happy and glorious *Æons*, whose name was Christ; that this "Christ chose for his habitation, the person of Jesus, a man of "the most illustrious sanctity and justice, the son of Joseph and "Mary, and descending in the form of a *Dove*, entered into "him, while he was receiving the Baptism of John in the waters of Jordan; that Jesus after his union with Christ, opposed "himself with vigour to the *God of the Jews*, and was, by his "instigation, seized and crucified by the Hebrew Chiefs; that "when Jesus was taken captive, Christ ascended up on high, "so that the man Jesus alone was subjected to the pains of an "ignominious death." What a strange unintelligible system! The intention of this monstrous doctrine, was to reduce the Son

of

* Dr. Mosheim, Vol. 1, page 110.

of God upon a level with created beings, and divest him, (if possible) of his uncreated Glory.

According to the same Author, the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead, kindled no flame, begot no divisions in the Christian Church after Cerinthus, for the space of three hundred years, until Arius arose; who maintained, that the Son was totally, and essentially distinct from the Father; that he was the first, and noblest of these beings, which God the Father had created out of nothing; the instrument by whose subordinate operations, the Almighty formed the Universe, and therefore inferior to the Father in nature, and dignity. This opinion of Arius is rather more refined than that of Cerinthus, but in every respect as opposite to the Scriptures of truth. Where do we find it in the least degree hinted in all divine Revelation that our Redeemer was the first, the noblest creature that God made out of nothing? Is he not expressly called the everlasting Father, * (Heb. the Father of Eternity) are not his goings forth said to be from everlasting, † (from the days of eternity?) The names he bears, the characters he sustains, the works he hath performed, the honours paid him, certainly raise him far superior to the highest, and most noble rank of creatures, ever the Almighty formed.

This novel opinion of Arius, created great confusions in the Church, to allay which, the Emperor Constantine assembled in the year 325, the famous Council of Nice in Bithynia, where the deputies of the Church universal were summoned, to put an end to this controversy. In this General Council, the Doctrine of Arius was condemned, Christ declared consubstantial, or of the same essence with the Father. It is well known to such as are in the least degree acquainted with Ecclesiastic History, what dreadful animosities, confusions, and blood-shed happened in the Christian Church, many years after, on account of this unhappy controversy. For the most part, the Gothic Nations who oversaw the Roman empire, embraced the tenets of Arius. But yet, the triumphs of Arianism were but transitory, and its prosperous days were entirely eclipsed, when the Vandals were driven out of Africa, and the Goths out of Italy, by the victorious arms of Justinian. The other Arian princes were easily induced, to abandon the doctrines of Arius, and not only so, but to employ the force of Laws, and the authority of Councils, to prevent its further progress among their subjects, and to extirpate it entirely out of their dominions: Such was the conduct of Sigismund king of the Burgundians; Theodimir king of the Suevii, who had settled in Lusitania; and Reccared king of Spain. Whether this

change

* Isa. ix. 6. † Micah v. 2.

change wrought in these princes, was owing to a scriptural conviction of the errors of their ways, or to the influence of hopes and fears, is a question which will not be easily determined. But one thing is certain, that from this period, the followers of Arius declined apice, and could never after, recover any considerable degree of stability and confidence.

The present age, seems to strain every nerve, and to use every possible means, to revive that buried cause. Many in the Christian Church, look upon the orthodox system on this head, as a clog to religion, and a bar to its propagation. Strange! that any should entertain such a notion, of that which is the glory of our religion. Remove this, and what have we more. It is the very basis, upon which the whole is built; the pillar, which supports the whole. If Christ be not God, equal with the Father, it will be a matter of no small difficulty to determine, how we are to be saved: We are immediately reduced to this impossible condition, of performing perfect, personal and unremitting obedience to the moral law: Who can rationally, or safely expect, salvation by the Death, and blood shedding of a Creature, let it be of never so high an extraction, and noble pedigree?

About the year 1545. the doctrine of the Trinity was impugned under another appearance, by that sect called Socinians, whose principal founders were Lælius, and Faustus Socinus. They (if possible,) entertained more dishonourable notions of Christ, than the Arians. According to the aforementioned Author; * the sum of their Theology is this. “ God who is infinitely more perfect than man, though of a similar nature in some respects, excited an act of that power by which he governs all things, in consequence of which an extraordinary person was born of the Virgin Mary. That person was Jesus Christ, whom God first translated to heaven by that portion of his divine power, which is called the *Holy Ghost*, and having instructed him in the knowledge of his will, counsels, and designs, sent him again into this sublunary world, to propagate to mankind a new rule of life, more excellent than that which they formerly had, to propagate divine truth by his ministry, and to confirm it by his death. Those who obey the voice of this divine teacher, (and this obedience is in the power of every one whose will and inclination leads that way) shall, one day, be clothed with new bodies, and inhabit eternally those blessed regions where God himself immediately resides. Such, on the contrary, as are disobedient and rebellious, shall undergo most terrible and exquisite torments, which shall be succeeded by annihilation, or the extinction

* Mosheim, Vol. 3, page 554.

“extinction of their being.” A strange system of Divinity: In which there are as many errors, as sentences, what an anti-scriptural Hypothesis is the ascent of Christ into heaven, to be instructed in the divine councils! Is it possible to conceive, that our Lord Jesus Christ, should be taken up into heaven, for no less purpose, than to be instructed in his embassy, and understand the mind of God, as to his office, and yet not one of the Evangelists, give any account of the circumstances? They are very particular as to his birth, fasting, baptism, preaching, miracles, suffering, resurrection, and ascension; but not one word among them all, as to the circumstances of his being taken up into heaven, for so great a purpose. Now, if this Article of the Socinian Creed be true, and necessary, to be believed, why is it not plainly revealed, why is there no mention made of it at all? Who can possibly imagine it consistent with the sincerity, and faithfulness of the writers of the new Testament, to conceal such a very material Article? “Before Abraham was, *I am* says our Lord.” “whose goings forth have been of old, *from everlasting,*” says an inspired prophet. No say Socinians, he never existed until his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary! The Socinian method of salvation is referred to the free will of the creature; obeying the voice of this divine teacher, ensures everlasting happiness. We wish they would rather attribute it to the atonement, and merit of the Saviour, as Paul doth. In whom we have redemption thro’ his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. * Here is not a syllable of the allgracious, and powerful operation of the Holy Ghost, on the souls of men, making them willing in a day of his power. † Arians and Socinians, reducing Christ to the level of a mere creature, natively leads them forward, to unhinge the Scripture doctrine of the corruption of human nature; of the insufficiency of the most perfect human obedience, to secure sinful men from the wrath to come, and to procure eternal bliss; of the necessity of Christ’s sufferings and death, in the room and stead of the guilty. In a word, take their divinity all in all, it differs very little from a system of infidelity.

Although says the same Author, ‡ “the Socinians profess to believe that all our knowledge of divine things is derived solely from the holy Scriptures; yet they maintain, in reality, that the sense of scripture is to be investigated by the dictates of right reason, to which, in consequence, they attribute a great influence in determining the nature, and unfolding the various doctrines of religion. When their writings are perused with attention, they will be found to attribute

* Eph. i. 7

† Ps. cx. 2

‡ Vol. 3, page 592.

- “ bute more to reason, in this matter, than most other christian
 “ societies. For they frequently insinuate artfully, nay some-
 “ times declare plainly, that the sacred penmen were guilty of
 “ several mistakes, from defect of memory, as well as want of
 “ capacity: That they expressed their sentiments without ei-
 “ ther perspicuity or precision, and rendered the plainest things
 “ obscure by their pompous and diffusive Asiatic stile; and that
 “ it was therefore absolutely necessary to employ the lamp of
 “ human reason to cast a light upon their doctrines, and to ex-
 “ plain them in a manner conformable to truth ” According
 to this manner of arguing, it is not divine revelation that is to
 be our infallible rule and unerring guide, respecting faith and
 practice, but man’s own reason must be his sole director, lest the
 scriptures should lead him astray. Divine revelation, altho’
 never against reason, yet most of the articles contained in the
 sacred Scriptures, rise infinitely superior to the weak, corrupt,
 blind reason of man. The carnal man, (says the inspired apos-
 tle of the Gentiles) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,
 neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discern-
 ed. * An inspired prophet entertains higher views of the Scrip-
 tures than these men seem to do; he candidly confesses, that the
 divine word was his sole conductor, in investigating the nature,
 counsels, and perfections of the divine Being: What he was to
 believe concerning him, and how he was to act towards him.
 Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path, † Accord-
 ing to the Socinian Hypothesis, no doctrine in divine revela-
 tion, ought to be acknowledged as true in its nature, or divine
 in its origin, all whose parts are not level to the comprehension
 of the human mind: And that, whatever the scriptures teach
 concerning the perfections of God, his counsels and decrees,
 and the way of salvation, must be modified, curtailed, and filed
 down, in such a manner by the transforming power of art and
 argument, as to answer the extent of our limited faculties.
 Who could imagine, that such tenets would have ever found
 their way into the Christian Church? If every article contained
 in divine revelation, must be reduced so as to answer the extent
 of our understandings, there will be found to be but very few
 articles, especially such as have a reference to man’s salvation,
 that we can credit at all. They will be found to lie too deep for
 reason’s line to fathom, altho’ not for our faith to credit. For
 instance, eternal life we are told, consists in the knowledge of
 the only true God; ‡ and yet who among either Angels or
 men, can answer the question, what is God? Is this enough to
 deny

* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

† Psal. cxix. 105.

‡ John xvii. 3.

deny his existence, because we cannot comprehend his nature? That moment God comes to be comprehended, by any created understanding, he ceases to be.

What horrid impiety! To blame the Amanuensis of the holy Scriptures with mistakes, proceeding from want of memory and capacity. Was not the Holy Ghost promised before our Lord's ascension to the Disciples, for this, among other special ends, to lead them into all truth? It would require a good deal of the most unhappy ingenuity, to reconcile our Lord's promise, with the Socinian opinion. "Holy men of God, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," † is the language of one, to whom the preceding promise was immediately directed. The language of the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles, coincides exactly with that of Peter. "All scripture, says he, is given by the inspiration of God." ‡

According to the aforementioned Author, || Faustus Socinus in his treatise against the semi Judaizers, acknowledged it as his opinion, that "praying or offering up divine worship to Christ, is not necessary to salvation. The Christian, (says he) whose faith is so strong, as to encourage him to make his addresses habitually and directly to the supreme Being, and who standeth not in need of the comfort that flows from the invocation of Christ his *Brother*, who was tempted in all things as he is, that Christian is not obliged to call upon the name of Jesus, by prayer and invocation." I have no notion that the greatest believer ever existed, attained to such a degree of faith, as to supersede the comfort arising from Christ's intercession. It is perfectly unintelligible to me, that a Christian in this life, through the perfection of his state, is not obliged to invoke the name of Jesus. I would rather imagine, that when a complete state of perfection in Glory will take place, the saints will be eternally beholden to Jesus the intercessor, for the comforts arising from his advocacy, even in that happy place, and in that complete perfect state. No body I think, who possesses any esteem for Jesus, would wish to be ranked among the Socinians great believers.

In the sixth century, according to Dr. Mosheim, * the doctrine of free grace thro' the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, was openly oppugned by Pelagius, and Celestus, the former a Briton, the other a native of Ireland. These men says he, "looked upon the doctrines which were commonly received, concerning the original corruption of human nature, and the

† 2d. Pet. i. 21.

|| Vol. 3, page 600.

‡ 2d. Tim. iii. 16.

* Vol. 1 page 433.

“ the necessity of divine grace to enlighten the understanding,
 “ and purify the heart, as prejudicial to the interests of holiness
 “ and virtue, and tending to lull mankind into a presumptu-
 “ ous and fatal security. They maintained, that these doc-
 “ trines were as false as they were pernicious; that the sin of
 “ our first parents, was imputed to them alone, and not to their
 “ posterity; that we derive no corruption from their fall, but
 “ are born as pure and unspotted as Adam came out of the
 “ hand of his Creator; that mankind, therefore, are capable of
 “ repentance and amendment, and of arriving to the highest
 “ degree of piety and virtue by the use of their natural faculties
 “ and powers; that, indeed, external grace is necessary to ex-
 “ cite their endeavours, but that they have no need of the in-
 “ ternal succours of the divine Spirit.”

From that, to this present time, the tenets of Pelagius have had their abettors in the Christian Church, to the deep sorrow and regret of every generous Christian. How far a belief of these doctrines tends to the prejudice of holiness, and virtue, let any unprejudiced Christian judge. Those who believe that mankind are born sinful and polluted; maintain the absolute necessity of the powerful operations of the Holy Ghost, instead of man's natural powers and faculties, in order for the renovation of sinful man; who believe, that without a saving faith in Christ, and union to him, nothing can be done either glorifying to God, or profitable to ourselves; in a word, who place the whole of their salvation from first to last to the account of God's grace, thro' the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; these I say, may risk the credit of their belief upon the empty holiness of its professors.

It is difficult to conceive, how men can form a system of doctrines from the holy Scriptures, or inculcate the practice of virtue and holiness without reference to Jesus, as the author and finisher of our faith; as the Alpha and Omega of our salvation. To inculcate the practice of morality, without setting before men their corrupt ruined state by nature, without urging faith in his blood, appears to me as foolish, and every way as frivolous a scheme, as for one to imagine to build a house, by beginning at the roof, without laying the foundation in the ground. Never did immorality and vice of every species, arrive to such a monstrous height, as it hath done since men have lost views of the universal, early, depravity and corruption of human nature, and the absolute necessity of Christ's atonement and merit, and the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit, to renew sinners in the spirit of their minds. A few empty jejune sketches of morality, are substituted in the room of the solid substantial truths
 of

of the Gospel. Proofs for the support of a particular doctrine, introduced from the Heathen Philosophers and Poets, seem to be more palatable to the present age, than those which should be fetched from the lively oracles of God.

It certainly ought to be a matter of the deepest regret and sorrow, the many divisions, and opposite sentiments that rend the Christian Church at this day. There are many, no doubt, looking out and longing for that happy period, in which the watchmen on mount Ephraim shall see eye to eye, and sing together; when the Lord shall return to the people a pure language, that they all may serve him with one consent. In the mean time, it must be matter of lamentation to every lover of Jesus, to see these great truths that are the very basis of the Christian System, so virulently impugned, and treated too often, in the most scurrilous, if not in a blasphemous manner. † Let no body imagine, that the difference between the Arians, Socinians and Orthodox, is a matter of trivial moment: Nothing within the compass of divine revelation is of equal importance. The question is, whether or not, the second person of the ever glorious Trinity, be God equal with the Father, in all the essential properties, and attributes of Deity; was manifested in the flesh in the fulness of time, to take away sin by his propitiatory and vicarious suffering; so that there can be no salvation to fallen man, but by faith in his blood; or whether that Jesus, that appeared in the world in the form of a servant, owed his original to the all creating hand of God, at the beginning of time; or to his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary; set an example to mankind by a holy and virtuous life, and died a Martyr, to confirm the doctrines that he taught; and then referring man's salvation to the good works of the creature, instead of the merit of the Saviour. The ensuing letters are designed to establish the former, and refute the latter opinion.

To know the truth as it is in Jesus, is one of heaven's choicest blessings. To search the Scriptures daily, to pray with the royal prophet, "open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," are means of heaven's institution to obtain this invaluable privilege. Let none think it below them, to know the Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation. That there have been errors and heresies in the church from

† Some scurrilous wits think nothing of expressing themselves thus, "that there is no more virtue in Christ's blood than in that of a Bull." We wish at least men would learn not to blaspheme; some speak with more reverence of Christ's blood, but express it as their opinion that they cannot be saved by it!

from its commencement, to this very day cannot be denied. If the question be asked, from whence doth it proceed, that men thus err from the truth, and follow their own delusions? I answer, there seems to be but three possible ways from whence this spiritual malady can originate; it must either flow from God, from the Scriptures, or from ourselves. From God it cannot flow, for every good and perfect gift comes from him, and from him is the spirit of a sound mind; it would be the very height of blasphemy, to entertain the remotest thought that God, who is immaculately pure and holy, would infuse any vicious quality or perverse disposition into any of his creatures. It cannot proceed from the Scriptures, this would be in effect to impute it to God, the Scriptures being the word of God; it must then inevitably follow, that the only source of this evil must be traced up to, and ultimately resolved in man's corrupt heart and blind understanding. Ever since sin reared its cursed head in this world, and spread its baneful influence among the human race, the nature of man has been corrupt, and his understanding, the eye of the soul darkened; † his affections polluted; upon the face of the whole earth, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, that understandeth, or seeketh after God. * So that mankind in general, without the special illumination of the Holy Ghost, cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. Man is carnal and earthly; the things of God are spiritual and heavenly; and these are contrary one to the other: Therefore, as the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, so the wisdom of God is foolishness with carnal men. This being the case, with men in general, the Scriptures assert the absolute necessity, for men to be transformed by the renewing of their minds; † and restored to that soundness of mind, to that light of the understanding, and spiritual discernment necessary to know the things of God, and those things which belong to our eternal salvation.

It may here be observed, that where the means of instruction are obstinately withstood and resisted, this blindness, which was at first natural, becomes judicial, from being a defect, it becomes a judgment: Which is the case with all such, to whom God sends strong delusions to believe a lie: This is the last stage of blindness, and referred to in our Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem, Luke 19, 22. If thou hadst known, even thou, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. To what else, can we attribute the different effects of Paul's preaching at Rome, but to that blindness, whether natural or judicial, that these men were in. That his whole audi-

ence

† Eph. iv. 18.

* Rom. iii. 2.

‡ Rom. xii. 2.

ence did not receive the truth, was not owing to the ambiguity of its terms, or the defect of its evidence, but wholly to the state and disposition of the hearers. † When the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost, and inspired the Apostles with the gift of tongues, some devout men were amazed and confounded at the miracle, plainly seeing the hand of God in it, and asking what it meant: What was the end and design of it? Peter informs them: They received the word gladly, and were baptized; while others, to avoid the conclusion mocked, saying, these men are full of new wine. §

Some men seem to possess such an unaccountable perversity and disposition of mind, that they will not give themselves the least trouble, either to know, or believe certain scripture doctrines, because say they, “these are nice points, we would not wish to hear them spoken of, or intermeddled with,” such as the doctrine of the Trinity, Christ’s supreme deity, salvation thro’ his merits, &c. To reject any truth, because it is a nice point, (i. e. if I mistake not a doctrine which they cannot comprehend) I scarce know what we shall believe; scepticism would universally prevail throughout the world. Is not our own existence a nice point, are we not fearfully and wonderfully made? That we exist, is an undoubted fact, but how we exist, how we were formed in the womb; when, or how, our immortal spirits were united to this clay tabernacle; how the union is supported and preserved; these are things beyond our comprehension; but because we cannot thoroughly investigate these truths, are we to deny our existence. That there is a God, who is in all, over all, and above all, is an undoubted truth; but what that God is, we never can know to perfection; but for this reason, are we to turn Atheists. No man ever took upon him to explain the nature of that union, that subsists between the three persons of the ever glorious and undivided deity; nor the hypostatical union between the two natures in Christ’s person; so as these doctrines might be fully comprehended, and thoroughly understood. It is enough for the believers of these, or other similar controverted doctrines, that they are plainly asserted, and undeniably proven in the holy Scriptures.

That man’s salvation is entirely owing to Christ’s obedience and death, and not to the pattern and example he set before the world; nor to any good work performed by the creature; is a doctrine which has obtained the sanction of many learned and pious Divines, from the commencement of christianity to this very day. For the satisfaction of the English reader, I shall mention

† Acts xxviii. 24.

§ Acts ii. 13.

tion a few of these eminent men, as taken notice of by a very learned and ingenuous Author. †

Justin Martyr who lived in the year 150, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, thus expresses himself. “ The blood of Jesus
“ Christ, is the true atonement, which all true penitents lay
“ hold on; for neither by the blood of bulls or lambs, or the
“ ashes of an Heifer, or any similar oblation, is expiation
“ made.” He further adds, “ it pleased God to make Christ a
“ curse for us, which could not have been done, unless he had
“ sustained our place, and suffered the punishment due to us.”

Origen, who lived in the year 230, in his fourth Homily thus expresses himself. “ If there had been no sin,
“ there had been no necessity for the Son of God to have
“ assumed the character of a Lamb; neither would there have
“ been any cause for his sufferings in the human nature; but
“ to have remained what he was from eternity, the Word. But
“ since the entrance of sin into the world, a propitiation was re-
“ quisite, a propitiation cannot be made, but by a Sacrifice; it
“ was necessary therefore, that a Sacrifice should be provided,
“ to take away sin.” He further adds, man could not commute
“ with God for his soul, but God gave the precious blood
“ of his Son for souls; for we are not bought with corruptible
“ things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of
“ Christ.”

Eusebius of Cæsaria, who lived in the reign of Constantine, Lib. 10. de demonstra. Evengel. has these remarkable expressions. “ The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the
“ world, was made sin for us; who altho’, he knew no sin,
“ was made by God sin for us; substituting him in our place
“ and room, that we might be made the righteousness of God
“ in him.”

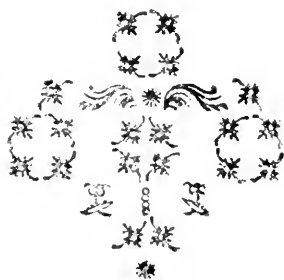
Athanasius who lived in Constantine’s reign in his book de incarna. verbi Dei; thus speaks. “ It was necessary that Christ
“ should suffer that death, which we all deserved to suffer; and
“ because the Word being immortal, could not die; he assumed
“ a body for this purpose, and offered that in Sacrifice for all.”

Augustine who lived in the fifth century, lib. 14. cont. Faust. Manich. Cap. 4. thus delivers himself. “ Christ who
“ was without sin, bore our punishment, that he might pay
“ our debt, free us from guilt, and deliver us from punish-
“ ment.” And in his treatise on Psal. 95 thus speaks. “ Men
“ who were sold into captivity, are delivered from their capti-
“ vity; they could sell themselves, but they could not deliver
“ themselves; the Redeemer came and paid down the price,
“ poured

“ poured out his blood, and bought the world. Do ye ask
“ what he bought? See what he gave, and find out what he
“ bought. The blood of Jesus Christ is the price, of what va-
“ lue is it? Sufficient to redeem the whole world.” Again
adds he, “ he was made the Son of man, that we might become
“ the sons of God; he suffered for us, without any demerit on
“ his part; that we by him, might obtain grace without our
merits.”

My readers from the aforefaid instances, (and others which
might have been added) will see, that the doctrine proposed to
be confirmed in the subsequent letters, is no novel doctrine. It
has had the suffrage of the pious and learned in all ages. Why
should not we contend for that truth, why should we not cordially
embrace that precious doctrine, which fills the mouths,
and ravishes the hearts, of all the redeemed from among men?
Their song is, and eternally will be; “ unto him that loved us,
and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory,
and dominion, for ever and ever, Amen.” That my readers may
be introduced among that celestial company, and join in that
divine anthem, is the most sincere wish of,

WILLIAM LAING.





L E T T E R I.

PHILEMON TO ONESIMUS.

DEAR ONESIMUS,

I Received yours; the deep concern you seem to be in, under a consciousness of guilt, and a dread of falling under the eternal displeasure of a justly incensed God, puts me in mind of that terror, which seized the Israelitish congregation, at the giving of the law on Mount Horeb.—I am sure you will agree with me, that this was one of the most pompous and dreadful spectacles, which ever mortals beheld. The holy mount covered with smoke; thunders ready to burst over their heads; lightnings darting then a dismal brightness; the trumpet sounding long and loud; the voice of the Eternal, heard out of the midst of the fire. These concomitants, which attended the Almighty's descent rendered the scene in the highest degree awful, and solemn. But besides these awful circumstances, there were others no less terrific. Formidable barriers, not to be passed over, without expiating the rash attempt, by a sudden and tragical death. Thousands of angels, ready to revenge the contempt of the divine law, upon the least signal. The earth trembling, and ready to sink into its foundations. Is there any wonder, that we behold six hundred thousand men, frozen with fear, and begging as the only favour that God should not speak to them, lest they should die? Need we marvel, that Moses himself, habituated as he had been to communion with God, should exceedingly fear and quake. You may see this very affecting scene painted in the most lively colours by the Jewish Legislator, in Exod. 19.

My dear *Onesimus*, the period is fast approaching, as fast as the wings of time can bring it, when not only six hundred thou-

stand, but a great company which no man can number, must stand before an impartial tribunal, petrified with fear, to answer for every transgression of that divine and righteous law, promulgated with so much solemnity on Mount Sinaï. Yes *Onesimus*, there is a time coming, when all that have been, are, or shall be, must be summoned out of their graves by the sound of the last trumpet, to appear before the great white throne, upon which Jesus † shall visibly sit to determine the final doom of the whole human race. What a tremendous sound! penetrating into the very caverns of the earth; into the bottom of the fathomless ocean; into the very depths of hell; hell and earth shall, must give up their dead. What an almighty energy must be in that summons; arise ye dead and come to judgment. These delicate ears, or rather, (if you allow me the expression) careless hearts, which can scarcely either think, or hear, of that glorious dreadful day; must hear, must obey. Starting as from a dream, they shall see, not a single mount on a blaze; but the whole universe. They shall see the great judge descending in flaming fire; the world around them burning, the elements melting with fervent heat. ‡ O! that this important truth, was written as with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond, on the consciences of such, as treat the divine law with the most daring contempt, and blasphemous effrontery. Consider this, and be afraid, ye that upon the most trivial occasion, never stop to break over these bounds, which God in his law hath said, ye shall not transgress; or else ye shall die. May you my dear *Onesimus*, walk soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world; that when the great judge descends, to put a final period to all the affairs of puny mortals, and to pass an irrevocable sentence both on good and bad, you may stand undismayed, at all the terrors of that awful period. O! may that Jesus, who suffered and died for sinners, appear in that day as your advocate, and your friend; and may you, and your bosom friend, start out of our graves, at the sound of that alarming voice, “arise ye dead and come to judgment,” and re-echo, “behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. Lo This is our God, and we have waited for him”!

You desire in yours, to give you my thoughts on the priesthood of Jesus. (To help your faith, confirm your hope, and increase your joy; I am bound by all the ties of nature and grace, and a long contracted friendship) On the priesthood of Jesus, depends all our hope for eternity. His obedience and sacrifice,

are

† Acts xvii. 31.

‡ See this awful period described by the Apostle Paul, 2d. Thess. Ch. 1.—2d. Pet. iii. 10.

are the only ground upon which we can expect the pardon of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons, with an infinitely holy God. I undertake this the more willingly, considering this article of our faith is so little understood, and in no age perhaps, so notoriously impugned. The Socinians would willingly, (if possible) strip him of this most exalted character, and comfortable office; if they condescend to recognize his sacerdotal office at all, they confine its execution to his heavenly state. They maintain he is a priest *improprie sic dictus*, improperly so called, and his satisfaction to the law and justice of God in the room of the guilty, a metaphorical satisfaction. The former opinion naturally leads to the latter, for if he be but a Priest improperly so called, his Sacrifice can be no real Sacrifice, no reconciliation made by it, between an offended God and offending men; no pardon of sin acquired by it, no virtue or value in his atonement, to merit heaven and eternal glory for us; nor any sanctifying influences in his blood, to prepare and make us meet for that celestial state; the nature of his death, could consist in no more, than merely to seal and confirm the doctrines which he propagated in his life; and instead of his death being a propitiatory, vicarious sacrifice, it was only intended to exhibit to mankind, an example of patience and resignation under a suffering lot; instead of dying as our propitiation, he died a Martyr for the truth: In this case, I cannot see but that this paradisaical injunction is yet in full force, "do this and live." But alas! are not the terms of the covenant of works, infinitely superior to the power and ability of any lapsed creature to fulfil; therefore the blessing promised absolutely beyond our reach to obtain. Paul informs us of that admirable expedient, and glorious device that the infinite wisdom of God contrived to enture the inheritance we had forfeited, and the blessing we had lost; for when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. † For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ||

Jesus is our Mediator; this is the language of an inspired penman. "There is one God, and one Mediator, between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Considered in this capacity, he is invested with the threefold offices, of prophet, priest, and king; in his instalment into, and execution of these offices, doth his mediatorship consist. It was absolutely necessary, that he should

† Rom. v. 6.

|| Cap. viii. 3, 4.

should be installed into, and execute these offices, considering the threefold misery mankind were involved in; ignorance, guilt, and bondage. If he had been only a prophet, our guilt had remained; if he had been only a priest, our ignorance could not have been removed; if he had been only a prophet and a priest, we would have remained in the power, and under the tyranny of the prince of the power of the air. But in the adorable wisdom of God, he is made of God unto us, wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification; † wisdom as a prophet, righteousness as a priest, and sanctification as a king. Why should any one quarrel at this constitution of the mediator? *Onesimus*, do you not see and acknowledge, that if he who lay in the bosom of the father, had not revealed the eternal counsels, purposes, and designs of God to the world, the world would for ever have remained in the grossest ignorance with regard to these important things. Christians of every denomination seem to be mutually agreed to recognize Christ as a prophet, to appear on the theatre of this world, clothed with the character of Heaven's ambassador: Why should there be any murmuring about the execution of his sacerdotal function, in its full latitude, suffering on earth, and interceding in Heaven? I persuade myself *Onesimus*, that you entertain other views of sin, than that it could be otherwise expiated, than by the sufferings and atonement of Christ; and other views of an infinitely holy God, than to imagine, that any thing else could have satisfied divine justice, than the vicarious, propitiatory sacrifice of our great High Priest. The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake, for he hath magnified the law, and made it honorable. * You see this Evangelical Prophet, speaks the very language of an inspired Apostle; both proclaim his Priesthood, both recognize the inestimable blessing that flows to us, to the very chief of sinners, in the execution of this office, *righteousness*; a righteousness, which removes every thing the sinner has to dread, puts him in possession of what his utmost wish can crave.

The execution of his priestly office has a more immediate respect to God, than that of his prophetic or kingly offices. As a Prophet he instructs, as a King he rules us, but as a Priest he immediately appears in the presence of God, for us; ‡ as a Priest, he makes up the breach, magnifies the law, satisfies justice, and makes ample reparation to the injured perfections of the Deity; as a Priest, mercy and truth, meet together, righteousness and peace mutually embrace each other. ||

Altho'

† 1 Cor. i. 30.

‡ Heb. ii. 24.

* Isa. xlii. 21.

|| Psal. lxxxv. 10.

Altho' the priesthood and Sacrifices under the law adumbrated and pointed to the priesthood and Sacrifice of the future Messiah, yet he sprung not of the family, nor was constituted after the order of Aaron. He sprung from the tribe of Juda, and as man, was lineally descended of the family of David. And there shall come forth (says Isaiah) a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. § The Apostle Paul in writing to the Hebrews, shows the accomplishment of this ancient prediction in the person of our great High Priest. For says he, he of whom these things are spoken, pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the Altar: † For it is evident, that our Lord sprang out of Juda, of which tribe, Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. ‡ The Levitical priesthood and Sacrifices, are for ever suspended; a more glorious priesthood, and an infinitely better Sacrifice, has taken place instead of the former. For says the same Apostle, “the law maketh nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did.” This was then the tribe, the family, from whence the Messiah sprung. The order after which he was constituted, was that of Melchisedec. This the same Apostle informs us; for says he, he testifieth thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. * Long before his actual investiture into this office, it was predicted after what order he should be constituted. Hear the royal Psalmist's declaration on this head; the Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. † What this order of Melchisedec was, the Apostle Paul informs us in his epistle to the Hebrews, Ch. vii. 23. Perhaps you find yourself at a loss, to know the meaning of the Spirit of God here; I do not wonder at it; this seems to be enveloped in very great darkness; this I apprehend may well be reckoned to be among some of Paul's writings, which Peter tells us, are hard to be understood. There are few things in Scripture which have divided Commentators more than this; to recite the different opinions of Divines on this head would be to fill a volume. There are two opinions, which have been the most generally maintained, and chiefly deserve our attention. First, that Melchisedec was an illustrious man, a great King, a Priest of the true God cotemporary with Abraham, and living in Palestine, or in some of the countries near it. A second opinion is, that this Melchisedec was Christ himself. † Both these opinions have had numerous abettors

‡ Besides these two, there have been various others; some have been so extravagant as to give us this history of Melchisedec, viz. “That Adam

§ Isa. ix. 1. † Heb. vii. 13, 14. ‡ Heb. vii. 19.

* Heb. vii. 17, 21. † Psal. 110.

tors; each have supported their respective opinions with very cogent arguments, tho' not with such, but that great objections against both may occur. There seems to be one strong objection against the last opinion, what sense can be put upon Jehovah's oath, constituting him a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec, if he was really the Son of God, appearing in the human nature to Abraham? The sense and meaning of the oath he-hoved to be this, "thou art a Priest for ever after thine own
" order."

Whatever objections may seem to be against adopting, and maintaining, the first opinion, I would at present, rather embrace it, and instead of looking upon Christ as at this time anticipating the human nature, I would rather view the Melchisedec here spoken of, as an illustrious type of the Messiah; who was in the fulness of time to come in the human nature, to be installed in, and for ever to execute the Sacerdotal office; his very name seems to point out what our Lord Jesus Christ is called by the inspired writers, "*Melchisedec*, King of righteousness." Is not our High Priest, called "Jehovah our righteousness" † "King
of

" Adam ordered his children to take his body out of a place called the
" cave of the treasure, where he was to remain embalmed for a while,
" and to carry it to the middle of the earth; that Lamech, when he
" died, left the same command with Noah; that Noah took those re-
" licks into the Ark with him, and kept them there till he died; that
" he ordered his Son then to take the same, to provide bread and wine,
" to go along with Melchisedec, the Son of Phaleg, and to march until
" they came to a place which should be shown them by an Angel;
" that Noah commanded Melchisedec to fix his dwelling in the same
" place, to lead a single life, and to pass it as a Monk, or a religious
" person, because God had chosen him to perform religious service in
" his presence; but not to build any temple, nor shed the blood of any
" Animal, nor to offer up any Sacrifice, but bread and wine." As this
is an extravagant opinion, so the following is profane, viz. "that Mel-
" chisedec was a power, or virtue greater than Jesus Christ himself."

There have been likewise many fabulous opinions of him, such as this whimsical one; that the Sun was the Father, and the Moon the Mother of Melchisedec. Athanasius entertained this notion, viz. that his being said, to be without Father and without Mother, was, because the earth opened and swallowed up all his relations.

Others have entertained improbable opinions of him, such as, "That
" he was the Holy Ghost, or an Angel, or an extraordinary person im-
" mediately created by God like Adam, and for this reason, he is said
" to be made like the Son of God, the title which the Evangelist Luke
" gives to Adam."

of Salem" i. e. King of peace. * Christ is our peace, he made peace by the blood of his cross. Melchisedec is here described as without Father, and without Mother. I apprehend, that Paul means not by this description, that he was immediately created by God, and did not descend by ordinary generation as a Son of Adam; but rather to show the Scripture's silence on this head. Seneca speaks of two Roman Kings, that the one had no Father, and the other no Mother, which he himself thus explains; that they doubted who was the Father of the one, and no mention was made of the Mother of the other. Our great High Priest as Man, he had no Father, as God no Mother. If Melchisedec was a type of Christ in this respect, it affords a very strong proof of what our Mediator behoved to be; God as well as man, and man as well as God; both to be the antitype of this man. "Without beginning of days, or end of life," adds the inspired Historian. Here I imagine, Paul doth not speak of what Melchisedec was in himself, but what he is in relation to us. Paul's argument seems not to be founded upon the nature of the thing, but upon the silence of the Scripture. Melchisedec with regard to us, is without beginning of days, because there is no mention made of his birth; and without end of life, for the same reason. This is Christ's own declaration of himself, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last."

It is further predicated of Melchisedec, "that he abideth a Priest continually." He abode singularly and alone a Priest: He is the only one mentioned by the sacred writers, in whose person the regal, and sacerdotal offices concentrated. There were Priests and Prophets, as Samuel; Prophets and King, as David; but Melchisedec, stands unrivalled in his station of Priest and King. An inspired Prophet, states the resemblance between Melchisedec, and our Lord Jesus Christ in these few words, he shall sit a Priest upon his throne. † He offered his oblation here on earth; he now sits as a Priest on his throne in the highest heavens, exercising in a certain manner and degree, his priestly office, and for ever will, through all the successive ages of time, and the endless ages of eternity. The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters. ‡ For the foregoing reasons, the Apostle

* Some think that Salem is the same with Jerusalem, it would rather seem that this Salem lay in the way between Damascus and Sodom; it retained the same name in our Saviour's days as appears by the Evangelist, saying, that John baptized near Salem, John ii. 23.

† Zech. vi. 13.

‡ Rev. vii. 17.

tle might well affirm of Melchisedec, that " he was made like the Son of God," by being thus a most eminent type of him.

However *Orasmus*, although I am far from being singular in the exposition now given of the Apostle's account of this singular man, I am far from being so dogmatic, as certainly to affirm, and palm it upon you, or any other, as the mind of the Holy Ghost on this very abstruse part of holy writ. Whatever pains the learned have taken to unravel this intricate subject, there is still a vast field left for other enquiries.

By carefully attending to Paul's reasoning in the 7th. Ch. of his epistle to the Hebrews, you will find that the principal design he had in view, was to establish the eternity of Christ's priesthood, in opposition to the Priests under the law. The Aaronical priesthood was changing from day to day; they were not suffered to continue by reason of death, *v.* 23. They were constituted priests after the law of a carnal commandment; Christ after the power of an endless life, *v.* 16. The same sacred penman informs us further, *v.* 18. that there is a disannulling of this carnal commandment, constituting the Aaronical Priesthood, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. The precepts of the Ceremonial Law, were weak and beggarly elements, compared with the Gospel dispensation. † The Levitical priesthood and sacrifices, were weak and unprofitable unto the justification of a sinner in God's sight, and for the pardon and expiation of sin: What these could not do, the sacrifice of our High Priest did.

Orasmus, if you consult the 5th. Ch. of Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, *v.* 1, 4, 5. you will find Christ's priesthood, and what peculiarly belonged to him to do in the execution of that office, clearly proven; one principal part of the Levitical priesthood we are told, " was to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins;" there was indeed another part, but founded on this, *viz.* to intercede for the people; their oblations were prior to their intercessions. The way to the holy of holies, was by the altar. God never instituted the office of priesthood merely to intercede, the principal part of their office lay, in offering gifts and sacrifices for sin, typically to remove sin, and reconcile an offended God, to an offending sinner. Now if this be allowed to Aaron and his sons, why should any deny this part of Christ's priestly office, *viz.* his offering up a real, propitiatory sacrifice in the room of the guilty? The principal part of Christ's priestly office, I imagine was executed in the days of his incarnation. That he now appears in the presence of God for us, is owing to his hanging on the cross for us. I may perhaps in the course of my correspondence with you, have occasion to be more explicit and full on this subject, therefore shall not anticipate, what will fall in
more

more natively in another place. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, (says the Apostle) but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" Sacrifices being of divine institution, it necessarily follows, that no sacrifice could be accepted of God, unless offered by one, legally set apart for that purpose. So adds the Apostle, v. 5. Christ glorified not himself, to be made an High Priest, but he, (viz. God who appointed him to be so,) who said unto him, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. This refers to Acts xiii. 33. and is spoken of there as touching his resurrection from the dead; intimating that by God's raising him from the dead, he gave a most ample testimony to the world, that he as Mediator, was by Jehovah consecrated to be the High Priest of our profession. The Apostle adds, v. 6. as he saith also in another place, thou art a Priest for ever, &c. but of this I have already given you my sentiments. Now, if any one grants, that Aaron and his Sons were proper Priests, appointed by God to offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins; why should Christ be denuded of this principal part of his priestly office, viz. offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, in the room and stead of the guilty, particularly, seeing he was appointed to this office by the oath of God the Father?

Onesimus, if you please to consult the 29th and 30th Chap. of Exod. you will there find the various rites and ceremonies used at the consecration of Aaron and his Sons, to minister in the Priest's office. After the Ram of the consecration was offered up, and Aaron and his Sons clothed with the holy garments, they were with great solemnity anointed with the holy anointing oil, and with the blood of the slain Sacrifices. † You will find *Onesimus* that God testified in the sight of all Israel, and after a very solemn manner, that he approved of the instalment of Aaron into the priest's office by a miracle, there came fire from before the Lord and consumed the victim, which Aaron offered immediately after his consecration.

Solemn

† Bishop Patrick seems to think, that the ceremonies used by the Heathens in their Taurobolia, or Cribofia, which was the name they gave to their Sacrifices of Bulls, was in imitation of the sprinkling of the Aaronical priesthood, with the blood of the slain Sacrifices. It was chiefly at the consecration of their Priests, that these kind of Sacrifices were offered. They digged a hole in the ground, and caused the person who was to be consecrated to descend into it; they covered this hole with planks that were bored thro' in every part; they offered a Bull on these planks in such a manner, that his blood might pass thro' all the orifices, and sprinkle the person standing under them who was destined to be the High Priest.

Solemn as the transactions were which took place at the consecration of Aaron and his Sons, they lose much of their solemnity, when compared with those phænomena which occurred at the inauguration of Jesus into his mediatory offices. Thirty years he had lived an obscure life; the current opinion was, that he was the Son of Joseph and Mary: Demeaning himself, as if he had no title to that illustrious character which he bore eternal ages before his incarnation; as if he had not been invested with this important commission, to lay down his life for his sheep. The time being now come, in which he must appear in a more active sphere of life, in which he must appear on the Theatre of this world, as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his Church: To convince the world that Jehovah had not repented of the oath which he swore, in constituting him a Priest for ever; he gave such ostensible proofs of it at Jordan, that the faith of his Disciples and followers might be for ever confirmed in this grand article, that he is our Mediator between God and men.

Whilst John was baptizing at Bethabara, beyond Jordan, among the rest that repaired to be baptized by him, Jesus was one: Jesus being baptized, and ascending out of the waters, a voice was heard out of the excellent glory, "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." At the same time the Holy Ghost descended and rested upon him in the shape of a dove.*

Are you not amazed *Onesimus*, at the condescension and grace of the ever blessed, and undivided Trinity. "Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him!" This grand, and glorious scene took place for us. In order to promote our best interests, to procure our eternal happiness, our High Priest must be baptized, in order to fulfil all righteousness, baptized by one of his own creatures, which his own right hand formed out of the dust. Job informs us, that when the Almighty laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sung together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy. Here was a better, a more sure foundation laid, laid in Zion, to support a sinful world, tottering on the brink of endless ruin, and whosoever believeth on him shall not be confounded. Angels rejoiced at his birth; but here the Eternal Father rejoices over his Son, approves of his substitution in our
room

* In Athanasius' time, when the Arian heresy made an alarming progress in the Christian Church, it was common for the Orthodox, to refer the Arians to Jordan to convince them of their error. *Abi Ariane ad Jordanem et videbis Trinitatem*, i. e. O Arian go to Jordan and thou wilt see a Trinity.

room, and delights in him as such: "This is (orig. that) my beloved Son," pointing at the singularity of his office, as well as his nature. Were Aaron and his Sons anointed with the holy oil at their consecration into the priest's office, so was our Lord Jesus Christ, "with the oil of gladness." The Holy Ghost in the form of a dove descended, and abode upon him. He came upon the Prophets, he rested on the Messiah. You may consult at your leisure *Onesimus*, the beginning of the 11th and 61st Chapters of Isaiah's prophecy, where you will see how the Spirit rested on the Mediator, and for what end; consulting these you may safely set your seal, to what Christ himself testifies on this head, "the Father giveth not the Spirit to him by measure."

We need not be amazed at this glorious transaction, when we consider, that within the space of three years and a half, great and glorious things were to be achieved by the Captain of our salvation. God was to be glorified, an end put to sin, reconciliation procured, an everlasting righteousness brought in, Satan subdued, and sinners emancipated from his galling yoke. How often did the Eternal Father testify his approbation of Christ's substitution in our room. In the 12th Ch. of John's gospel, v. 27, 28. we behold the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, thus petitioning. "Father glorify thy name," a voice was heard from heaven saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." On the mount of transfiguration, and in the presence of two celestial visitants, and three of his disciples, we find a repetition of the same words, which were heard from the excellent glory at Jordan. † Heaven delighted to dwell on this glorious subject. We find an approbation of Jesus extorted from his very enemies; by a secret impulse which they could not resist, they were obliged to recognize him as the Son of David, the King of Israel, the Saviour of men. Hear their song of praise, listen to their voice of applause, "Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord to save us, Hosanna in the highest!" †

Onesimus, would you wish to know some of these endearing properties by which the High Priest of our profession is characterized in the Scriptures; with pleasure and delight, I would recommend him to my dear *Onesimus*, as follows. He is one who hath sufficient favour with the Eternal Father to recommend all his clients to the mercy, care, and protection of the Father. Who can possibly entertain a doubt of this, when we consider, what he is, how he stands in Heaven's account: He is God's
Son,

† Mat. xvii. 5.

‡ Mat. xxiv. 9.

Son, his own dear and his beloved Son, his elect in whom his soul delighteth. Is it possible to conceive, that the Father will not grant to such a one, whatever his lips can crave? "If any man sin, (says the beloved Disciple, 1 John ii. 1.) we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." In the execution of the intercessory part of his priestly office, he doth not stand in the presence of God for us as a mere supplicant, interceding for mercy, grace, and pardon, for his people upon the footing of mere favour. No, but he appears as an advocate pleading upon the footing of what is just, and right. He appears in the presence of God for us, agencing our cause, and interceding in our behalf, upon the footing of his own oblation. He intercedes not for us, as he once did for himself, conditionally. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." No, but "Father I will," peremptorily, and absolutely. He once in the end of the world, appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and now in glory, he appears as a slain lamb, *willing*, that all the blessings and benefits flowing from this atoning sacrifice, be communicated to all his people in due time. Seeing we have such a prevalent High Priest within the veil, may we not on every occasion adopt the triumphant language of Paul, Rom. viii. 33 "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, it is Christ that died;" that offered up himself a peculiar victim, a vicarious sacrifice: That rose again, and having discharged our debt, and given full satisfaction to divine justice on earth, he is now at the Father's right hand, making intercession for us. Do you complain *Onesimus*, of the strength of sin, the power of temptations; are you grieved for the weakness of your faith, the feebleness of your hope? In the highest Heavens, in the presence of God, appears a mighty, an Almighty intercessor; the mighty God in human nature. By the merit of his death, and prevalent intercession you shall rise superior to all the strength of sin, and power of hell, and through him that loved you, be made more than a conqueror.

He is a faithful High Priest; righteousness is the girdle of his loins, faithfulness the girdle of his reins. * "In all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a faithful High Priest." || He is a faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, and in things pertaining to us. "The council of peace shall be between them both," says an inspired Prophet. The result of this was, Christ undertook to bear the sins of many, by making his soul an offering for sin. Arduous, and difficult as this undertaking was in its execution, faithfulness bound him to the performance. He did not, he could not retract, until all

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* Isa. zi. 5.

|| Heb. ii. 17, 18.

was accomplished; then bowing the head, he gave up the Ghost in this triumphant language, *it is finished*. May we not safely argue, that if he was faithful in things pertaining to God, will he not also be faithful in things pertaining to us? Surely he will.

By the special donation of the Father, his sheep were committed into his hand; "thine they were and thou gavest them me." At his hand they will be required; before the throne of God they will be presented; none shall be missing in the day of reckoning. "Behold I and the children which thou hast given me," will be his language in that day. There is not a promise contained in their charter, but shall be accomplished, "for faithful is he that hath promised, who also will perform." "He is faithful and will not deny himself." There is not a blessing in the Covenant of Grace, nor a benefit the purchase of his blood, but they in due time shall participate of, not a temptation but they shall escape; in his faithfulness he will not suffer them to be tempted, above what they are able to bear. There is not a difficulty lying in their way to glory, but they shall surmount; not an enemy but they shall conquer, yea even the last enemy, *death*. The saint considering the faithfulness and truth of his great High Priest, may sing of victory before the conflict be over; may triumph before he enters the field of battle. Depending on Christ's faithfulness, he may shout, and sing, O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory!

He is a merciful High Priest; have we any reason to doubt of his mercy towards us, who suffered the wrath of God for us? Can we suppose that he is less merciful now, in his exalted state, than he was when tabernacled among men? Hath he shut up his bowels of compassion within the vail, or were they expended, and utterly evacuated on miserable objects when here in our world? No, he left this world with bowels full of compassion, with a heart relenting for his poor miserable members. Let us follow him in the days of his incarnation, and wherever he went, we will find traces of his sympathy and compassion shown, oftentimes to his very enemies and persecutors. "I have compassion on the multitude," is the language of our merciful High Priest: A multitude, which in a very short time was so provoked against him, purely on account of the heavenliness of his doctrine, that they all forsook him; trampled his mercy under their feet, and treated his grace with disdain. In pronouncing the doom of Jerusalem, and sealing the inhabitants of that wicked city under an awful judicial stroke, this he cannot do, without tears. See his heaving heart! Behold his weeping eyes! See the deepest compassion, mixed with the most stern justice! The Evangelist Luke, Ch. xix. v. 41, 42 informs us, that when he came
 night

nigh the City, he beheld it, and wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou at least in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. Who could look for compassion, in the midst of so much unheard of cruelty as Jesus experienced on the cross, at the hands of his implacable enemies. Yet in spite of all their malice, his divine clemency appears; when they blasphemed, he prayed, "Father, forgive them." If his bowels of compassion now and then, yearned over his most inveterate enemies, what could those expect who made their approaches to him as a merciful High Priest, under a consciousness of guilt, and a sense of manifold infirmities? He exceeded their expectations, rose in his mercy superior to their most unbounded wish. He made the lame man to leap as an hart, the tongue of the dumb to sing; and poured daylight into the eyes of the blind; he healed the loathsome leper, and raised the almost putrid carcase to life. His compassionate nature did not stop here, he poured his grace into their souls; pardoned their sins, enrolled them among the number of the citizens of the new Jerusalem; opened the blind eyes, not only to see the sun, but the wonders in his law; made the deaf to hear, not only the language of their fellow creatures, but to hear, and obey his own divine and heavenly message; made the lame not only to walk, but to run in the way of his commandments; not only raised the dead to life, but made them heirs of eternal life, and children of the resurrection; not only removed from the leper his ulcerous sores, but purified his heart, and made him meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

In his mercy and compassion, he covers the sinful imperfections, and daily failings of his people; he casts their sins behind his back, blots out as a cloud their sins, and as a thick cloud their transgressions; casts them into the depths of the sea. When Joshua stood up to minister before the Lord, to execute the priestly office, he was clothed in filthy garments; he had just left an idolatrous wicked country; something of the Babylonish turpitude cleaved to the Lord's minister, as much as to afford a handle to Satan, to bring in a railing accusation against him; but not so much as to make our merciful High Priest join in the accusation. No, he repels the accuser, and vindicates his own servant. "The Lord rebuke thee O Satan, is not this a brand pluckt out of the burning." † Could Peter have reasonably expected less, than the most cutting reproof from a much injured Lord; injured by the perfidy of an apostle, denied, (and that with an oath) by one, who upon several occasions had made the most unequivocal confession of him, as his Lord and Master? But behold in his clemency

† Zech. iii. 1, 2, 3. &c.

mency, and compassion, he forgets the heinous transgression of his Apostle, and blots out as a cloud his unprovoked apostacy: His eye of mercy directed to Peter was all the check Peter met with, from his, and our Lord.

But to complete the character, and show the perfection and propriety of his priesthood, he is an Eternal Priest. But this man because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, Heb. vii. 24,—28. For, (says the Apostle) the law maketh men High Priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son who is consecrated for evermore. The legal priesthood was not suffered to continue by reason of death: The sanctity of their lives, the importance of their office, could not ward off the king of terrors: They fell indiscriminately with others by the blow of this last enemy, and resigned their office to the next in succession. But Jehovah, with the most solemn oath hath constituted him a Priest for ever.

Do you ask *Oneſimus*, will Christ continue in the exercise of his priestly office, viz. the intercessory part of it, after the consummation of all things? Will he continually appear in the presence of God for us? Will there be any necessity for his advocacy? Any reason for his showing himself the patron, and advocate of the redeemed company, when they are all brought home to glory, and set with him on his throne? There is one particular place of Scripture, which would seem to insinuate, that Christ will no longer appear as our interceding High Priest, but that the execution of this office will be for ever suspended and laid aside, after the presentment of all his followers before the throne of his glory. 1. Cor. xv. 24. Then cometh the end when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power, v. 28. and when all things shall be subdued unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. It must be confessed I think, that this is a very abstruse passage, and at first view, would seem to conclude against Christ's advocacy in a future state. When death is destroyed, when all for whom he died are brought home to glory, and put beyond all possibility of a relapse; when Satan is for ever conquered; when all are judged, the wicked punished, and the righteous crowned with eternal glory; where is the necessity for his further advocacy. But I think, difficulties of an insurmountable nature stare us in the face at first view, if we consider this text as intended to point at a perpetual cessation of Christ's intercession within the veil in a glorified state. How is he to be made subject to the Father? Is there no kingdom, or dominion, to be exercised in that celestial state, but what is essential to the whole Godhead? Is the human nature

nature of Christ to be then subject to the Father, as saints and angels will be? That so as Christ was all in all before, with reference to the Church, and from his fulness did all his mystical body receive, so now is the Godhead to be all, and fill all things, without any reference to the Mediator. I would rather imagine the sense of this obscure passage to be this, viz. that the Mediatorial Kingdom of Christ which he possesses by delegation from the Father, shall cease with regard to its present mode of administration; that that rule, authority, and power, shall not be exercised in the same manner as now; ordinances shall cease, these mediums thro' which God communicates his blessings and grace, shall there be no more requisite: That intuitive vision the saints shall enjoy, will supersede the use of all these means which are necessary here: "There will be no temple there," i. e. no temple ordinances, they shall be honorably laid aside, because not necessary there. God shall be all in all to his saints, i. e. instead of all these means, through which life and salvation were communicated to his people here. By giving the text this turn, it, at least frees us from the many, and I think unanswerable difficulties, with which we would be embarrassed in denying the eternity of Christ's intercession. But how is he to be a Priest for ever according to Jehovah's oath, if God be *so* all in all, as to supersede Christ's intercession, in our glorified state? You will find a text very apposite to our purpose, in Rev. vii. 17. "The Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them," even that same Lamb of God, which in the days of his incarnation here on earth, took away their sins by his blood; and by the same blood sanctified their natures, and made them meet for glory. It would seem evident from this text, that all the felicity of the celestial state, all the communications from Deity, must necessarily flow to the saints, through the Lamb. It is very observable, that in all the accounts of the heavenly state, in the book of the Revelation, Christ as the *Lamb*, is never omitted, see Ch. xxii. v. 1. "And he showed me, (says John) a pure river of the water of life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and the Lamb." Fulness of pleasures, and these unsullied, will be the eternal portion of all the redeemed from among men. These eternal pleasures, these redundant joys, from whence do they proceed? From Deity simply, and abstractly? No, but from the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne. "He shall sit a Priest upon his throne," for ever and ever, not offering himself a sacrifice, but in a way inconceivable to us, presenting the infinite virtue, and value of his sacrifice here on earth, as the ground and reason of the saints perpetually enjoying the vision, and fruition of the Lord God Almighty.

I shall conclude my letter, with a few practical observations; and these, with a particular reference to your present anxious concern about your eternal interests. You are solicitous to know, how you are to be saved: An enquiry certainly of the greatest weight, of the utmost importance. “What will it avail a man, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” And what will a man’s sincerity avail him, in a way that God never appointed for salvation. Will God alter his method of salvation for any man’s belief, let his sincerity be never so unfeigned? In order to restore tranquillity to your anxious mind, and repose to your troubled conscience, *pardon* is absolutely necessary, pardon for infinite offences, pardon for heinous transgressions. Who is the purchaser of this pardon? Our High Priest. What was paid down as the ransom for sin? Christ’s Blood. How are we actually interested in this ransom? By faith, which is the gift of God. How is this faith to be obtained? By repairing to *him* by prayer, “from whom every good and perfect gift comes.” Observe the language of the apostle, Heb. x. 21, 22. “And having, (says he,) an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.” &c. What is your relief in all your straits, *Onesimus*? Where do you repair, oppress’d with grief, surrounded with trials; when all refuge fails you, when within are fightings, and without are fears? Is it not to God, by prayer; “O Lord, (says David, a man given to prayer,) I am oppress’d, undertake for me.” What gives you encouragement to approach such a holy Lord God, a God of spotless purity? Is it not, because you have a great High Priest within the veil. What an encouragement was it to old Jacob, to go down into Egypt, when his son Joseph was there before him, and master of all the store-houses. He could not but meet with a welcome reception from his son: The son could not but consult the happiness of the Father. What encouragement have we to go to God by prayer; we have on the throne, one who is near of kin to us, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh: And in whom, all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, grace and glory. “Let us come boldly to the throne of grace,” which has for its basis, judgment and justice: Justice satisfied, and judgment executed upon our Lord Jesus Christ, our atoning High Priest. View *Onesimus*, what surrounds this throne, Rev. iv. 3. “There was round about the throne a rainbow in sight like unto an emerald.” A rainbow, an emblem of God’s covenant of grace, confirmed and ratified in the blood of the slain Lamb. A covenant, replete with the most inestimable blessings, an in-

terest in God as our God, the promise of pardon and peace, preservation from evil, and perseverance in a state of grace, until grace be swallowed up in glory. This covenant never waxes old: God will never forget it; it surrounds his throne, it is in sight, like unto an emerald. After the waters of the flood had subsided, and the ark rested on the mountain Ararat; Noah built an altar unto the Lord, and sacrificed thereon; from this sacrifice, Jehovah smelled a sweet savour, a savour of rest: And Jehovah said in his heart, that he would no more curse the earth for man's sake. † Afterwards we find the great Jehovah entering into a covenant with Noah, and every living creature, and as a symbol of this covenant, he set his bow in the cloud, to assure Noah, to assure us, that such a judgment should never befall the world again to the end of time. || From the sacrifice that the Lamb of God offered up here on earth, a sacrifice to make an atonement for our souls, God smelled a savour of rest; and this is the result, God's anger is turned away, a covenant of grace established between God and his saints; in which, he hath most solemnly engaged, never to turn away from them, to do them good. In all your difficulties *Onesimus*, you may appeal to the throne of grace. Who sits on this throne? A God of grace, a reconciled God in Christ: Not an inexorable judge, issuing forth thundrings and lightnings from his throne: It is not a God whose dread may make you afraid, under whose tremendous arm you may be crushed, or who, with an indignant frown will drive you from his presence, as Christ drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple. No, he that sits on the throne is *Emmanuel*, God with us, God in our nature, God on our side; who has a fellow feeling with us in all our infirmities, because he was in all points tempted as we are.

May we not *Onesimus*, plainly see in the priesthood of Christ, the surest basis laid for sinners of every description, who by faith fly for refuge to this hope set before them. “But this man because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood: Wherefore *he* is able also to save to the very uttermost, all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”* He is an all powerful High Priest, he is able to save in the most desperate cases, to the very last verge of time. When here on earth, how liberally, and freely did he dispense his free grace, and precious salvation to the most unworthy, to the veriest wretches ever existed; a foundation is laid in his blood, for sinners to expect deliverance from wrath: He ever lives to see to the application of that salvation, purchased by him on earth. Who could ever have imagined, that salvation would have

† Gen. viii. 20, 21. || Ch. ix. 12, 13. * Heb. vii. 24, 25.

have come the way of Mary Magdalene; a nuisance to mankind, sunk in licentiousness, abandoned to all manner of uncleanness: Yet a gracious and merciful Saviour, did not disdain to save her from her sins, and adopt her into his family, and enrol her name among the number of the justified, and sanctified in Christ Jesus. O that sinners would but credit his own gracious declaration! " Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Are not his thoughts above our thoughts, and his ways above our ways. Who would have imagined, that there should have been wrought such a miracle of mercy at so late an hour, as happened in favour of the thief on the cross: The one moment, in concert with his sinful companion, reviling the Saviour of the world; the next moment Jesus smiling on him, assuring him of a happy entrance into paradise, where he himself was that day to be. Never was the Devil so much disappointed: What malice and chagrin, would fill the heart of that dark revolted spirit, to find himself baffled at such a period. What an unaccountable thing, to see grace triumphing at so late an hour. How would he curse the cross, that spoiled him of his prey. Consider thou envious, cursed spirit, it is not all lost that is in danger. Our High Priest is able to save to the uttermost. Ye obstinate sinners, ye presumptuous transgressors, ye that add iniquity to sin, beware of abusing God's grace, and slighting Christ's salvation when in your offer, expecting salvation at a late hour. Here is one instance, that none may despair, and but one, that none may presume. Are you certain, that God will grant his grace, when he afflicts you with his hand? Are you sure, that in that tremendous hour, when death will attack you, that Christ will come, and make you sharers of his salvation? Rather dread, that in pursuing a course of wickedness, and slighting the day of your merciful visitation, that he will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. † Therefore instead of finding salvation at that late hour ye expected, ye shall eat of the fruit of your own ways, and be filled with your own devices.

May we not see *Onesimus*, how much they dishonour the Saviour, and discourage the convinced sinner, who endeavour to divest Christ of his priestly office. For if he is not a Priest, no atoning sacrifice has been offered up for our sins; and in this case

† Prov. i. 26, 27, 28, 31.

case, we must make a direct application to the merit of our own, (falsely so called) good works: For good works, without a lively faith in the person, death, and mediation of Jesus, is a mystery, the Scriptures know nothing of. Such as deny his Deity, can scarce expect salvation by his sacrifice: Neither would I, *Onesimus*, if I entertained the same notion. For a creature, as the Saviour of the Arians and Socinians is, to bear the sins of a guilty world, to endure the wrath of an angry God, to finish transgression, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, would be too much, to be expected at his hand: All that such a Saviour could give, or could reasonably be expected from him, consists in the example he hath set before us, in his life, the instructions left us by the doctrines he taught, and sealing as a Martyr, the truths which he as a Prophet delivered: Consequently, for all that he suffered on the cross, we must make the best of our way to glory, by our own works. But what if God respects no man's works in the matter of justification? Do you reply, this certainly is impossible, or else the world seems to be in a great mistake. We may allow the world to be mistaken, but I think we cannot entertain the remotest thought, that the apostle was mistaken. Doth he not roundly tell the Galatians, tell us, and all successive generations to the end of time, that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. † Observe he uses the same language in his epistle to the Romans, Ch. iii. 28. Therefore, (says he,) we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law.

What a pitiable dilemma must a poor sinner be reduced to, in quest of salvation, and embracing the Arian or Socinian hypothesis. He views the Saviour as a creature who lived a holy life, and died a Martyr for the truth: No complete and vicarious satisfaction made by his death to the justice of God: For as I formerly hinted, who could expect pardon at a creature's hand, or at the hand of a God by grace, as these men express themselves. This door then is at once shut. But there yet remains another open: But it happens to be a door, that God hath shut, and never will open for any man. What is this door, by which these men must believe they shall enter the celestial regions? Endeavour to live honestly, give of your goods to feed the poor, open your door to the stranger, protect the fatherless and widow; in a word, do all the good you can. All these moral virtues are very good, all these will be found in the justified in Christ Jesus, but all this group of virtues, will never justify any man before God's tribunal. These are not a satisfactory righteousness, sufficient to magnify the law, or satisfy the infinite incensed justice

of

† Gal. ii. 16.

of God. But what if a sinner, conscious of guilt, and afraid of falling into the hands of the living God, sees this? What if the confession and acknowledgment that the church makes flash conviction in his conscience, and roundly informs him, that all his righteousness, is as filthy rags? This corroborated by Paul's positive assertion, brings him almost to the very brink of despair. Do you remember *Onesimus*, the advice that Paul gave to the philippian Jaylor: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Do you remember the sermon Peter preached to Cornelius, when he being forewarned by God in a vision, sent for him from Joppa; did he stand up and harangue the Centurion, on his prayers, his alms, deeds, &c. &c. and inform him, these would justify his person, and recommend him to the divine favour, these would procure the remission of his sins, and an entrance into glory? No, he preached Jesus, and the resurrection; that Jesus, by whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins; by whose atonement and merit we are made accepted, and our title to the glorious inheritance ascertained. "To him, (says he,) gave all the Prophets witness, that thro' this name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins." But I am rather anticipating myself here, as I propose in some future epistle, to dwell longer, and enlarge more copiously on this subject. In the mean time, my dear *Onesimus*, let Emmanuel, God in our nature, on our side, be precious to you: Let this precious and admirable truth dwell in you; that Jesus is our atoning and interceding High Priest. Habitually dwell on the glory of his person, the suitableness of his offices; glory in his holy name, that when the earthly house of this tabernacle drops, and your earthly part resigned to the dust, your immortal spirit may enter into Paradise, to be for ever with the Lord. That this may be the happy attainment of my *Onesimus*, is, and ever will be, the earnest prayer of

Yours most affectionately,

PHILEMON.



L E T T E R II.

P H I L E M O N T O O N E S I M U S.

My dear Onesimus,

I Received yours; am glad to hear of your perfect recovery from your late indisposition. May you long live to show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness, into his marvellous light. May the thread of your natural life be long protracted, to convince the world by your virtuous practice and conversation, that an entire dependance on Emmanuel's righteousness for eternal salvation, is by no means inimical to the interests of holiness; that the grace of God, communicated to you through the medium of the gospel of peace, hath taught you, "to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world."—you take notice in yours, of the variegated and mutable state of all sublunary enjoyments here below: Every day *Onesimus*, may convince us of this important truth. This is a truth attested by the wisest of men. "There is no abiding thing under the sun," "One generation goeth, and another cometh." What strange changes doth every revolving day introduce! Just now I was reading the news paper, and I find in the same column, a bill of mortality, with a register of births and marriages. How often is the same house, alternately the house of mirth, and sorrow.—How often do we find the hearts of fond parents leaping within them for joy; when they view with an eye of parental affection, their growing offspring as "tender plants round about their table." But alas! how often is their joy turn'd into sadness, and their mirth into lamentation. Death casts its sable mantle over these shooting branches, and cuts them down ere they be grown; consigns them to the dust, and with them, the hope, and comfort of surviving parents. Let us view the field of battle, what a dismal scene! what different effects, are the result of a martial engagement. No sooner doth the report of victory reach the Capital, than acclamations of joy meet you in every corner. Every artifice that the wit of man can devise, is used on the occasion, to demonstrate the joy of the inhabitants: Yet in the midst of all this hilarity, there is always found an air of dejection in the countenances, and contending passi-

ons in the breasts of not a few. Parents weeping for their lost Children; widows for their affectionate Husbands, who fell, gloriously fell, in the defence of their religion, lives, and liberty. Our greatest pleasures, are always mixt with pain. The fairest, and sweetest-scented rose, grows on a prickly thorn.—In the same news paper, I find an account of a great and opulent merchant turned bankrupt. How often has adverse winds, and boisterous seas, turn'd the most wealthy to beggary. Happy for those who have laid up “treasures, where the moth cannot devour, nor rust corrupt, nor thieves break through to steal:” Where no untoward accident can ever reach. Within the veil where Christ is, all is secure; without nothing is certain. “Riches take to themselves wings and fly away.” I am also at the same time, and through the same medium, inform'd, of some who are just now rais'd to splendid fortunes, who were poor before. The Lord in his allwise providence, “maketh poor, and maketh rich.” O may such as possess this world's affluence consider, that they are but stewards of the good things of God's providence; and that they must render an account to the great giver, how they dispose of the gift! O that such would view the pomp and glory of this present world, with Solomon's perspective: This man, the wisest, and probably the richest of men, indulg'd himself in every thing that might regale nature; but shortlived were his pleasures, unsatisfactory his pursuits; he outlived them all. Before he clos'd his eyes on this world, he wrote this motto on every created enjoyment, a motto which he experienc'd to be true; which succeeding ages after him, have set their seal to, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” Happy for the genuine Christian, he has something to support him amidst the failures of sublunary enjoyments: Something which the world neither can give, or take away. Observe *Onesimus*, the seraphic song of an old Testament believer, a believer of no mean stature indeed, I mean the prophet Habakkuk: “Although, (says he,) the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, the labour of the olive shall fail; and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the folds, and there shall be no herds in the stalls: Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.” q. d. I find, and actually possess in God my Saviour, what is more than sufficient to compensate for the loss of all Creature comforts. Let them be gone, my God remains. My heart, and my flesh may, and will fail, but God will fail me never. That robe of righteousness, and those garments of salvation, the purchase of *Emmanuel*, laid a foundation for that Evangelical Prophet Isaiah, to express himself in these seraphic strains; “I will greatly re-
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joyce in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the robe of righteousness, and with the garments of salvation † A robe of righteousness, wrought out by the great High Priest of our profession, in the human nature, in the offering up of himself to God, a sacrifice without spot, or blemish For, (says the Apostle,) it is of necessity, that this man have somewhat to offer." ‡ The same inspired penman, informs us what this man actually offer'd " But now once in the end of the world, hath he appeared to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself." § " So Christ was once offer'd to bear the sins of many." If it was a peculiar part of the sacerdotal function under the law, to offer up sacrifices for the sins of the people; then Christ must be a proper Priest, seeing he had somewhat to offer, he actually offer'd up somewhat. And what this offering was, we may come to know, by consulting the Prophet Isaiah, Cap. xliiii. v. 10. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin. If we want to know the object to whom this oblation was made, together with its final cause, Paul will inform us of these: Heb. ix. 14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God. The sacrifice offer'd up by our High Priest, was his holy human nature, consisting of a human soul, and body united: " A body hast thou prepared me," " when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." This then was the sacrifice; but how could the oblation of Christ's human nature expiate sin, finish transgression, and bring in an everlasting righteousness? No otherwise that I can conceive, but by that strict indissoluble union, that subsisted between the divine and human nature, in his person. This was the Altar, (the divine nature,) that sanctify'd the gift, and render'd it efficacious to answer all the purposes of God's glory, and man's salvation. For this reason, the blood which he shed, is sometimes call'd the blood of God* Feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. || Do you ask *Or simus*, what I understand

† Isai. lxi. 10.

‡ Heb. viii. 3.

§ Cap. ix. 26, 28.

* Acts xx. 28.

|| Upon the Socinian, and Arian scheme, redemption through the blood of Jesus cannot reasonably be expected. It is fit and congruous, that the person that suffered should possess the same specific human nature that sinn'd. But according to the Arian scheme, the Mediator had no human nature: For instead of a human soul, they maintain that a certain superangelic spirit which God created from the beginning of the world, actuated and inform'd that body conceiv'd in the womb of the Virgin

derstand by the hypostatical Union of Christ's two natures? Do I thoroughly understand, or can I by my reason comprehend it? Yes, I can as easily understand it, and as fully comprehend it, as I can understand and comprehend the nature of God; and yet my reason obliges me to believe he exists; or the union between my soul and my body, and yet self-consciousness obliges me to credit that there is such a thing: Yea, I have fully as clear an idea of my Saviour, *God and Man*, as I have of the Arian's Super-Angelic spirit united to a human body; or the Socinian's extraordinary *man*, formed in the womb of the Virgin Mary above seventeen hundred years ago — Do you ask, was it absolutely necessary, that our High Priest, Emmanuel, God in our nature should offer up himself a sacrifice? Could not sin be remitted, and the transgressor saved, but by the death of Christ, as a propitiatory vicarious sacrifice?

To your query, I might briefly answer in the words of the Holy Ghost Without shedding of blood there is no remission. † We have no reason I think to imagine that God would have delivered up his own Son to the death for sinners, if either the blood of Bulls and Goats; the moral obedience of the delinquent; the efficacy of Christ's doctrine, or the force of his example, would have answer'd the ends and purposes of God's glory, or man's salvation.

Permit me here *On-sinus*, to be a little more particular on this subject. Let us take a cursory view of the nature and perfections of that glorious being against whom sin is committed, in order to convince us of the necessity of the death of *Jesus*, in order for remission. If then, this great and glorious being whom we have offended, be essentially holy and just, just and holy, by a necessity of nature; if he bears a perfect aversion to that vile and abominable thing *sin*, as diametrically opposite to the sanctity of his nature, and the righteousness of his law; which cannot be deny'd, and is denied by none, that profess a belief in the sacred oracles: Then it must necessarily follow, that sin must be punish'd, either in the person of the sinner, or in the person of a surety, previous to the reception of the sinner into favour. The Scriptures every where celebrate the holiness of the divine nature, and God's displicency and hatred against sin. "Thou art of purer eyes, than to behold sin, and canst not look upon iniquity."

Virgin Mary. As the Arians divest him of his human nature, Socinians confine the personal structure of Jesus to humanity entirely. Consequently these men must refer their votaries to something else for Salvation than to the *Blood of their Jesus*.

† Heb. viii. 23.

iniquity. † Now, since justice and holiness are essential perfections of the divine Being, it necessarily follows, that sin cannot go unpunish'd. The distributive justice of God requires, that "every one should receive according to the deeds done in the body. || It is true, that God's hatred of sin, is by no means attended with that emotion and perturbation of mind, which we feel when offended: But the greatest detestation, join'd with a certain and constant determination to punish it. And there is you will find, a necessary connexion establish'd between God's hatred of sin, and his determination to punish it. Observe the language of the royal Psalmist on this head. Psal. xi. 5, 6. But the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth. Being wicked, God shall, God must treat him as such. "Upon the wicked he shall rain fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest." The inspired Apostle of the Gentiles, speaks the same language, establishes the same position. Rom. ii. 8, 9. Indignation, and wrath:—Tribulation, and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil.

Further, holiness being an essential perfection of the divine nature, it necessarily follows; that it cannot possibly be an indifferent thing for God, to hate sin, or not; because he is holy, not by an act of his will, but by a necessity of nature. And as vindictive justice, is as essential to his nature as holiness, it must also necessarily follow, that it cannot be an indifferent thing for him to punish sin, or not, as he pleases. Supposing then, sin to take place, and God's hatred of sin essential to his nature, it of course follows, that justice must be satisfy'd, and sin pardon'd, before the offender be receiv'd into favour. You must observe *Onesimus*, that there is a most material difference between the exercise of the clemency and goodness, and the exercise of the justice and holiness of the divine nature. He may communicate the former, when, and unto whom he pleases. God's acts of mercy and compassion are purely arbitrary; not so his acts of justice. The former, with regard to exercise, flow from the divine will, the latter from the divine nature. The lofty and glorious descriptions of the goodness and clemency of God, militate nothing against the nature of his vindictive justice, or that constant determination of God to punish sin. One reason perhaps, (among many others) may be assign'd, why God is so often described in scripture as more prone to the exercise of mercy than judgment; because when God punishes the sinner, there is but a very sparing discovery made of the divine nature; but in acts of mercy, we see (so to speak) the all of God; all the perfections of God are develop'd, and expos'd to open view.

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† Habak. i. 12.

|| Rom. i. 18.

With regard to the sinner receiv'd into favour, whose sins are pardon'd, whose nature is sanctify'd, and he finally sav'd; there is justice, yea, and a glorious display of that perfection too, as well as the amiable perfection of mercy: But with regard to such as for their sins, are finally condemn'd, there is only the exercise of justice without mercy. There is a combination of all the perfections of Deity in one single act of pardoning mercy.

This necessity of nature in God to punish sin, is not a physical, but a moral, rational necessity: It is still in the power of his own hand, and his most sovereign, and righteous will, to diversify, and modify the punishment sinners deserve for their moral transgressions, to defer it for a time, or not, to transfer it from the personal transgressor, or not. It was still in the power of his sovereign will to have punish'd the old world, either sooner, or later than he did; or to have diversify'd the punishment. But although the time and mode of punishing sinners be still lodg'd in the power of his own sovereign free will, yet the actual punishing sinners lies in, and flows from the perfection, purity, and inflexible justice of his nature.

The punitive justice of God, or his invariable determination to punish sin, obtains the suffrage even of the Heathens themselves. From whence arises those dreadful terrors in the conscience, which shake the sinner's whole frame? From whence proceed those occult lashes from God's vicegerent? Do they not flow from a certain dread and terror of punishment at the hand of an infinitely holy, and just God? || Why do men fear, if God was all mercy; or if he was not by a necessity of nature bound to call them to an account, and reckon with them according to their deeds? Conscience God's deputy in the soul of man, is both the *inix*, and *julix* of moral transgressions: It points directly to them; it passes sentence immediately on them. Observe the language of inspiration on this head, which show the works of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another. † See the acknowledgment of the Barbarians at Melitus; when Paul and the rest of his companions were ship-wreck'd and cast on that Island; a viper fastning on Paul's hand, they immediately concluded, that he had been some flagitious wretch, which although he had escap'd the dangers of the deep, yet *vengeance* would not suffer him to live. ‡ For what end were piacular sacrifices offer'd among those destitute of divine revelation, but to appease the wrath of their angry Gods, and to escape the punishment they dreaded, was their due on account of their crimes. Permit

|| Witness Belteihazzar. † Rom. ii. 15. ‡ Acts xxviii. 34.

Permit me again *Onesimus* to prove the necessity of Christ's atonement and satisfaction, from this consideration, viz. that no reason can possibly be affirm'd, why, without an absolute necessity, God, an infinitely just, righteous, and holy God, should make his own dearly, and only begotten Son, a curse, and sin, (which I shall prove afterwards) for us, if any other expedient could have been fallen upon, to effectuate this salutary scheme of salvation. The infinite wisdom of God contriv'd this admirable union between the two natures in the person of his Son; this Son, the affectionate Father expos'd to the greatest sufferings and the most cruel reproaches, and at last to an accursed death, as a ransom for our sins. These sufferings of his, were a long time prior to the period in which they were actually inflicted, foretold in various and obscure ways; prefigured, and held forth by the whole train of sacrifices impos'd by God on the whole body of the Jewish nation. God out of divine sovereignty, and after so many other atrocious crimes as the world had been guilty of, permitted a sinful generation, to stain their hands in the blood of his Son; from the view of which atrocious deed, the sun shrunk back and withdrew its rays. A crime, which the whole body of the Jewish nation, are to this day groaning under. For this, God hath to this present period, "shut them up in unbelief." Would not all this *Onesimus*, to speak with reverence, seem a kind of solemn farce, if there had not been a necessity for the Son of God to have died, in order for our redemption? Would not the whole of this scene seem directly repugnant to the goodness, the wisdom, and the justice of the divine nature; without any necessity, or such, as might have been superseded to proceed after this manner, in a mere arbitrary way? If you reply, that God might act after this manner, in order to manifest, that his right and authority over the Creature was such, that he might, in a consistency with the glorious perfections of his nature, inflict the most grievous torments, even on the innocent. I question much *Onesimus*, if it would be agreeable to the nature, or consistent with the perfections of Deity, to punish an innocent Creature; at least if he could claim this right and authority, we have no instances of it: Or if at any time he might inflict the most grievous torments on the innocent, yet surely, one would imagine he would not act in this manner with his beloved, and only begotten Son, in whom he still testified that "he was well pleased." || I think you will scarcely

|| Why then did Christ suffer? He was innocent, perfectly holy, yet "God spared him not." The only reason, and a scriptural one too, was, that "he was made sin for us." Our sins were imputed to him, and he, in a sacrificial sense died for their purgation.

scarcely reply, that the whole of this transaction was order'd by the arbitrary will of God, for confirming the salutary doctrines that his beloved Son taught. I imagine such a suggestion is contrary both to scripture, reason, and experience; certainly, God in the depths of his sovereign wisdom could find out other means, of a far easier nature, by which the doctrines of salvation might be confirm'd, than by the dreadful passion, and most exquisite sufferings of his dear Son. Doth not the scriptures inform us, that this was effected by Christ's miracles, and by the native demonstration of the truth in the consciences of men; by these things we find him approving himself to the Disciples of John, || and even to the whole multitude; † in a word, we gather from experience, and Scripture, that Christ crucify'd was unto the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness.

Again, I am sure you will be far from entertaining this notion, that it was necessary we should be taught by such an awful lesson, that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom. For if nothing else was intended, we might have been sufficiently taught this, by the example of other Martyrs; and I am sure there is not one that enter'd the celestial glory, since the gates of glory were open'd, that have been call'd to suffer so many great and dreadful indignities as Christ did, nor ever will. Why then were we all to be taught by the example of the Son of God, that the gate of Heaven is on no other terms open, but by passing through a scene of the most direful sufferings? Unless then, we maintain that satisfaction was made to the justice of God, by the suffering of Christ, and in no other way satisfaction could be made; there can no other just and wise reason, and worthy of God, be ever assign'd why Christ should have suffer'd as he did. I am sure *Quisimus*, you are far from thinking that no satisfaction was necessary on account of the justice of God; but that he exacted it on account of some other perfections of his nature, namely, to declare his power and will to punish sin, which he might suffer to pass unpunish'd. I am sure my dear Friend, you could scarcely reckon the power and will of God exercised in such a manner, and declar'd for such a purpose among the perfections of the divine nature. I think, if God could consistent with his glory not punish sin, either in the person of the sinner, or (surely, it might be queried, whether he can consistently punish sin at all? Because in that case, he would seem to afflict the sinner without a sufficient reason, and ill treat the works of his hands without a cause. But to do any thing without a reason can be on no account for the honour of God. As I hinted already,

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God is holy, and because he is necessarily so, he must hate sin; his displeasure against it, wherever it is to be found, must be eternal, and irreconcilable; for sin being contrary to the purity of his nature, he must have an eternal aversion to it. If there be not then a way found out to separate between the sinner and his sin, he must lie for ever under the displeasure of a sin-revenging God; and it is clear, that no displeasure can be manifested without some marks of it upon the person of the offender, or, if a surety be found out upon him. God can as soon divest himself of his purity as always forbear his displeasure against an impure sinner. There must then be a reparation made to the honour of God's justice and holiness; by ourselves it could not be without condemnation; neither by another, without sufficiency in the person. No Creature was capable of making this reparation, all the Creatures being of a finite nature, could never make a compensation for the disparagement of infinite holiness. He must undoubtedly entertain but despicable and low thoughts of this excellent and glorious perfection, who imagines that a few tears, resolves and promises, at an hour of death from a sinful Creature, can be sufficient to repair the wrongs, and restore the rights of injur'd justice and holiness. It must therefore be such a compensation as is commensurate to the holiness of the divine nature, and the divine law; but this could not be procur'd by any, but him that was possess'd of *Godhead*. The person appointed, and design'd by God, for so great an undertaking was one, "*in the form of God*"; One, "*equal with God*." The punishment of our sin was, by the all-wise and gracious appointment of Heaven, translated to this person, in order for the securing the interests of the holiness, justice, truth, and righteousness of God; and his obedience and death, or in other words the righteousness of that divine person, imputed to the sinner for pardon and acceptance. In a word *Onusimus*, if God could have hated sin without punishing it, his Son had never felt the smart of his wrath. His love to his Son, had been strong enough to have caused him to forbear, had not the holiness of his nature been stronger, to move him to inflict a punishment according to the demerit of sin. And this way we can account for all those sufferings, and grievous torments, which the Son of God endur'd and bore in our stead; and without viewing his death as propitiatory, and satisfactory, it would be difficult, yea, impossible to account for it upon any other principle, in a consistency with the goodness, holiness, and justice of God.

I might also prove the necessity of the death of our great High Priest, in order for satisfaction, and that from the threatening denounc'd against Adam, in case of a breach of the Cove-
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nant of works. “ In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” Now is it possible that Jehovah, who is truth itself should lie, or alter his mind? No. “ He is in one mind, and who can turn him ” As he is immutable in his nature, so in his purposes and resolves. Is it possible, that the strength of Israel should repent? In a consistency therefore, with the immutable threatening of the Almighty, it is absolutely necessary, that sin should be punish’d, either in the person of the sinner, or the surety. If God could dispense with the punishment, he might dispense with the law threatening it; but this is impossible, the law being founded in the sanctity and justice of the divine nature.

If you reply, that God oftentimes in Scripture promises to avert the punishment threaten’d upon the footing of repentance and amendment of life; without any mention made of Christ’s sacrifice, and in this case, would it not seem evident, that sin may be pardon’d, and the sinner releas’d from condemnation, without death being inflicted, either on himself, or a surety in his stead?—In answer to this, I would just ask you, is it possible for repentance unto life, to take place without faith? I ask again, who, or what is the object of faith, I mean its immediate object? You will probably reply, and in so far you are right, that faith’s immediate object is Christ; but observe it is Christ as crucify’d; hence call’d “ faith in his blood.” Hence it necessarily follows, that to ward off the blow threaten’d by the holy and righteous law of God, we must have recourse at last to the oblation which our great High Priest made of himself to God, as a sweet smelling favour. The blood of Jesus Christ then, is the meritorious cause of our redemption from the law threatening, and consequently, of our final salvation; faith and repentance only the *conditio sine qua non*. If the threatening of the law denouncing punishment and death, could be dispensed with, it must either be by the law itself, or by the Gospel. It cannot be by the former, for the law never relaxes in the least degree, nor dispenses with the least failure; it must have perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience, or else its penal sanction must inevitably take place against the transgressor. For the law properly speaking, and strictly taken, knows nothing of repentance, because it knows nothing of Jesus. Its constant determinate language is, “ Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” || Again, the punishment threaten’d by the law, cannot be dispens’d with by the Gospel; for this would be to vacate the law, and render it of none effect, contrary to the express declaration of Paul, Rom. iii. 31. Do we
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make void the law through faith, God forbid; yea, contrary to one of the great ends of Christ's mission into the world; which was, "not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it." The manner of a sinner's justification before God, and his final consummate happiness, is reveal'd in, and by the Gospel, namely, the obedience, and death of the Lord of Glory; and this is by no means contrary to the law threatening; because the very foundation of a sinner's justification lies here, in the fulfilment of the law by Christ; its precepts in his holy life, its penal sanction in his accursed death. What a vain and fruitless thing is it, my *dear Onesimus*, to talk of the efficiency of faith and repentance, to divert the law threatening, and save the sinner from wrath, independent of Christ's sacrifice. Faith and repentance if genuine, and evangelical, terminate directly and immediately in Christ, as crucify'd and slain. "They shall look upon me, whom they have pierced, and shall mourn." ||

Again to establish the necessity of Christ's death as a propitiation for our sins, let us for a moment cast our eye on the Jewish Oeconomy, particularly the sacrificial part of it. What reason can be assign'd, why an infinitely wise God should have impos'd on that people, such a dispensation consisting in such a number of

|| I can scarcely pass over the definition which a certain learn'd Doctor of Divinity is pleas'd to give us of repentance. "Repentance," (says he) is neither made up of confession of sin, and sorrow for sin, "or withing and proposing to be better; nor of external penances, "fruitless ceremonies, vain commutations, purchasing dispensations, "and buying indulgences; not one, or all these put together, is re- "pentance. Any man that hath eyes in his head may plainly perceive, "that the repentance to which pardon is promised in the Gospel, is al- "together as broad, and as long, as to deny all ungodliness and world- "ly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present "world."—With your leave Doctor, is it not somewhat strange to hear of repentance without confession of, or sorrow for sin? (But this is a negative part of your definition.) "Peter went out, and wept bitterly." "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn." Is it not as strange to hear a Minister of Jesus, defining repentance, and forgetting there ever existed such a person as Jesus. Is he not "exalted with the Father's right hand, to give repentance to Israel." Any man that hath eyes in his head, and can read the Scriptures, and take the least pains to consult these living Oracles can scarcely, (unless he willingly shut his eyes) call upon sinners to a Gospel repentance, without directing them immediately to *Jesus*. A strange definition of repentance! To deny all ungodliness, &c. This will always be found in a true penitent. But the tenor of conversation is as far from being repentance, as the fruit is from being the tree, or the branches the root. How dishonourable to the blessed Jesus is this!

of sacrifices, and other rites and ceremonies, if these had not had a respect to a better dispensation which was to take place in the fulness of time, by the appearance of the Son of God in human nature, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and put a final period to the Jewish sacrifices, which were undoubtedly, (if they were significative of any thing) typical of Christ's better, and more perfect sacrifice. Without viewing the Jewish œconomy in this light, it will appear perfectly puerile and trifling, every way unbecoming an infinitely wise God to have impos'd it on that, or any other people: But in a typical light it will appear big with the greatest, and most important truths, and significative of the most salutary blessings: In this light it will appear with a peculiar splendor and glory. I make no doubt, but for this, as well as other reasons the Apostle calls it *glorious*. "For if the ministrarion of death was glorious."—"And if the ministrarion of condemnation was glorious." Why would not God speak with his chosen Israel, until there was a sacrifice offer'd, and the blood sprinkled on the people? But to signify to them, and to us, that sinners can have no intercourse with a God of spotless purity and perfection, nor can possibly be admitted into his blessed preience, but by virtue of the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus; a sacrifice of *rest*, with which God is well pleased, and through its infinite value, he graciously condescends to dwell with men upon earth. Why did Moses act the part of a Mediator between God and the Israelitish congregation? But to teach them, and us, the absolute necessity of a Mediator between God and men: A Mediator, who "hath made peace by the blood of his cross"? Why was the blood of Bulls and Goats poured out at God's altar? Was it to confirm any doctrine, or set before the people any example, after which they were to copy? Or was it to ensure their eternal interests, and render God *really* propitious? Or in a word, was it to confirm any covenant? No. None of all these things were the immediate result of the Jewish sacrifices. What then? Their whole design consisted in this, typically to remove the sin of that people: Typically I say, for farther they could not reach. The blood of Bulls and Goats could not purge the conscience from moral pollution. These sacrifices then necessarily presuppose some other sacrifice of a higher, and more perfect nature, *really* to accomplish that which they only could adumbrate and prefignify. Abstracting from this view of these legal sacrifices, it will be difficult I apprehend, to assign a reason for their institution. And if they were typical, it of consequence follows, that they must have had some relation to, and connexion with an anti-type; if they were only shadows, (as the Apostle Paul plainly

asserts) these shadows must have a relation to a substance. Now what this antitype and substance is, the same inspired writer in the most unequivocal language informs us, in his epistle to the Hebrews, viz. *Christ*. || In the course of our correspondence I may have an occasion to speak more particularly on this subject.

Onesimus,

|| Maimonides the Jew gives a strange reason for the institution of the ceremonial law, viz. for the extirpation of *Idolatry*: For says he, when God sent Moses to redeem his people out of Egypt, it was the usual custom of the world, and the worship in which all nations was bred up to build temples in honour of the sun, moon and stars, and to offer divers kinds of Animals to them, and to have Priests appointed for that end; therefore, God knowing that it is beyond the strength of human nature instantly to quit that which it hath been long accustomed to, and so powerfully inclined to, would not command that all that worship should be abolished, and he should be worshipped only in spirit; but that he should be the object of that outward worship; that temples and altars should be built to him alone; that sacrifices should be offered to him only, and Priests consecrated only to his service.—Saurin's dissert.

Cedrinus, according to the aforementioned Author entertain'd almost the same opinion, viz. that the festivals, separations, purgations, oblations, and decimations which took place among the Jews, were enjoin'd on them by God, that being employ'd in doing these things to the true God, they might abstain from Idolatry.—Dr. Spencer entertain'd almost the same opinion, viz. that the most of the Jewish rites of the old law, were in imitation of those of the Gentiles, particularly of the Egyptians; that God in order to divert the Children of Israel from the worship they paid to false Deities, consecrated the greatest part of the ceremonies perform'd by these Idolators, and had form'd out of them the body of the ceremonial law; that he had indeed made some alterations therein as barriers against Idolatry, and that he had accommodated his worship to the genius and occasions of his ancient people.—Is it not strange that such chimerical fancies should enter into the mind of any body, and particularly a professed Christian. Who in the most transient manner can read the eighth, ninth, and tenth Chapters of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, and subscribe to the aforementioned opinions? If allegories, (as Spencer observes) are the refuge of ignorance and fallies of the fancy; there never appear'd a more ignorant man in this world than the Apostle Paul. Strange indeed! To introduce a system of religion to extirpate Idolatry by sanctifying Heathenish rites. Was not this the way certainly to perpetuate, rather than extirpate it? Could the Israelites have forborne looking with veneration on the religion of the Egyptians, if God himself had consecrated their ceremonies, and made use of them for models? Would they not have lien under a perpetual temptation of leaving the copy, and taking the original?

Onesimus, I had scarcely finish'd the last sentence when an intimate acquaintance, (*Superbus Parisæus*) call'd, desiring to see me. This man had got a liberal education, was of an unblemish'd character, had obtain'd a good report, by a most strict, and exemplary conversation: His house was an asylum for the stranger, his ear was never shut to the cry of the needy, a protector of the fatherless and widow, an upright magistrate, an affectionate husband, and an indulgent parent; in a word, he was a perfect model of the character given by our Lord of a certain man in Luke xviii. v. 11, 12. He might with the greatest propriety say with that man, "God I thank thee, I am not as other men are," &c. This Gentleman and your Friend being on the most intimate footing, he very politely enquir'd what I had been engag'd in, that prevented me from paying him a visit that morning as my custom was.—I inform'd him that I was engag'd in writing to you on a certain subject, about which you wanted further information. He requested, if it might consist with good manners to know the subject. I told him without the least hesitation, that I would gratify him in his request; accordingly read over to him what I had written on the necessity of Christ's death and sufferings to take away sin; and that without faith in his blood there was no remission. I had scarcely done when I observ'd his countenance to alter; he seem'd greatly agitated; his outward demeanor betray'd the inward confusion of his mind. After pausing a few moments, he address'd me in the following terms. "My dear *Philemon* if what you have just now advanc'd be true, I have my religion yet to seek. My system and yours, are as opposite as light is to darkness. I never dream'd that Christ's death was so necessary for purchasing pardon and peace with God, as you insinuate. I never imagin'd that there is such a necessary and indissoluble connexion establish'd between God's mercy, and Christ's blood. I never once thought that there reign'd in the divine Being, such an antipathy against sin; nor that punitive justice was such an essential perfection of God's nature.—In a word, my creed was this: "To do justly, and love mercy," was all that God requir'd to found my title to eternal happiness. I still indeed had a very high veneration for Christ, as one of the most noble, and glorious beings ever the Almighty form'd. I still rever'd that all-wise dispensation of providence, in his mission into this world; but I never view'd his holy life in any other light, than to prescribe to the world a more perfect pattern, for a more holy conversation than had ever been presented to mankind, prior to this gracious æra. And as for his ignominious exit on the cross, I view'd it only as intended to confirm the doctrines

“ which he publicly taught and inculcated upon the world, in
 “ the discharge of his prophetic office; and to teach mankind
 “ patience and resignation to the will of Heaven, under the tri-
 “ als and afflictions which providence might measure out to
 “ them here. I never imagin’d that his death was, or should
 “ be consider’d as a *propitiatory vicarious sacrifice*; nor, as an
 “ *atoning High Priest* to this day, did I ever believe in Jesus.
 “ I believ’d that all the benefit mankind receiv’d by virtue of
 “ Christ’s death originated purely from that supereminent affec-
 “ tion the Eternal Father had for him, and not from any real
 “ intrinsic virtue that was in his death and oblation.—I need
 “ not hide from you *Philemon* the secrets of my heart, nor my
 “ practice and conversation. My parents were of good re-
 “ pute in the world; they entertain’d a partial fondness for me.
 “ I was educated under their own eye, and by one, who I be-
 “ lieve was as ignorant of, and as little believ’d in your system
 “ as I did myself. I must acknowledge, that I never heard of
 “ faith in Christ’s atonement and satisfaction mention’d as ab-
 “ solutely necessary to salvation. When religion came to be
 “ mention’d at all, and the terms of a sinner’s acceptance
 “ spoken of; God’s mercy, and man’s endeavours, were still
 “ introduc’d, as the only, and alone basis upon which we should
 “ build for eternity. And indeed upon cool reflection, I have
 “ oftentimes thought, that if the rest of the world were as desti-
 “ tute of good works as our Family, they would have but little
 “ ground to boast of, and less to build on them with a view to a
 “ blessed immortality. No one could indeed ever blame my
 “ Father for being guilty of a mean dishonest action. I never
 “ knew him to take the advantage either of the ignorance, or
 “ weakness of those with whom he dealt. But alas! I speak it
 “ with grief it was his habitual practice “ to take the name of
 “ the Lord our God in vain.” And on the Lord’s day, it was
 “ almost his constant employ to regulate his Books, to cast up
 “ his accounts; or to form plans for execution that week. And
 “ for the rest of our Family, who had no secular business on
 “ hand; that day was generally spent in parties of pleasure, I
 “ may safely add, in vain and idle dissipation, instead of wor-
 “ shipping God *in the beauty of holiness*. Scarcely, or ever was
 “ God worshipped in a family capacity, and I dread, our closets
 “ seldom found us at our secret devotions. In a word, *honesty*
 “ *and civility* were the all of our religion.

“ I remember *Philemon*, that when my Mother was on her
 “ death bed, and within a few moments of eternity, standing
 “ by her bed side, heard her express herself in these terms; I
 “ thank God, to my knowledge, I never injur’d one of my fel-
 “ low

“ low Creatures. This was the ground of her gloriation when
 “ leaving the stage of time, and repairing to an unknown re-
 “ gion. My teacher pronounc’d her a candidate for the new
 “ Jerusalem; this was echoed through the whole company.—
 “ I doubt *Philmon*, if you had been present, and preach’d up the
 “ necessity of faith in the atoning blood and merit of Jesus in
 “ order for salvation; and at the same time inform’d her, that
 “ by the works of the law, no flesh can be justify’d;” reminded
 “ her of the spotless holiness, and strict justice of the Deity; that
 “ he cannot view the least sin without the greatest abhorrence,
 “ nor pardon the least transgression of any of his sinning Crea-
 “ tures, without faith in Christ’s sacrifice and death.—I say
 “ if you had been present and observ’d this method, you might
 “ have derang’d her whole frame; and I suspect it would not
 “ have been well taken.

“ I acknowledge *Philmon*, that I am no sceptic; I am not
 “ without some fixt principles in religion; these I have already
 “ discover’d, as the fruit of my education, for I never search’d
 “ the scriptures myself to see whether my belief was consonant
 “ to these lively oracles, or not: Neither am I so dogmatic, but
 “ upon conviction, I could sacrifice these my principles.—
 “ The difference between your system and mine is so wide,
 “ that it truly alarms me. A point upon which our salvation
 “ depends, demands undoubtedly the greatest attention, and
 “ the most serious investigation. How I may augment my
 “ worldly substance, dispose of my Family, discharge the trust
 “ repositd in me as a Magistrate, are but trivial matters to this,
 “ what must I do to be saved.” Here he burst into tears.—

After he had recover’d himself a little, I address him in the fol-
 lowing terms: My dear *Superbus*, I am sorry to think that your
 system is so generally embrac’d, and so firmly believ’d. It is
 strange to think, that *Jesus* the Saviour is so much overlook’d,
 and his *salvation* so much despis’d; and *any* work of the Creature
 substituted in the room of his most perfect justifying righteous-
 ness. Is there salvation in any other name, or in any other
 thing, save in the name, and by the satisfactory death of the
 Lord of Glory? Surely shall one say in the Lord have I righte-
 ousness. || You hinted at the manner of your education; and
 truly it was *new*. (together with the example set before you) as
 might naturally be expected in its tendency, to wear off, and
 efface those impressions of the divine holiness and justice, which
 ought to be deeply rivetted on the conscience of every rational
 and accountable Creature. Nothing you will find better calcul-
 ated to introduce into the mind, unbecoming and unworthy
 ideas

ideas of God's purity, justice and strict holiness, than a profanation of the Lord's day. Alas! how many are ruin'd through the prejudice of custom, example, and a wrong education. Could you *Superbus*, at this present moment approach God's dreadful tribunal and say, that there was nothing but innocence in your parties of pleasure on God's holy day? This was a day instituted by our sovereign *Lord* for his *service*, not for our *pleasure*. If God be true, you were putting the highest affront on the holy one of Israel. How can you, (or any one else that has the effrontery to spend that sacred day either in idle dissipation, or any secular business whatever) reconcile your conduct with what God himself so plainly, and so severely prohibits? Isa. lviii. 13.—Not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, on mine holy day.—I may further add, that wrong notions, I mean such as are not scriptural, of the holiness of the divine nature, of the intrinsic evil of sin, of the mercy, love, and grace of God, tend greatly in the issue to depreciate the Redeemer's person, obedience, and sufferings. To frame to ourselves a Deity that doth not necessarily hate sin, and consequently must punish it, is to frame an Idol in our imagination: A Being which no where exists save in our own brain. A God all mercy is a mere ideal God. A God all mercy is a God unjust. God never exercises his mercy, but in a consistency with his justice; and if we believe the scriptures, justice can never be reconcil'd to a sinner, but in *Jesus* and his satisfactory death.

You took notice of the last words of your dying Mother. I tell you *Superbus*, and you may credit it as an infallible truth, "that there is no genuine Christian, but what is a genuine moralist." And it is as certain, that morality never appears in such an amiable light, nor shows its heaven-born lustre in such a glorious, and an attracting point of view, as in the "justify'd in Christ Jesus." "Jesus died to sanctify, as well as to justify." His blood is the meritorious procuring cause of these two great and invaluable benefits. But there is a very wide difference between morality, and true Christianity. A true Christian moralist makes it his habitual study, "to exercise himself so, as to have a conscience void of offence towards God, and man," "To live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world:" But he glories only in the cross of Christ; from *this* his salvation flows, by *this* God only can be reconcil'd; and in a consistency with the perfections of his nature accept the sinner. "I know in whom I have believed," were among the last words of a most eminent new Testament Saint, and an inspired Apostle. "Lord Jesus receive my spirit," were the last words of the proto-Martyr

Martyr Stephen. What brought Job with confidence to the king of terrors was this; "I know that my Redeemer liveth." These holy men in passing out of time into eternity, drew a veil over their good works, as not worthy to be mention'd in that trying hour; as they were not the basis upon which they had built for a blessed immortality. These holy men of God mention *him* only, "who loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood," and who could only "present them faultless, and blameless, before the throne of his glory with exceeding joy." || Scarce was the last sentence concluded, when a messenger arrived for my friend *Superbus*. Upon his departure, he promised to return the next day; adding at the same time, that he would seriously consider what had passed in this interview. I keep my letter unseal'd *Onesimus*, in order to send you an account of what may take place at our next meeting.

Superbus return'd according to promise, and at the time appointed; but indeed far from being in that temper and disposition, which I expected, or wish'd to meet with my Friend. He seem'd to be greatly chagrin'd, a cloud hung on his brow; the accent of his voice indicated choler in his heart. Brooding on what pass'd, he imagin'd he was taken at a disadvantage. Girding on his harness he thus address'd me.—"My dear *Philemon*, "I honour and esteem you; but I am determin'd never to give "an implicit faith to you, nor any man living. I must exercise my own understanding, and satisfy my own mind; your *ipse dixit* shall never pass with me instead of, "thus saith the Lord."

|| It is almost incredible, and a matter of the deepest regret to find in a Christian land what ignorance prevails with many, who profess the religion of Jesus. Men's sentiments are never better known than in that awful period, when eternity presents itself broad in their view. Then it is, that hypocrisy hides its head. Nothing but undisguis'd sincerity, may at such a crisis be expected. But alas! how often is it found, that bare morality is all that many trust to; or the absolute mercy of God without any reference to the death of Christ; or because they have been sorely tried in the furnace of affliction; as if any, or all of our afflictions here, were adequate to compensate for the injuries done, to a holy and just God. Others expecting salvation because they were of such, and such a persuasion; as was the case with a certain man who expected God would save him, "because he died a *Presbyterian*!" O! how careful should such be, who have (under God) committed to their care the precious souls of men. How ought they to be instant "in season, and out of season, instructing, exhorting, with all long suffering and patience."

Is it not strange, for such as have the scriptures, to be so ignorant of the terms of salvation? "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

“ Lord ” Yesterday you harangu’d me on the necessity of
 “ the death and oblation of Jesus. You plainly, and positively
 “ asserted that there was no possibility of pardon or hope of ac-
 “ ceptance, but by faith in his blood. I have been considering
 “ on what you advanc’d, and by comparing it with the Scrip-
 “ tures of truth, I find that your opinion is far from being te-
 “ nable, and your doctrine far from being Scriptura’l.” He
 spoke these words with such vehemence and ardor, that you
 would have imagin’d, he would have breath’d out his soul along
 with his words. || I was astonish’d to find the Lamb turn’d into
 the Lion. However, I was determin’d at all hazards to keep
 my temper, and if possible to bring him back to his. I asked
 him, what were his objections to what I advanc’d yesterday?
 If I could not answer them, I would cheerfully yield him the
 laurels. That I never should show, nor ever be guilty of so
 much mean pride, as triumph when conquer’d.—Being a little
 more compos’d, he adress’d me in the following terms.—“ I do
 “ not think *Philemon*, that there should be so much stress laid on
 “ Christ’s death and satisfaction for salvation as you would infi-
 “ nuate, when I consider the descriptions given of God in Scrip-
 “ ture; the terms of pardon there defin’d and laid down, and
 “ these without the smallest hint of the necessity of Christ’s death
 “ and sacrifice. If you bear with me a little, I shall, in an
 “ agreeableness to Scripture, and in conformity to what I have
 “ been taught from my infancy, show, that independent of
 “ Christ’s atonement there is pardon and salvation for sinners,
 “ upon the performance of certain conditions within the sphere
 “ of human nature to accomplish. Permit me to refer you to
 “ the authority of an inspir’d penman; an authority, whose au-
 “ thenticity you cannot dispute: I mean the Prophet Micah.
 “ chap. vi. v. 6, 7, 8. He hath showed thee O man what is
 “ good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do just-
 “ ly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.—
 “ Now *Philemon* is there here any the least hint of the necessity
 “ of Christ’s death, or faith in his blood for the remission of
 “ sins? Are not the preceding words the language of a sinner
 “ in quest of salvation? Not knowing what to do to placate an
 “ offended God, and restore tranquillity to his anxious mind.
 “ Shall

|| How highly requisite is it for such as engage in the controversial
 line, to possess their souls in patience. If controversies in religion were
 manag’d with more candour and humility, with an unfeign’d desire to
 promote God’s glory, and the interests of immortal souls; they would
 be far more acceptable, than they generally are, and tend to more edi-
 fication, than they generally do. The religion of Jesus teaches to lay
 aside all bitterness, &c.

“ Shall thousands of Rams, ten thousand rivers of oil, shall the
 “ fruit of his body atone for the sin of his soul? Doth not Jeho-
 “ vah point out the very means, direct to the immediate reme-
 “ dy? He hath showed thee O man what is good; &c. i. e.
 “ You need not trouble yourself at this rate: There is nothing
 “ so evil in sin as you suppose, nor so awful in God’s threat-
 “ ning. Jehovah indeed hath said, that the soul that sinneth
 “ shall die; yet here you see an easy way to escape the
 “ threatening: Do justly, love mercy, i. e. do not grossly in-
 “ jure, nor cheat your Neighbour; abstain from robbery and
 “ oppression; love mercy; be ready to do all the good offices in
 “ your power; walk humbly with your God, and this is what
 “ the Lord requires of you. Now *Philemon*, is not the man
 “ that fulfils the conditions here prescrib’d, the man that God
 “ will pardon and receive into favour, without any reference
 “ had to the atonement of Christ, which you so strenuously insist
 “ upon as essentially necessary to procure these invaluable bles-
 “ sings. I dread you will find yourself at a loss to support your
 “ hypothesis, and retain the spirit of this text.

Superbus, I have heard with astonishment, and beheld with re-
 gret, this text introduced by men as the ground of their hopes for
 salvation, whose mouths were full of blasphemy, and whose con-
 versation was one continued scene of all manner of uncleanness.
 To love mercy, to do justly, was in their blinded, prejudic’d
 mind, a sufficient atonement for injuries immediately commit-
 ted against the God of Heaven. According to your explication
 of this text “ to do justly, love mercy, &c. is the all of religi-
 on;” I acknowledge indeed that they are very essential parts of
 it; for “ without holiness no man shall see the Lord:” But I
 assert, how miserable would you be, if God at the great day
 should judge you by this text to which you now appeal. How
 astonishing is the pride of man, who will dare to urge a plea be-
 fore God which must issue in his own condemnation. I ask you
Superbus, do you indeed deal justly? Do you in all your dealings
 with your fellow Creatures strictly observe that golden rule laid
 down by our Lord, “ to do to others as you would have them to
 do to you.” Did you never in your commercial business take
 the least advantage of the ignorance, or necessity of your Neigh-
 bour? Did you never speak, or report any thing to his hurt or
 prejudice, without sufficient warrant, and a relevant cause? Do
 not you feel how tender of your own interests and character
 you are? Have you been equally so with regard to the character,
 and interests of others, of all others, with whom you have had
 any connexion, without being influenc’d in any instance, or
 degree, by partiality or mercenary views? If you cannot appeal
 to

to the searcher of hearts, that you have walk'd in this integrity, your pretence that you have done justly is vile hypocrify; and you may tremble to think, how easily you may be condemned out of your own mouth. But granting, the penetrating eye of God saw no blemish in your character with regard to the performance of these relative duties you owe to your fellow Creatures: I ask you, have you done justly in relation to those duties you immediately owe your Maker? Doth he not require of you, of every one, to fear his great and dreadful name? And did you never take it in vain? Doth he not strictly enjoin the sanctification of his holy sabbath? Did you never pollute it? Have you made his word the rule of your duty, is it your directory in all cases, and in every circumstance of your life? Have you in every thing by prayer and supplication, made your requests to God? Have you habitually intended the glorification of his name in all your actions? Has Paul's exhortation been the rule of your conduct, from which you have at no time, and upon no occasion swerv'd either in thought, word, or deed, viz. "Whatsoever ye do, whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God?"

Do you love mercy? Is it a reigning prevalent principle with you to overcome evil with good? If your Brother, or Neighbour offend you, not seven, but seventy times seven in a day; do you find it a pleasure to repeat your forgiveness? Do you bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and speak all manner of evil against you? If not, what have you to do with mercy; either to pretend that you love it, or to indulge the least hope of obtaining it at God's hand, if you know of no better way of seeking it, than by your own works? But granting *Superbus*, that you were less culpable in these particulars than you, or any else is, what shall we say about walking humbly with God? How impossible is this, while we trust in our own righteousness, and our hearts rise against the grace of God revealed in the gospel. Are we not impatient oftentimes under his afflicting hand; and ungrateful for innumerable mercies he bestows. I would recommend to your serious consideration the character which a certain Pharisee gave of himself, Luke xviii. and you will perhaps find very few that can justly adopt the same language, and lay claim to the same line of conduct; and yet this man was far from being justify'd in God's sight. There was a cursed root of spiritual pride at the bottom of all his morality, and seemingly devout exercises. Such a principle is to be found in the heart of every one, who is not by the grace of God determin'd to betake himself to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, and learn of him who is meek and lowly. I may add, that if

to do justly, love mercy, &c. be the all of religion, then Christ is dead in vain.—What doth the Lord require of his justify'd, and redeemed people? Is it to make their own peace? He would as soon require them to make a new Heaven, and a new Earth. But what doth the Lord require of them, as evidences of their esteem of him, and his holy law? What doth the Lord require of them as evidences of the highest veneration for him, who loved them, and gave himself for them? But to do justly, to give God and their Neighbour their due; to love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength; and to love their Neighbour as themselves: Because they are fellow sinners, and capable of being called to a participation with them in the honourable relation, and glorious privileges of the Sons of God. I tell you *Superbus*, that upon this principle of faith in Christ's atonement, the practice of virtue is attainable, and no otherwise. There are many honourable and blameless characters in the world, with regard to the outward concerns of life, and in the judgment of short-sighted mortals; but there is no person upon earth who doth, or can love, and practice justice in its full extent, but he who has received the spirit of Christ, and habitually lives on him by faith, for wisdom and strength. The justify'd in Christ Jesus are call'd to love mercy; but who can love it, but those who have obtain'd it? When we can say, that God for the sake of his dear Son, hath forgiven our immense debts, we will have no desire to take our Brother by the throat for a few pence. This feeling sense of the divine goodness, and the continual need we find of divine mercy from day to day, will soften our hearts, and gradually disarm, and weaken every proud thought, that would plead for the exercise of anger and resentment against those who have offended us. "We will then be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." We will then put on as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, long suffering and compassion, forgiving one another, if we have ought against any." What doth he require of his saved people? But to walk humbly with God; "but how can two walk together except they be agreed." Who is the peace-maker? Jesus. How hath he made peace? How are God and sinners reconcil'd? "By the blood of his cross."

If you lose not your patience at my long answer to your objection, permit me, to tender you this caution. Beware of disjointing the word of God: The holy Scriptures are one compleat *whole*. God hath so join'd them together, that it will not be safe for you, or any one, to put them asunder. What dreadful havock would we make of God's word, if we were to explain one text without taking into our consideration at the same time

its connexion with another. e. g. The text you just now mention'd to plead your cause, and support your opinion, and others of a similar nature, make mention of those duties which God requires of all his people, to testify their love for him, and to manifest to the world, and their own consciences, that God hath "called them out of darkness into his marvellous light;" to show forth the praises of him who hath enroll'd them among the number, and made them sharers of the privileges of the Sons of God. Not as you suggest, to procure our salvation in the practice of these moral virtues: For this would tend in the issue to make one part of Scripture clash with another. Is not a sinner's justification before God immediately, and directly refer'd to faith in the blood of Jesus? Acts xiii. 38, 39. Be it known unto you men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins,——And by him all that believe are justify'd ——Is not the sinner's final salvation also immediately refer'd to Jesus? "There is no other name given under Heaven, and among men, whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus: Neither is there salvation in any other" name, or thing, save in the name, and by the compleat and perfect satisfaction of Jesus. He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." View these, with many other Scriptures of a like nature, with that which you lately introduc'd, and commented upon, and they will *seem* absolute contradictions: View them as parts of the whole undivided word of God, and they perfectly harmonize. Faith in Christ's sacrifice and death, puts us in a capacity for performing every duty, either respecting God, our Neighbour, or ourselves, which the Scriptures enjoin. And without this faith as the radical principle of all gospel holiness, you may credit me *Superbus*, you will never do justly, love mercy, nor walk humbly as you ought, nor as God requires. Never, never then, cajole yourself in this imaginary idea, that in the performance of the afore-^{pecify'd} duties, (and these you hinted, lie within the sphere of human nature) the ail of our salvation consists.

Superbus here paus'd a little; then return'd this reply. If there were no other Scripture phrases to militate against your hypothesis, I certainly would be more than half a convert. I must acknowledge, that a man may go a great length in the practice of morality, without being a genuine Christian. The account our Lord gives of the Pharisee that went up to the temple to pray, is certainly an undeniable proof of this. † The account which Paul gives of himself in his unconverted state still sets the matter in a clearer point of view. Upon his moral attainments he

trusted

trusted: These he pronounced were to be everlasting gain to him. But here I apprehend, (and according to your system) lay his great fault; he had no recourse, to the blood of Jesus for pardon; no dependance on his righteousness for justification. But when it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, he confesses the sandy foundation upon which he built; and counts all those things loss which he formerly reckoned gain. Hear his own words: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord: For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. || I think *Philemon*, that if Paul could not be saved upon the footing of his own moral righteousness; although in this respect the head and shoulders above a great part of the world: How shall they appear before an infinitely just, and holy God, trusting in themselves, and yet come not the length either of the proud Pharisee, or the great Apostle of the Gentiles, in his unconverted state?—But I have other objections against your system. How can you reconcile your notions with these Scriptures? Jerem. iii. 12, 13, 14, 22. Ezek. xxxiii. 14, 15, 19. Taking up the Bible which was lying before him on the table, he read these passages with a certain air of triumph. Now I see *Philemon*, from what I have just now read, that life and salvation is here promised, and secur'd to penitent sinners, upon the footing of their repentance, and God's mercy, without taking all that round that you take. Faith according to you is necessarily connected with repentance; and both with the atonement and satisfaction of Christ. Is there the remotest hint of these, in the passages I have just now quoted? And these Scriptures are true: It must of consequence be true also, that to turn from sin, to the practice of moral virtue, is all that is requisite to ascertain our title to happiness, and secure from the wrath to come. *Superbus*, do you remember the caution I lately gave you in the explanation of Scripture? Never to take detach'd pieces of it, and force your explication on these, without a reference to other parts where the subject is more fully contain'd, and the doctrine taught, more clearly explain'd. In the Scriptures which you have just now read, repentance is describ'd under the notion of turning from sin, which necessarily implies, (where it is a genuine gospel repentance) a turning unto God, in the habitual practice of all new obedience. But in order to obtain a more

full

full and ample account of this grace, you may read Zech. xii. 10. And I will pour upon the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn, &c. From this text it is evident, that a true and evangelical repentance is necessarily connected with Christ, (for that this promise has a reference to him is clear from John xix. 37.) and with Christ as crucify'd. Here we may also learn the efficient cause of repentance, the *Holy Ghost*. "I will pour upon the house of David, &c. the spirit of grace and supplication." Sometimes indeed we find repentance ascrib'd to God the Father, as its immediate author: "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life;" sometimes to Jesus, "him the Father hath exalted with his own right hand, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel," &c. This informs us, that all the external works of the one blessed Deity, are undivided; although œconomically consider'd it is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost. It is owing to his divine agency that sinners are convinc'd of sin, see its evil, and dread its consequences; and are determin'd to fly to the mercy of God, as venting honourably to the very chief of sinners, through the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus. Observe here again *Superbus*, from whence doth the repentance which is necessarily connected with eternal life flow? From faith. "they shall look upon him;" which in New Testament language, is the same with believing on him. When you would explain the nature of repentance to others, or entertain a scriptural idea of it yourself, you must carefully advert to this, that the principal author of this grace is the Holy Ghost; its principal object Christ, and him crucify'd; and so repentance cannot be the meritorious cause of a sinner's salvation, but Christ's death and sufferings. You must also take into the account faith, from which repentance flows, and is immediately connected. All these ingredients are to be found in a true and evangelical repentance. And we can have no proper notion of it, nor explain it according to the oracles of truth, if any one of these is left out. God oftentimes calls upon sinners to repent, for this, among other reasons; because, although the grace be God's, the act is ours. The Holy Ghost is the principal agent in working all saving graces in the hearts of sinners, such as faith, love, &c. yet he will not believe for us, nor love God for us, neither will he repent for us.—Further *Superbus*, I grant that God may for a time defer, and mitigate temporal punishments without any prejudice to the holiness of his nature, or the righteousness of his law, upon the hypocritical and feigned repentance of sinners; but from this his procedure with sinners in this life,

life, we are not to conclude, that he is under a necessity to deliver from the wrath to come. What sort of repentance think you was Ahab's? Was it not entirely feign'd and hypocritical? The spirit of God gives him this character, as one that "sold himself do do iniquity." And yet we find upon his repentance the evil threaten'd was deferr'd, it did not happen in his day: But some short time after his death, there was not one of that wicked family but what were utterly extirpated, and their memory cut off. To talk of repentance, and God's mercy, independent of Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin, as all that is requisite for pardon and reconciliation, is only talking at random; yea is worse; it is a taxing the infinite wisdom, goodness, and love of God, in choosing and sending his Son into the world, to suffer and die to save sinners, when they could have been saved otherwise. But "without shedding of blood, there is no remission;" and if no remission, no exemption from condemnation.

Philemon, I had almost forgot to introduce unto you a great cloud of old Testament witnesses, approved by God, and honourably spoke of in the sacred Scriptures; I mean those mention'd in the eleventh chap. of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. By faith Noah, Abel, Abraham, &c. did such and such things, perform'd such and such actions, as were well pleasing to God; and upon the account of their faith were admitted into glory. Now I appeal to yourself, is there any mention made here of Jesus, or his atoning sacrifice? From hence I certainly conclude, that Christ's satisfaction is not of such importance in the scheme of man's salvation as you insinuate.—To this *Superbus* I answer, by asking you this question. Were those old Testament Worthies saved in a different way from such as live under the Christian dispensation? Do you think that God had one way of pardoning their sins, and receiving them into glory, and a different way of dealing with us, in these respects? The way that we come to be saved is revealed in the most unequivocal terms, and press'd home on sinners, as the only and alone way: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." I grant, that the revelation of Jesus under the old Testament dispensation, was but dark and obscure, in comparison of that under which we live; in which "Jesus is set forth evidently crucify'd before us:" But dark and obscure as it was, there was such a revelation of Christ made, as was sufficient to lay a foundation for their faith, that the seed of the woman should come in the fulness of time, and by his death purchase pardon and eternal salvation, for all who should believe in his name. Observe what is predicated of those Worthies; *v.* 13. These all died in
faith,

faith, not having received the promises; but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them. See also in v. 25, 27 what is recorded of Moses, viz. that he esteemed the reproach of *Christ* greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. The immediate object of their faith, viz. Jesus Christ the Lord, was not such a mysterious thing to them, as you seem to imagine. Those Worthies were all pardon'd and receiv'd into favour, and exalted to glory in the very same way, and by the very same means that we are. Their faith terminated on the Messiah yet to come; ours as already manifested: Herein lies all the difference. "Abraham, (says our Lord) saw my day afar off, and was glad." "Jesus was the Lamb of God, (under the Old Testament, as well as under the New) which taketh away the sins of the world." "He was the way, the truth, and the life," to those ancient believers, as well as to us, who live under a more bright dispensation of the covenant of grace.

Philemon, I find great fault with your system, asserting the necessity of Christ's sacrifice for pardon, and final acceptance, from this consideration: How repugnant to divine justice must it be, to punish an innocent, for a guilty person! "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" But where is the justice and rectitude of such a substitution? Yea, is it not directly repugnant to the revealed will of God? Taking up the Bible he read, Deut. xxiv. 16. The Fathers shall not be put to death for the Children, neither shall the Children be put to death for the Fathers, but every man shall be put to death for his own sin. And in case you reply, that this is only enjoin'd on men, God leaves himself at liberty to act as he in his infinite wisdom, and adorable sovereignty sees meet: I shall read to you, out of an inspired Prophet, where the divine Being engages to pursue the very same plan of conduct, which he enjoin'd on his chosen Israel. Ezek. xviii. 4, 20. Behold, (says God himself) all souls are mine, as the soul of the Father, so also the soul of the Son is mine: The soul that sinneth shall die.—v. 20. The soul that sinneth it shall die: The Son shall not bear the iniquity of the Father, neither shall the Father bear the iniquity of the Son, the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. What law, what custom can you introduce, that ever subsisted among men, that authoriz'd the substitution of an innocent person, in the room of the guilty? Or, that an innocent person was ever allow'd to step forward, as a vicarious sufferer? I am mistaken, if you find not *Seneca*, *Lycurgus*, *Demosthenes*, and *Plato*, in direct opposition to you. These famous lawgivers, and renown'd

orators,

orators, all unanimously declaring that, “ to punish the innocent, *for*, or *instead* of the guilty, is a most iniquitous thing in the sight of the Gods.” And why should you, (elevating his voice, and delivering himself in a very angry tone) so strenuously maintain, that there was a necessity that Christ should suffer, “ the just, *for*, or *instead* of the unjust,” contrary to the language and purport of the Scriptures just now cited; to the custom of Nations, and the institutions of the wisest legislators.

My dear *Superbus*, have patience a little: “ The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” Your objection is so complex, that I scarce know where to begin to reply. You assert, that it is contrary to the divine law, to the custom, and laws among nations, the doctrine of substitution. I am sure, that there is nothing more common among men in pecuniary matters, than to admit of a surety, in case of the failure of the principal debtor, and this way the surety becomes liable to pay the whole sum, in case of the insolvency of the debtor. With submission to you *Superbus*, it is neither repugnant to the divine law, nor to the laws and customs of nations, to punish the innocent for crimes they were never guilty of. Doth not God in the second commandment threaten to punish the iniquities of the Fathers, upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation? Have we not various instances in Scripture, of children suffering for the crimes of the parents? For the iniquity of Ham, was not his whole succeeding offspring punish'd? “ Cursed be Ham,” &c. What think you of the Israelites suffering for the transgression of Achan, and particularly, his whole innocent family? For the fault of Saul, were not seven of his Sons hanged up before the Lord in Gibeah of Saul? For the sin of David in numbering the people, the Lord smote seventy thousand of them with the pestilence that they died. Observe Jeremiah's complaint: “ Our Fathers have sinned, and are not, and we have borne their iniquity; i. e. the punishment of their iniquity. Did you never take notice of that awful threatening pronounced by our Lord upon that wicked and adulterous generation, and which was actually accomplished, not many years after his ascension: Math. xxiii. 35, 36. That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zecharias the Son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the porch and the altar.—Verily I say unto you, that all these things shall come upon this generation. You certainly cannot forget the famous story of those two illustrious Friends, *Pythias* and *Damon*: When the latter was condemn'd by *Dionysius* the tyrant of Syracuse, to die upon a certain day; but having some domestic affairs of very great im-

portance to settle, begg'd leave to go home, and he would certainly return on, or before the day appointed for his execution. This would not be granted. *Pythias* offer'd himself as a substitute, and was accepted. The fatal day approach'd, but no appearance of *Damon*. *Pythias* ascended the scaffold, and with an air of composure and cheerfulness, was about to resign his life, *in stead* of his Friend. You know, that before the fatal stroke was given, *Damon* made his appearance, and releas'd his Friend: The Tyrant releas'd both. Did not the Carthaginians when brought to the last extremity, in their wars with the Romans, offer up as *substitutes* for the whole state, two hundred of their most noble Children, to placate the wrath of the angry Gods. But if these instances will not suffice, I have in reserve the authority of an inspir'd penman; I mean the Apostle Paul. Rom. v. 7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. Further, was not the doctrine of *substitution* taught in all the bloody sacrifices of the Jews: Particularly, on the great day of atonement. On that day the *Hazazel*, or scape goat was brought before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; the High Priest placing his hands on its head, confess'd over him, "all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of the house of Israel;" then sent him away into a land not inhabited — To the Scriptures you introduc'd in support of your hypothesis, I answer, that the holy and righteous law of God, can address sinners in no other language than this, "the soul that sinneth shall die." It knows of no substitute; it cannot direct to one. But turn your eyes to the gospel of the blessed God, it discloses to open view what the law knows nothing of; even a surety, who voluntarily offer'd himself in the room of the guilty. And here let it be observ'd that although the law knows nothing of a surety, yet it cannot refuse one, when its demands can be fully answer'd by the surety. Therefore a substitute in our room is by no means derogatory to the honour of the law. Our glorious surety step'd in, fulfill'd the law and made it honourable: Suffer'd in the room of the sinner that punishment, and bore that wrath, which the law threaten'd against the personal transgressor. Christ was "made under the law." And "made a curse for us." That other text which you mention'd in Ezek. xviii. 4. 20. ought to be very cautiously explain'd. Taking these words strictly, would they not run directly contrary to the express letter of the second commandment; and all the scriptural instances already cited, where *many* suffer'd for the transgression of *one*? Again, taking these words in their strictest sense, and according to the letter, would they not convey this idea, that all sinners with-

out exception must die; and that no innocent person should die? But was not Christ perfectly pure and holy, without the least taint of moral pollution? Yet he died the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross. The meaning of these words I apprehend is this; that the children of wicked parents shewing an averſation to their iniquitous practices, an infinitely holy, and righteous Judge, will not lay their ſins to their charge, nor call them to an account by puniſhing them for their iniquities.

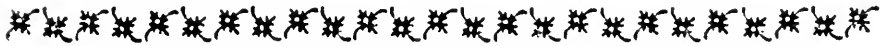
Superbus, you make a very great outcry about the injustice of this divine procedure, in puniſhing an innocent person *for*, or *instead* of the guilty. Strange! that the most unparralleled instance of God's love towards sinners should be taxed with the greatest injustice! In spite of all that contempt that may, or can be pour'd on this most benign œconomy of the Almighty, this is the constant language of the Holy Ghost on this head: "That Christ was made sin *for* us," and "a curse *for* us;" that "he suffer'd the just, *for* the unjust;" that all our ſins were charg'd to his account; that he list'd them up upon the cross, and bore them away. But why should this be thought strange, or unjust? Was he not Lord of his own life? Could he not, without acting contrary to the strictest rules of justice, dispose of it as he saw meet? Hear his own words on this head; John x. 18. I lay down my life of myself; I have power to lay it down, &c. Was there any external force in the case? Was he dragg'd to the altar? No; I delight to do thy will! O my God. Was not his substitution in our room, every way adequate to answer the end propos'd by it? For this you may consult Isai. liii. 7, 10, 11. Heb. i. 13. Acts ii. 24. Did the imputation of our ſins to him as our surety, pollute and contaminate his holy nature? It would have been the greatest injustice, (if possible) to have made him a sinner; but none, if we can credit the Scriptures, to be "made sin," i. e. to have all our ſins imputed to him, and he dealt with, as if he had been the principal transgressor. It would have been the greatest injustice to have substituted any one in our room, that might have perish'd in the attempt: But our glorious High Priest being the *Mighty God*, could not but come off the stage triumphantly, and honourably. He died, and by dying, conquer'd death. This corn of wheat fell into the ground, rose again to the eternal advantage of Myriads of lost sinners. Again, had he not Heaven's authority for what he did? And is it possible to conceive, that he who is the source of all justice, should set his seal to an unjust action; or authorize any one to any office, or perform any action, that was not perfectly conformable to the strictest rules of righteousness. "I came not of myself, but the Father sent me." In a word, is not our substiti-

tute of the same human nature with us? Can there be any injustice for one of the same specific nature suffering for another, taking into the account what was observ'd above. And was not our surety, *Emmanuel* God with us, God in our nature? He is *one* with us, by virtue of the ordination and appointment of Heaven; by which he is made over to us as our surety, to pay our debt of obedience, and suffering; and we given to him, to be redeem'd by his blood.—Instead my dear *Superbus* of finding fault with this all-gracious dispensation of the Almighty, let us rather fall down and adore, and from our very souls, reverence that unsearchable wisdom and prudence of God, that contriv'd such a way whereby salvation is ascertain'd to us, without the least blemish upon the nature, or infringement on the holy law of God. Let us with grateful hearts, show forth the praises of the Eternal Father, who spared not his own Son, but deliver'd him up to the death for us all: A Son for slaves; the Lord of all, for worms of dust! Let us celebrate in songs of praise, that immense ineffable love of the Eternal Son, who although “he was the brightness of the divine glory,” and “who thought it no robbery, to be equal with God;” yet came, was made man, appear'd in the form of a servant; liv'd a sorrowful life, and died an accursed death! Let us with all Saints and Angels round about the throne, ascribe all might, majesty, dominion, wisdom, and riches, to him who died to purchase a right to that heavenly inheritance, for such as had utterly forfeited it.

Superbus being hastily call'd away, promis'd that he would consider on what I had offer'd in answer to his objections: It is very likely *Onesimus*, that in the course of our epistolary correspondence, I may be often interrupted by him. I think if I am not far mistaken, he is desirous to know the “truth as it is in Jesus.” But considering the ignorance he was brought up in, together with the false principles instill'd into his mind; it may be a considerable time before he get the better of his long rooted prejudices. But in the mean time, you may rest assur'd, that whatever passes between him and your Friend will not be kept a secret from you: And may it tend to your further confirmation in the doctrines of the gospel: That when others are “laid about with every wind of doctrine,” “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;” you may be more and more establish'd in the truth as you have been taught. And with an increase of your knowledge in the principles of our holy religion, may your love to the Lord Jesus grow more and more, until you reach that place, where your song shall eternally be, “unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood, be praise, riches, wisdom, dominion, and glory, for ever

ever and ever. Amen.—That this may be the case with my dear Friend, is the sincere wish, and fervent prayer of

PHILEMON.



L E T T E R III.

P H I L E M O N TO O N E S I M U S.

Dear Onesimus.

I Received yours; am exceeding happy to hear of the increase of the family, and estate of our valuable Friend *Aristarchus*. May he long be spared to enjoy the one, and be a blessing to the other. You certainly must reckon yourself very happy in the company, and conversation of such a worthy man. The value of a good man is never properly known, nor duly estimated, but by such, as possess the same gracious disposition. The aphorism of an inspired Prophet will hold true in all cases, and particularly in this; “how can two walk together except they be agreed.” You inform me, that the yearly income of our Friend is greatly augmented. The Lord in his all-wise and gracious providence, “maketh poor, and he maketh rich.” There is nothing that we possess, either of a temporal, or spiritual nature, but what owes its source to his sovereign goodness. He blesses the labour of the diligent; or else “the hand of the diligent never would make rich.” “Is not this great Babylon, (said proud Nebuchadnezzar) that I have built, &c. He forgets to acknowledge the God of the whole Earth, in whose hand he, and all things are. He attributes the whole to himself; as if his hand had created the stones, as well as erected the fabric. He gloried only in the strength of his own arm, and the extent of his own wisdom. Little did he consider that the materials of that grand city were God’s. Whatever we possess of this world’s goods, belong originally to the God of nature: And even, when in our possession, he has an unalienable right to them, and an indisputable claim upon them. If we saw properly, and as we should, we might discern this motto written in legible characters, a motto enturing all that we possess and enjoy, to that great God, whose originally they are: “*These are mine.*”——Did you ever take notice *Onesimus*, of that pious answer which Jacob gave to his

his brother Esau; when enquiring concerning the company that followed him: "These are the Children which God hath graciously given thy servant." The food that we eat, the clothes which we wear, the earth that we tread on, the air that we breathe in, are all God's peculiar property: They are still in the power of his sovereign will, to continue them or not; to render them serviceable, or not. What little reason have the rich in this world to be proud of their splendid fortunes. What an absurd thing would it be, for a beggar to be proud, when attir'd in another's raiment, and fed at another's table, and enjoying all the necessaries of life through the channel of another's bounty, and liberality: Just as absurd is it, to see those who live upon Heaven's bounty, picque themselves upon this, that they are more wealthy and gay than their Neighbours. I know nothing men resemble Satan more in than pride. This is the peculiar signature, and distinguishing character of these dark revolted spirits. Instead of treating our inferiors with disdain, or behaving with that haughty supercilious air, which many do, we ought rather to behave with the greatest humility of spirit, considering that as the great Lord of all, in his providence hath made a distinction among mankind, that we were not among the poorest, and lowest of the human species. If it be thus with our temporal enjoyments, and earthly comforts; if they are all lodg'd in his sovereign hand, and dispens'd according to his sovereign pleasure; much more our spiritual saving graces. If we have faith, God is its author, and its finisher; if we persevere to the end, and in the issue, receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls; it is owing to his putting his spirit in us, and his promise of never turning away from us to do us good. If we walk in his ways, and are preserv'd from these vices which are the current plague of the age, or place we live in; it is not owing to our care, watchfulness, and prudence; no, but to God's faithfulness in the accomplishment of the promise. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Proud sinners, that would detract from the glory of that Almighty Lord, by denying the gifts of his providence and grace, to be solely lodg'd in the hand of his sovereign and gracious will. "By the grace of God, I am that I am," is the confession and acknowledgment of an eminent Apostle. The salvation of sinners through our Lord Jesus Christ, is peculiarly calculated to put an end to all self-gloriation: to bring down the lofty looks of man, and lay in the dust the pride of all flesh; that the Lord alone may be exalted. The holy Christian, is the humble Christian. He is clothed with humility. This is the most splendid garb ever we wore; it is an external badge of our spiritual, and heavenly descent; the most unequivocal

unequivocal evidence, that we are the Disciples, and followers of him who was “ meek and lowly.”

You insist *Onesimus* in yours, that I should continue my former subject respecting the priesthood of Christ. I told you already, that there was a necessity that our High Priest should offer himself a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling favour, in our room and stead, by an argument taken from the nature of God, and the threatening of his law, &c. Do you now ask, is Christ, God and Man, our Saviour, not only by the example he exhibited, or the doctrines which he taught, but by his meritorious death? Did he die, not only for our good, but in our room? Is the death which he suffer'd on the cross, a true, real and propitiatory sacrifice, for the sins, transgressions, and iniquities of all who shall believe in his name for remission. In order to confirm this important, and comfortable truth, permit me to lay before you a few of those designations and characters attributed to our High Priest in Scripture.

He is denominated a Mediator: The question is, in what sense is this title applicable to Jesus? I answer negatively, not in this restricted sense, as an interpreter of the divine mind only, as Moses is call'd Deut. v. 5. Exod. xx. 19. but positively he is such a Mediator, as interpos'd between God and sinners, taking up the difference, and making up the breach; restoring peace between parties at an infinite moral distance. But how is this peace restor'd by the Mediator? How come Heaven and Earth to be reconcil'd? How doth it happen, “ that mercy and truth meet together, that righteousness and peace mutually embrace each other?” How comes the flaming sword of incensed justice to be sheath'd, and the inheritance restor'd? Let the holy and unerring oracles of God answer the question. Col. i. 20. He hath made peace by the blood of his cross. Not by the doctrines he taught, or the example he exhibited only, but principally by his meritorious death and sufferings.—Was not the principal and primary end of Christ's mediation, to offer himself to God as an atoning sacrifice, and upon the footing of that, to enter into the holiest of all, there to “ appear in the presence of God for us?” Heb. ix. 12. Neither by the blood of Bulls or Goats, but by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us? Eternal redemption was, (you see) obtain'd for us by the pouring out of his blood as a peculiar victim in our stead; and that previous to his entering into his glory. It is very observable, that for the most part, (if not always) where Jesus is denominated *Mediator* in Scripture, there is mention made of his blood. Heb. xii. 24. And to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling. Tim. ii. 6. There is one God, and one

one Mediator,—who gave himself a ransom. Observe again another scriptural designation of our High Priest, a *surety*. Heb. vii. 22. By so much was Jesus made the surety of a better Testament.—A Mediator properly speaking, only presents himself between the parties at variance; tries if by any means reconciliation can be effected, a surety goes further; if there are conditions to be performed in order to make peace between the dissentients, he engages to fulfil these: If it be a pecuniary debt, to discharge the sum; or if punishment be requir'd, to bear that. Prov. xxii. 26, 27. Christ is constituted the head and surety of the new covenant, (or Testament) in which God promises all spiritual and eternal good things; but upon condition that Jesus shall pay our debt of obedience which we owe the law as a covenant, and our debt of punishment which we were obnoxious unto by law transgression. This Jesus as our surety consented to do, this he actually did; in his holy life, and expiatory death. And that these conditions were to all intents and purposes fulfil'd, we learn from his appeal to the Father on this head, John xvii. 4. I have glorify'd thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And at the conclusion of his sufferings, knowing that all things were accomplished, the law magnify'd and made honourable, justice fully and completely satisfy'd, and so our debt of obedience and punishment discharge'd; “he bowed the head and said it is finished.” This is put beyond all doubt, in the Father's raising him from the dead, and receiving him up into glory, and setting him at his own right hand. John xvi.

Permit me *Oneismus*, to elucidate this great and comfortable truth, from the effects ascribed to Christ's death, and blood-shedding. The first I shall mention is that great and unspeakable benefit, *Redemption*. How copious and full are the Scriptures on this head: They explain the blessing, and at the same time discover its meritorious cause. I Cor. vi. 20. Ye are redeemed, not with corruptible things, &c — but with the precious blood of Christ. From what we are redeemed the same inspired penman informs us, in his epistle to Titus, chap. ii. 14. Christ hath given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity. That the grand capital blessing of forgiveness is obtain'd through the blood of the Redeemer, we are also taught in Eph. i. 7. In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

In order to give you a proper idea of this word, allow me to observe, that it is variously taken in Scripture, according to the subject treated of: Sometimes it signifies to lay hold on the present opportunity, in order to gain the end we have in view.

Eph. v. 16. Redeeming the time because the days are evil. It is sometimes taken in a metaphorical sense, to deliver, or redeem without the intervention of a price: In which sense, we are to understand the deliverance or redemption of the Israelites out of Egypt: And so Moses is call'd their deliverer, or redeemer, AEs vii. 35. In this sense also it is very frequently used in the book of Psalms; where God is said to deliver, or redeem the souls of his servants, i. e. when he frees them from some danger either felt, or fear'd. But chiefly and properly, it is taken, for that deliverance and freedom from something noxious and evil, by the intervention of a price. By a price, I mean any thing that is of sufficient value for accomplishing the end propos'd, viz. redemption: Thus the first born among the Jews were to be redeem'd with five shekels of silver. Numb. iii. 46, 47. The inheritances of such as through poverty, were constrain'd to mortgage them, might be also redeemed with money. Levit. xxv.

Let us now see *Onesimus*, how we come to be redeem'd: What is our redemption owing to? What is its meritorious cause? That silver and gold, the blood of Bulls and Goats, have no merit in them to procure our freedom, is granted by all. Is it then by Christ's atonement metaphorically taken, as was the redemption of the Jews out of Egypt? Or his death, as a Martyr to confirm the truth of what he taught, and in connexion with the example and pattern he hath left his Disciples and followers to imitate, and copy after? Or is it owing chiefly and principally to his death as a ransom for our souls; without which we, and all mankind would have lien under the power of sin, in the "gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity," for ever and ever; and in captivity and slavery to the prince of the power of the air? This I think must be confess'd to be the truth, when we consider mankind in a scriptural light. Are not all mankind by nature, and consider'd as the descendants of fallen Adam, obnoxious unto, and immediately lying under the most grievous servitude to sin? Observe the miserable, but genuine account the Apostle Peter gives of sinners, of all sinners by nature, Pet. ii. 19. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, is he brought into bondage. The great prophet of the church bears testimony to the same doctrine, and confirms the same lamentable truth: "Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin." In this case do not sinful men become obnoxious to the law's curse, and the wrath of an angry God? Gal. iii. 10. Are not all mankind obnoxious to death, not only temporal, but eternal death, consisting in the everlasting separation of both soul and body, from the

the comfortable presence of God in hell-fire for ever? Doth not the Devil tyrannize over sinners? Doth he not hold them in his chains, leading them captive at his pleasure? “ For this end was the Son of God manifested to destroy the works of the Devil.” “ He took upon him the nature of the seed of Abraham, that he might destroy death, and him that had the power of death, that is the Devil.” Do you think *Onesimus*, that the spirit of God strains a point here, when he describes the whole human race as thus in a state of slavery and bondage? Do not mankind in general experience every kind of misery, and every degree of calamity, that can possibly flow from a state of servitude and bondage? The prison in which the slaves are detain’d may be referr’d either to this corruptible body, which is like a clog to the soul, and out of which all believers “ groan earnestly to be delivered:” Rom. vii. 24. Or we may rather view it as having a reference to this present evil world; a world replete with every kind of misery, truly a vale of tears, a place of weeping, lamentation and woe: And to the wicked the suburbs of that eternal prison, out of which they shall never be releas’d. The chains with which captive sinners are bound, are the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind; with these Satan the strong man that keeps the house, detains his prey in close custody, 2d Tim. ii. 26.— If it was not *Onesimus*, that the Spirit of God draws the aforesaid picture of human nature, you might be apt to suspect me of partiality; or that I was in a bad humour, when I thus characterized the whole laps’d race of Adam. If the picture seems shocking, I cannot help it.—I imagine then, that you must conclude with me, that no less than a sacrifice of infinite value, and blood of infinite merit could wash such an Ethiopian: That no less than he who is “ God manifested in the flesh,” could have destroy’d death, and him that had the power of it: That nothing could have deliver’d from the power and servitude of sin, but Christ’s “ being made sin;” or, from falling victims to the wrath and curse of God, but by his being made “ a curse for us.”

To convince us that it is Christ’s death that is the price of our redemption, we find that where the latter is mention’d, it has always a reference to the former, as the ransom or price. Math. xx. 28. 1st Pet. i. 18. 1st Cor. vi. 20. In these Scriptures you will find by consulting them, the price of our redemption is resolv’d into the blood of the Lamb. This was the ransom he gave, the price he paid down for our release. || Hence he is not
only

|| The ancient *Latins* borrowed their *lustrum* from the greek word *lutron* a ransom. Hence *Titus Livius* informs us, that on a certain occasion, the Centurions of the army with the Cavalry repair’d to the
Campus

only call'd *lutron* a ransom, but *anti-lutron*, a ransom for us. The Spirit of God strongly guards us against every thing that might tend to give us the slightest views of redemption by the blood of Jesus; to shut us up to the faith and belief of this grand and interesting article, that we are redeem'd with a price, and that price the blood of Jesus; and that it was paid down for us. 1st Tim. ii. 6. Who gave himself a ransom for all. The preposition here denotes Christ's substitution in our stead; as in many other places of holy writ. "Would to God, (said David) I had died for, or instead of thee." &c. Archilaus is said to have reigned in the room, or instead of Herod, as I already observed. In our redemption by Christ's death there is evidently an imputation of our sins to Jesus, as there is in the day of a sinner's believing in Jesus an imputation of his righteousness to us. What he did, and suffer'd was for us. For us he liv'd, and for us he died.—But that you may obtain a more compleat idea of this matter; allow me to observe, that the redemption of captives among men may be obtain'd different ways: As when a master liberates his slave by a gratuitous manumission, without any price payed down as a compensation for his liberty; by permutation or change; this mode of redemption frequently happens in the time of war: The Carthaginians sent so many Roman captives to Rome, in order that the like number might be sent back to Carthage; sometimes the redemption of captives is accomplished by force, as when David by the strength of arms, recovered all that the Amalakites had violently taken away, when they burnt Ziklag; lastly redemption sometimes takes place by some satisfaction given, as when a surety pays for an insolvent debtor, or suffers punishment instead of the person, or persons, in whose room and stead he stands. Now to apply this to the case in hand: In the business of our redemption, the first could not take place; for although we are sav'd by grace, yet it is still, and must be through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. For, the sentence of the law was, "the soul that sinneth shall die."

And

Campus Martius, and there offer'd up a sheep, a sow, and a bull, which they call'd a *lustrum*, or ransom. Hence the phrase common among the Romans *lustrare urbem*, to ransom, or make an atonement for the city; to redeem it from some impending danger by a piacular sacrifice. Thus the Decii also are said to atone for the Roman army by devoting their lives to death.—In ancient Gaul nothing was more common, than to offer up human sacrifices as a ransom.—Thus we see the word to redeem, and that by the price of blood, is not only scriptural, but commonly us'd in the same sense among the heathen nations.

And death would have been the inevitable consequence, if a surety had not stepped forward, and undertaken to satisfy its most extensive claim. If we could have been redeem'd by an act of mere mercy, and grace, we have no reason to think that God would have given up his Son to the death for us all. As the first could not take place in the business of our redemption, neither could the second: What could we give in exchange for our souls? Could either men or angels give a sufficient ransom to God, as the purchase of redemption? Neither could we be deliver'd by force: Could the force of arms have broke the chains wherewith the captive was bound? Could we have been introduc'd into the presence of an infinitely holy God, and enter upon the inheritance of the Saints in light, by an act of violence? No. It remains therefore, that we are redeem'd by price, and the price is, "the precious blood of Christ."

But *Onesimus*, although our redemption is neither effected by mere favour, permutation, or force, yet I confess, that in a certain respect, these several ways of release are found, as so many concurrent causes, in effectuating this grand and salutary scheme of man's redemption. Hence a variety of Scripture phrases which seem repugnant to one another, may be easily reconcil'd. e. g. Sometimes we are said to be sav'd by God's free grace. Eph. ii. 8, 9. Rom. iii. 24. Again we find our redemption and salvation attributed to the price which Christ paid down, viz. his blood, 2d Cor. vi. 20. Ye are bought with a price. 1st Peter i. 9. Ye are not redeem'd with corruptible things, &c.—but with the precious blood of Christ. And this way we come to be redeem'd by an interchange of persons: Gal. iii. 13. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse *for us*. In a word, our redemption and salvation is sometimes attributed to the exertion of almighty power: Isai. lxiii. 5. I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; Col. ii. 15. Now *Onesimus*, all these various and different accounts of our redemption, will hold exactly true, when we consider redemption in respect of God the judge, Christ the redeemer, man the redeemed, and Satan from whose power and tyranny we are redeem'd. With regard to the *Judge*, was it not entirely owing to his free and disinterested love, that he sent his Son to suffer and die in the room of the guilty, to procure their rescue? John iii. 16. With regard to *Jesus the Redeemer*, he graciously submitted to an interchange of persons: He *for us*, was made sin, and a curse; to deliver us from both: On the part of the *redeemed*, nothing could have been more gratuitous and free; our own wisdom could not have contriv'd the glorious scheme,

scheme, neither could our own arm have achiev'd it. Of the people there was none with him, either in laying the plan, or in its execution. In a word, with regard to *Satan*, we are redeem'd from his slavery, entirely and only, by an act of Almighty power: The great Redeemer "contended with him, that contended with us." Consequently our redemption is brought about both by price, and power. The former has a reference to God; the latter to Satan. By the former, we are deliver'd from sin's guilt, and consequently from condemnation; by the latter, we are freed from the dominion and tyrannizing power of the Devil. There was no price paid down to that unjust usurper in order to deliver the lawful captive; and rescue sinners from his chains.— This accounts for the twofold character by which the Redeemer is oftentimes design'd in Scripture; a *Lion*, and a *Lamb*. As a *Lamb*, he offer'd himself up a sacrifice; as a *Lion*, he obtain'd a glorious victory. A *Lamb* refers to his merit, a *Lion* to his power. As a *Lamb* he redeem'd us to God by his blood; as a *Lion* he triumph'd over our foes by his power.

May we not learn somewhat of the glorious achievements of our Redeemer, from a certain designation he obtains in the old Testament? We find him there expressly call'd *Goel* Redeemer, I know, (says Job, chap. xix. 25) that my *Goel* Redeemer liveth. And the *Goel* Redeemer shall come from Zion to turn away iniquity from Jacob, *Isai.* lix. 20. What the *Goel* of old had a right to do, that our Redeemer actually did. The *Goel* of old had a fourfold power and authority invested in him. He possess'd a right and power to redeem any thing that was sold, or alienated, upon the account of the poverty of his Brother, or Neighbour; whether it was a house, a field, or an inheritance, &c. *Levit.* xxv. 25.—He had a right to redeem his Brother, if sold to a stranger. *Levit.* xxv.—Again he had a right and power to vindicate the blood of any person slain unawares, if he found the homicide without the gates of the city of refuge; *Numb.* xxxv. *Deut.* xix. 6. hence he was call'd *Goel Hadam*, the avenger of blood. If the manslayer got within the walls of the city of refuge, it was beyond the power of the avenger of blood to put him to death: But if found without the walls, he had authority presently to vindicate the blood of the slain man. In this city, he behov'd to remain until the death of the High Priest; afterwards he might, without danger of being put to death, return home, and take possession of his house and inheritance as formerly. ||——Lastly the *Goel* of old had a right

|| The Jews have a tradition, that it was usual for the Mother of the High Priest to send rich presents to the exil'd homicide, to prevent his wishing, or praying for his death.

right to marry the wife of his deceas'd Brother, or near kinsman, to raise up seed to his Brother. This was permitted by an all-wise providence, for the preservation of the families, and tribes of Israel, distinct. Deut. xxv. 5 The manner of betrothing the wife of the deceas'd was, the *Gael* spread the skirt of his garment over her: Hence says Ruth to Naomi, spread the skirt of thy garment over me, for thou art *Gael*, a near kinsman: Implying her desire of a matrimonial contract. The Caldee paraphrase on these words, more clearly expounds the sense: Let thy name be put upon thy handmaid, by taking her to wife. This custom that prevail'd among the Jews of spreading the skirt of the garment over the intended bride, was in token of that right and authority he had over her; and as a pledge of conjugal affection, love and protection. Deut. xxii. 30. Ezek. xvi. 8.

That the death of Jesus is a proper and real satisfaction to divine justice for our sins, will farther appear, when we consider another effect of it, *reconciliation*. The Scriptures are every where plain and full on this head, where the subject is treated of by the inspired penmen. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself, by Jesus Christ." &c. "Having made peace by the blood of his cross; to reconcile all things to himself."—And you who were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconcil'd in the body of his flesh. || Now, if we are reconcil'd by the death of Christ, there must be such a real efficacy in it as to satisfy the justice of God, for otherwise he could not but have appear'd in a state of hostility against sinful men.—To reconcile, is to renew that ancient friendship which once had subsisted between two, or more parties; but for some reason or other had been dissolv'd. Previous to the fall of the first man, and as long as he continued in his primeval integrity in which he was form'd by the creating hand of his Maker; he was in a state of the most strict alliance, and the most endearing friendship with Heaven: God lov'd his creature, the Creator was the centre of the creature's affection. Man's apostasy was the tearing of the creature from God; was productive of God's aversion to the sinful creature. An infinitely holy and righteous God, cast an eye of complacency and delight on innocent man. Then was the happy period when the Almighty rejoic'd in all his works together. But alas! sin soon dissolv'd the endearing connexion, broke the bands of friendship between Heaven and earth. Now he beholds, and cannot otherwise but behold the whole human race, as a company of rebels, traitors to his crown and government; affecting independency on their rightful Lord and sovereign.

Now

Now reconciliation can never take place, until sin, the cause of the difference be remov'd; and this, if we believe God speaking in the word, is, and only could be effected by the death of Christ: For to this as the cause, is our reconciliation every where in Scripture referr'd. Why should this precious blood be undervalued, trodden under foot, and counted but a common thing, not fit to answer this valuable purpose of introducing reconciliation, between an offended God and offending men. When we were enemies, we were reconcil'd to God by the *death* of his Son. Rom. v. 10. Not by the efficacy of his doctrine, the force of his example, nor the prevalency of his intercession in glory; but chiefly, and principally by his death upon the cross.

But that you may obtain a more comprehensive and clear view of this salutary blessing, which is the immediate fruit and effect of the death of Jesus; allow me to observe, that reconciliation is sometimes attributed to the Father, sometimes to the Son, and sometimes to believers themselves; But indeed, for very different reasons and causes.—God the Father may be said to be the author of reconciliation, in as much as, from ages everlasting he determin'd to receive the seed of Christ into favour, and restore them to a place in his affection and love, which they had forfeited by their apostasy; and in time sent out of the depths of his sovereign love, his own eternal and only begotten Son into the world, cloth'd him with our nature, gave him up to the death for us, and accepted of the sacrifice of himself, as a proper and real satisfaction, for all the injuries he had sustain'd from sinning man.—Believers may be said to reconcile themselves to God, in as far, as they by faith lay hold on this great blessing offer'd in the gospel. Faith in the blood of Jesus, is of the greatest consequence in this matter; it not only strikes the sword out of the sinner's hand, but the enmity out of his heart: 2d Cor. v. 20. We pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. There can be no removal of the difference on our part, no actual reconciliation, but by faith's embracing the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus, as held forth in the gospel: "Let him take hold of my strength, and he shall make peace with me." We may give all our goods to feed the poor, and our bodies to the flames, and yet after all remain in a state of hostility with Heaven, if destitute of that faith which claims him who hath made peace by the blood of his cross.—Again our reconciliation is referr'd to the Son of God: Rom. v. 10. Eph. ii. 16. The free sovereign love and grace of God the Father, is the primary moving cause; faith on our part, is the instrumental cause; the death of Jesus, the meritorious procuring cause of our reconciliation: It is this, which satisfies divine justice,

justice, and turns away God's wrath: It is this, when trusted in as the ground of our acceptance with God, that kills our enmity, and reconciles our hearts to the holiness of the divine nature, and righteousness of the divine law.

But that there may remain no doubt in our minds respecting this great truth, viz. that the death of Jesus is the meritorious cause of our reconciliation: The Spirit of God uses another phrase to elucidate, and confirm this interesting point: Rom. iii. 25. Whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation*, through faith in his blood: 1st John ii. 1. And he is the *propitiation for our sins*. It is too well known to need any proof here, that this term refers to the turning away of the divine wrath, by a propitiatory sacrifice; and is not only used in this sense in the holy Scriptures, but also by profane authors. || When Christ then is said to be a propitiation for our sins, the meaning is, that he hath by that sacrifice which he offer'd up of himself, pacify'd an offended God, and render'd him propitious and merciful to the sinner which believes in Jesus. You know *Onesimus*, that the Ram which was offer'd up in sacrifice for sin, was call'd the Ram of the *propitiation*, or atonement. Numb. v. 8.—Besides the Ram of atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him. And that solemn festival which prevail'd annually among the Jews, on which a propitiation was made for the sins of the whole congregation, was call'd the day of *propitiation*, or atonement. Levit. xvi. When Christ is therefore said to be a propitiation for our sins, the meaning must be, that his death was intended by God to be, and really was of that value and efficacy, sufficient to atone for sin, and restore peace between God and men, and that upon the most solid and firm basis. You know *Onesimus*, what name was appropriated to the Ark, it was call'd the mercy-seat, or *propitiatory*; because it was there God promised to be propitious to his people: And when the High Priest made atonement for himself, and for all the congregation, it was by sprinkling the blood of the sin-offering before the mercy-seat, or propitiatory. When therefore, the Apostle saith that God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation, or *mercy seat* to us, have we not all the reason in the world to believe that he was our sin-offering?

|| *Homer* informs us, that the Athenian young men appeas'd, or render'd *propitious* the *goddesses*, by sacrificing Bulls and Lambs.—The hebrew word *in Kal*, signifies to *cover*; *in Pihel*, to placate, and render propitious, when God pardons sin, he covers it, and in his mercy hides it from his sight; casts it into the depths of the sea, &c. These figurative phrases convey this comfortable idea to us, that God will never call to an account a believer in Jesus, for his transgressions. "There is no more condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."

offering? Is it not his blood that makes an atonement for our souls, and renders God propitious? Under the O'ld Testament, such as were solicitous to have God propitious to them, were to come with the blood of their sin-offering to the mercy-seat: So under the gospel dispensation, we must expect to find God propitious to us, only through the blood of Jesus, our mercy-seat.

Before I seal up my epistle, permit me to give you an account of a conversation which pass'd between your friend and *Superbus*. After I had read over, (at his desire) what I had written to you; and pausing a few moments he address'd me after the following manner. “ *Philemon*, I never entertain'd such an opinion of the death of Jesus as you hold forth. I still believ'd that his death, in its utmost extent, never reach'd higher, nor was ever intended for any other purpose and design, than merely for our good: That it was a real propitiatory sacrifice I never once dreamed; that, to save the world by his doctrine and example, was the principal design for which the Father sent him into the world; that his being stiled *the Mediator*, imported no more than this, an interpreter of the divine will, a revealer of the secret purposes of the Almighty; and that this was one principal end and design of his mission into this world; and that believing the doctrines which he taught, and following the example which he set, ensures salvation, without any reference to his death, as a *propitiatory* and *vicarious* sacrifice. If your doctrine be true what can the beloved Apostle mean when he thus speaks; 1 John iii. 16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. Now *Philemon*, would it be wrong logic, to argue from the end and design of our laying down our lives for the brethren, (if providence call'd to it) and the end for which Christ died for sinners? Are not these two things immediately connected together by the Apostle? Now who can be so foolish, as to imagine, that one man's death could atone for the sin of another, or purchase peace and pardon?”

Superbus, there cannot possibly be worse reasoning than to argue from the end and design of our laying down our lives for the brethren, to the end and design of Christ's dying for us; as if God had no higher end and design in view, when he deliver'd up his own eternal, and only begotten Son to the excruciating death of the cross, than that for which, when providence calls us to it, we are to lay down our lives for the brethren. If it was to issue in the glory of God, or save our brother from danger, we are bound by the law of religion and love to lay down our life for him: But as you justly observed we cannot by our death save

his soul from destruction; our blood cannot wash away his sins, nor appease an offended God. But if we do not wilfully pervert the meaning of the Holy Ghost speaking in the Scriptures, we must see and acknowledge, that Jesus by his death procur'd, meritoriously procur'd these invaluable blessings. Hear the sentiments of the royal Psalmist on this head: Psal. xlix. 8. None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a sufficient ransom for him. But what one brother cannot do for another, Christ certainly did for all his brethren. Did he not "give himself a ransom for all?" In him we have redemption. If you reply, that the Psalmist's intention here, is only to convince us that no man can redeem his brother from the power of death, and the dominion of the grave. Granting this to be the genuine meaning of the text: Will you not allow me to draw this inference, that if a man cannot save his brother from death, far less from hell. But take notice, what the Psalmist further adds, v. 9. The redemption of the soul is precious, and it would have ceased for ever. Yes *Superbus*, for all that either men, or Angels could have done, or suffer'd, utter destruction would have been the lot of the whole human race. It is indeed impossible to conceive, that the death and sufferings of a Creature, although of most noble extraction, can redeem an immortal spirit from death and destruction. But my friend, doth not the death of Jesus accomplish this? "Much more being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." You must observe *Superbus*, that the text you just now quoted, is introduc'd by the Apostle to inculcate the exercise of brotherly love; and that, if in providence we are called to it, we are to carry our affection and esteem so high as to sacrifice our own life for the welfare and safety of our brethren; but by no means with this view to merit pardon and eternal life. We cannot suppose, that a man directed by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, would be guilty of such a palpable self-contradiction, as you by your objection would palm upon him. Doth he not in the most explicit terms, and the most unequivocal manner inform us, "that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sins?" This much, neither he, nor any one else could ever say of any, but Jesus alone.

You hinted a little ago, that you never entertain'd any other idea of Jesus under the peculiar designation of Mediator, than as an *internunciatus*, or interpreter of the divine will. To give all possible satisfaction on this head, (besides what was hinted at already) let me put you in mind, that Jesus as Mediator was invested with the threefold office of prophet, priest, and king; and in this his mediatorial character, he may be consider'd accomplishing great and important designs. There was an absolute

late necessity for the Mediator to be invested with, and execute this threefold office, in order to the completion of man's redemption.—To justify us before God, by remitting the guilt of our sin.—By sanctifying our natures, and cleansing us from the filth and pollution of sin.—By introducing us into the way of holiness, and preserving us in it until we obtain the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls. The first great benefit, we obtain by him as a Priest; who satisfied divine justice in our room and stead. Heb. vii. 22. The second, we receive from him as our King, who is the head of all influences to the Church, and every individual believer. Eph. i. 22, 23. In a word, as our Prophet he directs, and presides over his people; he is their leader and commander. There is infinite merit in him as a Priest; divine efficacy as a King; and from him as a Prophet we receive heavenly instruction and an holy example.—You seem to restrict the death of Jesus to one particular end; but if you carefully consult divine revelation on this head, you will find that Christ died for a threefold end and purpose.—To satisfy divine justice, to put an end to sin, and bring in an everlasting righteousness. See how particularly the prophet Daniel specifies these great ends of his death. Dan. ix. 24. To finish transgression, to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness.—Again, he died to procure and purchase, a vent and egress for the Holy Ghost into the hearts of all believers; for the purgation of inherent corruption, and making them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light; to raise in them an habitual detestation to sin, and a love for the practice of all manner of godliness, in heart and life. Seeing, (says the Apostle Peter) ye have purified your souls, in obeying the truth, through the Spirit. || Hence the third person in the glorious Trinity is oftentimes call'd the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit of holiness, not only because he is essentially holy, but for this reason also, because he is that divine agent which implants this heavenly disposition in the hearts of all believers; which shows itself in their life and practice.—Finally his death is exemplary; he hath by dying set a most eminent and an illustrious example before us, of love, patience, humility, obedience, and other christian graces which tend to promote and perfect sanctification and holiness in his people. 1 Pet. ii. 21. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.—Do you not see, *Superbus*, and are you not fully convinc'd, that the death of Jesus hath actually accomplished these three great and important ends? If you want to entertain a scriptural idea of the end and design of Christ's death

death, you must take all these into the account. His death was a proper and real satisfaction for our offences, and so the object of our faith; it is efficacious for the purgation of our inherent corruptions, through the Holy Ghost, and so, the object of our hope; it was exemplary, and so worthy of our imitation: It is the foundation of our justification; the root and principle of our sanctification; an incitement to a holy resignation to the will of Heaven in afflicting circumstances. In the matter of our justification by his blood, and sanctification by his Spirit, our Lord Jesus stands unrivalled: No man, yea, no Creature, ever the Almighty formed, could have contributed in the smallest degree to the purchase of these invaluable benefits, he stands here in the eye of faith, single and alone. For what he has done in this respect he is to be ador'd, not to be imitated. But on the other hand as dying to set us an example, he comes to be the object of our imitation. "We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son," as well in suffering, as in glory; in sanctity, as well as in felicity.

Onesimus, my friend *Superbus* seem'd to be a little embarrass'd from what I had just now observed: But recovering himself a little, he address'd me in the following terms. "*Philemon*, I begin to see my mistake, I freely acknowledge my error. I begin to entertain other views of the Redeemer, than ever I had. I lament my remissness in not searching more carefully, and attending more heedfully, to what Moses, the Prophets, and Apostles have written concerning the Mediator as to his person; and his death as to its peculiar ends and designs: My belief hitherto has not been properly my own: I have in too many instances, seen only with the eyes of my teachers: To them I have too much resign'd my judgment in matters of the greatest importance that ever concerned mankind. There is no mystery in trade, but what I have endeavoured to unriddle; I never could be perswaded to trust to any man in those matters in which my purse was concerned. What a foolish part have I acted, in trusting so much to others in those things, in which my conscience was so deeply interested; in those things, in which my eternal happiness was concerned. I blush, I am asham'd of my conduct: But I hope through the divine blessing, yet to be recovered, and brought to the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus. I am struck with astonishment at the condescending grace, and ineffable love of the Mediator, who, to save us, was graciously pleas'd to step in between the consuming wrath of an angry God, and the dry stubble; who appear'd in our nature, as our *Goel*, our Kinsman Redeemer; that redeem'd the mortgaged inheritance,

“ tance, by becoming bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh;
 “ who triumphed over all our enemies in his cross; and who
 “ hath as our *propitiation* reconcil’d us to God by his blood; and
 “ through whom, as our *mercy-seat* we will find God merciful
 “ and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.—In
 “ the mean time, *Philemon*, I beg as a special favour, that you
 “ will not remit of your assiduity and diligence, in instructing
 “ me more and more in the mystery of Christ.” So saying, he
 arose and went home; and accordingly, I close my epistle: But
 not without wishing that my dear *Onesimus* may increase more
 and more, in the love, and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 Believe me, to be most sincerely your’s, &c.

PHILEMON.



L E T T E R IV.

PHILEMON TO ONESIMUS.

Dear Onesimus,

LAST week, in my journey to the Capital, I paid a visit to
 your friend *Gaius*: But to my astonishment, found the whole
 family in tears. I could not possibly comprehend the reason. I,
 at first imagined that some breach had taken place among them
 by death. But casting my eye around, I perceiv’d this was not
 the case. I could not possibly divine, what disastrous event had
 befallen that generous, and good family, to drown them in such
 poignant grief. I at length made bold to enquire, what could
 possibly have reduc’d them to that melancholy situation? *Gaius*,
 in broken accents of grief and vexation, gave a brief recital of
 his misfortunes, in the following manner.

“ My dear *Philemon*, in what language can I express the dis-
 “ mal tale of this day! My brother *Crispus*, to whom our pater-
 “ nal estate fell, (he being the eldest) squandered away his
 “ substance; and in order to support his luxury, at length sold
 “ the estate; and after all run deep in debt. His lust for
 “ gambling had no bounds; this led him into all the vices that
 “ generally attend this infamous, and unmanly exercise. This
 “ was carried on by my brother, until his money and estate
 “ were quite exhausted, and he so deep in arrears, that he was
 “ seiz’d by his creditors, and cast into jail: There he had time

“ to think on his infamous and prodigal life. Here he lay stung
 “ with remorse, and torn with a thousand reproaches from a
 “ guilty accusing conscience. O that prodigal licentious sin-
 “ ners would take warning at the expence of my poor brother !
 “ Conscience sooner or later, will make sinners feel its awful lash.
 “ Now *Philemon*, what could I do ? Both nature and religion
 “ pled for the prodigal. Not to have listened to the voice of the
 “ former, would have argued inhumanity ; not to have yielded
 “ to the dictates of the latter would have argued a disconformity
 “ to him, who is good to the unthankful and evil. I yielded
 “ to both : But before I took any step to release my brother by
 “ paying his debts, I expostulated with him with regard to his
 “ sin and folly : He seem'd to be sensible of both, and to repent
 “ of both. I thought I had gained my brother, not only from
 “ the paths of vice, but to the love, and practice of virtue. In
 “ the mean time, his debt was so great, that I could not pay
 “ the full sum without endangering my own interest : I was
 “ therefore obliged to borrow from your friend *Sofibenes*, for
 “ which I gave him my bond. Accordingly my brother was
 “ releas'd : But then what could he do, in order to provide for a
 “ rising family ? I was therefore under the necessity of setting
 “ him up in the mercantile line. But through ignorance of
 “ his business, and a strong desire to live in the same splendid
 “ rank in which he appeared in the days of his prosperity, he
 “ in a short time turned bankrupt. My sorrows now began to
 “ multiply. The term agreed on to pay *Sofibenes* was elapsed ;
 “ and in the mean time, the melancholy news arrived, that the
 “ ship which I had lately fitted out for the West-Indies was lost,
 “ and all on board perished ; and here, almost my ail, with re-
 “ gard to my worldly substance also perished. This is the reason
 “ *Philemon*, of these tears which bedew our cheeks, of that me-
 “ lancholy, which sits so deep on our countenances.”

Here *Onesimus* he stopt ; and to tell you the truth, I was very
 glad. I felt most sincerely for my worthy friend — Before this
 disaster, no man could be more respected than *Gaius* : Every one
 striving to court his friendship, and stand unrival'd in his affecti-
 on. One would have imagined, that considering the footing he
 stood on in the days of his prosperity, that although he had been
 strip'd as bare as Job, yet he never would have been in danger
 of want, nor felt the loss of a friend. But alas ! along with his
 substance, his friends fled. Few left to console him in his me-
 lancholy situation, or stretch forth the hand for his relief. This
 naturally led me to repeat the words of the Poet.

Donec eris felix multos numerabis amicos,
 tempora si fuerunt nubila, solus eris.

True friendship is of a too heavenly extraction to lodge in the breast of every one. "A friend in need, is a friend indeed." The pious, the generous *Gaius* told me, that he had none to trust to in this day of distress, but that "friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Fallacious and deceitful friends may fawn on us when Heaven smiles; but let providence frown, and they hide their heads. Let us my dear *Onesimus* pursue after an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then on his arm we may trust; his faithfulness will be our shield and buckler. His bowels of compassion are never shut; when he smites, he loves, as well as when he smiles. His severest corrections are but evidences of the greatness of his affection. See that inimitable, and at the same time, every way comfortable description of the Almighty's care and concern towards his ancient Israel. Deut. xxxii. 16. He found him in a desert land, and in a waste and howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.—As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them upon her wings, so the Lord alone did lead them. What comfort is wrapt up in these figurative phrases to a distressed christian. Your pious mind, and your former experience of the Lord's kindness to you, will supersede any comment which I might make on these words. How copious and full is the Holy Ghost in deciphering the divine benignity, and unparallel'd care which the Almighty exercises about his people, about all his people, in all ages, places, and circumstances. How diversified the expressions, to answer the variegated conditions of all Saints. *Gaius* is happy in the God of Israel. If his dearest, and most intimate connexions turn their back on him, and forsake him, the God of Jeshurun will never prove perfidious.

I leave this mournful scene, with a heart full of grief: I feel for their loss, yet I am glad they have an interest in something more solid and durable; something which neither winds, nor seas, moth, nor rust, thieves, nor robbers, can deprive them of. I overheard my friend *Gaius* just as I was leaving him repeat these words; "though my heart and my flesh faint and fail, yet God will fail me never."—The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.—You see *Onesimus*, the support and aid which religion affords in times of the greatest distress. "The Lord will not leave his people, nor quit his own inheritance."

You desire me in yours to be somewhat more explicit, respecting the subject of Christ's substitution in our room: For as you justly observe, if Jesus was our substitute, our sins behoved to be charged to his account, and his obedience, and sufferings, (which constitute

constitute his righteousness) to all intents and purposes, accounted the believer's, as if he had personally obeyed and suffered. There is scarcely an article in divine revelation more plainly taught, and oftner inculcated, than the doctrine of Christ's vicarious obedience and sufferings. † The just suffered *for*, (or in the room of) the unjust, that we might be brought to God." I may here observe, that all the propitiatory sacrifices which obtain'd among the Heathens, were always considered as vicarious || You must here take notice, that this is the usual and most frequent acceptation of the participle *for*:—When Abraham the father of the faithful, was ordered by God, to execute one of the most painful tasks that ever was enjoin'd on any fond parent; to offer up in sacrifice his Son, his only Son, the Son of the promise: Just as he was about to dart the sacrificing knife into the heart of the intended victim, he lifted up his eyes and beheld a ram caught in the thicket, which he offer'd up *for*, or *in the room of* his Son Isaac. Observe *Onesimus*, Paul's language in writing to the Corinthians; 1 Cor. i. 13. Was Paul crucified *for* you, or *in your stead*? There is more understood than is express'd in this phrase: By this manner of speech he certainly had this in his view;

† see Rom. viii. 32. Math. xx. 28.

|| We have a remarkable instance of this in the *Fasti*. of Ovid: Certain birds which fed upon the flesh of children, and suck'd their blood, were coming down upon the young *Procas*, and just seizing on their prey; the Nymph *Crane* immediately sacrific'd a pig, and holding in her hands the entrails of that victim, said:

Noctis aves extis puerilibus, —
 parcete, pro parvo victima parve cadit.
 Cor pro corde, pro fibris fumite fibras,
 hanc animam vobis pro meliore damus.

i. e. Ye birds of night, spare the bowels of the child. We substitute a tender victim in his stead. Accept the heart, and the rest of the entrails, for those of the boy; we offer you one life in lieu of a better. Ovid. *Fast.* lib. 6, v. 159. &c.

It was a usual custom among the Massilleanians, that when any dismal calamity threaten'd them, such as the pestilence, war, &c. they chose one from among the poorer sort of the people, and offer'd him up for the whole. The victim was fed for a whole year at the public expense, with the finest and purest food. Then they adorn'd him with vervain leaves, and cloth'd him with sacred vestments, and led him round the city; at the same time, pronouncing the most dreadful execrations on him; that all the evil, they had been guilty of, might fall on him: Afterwards they offer'd him up in sacrifice in the room and place of the whole.——vide *Outram. de Sacrif.* pag. 261.

view; to convey to these Corinthians this very important truth, that Jesus Christ the Lord, died *for* them, or *in their stead*. The sacrifices which were offer'd up under the Old Testament dispensation, whether for particular persons, or for the whole congregation, were always suppos'd to be substituted in the room of the offerer, or offerers. It would require a good deal of the most unhappy ingenuity, to explain these foregoing phrases to any other meaning, than to point out the substitution of one person in the room of another. If this then be granted, (which I think cannot well be refused,) that Christ's death was vicarious, it will necessarily follow, that our sins were laid on him for their expiation; consequently his death was a propitiatory, as well as a vicarious sacrifice. ||

Among the many places in holy writ where the vicarious nature of Christ's death is clearly taught us, I shall select the two following; Gal. iii. 13. 2 Corinth. v. 21. By looking into your Bible, you will find the first of these reads thus; Christ was made a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.—You must observe, that these words are here

|| It was a common thing in Egypt, when any direful calamity threaten'd that nation, to offer a vicarious sacrifice to their Gods; and putting their hands on the head of the victim, they us'd this form of imprecation. "If any evil be to befall Egypt in general, or any of the inhabitants in particular, let it come upon the head of this victim." From whence arose the custom of not eating the head of any animal in Egypt. According to Plutarch, they either threw it into the river, or gave it to strangers.—The same custom was very prevalent in many places in Greece; and what was very remarkable, he that offer'd up the victim was looked upon as unclean, so that he was not permitted either to enter the city, or his own house, until he had washed himself in water. Perhaps, the Heathens might have borrowed this from the Jewish ritual: It was particularly enjoin'd on him that carried away the Scape-goat; that burned the sin-offering without the camp, that they should not enter into the camp until they had washed their clothes. Did not this evidently point out, that as sin is of a defiling nature, these persons who were employed either in carrying away the Scape-goat, or burning the sin-offering without the camp were in a certain sense polluted? Doth not this naturally lead us to conclude, that it was the fix'd opinion of the Jews that their sins were transferred from them to the sacrifice; or how could they imagine that these persons were unclean? When a propitiatory sacrifice was offer'd up among the Jews, they us'd a certain solemn deprecation consisting of these phrases.—"I beseech thee O Lord, I have sinn'd, I have been rebellious, I have done perversely; this and this have I been guilty of; now I repent that I have sinn'd: Let this be my *expiation*." Looking upon the victim those words were added: "Whatsoever should justly fall on my head, let it fall on the head of my sacrifice. Outram. de Sacrifi. pag. 260.

here introduc'd by the Apostle to prove the doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law. And by attentively considering this verse a little we will find, that it not only tends to elucidate and confirm the point that the Apostle is here proving, but emphatically explains and illustrates the glorious scheme of man's redemption through our Lord Jesus. It contains these three things: Our redemption by Christ; from what we are redeemed, from the curse of the law: We have also the manner how this glorious blessing is achiev'd, viz. by Christ's being made a curse for us. Upon the first of these I have already given you my sentiments. I told you that our redemption consists, in the paying down of a price for us, and that that price was the blood of Jesus; or that satisfaction, which he gave to the justice of God by the offering up of his holy human nature in sacrifice for us, or in our stead. And here you may remember, that it was consider'd as real and proper, not figurative and metaphorical, as Socinians maintain. The Spirit of God here informs us, from what we are redeem'd; "from the curse of the law." Under this curse the whole human species are concluded, who have not by faith fled for refuge to the hope set before them: This the Apostle teaches, *v.* 10. For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse. *i. e.* as many as seek, or expect justification and eternal life, by the merit of their own good works. There never was that moral perfection in any work of the creature adequate to the extensive demands of the law, consequently, can never be the basis of a sinner's justification in the sight of God: Therefore to seek justification, pardon and acceptance for, or upon the account of any work of ours, is, according to the Apostle's reasoning, an irrefragable evidence that we are under the curse. "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse."

The law's curse may be considered two ways; either actively, or passively. Actively considered, it consists in the law's sentence, or, rather the sentence of the great Judge, condemning the law transgressor. Passively considered, it consists in the actual inflicting of all that punishment, whether spiritual, corporal, temporal, or eternal, which is contain'd in the law threatening; consisting in the punishment both of loss, and sense; a deprivation of all good, and an infliction of all that is evil, and tormenting both in soul and body, in hell-fire for ever. What a dreadful case to be under the law's malediction! But this is the case of all, of all without exception, whether professors or profane, "whom the Son of God hath not made free." How universal is the law's curse! It hath seiz'd the whole human race; it would have pursued the whole to eternity in the lowest hell,
if

if it had not been for the interposition of Jesus, who out of divine condescension, and unmerited affection took the curse upon himself. "Christ was made a curse for us." This awful curse of the law, seizes the sinners body, his soul, his estate: "Cursed shalt thou be in thy basket, and in thy store; in the city, and in the field." &c. Who would not most ardently wish for an emancipation from this awful state? Nothing certainly, but the deepest and most fatal security; the strongest temptations of Satan; the most infamous love to sin; or a vain presumptuous hope of mercy, can restrain any, yea every one, from crying out, "what must I do to be saved." This verse points out the very way of salvation; shuts us up to the faith, and at the same time effectually bars the door on all creature merit, or the supposed goodness of our own hearts, or the exact regularity of our own moral conduct, as the ground and foundation of our justification, and freedom from the law's curse. It shows us plainly, that although God be merciful and gracious, we are not redeem'd by a mere act of absolute mercy or grace, without a satisfaction, and that adequate to the most extensive demands of the law, and the utmost claim of divine justice.

Permit me now *Onesimus*, to enquire more particularly, how we come to be deliver'd from the law's curse? The Apostle resolves this query. "Christ was made a curse for us." He underwent all those sufferings, bore all that wrath, contained in the sentence of the law against sinful men. Do you ask, how can it be possible, or once supposed, that the beloved, and only begotten Son of God, the author of all good, the origin and spring of all blessedness could be made a curse? This phrase seemed so harsh to some, that in order to soften it, and make it run more smoothly, they added the particle *as*, Christ was made *as* a curse for us. But we have no reason either to diminish, or add to the words of the Holy Ghost on this, or any other subject. Upon the truth of this phrase depends our salvation. This is the foundation of our faith; the support of our hope; the ground of our gloriation. These are the glorious truths contain'd here, that the great and Almighty God pour'd out the vials of his wrath to the uttermost upon the Mediator, that we might escape that horrible tempest; that he made him a curse, that we might be crown'd with all the blessings of his covenant, and purchase; bless'd in the immediate vision, and fruition of God in the celestial state; that he for a time forsook him, that we might be brought under the patronage and protection of Heaven for ever. More particularly, our Redeemer is to be considered in a twofold view; as the Son of God, his dear, only, and beloved Son, whom he lov'd eternally, without variation or change.—He is to be considered again, as our surety

surety and Mediator; as standing in our room clothed in our human nature, and numbered with transgressors. As our surety he was made sin, and a curse for us; and although bearing the wrath of God, and the curse of the law in our stead, he, in that very instant, stood as high in the favour of his Eternal Father as ever; for if he had by being made a curse for us, lost the divine favour, he never could have been the author of eternal salvation to all that believe. It derogates nothing from the glory of our Mediator, that he, being without sin, was made sin, and a curse, to liberate and redeem us from both.

Do you ask, how is it certain that he was made a curse? The inspired penman answers this query, and expounds this riddle. "For it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." These words you will find cited from Deut. xxi. 23. where we find, that hanging on a tree is pronounced by God himself to be an accursed death. Do you enquire, how the Apostle could accommodate this sentence to the death of Jesus, since his death was not properly hanging on a tree, but nailing to a tree, made in the form of a cross, hence call'd crucifixion? I answer, that the Apostle might with the greatest propriety accommodate, and apply this sentence to crucifixion, although primarily intended against those who were guilty of such crimes as laid them obnoxious to be hanged on a tree, for this reason: The genus you know includes every thing of the same kind, so that nothing can be affirmed of the genus, but what may be applied to the species; or, whatever is predicated of the former, may be also predicated of the latter: If therefore hanging on a tree was pronounced an accursed death, why not crucifixion, which is a kind of suspension, or hanging. Do you ask again, why a curse was annexed to this kind of death? Why was there such a mark of infamy affixed to this species of punishment, and not to burning or lapidation. || &c. The death of the cross, was a vile and detestable death,
both

|| There were four kinds of punishments for capital crimes which took place among the Jews: Lapidation or stoning, burning, beheading, and strangling. There was no such a thing as putting any to death by crucifixion, until they became subject to the Roman Empire. And it is very observable, that there is no word expressive of this kind of punishment in the ancient Hebrew language.—The Jews thought that there was no kind of death which afforded a more awful spectacle, nor so base in its nature, as hanging on a tree. Therefore they imagin'd that a curse was annex'd to it to deter men from such flagitious crimes, as rendered them obnoxious to such a detestable sort of punishment. It was a common proverb among them, "that the hanging a man on a tree is the vilification of God." Whoever therefore deserv'd
this

both in its own nature, and by the law threatening. There were three things which render'd it odious and detestable in its nature; its pain, infamy and duration. By the law it was an accursed detestable death, not absolutely consider'd, so that there was no mercy for such as underwent this sort of punishment: The contrary of this is evident, from the case of the thief on the cross: Neither in the sight of God was this species of punishment any more accursed than another; for as it is not the punishment, but the cause that constitutes the Martyr, so simply hanging on a tree, renders no man more accursed than dying in his bed, if it was not owing to the crime which brings him to this untimely end.—I apprehend *Onesimus*, that an omniscient and all-wise God annex'd a curse to this sort of death with a particular view to that death the future Messiah was to suffer on Calvary's mount. O such amazing condescension! Ineffable love indeed! Behold the Lord of glory, he, “ who was in the form of God, and who thought it no robbery to be equal with God,” appearing among men, “ in the form of a servant,” and becoming obedient unto death, even the death, the accursed death of the cross. “ Cursed is every one, (is the sentence of the Jewish legislator) that hangeth

this punishment, were deemed by them the most execrable of all wretches. And lest, either the earth, or air should be contaminated by such vile men, they were commanded to take them down, and bury them the same day: And if they were not dead at a certain period, they either broke their legs, or by some other mean accelerated their dissolution. As hanging among the Jews was reckoned by them a vile and detestable death, so was a suspension by crucifixion among the Romans, and never obtain'd among them, but upon malefactors, whose crimes were of a very deep dye; and for the most part only inflicted on their slaves; hence denominated, a slavish punishment; *pone crucem servo*, (says Juvenal.) The authors of sedition or tumult, were either crucify'd, or thrown to wild beasts. If they were of note in the state, they were expos'd to Lyon, or Tygers. Pilate ordered Christ to be crucified, because it was represented to him, that he affect-ed to be king. If any of the Roman citizens, or free-men were crucified, they were first deprived of all the immunities of the Empire, and then delivered into the hands of their slaves to be whiped. Thus they dealt with the Saviour.—Among the Jews it was not every crime that render'd a man obnoxious to hanging on a tree; but such as was of a public nature, and which might, in its consequences draw down the divine vengeance on the whole nation. Numb. xxv. 4. 2d Sam. xxi. 6. And as this kind of death was accursed by God, it was look'd upon as propitiatory, to placate an offended Deity, and turn away his wrath. Hence, we find that as soon as the princes of the congregation were hang'd up before the Lord, the Lord turn'd from the fierceness of his anger. vide Turrent de Satisf.

hange on a tree." "Christ was made a curse for us," says the same eternal truth. He suffer'd for crimes, but crimes not his own; but such indeed as deserved the curse. He voluntarily undertook to bear our sins, this he could not do, without feeling in the most sensible and awful manner, what the curse of the great Judge against that abominable thing is. He bore that accursed thing sin, in his own body on the tree. He suffered the punishment of that accursed thing *for us*; for you my dear *Onesimus*, for every believer in Jesus. Doth not the bliss which flows from that accursed death cast a veil over its vileness? Doth not your heart leap within you for joy, when you consider the ever blessed Son of God, redeeming you from the curse of the law, and in lieu of that, crowning you with all the blessings which flow from his cross, and spring from his grave? And did the Mediator suffer the accursed death of the cross merely as a Martyr for the truth, or to propound an example to us for our imitation? Do you not exclaim, God forbid? So exclaims your *Pbilemon*. While divine revelation assures us that Christ was made a curse *for us*, we may rest assured at the same time, that through faith in his blood, the curse of God shall never alight on our guilty heads.

We find the same inspired penman in his second epistle to the Corinthians, chap. v. v. 21. confirming in the clearest manner, and in the most unequivocal terms, the vicarious substitution of Jesus. 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. Would you not imagine *Onesimus*, that in the very reading of these words the truth of Christ's substitution in our room, and the translation of our guilt on him, would be the very first idea that should strike the mind; and that any other could scarcely present itself. Every word here has its peculiar weight in establishing this important truth. "He was made sin for us," says the inspired penman implying that our sins were charged to his account. But how could this possibly take place, unless he had been our surety? || Observe the Apostle's language in his epistle to

|| The term *sin* in the Old Testament is frequently taken for the punishment of sin; and the victim offer'd for sin's expiation. "My punishment, (says Cain) is greater than I can bear." My sin, as in the original language, is greater than I can bear, i. e. the punishment for my sin. "If thou doest not well, sin lieth at thy door," i. e. certain and sudden destruction awaits thee.—Zech. xiv. 19. This shall be the punishment. (Heb) the *sin* of Egypt, and of all nations, that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.—It sometimes signifies a peculiar victim, or an offering for sin: Thus it is oftentimes taken in the

to the Heb. chap. ix. 28. He, (viz.) Christ, shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. He shall appear not only free from every blot or stain of sin, this was true of our Lord when he appear'd in the human nature, and that even when he was made sin: "He was holy, harmless, undefil'd, and separated from sinners." The meaning then certainly must be, that he will appear at the last day, without bearing our sins by imputation, as he bore them in the days of his incarnation, and tabernacling among men. He will then appear, no more to be made sin, no more to suffer for sin. His being made sin, necessarily subjected him to suffering; and no reason can possibly be assign'd for his bearing the punishment of our sins, but because he was made sin. His being made a sin-offering necessarily presupposes his being made sin; for where no sin is, either imputed, or inherent, punishment never can take place, sin and punishment are necessarily and indissolvably connected. O astonishing condescension! Love past finding out! Christ bearing our sins, as if they had been his own. And indeed his they were by his voluntary undertaking to be our surety, to pay both our debt of obedience and punishment. || When ever we cast our eye on Calvary's mount, and behold the Lamb of God laid on the altar, suffering and dying, this query naturally arises in our mind; why, what evil hath he done, to inflame the wrath, and rouse the indignation of God in such a manner, and to such a degree, as to burn up, and consume this sacrifice? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Why the Lamb of God did no evil; no evil could the holy one of God possibly be guilty of. Why then

the book of Leviticus.—He shall sprinkle the blood of the *sin*, i. e. of the sin-offering, upon the side of the altar. Levit. vii. 9. And the Priests are said to eat of the *sin* of the people, i. e. of the sacrifices offer'd for sin. Christ was made a sin-offering for us, he bore the punishment of our sins, that he might deliver both from the guilt and pollution of sin.

|| The sin-offering was so holy, or devoted to bear God's indignation for sin; that none durst touch it, but he who was holy, the garment must be wash'd on which any of the blood had been sprinkl'd; and the earthen vessel in which it was boil'd must be broken; and the brazen pot scour'd and rinsed; Levit. vi. 27.—yet this devoted and cursed thing, loaded with the sins of the whole people, the Priest must eat, and turn it into his own flesh and blood, that he might bear their iniquity, as it were incorporated in his own body. And thus it was that Christ was made a curse, and sin for us, and bore our iniquities: They were so to speak, incorporated in him, made his own, and he bore them in his own body on the tree; and suffer'd for them as if they had been of his own contracting.

then was he made a sacrifice? Why was he punish'd? "He was made sin for us." But who made him sin? The Apostle answers the query, *God*; for he, viz. God hath made him sin. When the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles, in connection with the rest of his fellow Apostles, were executing the office of Ambassadors in God's name, inviting, and pressing sinners to lay aside the weapons of their rebellion, and be reconcil'd to God; they open up, and explain the foundation upon which they went in the execution of their office, viz. that there was redemption purchas'd by Jesus for sinners, by the special appointment of God; and as this was a sufficient reason for the Apostles to preach the doctrine of reconciliation, so it laid a most firm foundation for them to give the obedience of faith to their embassy: As if the Apostle had said, ye need not, O ye Corinthians hesitate one moment, to claim the benefit of pardon and peace, when God the party offended is now reconciled by the death of his Son; there was nothing that stood in the way but sin; we are commission'd by our great Master to inform you, that that accursed thing is remov'd, and in order to its removal, "God made him sin for us." Let Socinians *Onesimus*, cajole themselves in their *Martyr* Saviour; let us rejoice in this that our *Jesus* was made sin, had our sins imputed to him, and in consequence of this imputation was made a *curse*; suffered all that punishment which was the just demerit of our offence. Let them spurn at the doctrine of a vicarious sufferer as they think proper, if the Scriptures are true, by a vicarious sufferer, eternal salvation is purchased, transgression and sin finished. "For he hath made him to be sin for us." || Here the Apostle takes particular notice of the special appointment and ordination of God, constituting Jesus our surety; and in consequence of this, laying our sins on him, and making his soul, i. e. his holy human nature, a sacrifice for their expiation.

Further, to guard us against the least apprehension that Jesus suffer'd for his own personal transgressions, the inspired penman emphatically

|| The phrase in the original language properly signifies to appoint and constitute. Math. iii. 14. John vi. 15. Acts iii. 36. Therefore let all the house of Israel assuredly know, that God *hath made* the same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ; i. e. constituted and appointed him Lord and Christ. This has a reference to his Mediatorial state, not to his filiation or sonship as the co-eternal Son of God. Having finish'd our redemption on the cross, the Eternal Father, in testimony of his entire acquiescence in what he had done, received him into glory, and made, i. e. constituted and appointed him to be the head over all. God made him to be sin, constituted, and appointed him to bear our sins in his own body on the cross.

emphatically adds, "who knew no sin." It is one thing to know sin, and another thing to be made sin: To know sin, is to be really a sinner: To have sin inherent in the nature, and appearing in the practice. To be made sin, is to have sin imputed. Jesus, the holy one of God, knew no sin practically, or experimentally; there was no stain or blot in his immaculate nature; as he knew no sin by an infection of it in his nature and constitution, so he knew none by approbation. The phrase *to know*, frequently in the Hebrew language signifies to approve of a person, or thing. Jesus "is of purer eyes, than to look upon sin," or in the least degree, to approve of it in any one. He kept communion with sinners, but he had no fellowship with their sins. He eat, he drank, he conversed with vile men, without contracting the least moral pollution. Sin may be considered two ways; either in its filth and inward vitiosity; or in its guilt and punishment. The former Christ knew nothing of, "for he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth;" the latter he experimentally felt and knew; for he took on him sin's guilt, and suffered its demerit: "For he was made sin, who knew no sin." That Jesus as our surety had our sins imputed to him, and their demerit exacted at his hand, will further appear, when we attentively consider the reason here assigned by the Apostle, why he was made sin, namely, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," i. e. that we might appear righteous in the sight of an infinitely holy God, not with an inherent, but with the imputed righteousness of Jesus. We are shut up here to set our seal to this important article of our religion, that our justifying righteousness is no more inherent in ourselves, than sin was inherent in Christ: We are made the righteousness of God in Christ, the very same way that he was made sin, namely, by *imputation*: The antithesis in this verse shuts us up to this explication and view of the words. It may be here observed that we may be said to be made righteous in a twofold sense — By the infusion of a principle of righteousness and holiness into our natures; this is done by the Holy Ghost in sanctification. — Again we may be said to be made righteous by the imputation of a righteousness to us in justification, and this stands opposed to condemnation. These two, although entirely distinct, yet are inseparably connected. Whom God the righteous Judge justifies, he also sanctifies. And as Christ's being made sin, did not render him inherently sinful; so our being made the righteousness of God in, by, or through him, consists not, in infusing a principle of holiness into us, but by the imputation of a righteousness to us. "Surely shall one say in *Jebouab* have I righteousness and strength." "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

If we are accepted with God as righteous, it is in Christ, by virtue of our relation to him, on account of our belonging to him, or in consideration of our being his, the people for whom he has undertaken. If Christ then was our substitute and federal head, our guilt was legally imputed to him, and his righteousness to us. The righteousness here spoken of, from what has been already observed, is by no means the same with godly sincerity: It is not sincere imperfect obedience to the gospel, as accepted by a gracious God, in lieu of a perfect righteousness: It is not an attribute of the divine nature; neither is it faith from which it is plainly distinguished, Rom. i. 17. but the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone. Here it is called the righteousness of God; because the obedience and sufferings of the surety, (which constitute this righteousness) were the obedience and sufferings of *Jehovah* in the human nature. It is a righteousness, that God has appointed and ordained for the justification of all them who believe. It is a righteousness which God accepts of, and is well pleased with. “The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake.” ||

Do you ask *Onesimus*, what are the constituent and concurrent causes of a sinner's justification before God? I answer, (and in answering this I shall conclude my letter) there are these three—God's free grace;—Christ's righteousness;—and faith. Being justify'd

|| The explication of this verse which *Philemon* has given above, exactly coincides with that which some of the ancient Fathers put upon it, as taken notice of by *Hebden*, I shall cite them as they stand in that author.—The writer of the epistle to *Diognetus*, says “he, (viz. God) gave his own Son a ransom for us, the Holy One for sinners.—For what could hide our sins but his righteousness? In whom was it possible for sinners and ungodly to be justified but in the Son of God? O sweet commutation!—That the sinfulness of many should be hid in one righteous One, and the righteousness of one, justify many sinners!”—*Jerom*. “Christ being offered for our sins, received the name of *sin*, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; not our own, in ourselves.”—*Augustin*, “All who are justified by Christ are righteous, not in themselves, but in him.” Again, “the Apostle having said, we beseech you for Christ, to be reconciled to God, he immediately adds, He who knew no sin, &c. He does not say, as in some faulty copies, he who knew no sin, made sin for us, as though Christ had sinned for us; but he who knew no sin, God made sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him. He therefore was sin, as we are righteousness, not our own but God's; not in ourselves, but in him; as he was sin, not his own, but ours, not in himself, but in us. *Bernard* quotes this passage of the Apostle with such an explication as this; Thus we are the righteousness of God in him, as he was sin for us, namely, by imputation.”

justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Rom. iii. 24.—Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. v. 1. These three, although entirely distinct, yet mutually, and harmoniously agree, and establish each other. The procuring cause is the grace of God; the meritorious cause, the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; the instrumental cause, faith in Christ's blood. Here is then justification by grace, through Christ, and by faith. The grace of God by which we are justified, is not his grace in us as some pretend, but his free favour or loving kindness towards us, which a variety of texts point at, as the sole fundamental cause of the whole of our salvation. Eph. ii. 4, 5, 6. 2 Tim. i. 9. Titus iii. 5. Although the Apostle in the strongest language possible, asserts and maintains free justification by the grace of God, yet he adds, “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;” by which is meant either the ransom paid, or the act of purchasing. Though therefore we are justified most freely, i. e. without any the least worthiness on our part, and antecedent to any good work done by us, (Eph. ii. 10.) it is nevertheless, through Christ as the meritorious procuring cause of it, for worthless guilty creatures. The Socinian in the height of his pride will tell you, that as satisfaction and merit, obedience and punishment are inconsistent; so is the grace of God, and the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in the matter of a sinner's justification before God: But a much more competent judge than any of that fraternity, has plainly discovered their consistency, and mutual harmony in a variety of texts. Eph. i. 7. Rom. iii. 25 chap. v. 15. 17. 21. chap. vi. 23. &c. || Let these pretended masters of reason say what they will, the redemption of sinners is *through* the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus, and yet according to the riches of divine grace. Eternal life is a free gift, through Jesus Christ our Lord. If sin is abominable in itself, and infinitely displeasing to God; if the holy one of Israel will not, cannot honourably acquit his guilty creatures, but in consideration of an equivalent ransom, or a fulfilment of the demands of law and justice for them: And if rather, than these guilty creatures should perish, through an inability to pay such a ransom, and satisfy justice by any obedience and suffering of their own, he will send his own Son,

|| It is somewhat strange, that a Socinian will find a greater consistency between the Bible, and Mahomet's Alcoran, than between the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ, in a sinner's justification. If the reader can obtain the address, or epistle of the Unitarians to the Morocco Ambassador, in the reign of King Charles the 2d, he will find the above assertion verified.

Son, substitute him in their place, and in consequence of that, accept them as righteous; if so, here is a most affecting display at once, of the strictest justice, and the freest, richest mercy. The last constituent cause of a sinner's justification before God, is *faith*. This is sometimes called the faith of Jesus Christ; Gal. ii. 16. The faith of the Son of God; Gal. ii. 20. Faith in his blood; Rom. iii. 25. &c. So that the proper and immediate object of justifying faith as such, is not every truth revealed in divine revelation; but Christ as a suffering dying Saviour, purchasing life and salvation to mankind sinners as such; or God as reconciled to sinners, and satisfied for their sins, by the blood of Jesus; or the gospel as representing such a Saviour dying in our stead, and such a reconciled satisfied lawgiver, to the view of our minds; hence called the "faith of the gospel," a "belief of the truth," &c. In one word, the nature of justifying faith consists in this, "a receiving and embracing the Lord Jesus Christ as freely offered in the gospel." What is exhibited in the word, and preaching of the gospel to all indefinitely, the believing sinner appropriates to himself in particular: "Who loved me, and gave himself for me." So that this faith doth not consist only in a bare assent to evangelical truth; but particularly in an appropriation of the divine blessings, as contained in God's covenant, and held forth in the gospel. That *Jehovah* our righteousness, who in the human nature, was made sin, and a curse for sinful and accursed men, may be precious in the sight of my *Onesimus*, is the earnest desire, and fervent prayer of his

PHILEMON.



L E T T E R V.

P H I L E M O N T O O N E S I M U S.

Dear Onesimus,

I am sorry to learn in yours, that such a disrespect for the Lord's day exists with you, as it doth here. I am afraid the evil is too epidemical: And the more to be lamented, that the command enjoining its observation is so strict and peremptory, yea more so, than any other of the precepts of the moral law. Before the existence of sin in this lower world, there existed a sabbath. Adam in a state of innocence had no need of a *day of rest* to

to recreate and refresh him after the toils of the week; but God saw meet to enjoin him one day in seven, in order that he might therein enjoy more special communion with his Creator. If a sabbath was requisite for Adam in a sinless state, how much more for us in our degenerate and corrupt state, who are so prone to iniquity, and have need of all the helps we can obtain against it. Adam might have lived without sin on earth, but not without a sabbath. As the light of nature teaches us that there is a God, and that God is to be worshipped, it therefore teaches of necessity, that there must be a certain time consecrated, and set apart for this purpose. God himself hath specified and defined the time, and in this specification, hath utterly prohibited all manner of worldly employments, except such as have a reference to works either of necessity or mercy. A seventh day has been always set apart for the solemn worship of God since the creation, and such a seventh day, as never a week in the alteration was without a sabbath, and never a week had two sabbaths; for as the week ended with the Jewish sabbath, so the next week began with the christian sabbath: Which could not have been the case, if any other seventh day had been chosen, to be the time of the Lord's resurrection from the dead.—In order to a right sanctification of the Lord's day, two things are necessary:—An observation of that day as a day of rest.—A consecration of that rest wholly to the worship and service of God.—There must be a resting from all the ordinary works of our calling, *Exod. xx. 9, 10.* What is acquired on that day, is got by robbing God of that time which he hath consecrated for religious purposes, and in this case a blessing cannot be expected to attend it, sooner or later, it will prove like Achan's wedge of gold, which brought a curse upon all the rest, which he had lawfully gotten. God may in a way of righteous judgment, permit men to go on in a course of sabbath-profanation, in vending their goods to such wretches as themselves who will buy them, and may permit them to prosper and flourish for a time, in their iniquitous practices; but let such consider, although he is for the present silent, he is not like Baal's Priests *of Rep.* “Because judgment against an evil work is not speedily executed, the hearts of the children of men are set in them to do evil.” He may visit the iniquities of the Fathers in this respect, upon their children after they are laid in the dust, and consume that which they acquired by committing a robbery upon Heaven.—There must also on the Lord's day be a resting from all kinds of recreations, which may be lawful at other times, and on other occasions. These are expressly prohibited by God himself, *Isai. lviii. 13.*—“Not finding thine own pleasure on my holy day:” This is found by experience, that such
sinful

sinful recreations do more steal away our affections from spiritual duties, and distract us more in God's service, than the very works of our calling do. How Heaven-daring is it then to see men sequestrating either a part, or the whole of that holy day, merely for their own amusement — On God's holy day, there should be a resting from all immoderate eating or drinking, so as to unfit us for the discharge of those religious exercises whether public, private, or secret, which are incumbent on us on that sacred day. I do not say, neither do I believe, that the sabbath is to be observed as a day of fasting; neither I am sure, ought it to be observed as a day of feasting. It was certainly intended for far higher entertainment, than that which merely respects the body, and social intercourse with one another: Its principal design in the institution of it was, that we should enjoy communion with "the Father of Spirits." In a word, on the Lord's day there ought to be an abstinence from all carnal discourse, and carnal thoughts as far as possible. *Isai. lviii. 13* — "Not speaking thy own words." As God commands us not to work with our hands on that day, so he commands the tongue to rest from worldly carnal discourse, unbecoming the sanctity of that day.—An abstinence from all carnal thoughts is certainly requisite: God requires not only the outward man, and external actions to be consecrated unto him and his service on that day, but more especially the inward man, the hidden man of the heart. *Prov. xxiii. 26. Rom. x. 10.*

The rest of the sabbath is to be wholly consecrated to the worship and service of God, and that either publicly, privately, or secretly: Worshipping God publicly in the beauty of holiness, in concert with his people; in our families, by reading the Scriptures, praying, praising, instructing children and servants; &c. in our closets, by secret prayer, meditation, self-examination; &c. so that the sabbath, (as one expresses it) ought not to be a sabbath of oxen and asses, consisting in a mere cessation from worldly employments. ||—The sanctification of the sabbath tends much to the honour of God. Observe God's language to his church in this case; *Isai. lviii. 13.* If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, &c. I do not think that we can possibly pour greater contempt on the Holy One of Israel, than by being guilty of *sacrilege*; but every one who deliberately, and voluntarily profanes that holy day either in thought, word, or deed, is guilty of this crime: And it never diminishes the sin, that men do not think they are guilty.—Again, the sanctification of the sabbath

bath is not only honouring to God, but profitable to ourselves. It is a blessed day to the careful observers of it, and sanctified to many gracious purposes. "The sabbath was made for man," i. e. for man's great benefit and advantage. || This was one great end why the sabbath was instituted, that God might by it, in the use of all his ordinances, enrich our souls with spiritual blessings in heavenly things; and accordingly the sanctification of it is an especial mean, both to beget, and to strengthen grace in our souls, Ezek. xx. 12, 20.—But let us consider the equity of the duty to sanctify this day unto the Lord. Hath not the Lord afforded us six days in seven for our own secular business, and reserved to himself but one, for his worship and service, whereas he might have required six days for his worship, and afforded but one for our work? Is it not therefore most just and equitable, that conscience should be made of giving unto God this day, by consecrating it wholly to his worship and service? In fine, by a careful observance of the Lord's day, we continue and perpetuate a thankful remembrance of the two great benefits both of *Creation* and *Redemption*, which contain a short abridgment of true religion. The sabbath duly observed is a type of the everlasting rest, that remains for the people of God in a future world. How then can any possibly think to enter into that rest, who spend their time in these most Heaven-daring crimes of sacrilege, and robbery? It has been always observed, and the remark is not more common than true, that *true religion*, and the *power of godliness*, have flourished most, where the sabbath has been most conscientiously observed; and seldom shall we see in any person or family, or society of men whatever, any great seriousness, or favour of religion, where the sanctification of the sabbath is neglected, it is impossible to conceive, (because the thing in itself is impossible) how a man can pretend to love God, and not love his day, and the ordinance of that day. Nothing I apprehend but a strong delusion of the Devil, can tempt a man to imagine he loves and fears God, and yet habitually pollutes the sabbath.—I conclude this preamble *Onesimus*, by making this observation, namely, that both sin and duty seem to be hid from the eyes of this present generation.

Onesimus, I find in yours a certain claim, (but expressed in the most modest terms,) which you say you have by right of promise on me, to give my sentiments on the 53 chap. of Isaiah. I have no reluctance my *dear friend* to fulfil my engagement; and

|| That great and excellent man, Lord Chief Justice Hale, declared that when he most carefully and conscientiously observed the Lord's day, he found God blessed him more especially that week after.—The same observation was made by Queen Mary, as Bishop Burnet hath recorded of her, in the life of that excellent Queen.

and the discharge of this debt, will I hope tend in the issue, to corroborate my present argument; and I am sure in the sequel you must agree with me, that the Evangelical Prophet in the plainest, but strongest language, proves the substitution of Jesus in the room and place of the guilty. I am sure *Onsimus*, there is no article of revealed religion, no doctrine within the compass of divine revelation, so clearly taught in so few words, and so often repeated, as the doctrine of the vicarious and propitiatory sufferings of Jesus, in the aforesaid chapter. Who could have more clearly and graphically described the exinanition, and exaltation, the sufferings and death, the wars and victory of Jesus, than Isaiah hath done. He rather seems to write of events already accomplished, than such as are only in the womb of the decree to be brought into a state of futurity and being, in some after-period. He appears in our view, rather in the garb of an Evangelist, than in the Prophet's mantle; giving a detail of facts which he himself had been an eye witness of; for the most part making use of the present, rather than the future tense; pointing at the sure and certain accomplishment of what he wrote, and at the same time, is a strong indication of that holy fervour of soul with which he was actuated in the mean time. In reading the aforesaid portion of holy writ, one would be almost tempted to conclude, that he had been one of the twelve; had accompanied his Lord and Master all the time of his public ministry; had been an eye witness of the contempt and contradiction he met with from sinners; had seen him condemned; had been along with him in the garden, and had accompanied him to the cross, and beheld him nailed to the accursed tree. With an admirable dexterity, he enters into the efficient and final causes of the death of Jesus; and not only once or twice, but almost in every verse, represents him as our substitute-sacrifice.

Can any one, at least any professing the Christian religion, apply this remarkable prophecy to any, but the Messiah? The Eunuch, Prefect to Candace Queen of Ethiopia, seemed to be at a loss to whom this prediction should refer: Of whom speaketh the Prophet, of himself, or of some other man, says he to Philip? Acts viii. 27. But let us consider, that he was only a proselyte, and but a novice in the Jewish mysteries. The case is not so with us; we have the prophecy in history, and the history confirmed by a troop of witnesses, whose testimony is unquestionable; who with the utmost perspicuity, demonstrate the truth of the prediction by the event. What shall we say of those holy Evangelists and Apostles, yea, of Jesus himself? All unanimously agreeing in this one point, that the Prophet here spake of some other

other man, even “ God manifested in the flesh.” † No doubt can possibly remain in our minds with regard to the object of this prophecy, and its principal intendment, unless we wilfully shut our eyes, and are determined at all hazards not to admit the clearest, and most indubitable evidence. Concerning which of the ancient Kings, or holy Prophets, could it ever be affirmed, that they did no sin, neither was guile found in their mouth? Was there ever a descendant of Adam by ordinary generation, so just and holy, as neither in thought, word, or deed to offend? Who among the tribe of holy Kings, or Prophets, healed the maladies, and made an atonement for the sins of their people? Which of them by their personal stripes averted the divine wrath, and purchased by their death, peace and reconciliation with God? In a word, who among them died, rose again, and saw a holy seed as the fruit and effect of their death? But this is predicted of Jesus: “ He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days.” &c.

In the 2d and 3d verses of the chap. the Prophet describes the abject and humble state of the Messiah in these metaphorical phrases, “ he shall grow up before him as a tender-plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.” None ever appeared on the theatre of this world in such a low and abject condition. “ The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.” This was a very different appearance from that which the Jews expected the Messiah would make: They dreamed of nothing but grandeur and majesty to attend his every footstep; and particularly, an immunity from the Roman yoke, the principal signal of his appearance: But how greatly mistaken was that deluded dreaming nation! Here was the Messiah, here arose “ the bright and the morning star,” and yet none of these *insignia*; nothing in his external appearance, either to attract the attention, or beget a veneration in the spectators. The Sun of righteousness arose, but under a cloud. The rod out of the stem of Jesse, and the branch out of his roots, budded and came forth; but how? As a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. Descended of a mean and low parentage; nursed and brought up, not in Herod’s palace, but in Joseph’s mean cottage. Let us behold his train, and cast our eyes upon his Disciples and followers; were they composed of the grandees of the nation? No, he had too mean an appearance to attach the princes of this world to his interest, or engage them

† Some modern Jews refer this prophecy to Abraham, some to Moses, others to Isaiah and Jeremiah, and some to the Jews in general, when in their captivity in Babylon.—Some of the more ancient of that nation speak more agreeably to the truth, when they confine this prophecy entirely to the Messiah.

them to embark in his cause. Grief and sorrow sat on his brow, weariness and fatigue marked his every footstep. He had no form or comeliness in him why he should be desired. In the opinion of the Jews he seemed to be about fifty years of age, when he was not much above thirty. But notwithstanding this low and debased state of the Messiah, he was still, personally considered, the brightness of the divine glory, and the express character of the Father's person. Such as possessed the celestial grace of faith, discerned what lay beyond the reach of carnal men. The Apostles could testify the truth of this: "The word was made flesh; (is their unanimous testimony) and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." ||

This elegant Prophet proceeds, *v.* 4. to assign a reason for the humble and low appearance that the Messiah made in the days of his incarnation, and those calamities and sorrows, which were the inevitable concomitants of that state; and that, in order to remove the scandal which might arise from this consideration. "Surely he hath borne our griefs." There seems to be a particular emphasis in the word *Aken*, is surely, and is used here rather as a casual, than an affirmative particle. § It contains a reason why Christ appeared in this humble and abject state. It is observed by some, that it is frequently so taken, when that which immediately precedes is uncommon and strange. *Onesimus*, was there ever any event equal, or similar to this, since the Almighty laid the foundation of the world? Every part of this scene appears marvellous and strange. What think you of "God manifested in the flesh," who created all worlds, and by whose Almighty arm all things do consist, to appear on the theatre of this world in this humble and low state? Was he not the brightness of

|| It is reported of a certain King named *Agbaris*, that upon hearing the great things Jesus did, sent a Limner to draw his picture: The Limner wrote back, that he could not, for a certain divine glory which surrounded his countenance. Whether this was so or not, there was a divine glory, and the traces of a divine majesty which attended his every word and action. His most inveterate enemies were obliged to acknowledge, that "never man taught as he taught." "They wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth: Yet he was despised and rejected by the body of the Jewish nation; they neither saw the dignity, of his person, nor the divine majesty that attended both his doctrine and miracles.

§ It is twice rendered *but*, Job xxxvi. 8. Psal. lxxxii. vii. And once in *Isai. verily*, chap. xlv. 15. In other places where it occurs it is rendered *surely*, or *truly*. The judicious Calvin takes it in this place, rather as a casual, than an affirmative particle, vide Calvin. in locum.

of the Father's glory, and the express character of his person? Ought he not from his innate worth and excellency, abstracting from his gracious and benign designs, to have been *deliciae hominum*, the darling of mankind? Was this the case then? No, but the very reverse. "We hid as it were our faces from him, he was despised, and we esteemed him not." To fly from an invading foe, to persecute with unabating fury an implacable and an irreconcilable enemy, would not be thought strange; but thus to treat the best of Beings, who came upon the most important business, to accomplish the most gracious purpose, to save sinners from going down to the pit: How can we account for the behaviour of the Jews towards him, or vindicate their conduct? The descendants of that wicked generation lie under the reproach of "crucifying the Lord of Glory," to this day. "Surely he hath borne our griefs." &c. The verb *Nasa* to bear, is used variously in Scripture; but its various significations may be reduced to the three following. ||——To take up somewhat, as on one's shoulders:——To bear the weight of a thing, not only to take up, but carry somewhat that is weighty, as a porter bears a burden.—In fine, to remove, or take away: And in this sense, it is sometimes applied to God, when he pardons, or takes away the iniquity of his offending creatures. The blessed Jesus bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows, as a strong man bears a heavy burden laid on him. He *himself*, bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows, not by dropping a sympathetic tear over miserable sinners; but bearing penally the weight of the punishment of our sins; this was imposed on him, he cheerfully submitted to the burden.—Remember *Onofimus*, that whatever sorrows or calamities may befall you in this vale of tears, they are not penal, but castigatory: They proceed not from an absolute God, are not intended as part of the price of your redemption; no, they come from God as reconciled in Jesus; are evidences of his love and affection, and means for promoting your sanctification; to wean your carnal heart from this present evil world, and to quicken your desires after a better, where no sorrow or grief can enter. "Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." *Yet*, is here an adversative particle, and may be rendered with as much propriety *but* we did esteem him, &c. We viewed him in the light of a most noted malefactor, as one who justly deserved to be punished for his own personal crimes, and that by God himself. We looked upon him as such an atrocious offender,

¶ According to some Critics it occurs ten or twelve times in Scripture. Here it denotes both the reality, and importance of the matter to which it stands prefixed. See Hebden on the doctrine of imputed righteousness.

offender, whom vengeance would not suffer to live, and such a wicked one, as ought not to live half his days: Suffering poverty, grief, sorrow, and reproach, for his own crimes. || But as if the prophet had said, was our judgment according to truth? Did we pass a righteous sentence on the Son of God? Or was it not owing to our prejudiced minds, and our corrupt affections that the Messiah was thus slighted, despised, and vilified by us? Certainly it was. For, not because of any personal transgression of his was he stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; but *for us*. The righteous Judge of all, dealt with him, as he would have dealt with us, if he had not, in gracious condescension stepped into our room, and sustained our place, and so made himself obnoxious to these griefs and sorrows, the genuine offspring, and native consequence of our sins, imputed to him. The case was really this, “ he was wounded for *our* transgressions, and bruised for *our* iniquities.” Was it any wonder, to behold the Son of God in the human nature broken with grief, brought down with sorrow, when “ he was made sin for us,” when our transgressions were charged to his account? These immoralities for which he was bruised, were not his, but ours. He was the holy one of God; he knew no sin, either by inhesion, or approbation. “ He was wounded for our transgressions.” Where, and from whom did he receive these wounds? Let the blessed Jesus answer, in the person of an inspired prophet: Zech. xiii. 6. What are these wounds in thine hands? Those, with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. Oh! cruel friends! He came to his own, and instead of meeting with that entertainment which might have been reasonably expected, instead of caressing, loving and adoring, they pierced, wounded, and brought to the dust of death, their, and our best friend, and most gracious benefactor! But alas! there must be more than wounds in the case: The prickly briar piercing his blessed temples; the nails rivetted through the shivering flesh; the spear thrust through his blessed side, were not sufficient. Such was the odious and detestable nature of sin; such was the extensive nature of that satisfaction claimed by infinite justice, to procure pardon and peace, that Jesus must be *bruised*, as well as wounded. “ He was bruised for our iniquities,” for our prevarications. He was wounded by men, he was bruised by God. His cruel friends had the principal hand in the former, his own gracious Father, as sustaining the rights, and maintaining the majesty of the Deity, in the latter. My dear friend, was there not a weight laid on the Mediator

sufficient

|| A blasphemer, a sabbath-breaker, a friend of publicans and sinners, one who had a devil, and was mad; were the common, but unjust designations bestowed on the Son of God, and the friend of men.

sufficient to bruise, yea mortally to wound him, and bring him to the dust of death? If you enquire what it was? I answer, our transgressions, our iniquities, and God's wrath. What a stupendous, heavy burden! Yet he bore it, he being God, as well as man, was qualified for the undertaking. What could not humanity so intimately connected with divinity, do, and suffer, without succumbing under the load. Do you think *Onesimus*, that these wounds and bruises, had no connexion with the pardon and purgation of our sins as the meritorious cause? If giving the obedience of faith to the doctrines which he taught, and imitating the example that he exhibited to the world, were sufficient for these salutary purposes, why, in a consistency with the holiness and justice of the divine nature, did the Eternal Father bruise him under the weight of our sins, and the burden of his own wrath? He was bruised, not for sins of his own; not for any trial of his virtue; or to exhibit him to the world, as a perfect pattern of submission, *only* or *chiefly*; not only to inform us that God hates sin; but he suffered *for* our sins as the proper impulsive cause. || Doth not these phrases, to suffer *for sin*, to die *for iniquity*, always import suffering, or dying for these sins and iniquities spoken of as the procuring cause of them? Jer. xxx. 15. chap. xxxi. 3. Levit. xxvi. 18, 24, 28.

The prophet adds, "The chastisement of our peace was upon him." The correction, or punishment necessary to procure for us all happiness, both in this, and the life to come, was laid on him, and he voluntarily submitted to bear it. The word *Musar* which we render chastisement, imports not only paternal, but vindictive corrections. Jer. xxx. 19. In its primary signification, it is taken for discipline, and instruction; and has a reference to dull and untoward scholars, with whom words, without the rod will not keep them to their duty. Secondly and figuratively, it is taken for chastisement; and sometimes materially, for the punishment itself inflicted on sin's account. Hosea ix. 2. The revolvers are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker, or a *chastiser* of them all. It is observed by some, that wherever this word occurs in Scripture, it has a reference to sin either imputed, or inherent, as the procuring cause of correction, or punishment. "The chastisement of our peace was upon

|| The particle *for* expresses not an occasion only, or as some speak, an improper cause. Our sins were the procuring cause of all Christ's sufferings; and the penal effect of our sins. It is not said merely, "he was wounded, and bruised for us," but *for our transgressions*, i. e. he endured the deserved punishment of our sins. That this is the meaning of the Spirit of God in these phrases, is as clear as the Sun to any who do not wilfully shut their eyes against the clearest evidence.

upon him." Here we behold as in a glass, the gracious end and design of all these wounds, bruises, and chastisements; to put an end, a perpetual end to all hostilities between an offended God and a believing soul, and restore peace and reconciliation, and that upon the most honourable terms. The first and more immediate effect of sin, was to set God and his Creatures at variance: The rupture was so great, the breach so wide, that none but "God manifested in the flesh" could heal. O rare expedient of infinite wisdom! And was there no way for composing the difference, but by Christ's being chastised, and that unto blood-shedding? "He hath made peace by the blood of his cross" And if ever peace be restored to a troubled conscience, it must be by faith's application of this blood. Nothing less will pacify an awakened conscience, but what satisfies God's justice, namely, the peace-speaking blood of Jesus.

"By his stripes we are healed." Sin not only set God and his Creatures at variance, but mortally wounded the whole human race: It hath given such a deadly stab to the whole rational creation, that no medicine can heal, no antidote can prevent the wound from proving mortal, but the stripes of the blessed Jesus. The malady is so interwoven in the nature, and rivetted in the constitution of every Son of Adam, that no Physician can remove but the second Adam; and this he could not do, by any example ever he exhibited, nor any doctrine ever he taught, neither by his death as a Martyr only, but as a real, propitiatory sacrifice. Here is the remedy an all-gracious God hath provided, and an ever-indulgent Saviour hath by his death procured; "for by his stripes we are healed."

This evangelical prophet proceeds, *v. 6.* under another similitude, to point out the lost and deplorable condition of all mankind, as the natural descendants of the first Adam. "We all like lost sheep have gone astray," and strayed to such a distance, that we never could have returned, so as to be re-instated in the divine favour, unless the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, had come to seek, and to save that which is lost. "We have turned every one to his own way:" The way of our own hearts, the way that our corrupt hearts chose, and were impetuously inclined to. This generous confession here made by the prophet, intimates the folly of sinners as such, and their indisposition to return again to that God from whom they had strayed, with a strong propensity to what is sinful and destructive. This also clearly evinces the irrecoverableness of fallen Creatures, but in the way contrived by infinite wisdom, and revealed in the Gospel. "And the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." Which words, I think almost to a demonstration, assert the imputation

putation of our guilt to Jesus, and God's punishing him, though spotless and pure in himself, for the sins of his people. It is not here said the Jews persecuted him, the Devil and his agents raged against him, though all that was true, but *Jehovah* himself considered as an offended righteous lawgiver, "has laid on him," consenting to stand in the place of sinners, "the iniquity of us all." The prime agent in Christ's sufferings was "*Jehovah* himself." What was the act of *Jehovah* in this case? According to the text, he laid, or made to meet on him the iniquity of us all. || Iniquity here must signify, either sin itself, or guilt and punishment for sin: Consequently, when it is here said, that the Lord made to meet on him the iniquity of us all, the meaning must be, that the Lord punished him for the iniquity of all those in whose name the prophet here speaks. In Scripture style, iniquity is said to be on a person, when guilt is imputed to him; Numb. xv. 31.—1 Sam. xxv. 24. Upon me, my Lord let this iniquity be, i. e. I take the fault of this man, *Nabal*, on myself: Let it be charged on me: I consent to be punished for him.—The language of the prophet here is very emphatical; the iniquity of us all, which must signify either, the sins themselves of all of us; or the guilt contracted by all of us; or the punishment due to us for sin; or sufferings equal to what we were all liable to undergo. I am far from asserting that the Lord made to meet on his Son, iniquity with regard to its fault; Jesus had *Holiness to the Lord* written on his heart, as well as on his mitre. That the Lord imputed to his Son the commission of so much as one sin, or transferred the least degree of moral pollution, would be the height of blasphemy to maintain: But with regard to the guilt and punishment of sin, the one was certainly imputed, and the other he suffered, if the Scriptures can be credited. He voluntarily fitted himself in the room of these straying sheep, hereby to evince, (Oh! That the world would believe the great truth) that he was the good shepherd in laying down his life for the sheep. *Jehovah* made to meet on his Son all the iniquities, of all believers, in all ages and periods of the world. How many
in

|| There are different readings of these words. The *Greek* interpreters read them thus; The Lord gave him up for our sins; the *vulgate* version, the Lord put the sins of us all upon him; the *Arabic*, the Lord delivered him up for our sins; the *Syriac*, the Lord made to meet on him the iniquity of us all. These various readings tend in the issue to the same thing; namely, to confirm this interesting article, that straying lost sinners never could be restored to the favour of God, nor introduced into Christ's pastures, nor brought under the patronage and protection of Heaven, but by the imputation of our sins to him, and their expiation by his bloody sufferings, vide *Outram. de Sacrif.*

in their number, how heinous in their aggravations! Mine iniquities, (says the royal Psalmist) are gone over my head; sooner will we calculate the particles of sand, scattered here and there, on the sea shore, than we can number our transgressions. Can, or dare my *Onesimus*, leave this ample acknowledgment, this ingenuous confession, at the door of the man according to God's own heart? I am confident you are far from saying, "I thank God, I have no reason to make such an acknowledgment, nor express such a confession before the most High God." What think you of the numberless sins of Myriads which met upon the Lamb of God? What an enormous weight! Add to this, the punishment he suffered for sin, and the burden becomes intolerable! It brought him to the dust of death. What a prodigious ocean of waters would a junction of all the rivers in the universe make, if cast into one bed, and confined within one margin. The idea almost confounds imagination itself. In the person of our glorious Mediator, sin met with wrath, wrath flamed against sin so, as to consume this sin-offering, from which God smelled a sweet savour; and accepting the offering, he forgives the iniquity of the personal transgressors, receives their persons into favour, and accepts their imperfect services.

In consequence of Jehovah's causing to meet on the Saviour the iniquities of us all, the prophet adds, *v. 7.* He was oppressed, and he was afflicted. See with what propriety this evangelical prophet connects this, with what precedes. What could have been rationally expected, but the heaviest oppression, and the severest affliction when struggling under such an enormous load, "God's wrath, and our sins." The punishment of the damned in hell, will be a burden too heavy for them to bear; oppressed and afflicted beyond measure, under the weight of innumerable sins, under the weight of that wrath of which none knows the power. How much more oppressed behoved the Son of God to have been, who had all the sins of his sinning people, with all their aggravations to bear, and all that punishment, the demerit of their crimes, to suffer. || "When we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly." Why did he die? What was the primary moving cause, both on the part of the Eternal Father, and his Eternal Son? *Love*, God so loved the

¶ Tremellius, and others read the words thus; it was exacted of him, and he answered. The original word will bear this reading; the connexion is by no means hurt, by translating them thus. What was it that Jehovah exacted of his Son? Perfect obedience to the law, in its most extensive claim; and punishment for our sins. Never were there such insolvent debtors as sinners; never such a gracious creditor as God; and never a more condescending *Surety* than Jesus.

the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. John iii. 16. Behold the condescension of the Surety: Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, although he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.—The High Priest of our profession, cheerfully and cordially resigned himself up to the Father's righteous will, and the stroke of his vindictive justice, without the least reluctance. Lo I come! To do thy will I take delight. Consequently the prophet here adds,—“he opened not his mouth.” He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter.” When false witnesses arose, and laid things to his charge, things which he was never guilty of, things which he knew not, either by commission, or approbation; see how this meek Lamb of God behaved. When wicked men were suborned to hatch the most palpable falsehoods, and introduce lying evidences against him; with what admirable patience, and cheerful resignation did he behave! He never opened his mouth. Might he not have appeared in his own defence? Could he not have easily repelled those lying evidences? Certainly he could: Yet he did not, in so much that Pilate marvelled, Mat. xxvii. 12, 14. He appeared before an higher tribunal; He had to answer before an impartial Judge, for what he had spontaneously contracted to pay. Here was a charge, considering the station he filled, could not be superseded. The charges brought in against him by the Jews were of little, or no concern to the blessed Jesus; he cheerfully acquiesced in the most unjust sentence that could have been passed by any Judge. “The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” went cheerfully to the altar: Never opened his mouth when reviled, buffeted, scourged, and nailed to the accursed tree. And when our debt of punishment was exacted of him by the Father, with the most remarkable patience he resigned up himself to the will of Heaven: “Not my will, but thine be done” ||

The prophet proceeds to inform us of the true and genuine reason of his death. “He was cut off, out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people, was he stricken.” As he stood the surety of God's sinning people, their transgressions were charged to his account; and as a vicarious sufferer, he must die in order for their expiation. It is hard to conceive, why the Lamb of God should have been cut off out of the land of the living, or how it could have been consistent with the strict justice of God, or with the immaculate purity and holiness of his

|| It was judged by the Heathens a bad omen, if the victim came with reluctance to the altar; or when bound, to break loose, or low: Hence is that expression of Ovid. *Mugitus victima diros edidit.*

his nature, to cut off his Son, if there was no sin in him either by inhesion, or imputation. But that sin, and our sins too, were his by imputation, we are, (if we credit the lively oracles of God) constrained to believe. “For the transgression of my people was he stricken.”—The prophet proceeds further to point out the principal agent in his death, *v.* 20. “It pleased the Lord to bruise him.” Although he stood in the nearest, and most intimate relation to the Father, yet he would abate nothing of his hatred against sin, imputed to one so dear to him, and who never had done any thing contrary to his will. The strong and piercing cries he uttered could avail nothing. As our representing head, he fell into the hands of an absolute God; a God whose righteous law, and inflexible justice demanded satisfaction, previous to our reception into favour, or our participation of the celestial inheritance. “It pleased the Lord to bruise him.” In this critical moment, God seems to lay aside the bowels of a Father, and put on the garb of an irreconcilable enemy: Upon which account probably, our glorious surety in the midst of his agony gives him the title of God, and supercedes the usual title Father. “My God, my God;” not my Father, my Father. He seems to hang upon the cross like a disinherited Son, while he appeared in the garb of a sinner. Then was his head loaded with curses, while he stood under that awful sentence, “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” God left him not to the will of the instruments of his death: No, he must have the chiefest blow of bruising him, himself. All the power of Devils and men, could not strike a blow strong enough, to satisfy the claim of justice, and secure the rights of holiness: The cup was therefore put into his hand by the Father. He would rather behold his dear Son groaning on the cross, than his holiness under the injuries of a transgressing world.—“When *thou* shalt make his soul an offering for sin,” i. e. a peculiar victim for the expiation of sin; this is the meaning of the term in the original language. Thus the prophet in order the more fully to ascertain the nature and intent of Christ’s death, asserts in the most unequivocal terms that he was a vicarious sufferer.—“For, (adds the Evangelical prophet) he shall bear their iniquities. And he bore the sins of many,” *v.* 11, 12. To bear sin in the usual acceptation of the phrase, is to be punished for sin. || Though he was numbered with transgressors, though he bore the sins of many, yet he was the holy one of God, who did no sin: Therefore for no personal fault was he obnoxious to punishment. Must it not therefore unavoidably follow, that there was a translation both of our guilt, and punishment, by a judiciary imputation of the one, and

and a vicarious suffering of the other. Consequently it must necessarily follow, that these his penal sufferings did truly and really placate an offended God, and reconcile to God offending sinners. What necessity was there for all these sorrows, griefs, and bruises, if our peace and reconciliation with God, could have been effected by his doctrine, and example? Why did Jehovah strike, smite, and afflict his own Son? Why did he bruise him in the awful and tremendous manner he did? Why did he make his soul an offering for sin? No ostensible reason can possibly be assigned, but because he was our surety, and stood in the room of the principal transgressor. The griefs, the sorrows, the sins, the transgressions that he bore were *ours*.——To sum up the whole, we may behold here, the meritorious cause of Christ's death, *our sins*; the efficient cause, the imputation of them to him by a judiciary act of the Father, and the voluntary susception of them by the Son of God in man's nature; the final cause, the expiation of sin, and redemption from punishment.

On. simus, in order that you may be thoroughly convinced that this Evangelical prophet speaks of Christ, and of none other, we find the aforesaid remarkable predictions applied by an inspired Apostle almost in the very express words, 1 Pet. ii. 24, 25. The phrases used by this Minister of the circumcision, were perfectly familiar to those to whom he directed his epistle. They knew, that *to take away sin* in a sacrificial sense, had a relation to an atonement made by a sacrifice for that sin, for which the sacrifice was offered: Therefore, when Christ is said to bear our sins, (Gr. to lift them up, and bear them away,) the meaning is, he took the punishment of them upon himself, and made atonement for them before God. This is far different from the Socinian gloss on this head. They will tell you that he did not undergo the punishment of our transgressions; but that his voluntary death prevailed with God to absolve his servants at the last, and reward them with eternal glory. So then it would seem that satisfaction is yet to be given, and atonement made, notwithstanding of all that Christ hath done and suffered. But is there not the greatest reason to dread, that if the creditor demands what we owe to law and justice, that instead of paying the last, we will never be able to pay the first farthing of the debt. But perhaps Socinians, these great masters of reason, and common sense, may have a stock by them, of which we have no acquaintance.

Onesimus,

Onesimus, I had scarce finished the last sentence when I was interrupted by the sudden appearance of my friend *Superbus*. He reminded me of my former promise, never to write to you on any subject of importance, without communicating the same to him. I acknowledged he had a just claim upon me by virtue of my promise, and that his request should be immediately answered, providing his time and patience would permit: Accordingly I read to him what I had written to you on the substitution of Christ, as a propitiatory and vicarious sacrifice. He paid a particular attention to that cursory view I had taken of the liii. of Isaiah; but seemed not to relish my sentiments, nor coincide with my explication: Accordingly he made this reply. “ I “ fear *Philemon* you will find it a matter of no small difficulty to “ prove your point, and establish your hypothesis, from some of “ these Scriptures upon which you seem to lay the greatest stress. “ For instance, “ he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:” This according to you, points out the punishment he “ endured in consequence of the imputation of our sins; and so “ his bearing these, necessarily supposes a proper and real satisfaction made for them. But with your leave; do we not find “ in Exod. xxxiv. 8. and Numb. xxxiv. 8. the word *Nasa* “ is there used simply to pardon, without any reference to Messiah’s bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. I would “ wish at least to know, how I am to understand this term in “ the two forementioned Scriptures. The Lord, the Lord God “ merciful and gracious, *forgiving* iniquity, &c. You know “ that this is the very same term which the prophet uses when he “ says he bore our griefs. According to you he bore them as a “ peculiar victim in our room, and so made an atonement for “ them; and in this way our sins come to be pardoned, and we “ saved both from the guilt and punishment of iniquity.”

Superbus, in order to give you all manner of satisfaction on this head, let me remind you of that which I formerly proved, viz. that considering the holiness of the divine nature, and the righteousness of the divine law, God could not in a consistency with his justice manifested in the threatening, forgive sin without a previous satisfaction: From hence the necessity of Christ’s death was inferred. Observe again, that God may be said to *bear*, (or as the term is translated to forgive) our sins in another point of view, than Christ bore them on the accursed tree; that Christ did this, is the language of an inspired Apostle; that God bears, or forgives sin is the language of an infallible historian: Both are true. Christ’s bearing our sins on the tree, opens a way for God’s pardoning them, to the glory of his justice, and the honour of his law. The Scripture knows of no other channel,
through

through which pardon flows to the sinner but through Christ the propitiation, and only Mediator between God and man; it directs the awakened sinner to no other method than faith in the mercy of God, through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. Why did Christ bear our sins, if they could have been pardoned without any reference to his sufferings; and such a reference as carries in it this idea, that they were truly propitiatory? Let us attend to the language of the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles on this head: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." In every bestowment of pardon there is an act of mercy, and every act of pardoning mercy presupposes satisfaction given, and an atonement made by the surety. *Superbus* further replied; "I cannot conceive how your opinion, and that of the Evangelist Matthew can ever coincide: The sorrows, the griefs that Christ bore, according to your hypothesis, have a reference to our moral transgressions, and Christ's sufferings because of their imputation to him; but the inspired Evangelist seems rather to refer these to the bodily infirmities of those, with whom he was conversant in the days of his flesh. If you please, I will read the text, Mat. viii. 17. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, he himself took our infirmities, and bore our sicknesses. If you please to view the preceding context, you will find to be true what I have just now asserted. I cannot conceive how you can maintain your opinion, and grant the infallibility of the Evangelist."

Superbus, why may not this prophecy relating to the Messiah have a twofold accomplishment? Was it not accomplished, when he removed the infirmities, and healed the diseases that were prevalent among the Jews; and by suffering on the cross, procuring pardon and remission for moral transgressions. † You will find many predictions in Scripture, particularly in the Old Testament, of a compound signification. e. g. That illustrious prediction

† The Jews were of opinion, that this passage had a relation to the Messiah's procuring the remission of sin by his death, as well as healing their bodily distempers.—The learned Grotius was of the same mind; his words are these. "Sicut veterum res gestæ rerum Christi figuram habuerunt; ita et ipsius Christi actiones aliæ aliis denotandis intervenerunt. Nam beneficium corporibus redditæ sanatis quin figuram remissionis peccatorum et sanatarum mentium tulerit, dubitari non potest. Bis ergo impletum est vaticinium. Primo cum Christus semet defatigans ad vesperam usque aliorum malis levandis vacavit; ut hic ostendit *Matthæus*. Posterius, cum crucis supplicium perferens remissionem peccatorum nobis impetravit." Vide Grotius in locum.

prediction which we have in Isaiah, chap. ix. v. 1. is of this sort. The people which walked in darkness have seen a great light. Now, is it not evident, that this prediction had a primary reference to the redemption of the Jews from their Babylonish captivity? By darkness, and the shadow of death is intimated, the calamitous and miserable state of the Jewish nation when exiles from their native country. It is here foretold concerning that people, that they shall see a great light: They shall experience a happy turn in their affairs; and see the hand of a kind providence breaking their bands, and bringing about their deliverance.—Was not this prediction also eminently accomplished in New Testament times, by the preaching of the everlasting Gospel by our Lord Jesus Christ, about the sea coast of Galilee. || Might not this prediction be referred to that glorious period, when the Saints shall emerge out of a long state of darkness, in which they had lain for many ages in the bowels of the earth, to a glorious immortality; to enjoy the vision and fruition of God, where no misery nor calamity can ever enter; where the Lord will be their everlasting light, and their God their glory?

“ I have yet one objection against your opinion with regard to
 “ Christ’s bearing our sins, and making his soul an offering for
 “ sin to make an atonement before God: And this I imagine, I
 “ am fully warranted to object against your hypothesis from the
 “ instance of the Scape-goat. This Goat you know was pre-
 “ sented before the Priest; and by the imposition of hands, all
 “ the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of the whole house of
 “ Israel confessed over its head: It was then sent into the wilder-
 “ nefs. Now *Philemon*, was not sin here taken away without
 “ shedding of blood? Why, if there was such a necessity for
 “ blood-shedding in order to make atonement, was not the Goat
 “ immediately slain, and offered up in sacrifice? If that had
 “ been done, it would have strongly corroborated your opinion;
 “ particularly, as the Goat was an eminent type of Christ; but
 “ we find the reverse was the case. The plain meaning of this
 “ solemn transaction consisted, I apprehend, in neither more
 “ nor less than this, to intimate to the Jews, and convey this
 “ moral lesson to us, that God had taken away their sins, and
 “ pardoned their iniquities, by an act of his mercy as truly and
 “ really, as if they had been actually transferred to, and carried
 “ away by that animal, into the wilderness.”

Superbus, your objection is erroneous in a variety of respects. You seem to take it for granted, that the phrase *to bear sin*, has only a respect to the Scape-goat’s carrying away the sins of the Israelitish congregation into the wilderness, on the great day of atonement;

atonement; but should not the phrase be extended further, and referred to all those propitiatory sacrifices which were offered up on other occasions? You maintain, that there was no translation of sin to the Goat; that there was not a proper real translation I grant, for this very good reason, that that Creature was not capable, either by suffering, or any other way, actually to remove the guilt of sin. But dare you affirm the same thing of Jesus. We must always observe, a very great difference between the type, and antitype; the shadow, and the substance. It is true, that neither the blood of Bulls or Goats, or the ashes of an Heifer, sprinkling the unclean, were sufficient to purge away the filth of the conscience. But can any one be so presumptuous as to deny, that the blood of Jesus, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself to God, is not of sufficient value to answer this desirable end. That there was no translation of the sins of the Israelitish congregation to the Goat, so that in no sense whatever he bore their sin, I utterly deny. If the Goat was not to be viewed in a vicarious light, and for this reason had the sins of a sinning people transferred to him, the whole of this striking translation was nothing but a mere solemn farce. See how minutely, and emphatically the Spirit of God relates the whole affair. Levit. xvi. 21, 22. And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live Goat; and confess over him, all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins, *putting them upon the head of the Goat*, &c. v. 22. And the Goat *shall bear upon him all their iniquities* into a land not inhabited.

Now *Superbus*, I ask what are we to understand by these phrases? What idea do they convey to us, if there was no translation of the guilt of that people to the Goat? Although not a real and proper, yet a ceremonial and typical translation, there certainly was. And in order to convince us the more thoroughly of this, the Goat afterwards was still reputed unclean: And the person that carried him away into the wilderness, was under the necessity of washing his clothes, and bathing his flesh in water before he entered the camp. Levit. xvi. 26. You further object, that the Goat was not slain; and so sin may be pardoned without blood-shedding, contrary to a cardinal article in my creed, that, “without shedding of blood there is no remission.” But it cannot be positively affirmed whether it suffered or not. If we can give any credit to Jewish traditions, it suffered, and that a violent death. || One thing is certain, that it was carried into an inhospitable

|| The Jews affirm, that the Goat was sent into the wilderness, and thrown headlong down a steep rock. They further add, that a scarlet thread

table desert, where very probably, it perished either through want, or was torn by wild beasts.

But to come nearer the point, observe, that the translation of the guilt of the people on the Scape-goat, and his banishment into the wilderness, was not the whole, but only a part, and the least part too of this transaction. The expiation principally depended upon the other Goat that was slain. For you must remember, that the Lord's Goat was offered up in sacrifice, and its blood poured out, and sprinkled upon the holy place, previous to the sending away of the *Hazazel*, or Scape-goat. Therefore *Superbus*, you are always to advert to this, that this ceremony consisted not in one act, nor was finished by one Goat: But to the completion of this ceremony, the two Goats were necessary; the one to be offered up in sacrifice, the other to be sent away alive into the wilderness. The first typified the expiation of sin by bloodshedding; the last pointed out the immediate effect of this expiation, the taking away, or removal of guilt, that it should not be remembered by God, nor come into judgement against them. Materially considered, every sin-offering contained all that was typified by these two Goats: But God for the greater consolation of his people, repeated this annually to convince them indeed, that by sacrifice their sins were to be done away, and expiated. We find something similar to this in the cleansing of the Leper, Levit. xiv. 6, 7, 52, 53. Now you see *Superbus*, that of these two birds, one was to be slain, and the other let go alive. The blood of the slain bird sprinkled on the Leper, cleansed him from his disease; the letting the live bird go, was a certain token of its removal. The imperfection that still attended all types, required that on various occasions, and in different respects, the same

thread was tied about its horns; and if God was to show himself propitious in pardoning their sins, the scarlet thread turned white. Accordingly they refer what we have in Isaiah, i. 18. to this transaction, and explain it accordingly. " Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be like crimson, they shall be as wool. They further add; that if the scarlet thread thus changed its colour, he that carried the Goat into the wilderness sounded a horn, and others who were appointed at proper distances for this purpose, repeated the sound; so that the news soon reached Jerusalem, and from that, in a very short time from Dan to Beersheba: And by this method the whole land came to know in a very short time, that God was propitious in pardoning their sin. They proceeded then to praise God for his goodness. But if the scarlet thread changed not its colour, this was an evidence to them that God was wroth; and upon this the horns were silent. A general dejection overspread the whole land: Fasting and continual prayers were appointed to placate an offended God, and turn away his wrath. Turrentine. de Satisfact.

same thing should be taught by more than one type; which was the case in the two fore-going instances. ||

I would ask you *Superbus*, whether or not these two Goats, and the ceremonies appertaining to them, had no regard to the removal of sin? What opinion think you did the Jews entertain of this whole process? I presume, I may answer for you, that it was their judgment, that they were chosen, the one to be slain, the other to be let go alive, with a view to the purgation, and removal of their iniquity. I ask again; whether or not, was it a real, or only a figurative atonement and removal of sin that was made by these Goats? You must certainly reply, it was only figurative. What then did this whole ceremony prefigure? Did it not adumbrate, and point at the future sufferings and death of the Messiah, who was in the fulness of time to come, and by his death and resurrection, purchase and apply, the great and interesting blessings which this, and all the other Jewish sacrifices could only exhibit in a very dark, and imperfect manner?

I know not indeed *Philemon*, how I can possibly understand this mystery in any other light. And to tell you the truth, I am more and more confirmed in this great and capital article of our holy religion, *pardon of sin by the propitiatory and vicarious death of the Son of God*. I am convinced, that that glorious personage died for us; bore our sins; was stricken, smitten, and afflicted of God in our room and stead. Happy, my dear *Philemon*, would I reckon myself, if I could adopt with the same confidence, and with the same assurance of faith, the Apostle's language: "Who loved me, and gave himself for me."—Having said this, he was hastily called away, and your friend left to his own meditations.—I intended

† The mystery of the two Goats have been variously expounded by Divines. Some find clearly adumbrated the two natures of Christ: The human nature which suffered, the divine which is impassible. Others the state and condition of the Messiah before, and after his resurrection: His dying on the cross, and his rising again to live for ever. Others find our redemption both by price and power, emblematically exhibited: Christ dying for sin, and removing it by virtue of his meritorious death; and engaging with the Devil, man's adversary, and overcoming him by his power, as a risen Saviour. It is true, that we are redeemed both by price and power, but whether or not, these two Goats prefigure Christ's exercising these two mediatorial offices is a question.—I imagine, that we are rather warranted to understand this mystery, and explain it in no other light, than as pointing out the perfection of Christ's sacrifice: Who not only bore our sins in his own body on the tree, but also lives, to see to the effectual application of all the fruits of his propitiatory and vicarious death. This is evidently taught in these words of the Apostle, Rom. iv. 25. Who was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification.

tended, if I had not been interrupted by *Superbus*, to have proceeded further in establishing this great article of the Christian religion; the truth of Christ's satisfaction in our room and stead. If health permit, you will soon hear again from your friend.—In the mean time, that my dear *Onesimus* may reap all the fruits which flow from *his* death, who made his soul an offering for sin; who bore our sins, in his own body on the tree; is, and ever will be, the cordial, and most fervent prayer of

PHILEMON.



L E T T E R VI.

PHILEMON TO ONESIMUS.

Dear Onesimus.

I Received your kind letter; am extremely happy to hear of your welfare; particularly, that your soul prospers. May you, in the use of all Heaven's institutions, be found adding a cubit to your spiritual stature; until you arrive to the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. In your spiritual progress, you may lay your account to meet with a variety of interruptions, both from a body of sin and death within you, and from the temptations of a cunning malicious foe, and the enticing allurements of an ensnaring world. But from whatever source they originate, he that is with you, and in you, is stronger than all that are against you. He is omnipotent: He will be your rock, and your shield.

You complain in yours, that you find yourself at a very great loss, to preserve your conscience safe; and your garments unspotted, and at the same time to maintain your honor and character in the world. I assure you *Onesimus*, you will find these things almost incomparable in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. They will wonder that you do not run into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. || I would tender you this advice; never in the slightest instance dishonor your dear

|| "Methinks says Bishop Hall I see those monstrous Sons of Lamech coming to Noah, and asking him, what he meant by that strange work? To whom, when he reports God's purpose and his, they go away laughing at his idleness, and tell one another, that too much holiness had made him mad: Yet (adds the Bishop,) they cannot all flout Noah out of his faith; he preaches, and builds, and finishes!"

dear Redeemer; wound your conscience, and sacrifice your own peace to gratify any man; or to shun the greatest obloquy and reproach which may be cast on you, in a way of living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world. Consider, that your great Lord and Master whose you are, and whom you serve, endured the contradiction of sinners against himself. "He was despised and rejected of men; and we hid as it were our faces from him." Let your conscience be well informed of what is sin and duty from God's word, and then, let the consequence be what it will, never contradict its language, nor stop its mouth. How many sell their soul to please a friend! Never look on that man to be your friend, who would advise you, for enhancing your temporal interests, to be guilty of an unjust, and wicked action. A man who has got the better of his conscience, cast off all fear of God, and lives in an open violation of all the rules of morality, you need never expect, (let his pretensions be what they will,) that he will prove a steady friend. A man who pays little, or no regard to his own eternal interests, you cannot expect, that he will interest himself much in yours. What a world of trouble oftentimes doth an unlawful cringing to a wicked world, involve men in. You may remember what happened to Darius for his compliance with his wicked court. His princes and counsellors, gathered together with one accord, to have Daniel condemned. For what? For treason, for rebellion? No, but for praying to his God. King Darius, in compliance with their wicked suit, condemned innocent Daniel; signed, and sealed an irrevocable decree, that he should be thrown into the Lion's den: His conscience in the mean while informing him that he was wrong. You know also, what trouble and vexation of spirit he laboured under, until he knew that Daniel was safe. Beware of complying with any man, in any action contrary to the dictates of your conscience. Take heed of committing an action, when conscience in the mean time, is flying in your face. Walk straight, and you shall not stumble. I have often thought with pleasure on that sacred, and consolatory truth: "The Lord keepeth the feet of his Saints." If this was not the case, they would soon be as weak, and as wicked as other men. "When thou walkest, thy feet shall not stumble." May my *Onesimus* be more than a conqueror over all the temptations, and allurements which may be cast in his way: May he triumph over all the power and policy of the wicked one: And for ever possess that peace and consolation, which flow from faith's apprehension of the all-atoning merits of that *Jesus*, who suffered and died for the ungodly.

You

You desire me in yours to enlarge somewhat further on the subject of Christ's death as a proper, real sacrifice for sin. You cannot claim any thing at my hand, more agreeable to my inclinations to discharge: As I firmly believe, that life eternal flows from the cross, and springs from the grave, of a crucified and risen Saviour. I can find no other refuge set before men, as sinners, into which they can fly, and be safe.—“ This man, (says the prophet,) shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest: As rivers of waters in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. § I shall at present confine myself to Christ's sufferings in the garden, the night immediately preceding his crucifixion; and by attentively investigating his sore soul-conflict in Gethsemane, we must be laid out to view him not as a Martyr *only*, but as a vicarious sufferer, having our sins imputed to him, and bearing the wrath of God on that account; and so making a proper and real satisfaction to the justice of God, for our offences.

Before I enter particularly on this, let me remind you of a circumstance which claims your attention. Previous to his conflict in the garden, he was with the eleven shut up in a close room, where the last supper was celebrated. After which, and probably all standing; he begins his consolatory sermon, from the 31 v. of the xiii. chap. of John's Gospel, to the close of the xvi. chap. This being ended, he lifts up his eyes to heaven; prays for himself, for his Disciples, and for all who should believe on him through their word. || What a deep concern filled the

§ Isai. xxxii. 2.

|| According to *Maimonides*, there was a threefold form of prayer used by the high Priest on the great day of atonement, when he went into the holy place, to make atonement for himself, his household, and for all the congregation. That for himself and family was conceived in these words. “ I beseech thee O Lord, we have sinned, we have offended, we have rebelled in thy sight; I and my family. I beseech O Lord, pardon now our sins, our offences, and backslidings; by which we have offended and rebelled, I and my family; as it is written in the law of Moses thy servant; where it is said, on this day expiation shall be made for you, and ye shall be clean from all your sins before the Lord.” That for the whole Aaronical priesthood was conceived in almost similar terms. “ I beseech thee O Lord, we have sinned, we have offended, we have rebelled in thy sight, I and my family; and the Sons of Aaron thy holy people: I beseech thee O Lord, pardon now our sins, our offences, and backslidings, whereby we have sinned, offended, and rebelled against thee, I and my family, and the Sons of Aaron thy holy people; as it is written in the Law of Moses thy Servant, on this day expiation

the innocent soul of Jesus for completing the work of man's salvation! What unparalleled affection for his Disciples and followers! What inimitable patience and resignation to the most afflicting lot, to the most cruel death that ever was inflicted, or suffered!—Having finished his prayer; he leaves the room, passes over the brook Cedron, and entering into the garden, this devoted victim begins to suffer.

This very affecting scene is minutely described by three of the inspired Evangelists. || The inspired Apostle of the Gentiles takes notice of it also, in his epistle to the Hebrews, chap. v. v. 7, 8. Permit me then *Onesimus*, for the sake of order, and perspicuity to describe his sufferings in Gethsemane, with regard to their parts and degrees; with regard to their adjuncts; and lastly their effects.—The parts of his present agony were two, sorrow, and fear; the former flowed from that present pressure of soul he was under; the latter, from the dreadful apprehension of that future distress, into which he was soon to be involved. The adjuncts, or concomitants attending this scene, were the bloody sweat, and the presence of Angels, sent on this occasion to strengthen him. The effects attending this sorrow and fear, were the most ardent prayers put up to his heavenly Father, that this bitter cup might pass from him. The fervor of which is thus expressed by the Apostle; “Who in the days of his flesh, offered up strong cries, and tears.” How minutely is this whole scene painted forth by the Spirit of God: How comfortable to think, that these sufferings were for us, to rescue us from that eternal agony into which we would have been irretrievably plunged, had it not been for his generous interposition. †——He began
(says

ation shall be made for you, and ye shall be clean from all your sins before the Lord.* To which prayer the Priests thus answered: “Let the honorable name of thy kingdom be praised for ever, and ever.” The prayer put up for the whole congregation, was as follows. “I beseech thee O Lord, thy holy people, the Israelitish nation, hath sinned, offended, and rebelled in thy sight; I beseech thee O Lord, pardon now the sins, offences, and backslidings, whereby thy people, the Israelitish nation, hath sinned, offended, and rebelled in thy sight; as it written in the Law of Moses thy Servant, where it is said, on this day shall expiation be made for you, and ye shall be clean from all your sins before the Lord.” To which prayer both Priests and people answered: Let the honorable name of thy kingdom be praised for ever, and ever. Outram. de Sacrif.

|| Math. xxvi. 37, 39.

Mark xii. 33, 34, 35.

Luke xxii. 42, 43, 44.

† Thou most indulgent, most tremendous power,
Still more tremendous for thy wonderous love!

(says the inspired Evangelist, Math. xxvi. 37) to be sorrowful and very heavy. The time was approaching, was just at hand, when he was to bear the wrath, and feel the vengeance of offended Heaven; when he must grapple with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places. This awful prospect, struck his holy innocent soul with an unusual terror. It seized him in such a manner, as forced him to cry out in the hearing of his Disciples, “now is my soul troubled.” “The awful and gloomy period is now at the door, in which my soul must bear the griefs, and carry the sorrows of my sinning people. Now must the sacrifice deposited on the altar at my birth, be consumed, and my soul made an offering for sin. I see the tremendous, but holy arm of my Father lifted up, and ready to strike the blow.—The sword of incensed justice is drawn, and ready to pierce my heart with ten thousand sorrows. That arm, that sword will bring me to the dust of death. O ye my Disciples, my soul is encompassed about with sorrows! || I look for no comfort from you, my Disciples; I expect no mitigation from your tears; nor the smallest deliverance from the hour and power of darkness, by your prayers. The Son of man must suffer; and that hour is come; it can neither be postponed nor shunned.—The grievous nature of Christ’s sufferings on this occasion, is expressed by another phrase, Luke xxii. *He was in an agony*. The word in the original is expressive of that anxiety, and anguish of mind, that a person endures when constrained to undertake any thing of an arduous and difficult nature; particularly, it is applied to such who engage in any severe, and bitter conflict. Hence in profane authors it is taken to signify a combat. My dear *Onesimus*, Jesus the Son of God, and the Saviour of men, was now on the very eve of engaging in the most severe, and perilous combat ever was undertaken. Let us consider the nature, and number of those who stood in array against him. The captain of our salvation, must enter the lists with Heaven, earth, and hell: There were no idle spectators on this occasion. Christ stood alone; “of the people there was none with him.” He stood
the

|| The word in the original language signifies to be so environed with sorrows, as there can be no possibility of escaping; my soul is *environed* with sorrows, even unto death. How weighty, and grievous must that burden have been, which brought him at that very period to the jaws of death. We have a similar phrase in Isai. liii. 3. He was despised, and rejected of men, a *man of sorrows*, not a sorrowful man, but in the abstract a man of sorrows: There are great numbers in the world, who may be properly enough called sorrowful men: But none in the strict sense of the word men of sorrows. There never was, nor ever will be, any sorrow like unto Christ’s.

the centre of the Father's wrath; the malice of Devils, and the rage of men. If "his own arm had not brought salvation to him," and if that arm had not been *omnipotent* too, he behoved either, not to have entered the lists, or been overcome. Now was the important event in which God was to be glorified; hell vanquished, and death overcome, and slain in its own territories: Satan vanquished and routed with his own weapons; his dying cause, brought to destruction; his half-wounded head, totally bruised. But before these singular events be accomplished, this intrepid warrior must suffer, and by suffering overcome, and by dying, prove the Lord of eternal life; and his agony deliver us from the accusations of a guilty conscience, and the exquisite torments of that place, "where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.—The Evangelist Mark, expresses the greatness of his sufferings at this period by these two phrases, "he was sore amazed, and very heavy."|| These phrases are expressive of that horror, which shakes the very soul, and renders it as it were fatigued under a burden of grief. They point at that horror and vexation, which like a heavy burden, presses the damned in hell. The Apostle Paul informs us that he feared. Heb. v. 7. Who in the days of his flesh, offered up strong cries and tears, to him that was able to save him from death; and was heard in that he *feared*. † "He was sore amazed," says Mark. This signifies more than simply to fear: It supposes a fear joined with horror: When the mind is struck with any thing awful, a kind of stupor immediately seizes it. It is the stupefaction of all the faculties of the mind; arising from the most pungent and vehement sense of evil, either felt, or feared. In this sense *Virgil* hath rendered it.

Obstupere animi, gelidusque per ina cucurrit,

offitremor.

I come now to the adjuncts of this sore soul-trouble, in which the Son of God was involved, at this critical juncture. The first of

|| Mark xii. 33, 45.

† Some render the phrase thus; he was heard in that he feared; i. e. upon the account of his piety, and reverence toward God. It is true, the term *fear*, is oftentimes taken in the foregoing sense: but I imagine these prayers and tears, were not so much expressive of his piety, as the greatness of that amazement which on this occasion seized his righteous soul. The scope of the Apostle, requires this sense of the words. He is here representing our Lord Jesus, as one of like passions with ourselves; that he might inculcate this comfortable truth, that he was a merciful, and faithful High Priest. The fear he was seized with, says *Grotius*, and the ancient Fathers, was owing to the divinity for a season, withdrawing its influence from the humanity. See Dr. *Whitby* on the text.

of these is taken notice of by the sacred Historian Luke. † “ Being in an agony, his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling to the ground.” Great drops of blood, concentered, or congealed, into one mass. Here was a supernatural bloody sweat, proceeding from that extreme anxiety, and uncommon horror which seized the man Christ at this critical period.

Concerning this effect of Christ’s terror and amazement, there are various opinions. Some take it for a proverbial expression; denoting nothing more than a grievous and extraordinary sweat. Others imagine, that the matter of this sweat was not blood, but only drops of blood uncommonly large and viscous, like unto blood. Some suppose, the phrase is hyperbolical, importing a very marvellous kind of sweat, but not a bloody sweat, and for this reason, because the Evangelist uses this phrase in the description of it, *as it were*. But here it may be observed, that the Greek particle is not always used as a note of similitude; but very often expresses the truth and certainty of the thing in hand; as in John i. 14. Luke xxiv. 11. 2 Corinth. xi. 17. It is further questioned, whether this bloody sweat was natural, or preternatural? Some imagine it was natural; and produce various instances of persons overtaken with bloody sweats. But we find, that when Physicians relate cases of this nature, they always assign a natural cause; such as, the too great rarity of the skin, and the too great tenuity and serosity of the blood; together with a bad, and extenuated habit of body. But none of all these things could possibly be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Being without sin, he possessed the best constitution, and the most exact temperament of body. There was nothing of the accursed thing in him, to disturb the primary qualities, or break that excellent harmony, which reigned in his pure and holy tabernacle. And as was just now observed, he is said to be sorrowful, amazed, and very heavy: Now these affections certainly produce a very different effect on the body. When one is seized with an uncommon dread, the natural spirits and blood desert the exterior parts of the body, and fly to the heart. From the whole then, I think we are sufficiently warranted to conclude, that this bloody sweat, which seized the Lord Jesus Christ in the garden, arising from his present sufferings, and the future prospect of others awaiting him, was really supernatural

The next adjunct attending our Lord’s agony in the garden, was the mission of Angels sent to strengthen him. How inconceivably great must these sufferings have been, which required the assistance and presence of the heavenly Host! Behold with astonishment, *Oneſimus*, the Lord of all Angels, Devils, and men, surrounded with these spiritual intelligences, strengthening, and

comforting

comforting their Lord! These Angels of light, these heavenly Ministers, executed various, and important offices respecting their Lord, from the time that he became incarnate to this very period. They announced his nativity; ministered unto him immediately after his temptation in the wilderness: But now they descend from their celestial mansions, the seat of tranquillity, repose and happiness, to behold their sorrowful, and amazed Lord, and Prince, requiring their immediate assistance. What a scene! “Thou hast made him a little lower than the Angels,” says the royal Psalmist. Were you ever, O ye Angels reduced to such a low humbled state? Did you ever feel the most poignant grief, and the most dreadful horror seizing your souls? No, ye Ministers of this highest Lord, no such cup was ever put into your hands, as was put into his, so as to require strength and comfort, either from Heaven or earth. But you are to take notice *Onesimus*, that these heavenly visitants did not, neither could strengthen their struggling Lord, by any new accession of power; They bore no part of the burden of suffering, at this time imposed on him: He trod the wine press alone. The ancient Fathers observe on this head, that the Angels did not support, but comfort him: The divinity withholding at this juncture its wonted influence from the humanity, reduced the man Christ so low, as rendered the presence of the Angels to comfort him, needful at this time.

The last thing I observed which claims our attention in this awful scene, was the effect that this agony had upon the man Christ, which affords a most clear proof of the greatness of his sufferings. He offered up the most fervent supplications, with strong cries, and tears, that this bitter cup might pass from him. || If the keenest sense of present evil, and an awful apprehension of future distress could influence any one, to entreat in the most fervent manner, a removal of the former, and an escape from the latter, the Lamb of God had the greatest reason so to do. He was just now involved in the greatest conflict, but he knew the bloody scene was not to terminate here; Calvary must succeed Gethsemane: The cross the garden: Here was but entering into the storm: Here fell but the small drops; the great rain of the divine wrath was reserved for a future period, and that at no great distance. Was it any wonder, that our Lord Jesus Christ should pray, and reiterate his prayer? Yea, not only twice, but three times, doth he send up his most fervent supplication to the throne; and not with his eyes, or hands lift up to Heaven, but
lying

|| Math. xxvi. 39. Mark xiv. 38. Luke xxii. 42.

lying prostrate on the ground, in the most disconsolate condition. Here he lies, *Onesimus*, not mute and silent, but praying, and not muttering prayer, but piercing the skies with his voice, with strong cries and tears, pouring out his soul into the bosom of his Heavenly Father. If it be possible, O my Father, let this cup pass from me. Let the present agony in which my soul is involved, be removed; let that ignominious death which I foresee is awaiting me on the accursed tree, be superseded; let me escape this awful hour, and power of darkness; but if not, let thy will, not mine be done. "The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it." ||

Do you ask *Onesimus*, what was the genuine cause of this agony, trouble, and heaviness, that seized the man Christ, on this occasion? It is an undoubted fact, from what has been suggested above, that there was something exceeding grievous in his case, either felt, or feared, that thus made him present his supplications to the Father, with such ardency, and to require the presence of the heavenly Angels to comfort him. What this cause was, is not agreed on. Some imagine, that the foreknowledge of the flight and dispersion of his Disciples was the cause. The Lord Jesus say they, did not fear for himself, but for his Disciples, whom he foresaw would leave him; one of them betray him, another deny him. Others again, are of the opinion, that the sin and rejection of the Jews, was the reason. Others imagine, that this proceeded from the foresight of the miserable end of Judas, who for betraying him would be guilty of suicide, and perish eternally. Others think, that a mere sympathy and commiseration for lost sinners in general was the occasion of this agony. Some again maintain, that the thought of dying a painful, and shameful death on the cross, begat in his holy innocent soul the grief, trouble, and vexation under which he laboured in the garden. In a word, some imagine that it was owing to the appearance of the Devil in a human shape, and wrestling with him in the garden.

Permit me *Onesimus*, to enquire here whether or not, these aforesaid reasons have that solidity and weight in them, as to resolve Christ's agony in the garden into all, or any one of them. That the flight and dispersion of the Disciples could not be the reason, I think is evident from this consideration: Had he not a short time prior to this, recommended them into the merciful arms, and powerful protection of his heavenly Father: He informed them that they should be all scattered from him, and he left alone; but that, at the same time, they were in no danger of missing the eternal inheritance prepared for them; that he

had

had appointed them a kingdom, and that they should sit with him on his throne. What anxiety then, could possibly possess the breast, and seize the soul of their dear Lord and Master from this quarter.—Neither could the apprehension of the sin and rejection of the Jews be the cause: Had he not foretold their destruction, and that upon this just, and equitable ground, their rejection of him. Why then should he be in such dismay, for what he saw would inevitably be their case, prior to this? Neither I think, can the dismal end of Judas be admitted as the reason: Because he foreknew, and predicted, the fatal end of that Son of perdition, devoted to death, and destruction, John xvii. 12.—Again, the sympathy and concern which he felt for lost perishing sinners, no doubt affected the innocent soul of our Lord Jesus; but what reason can possibly be assigned why he should be more affected at this period, than at any other, I cannot possibly divine?—Further, I think it entirely unworthy of our Lord, to suppose him capable of being intimidated in the least degree, but especially to be cast into such an agony, at the appearance of Satan, or by any struggle he possibly could have with the prince of darkness. It would certainly have been infinitely below the Captain of our salvation, to have been subjected to any dread at the prospect of all the united forces of men, and Devils, in whatever shape they could have assailed him. ||

Among all the different reasons which have been taken notice of, into which Divines have resolved Christ's agony in the garden, that, viz the foresight of that shameful, and painful death on the cross, which he saw awaiting him, demands our most particular attention. This at least has a specious appearance of being the true and genuine cause. But if we view this narrowly, we will find, that it will in the issue tend to cast the highest reflection on Jesus, to suppose that the fear and dread with which he was seized in the garden, originated from the view of his bodily sufferings on the cross. Would not this place him in a scale far inferior to many, who have suffered the most cruel torments, for the cause of truth and religion? How many thousands of holy Martyrs, have faced death and danger, with the greatest intrepidity, alacrity, and patience; never betraying the smallest degree of fear, never supplicating for the removal of their bitter cup: Instead of being agitated in the manner our Lord was, they have sung in the flames, and rejoiced to embrace the stake; and with as much cheerfulness, resigned their life into the hands of their merciless

¶ vide Tarrant. & satisfact.—also Hebdens's vindication. &c.

merciless enemies, as if they had been going to be invested with the ensigns of royalty. The cross, the rack, the gibbet, the devouring flame, exposure to wild beasts, all these instruments of inhuman cruelty, that a wicked policy could contrive, and inveterate malice put in execution, never made them shrink; but with the greatest resignation, hastened to death, as to a triumph; and with the Apostles, praising God, that they were counted worthy to suffer death in the most tormenting manner, for his name's sake. What reason can possibly be assigned for such a great disparity between a suffering Saviour, and weak infirm Creatures, offering themselves with cheerfulness, and laying down their lives with the greatest composure and resolution; and Jesus sorrowful, amazed, very heavy, and deprecating that bitter cup? Was not *Peter* crucified, *Paul* beheaded, *Bartholomew* flayed alive, *Laurentius* tortured, *Ignatius* torn with wild beasts, without betraying the least appearance of fear, or impatience? But behold the Son of God exceeding sorrowful, at the very first view of death; pouring out prayers and tears, lying prostrate on the ground, crying with a loud and lamentable voice to his Father, and at the same time, sweating great drops of blood. From what has been suggested above, I imagine that one of these two things must necessarily follow; viz. that Christ was more timid, and less patient than others who have suffered for the cause of religion; but such a supposition would certainly be downright blasphemy. Or, again, that there was some thing more grievous and extraordinary in his sufferings than the mere apprehension of his hanging on the cross, exposed to the contempt of his flouting adversaries; or having his body nailed to the accursed tree.—Let us then more particularly enquire into the real and genuine cause, from whence his agony in the garden originated. I imagine then *Onesimus*, that it was not simply death, and death on the cross, but the *accursed* death of the cross that was obvious to him at this period, a foretaste, or prelibation of which, he was just now, in the most awful manner, experiencing. He sees the sins, not of one, but of myriads with all their possible aggravations, mustered up, and meeting on him, and as the surety of God's people charged to his account. He now beholds himself fitted before the formidable, but just tribunal of an offended Deity, in the person of the Father; from which he could neither fly, nor possibly be rescued, otherwise, than by satisfying the utmost claim of justice; which was, that seeing he became responsible for the expiation of our guilt, he must suffer all that wrath, and curse, which was the demerit of our sin. And, “Who knows the power of that wrath.” “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” In what an awful

ful condition doth the suffering Saviour find himself involved. Never did divine justice appear to be more exact, nor the law more rigid: It was given in thunder, smoke, fire, and lightning! But that was nothing equal to the dreadful storm which fell upon the Lord of glory, in fulfilling its demands. Never did that righteous law thunder in such horrid peals in the ears of any, as now it doth in Christ's. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Christ was subjected to the curse. Sinners violated the law, but they could make no reparation. The curse would inevitably have taken hold on them, if the Son of God in our nature had not condescended to bear it in our room and stead. "But Christ was made a curse for us."—Never did hell appear in such a wrathful form as just now. Hell's gates were set open; its cursed inhabitants in their turn, and according to their measure, were permitted to torment, and afflict the Lord Jesus. His heel must as necessarily be bruised, as the Devil's head broken—Were not these awful circumstances enough, yea more than enough, to have shook the whole frame of an innocent suffering Saviour? Were not these things sufficient to make him amazed, sorrowful, yea exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?

Permit me *Onesimus*, to take a comparative view of the death of Christ, and that of the Martyrs, who have laid down their lives for the truth, and if we can not find more bitter ingredients in his death, than in theirs, I think we must entertain but a very contemptible idea of the suffering Saviour, in the view of his dissolution. Christ feared, was amazed, and exceeding sorrowful; the Martyrs rejoiced and gloried in their suffering: No complaints proceeded from their lips; no sorrow hung on their brow; no wish to have their torments mitigated, nor the sentence suspended. But I proceed to draw the parallel between the one, and the other in the few following particulars.

Although the Martyrs were sinful men, yet they had the fullest assurance that God was reconciled to them by the death of his Son, so as they never should be obnoxious to condemnation; and that although they suffered, it was not to discharge the debt of sin they had contracted; it was not to fulfil any demand of divine justice; but for the glory of God, and to seal the truth which they had espoused, and openly professed. This would have been an easy death to Christ; if this had been all, if there had been no other ingredients in it, we never would have heard of his agony in the garden, nor his lamentation on the cross. But Christ, although perfectly holy, and absolutely free of sin, personally considered, yet he was reckoned among transgressors; and had

had to account to God by punishment, for our sins imputed to him. There was no such thing in the death of the Martyrs.

Martyrs suffered only by the hands of men. Notwithstanding of all that men could inflict, they still experienced God propitious, and gracious. When men frowned, Heaven smiled; when men persecuted, God supported. They beheld something of Heaven's glory, and felt something of Heaven's happiness, even in the midst of the flames. This capacitated them to lay down their lives with composure, and resign up their spirits into the hands of their heavenly Father, with joy.—But Christ not only suffered at the hands of men, but by the hand of his Father. “It pleased the Lord to bruise him:” “God spared him not.” How dreadful must the punishment be, when it proceeds immediately from the hand of an offended God! That must be an awful blow, which the hand of the Almighty gives.

Martyrs only suffered corporally: Inwardly they were supported, and their souls refreshed by the comforts and consolations of the Holy Ghost, which are neither few nor small; and who, even in the midst of the furnace made the dew of Heaven to lie on their branches. This prevented them from sinking under the burden; made them sing in the midst of the flames, and triumph before the conflict was over.—But Jesus suffered in his soul, as well as in his body. “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” No comfort for a time, was afforded this Lamb of God. His Disciples forsook him, his friends stood aloof from his side, and to crown all, he was forsaken of his Father. Were there any sorrows like unto his sorrows, wherewith the Lord afflicted him? The sufferings of his soul, were the soul of his sufferings. “The Spirit of a man will sustain his infirmities, but a wounded Spirit, who can bear,” is an aphorism of the wisest among men.

The Martyrs were fully sensible, and morally certain of this, that they had no more to do, than pay the debt of nature. They knew that Christ had both purchased and promised eternal life; they believed the former, they embraced the latter.—But Christ had to struggle, both with temporal, and eternal death. The wages of sin, which he was now about to pay, included both. And although he neither did, nor could suffer eternally, yet his sufferings were equivalent to the torments which all his saved, and redeemed people would have suffered, eternally in Hell.—

Again, the Martyrs drank the cup of suffering indeed; but the bitterness was extracted by Jesus, so that there remained nothing deadly, or hurtful in it to them.—But the cup put into Christ's hand was full of mixture. What can be more bitter than sin? More awful than wrath? But these were the compo-
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sition in Christ's cup. In a word, Martyrs fought with death, with Satan, and all his emissaries, but as overcome, and already virtually conquered. In the midst of their most severe struggles, and bitterest agonies, they might triumphantly sing, "O Death where is thy sting!" But Christ had to combat with death, and him that had the power of it, in all their vigour.—You see *Onesimus*, how widely different was the death of Jesus, from that of the Martyrs; both in its cause, measure, and end. They suffered by the hands of men, Jesus immediately by the hand of God: The sufferings of the former were only medicinal; those of the latter purely penal, and satisfactory.

Onesimus, just as I had finished the last sentence, a rap was made at the door, and being opened, my friend *Superbus* made his appearance. I invited him in, and after our usual compliments were over, he, deeming what I had been engaged in, politely asked, if I would favor him so far, as to read the contents of my letter to you; without any demur, I instantly complied. He begged leave after I had done, to ask a few questions, merely for his further information on the subject. I told him, that he was welcome to propose any question, or start any difficulty, on this, or any other subject he thought proper, and that according to my measure of light and knowledge, I should answer the one, and resolve the other.—Accordingly, he proposed this query: "How could Christ the Son of God be obnoxious to such fear and horror, when at that very moment, he knew he was the object of the Father's complacency, and delight; and being such, how could he experimentally feel his wrath and indignation? How was it possible, that he who stood in such a near relation to the Father, and as dear to him as himself, could be reduced to such a dismal state, as to sweat great drops of blood, and require the ministration of Angels?"

Superbus, in answer to your query, let me observe, that the Lord Jesus Christ is to be considered in a twofold capacity, as God's eternal, only begotten, and well-beloved Son; or, as our Mediator, clothed in human nature, and made like unto his brethren in all things, sin excepted. In the former respect, Christ was the beloved of the Father, with whom he was ever well pleased, and with whom he never could be displeased; but considering him as our Surety, bearing our sins, he must be made a curse, and experimentally taste of all the bitter ingredients of that cup of suffering which was put into his hands. Here shone in the most brilliant lustre, the greatest love, and the greatest hatred against sin, at the same time: Love to him, who was the brightness of the divine glory, in whom all holiness, necessarily, essentially, and independently dwells; and at the same time,
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upon him as Mediator, pouring out the vials of his wrath, and indignation; "putting him to grief;" "making his soul an offering for sin." From these two distinct views of Jesus, you can easily reconcile these two ideas, which at first sight seem incomputable. This is an eternal truth, that Jesus was from eternity, and will continue to endless ages, invariably, and immutably the supreme object of the Father's delight; and yet it is as true, that "he was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted;" that he made him sin, and a curse for us. He loved him as a Father, punished him as a righteous Judge, before whose tribunal, he as Mediator, clothed in our nature, sisted himself, to answer for our offences, and to make expiation for our sins by his death.—*Superbus* enquired again—"How could Christ be under such "a fear and dread, when he could not but be morally certain, "that he would in the issue, obtain a glorious triumph."

You know *Superbus*, that the affections of hope and fear, work alternately upon the mind in their turn, according to the object presented immediately to the mind. If the object in view be agreeable, hope takes place, from which springs up present joy; but if the object in view be disagreeable, fear is engendered, and from this originates present dejection: These two affections are always contrary, the one to the other: And observe here, that any present evil strikes the mind immediately, with far more energy, than a future good, although the possession of it is beyond all doubt: For whatever is present, affects the mind more, than what is only in futurity, be what it will. When ever grief or fear is the ruling passion, it so absorbs the mind that it scarcely looks forward to the good in reversion, or contemplates on any thing which might tend in the mean time, to alleviate the present distress. e. g. If a kingdom was promised to a man upon this condition, that he endure the torment of the rack for a certain limited time; it is certain, that the man would be so much absorbed with his present suffering state, as would deprive him of every pleasant idea which might be supposed to occupy his mind, from the consideration of his future princely grandeur: For some short space of time there is a suspension of all the pleasant sensations of the mind. Let me now apply this to the case in hand. Christ had a twofold object in view; the cursed death of the cross; this he could not shun: The way to the crown, was by the cross. He had also in his view, a certain glorious triumph and victory. He knew that he would certainly swallow up death in victory: And that although, however low he might be reduced, in due time he would lift up the head. These objects were productive of the affections of grief, and fear, hope, and joy. When reflecting on that dreadful sea of wrath
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he had to go through, he could not but fear, and be amazed; he saw death before him in its most hideous, and grim appearance: But at the same time, he saw that he would gloriously finish what he had begun. That he would glorify his eternal Father, purchase an eternal redemption for his seed; and at the same time, overturn the Devil's kingdom. These considerations supported his hope, and excited his joy. You will find these affections alternately, and almost instantaneously succeeding one another, in John xii. 27. Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say: Father save me from this hour. His mind just now was so swallowed up with sorrow and dread of that dismal hour, which was almost at the very door, that the affections of hope, and joy, for a short space lay dormant: But in a moment, reflecting upon the end for which he was sent into the world, and the happy and glorious issue his ministrations here on earth would have, hope and joy immediately succeed; "But for this end, (he cries out in a transport of joy, and triumph) came I into the world." "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine be done." From these things you can easily account for that fear and dread which seized the man Christ, and that in a consistency with the certain hope and expectation, of obtaining a complete victory.

Superbus again enquired, "how Christ could be said to be heard, according to the express declaration of an Apostle, Heb. v. 7. and also of himself, John xi. 42. when we see, that he drank the bitter cup, the object of his dread and terror, and that without any mitigation?"—*Superbus*, there were two things which Christ as man might fear, (for you know he was made like unto us in all things,) that he might be swallowed up by these sufferings, which he saw impending over his innocent guiltless head; or that he might succumb under them. His God and Father heard, and delivered him from all these fears; so that with the most invincible constancy, he bore the most grievous torments, and obtained a most glorious resurrection from the dead, and a most eminent triumph over him that had the power of death. It is an undoubted, comfortable truth, that Christ was heard in that he feared; not, that he should not suffer; but that he should not be swallowed up of his sufferings; not, that he should not drink the bitter cup, but that he should not perish in the attempt.

Philemon, from the account you have given of Christ's agony in the garden, I think this conclusion must necessarily follow, viz. that Christ was truly man, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; the offspring, as well as the root of David; David's Son, as well as his Lord. The Deity being impassible, these extreme

treme sufferings which he underwent in the garden, believed to be the sufferings of his human nature.—Were there not some of the ancient Fathers, who were of the opinion, that upon the account of the strict union between the divine, and the human nature in Christ's person, that all his sufferings, whether in the garden, or on the cross were only in appearance, and not in reality: That his body as it was incorruptible, so it was impassible: They, if I mistake not compared Christ's body to fire, and the air, which when one shoots an arrow through these elements, it divides the parts without leaving a wound. *Superbus*, it is scarce worth any one's time, or pains to refute such an absurd, and antisciptural notion. Nothing can be more destitute of truth, and contrary to the universal language of the sacred writers on this head. I may just observe to you, that this opinion was publicly condemned by the unanimous consent of the whole Church—Permit me *Superbus*, to make this one observation in connexion with yours, viz. that the sufferings of Christ, in the garden, and on the cross, as they were entirely incident to the human nature, so they militate nothing against his supreme Deity: He was the true God, as well as man; “God manifested in the flesh.” The *Logos*, that was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, was in the beginning, from eternity with God, and not only so, but was truly, and really God. || He was man to suffer, God to satisfy; man to die, God to triumph over death. Suffering in order to reinstate sinners in the favour of God, and procure the happiness which they lost, was unavoidably requisite, from the sanctity of the divine nature, and righteousness of the divine law, and that in the nature which sinned. Sin objectively considered, is an infinite evil; no atonement therefore for sin could be admitted, but what was of an infinite nature, this therefore, could only be made by an infinite person. Therefore, in order that the interests of holiness should not suffer, and that the righteousness of the law should remain inviolate, it was absolutely requisite, that satisfaction should be made in, and by the nature that sinned. The Eternal Word was incarnate; and thus, the dignity of his person, in union with the human nature that suffered, answered all the claim of law and justice against us, and at the same time, secured an eternal redemption for us. It is impossible to conceive, how atonement for an *infinite* offence could be made by the Saviour of the Arians, and Socinians. They are reduced to this predicament, (which I am sure my dear Friend, you would never wish to be,) to make an atonement for their own souls! If men are their own Saviours, there must be as many Saviours, as there are men saved; but the Scripture only

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knows of one: It knows of no other name, directs to no other thing, but the name, and satisfaction of Jesus,—Further, it is very difficult to conceive, why he should have suffered so much, viewing him only in the light of a Martyr for the truth; and not as a vicarious sacrifice, making an atonement for our sins.

I think *Philemon*, from the severity of Christ's agony in the garden, we may warrantably conclude that sin is an evil, and a bitter thing. Is it not to be lamented, that there should exist in the christian world such fools as to make a mock of sin, and drink it in, as the ox doth the water, with pleasure, and greediness.—A few days ago, I overheard a company in the height of good humour, disputing about an affair of a very trivial nature. I was astonished to hear such repeated oaths, cursing, and even blasphemy, which escaped them the short time I overheard them. You would have imagined that hell had opened its mouth, and spewed out its inhabitants.—Sometimes swearing by that *great and dreadful name, the Lord our God!* Sometimes by that adorable person *Jesus*, who came upon this benign errand to save sinners! Sometimes by the *Holy Ghost* the sanctifier, who in the œconomy of redemption purifies, and makes sinners meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, that men, that christians, that christians who expect salvation, should thus “set their mouths against the Heavens, in their blasphemous talk.” How horrid, thus to revile, and pour the utmost contempt on the ever-blessed Trinity! And do such men expect salvation? Can they be saved? The Almighty and righteous Judge has already pronounced their doom. Hear it ye swearers, and tremble; hear it and repent. “The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain:” After swearing had turned stale, they varied their language, and entered upon the sin of *curseing*. It was no pain to them to pronounce, what, I tremble to repeat the awful sentence, *damnation! damnation*, Sometimes on themselves, on their fellow companions, and sometimes on objects incapable of it —I shudder to repeat the half of what I overheard.—And dare sinful men mount the throne, and sit as Judges, and pass a sentence, which belongs only to the sovereign of all things to pronounce. I was glad to make my elopement as soon as possible to be out of their hearing. O! what a place must hell be, when sinners only on the way to it are so abandonedly wicked! This seems to be one of the predominant sins of this age; a sin taking it in all its circumstances, there can be none greater; it is an offence immediately against Heaven; a sin which openly proclaims the perpetrator destitute of all vital religion. Can that man possibly fear the Lord our God, who upon
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the most trivial occasion, summons the great God to be his witness? Did that man firmly believe, that God was able to plunge him into destruction that very moment, would he imprecate this on his own guilty head? A common swearer, is a downright Athiest: He denies at once, all the perfections of Deity; and alas! imposes on his own wretched soul. An external profession of religion instead of mitigating, greatly aggravates the horrid crime. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, &c. and come, and stand in this house which is called by my name, and say, we are delivered to do all these abominations. || These men of whom the Lord here complains, ran on in a course of impiety, yet they were professors of God's name: They went to his house, they stood in his presence; but the language of this mock profession was, we are delivered to do all these abominations! What an unseemly thing in God's house, perhaps at a sacramental table, *a solemn face with a profane heart.* In my opinion, to set up the image of Baal, to fall down, and worship that Idol, would not be a sin so heinous in its nature, as it is for christians to profane that blessed, and glorious name, whereby they are called.—How guilty *Philemon*, are common swearers of the atrocious and horrid sin of perjury; if a man was afraid to be guilty of this Heaven-daring iniquity, how cautious and deliberate would he be, before he ventured to affirm any thing upon oath. Would he not consider, whether it were exactly true; whether it were certain, or only probable; whether he was not liable to mistake, or misinformation in the case; and many other things which are necessary to be considered before he would swear to it. But is it not as clear as sun-shine, that common swearers trouble themselves with none of these thoughts. What they say at a venture, they boldly swear to; what they rashly utter, they as rashly add oaths and imprecations to it. Common swearers are habitually guilty of perjury; for although they please themselves with thinking they swear in jest, yet such may assure themselves, that the obligation of an oath cannot be laughed away. When men will swear to do this, or the other thing, which it may be they intend not at all; or that such a thing is true, which they know to be false; they are nevertheless guilty of perjury, for not considering that they are so. The stupidity of a man's conscience will never make sin cease to be what it is. If men would but weigh the truth of every thing they affirm, before they venture to swear it, they would spare a great number of their oaths: And if they found it was exactly true, they would be immediately sensible that it deserved not such a

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solemn confirmation, and be ashamed of the sinful vanity of swearing to no purpose.

I think *Philemon*, that the swearer is guilty of the greatest immodesty, pride, and arrogance of spirit. There are few things which seem more disgusting in a man than to affirm every thing with confidence, and be peremptory in all his talk: This is to impose upon his company, and leave no room for any one else to be of a contrary mind; such companions should, and generally are, shunned by all wise men, as being void of that modesty, and sobriety, which render men sociable, and conversible. But what shall we say of those, who are not only positive and dogmatic in their common discourse, but assert every thing with the solemnity of an oath. Certainly, there is as much of rudeness and ill-manners towards men, as there is wickedness in the sight of God by such conduct.—Common swearing argues the greatest vanity, and lightness of mind. Is it not plain, that the greatest part of our conversation, and correspondence with one another, requires no such a thing as the solemnity of an oath for the confirmation of what we either affirm, or deny. This being the greatest security we can give, he must be a very light-headed wretch, who will throw it out at every turn. He cannot tell what he did yesterday, or make a promise to his friend to day, but out comes an oath, or an imprecation to confirm it; he must call God to witness by invoking his justice, and vengeance, if what he says is not true, or if he do not fulfil his engagement to his friend. He doth more in this case, than if he would call town and country, to be witness against him, if he proved false to his word; nay more, than if he was to call all the Angels in Heaven to witness between him, and his neighbour. For my own part, I am apt to suspect every one that deals his oaths, and curses so liberally and freely.—*Philemon*, I am afraid that I have transgressed on your patience; but the truth is, I can never enter on this subject without testifying my utmost detestation at such a horrid practice.—I propose to-morrow, (if the Lord will,) to call on you, to hear your thoughts on Christ's sufferings in the garden, which you propose sending to your friend *Onesimus*, so saying, he went home.

My dear *Onesimus*, I am very glad, and I am sure so are you, to find *Superbus* such a professed enemy to that too common practice of swearing. There is a custom very prevalent among many, who yet cannot be ranked among the class of habitual swearers; viz. exclaiming upon certain occasions, particularly, when in a surprisè, or fright; good God! Lord have mercy on us! gracious Heaven! This is a flagrant breach of the third commandment. What is it, but a taking of God's name in vain?

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When we pray, let us “ enter into our closets, shut our doors upon us, and our heavenly Father which seeth in secret, shall reward us openly.” Our closets are certainly by far the best place, and it may rationally be supposed that we are in a far better, and more composed frame of spirit, than when in a surprisè. Let us, my dear friend, never learn the way of the wicked; let us copy after Christ’s example, let us follow his footsteps: Let us entertain an habitual and deep impressiõ of his sufferings and agony, in order to learn this lesson, what a vile and an execrable thing sin is. Let us never make Jesus the minister of sin, by a sinful course of life. If such things were done in the green tree, what will become of the dry. If the Son of God was in such an agony in suffering for sin, and that *only by imputation*; what a dreadful agony must such be reduced to, who must to eternity, lie under the dreadful load of innumerable personal transgressions, and that wrath of which none knows the power! But such an intolerable burden awaits all the wicked. “ The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”—That my *Onesimus* may be preserved from the evil of an evil world, and presented faultless, and blameless, before the throne of the divine glory, is the most cordial prayer of

PHILEMON.



L E T T E R VII.

P H I L E M O N T O O N E S I M U S.

Dear Onesimus,

WHAT was suggested yesterday by my friend *Superbus*, with regard to the evil of sin, particularly, that Heaven-daring sin of cursing, and swearing, left such an impressiõ on my mind, as to determine me to sift this subject to the bottom; to see if possible to find out the reason and spring, from whence this reigning evil originates.—I find, that some addicted to this crime, add a kind of an appendix to their rash oaths, containing a short prayer that God would forgive them, for saying so and so; and by a monstrous sort of *copula* join swearing and prayer together.

Strange, that out of the same mouth, and particularly, at the same time, should proceed blessing, and cursing! To pray for pardon in the very act of sinning, is certainly not the most likely way to obtain it. What a heterogeneous mixture! What do

do such men think? Will God be flattered and fawned into forgiveness: The same thing may be affirmed of every one, who goes on in a course of any kind of immorality, and continues his devotions, and presents his supplication to God for pardon. He continues praying, but never quits sinning. Thus alternately praying, and sinning, serving God, and Baul, until he finishes his wretched course, and drops into the hands of the living God. I think no body will pretend that oaths tend to a man's health, or to the increase of his worldly substance; that they give his wine a better flavour; ease his pains, or give a zest to his pleasures. Seeing then, no such pretensions can be made, one would be almost tempted to think, that men take a pleasure in swearing, just because God forbids it: And that they are determined, if he should make them the objects of his vengeance, they will affront him to his face!—Some pretend that swearing embellishes, and ornaments a man's discourse; sets off his language, and if well placed, makes a sentence run better: This goes a great way with some. What a wicked excuse; what a horrid pretext! “Let your speech, (says an inspired penman,) be always with grace.” If swearing sets off a discourse before men, how I pray, does it set it off before God? The best ornament ever graced any speech, when it turns upon the point either of affirming, or denying, is *yea* and *noy*; “and whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.” Do such as are guilty of this horrid impiety, credit this? If they do not, they call the amen, the faithful, and true witness a liar; if they do, how do they imagine, they will be able to confront that injured majesty, and answer for such a presumptuous breach of the third commandment?—Some have another pretext; they will not be believed, (say they) unless they swear. What is the import of this, but a confession that they have been so notoriously given to lying, that no body will credit them upon their bare word. A man who is known to make conscience of speaking truth, will find little difficulty of creating a belief of what he says among any of his acquaintance, without an appeal to God: Besides, the oath of a common swearer, gives indeed but little assurance of the truth of what he says. If I knew a man to fear an oath, his oath would satisfy me beyond any other testimony that could be given, and upon the oath of such a man, a court of judicature may proceed with confidence; but what regard I pray, can reasonably be paid to his oath, above his bare word, who is known to swear on all occasions? Little assurance we can have of the truth upon his oath, because it is as customary for him to swear as to speak. ||—The usual excuse for the ex-

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|| In Athens, a common swearer's oath was not allowed nor accepted of in courts of judicature; and sometimes the simple testimony of a man of probity was admitted without it.

renuation of this sin is, that of sudden passion. When men are a little provoked, they burst out presently into oaths and imprecations, and pretend they cannot help it; for they had no other way to discharge their minds, and give vent to their passions, but by cursing and swearing. How common is it for men while they frame an excuse for one sin, to betray themselves guilty of another. Is not this a plain token of an impotent mind, that hath no rule over itself; but is hurried away with intemperate passion, which ought to be matter of shame to a rational creature; and much more to such, who *pretend* to be the Disciples of Jesus. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God — Sometimes an excuse is pled, that men swear out of custom, and compliance to others. This carries in it indeed a show of civility, and good nature; but for all that, it is the silliest excuse that can be imagined; it is an evidence of a mean degenerate mind; for although, in things of an innocent and indifferent nature, it is commendable for men to remit something of their own way and humour, and to suit themselves to the customs and manners of those with whom they are conversant; yet to be complaisant in all things, without exception, is the ready way to turn men as profligate, as the Devil would wish any one to be.—In a word, a very common way of excusing rash swearing is by pleading *habit*. This implies in it I think, the greatest evil of this nature that possibly can be. Why it is just to confess, that a man is guilty of this sin in the highest degree. An evil habitual custom is the very height of wickedness. A man may, through the strength of corruption, the temptations of Satan, in an unguarded hour fall into sin, but when sin becomes habitual to him, it constitutes him a sinner in the highest degree. Is it not a wonder my dear friend, that men are so wicked; and is it not a greater wonder that God is so long-suffering: After so many prayers and intreaties that Heaven would do its worst; and its worst is, to send them to destruction which they seem so eagerly to implore.

I leave this disagreeable preamble, and turn to a most extraordinary scene; a scene which, although shocking to behold, yet has a most glorious, and comfortable prospect with regard to us. I have already given you my sentiments on the nature of Christ's agony in the garden; I, therefore now proceed according to my promise, to trace our Lord's sufferings on the accursed tree; particularly, that part of them which consisted in his dereliction of the Father. In the whole of Christ's humiliation and suffering state, the grievous nature of sin, God's wrath, together with the ineffable greatness of his love shine forth in the most radiant colours, and display themselves in the most eminent manner and degree; and particularly, in the sufferings of Christ's soul. These
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may be viewed, as commencing in the garden, and completed on the cross. With regard to the former, I have already delivered my mind. I proceed now, to speak of that hour, and power of darkness which overtook the divine Saviour on the cross: And this will afford I imagine, an invincible argument that Christ's sufferings, particularly in the garden, and on the cross, were for our sins; and so his death was a true, real, and expiatory sacrifice making an atonement to God for us.

As Christ's descent on the cross is the particular circumstance which I design to dwell a little on; it may be observed when Christ complained of this. According to the inspired Evangelist it was about the ninth hour, || i. e. near the termination of that darkness, which commenced about the sixth hour; and consequently, lasted about three hours. † There behoved certainly to be some weighty reason to move the God of nature to act contrary to the established laws of nature on this occasion. Perhaps, to point out the grievous and horrid nature of the Jews act in crucifying the Lord of glory. This was such a crime, so atrociously wicked, that the sun itself blushed to behold; or perhaps, this was intended as a prelude of that future destruction, awaiting the Jewish nation; particularly, that judicial blindness and darkness, which an all-wise, and sovereign God shut them up in for a time, Rom. ix. or to be a signal to his enemies and persecutors, yea to the whole world, to whom the report should come, that he who suffered was more than man, "God manifested in the flesh;" or lastly, to evince and point out the greatness of Christ's sufferings; the sun of righteousness set in an eclipse. May be, that external darkness which enveloped the world on this occasion, was an emblem of that darkness, sorrow, and grief which seized the innocent soul of this glorious sufferer. Near
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|| Math. xxvii. 45.

† "There was darkness over all the land; either over the whole land of Judea, or over the whole Roman Empire, or over the whole world; the latter is most probable." According to Tertullian, this remarkable event was recorded in the Roman archives; the very period in which it happened taken notice of, viz. the 262 Olympiad, which refers to the 18th year of the reign of Tiberias Cæsar; in which year Christ suffered. That this extraordinary darkness happened in Egypt, Dionysius testifies: Which, when he observed, he cried out, "that either the world was at an end, or the God of nature suffered." It is certain, that this eclipse was extraordinary and miraculous, as it happened at full moon, a solar eclipse never happening, nor according to the course of nature, can, but when the moon is about the time of her change.

the termination of this darkness, Jesus poured out his complaint *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.* All nature seemed to be seized with a general consternation; no wonder, never did there such a scene happen. Greater darkness, than that which overwhelmed the world, seized the Jews at this critical period, or else, they behoved to have seen, and acknowledged that he whom they were crucifying was the Lord of Glory. 1 Corinth. ii. 8. All nature seemed to feel, except the hardened Jews. Here were no idle spectators; Heaven, earth, and hell, were all concerned. The earth shook, the sun hid his face; the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from top to bottom. The holy of holies, which no eye ever saw, and into which no human foot durst ever enter, but the high Priest, and that only once in the year, was now laid open to every spectator. Heaven frowned, exacted our debt of punishment at the hand of this suffering Lamb of God. "God spared not his own Son." Hell shook to its centre; now was that blessed æra come, when that ancient prediction, (almost coeval with the entrance of sin into the world) must be accomplished. An æra big with sorrow, grief, and pain to Jesus; with everlasting comfort and consolation to us; with irretrievable destruction, and confusion to the prince of darkness. The Redeemer's heel indeed must be bruised, he must suffer in the human nature; but the Devil's head must be broken, his kingdom subverted, the dominion and sway, that he had over the nations, wrested out of his hands. Probably hell was never in such a consternation and dread, as when it heard this commission issued from the throne, with all the energy Heaven could give it: "Awake O sword against my shepherd, against the man my fellow, smite the shepherd."—"In satisfying the claim of my justice, O my Son, in securing the rights of my holiness, thou must be stricken, smitten, and afflicted. As surety for my lost people, thou must bear all their sins. The Devil thine adversary, must be let loose upon thee; but thou shalt in the issue, divide the spoil with the mighty; thou shalt tread on the adder, the young lion, and the dragon, shalt thou trample under foot." My dear *Onesimus*, what a place was Calvary's mount on this extraordinary occasion.

To behold the Saviour nailed to the cross, hand and foot, in the midst of almost midnight darkness, and under the concussions of a trembling world; and to add to the horror of the scene, insulted, mocked, crucified and slain! Impious wretches! Who, when they could scarcely discern one another, yet they whisper to one another, "he saved others, himself he cannot save." If he is such a
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one as he pretends to be, God's Son, and equal to him in supreme dignity, "let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him." We regard not the trembling earth, the lowring sun; neither the one, or the other, shall deter us from our purpose, die he shall. || Yes, die he must; not as a Martyr, to confirm the truth of his doctrine, but as a vicarious propitiatory sacrifice, to purchase an eternal redemption from sin and wrath for his offending people. Die he must, to rescue us from eternal condemnation, and introduce us into the mansions of never-fading bliss. But whose sufferings were these that achieved these mighty blessings, these unspeakable advantages? † Who is he? "the Lamb of God;" God manifested in the flesh." Pardon for *infinite offence*, can never be procured but by the merit and atonement of an infinite person in the human nature. It must be blood divine, or in the language of the Holy Ghost, "the blood of God." Acts xx. 28.

Permit

|| And was the ransom paid? It was: and paid,
 (What can exalt the bounty more?) for *you*
 The sun beheld it——no, the shocking scene
 Drove back his chariot: Midnight veil'd his face,
 Not such as this: Nor such as nature makes.
 A midnight new! A dread eclipse, (without
 Opposing spheres) from her Creator's frown!
 Sun didst thou fly thy Maker's pain? or start
 At that enormous load of human guilt,
 Which bow'd his blessed head; o'erwhelm'd his cross;
 Made groan the centre; burst earth's marble womb,
 With pangs, strange pangs! deliver'd of her dead.
 Hell howl'd, and Heaven *that* hour let fall a tear;
 Heaven wept, that man might smile! Heaven bled,
 That man might never die.

NIGHT THOUGHTS, pag. 51.

He weeps! The falling drop puts out the sun;
 He sighs! the sigh earth's deep foundation shakes.

pag. 59.

† Pardon for infinite offence! and pardon
 Through means, that speaks its value infinite!
 A pardon bought with blood! with blood divine,
 With blood divine of him I made my foe.

pag. 53.

YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS.

Permit me now *Onesimus* to offer you a few thoughts on the dereliction of the Son of God on the cross. || And here I imagine there was no separation of the divine from the human nature. He assumed that nature never to lay it aside. He was as truly, and really *Emmanuel* on the cross, as he is now on the throne. This hypostatical union nothing could possibly dissolve; no, not death itself, which breaks every tie, looses every connexion, and dissolves every relation between man and man, had no influence here. Death indeed dissolved the union between his human soul and body, but without touching the personal union between the two natures in his person. This is no more mysterious than that which takes place with regard to all Saints; the last enemy separates between their soul and body, without ever touching the union between Christ and them. “Death cannot separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.” If the personal union had been dissolved on this occasion, it would have been absolutely impossible for the human nature, either to bear that enormous burden of sin and wrath imposed on it; or to have made an atonement for our sins: Neither would there have been the least propriety in these phrases, where he who suffered is said to be the “Lord of Glory;” and the blood by which the
Church

|| With what peculiar fear and reverence, ought every article of our holy religion to be investigated, particularly those profound and mysterious parts of it, and among these Christ’s dereliction on the cross must be acknowledged to be one. There is indeed a greater depth of mystery, in some parts of the christian system, than others; but taking the whole complexly, (particularly that part of it which relates to our salvation) we will find *mystery* written on the front of every article. The manifestation of the Son of God in human nature is called a mystery. 1 Tim. iii. 16. The spiritual union between Christ and his Saints is called a mystery. Eph. v. 23. There is a mystery which the Apostle calls the mystery of Christ. Eph. iii. 4. To banish every thing out of divine revelation, but what is comprehensible by our reason, there will remain but little behind. To maintain, that we are under no obligation to credit any thing in the word of God, that lies beyond the sphere of our comprehension, there will be but little left us to believe. Upon this principle no man can be accused for turning Atheist, because he cannot comprehend what God is; nor of insanity, for denying his own and the existence of his fellow creatures, because he cannot tell, how either exist. Because I cannot unravel all the mysteries contained in matter, should I deny it, I would be looked upon, and justly too as fit for Bedlam. That Christ was deserted, is beyond all dispute, we have his own word for it; his lamentable cry yet sounds in our ears. But to enter into, and particularly define all its circumstances, we cannot. To be dogmatic on this head, might probably argue more of the fool than the christian.

Church is purchas'd is said to be the *blood of God*. I say then, that Christ's desertion on the cross, implied no such thing as any separation of the divinity from the humanity.—Neither was he deserted, as to any cessation of the Father's love: He was, in all periods, and in all circumstances the beloved of the Father; and as much so on the cross, as when he lay in his bosom from eternity, or now when exalted to his throne. He is by way of eminency *the* beloved. “This is (*that*) my beloved Son, (is the language of his God and Father from the excellent Glory) in whom I am well pleased.” This not only points at the singularity of his nature, but at the high degree in which he stood in the affection and love of the Father. He is God's elect in whom his soul delighteth. He loves him as himself, as participating of the same divine nature with himself; as heir by a natural and an essential right to all the glory, perfections, and attributes of Deity. If it was possible, that infinite love could be augmented, now was the time: Here was a notable occasion afforded for its increase; here was the *ne plus ultra* of Christ's obedience: “He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross:” “Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life for the sheep.”—Again, there was no withdrawing of the spirit, which at the commencement of his public ministry, was given him above all measure, particularly as the spirit of holiness. There was no moral evil attending his complaint; no sinful impatience; nothing that betrayed in the smallest degree, any declension from that state of perfect and immaculate purity, in which he was conceived, born, and lived. If there had been found in him at any time, the least moral stain, or sinful imperfection, that moment he ceased to be the Saviour, and the end of his incarnation, life and death rendered abortive. The Lamb of God could never have taken away sin, if there had been the least moral stain, either in his nature, or conduct: But he was absolutely, and for ever, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners. He endured and suffered the most dreadful physical evil, but at the same time infinitely removed from all moral evil.—In a word, here was no desertion with regard to that strength and power, promised the Mediator to accomplish the work of man's redemption. The divine nature operated on this occasion, to the support of the human, so that it did not sink under the burden: Although for a time, the man Christ was deserted, yet he was upheld.

Permit me now *Onesimus*, to enquire positively into the nature of Christ's desertion on the cross; and I imagine it consisted in this, a temporary suspension of that joy, comfort, and felicity which the man Christ had all along, prior to this period enjoyed

in the most ample manner, without any interruption. It became him as surety for sinners, to feel in the human nature, the greatest grief, and the most exquisite sorrows, both in soul and body, on the account of sin imputed to him; and this was one principal ingredient in his penal sufferings, a suspension of that influx of joy and comfort from the divinity to the humanity, which it formerly enjoyed.

Desertion may be considered either as total, absolute, and eternal, or only temporary, and partial. The former consists in the withdrawing of the divine presence, and a shutting up under the divine indignation in hell for ever; the latter consists in a partial hiding of God's face, and a temporary suspension of his favour. God sometimes, for wise ends and purposes chastises his own, who are near, and dear to him after this manner: Hear how the Church of old complains: The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. *Isai. xlix. 14.* God himself confirms the same truth: In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment: For a very small moment have I forsaken thee. *Isai. liv. 9.* How often do we find the Saints complaining bitterly, upon the Lord's withdrawing his usual assistance in their redemption from temporal evils; or hiding his countenance from their souls. Christ, considered as the eternal Son of God, did not, neither could, experience this temporary, and partial desertion: But considered in his official capacity as Mediator, this was the principal, and most bitter ingredient in that cup, which the Father gave him to drink. He for a moment, remained without the feeling sense of the divine favour, while at the same time, he bore the weight of Heaven's indignation both in soul and body.

Do you ask *Onesimus*, what could be the reason of God's proceeding thus with his Son? Without all controversy, there behoved to be some weighty cause, why God did forsake this glorious sufferer. There are three causes, for which God may desert a creature; for trial, for correction, and for punishment for some crime.—For trial, thus according to some, God left Adam, by withholding that continual influx of grace and strength, which was necessary for his standing, in order for the trial of his obedience. In *2 Chron. xxxii. 3.* we are there informed that God left Hezekiah, that he might know all that was in his heart.—Again, God sometimes deserts his own children for their correction; that by such a chastisement, they may be the more stirred up to the exercise of humility and renewed repentance; to a greater degree of hatred to sin, and love to holiness. In this sense, these Scriptures are to be understood, *Isai. liv. 9.* *Lam. v. 20.* Lastly, God may be said to leave and desert a person for the punishment of his sin: Thus he left Saul, when he neither answered
him

him by Urim, or Thummim. Thus he hath left the whole nation of the Jews, Rom. ix. and the profane heathen world, Rom. i. Thus he will leave to eternity, the damned in Hell.

Allow me now to enquire in what sense the Son of God in our nature was left, and deserted. I imagine it could not be for trial, either to explore and find out what was in him, or to set us an example. It cannot be denied that in those excruciating pains which he suffered, he gave the most signal and eminent display of obedience and patience. In this respect, the Apostle informs us, Heb. v. 7. that he learned obedience, by the things which he suffered. But would it not be absurd to affirm, that to try his obedience, and exercise his patience, was the principal end of his sufferings? Would it not have been inconsistent with the wisdom, and goodness of his benevolent Father, to expose his Son to such direful sufferings, for no other end, than to see whether or not, he would be obedient? What a mean and low end do those men affix to the desertion, and other sufferings of Christ, in confining them to the trial of his obedience, and setting before us an example worthy of our imitation. It is readily granted that Christ suffered leaving us an example, 1 Pet. ii. 21. but who will be so daring as to affirm, that all the end of his desertion and other sufferings was answered by this.—Again, neither was he left for correction, unless *for us*; of him it was predicted, “that the chastisement of our peace should be upon him.” Let us consider the suffering Saviour as he really was, pure and holy; infinitely removed from every spot of moral pollution; was there any thing then, in this spotless Lamb of God, worthy of correction or chastisement? Certainly no.—It remains then, that this desertion of Christ’s was truly, and properly penal; as a part of those sufferings which our sins deserved, and which divine justice exacted. He hung between Heaven and earth, a spectacle of miseries, and the reproach of men, and deserted of the Father to atone for our deserting God. There is in every sin, a turning our back on the Almighty! “My people says Jehovah, have committed two great evils, they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters,” &c. This complaint might have been with the greatest propriety adopted in all periods, and in every succeeding generation since Adam forsook God in paradise. It was not peculiar to that backsliding generation; we pursue the same measures, and persist in the same practice; and so probably will every succeeding age, until the end of time. Since man therefore deserved to be deserted of God, as a punishment for his sin; our glorious Mediator cheerfully submitted to this, to rescue us from being eternally cast off; to be deprived of the sensible smiles of his all-cheering countenance, and that we might eternally be-

hold his face in light and glory; to live with him in the strictest union, and the most exalted communion — In a word therefore, I apprehend that the meritorious cause of Christ's desertion, was for our deserting God; the final cause, our eternal and inseparable union and conjunction with him. Christ's dereliction on the cross, although however bitter it was to him, is a well-spring of everlasting consolation to us; in as much as, it is productive of the most salutary blessings: And what else is every thing that Christ either did or suffered. His poverty is our riches, his wounds our healing, his ignominy our glory, his cross our crown, his death our life, and his desertion on the cross our eternal union with the Almighty.

What acute sufferings were these *Onesimus*, that thus made him to cry out, yea to roar, as the Lion roareth, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." || Why, on this occasion what had he to fear? Nothing from Satan: Terrible as he is, what was he in the hands of an omnipotent, triumphing Saviour? Did he not some short time before his sufferings, pronounce his doom, and predict his total overthrow? John xii. 32. Now is the judgment of this world, now is the Prince of this world cast out. Could he dread any thing from the impotent malice of his inveterate foes? No: He foretold his Disciples, that he had overcome the world. What were their blasphemous speeches, their cruel tortures, their infamous, and scurrilous conduct towards him? He despised all, rose superior to all; and behaved mute and silent under all; except when he rendered blessing for their cursing, and prayer, for their blasphemy. But when he felt the weight of the revenging hand of an infinitely holy Judge, he was constrained to pour out his soul in the most bitter lamentations. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God:" But this Christ did; the truth of this he experimentally felt. Christ's desertion on the cross, is not to be understood extrinsically, as if it meant no more, than just leaving him in the hands of the Jews, to put him to death in this tormenting manner, as Bellarmine imagined. No, he had principally to do with

|| Epiphanius writing against Hilary, who maintained that Christ's manhood was nothing but a mere phantasm; went into the contrary extreme, in maintaining, that Christ's desertion and other sufferings, tended only to manifest the truth of his manhood, Have we not sufficient documents of his real humanity, prior to this period? Do we not find him hungering, thirsting, fatigued, complaining, and weeping; all which are only competent to human nature? If Christ had not been deserted for some other end, we would never have heard a complaint from him; for it is very probable that his bodily sufferings, were little more severe than the sufferings of those who were crucified with him.

with God the Father, as representing the majesty, and supporting the rights of the Deity, as the supreme Judge before whose tribunal, he was now sitted to answer for our debt of punishment, of which his desertion on the cross was a principal part. Hence the sufferings of our Lord Jesus are, and not without sufficient reason compared to the pains and torments of the damned in hell. He suffered for a time the punishment of loss; consisting in the privation of that comfort and joy, resulting from the immediate fruition of God's countenance and presence; he suffered also the punishment of sense; consisting in the most grievous torments and pains, both in soul and body. He felt particularly in his soul; he felt in a most lively and exquisite sense, the wrath and curse of the Lord God Almighty, poured like water into his holy innocent soul: This is what he in an especial manner calls the cup which his Father gave him to drink. Hence in Scripture language, the term hell, is not only taken to signify the place of the damned, but a state of the greatest distress, and misery. Psal. xviii. 6. Jonah ii. 2. He is said "to bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows." Now, no sorrow or grief can possibly be more pungent and severe, than that which consists in a present feeling of the divine wrath and indignation. He is also said to be "made a curse," and consequently became obnoxious to all those torments both in soul and body, which the law bound over the transgressors of it to suffer; and the holy and just law of God, never thundered out its curses in such an alarming manner against any, as against the surety, representing the persons, and submitting to become responsible for the guilt of his sinning people. The law threatening respects not only the outward, but the inward man: The damned in hell have nothing further to suffer than the pains inflicted on the one, and the anguish which seizes the other. When we say that Christ suffered the pains of hell, we do not mean that he was cast into the place of the damned; but this militates nothing against his suffering both the pain of loss and sense, which constitutes the torments of the wicked in that awful place. When we say, that the wicked shall be turned into hell, we never mean that the place is any part of the punishment, nor of the debt which the sinner owes to the justice of God for law transgression: For, where ever the wrath of God is poured out in the fulcets and extent of it upon the sinner, in soul and body, there is hell, be where it will. And hell, as well as Heaven, commences in this life: A guilty and an awakened conscience is a part, and the commencement of infernal torments; present joy and peace in believing, is a prelibation, and foretaste of Heaven, and the first fruits of endless felicity.

Onesimus, just as I had finished my letter, my friend *Superbus* made his appearance; was glad, he had been so happy, as to catch the opportunity of hearing the contents before it was sent off. After I had read it, he objected particularly against the account given of Christ's sufferings, making them in a certain degree equal to the punishment of the damned in hell. "Such a mode of expression, (added he) will certainly involve your doctrine on this head into the greatest absurdities. Will it not follow of course, that there were these two principal ingredients in his suffering, desperation, and eternal duration? Do not these enter into the composition of the sufferings of the wicked in hell? I can scarcely believe, that great and grievous as the sufferings of the Redeemer were, that they were so aggravated as you insinuate."

You need be in no dread *Superbus*, that absurdity will be the consequence of my doctrine on this head: You are carefully to distinguish between the punishment inflicted by the great Judge, and those adjuncts which are necessarily connected with, and flow from the imbecillity and frailty of the creature suffering; or in other words, between those things which are essentially included in the punishment inflicted, and those things which are merely accidental to it. Jesus as our surety, suffered the former, viz. all that punishment which the law of the righteous Judge threatens, for substance, infernal punishments; but the latter, he suffered not, neither could, viz. those ingredients which are merely accidental, and flow from the nature of the creature suffering. The despair, and eternity of the wicked's punishment in Hell are of this kind. These belong not essentially to the punishment threatened, and inflicted by the righteous Judge. These causes from which despair originates could find no place in Jesus: He certainly knew, that although however great and grievous his pains were, they would be but momentary, and that he would obtain a glorious outgate. Such a reflection as this, cannot find place, no not in the remotest degree in the souls of the damned. "Go ye cursed into everlasting fire," will be a sentence irrevocable. Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, will be the awful doctrine sounding in the caverns of the pit, for ever and ever. Justice exacts the last farthing, and without restitution there can be no hope of release. Desperation then, doth not so much respect the punishment, as its eternal duration. If the wicked in hell had but the remotest prospect, of ever emerging out of that gulph of misery, there would be no cause of despair. This gleam of hope, can only arise from a capacity in the creature to make an atonement for his by-past, and present offences: But a finite atonement for
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an infinite offence, can never be accepted of by the justice of God, for it requires the uttermost farthing, and out of that gloomy dungeon these prisoners of darkness can never be released until this be paid. With regard to our Lord Jesus, it is very observable, that at that very period, when his sufferings arose to the very highest pitch, when the floods of divine wrath overwhelmed his soul, and a veil drawn on the Father's countenance, there was, I say, even then instead of desperation, the strongest faith in the Father's love, care, and protection. "My God, my God." With regard to the eternity of the wicked's suffering in hell, this could be no ingredient in the sufferings of Christ. As I hinted formerly, eternity is not an essential ingredient in the punishment of the wicked in hell: It belongs not to the punishment essentially considered, but originates entirely from the infirmity of the creature suffering, which cannot by suffering satisfy; yea instead of this adds sin to sin. What can be expected in the pit of destruction, but impatience, murmuring, fretting, accusing, and blaspheming that Almighty arm, which crushes them under its vengeance. Upon supposition, that the sinful creature by suffering, could satisfy, there would be no such a thing as eternal torments; "the worm would die, the fire would be quenched." The merit of Jesus, consisting in his obediential life, and satisfactory death, was sufficient to satisfy for all the iniquities and transgressions of his sinning people, without his sufferings being eternal. And why? Because he was a *divine person*. It was neither necessary, nor possible, that his sufferings should be eternal: Not necessary, because he was capable by his temporary sufferings, to answer every claim that the justice of God had upon him as surety. Again it was not possible that his sufferings could be eternal; because if the law had required an eternity of suffering, satisfaction never could have been made, and mankind would have been reduced to the same predicament with the fallen Angels; but this was no part of the law threatening, essentially considered. Further, it was not possible for this reason, it was requisite that he who died to purchase salvation, should live to confer, and apply the same to all for whom it was procured. "He died for our offences, he rose again for our justification."

I ask you now *Superbus*, whether or not, from the consideration of the awful severity of Christ's sufferings, was there think you no more intended by them, than merely to confirm the truth of his doctrine, and set before mankind a copy for imitation, if called upon to suffer?

"*Philemon*, I freely acknowledge, and I firmly believe, that viewing the sufferings of Jesus complexly, in the garden, " and

“ and on the cross, the cup was too bitter for him to drink, con-
 “ sidered in the capacity *only* of a Martyr. Considering the
 “ death of Jesus, as a proper and real satisfaction for our sins, I
 “ can easily and rationally account for his agony in the garden,
 “ and his desertion on the cross, and upon no other footing what-
 “ ever. In making his soul an offering for sin, I can account
 “ for his pressure under the burden of sinners guilt and God’s
 “ wrath. Upon this footing, I can account for “ God’s being
 “ just, in justifying the ungodly.” Viewing the great and ul-
 “ timate end of Christ’s death, as a satisfaction to the offended
 “ justice of God, and to turn away his wrath from the sinner;
 “ I can behold with rapture and delight, the great Judge “ blot-
 “ ting out our sins as a cloud, and as a thick cloud our transgres-
 “ sions:” Accepting our polluted persons, and imperfect sacrific-
 “ es; admitting us into favour here, and receiving us into his
 “ glory hereafter; and all this in a consistency with the holiness
 “ of his nature, and the righteousness of his law. Upon this
 “ account also, I can see the propriety of the Church’s exclama-
 “ tion, we are all as an unclean thing in thy sight, and all our
 “ righteousnesses are as filthy rags. *Isai. lxiv. 6.* Why doth
 “ the Church here speak of their righteousnesses in such diminutive,
 “ and vile terms? Because in point of justification before
 “ God, they were but as rags, and could not screen them from
 “ the storm of God’s wrath; and filthy rags, which, if depended
 “ on, and trusted in, as the meritorious cause of their salvation,
 “ would but render them more vile in the eye of infinite parity.
 “ The Church certainly had some other righteousness in view
 “ before she could entertain such an opinion of her own: Yes,
 “ a righteousness, in which the all-penetrating eye of God can
 “ espy no blot, his righteous and holy law no imperfection.
 “ Whose righteousness is this? What is it? The righteousness
 “ of the Son God, in man’s nature; consisting in the holiness of
 “ his nature, righteousness of life, and satisfactory death. This
 “ righteousness, the same evangelical prophet in name of the
 “ Church proposes to glory in: I will greatly rejoice in the
 “ Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath covered
 “ me with the robe of righteousness, and with the garments
 “ of salvation. || I can now see, that the great Apostle of the
 “ Gentiles did not act such a foolish part as I have often thought
 “ he did, at least I never could account for his looking with such
 “ an indifferent eye, and entertaining such a poor opinion of
 “ his own righteousness, as he once did. “ When it pleased
 “ God to reveal his Son in him,” that righteousness which he
 “ counted gain, he then “ counted loss, yea dung, for the ex-
 “ cellency

“ cèllency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ his Lord.” &c. He
 “ made a total renunciation of all his, (falsely so called good
 “ works) and took up his refuge, for time and eternity, under
 “ the covert of Christ’s righteousness, as the only, and alone
 “ ground of his acceptance with God, in regard both of his per-
 “ son, and services. ||

“ My dear *Philemon*, I begin to see more and more into the
 “ glory and excellency of the christian system, as having an en-
 “ tire reference to *Jesus* the Mediator: I see all the great lines
 “ of divine revelation meeting and centering in him; all the
 “ promises yea and Amen in him; the curse threatened in the
 “ law borne by him; the salvation of sinners secured, and only
 “ secured by his death, and blood-shedding: I perceive all the
 “ perfections and attributes of Deity, more highly honoured,
 “ and more extensively glorified, than ever they could have
 “ been by the unfinning obedience of the first Adam. May the
 “ Spirit of wisdom and revelation discover to me more and more
 “ the knowledge of this great mystery of godliness, “ God ma-
 “ nifested in the flesh;” “ to take away sin by the sacrifice of
 “ himself; that I may know him in the power of his resurrec-
 “ tion, and the fellowship of his sufferings.”—Having thus
 spoken, *Superbus* returned home.

Onesimus, what must the demerit of sin be, when we behold
 the innocent Lamb of God suffering so grievously for its expia-
 tion? Although he was inherently holy, yet he experimentally
 felt its evil nature, its bitter effects. Never was there such a glo-
 rious display given of God’s holiness, and hatred against sin, as
 on mount Calvary, in the sufferings of his own Son.—For *one*
 sin of the Angels, he cast them out of Heaven into hell, reserv-
 ing them in chains of darkness, unto the judgment of the great
 day. Disobedience, even in these exalted spirits cannot be dis-
 pensed with. God will by no means clear the guilty.—For
 the iniquity of the old world, he rid the earth of that perverse ge-
 neration; swept them into eternity by the waters of the flood.
 How detestable must sin be to the eyes of his glory, when he so
 soon after the creation destroyed his creatures, and depopulated
 this terrestrial globe. Sin is not to be ventured on without soon-
 er, or later, being punished with the most direful vengeance.—For
 the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, Jehovah did a new thing, varied
 the punishment, adapted the vengeance to the crime; for burn-
 ing in their lust, he burned them up with fire and brimstone from
 Heaven;

|| Thy merit—

Imputed, shall absolve them who renounce
 Their own, both righteous, and unrighteous deeds;
 And live in thee transplanted;
 And from thee receive new life.

MILTON.

Heaven; probably, this was a foretaste of everlasting burnings. What a dreadful storm! See the elements gathering with fire and brimstone! Why, do you reply, is there no pity in God? Yes, he is very pitiful and tender in his mercy: But he is just, he is holy too. What can mercy do with presumptuous unrelenting sinners, but deliver them over into the hands of divine justice. Wo to that man, to that people and nation, who have mercy for their enemy. Ye adulterers, ye adulteresses, a more severe judgment is awaiting you, than befel Sodom.—You would perhaps think, it was but a very small transgression in Adam, and a slight breach of the divine law, that God should have dealt so severely with him, and with all his posterity. I said a slight transgression; perhaps in so saying I tread upon the holiness of the divine nature, I then recall it, and with more propriety say, that I know not the meaning of the phrase: A slight transgression, a small offence, and yet against an infinitely holy majesty! Every sin whatever, deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this, and in the life to come. Small as some may account the first sin, it did not escape the curse of God; yea the very ground on which sinners tread, is cursed for his sake. From the entrance of the first sin into the world to this very day, the whole creation groans under the sin of guilty man. Even the very serpent for the ill use the Devil made of it in tempting our first parents escapes not the curse. Have we not the greatest reason to exclaim, "Who shall stand before such a holy Lord God?" Is it possible for any man, for any nation, going on in their trespasses, to promise themselves immunity from the curse of a holy, and sin-revenging God, when we have such signal examples exhibited before us, in past ages? Let none in this present, or any succeeding wicked age think, that God winks at their sin, because judgment is not presently executed. If men take their time to sin, God will take his to punish.—But if these examples will not suffice to evince the holiness of the divine Being, and the detestable nature of sin; let us repair to Calvary's mount, and there, I presume, we will see the most glorious and eminent display that ever God gave of his hatred to sin, and regard to holiness. Here we behold the innocent Lamb of God, oppressed and afflicted, bearing the griefs, and carrying the sorrows of his sinning people. "Jehovah making to meet on him the iniquity of us all." Rather than sin should go unpunished, he will take vengeance on it in the person of his own Son. The curse of the law must light somewhere: To see it light on the head of sinning Adam; to see personal transgressors caught in the net, and fall into the snare, which their own hands have made, is no matter of surprise; but to see God's dear Son, who
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did no evil, neither was guile found in his mouth, caught in the thicket, and as a propitiatory sacrifice consumed in the fire of God's wrath, argues the most invincible hatred to sin, and the most eminent love to holiness.—In a word, not all the vials of judgments, that have been, or shall be poured out upon a wicked world; nor the flaming furnace of a guilty sinners conscience; nor the irreversible sentence against the rebellious Devils; nor the groans of the damned in hell, give such a demonstration of God's hatred to sin, as that of his wrath let loose, and poured out upon the Mediator.

May you my dear *Onesimus*, increase more and more in your love to holiness, and hatred to sin. May your garments be preserved unspotted in the world, and you presented without spot or wrinkle before the throne of the divine glory, where no sin can enter: That these things may be the happy lot of my *Onesimus*, is the sincerest wish and prayer of his most affectionate

PHILEMON.



L E T T E R VIII.

PHILEMON TO ONESIMUS.

Dear Onesimus.

I AM sure from the religious turn of your mind, you are often delighted, and highly entertained, in studying the book of nature. What a rational pleasure to a studious contemplative mind, doth this great volume afford. Whither can we possibly turn our eyes, but we will find a most affecting discovery of the wisdom, goodness, and almighty power of the great Creator, in the works of creation, and common providence. *Omnia plena Jovis*, (said an ancient Heathen,) all things are full of Jupiter: In him we live, move, and from him we have our being, is the language of inspiration, with regard to the fulness, omnipotence, and omnipresence of the invisible Deity: † The invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which he hath made, even his Eternal power, and God-head. || If we should but take the most cursory and transient view of the stupendous works of the Almighty in creation, we cannot but be filled with the greatest reverence, and

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† Acts xvii. 28.

|| Rom. i. 20.

the most profound veneration. Is it possible to contemplate the visible perfections of the invisible Deity without crying out, great and marvellous are all thy works Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints: Who shall not fear and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy? † How vain and useless will all our speculations on the Almighty Creator be, whether arising from divine revelation, or the manifestation of himself in the works of creation and providence, if they have not this practical tendency, to beget, and nourish in our minds a deep veneration for, and a prevalent desire after, a close and intimate connexion with the Father of our spirits. What aspiring reflections should possess our minds, when investigating the nature, and prying into the end and design of God's handy-works: When we consider, that that almost infinite variety of creatures both above and below, was created for the service and benefit of man. The Almighty has enlisted every creature into our service, in some measure or other. For our benefit, the sun arises, and like a strong man, rejoices to run his race, circling from the one end of Heaven to the other, not only to proclaim his great Creator's praise, but to enlighten and invigorate our lower world. He hath also set the moon in the Heaven's to direct our steps in the night, in the absence of the sun, and to discern the seasons: For us these glorious luminaries shine. For us doth the trees blossom, and the earth vegetate. For us are the clouds engendered in the lower regions of the air which pour down their influences, to fertilize our plains, and afford drink to man and beast. For us doth the thunders roll, the wind blow, and the seas flow. "How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty"! If you cast your eyes on that capacious basin hollowed by the hand of the Almighty, out of which the extensive garden of this world is watered, you will find an admirable display of the divine goodness, as well as the infinite power and wisdom of God. Sometimes we behold this vast collection of waters almost in a state of stagnation; its surface as smooth as glass; its roaring waves hushed in silence: But almost instantaneously it grows outrageous. It is for ever changing: A fit emblem of all sublunary enjoyments. That "there is no abiding thing under the sun," is the aphorism of the wisest of men. Lately, when walking by the sea-side, I had this verified: From the most profound calm, in a moment, it lifted up its proud waves, almost above the highest mountains: Some rolling with the most majestic air, others breaking with the most impetuous force against the shore; and then retreating back into the bosom of the great deep: Some dashing themselves into pieces with ungoverned rage, and whitening

ening into foam. What a hideous roar is heard, when these mighty billows beat the shore, enough to strike the stoutest heart with horror and amazement! When the royal prophet would paint the divine Being in all the terror of his majesty and glory, he represents him as mightier than these great sea-billows. The floods have lifted up O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea than the mighty waves of the sea. || When Isaiah would represent him in the greatness of his power, he exhibits him to our view as measuring the waters in the hollow of his hand. †

In the midst of so much disorder, confusion and rage, why do not these impetuous waters abandon their capacious bed, and deluge the world? No reason can be assigned for this restraint but this, namely, that the same Almighty all-powerful hand, that lifts up the aspiring waves of this tumultuous flood, has set their bounds that they can never transgress. “Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed,” is the restraining mandate of the Lord of these turbulent waters. Go ye sinners who are impetuously bent on your iniquitous courses, and learn from these tumultuous waters, learn obedience to your Maker’s will. Can no bounds Heaven hath set, will no law which the great God prescribes, keep you within bounds? Alas! You are like the sea, in all its turbulence, would to God you would learn to resemble it, in all its obsequiousness to the will of Heaven.

A most melancholy scene presents itself to my view in the midst of this dreadful storm. Rolling on these mountains of waters, I behold a large ship, without one single mast, without the least aid or assistance, and without all hopes of ever making the land. See the wretched passengers all disconsolate, the sailors standing aghast, and the Pilot himself despairing of success, hangs his drooping head upon the helm. Alas! what can they do. They imagine with themselves, that they hear in every heaving billow, this alarming and mortifying summons, “prepare for death and judgment.” Notwithstanding of the utmost effort of strength and skill, the storm baffles all their endeavours. There is one expedient yet left; they betake themselves to prayer, they pour out their whole souls into his bosom, who sits on the floods, and commands the deep. That gracious and indulgent Being, who holds the winds in his fist, allays their fury, and rebukes the raging waves, and conducts the weather-beaten ship to the

desired

|| Psal. xciii. 3, 4.

† Isai. xl. 12.

desired haven. You will find a most picturesque account of a sea-storm drawn by the royal Psalmist in the most emphatic language imaginable. Such as have been on the briny deep upon such occasions, have found the description verified in every particular. They that go down to the sea in ships, and do business in great waters: These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the Heavens, they go down again to the depths, their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord, and he bringeth them out of their distress. ||

How much of the wisdom and goodness of the great Creator is to be seen in this huge collection of waters. This vast tract of sea was never intended by the Almighty as an insuperable barrier to keep distant nations in a state of perpetual ignorance of one another, and confine each of them within their respective bounds; but as a medium for their union, and social intercourse with one another. By this means, the great author of nature hath made each individual country an ample compensation for the want of some productions. His intention therefore, was to render the conveyance of all sorts of commodities to distant countries perfectly easy, and expeditious, which would have been altogether impracticable without such an expedient and mode of conveyance. Nothing but the most profound ignorance can tempt any one to maintain, that the sea is the greatest obstacle in the way of one nation mingling with another, or participating of the commodities and productions of distant climes. *Horace* in a fit of ill humour, when deprived of his beloved friend *Virgil*, who had embarked for *Greece*, calls down heavy imprecations on his head who first invented the art of navigation. † That Poet considered those large tracts of sea which divide one country from another, as so many trenches hollowed by the hand of the Almighty, on purpose to hinder all intercourse and correspondence between them: And according to him, it was an act of the highest presumption to transgress these bounds. ‡

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|| Psal. cvii.

† Illi robur et æs triplex,
Circa pectus erat qui fragitem truci,
Commisit pelago ratem,
Primus, &c.—

‡ Nequicquam Deus obscuri,
Prudens oceano dissociabili
Terras, si tamen impiæ,
Non tangenda rates transiliunt vada.

Carm. lib. 1.

How much of the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty is to be seen, in the flux, and reflux, of this liquid element. The sea flows successively six hours from south to north; at least this diurnal course is but seldom interrupted; and rises sometimes more, and sometimes less upon our coasts. This is what we call its flux, or flood. It continues in that state about a quarter of an hour, and after that begins to recede, and gradually decreases six hours more. This return of the waters from north to south, and from our coasts to the main ocean, is what is called its reflux, or ebb. The water remains about a quarter of an hour in this lowest state, and after that makes again towards the shore. This is obvious to every one who has taken the least notice of the sea's motion. Such floods are strongest, and those tides are highest which fall out at the new, and in the full of the moon, and these are generally termed spring-tides as the former are called neap-tides: And these spring-tides are always highest at the equinoxes. This strange phænomenon being common, and always, almost invariably the same, we behold it with an eye of indifference; but if it was to happen like the transit of some of the heavenly bodies over the sun, the inland parts of the country would be almost totally evacuated, and our sea coasts crowded to behold with amazement and terror, the awful sight. "God's way (in this, as well as in many other parts of his providential dispensations towards the children of men) is in the sea, and his paths in the mighty waters, and his footsteps are not known."

Do you ask, what reason is assigned for such a phænomenon? Naturalists are extremely divided in their opinions on this head. Some imagine, that this effect is produced by the moon's pressure on the ocean when she passes directly over it, and makes the waters to rise on the shore by the elastic body of that air which intervenes between her and the ocean, and which struggles to expand itself through the waters passive obedience to such an impression.—Others again maintain, that it is not owing to the gravitation of the moon upon the sea, but to the pressure of the earth and sea together upon the moon which have an innate tendency to approach that heavenly body. But as such an enquiry is very precarious, I decline it: And instead of enquiring into the efficient cause of these alternate motions of the flux and reflux of the ocean, I would enquire into the great design, and
principal

principal aim, of an all-wise providence in this wonderful mechanism. To decide positively on that system of laws and rules, which are so much enveloped in mystery, and beyond the utmost reach of our capacity, is rather presumptuous: But to remain entirely insensible of those infinite obligations we lie under to the great Author of nature, I think is shameful ingratitude; or at least such a want of attention, as is highly blameable.

One great advantage we reap by the tides, particularly the spring tides is, that they clear the channels of our rivers, and by that means render them deep and large enough for the conveyance of large ships to the most populous cities, which otherwise, could never be accomplished. How often are the mariners obliged to wait for several days for this commodious increase of the waters, and to make the best improvement of such opportunities when they offer, to sail with safety into the road, or port to which they are bound, or up the river itself, without the least danger of running a ground for want of a sufficient depth of water.

Another special advantage we enjoy by the constant motion of the sea, is, it is prevented from corrupting and breeding the most infectious vapours; which would inevitably be the case, from its continuing in a state of stagnation for any considerable length of time. The indulgent, and beneficent Creator, has not entrusted such an important, and salubrious scheme to the uncertain, and precarious winds: For although he has appointed them to purify the air all around our habitations, and to render the productions of the earth by their repeated influences and impressions, the more easy; and although the winds are more serviceable on the sea, than the strongest horses could be by land, for the expeditious transportation of our commodities, yet their blasts are very uncertain, and often succeeded by long calms, which would soon breed corruption in this capacious basin. By this motion of the sea, those various impurities of the earth which are conveyed by the rivers into the sea, are so far from gathering together, and creating any contagion, that they are dispersed, and attenuated, and by their perpetual agitation thrown upon the surface of the waters, where they are exhaled into vapours, and in their descent converted into our service, by promoting vegetation.

But in order that the sea may be the more effectually preserved from all contagion, the flux and reflux of its tides are ordained by an all-wise providence to stir up daily the salts with which it abounds, from one end of this great reservoir to the other. And were not its waters to be thus in a perpetual state of agitation, the saline particles contained in them would immediately subside,

or sink to the bottom, and in this case, a putrefaction in the watery flood would soon be the inevitable consequence. Moreover, if the waters on our shores were to lose their brackish quality, they would not only putrify and grow infectious, but they would no longer prove so nutrimental to our fish, by which we would lose a very delicious part of numberless animals, which are appointed by the bountiful hand of nature's God for our subsistence.

Do you ask *On-simus*, from whence has the sea its saltness? In answer to your query, I would ask you, from whence has the fire its heat, the sun its light, or the Ethiopian his blackness? The great Author of nature, created the sun a luminous body, because otherwise it would prove of no service to mankind; and the same all-wise and beneficent Being, has bestowed this saline quality on the sea-waters, because otherwise he knew, that they would prove detrimental, instead of being any ways advantageous. Some indeed impute its brackish quality to some beds, or strata of salt, which lie in subterraneous caverns, and have a secret intercourse with the sea; the extremities whereof are gradually impaired, and washed away by its waters. I imagine, it must be a very great mistake to impute so general an effect as the saltness of the sea to so local and fortuitous a cause, as that of the extreme parts of such strata of salt as above mentioned being washed away by the sea. The Almighty has made the waters of the sea salt, that they might always continue in a state of purity, and be ever ready at hand to serve us. I think it may be confidently asserted with regard to the brinish quality of the sea, as it may of the fishes themselves, who cannot subsist in any other water. Now, no one will certainly have the assurance to say that the fishes who inhabit this watery flood, came thither by mere chance; that brackishness, therefore, which we find in those waters, and is so requisite for the nourishment and support of their inhabitants, is no more casual than they themselves are. The same Almighty Creator which gave being to the fishes of the sea, prepared for them, from the creation of the world an element suited to their natures, and at once furnished it with those saline particles, without which they could not possibly subsist.

How much of the wisdom and goodness of the great Creator is to be seen in the brackish quality of the sea-waters. The most minute particles of the sea-salt grow volatile, and are exhaled with the vapours, and diffused all over the face of the earth in order to become one of the main principles of vegetation. Again, those grains of salt which are more gross and weighty, resist the influence both of the sun and air, which exhale those vapours, and by this means fix the measure of evaporation. The greater the quantity of these saline particles is, which retards the rare-

faction,

faction, the lesser quantity of watery particles ascend into vapours. The salt, therefore, which renders the water heavy, makes the evaporation of the latter less profuse: From whence it is evident, that we are indebted to the brackish quality of the sea for that due proportion of fresh water which is exhaled from thence by the sun for our service: Since without such resistance of these salts it would exhaust such a profusion of vapours as would be more apt to deluge the earth, than render it fertile. In this particular, therefore, as well as in every other hand-work of the Almighty, we may discover with ease, how all the parts of nature with one voice, as it were, agree to promote the welfare of mankind. How mean and worthless a philosophy must theirs be, who, whilst they are making the strictest researches into the secrets of nature, wholly, or at least too much, disregard those gracious ends of divine providence which are so visibly displayed in the minutest parts of the Creation. And how blame-worthy must they be, who, instead of referring those invaluable blessings which are showered down upon the earth, and the whole race of mankind, to the wisdom of God, and his tender concern for his creatures, either impute them to undesigning causes, or look upon them as the effects of blind chance.

Onesimus, if we would explore the bosom of the great deep, and take a minute survey of its almost numberless inhabitants; what a prodigious task would it be. The royal Psalmist speaks of the inhabitants of this watery region as countless. || So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships, there is that Leviathan whom thou hast made to play therein. These all wait upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest they gather; thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. O! what a numerous family has providence to support. None but *he*, who is all-sufficient could supply such a prodigious number of creatures, all depending on him, and expecting their habitual supply from his infinite and inexhaustible beneficence. From the great Leviathan, to the smallest minnow, they have all their eyes directed to him who is good, essentially, and communicatively good: And in their way, they all praise him: Yes *Onesimus*, we will find no ingratitude but among the human species, among men constituted the *lords* of the creation; but among creatures, made *after the image of God*. All thy works shall praise thee O Lord. I leave it to the philosopher to enter into the bosom of this capacious reservoir, and specify the numberless inhabitants which Almighty power has created, and Almighty goodness sustains, and re-
turn

turn to answer a query which I find in yours, viz. to give some account of *Judas* the traitor of our Lord. It is true as you hint, that we may glean something even from the wickedness of the wicked, as well as from the upright conduct of the righteous, for our spiritual instruction, edification and caution.—This strange man was a disciple: “Have not I chosen you twelve.” As he was called to the exercise of the apostolic function, we need not question but he was possessed of every qualification requisite for its discharge. He was endued with the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, in common with his fellow disciples: In which sense he may be said, “to be made a partaker of the Holy Ghost.” When Jesus sent out the eleven to preach the gospel, and work miracles, he did not retain him as unworthy to be employed in this honourable office, or unmeet to fill this high station. No doubt, but *Judas* rejoiced as well as the rest at the subjection of the Devils to them; no doubt, but they yielded to him as well as to the rest. Very probably, the fruits of his ministry were as copious as those of the eleven; and very likely all this time he never dreamed what sort of a man he was. Behold then *Onesimus*, a man preaching Christ Jesus the Lord, and yet ignorant of him, I mean as to any real practical knowledge of him: Destitute of his saving grace; a stranger to the sanctifying influences of his spirit; casting out Devils, and yet the Devil never cast out of himself: The prince of the power of the air leading him captive at his will. When Christ called the eleven, he not only revealed himself to them, but in them; called them by his grace, as well as by his word. No office however sacred can confer grace; or prove an argument to the persons self or others, that he is a genuine Disciple, a real Christian: God in his all-wise sovereignty may bestow gifts on a man, plant him in his house, make him the instrument of watering others, and yet at the same time, be in the end a *cast-a-way*. Strange! for *Judas* to be one of Christ’s family, engaged in his work, and yet a stranger to himself. There is more in religion than merely crying *Lord, Lord*. *Judas* was in Jesus, as thousands besides him are, only by an external profession; without any real saving interest in him, or any sanctifying communion with him. There are none less apt to suspect themselves than hypocrites are. When our Lord and his disciples sat at the paschal supper, he addressed them in these words, “verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.” They all with grief in their hearts, and astonishment in their faces, began to pose their Lord with this question; “Lord is it I?” It is generally supposed, that *Judas* was silent on this occasion till the last, and in the mean time perhaps, little suspecting he was the vile person, that his Lord knew him

him to be. How often doth wickedness lie lurking in sinners' breasts unsuspected until a temptation offer. Little did Hazaël suspect that there was such cruelty in his heart, and such a thirst for blood in his disposition, while he was only captain of the Assyrian army. When sent to enquire at the prophet with regard to the health of his master; Elisha looks on him, and weeps, predicts what course he would pursue, when elevated to the Assyrian throne. After this man of God had enumerated a train of the most horrid barbarities, and the most cruel treatment the Israelites would meet with, and be involved in, through the cruelty of his nature; Hazaël replies, "is thy servant a dead dog, that he should do such things." But we find the event as it proved the truth of the prophet's prediction, so it showed that the man did not know himself. Hypocritical Judas perhaps, until stirred up by the Devil of covetousness, never imagined that he would be so base, and avaricious, as to sell his Lord and Master for any price; and especially for such a paltry low sum. Ah! *Onesimus*, let us never trust our own hearts; let us entertain an habitual jealousy over ourselves. Let us never triumph in the falls of others; if we stand, we stand by grace; if we triumph over the Devil, the world, and the flesh, it is owing to "God's teaching our hands to war, and our fingers to fight." Here is an awful instance presented to our view, of a star of the first magnitude, a Disciple, and one of Christ's family, fallen, and fallen irrecoverably. After receiving the *shop*, he immediately went out: This was the last time he ever was in Christ's company. Alas! it was a long and lasting farewell. He fell immediately into worse company: He went directly to the chief Priests and Pharisees to covenant with them for so much money in order to prosecute his horrid enterprise. Strange! was there no pious reflection in the breast of that perfidious traitor, to raise such a remorse, as to stop the intended wickedness? No, little good is, or can be expected to exist where Satan hath his seat. Is there nothing left in the breasts of swearers, sabbath-breakers, and unclean persons, to stop them in their career of wickedness? Can they not pause for a moment, and consider, that the habitual practice of these sins ripens them as fast for hell, as betraying the Son of God for thirty pieces of silver. Such shall, (like Judas) go to their own place. Strange! who but Satan could move any man, especially a Disciple, to go and sell his Master as if he had been selling an ox, or an ass. A goodly price indeed, he was sold at thirty pieces of silver. || How would it probably have grieved those who gave it, to have laid it out to answer the exigencies of the poor and needy, but with what cheerfulness do

they

|| About 3*l.* 15*s.* of our money.

they offer it, and pay it down too, when by it, he against whom they entertained the most inveterate malice, was to be delivered into their hands. It is very possible, that there may be found in the world a second edition of those wicked Pharisees, who may have money to expend on cards and dice, but none for a *Bible*; and may use the former, more than the latter. If Judas had certainly known the worth of his Master, would he have been guilty of such an enormous crime? If men knew, if they were but at the least pains to know the worth of their souls; the true value of Christ, and his grace, they would never be so foolish, as to sell all for a beloved lust. O ye wilful abandoned sinners, see your genuine picture in this reprobate man! And will you sell your share of Christ, his grace, his kingdom, and glory, for a base lust, or to gratify a wicked disposition! “As in water, face answers to face,” so doth your conduct and behaviour, answer to that of this traitor. Indeed, men cannot now act the very same sin over again, they cannot sell Christ to the Jewish rulers for thirty pieces of silver; but they can sell their souls for a very little profit or pleasure. May God give sinners eyes to see, what an evil the very least sin is, and hearts utterly to abhor it. According to some, the price which Christ was valued at, was the price of a slave: The blessed Jesus, must lay his account while in this world, to suffer every kind of indignity. Strange! The Lord of all, sold as a slave. And were not all mankind in a state of the vilest slavery? Our glorious Redeemer condescended to be thus treated to rescue us. There was nothing too arduous to undertake, or ignominious to suffer, but Christ cheerfully underwent, to ransom enslaved sinners. Alas! of what small account is religion in the estimation of many. Profane Esau sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage. || “A wicked man, (saith Solomon) will transgress for a morsel of bread.” A wicked Judas, for the paltry sum of thirty pieces of silver will sell his Lord and Master. But where lies the gain? To sell one’s soul, Heaven, and eternal glory, for a little

|| The birth right which Esau sold contained these privileges, 1. A double portion of his Father’s goods, Deut. xxi. 17. 2. Power and dominion over the younger, for he succeeded in the government of the family; or kingdom. Reuben thou art my first born, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power, Gen. xlix. 3. 3. The honour of priesthood in their own family. Exod. xxiv. 5. He sent the young men, or, the first born of the Sons of Israel, and they offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings before Jehovah. Afterwards the Levites were taken into the service of God, instead of the first born among the Children of Israel. This birth right Esau sold which evidenced what a profane person he was.

the pleasure, or profit. Such may perhaps, gain the pleasure of men of a like stamp with themselves, but oh! Will this counterbalance the loss of God's favour. What will it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul. The world can prove of no avail in the hour of death; it neither can bribe the king of terrors, nor assuage our agonizing pains. And for sinful pleasures, which wicked men are so eager to grasp at, and pursue after; a few years will render them as insipid, as they once were pleasant to the vitiated, depraved taste of the sinner. Oh! what a foolish bargain do sinners make.

After this covetous wretch had received the money, he proceeds without the least remorse to accomplish his wicked design. The next thought that struck him, no doubt was, where he should find him: He knew there was a garden nigh the city, where Jesus usually resorted for prayer, and he might possibly be there; he was not wrong in his conjecture, there he was, and according to his usual custom, praying. O ye sacrilegious Jews, and you traitorous Judas, dare ye lay hands on that sacred body, dare ye approach that sacred place, rendered holy by the presence, and exercise of the blessed Jesus! Yes, they will approach the place; lay violent hands on the Redeemer. There is scarce any degree of wickedness too great for a profane man in the pursuit of his impious determinations.—The place is particularly specified where Jesus was apprehended: “In the garden.” It was in the garden of Eden, where the first sin reared up its cursed head in this world; here it first commenced; here the wound was given. In the garden of Gethsemane, the preparation of that medicine which heals our souls, and restores to the favour of God commences. This garden prior to this period, was sequestered by Jesus for the purpose of religious exercises; “Jesus often resorted thither with his disciples.” How cheerfully, and voluntarily did Jesus go to death: Could he not easily have evaded the sagacious traitor? Could he not have retired to some more secret place? At other times, he shunned death; but now his hour is come: His ministrations here on earth near accomplished. Now he is willing to die; he will shun death and danger no longer. When he knew all things concerning him were accomplished, he addressed himself to die, John. xix. 28. Luke xxii. 53. When I was with you, (says he to the Jews) daily in the temple, ye took me not, but this is your hour. He was often in danger previous to this, and yet there were none that could touch him, because his hour was not come. What excellent comfort to a christian; as it was with the head, so will it be with the members; none can deprive them of their life, until the time appointed of the Father come. With the greatest intrepidity,

trepidity, and constancy, he went forward to meet those who were thirsting for his blood. The traitor had given them a sign that whosoever he should kiss that was he; so coming forward he saluted his Lord thus, "Hail Master, and kissed him." O, what treachery under the cloak of friendship! Would to God, the hypocritical face had ended here: But alas! Men have too easily learned from the perfidious wretch, to profess a sincere love and regard for religion, when immediately engaged in the exercises thereof, but in the tenor of their conversation betray it. Who would imagine, that men in the most solemn manner, at the table of the Lord professing a most sincere attachment to Jesus, and the interests of holiness, that these very men should, in the general course of their conduct make a counter declaration.

Scarce was the atrocious deed committed when he repented. Nothing can afford Satan more satisfaction, (if he can take pleasure in any thing) than a sinners late repentance. He pushed this miserable man to this horrid act, then suggested to him that there was no forgiveness for him; and to put an end to a miserable existence, was all the way that was now left to better himself. First to betray his Lord, then to usurp the prerogative of God, to take away that, which he neither could give, nor without the highest impiety take away. O what wickedness! When he saw that he was condemned, he repented, and went and hanged himself. Luke xxvii. 3, 5. Some have imagined that Judas when he betrayed Christ might have thought that he would not have died; but either, that he would have conveyed himself out of the soldiers hands, as he did when the multitude sought to stone him, or throw him down a precipice, or by some miraculous way would have preserved himself. But when he saw it was otherwise, he is not only sorry for what he had done, but makes an explicit confession of his sin; throws back the money, as unlawfully gotten, and therefore not to be retained, but renounces that, with the sin, and proclaims the innocency of his Lord. Some have gone so far as to pronounce him a true penitent! They think, that they can find all the ingredients in true repentance, in his; such as confession, sorrow for what he had done, restitution of the money as unlawfully gotten; together with an open declaration of Christ's innocency. These men must certainly have a very strange idea of a true repentance, and a true penitent. A true penitent, and yet hanging himself, is somewhat odd. If he had truly repented of his sin, and believed in the Lord Jesus for salvation, we have no reason to think, that our Lord would have declared that, "it had been better for him, he had never been born."

Moreover,

Moreover, was it not wonderful stupidity in the chief Priests and Elders, that they could make this answer to Judas, "What is that to us?" Did they think, that there was no crime in hiring a man to betray innocent blood? Did they not confess, that this money was the price of blood? Was not the field they bought with it called *Acedama*, the field of blood, a lasting testimony of their guilt? And Stephen roundly tells them, "that they had been the betrayers, and murderers of the Lord of glory." And they themselves, when the miracles done in Christ's name had awakened their consciences, began to be troubled, that the Apostles should bring this man's blood upon them.—The inspired evangelist Matthew, chap. xxvii. v. 9. adds, then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potters field as the Lord appointed me. These words being not in Jeremiah but in Zechariah, chap. xi. v. 12. have greatly puzzled commentators. Some think, that the prophecy of Jeremiah was placed first in the volume of the prophets, and so became the running title of that whole volume; so that, what was written in any of them, might be said to be written by Jeremiah. But one can hardly think that the prophet Jeremiah, should signify Isaiah, Zechariah. Again, some think it highly probable, that Jeremiah wrote the ix. x. and xi. chapters of Zechariah. Upon the whole, I would rather imagine, that the word Jeremiah had crept in through mistake, and that instead of writing the prophet Jeremiah, it should have been the prophet Zechariah. It is certain that a number of versions, instead of writing the prophet Jeremiah, only mention the prophet simply, without mentioning Jeremiah at all.

You enquire, how the account which the evangelist Matthew gives, can be reconciled with that which the inspired historian Luke gives of the death of Judas. We are informed by the former, chap. xxvii. 5. that he, (viz. Judas) cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. The latter informs us, Acts i. 18. that this man, (viz. Judas) purchased a field with the reward of iniquity, and falling head-long, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. You say you find yourself at a very great loss, to reconcile these two seemingly contradictory accounts. I imagine *Onesimus* that this may be very easily done. I would look upon Peter's account of this man's death, to be an improvement upon what Matthew had said, consisting in a declaration of what followed upon his hanging himself: And thus hanging, he burst asunder, and all his bowels gushed out; or precipitating himself,

himself, he burst in the middle. It is very probable, and I see no reason why it may not be admitted, that there was a more than ordinary providence in this extraordinary instance, to render the death of this traitor the more dismal, and remarkable. || O! dismal end of a more than wretched man.

Consider that he had been in the very best of company; fed at Christ's table; heard his heavenly doctrine, and no doubt along with the rest, assented to Peter's famous confession of him, as "the Son of the living God;" no doubt, had told the world so; had seen Satan subject to him; but alas! Now so far conquered by him, as for a small sum to betray him; and at last to precipitate himself headlong into eternal destruction. Do you reply, is not this sentence rash, and presumptuous? No, it is neither the one nor the other. Had not Christ pronounced him a Devil, John vi. 31. a Son of perdition, chap. xvii. 12. and had peremptorily declared that it had been better for him he had never been born. From such premises, it cannot either be rash or presumptuous, neither a diving into Heaven's secrets to say he went into a place, prepared for, or due to such a miscreant. "The tree is known by its fruits. Would it not be an excess of charity both antisciptural, and prejudicial to the interests of precious souls, to sooth them with this consideration; that notwithstanding they follow the footsteps of this vile man in selling Christ and their souls, either for the profits or pleasures of a transitory life, to tell them I say, that they are *the Sons of God*. O how careful ought the watch-men set on Zion's walls to be, in giving faithful warning; and making a difference between the precious, and the vile; between him that fears God, and him that fears him not: To give to every one their portion of meat in due season.

Permit me now *Onesimus*, to touch a little at a few of those incidents which attended our Lord's crucifixion. Before entering on these I may drop a hint or two with regard to the place where our Lord was crucified. It is described in the general, as a place without the city. "He suffered without the gate." Therefore Jesus that he might sanctify the people, &c. Heb. xiii. 12. The Levitical sacrifices were offered up without the camp. Levit. xvi. 27. Jesus therefore suffered without the gate, to inform us that he was the true sin-offering for his people; the great propitiatory sacrifice that only could make a propi-

|| Some have entertained this strange and unaccountable notion, viz. that Judas knowing, that Christ was to descend into hell, to bring thence the souls that were there; he went and hanged himself, that his soul might get thither before him, and so might thence be delivered with the rest!

per, real atonement before God for our sins. Jesus suffered without the gates of the earthly Jerusalem, to pave the way with his own blood, for our entrance into that heavenly city whose builder and maker is God. Christ was willing to go any where, to suffer any hardships for our good. It was our eternal happiness he had in view, in the whole of his sorrowful life, and cruel sufferings.—This place is particularly designed *Calvary*, or *Golgotha*, the place of a skull. This place was not only an infamous, but an abominable and loathsome place. A more fearful, and loathsome place our sins deserved. With our sins imputed to Jesus, he went to Calvary for their expiation; and if it had not been so, to hell the whole human race behoved inevitably to have gone, and there suffered eternally. He died in the place of a skull to save us from the place of the damned. || “ He was numbered with transgressors, and bore the sins of many.” He was taken to the place where malefactors were executed, as if he had been the most noted felon ever was put to death. In a word, the captain of our salvation disdained not to die on Calvary’s mount in order that he might bring many sons to glory.

I proceed now *Onesimus*, to offer to your consideration a few of those remarkable incidents which occurred during our Lord’s crucifixion. And the first that presents itself to our view, and peculiarly claims our notice is, the conversion of the Thief on the cross. The evangelists Mark and John, mention this but very cursorily: Luke informs us, that one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, “ if thou be Christ, save thyself, and us.” The evangelist Matthew mentions them both as joining in concert with the multitude, in reviling the Son of God. “ The Thieves also which were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth,” chap. xxvii. 44. The difference between these two accounts lies here; that after they were all nailed to the tree, and probably for a considerable time after, both the Thieves joined hand in hand in reviling the Son of God, this glorious sufferer; this agrees with the account Matthew gives. But some short time before Jesus expired, God granted to one of these Thieves repentance unto life; as a signal testimony of the sovereignty of his mercy, and the power of his grace:

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¶ It was an ancient tradition, that this place was called the place of a skull, because Adam was buried there: And therefore Jesus Christ who was to heal the fall of Adam must be crucified there; that where death commenced, there might be its destruction. Others think, it was so called from its figure, it being round like a skull. But probably it was so called upon the account of the bones and skulls of malefactors who were executed and left there.

This reconciles the account which Luke gives with that of Matthew. || Let us take a view *Onesimus*, of the disadvantageous circumstances under which this malefactor laboured at the time of his conversion. The Jews mocking, reviling, and railing at the object of his faith; his fellow-sufferer seconding their blasphemous language, why he might think, “is it possible that this can be the Saviour, the promised Messiah. If he was such as he has all along represented himself to be, would these sage Priests, these learned Scribes, and venerable Elders mock and revile him at the rate they do; or, if he was could he endure it, without the most signal vengeance executed on them. Why, if it were true that he saved others, why will he not save himself? The report was current that he raised Lazarus from the dead; why can he not with more ease save himself from dying, than raise the dead? This report had been industriously propagated by his disciples and followers to raise his reputation; but alas! it is now sunk lower than ever they advanced it. Can I credit my senses at this present juncture, and yet believe on him as the Messiah? Can I expect pardon from him, whom Pilate has condemned? Or salvation from hell by one that cannot save himself from dying in *Golgotha*. To revile a fellow-sufferer, is indeed an indecent deportment on such an occasion; I have other matters on hand; Eternity is before me: But at the same time, is it possible, that I can expect salvation from the curse by one who hangs on the cross?”——If this man had been present on some former occasions, when Jesus was gloriously triumphing in the power of his God-head, it would not strike us with any surprize to hear him crying out, “Lord remember me, when thou comest to thy kingdom.” But here he beholds him in a state of the lowest debasement.

|| According to the Mosaic law, no Thieves were to be put to death: Restitution in proportion to what they had stolen, was to be made; but no capital punishment to be inflicted. But the Jewish nation being a part of the Roman Empire, and for the most part governed by Roman laws, this crime as well as murder might be capitally punished. A mortifying reflection to that people, to see two men dying contrary to that law delivered to them immediately by God himself. The acknowledgment they made of the justice of their sentence and death, (at least one of them) argues either, that there was something more with which they were chargeable than simple theft; or that according to the Roman law to which they were then subject, they justly deserved death. Those crimes among the Jews which had no tendency to the immediate disturbance of society, were left to themselves to punish as they thought proper; and that without consulting the Roman Pretor, such as blasphemy, &c. Hence the Jews put Stephen immediately to death without ever consulting the Governor.

debasement. Had he seen him walking on the liquid element, pouring day-light into the eye-balls of the blind, unstopping the deaf ears, making the lame man to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing; in a word, if he had seen him cleansing the leper, casting out Devils, and raising the dead; and to have believed in him as the Messiah, would have been little matter of surprize. But in the case before us, instead of giving life to others, he was condemned, led to the place of execution, and hung up between two Thieves, as if he had been the greatest of the two. Moses believed God, but it was when he spake out of the burning bush: Abraham showed all manner of obedience to the commands of God, and all manner of readiness to leave his native country; but it was when God addressed him out of Heaven; the Patriarchs believed, when God spoke in dreams, and visions; the disciples were eye-witnesses of his miracles: But the poor Thief was converted, when he saw none of these wonders; but Christ in the deepest debasement, his hands and feet nailed to the cross, insulted by the multitude as one unable, either to help himself, or others: And probably this might be the first time that ever he knew any thing about Jesus, otherwise than by report.—How inexcusable think you *Onesimus*, must they be, who betake not themselves to the Lord Jesus now when exalted to his glorious throne in Heaven; exalted with the Father's right hand, a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins. Will not this extraordinary man rise up in judgment against gospel-hearers whose language is, we will not have a humbled debased Saviour, no, nor an exalted glorified Jesus to reign over us. It certainly will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for such as live under the dispensation of the gospel, and yet through their unbelief, their love of pleasure or profit, despise his person, and trample his blood under their feet. However the impenitent Thief may plead an arrest of judgment at God's bar, considering the circumstances he laboured under at his death; I am sure, we have, we can have no plea. We know a comfortable doctrine he was ignorant of, that "there is no other name given under Heaven, and among men, whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus." We know, at least we should, that that base and ignominious death which he suffered on that occasion is the source and origin of our life of grace and holiness here, and of eternal glory hereafter. These were things hard to be understood by that poor wretched man at this period; he laboured under every possible disadvantage. Oh where is our faith! Do you reply, the christian world believes all these things: But can that be a saving faith which consists only in a general speculative

speculative belief of these things? An unholy believer is a solecism in divinity: A believer, and yet wallowing in all manner of impurity! Faith purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes the world. Is it possible, that men who profane God's name and day, get drunk with the drunkard, and partake with the Adulterers, can be numbered with true believers? That faith which has for its fruit the salvation of the soul, is attended with universal holiness.

It is worthy our notice also the time of his conversion, the last day of his existence, and very probably the last hour. It is very likely that this man had lived in the most criminal carelessness with regard to the immortal interests of his soul to this very hour. When others were enquiring about Christ, who he was? What he did? The miracles which he wrought, the doctrines which he taught? So careless and indifferent was he; that he regarded nothing, but what had an immediate reference to this present life. Now his last cast for eternity was come: The time was short; the work was important: What can he do? Where can he fly for help? To look back on his by-past life was shocking; to look forward to that tribunal before which he must instantly appear, his soul recoils at the very idea. In this very critical moment, the last moment; it pleased God to reveal his Son in, and to him. Just before launching into eternity, he claims, and lays hold on Jesus suffering on the cross hard by himself; as he who was able to save to the very uttermost, all that come unto God by him. He believed, that even in that low debased state in which he now appeared, he was able to save him, and make intercession for him.

This man improved his time at last in such an extraordinary manner, as perhaps no man ever did before, or will hereafter. Within a few moments of eternity, he set to his seal that God is true, by believing the record God gave of his Son. He believed Jesus to be the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, when one of his disciples had betrayed him, another denied him, and all had forsaken him. When he was hanging on the cross, suffering the pangs of death, and deserted by his Father; he proclaims him Lord of Paradise. When the Jews condemned him, the Gentiles crucified him as an impostor, and a malefactor; he feared God, acknowledged the justice of his sufferings, and with patience and resignation submitted to them. He condemned himself, and justified the holy Jesus; declaring that he had done nothing amiss. He was solicitous not for the preservation of his body, but for the salvation of his soul; and not only for the salvation of his own soul, but that of his fellow-sufferer; whom

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he so meekly reprehends, and so earnestly requests not to proceed in his blasphemous language; and lovingly invites to the fear of God. So that the glory which redounded to Christ by his faith and piety upon the cross, seems such, as the whole series of a religious life in some other men, can hardly parallel.

Whatever God might do in adorable sovereignty with such a man, whose light in comparison of ours was but darkness; none need expect from this instance, that he will repeat the same sovereign act. To delay repentance to a death-bed in hopes of meeting with mercy and salvation, is the only, and effectual method to bar up all egress of mercy towards sinners. Nothing will make men careless about salvation, but a love for unlawful pleasures, and a greedy thirst after the enjoyments of a present life. But for men to pursue these things, and defer things of eternal moment to the last, what folly and stupidity! That is to say, when they have lost all taste for unlawful pleasures; when they can pursue the world no longer; then, as the common phrase is, they will turn good. If this is not the case, what can be the reason, that men are not more anxious about eternity, and the interests of their immortal souls than they are? Do men imagine that God will save them in their sins? He will as soon cease to exist, which is impossible. O let none delay repentance to a death-bed, expecting to find it there; unless they can place themselves in the same circumstances with the Thief on the cross: Nor even then itself, if they delay it with this view. Some divines of eminent note, have been, and are of opinion, that a death-bed repentance is never sincere. I would not go so far; but indeed there is all the reason in the world to suspect it. Some who in their own, and in the opinion of others, have been on the verge of eternity; and to all appearance have been deeply humbled for their past sins; who when recovered, evidenced that all proceeded from a servile fear of wrath; by “returning like the dog to his vomit,” to their former course of sinning. That my *Onesimus* may encrease more and more in his hatred to sin, and love to holiness, is the most sincere wish of his

PHILEMON.

L E T.



L E T T E R IX.

P H I L E M O N T O O N E S I M U S,

Dear Onesimus,

YOUR kind letter came safe to my hand; I am much indebted to you for the intelligence it contains: But am very sorry to learn, that several of your acquaintances have suffered so severely, in consequence of the late dreadful thunder-storm. You hint in yours, that you was greatly alarmed; I think no wonder, the thunder is the voice, and the awful voice too, of the Almighty. The awful thunder, and the frightful tempest, are as much the works of the Almighty, as the most tempting fruits, or the most flagrant flowers. Yes, he gathers that vast assemblage of clouds, which, when agitated by the winds, and charged with inflammable sulphureous matter, is productive of that alarming noise, and oftentimes proves destructive both to man and beast. The most nauseous medicines are the effects of his creating power, as well as the most palatable dainties. The Almighty Lord of all is honoured and obeyed by the most outrageous storms, as well as by the gentlest zephyrs: Yea there is not one of all his creatures, how mean soever, but what proclaims his praise; and all of them perform their respective functions, in the most absolute obedience and submission to his divine will; and although they have neither speech nor language, yet their voices are heard.

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though no real voice nor sound,
Amidst their radiant orbs be found;
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine.

The sun who invigorates and enlivens all nature, prompts,
(at least should) to the adoration of him, in whom we live, move
and

and have our being; the author of all our mercies, the ever-flowing fountain from whence all the good things we share of, both of nature and grace flows. The light which embellishes and gives a grace to the whole creation, is a most lively representation of him, who is the source and quintessence of all beauty and perfection. || The rivers, the forests, the verdure, the flowers, the fruits, unanimously conspire to demonstrate the goodness of their great Creator, and his tender concern for the good and welfare of his creatures. The awful voice, however, of his thunder is intended to rouse those out of their lethargy, who either abuse, or seem insensible of his favours; and though it does not often strike them dead, yet it at least alarms them, and serves them as a lesson of instruction. Every object which we see proclaims the glory of the great Creator, and is either a display of his divine indulgence, that we may be cordially drawn to love him, or a demonstration of his terror, in order to stir us up to fear him.

You enquire in yours, how the thunder is formed? What is the immediate procuring cause of it? It is not my province to enter upon, or give a particular account of the formation of this awful phænomenon; this I leave to the natural Philosopher. But, in answer to your query, allow me, in a few hints to give you my sentiments on this head.

Let me observe then, that one particular effect of the air is the evaporation of the waters: This, however at first view may seem altogether impossible and repugnant to reason, as water is a much more weighty body than the air, yet nothing is more certain. † The inflammable matter which the sun darts down upon the earth, penetrates with ease through the surface of all bodies which are moist and fluid; so that there is not only an evaporation of the waters, but of several other heterogeneous bodies along with it; namely, the volatile salts, the oils, the sulphur, and divers others corpuscles, which either proceed from the flesh of animals, or flow from the bowels of the earth, or from mines in the sea; where they either incorporate with the water, or, for the most part float on the surface of it like froth.

The atmosphere being thus replenished with this sulphureous matter, with a quantity of air in the small globules of water suspended

|| We have a threefold concise, but very emphatic description of God in Scripture; God is light, God is love, God is a Spirit.

† The other effects of the air are obvious; such as the winds, the vegetation of plants, and the digestion, as well as the nutriment of all living creatures: The air, likewise, is the vehicle of sounds, smells, and in some sense, of light itself.

pended above our heads by the evaporation of the sun, they either sink by slow degrees, or descend with impetuosity in various shapes of mists, mildews, dews, or gentle rains. If in their descent, they meet with an air so cold as to congeal them, they are formed according to their condensation, in flakes of snow of various sizes; and as such snow is always composed of oil, volatile salts, and a particle of fire enclosed in the centre of that little condensed mass, as in a cover, it must of consequence follow, that those lands on which it falls must be greatly improved and rendered fertile.

Again, if a torrent of air impells or dashes one large cloud against another with violence, then a considerable part of these small vesicles of water which stand suspended over our heads, burst; the water whereof they were composed, flows on every side, and falls either in lesser or greater drops, according to the distance of the cloud; or in a perpendicular or circular direction, according to the action of the winds. Our fall of rain in drops from the clouds increases in proportion as the drops incorporate in their fall: And the distance of the clouds determines for the most part this incorporation. The rain which descends from those clouds which immediately hover over our heads, and which we sometimes, almost touch, is very small; whereas those drops which fall from more distant clouds, are of a larger circumference.

The atmosphere consisting of several regions, or beds of air, expanded one over another, whose dispositions alter according to the various qualities of those winds which act upon it, it frequently happens, that the drops of rain, meet as they fall, in some region of the air which is cold enough to congeal them in their passage: Thus modified they are termed hail-stones: The bulk or size whereof, is always determined by that of the drops of rain so congealed in their descent.

From those particles of fire pent up in the centre of those vesicles before mentioned, and from those other oily, sulphureous, nitrous and combustible particles, which the water had carried along with it into the upper regions of the air, a train of inflammable matter is formed, which becomes more or less visible, in proportion to the strength and dimensions of it. If the quantity of fiery particles only forms a small globule of fire, that soon breaks and disperses, shoots into a stream of light, and immediately disappears; such a phenomenon is generally termed a *falling-star*: Of the same nature, probably, is that great stream of light, which in appearance shoots from one side of the hemisphere to the other, and which we call a *fire-dragon*: The *auroræ borealis*, or what is commonly called *streamers*, are of the same nature.

Again,

Again, if such a stream of light be extended farther; or meets with a stream of other matter, to which it sets fire as it rolls along, it is then termed *lightning*. If such a stream of inflammable matter darts down like a torrent of fire, it is called a *thunder-bolt*; the effects whereof are different according to the action of the wind, and the power and malignity of the ingredients whereof such flashes are composed.

The air contained in those small globules of water already taken notice of, being rarefied, it can exert its elastic force no other way than by bursting through them by a terrible explosion, which awful crack is what we call *thunder*: And though this violent crack, or clap, is but one single act, yet there seems to be a repetition of it, and lasts for some considerable time; because the sound is reflected from the surfaces of several adjacent clouds, and repeated by as many echoes.

Naturalists take notice of a threefold wind which generally attend a thunder-storm. The first which blows before it, the body of the cloud blows for the most part in a circular direction. There is another which blows at the same time from a quite different quarter, which occasions the meeting of the clouds, and their clashing one against another: After the lightning, and the clap of thunder, the sudden and tremendous shock of a third wind is felt, which is that air discharged from the middle of the cloud: This wind carries along with it a suffocating heat: Sometimes it disperses an intolerable stench of sulphur; from whence the nature of those materials which were conveyed into the regions of the air along with the vapours may be easily discovered.

When different winds rush forth from the centre of different clouds, and join with those which blew before, the storm increases; the air whirls round in rapid eddies; the smoke instantly descends, the dust rises, the darkness gathers, the rain pours down in floods, the lightning, hail, and thunder, all contribute to a general desolation. The flowery meadows, and the country round are all laid waste. Is it possible do you say, that such irregularities as these, which put all nature into a general consternation, can be the handy-work of an all-wise Creator? Yes, *Oneimus*, it is as much the result of fore-sight and design, as that law of motion is, by which it was occasioned.

The royal Psalmist describes this astonishing phænomenon in all the sublimity of language, both in its nature and effects.—The voice of Jehovah is upon the waters; the God of glory *thundereth*, the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of Jehovah is powerful; the voice of Jehovah is full of majesty. The voice of Jehovah breaketh the cedars: Yea Jehovah breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them to skip like a calf:
Lebanon,

Lebanon, and Sirion, like a young Unicorn, &c. || We find, Milton, among other parts of the armour which the Eternal Father orders Messiah to put on, in order to drive the revolted Angels out of Heaven, mentions his thunder as one;

—Bring forth all my war,
My bow and thunder, my Almighty arms
Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh.

When Messiah is preparing to execute his commission, he represents the chariot of Paternal Deity rushing forth with a whirlwind, and drawn by four cherubic shapes, and composed of the radiant urim divinely wrought: Ascending the same:

—At his right hand victory
Sat Eagle-winged, beside him hung his bow
And quiver, with three-bolted *thunder* stor'd,
And from him fierce effusion roll'd
Of smoke, and bickering flame, and sparkles dire.

And when actually engaged against those rebellious hosts, the Poet represents Messiah as grasping ten thousand thunders in his right hand.

—Full soon
Among them he arriv'd, in his right hand
Grasping ten thousand *thunders*, which he sent
Before him.

But adds the Poet,

Yet half his strength he put not forth, but check'd
His *thunder* in mid volley; for he meant
Not to destroy, but root them out of Heaven. †

It is very probable, the Poet borrows his imagery here from the sacred Scriptures; where the power and vengeance of the Almighty is figuratively compared to thunder — See in what sublime, but terrific language, the royal Psalmist represents the vengeance of Heaven against his foes. — At the brightness before him, his thick clouds passed, hail-stones and coals of fire. The Lord also *thundered* in the Heavens, and the Highest gave his voice, hail-stones and coals of fire. Yea he sent out his arrows and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings and discomfited them. ‡

‡ Psalm xxix.

† Paradise lost, book VI.

We

† Psalm xviii. 12, 13, 14.

We find the same figurative language used elsewhere, to express God's vengeance against the enemies of his chosen people. The clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound; thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy *thunder* was in the Heavens; the lightnings lightened the world, the earth trembled and shook. †

We also find, that it was no unusual thing for the heathen Poets to represent the wrath and vengeance of their angry Gods in the same figurative language; an example of which we find in *Horace*.

Scimus ut impios—

Titanas, immanemque turmam
Fulmine sustulerit caduco,
Qui terram inertem, qui mare temperat
Ventosum, & umbras regnaque tristia,
Divosque mortalesque turbas
Imperio regit unus æquo.
Magnum illa terrorem intulerit Jovi,
Fidens juvenus horrida brachiis,
Fratresque tendentes opaco,
Pelion imposuit Olympo. ||

O'er Gods and mortals; o'er the dreary plains,
And shadowy Ghosts, supremely just he reigns,
But, dreadful in his wrath, to Hell pursu'd,
With falling *Thunders* dire, the fierce Titanian Brood.
Whose horrid youth, elate with impious pride,
Unnumber'd on their sinewy force relied;
Mountain on Mountain pil'd they rais'd in air,
And shook the throne of Jove, and bad the Thunderer fear. ‡

These awful and alarming convulsions in the air, are not only intended as an admonition to men, but they are in a certain degree salutary: They purge the air, which by a too long stagnation would prove unwholesome. They destroy, likewise, an infinite number of insects which, though in some respects useful enough, would become pernicious and destructive to mankind, were they to multiply without restriction. They also fill the cisterns and reservoirs of such countries as have no springs, and supply our rivers with more water in one hour, than all the winter showers of rain in several months.—There is mercy mixed with judgment, in all the providential dispensations of Heaven towards the children of men.

Allow

† Psal. lxxvii. 17, 18. || Horat. Lib. 3. Ode IV. ad Calliopen.

‡ Philip's translæt.

Allow me to observe here, *Onesimus*, that the same causes which produce such shocking effects over our heads, produce likewise, as fatal effects under our feet; namely, earthquakes, and eruptions of volcanoes; the same water, the same air, and the same sulphureous matter, which rend the atmosphere, rend and torture the bowels of the earth.

Such vapours as are condensed, and distil in rain, carry along with them the salt petre that lies on the surface of the earth, the salts with which the bodies of animals abound, and all the other sulphureous inflammable matter which they meet with in their passage. These waters make their way into the bowels of the earth, through an infinite number of small crevices or channels. Sometimes they pass over a bed of salt; at other times, over layers of sulphur; here they pass through large mines of iron; there through beds of vitriol: They dissolve, and carry along with them divers particles of all these several materials. Now all these being lodged in the bowels of the earth, the least particle of fire brought thither by the action of the wind, or by means of fermentation, which is no uncommon thing among sulphureous and metallic bodies, or by some small quantity of sulphur, which burns in the subterraneous caverns of the earth, inflames the whole: And these are such terrible, and powerful agents, that they make the earth shake and tremble wherever they meet with the least resistance. They swallow up whole towns; yea the whole terrestrial globe would soon be laid waste, if their rage and fury was not checked by the Almighty.

Those volcanoes which are considered by those who live near them, as judgments, and the plagues of their country, are assigned by the indulgence of the Almighty, for their welfare and preservation. By these is a vent opened, through which the condensed air, with all those other combustible materials which rend the very bowels of the earth, have room to discharge their fury. All these inflammable materials when dispersed in the open air, lose their active powers, which, when united, would be irresistible, and drive before them every thing that opposed their passage.

You see *Onesimus*, that as we are fearfully and wonderfully made, we are fearfully and wonderfully preserved. We live in the very centre of danger. It would be easy for the Almighty to make the earth we tread on, the Heavens above us, to be the executioners of his vengeance. In the Almighty's quiver there are numberless arrows, which he may shoot when, and how he pleases. Happy for such who although they live in the heart of danger, yet dwell in the secret place of the most high, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty: Who are covered with his feathers, and under whose wings is their trust. Such need not

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be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day: Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkeness, nor for destruction that walketh at noon day. || If they should fall in the general calamity, if the arrow that wounds the head of the wicked reaches them, it is but a paternal stroke; their souls are safe. The Lord keepeth the souls of his Saints, he preserveth them from all evil. May my *Onesimus* be among that happy number, then he will have no cause to dread, either the rending skies, or the trembling earth.

I come now to answer your request in continuing my observations with regard to the Thief on the cross, which I left unfinished in my last. And may I not add here, what an instance, an unparalleled instance of the sovereignty of God's triumphing grace over a base sinner! What made this man differ from his neighbour? What stopt his blasphemous tongue, and opened his obdurate heart to embrace Christ Jesus the Lord, as his Saviour from sin and wrath? Did these motions towards Jesus, that hatred to his former life, and that love to holiness which was now begot in his soul, proceed from himself? Are not these things to be referred entirely to the sovereign grace, and efficacious power of God; "who doth according to his will in the armies of Heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the Earth." Why did this man repent, and not his fellow? Was his repentance solely an act of his own? Was it a work independent of the spirit of grace and supplication? If repentance can commence without any reference to Heaven's gracious aid, why is God said to have "granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life?" Why is Jesus said to be "exalted with the Father's right hand, a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel?" Why then did this man believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and turn from the love of sin, to the love of holiness? We must refer it entirely to the sovereign good pleasure of God; in granting faith and repentance to the one, and withholding it from the other. "I thank thee (says our Lord) O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth; because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Independent of that heavenly grace of faith, of which God is the sole Author; what could the one see in Jesus more than the other: The one saw as well as the other, *Jesus* the Saviour, hanging all forlorn between Heaven and Earth, a spectacle of miseries and the reproach of men; both saw him oppressed and afflicted, deserted by his friends, left by his Disciples in the hands of his cruel foes, without using any means for his rescue. But why did the one see *Jesus* suffering as a propitiation for sin, crucified through weakness, yet was able to save him from going down to the pit? Was not this Heaven's gracious

ous gift? "The Lord giveth the blind their sight." God, the sovereign Lord of his own gifts and graces, grants not faith and repentance to those whom he sees will believe and repent; but he bestows these gifts that sinners *may* believe and repent. Was this man prior to this critical period, a man of strict morals of an unblemished character? This goes a great length with many, as they imagine, to purchase and procure the grace and favour of God. The contrary of this is evident: He was hanged for theft. Independent of faith, God's free gift; we know of no action the creature can perform formally good: Yea these very actions which we are apt to deem works of righteousness, will be found in the eyes of divine purity to be but splendid sins. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "Who maketh thee to differ from another?" No previous good works, no inherent good qualifications or amiable dispositions, made the difference between this man and his fellow. Previous to the conversion of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, what good work can be attributed to him: If a series of persecutions, blasphemy, rage and madness against God's anointed and his followers, could be recommendations to the God of holiness and purity, these he possessed in an eminent degree.

To imagine, we can by any work of our's obligate the divine Being to forgive our sins, accept our persons, and grant his favour and grace; is subjecting the sovereign of all to the will of the creature, and to a state of dependance on the creature; and what is this, but in effect making him no God. Absolute sovereignty is an essential, unalienable pearl in the crown of Heaven. If God was to search the whole universe for such moral qualifications in a rational creature as the moving cause of his bestowing faith, repentance, or pardon; I aver he could not find any such: The cause is only resident in himself, not in the creature. "By the grace of God, I am what I am."—Why was Abel a gracious, a good man, and Cain a profligate wicked wretch? Was it owing to their birth? Did they not lie in the same womb? Were they not equally descendants of fallen Adam? Both by nature children of wrath. Was it not God's sovereign grace, and free disinterested love that made the distinction? Here was shown a standing example of the sovereignty of his grace to future periods in the first posterity of man. Why did he give grace to Abraham, and separated him from his idolatrous kindred, and dignified him to be the root of the Messiah? Might he not have chosen his Father, or Grand-father, or any other person in that idolatrous country as well as the Father of the faithful? Grace would have made the same change on any, as well as on Abraham. The same faith and repentance granted to the penitent

tent Thief, bestowed on the other, would have made him a believer and a penitent.—Why did God confine his promise to Isaac; and not extend it to Ishmael, the seed of the same Abraham by Hagar? Or to the children he had by Keturah after Sarah's death? What reason can be alledged for this, but his own sovereign good pleasure. Why did he not give the fallen Angels a moment for repentance after their sin; but condemned them immediately to irrevocable pains? Is it not as free for him to give grace to any he pleases, as to create what worlds he pleases? Why doth he not give all Converts an equal measure of grace? Some have mites, others have treasures. Why doth he give his grace to some sooner, to others later? Some are sanctified almost from the womb; others not until they arrive at full age; some not until they have fallen into some grievous sin, as Manasseh, Mary Magdalen, and Paul; Some at the last period of their existence as the Thief —What reason can be assigned for all this, but God's own sovereign good will and pleasure? He is the free disposer of his own grace. But this uncontrollable sovereign, by no means renders his sovereignty formidable. He shuts not up his throne of grace from any that seek him; he invites men, all men; his arms are open, and the sceptre stretched out; and no man continues under the arrest of his lusts, but he that is unwilling to be otherwise; and such a one hath no reason to complain of God.

There is *Oneſimus* in the hearts of all men such a principle of legal pride, that they wish to have as little of God's sovereignty intermixed with their religious principles as possible. To maintain and believe this, lays all self-gloriation in the dust; exalts the grace of God upon the ruins of human pride. “Stand by, I am holier than thou,” is the language of a proud pharisaical spirit; by no means that of a genuine humble christian, who sees he is an entire debtor to the free grace of God for all he possesses. Indeed considering God, as the God of grace, the most part of all his operations respecting the children of men, are entirely unaccountable to us, except upon this principle, his most absolute and uncontrollable sovereignty.—Why did God grant this exclusive privilege to the Jews above every other nation, to honor them with the depositum of his oracles? “He dealt not so with any other nation; and as for his judgments, they knew them not.” The rest of the world had no warnings from the Prophets, no dictates from Heaven but what they had from the sight of nature, the view of the works of creation, and the administration of Providence; and what remained among them of some ancient traditions from Noah; which in course of time were greatly effaced. Now, was there any reason in them for
this

this indulgence? Might not God have been as liberal to any other nation, yea to all other nations in the world, if it had been his sovereign will? Any other people were as fit to be entrusted with the divine oracles. Had the blood of Abraham from whom they were immediately descended, any more precious tincture than the blood of any other man? They, as well as other nations were made of one blood; and that corrupted both in the fountain, and in the streams. Can any one say, but that God might have left that favorite nation to grope after him by the dark glimmerings of Nature's light, and shown his statutes and his judgments exclusively to others?—Why did he not at the commencement of Christianity, give the same grace to the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, to acknowledge and own the person of the Messiah, to whom he made the promise of him for so many successive ages? Why has he left them for more than sixteen hundred years concluded in unbelief; their heart fat and their ears heavy? † Why did he not call the Gentiles without rejecting the Jews; and bind them both up together in the same bundle of life? Why he should acquaint some with it, a little after its publication in Judea; and others not until a long time after; some in the first ages of christianity; others have never to this day heard of Jesus and the resurrection? What reason can be assigned for these things, but “even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight?” What merit can be discovered in the Gentiles? There is something of justice in the Jews rejection; nothing but sovereignty in the reception of the Gentiles into the christian church. If the Jews were bad, the Gentiles were in some sort worse. The Jews owned the true God without mixture of Idols; though they owned not the Messiah in his appearance, which they did in a promise; but the Gentiles owned neither the one, nor the other. Some tell us it was for the merit of some of their Ancestors. But how could the means of grace to be taken from the Jews, who had, (if any people ever had) meritorious Ancestors for a plea? But if the merit of some of their Ancestors were the cause; what was the reason the debt due to their merit, was not paid to their immediate progeny, or to themselves; but to a posterity so distant from them; and so abominably depraved as the Gentile world was, at the time when the gospel sun arose in their horizon? Or was it from the foresight that the Gentiles would embrace it, and the Jews reject it? That the Gentiles would embrace it in one place, and not in another? How did God foresee this, but in his own purpose and grace, which he was resolved to display in one, and not in another? Or did he foresee this in their dispositions and natures. What,

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† *Isai. vi. 10.*

were they not all one corrupt mass? Was any part of Adam better than another? How did God foresee that which was not, nor possibly could be, without an act of his sovereign pleasure and will to give ability and grace to receive it? "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy."

Upon the whole *Onesimus*, I think we cannot account for the conversion of one of these malefactors, and the malicious obstinacy of the other, upon any other principle than the mere sovereign good pleasure of God: That infinitely wise Arbiter gives none account of his matters. And who, without suffering for the daring enterprise, can call him to an account, or say unto him what dost thou. Let us firmly adhere to this one principle, that "the Judge of all the earth will do right," although to us "his ways are in the sea, and his paths in the mighty waters." "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." He is righteous and holy in the execution of his justice, as well as in the administration of his grace. Just and holy in suffering the impenitent Thief to die in his sins, as well as bestowing saving faith and an evangelical repentance on his fellow-sufferer. The Lord is just in all his ways; righteous in all his works. What horrid impiety to arraign the great sovereign of all at our tribunal! What, to affirm he would not be just, if he did, or did not such and such things! who art thou O man, that repliest against God: Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter power over the clay, to make of the same lump, one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor. ||

Again *Onesimus*, from this instance of the conversion of the Thief on the cross, we may clearly see the all-powerful efficacy, and propitiatory nature of Christ's death for the expiation of sin. Upon this, and no other principle can we account for the salvation of this extraordinary man.—I think none will presume to say that he entered the celestial Paradise upon the footing of his good works. Prior to this period he was a loose and an abandoned sinner: And as I formerly observed it is very likely that he hung a considerable time upon the cross, blaspheming the Son of God along with his fellow-sufferer. This was a poor atonement for the errors of his bypast life.—Copying after that example of patience and resignation which was so eminently exhibited by Jesus on the cross, could not be the meritorious cause of this man's salvation; what, I pray, is praise-worthy in the resignation of a malefactor suffering for a capital crime. But if this is *so* necessary in mens salvation, how were such saved as never had the happiness to have it exhibited to them; nor presented as the ob-
ject

ject of their imitation? I hope they did not go to perdition, because they lived prior to the manifestation of *God* in the flesh. The truth is *Once for all*, that the Saints who lived under the legal dispensation, this man, who from the cross reached the Throne, we, and all succeeding generations to the end of time obtain salvation after one and the same manner. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to day and for ever." "He was the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world." The efficacy and virtue of his obedience and death, reached the first ages of the world; it will descend to the salvation of the latest posterity, until ages and generations be no more: While the example he exhibited and the pattern he showed both living and dying, could not possibly be the object of their imitation who lived prior to his appearance in human nature.—It would appear then, that neither his good works, nor his imitation of Christ's example was the foundation, or meritorious cause of his admission into Paradise—If it be said, he was saved because he repented: But why was not Judas saved too, he repented? Is not the Spirit of God far more explicit in informing us with regard to the repentance of that unhappy man than that of the Thief? We are not told in express terms that the latter repented, although we are certain he did: But we are told Judas repented, acknowledged he had done evil, in betraying innocent blood; and yet if we can give any credit to our Lord's words he was *the Son of perdition*. This then is evident, that one repenting sinner is saved, and another condemned. There must undoubtedly be some very material difference between the repentance of the one, and of the other.—The repentance of Judas was merely legal, arising from a dread of God's wrath for his sin; and that without faith's views of Christ's blood, as sufficient to remove the guilt, and purge from the filth of that heinous transgression. There are very few however abandoned they may live, when they come within views of Eternity, sin staring them in the face, conscience awakened and upbraiding them for their bypast wicked and dissolute lives, but will testify a sorrow for their past conduct; but this may proceed entirely from legal principles and self-interested motives; a dread of falling into the hands of the living God. In the repentance of the Thief on the cross, along with his sorrow and compunction for sin; there was an immediate and direct appeal to the Saviour, as I shall show afterwards. In the repentance of this man, there was this necessary, absolutely necessary concomitant, a genuine faith which has for its immediate object *Christ, and him crucified*. This was not in the repentance of the traitor, otherwise he had been saved, notwithstanding of what he had *done*. Faith in Christ's blood, will save the veriest wretch; and
without

without it the most seemingly virtuous and moral man shall never tread the threshold of glory. What I have just now observed *On: simus* is corroborated, and proven beyond all controversy by an infallible Apostle. “Be it known unto you, (says Paul) that through this man, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified.”†—But here again the question recurs; was it the faith and repentance of the Thief the principal cause of his salvation? Or in other words, is it faith as an act of the creature, or, the object, viz. Christ, by which we come to be justified before God and finally saved? The former I think it cannot be, without flatly contradicting a negative assertion of an inspired penman, by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified. † The same inspired Apostle positively proves in his epistle to the Romans, chap. iii. 24. by what this man, yea every man, is justified and saved.—Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.—A true and genuine faith, is the root and principle of all evangelical repentance; it is the instrumental cause of a sinner’s justification, by which he yields his assent to this true and faithful saying, “That Jesus Christ came to save the chief of sinners.” “Who loved me, and gave himself for me.” So that as I elsewhere told you, we can have no idea of a saving repentance without faith; nor a saving faith, without taking into our consideration *Christ* and him crucified; dying, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself—In a word, faith and repentance have no share in the purchase of redemption: We are not redeemed, because we repent and believe; but because Christ died. Faith gives an actual saving interest in his death; and repentance flowing from faith, raises a hatred and abhorrence to every species of iniquity; and a love to the practice of universal holiness. These graces then, as I elsewhere observed are the *conditio sine qua non*, but by no means, the principal efficient cause of our salvation. So that on the whole, this man went to Paradise that day with the Saviour upon the footing of *Jesus*, giving his life a ransom for sin; and paving the way to the holiest of all with his own blood.

It is worth our notice to observe the effects and fruits which followed immediately on this man’s conversion. He reproves his fellow-sufferer; confesses his sin, apologizes for Christ; and makes an immediate appeal to him by prayer. He reproves his fellow-sufferer; dost thou not fear God. A strong negative, implying that the fear of God was not in his heart; or else he never would persist in such blasphemous language; that he never would say a confederacy with them that had joined in a confederacy

|| Acts xiii. 37, 38.

† Gal. ii. 16.

deracy against the Lord and his anointed.—Where the fear of God is not the ruling principle in a man's heart, there is no sin so vile but he will commit; there is no course however wicked but he will run into. See, what a horrid catalogue of sins the Apostle enumerates in Rom. iii. v. 11,—18. and traces up this black list to the want of God's fear. “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” If men were afraid of God, would they, durst they sin with such a high hand as they do? Would any one in the immediate presence of the King, blaspheme his Majesty, and not be afraid of his wrath; and not incur his displeasure? Certainly no. But alas! many can in the immediate presence of the Lord God Almighty provoke him to his face, blaspheme his name; pollute his sabbaths; act the profligate in every respect without fear or dread. *Nehemiah* informs us, that he durst not do as the Governors before him did, because of the fear of God. † What preserved Job from a multiplicity of sins which others committed was this: For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure. ‡ Would the impenitent Thief, if the fear of God had been before his eyes, and considering his present situation, suffering for his sin, and within a few moments of eternity, have reviled the Son of God because he would not save him?—He reproves his fellow-sufferer for this reason, that he was in the same condemnation. † It was not long when they must launch into an invisible world, and be placed in an unalterable state. There is no doubt but this reprehension proceeded from real affection, and an unfeigned desire for the eternal welfare of this impenitent man. It is very observable, that all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, wish that all their fellow-sinners obtained the same discoveries, and felt the same pleasure in wisdom's ways that they themselves do. They are no monopolizers of religion: There is enough in *Jesus* for all sinners of every description, and character. “Andrew said to Simon, we have found the Messiah.” The news were too good to conceal; the gift too rich to hoard up for themselves. “Come see a man which told me all things ever I did,” is the language of a certain Samaritan woman, to whom Jesus had displayed his glory and imparted his grace. It is the most ardent wish of every genuine christian, that their fellow creatures and fellow sinners were cast in the same mould, and assimilated into the same image with themselves.

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† Nehem. v. 15.

‡ Job xxxi. 19.

† Luke xxiii. 40.

He confesses his sin and its just demerit. " We indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds." His language breathes nothing but that of a true convict; he is deeply concerned for the evil of his ways; for these crimes which brought him to this ignominious exit. He confesses his sin, takes shame to himself, and gives glory to God. Gracious persons are far from making the sins of others a perpetual topic for exclamation; they still include themselves in all their confessions, and if God was to contend against them, they would live and die in praise of his righteous judgments. None but a true penitent sees sin in its proper colours; none dread the divine displeasure more, because more acquainted with God than others. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause. †—Observe again his apology for Christ: " But this man hath done nothing amiss." When almost every one present had something to cast in *Jesus'* teeth; when the Governors, the Soldiers, the Jews, the impenitent Thief were all combined to asperse the character, and ruin the reputation of the Son of God, he had something to speak in his favour: He could not be silent. If any one had stepped forward, and addressed the Thief thus; all that you suffer, you suffer justly, all is too little considering the nature of your crime; this he would readily assent to, yea, if they had accosted him thus, you deserve Hell for what you have done; to this he would have cordially assented. But he cannot hear a word spoken against the Son of God, but his heart burns within him; his indignation is roused, and his zeal bursts out into a flame. None need ever imagine that they have obtained repentance unto life, and sound conversion to God, who can with silence and composure see God dishonoured, and not be offended at the affront offered to his sacred Majesty. " Fools make a mock of sin." They not only tamper with it themselves, but take a pleasure in seeing and hearing of others crimes. Moses, with regard to what concerned himself, was the meekest man on earth, but when the people fell into idolatry, out of indignation and zeal, he broke the calf in pieces, and stamped it into a powder, and made the people drink of it; and for the same offence, ordered every man to hang his sword by his side, and go forth and slay every man his brother. However silent we may be in our own quarrel, silence is dangerous in the cause of God.

Again, observe the prayer of this penitent Thief. " Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." It would seem evident from the prayer of the Thief on the cross, and Christ's answer to it, that whether Christ be a divine person or
not,

not, he is to be worshipped. But it is impossible that our prayer can be heard, or answered when address'd to an improper object. But this man's prayer was received and his suit granted, *ergo* Christ must be a proper object of prayer; and if of prayer, of every part of religious worship. Socinians differ on this head; some are of opinion that Christ is the object of religious worship, others are of a contrary persuasion. But is it not strange, that any one should doubt the propriety of this, when we read of two. (besides other proofs from Scripture) on the verge of eternity, praying to Christ. "Lord Jesus, (says Stephen) receive my Spirit." "Lord remember me, &c. says the Thief." Again, it is as hard to conceive, if Christ the Son of God, is not a divine person, how we can pay divine worship and service to him: And if he is not to be worshipped with a divine worship, what is it then? Doth it consist in a sort of complimentary service and honor, such as we pay to our superiors, when we address them with the title of my Lord, your Grace, &c. If Arians and Socinians say he is to be worshipped with a divine worship, would not this say, that he is a divine person, possessed of omniscience, omnipresence, and all-sufficiency; these and such like attributes and perfections are the formal reason of all the service and worship we pay to Deity. But it after all their robbing him of his supreme Deity, they insist he is to be worshipped with a divine worship; how far in the scale must it rise? How far must their votaries in worshipping Christ go, and no further? They must not go so far as to worship him as God supreme; but how far must they go?

This man, either previous to the present period, had had a speculative knowledge of what Christ was; but through a strong propensity to a licentious life, had stifled his conscience, and shut his eyes against the light; or else, when on the cross there had been an immediate revelation of Christ, what he was, what he possessed, made to him. To which of these we must refer the knowledge that this man had of Jesus, I will not determine. Probably it was owing to the latter: The same spirit that convinced him of sin, might immediately reveal to him Christ Jesus the Lord. Instantaneously was Jesus revealed to the great Apostle of the Gentiles.

This man was persuaded that Christ had a kingdom, "Lord remember me when thou comest to thy kingdom." What more could a Disciple have said, who heard this doctrine immediately from Christ's own mouth. "I give unto you a kingdom as my Father hath given unto me." Yes *Onesimus*, he is Lord of the kingdom of nature, grace, and glory, although ignominiously hanging on a cross. What but the strongest faith could have seen glory through such baseness and ignominy.

He is not only persuaded that he has a kingdom, but a kingdom to impart. What a comfortable reflection to that poor dying man. Christ has a kingdom, a crown, a sceptre, a throne to dispose of. Nothing can equal a genuine believer for boldness; he aspires at no less than the kingdom of glory. Faith has a broad foundation to build its expectations on, Christ's promise, and Christ's purchase. The cross purchased a crown, ignominy and contempt, glory, the most excruciating pains, eternal health. This man is further persuaded, that this kingdom will not be disposed of, and possessed by holy Angels, and holy Apostles only, but by all for whom it is prepared, purchased and bequeathed; however vile in their natures, and odious in their characters.—Faith in Christ's blood, will give an actual right to that kingdom in reversion for all believers. He knew that “Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance:” Sinners of every description; poor penitent Thieves, yea the very chief of sinners. “God is no respecter of persons.” “Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” The salvation of his soul was his principal chief concern; a genuine character of a true penitent. Although walking in the midst of trouble, environed with the most tormenting pains, to be either wholly rescued from these, or have them assuaged, was his least concern; but his most ardent and earnest desire lay here, to be remembered by Christ when he came to his kingdom. The contrary was the case with his fellow-sufferer; all his care was about the salvation of his body, to have it eased of its pains and be delivered from his present misery: And because Christ would not do this, he rails on him.

Observe *Onesimus*, Christ's answer to this man's prayer. To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. † The Paradise here mentioned, is the third, or Empyrean Heavens, where the soul of our Lord Jesus went after its separation from the body. Heaven and Paradise are synonymous terms with the Apostle Paul. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. I knew a man, &c. caught up to the third Heavens;—how he was caught up into Paradise. ‡ Heaven in Scripture is called Paradise, because it is a place of universal delights, and that in the most eminent manner and degree. “Before God's face, at his right hand are pleasures evermore.” What
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† Luke xliii. 43.

‡ Hence we may learn, that the soul survives the body, and exists after the dissolution of the union; also that the souls of the righteous go immediately to Heaven, and not to any middle place; and that they remain in a state of activity, and not like the sleeping birds in a state of torpitude and inactivity as some imagine.

a wonderful change in the affairs of this man. Just now hanging on the cross, executed for theft; in an instant death sets his soul at liberty, and Christ receives him into Paradise. Here Christ promises him his company in glory. "This day shalt thou be with me." "Where Christ is, there will all his servants be." "I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me." After all was accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ the Mediator but a certain prediction recorded in Psal. xcvi. 11. In order therefore to its fulfilment, he intimates to his murderers that he thirsted. † As man he was obnoxious to the natural infirmities and weaknesses of human nature, although entirely sinless; and in this case there was no wonder that he thirsted. He was prior to this, a whole day and night without taking any refreshment; that is, from the time he eat the passover with his Disciples until now. Considering also, that all this intervening space he was still in action. A considerable time in the garden in an agony, sweating great drops of blood; from the garden he was hurried to Annas, from Annas to Caiaphas, and early in the morning from Caiaphas to Pilate; from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate, and then to the cross. Add to all this, he had lost much blood; some in the garden, some in Pilate's hall, and on the cross. But the principal reason of his crying out, "I thirst," was to fulfil a Scripture, and the very last in the Old Testament respecting his death. It is very observable, that a great many of the most remarkable incidents respecting Christ's life and death, are taken notice of as a fulfilment of the Scripture. He was born of a virgin at Bethlehem; dwelt at Nazareth and Capernaum, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.—Whatsoever our Lord Jesus as Mediator was to do, or suffer, came not by accident, nor according to the will of man, but was fore-seen and predetermined by God, and accordingly recorded in Scripture.

It was customary to have vinegar at the place of execution, either to hasten the effusion of blood, by applying it to the wounds of the dying person, and thus to accelerate his dissolution; or rather according to some, to prolong his pain and preserve him from fainting. The Evangelist Mark informs us, ‡ that they offered him wine mixed with myrrh before he was nailed to the cross; according to a custom that prevailed among the Jews, to stupify the senses of the malefactor. The other in which was the vinegar was offered by the soldiers after he was nailed to the cross in mock and ridicule. See an amazing over-ruling providence! directing those soldiers to accomplish their own malevolent intentions; to carry on their cruel ludicrous farce in offer-

† John xix. 28, 29.

‡ Mark xv. 29.

ing him vinegar in his thirst. The God of Heaven has another end in view, to accomplish a prediction which took place many ages prior to this. God in his sovereign providence, can make the wickedness of the wicked answer the purposes of his glory, and bring about events, in which the agent has not the remotest view. Here the soldiers accomplished their purpose, and God accomplished his. The same observation will hold true in innumerable instances: The death of Christ particularly verifies this. Having tasted the cup offered by the inhuman soldiery upon an Hyssop-reed, he begins his song of triumph. When Moses led the Israelitish host through the red sea, they in the very spot where they pitched their tents, sung a song of praise to him, who opened a way through the liquid element for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over. Deborah and Barak followed the same example when the Lord gave them a signal victory over Sisera. In Rev. xv. 2, 3. we are told, that those who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name; stood on a sea of glass, having the harps of God, singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. In like manner, the Captain of our salvation having gloriously triumphed, by a complete conquest over all the spiritual foes of his people, *sin, death, hell, and the Devil*; sung this song of triumph to the joy of sinners, and the eternal confusion of their enemies.—*It is finished.* Now the captain of our salvation shouts, that man's salvation is accomplished, and completely as to its impetration perfected: As if he had said, I lay nine months in the Virgin's womb; was born in a stable, and laid in a manger; fasted forty days, prayed on the mount, sweat in the garden; have hung three hours on the cross in agony and torment; but now all is *finished*. Now sin is abolished, death destroyed, Hell conquered, the Devil subdued, the gates of Heaven opened, God's wrath turned away; now the law is magnified and made honorable, justice satisfied, and the interests of holiness secured. What I have just now observed *Onesimus*, you will find confirmed in the sacred Oracles. || This was I think the principal thing our Lord had his eye upon, in this triumphant exclamation, the finishing our redemption by the pouring out his soul unto the death. † Permit me my dear friend,

|| Luke xix. 10. Math. xx. 28. Heb. ix. 12.

† The finishing of the work of Creation, and the winding up of the wheels of time, are expressed by a similar phrase. ‡ But what comfort could we derive from this consideration, that the Almighty Architect had stretched out the Heavens for our Canopy, the Earth to tread on; had created

‡ Rev. x. 7.

friend, to insist a little more particularly on this head, and enquire into the full import of this emphatic and comprehensive phrase.—*It is finished.* The whole work the Mediator came to accomplish is now gloriously terminated. All the counsels, purposes and decrees of the Father, respecting man's salvation he had declared and unfolded; he kept nothing back. He unfolded God's gracious intention in sending him into the world, which was, "not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Those doctrines respecting the pure nature of God, and the sinful nature of man, he clearly expounded; the necessity of his death as a propitiation for sin, and of faith to give an actual interest in his merit and atonement. Nothing, either respecting faith or practice he kept back. Whatever belonged to his prophetic office was now concluded and perfected. And with regard to his priestly office, all his intercessory prayers for his people here on earth, were at an end. How often was the Son of God engaged whole nights in the mountains praying. He taught through the day, he frequently prayed through the night. "It was his meat and his drink to do the will of his heavenly Father, and to finish the work he gave him to do." Three and thirty years he spent in the most constant labour, in the most unremitting diligence. His obedience to the law in his life, constitutes a part of that robe of righteousness, and garment of salvation, wherewith all believers are arrayed; and upon the account of which they stand justified before God. "For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one many shall be made righteous." † Such is the sublime perfection, and vast extent of the divine law, that the justification of a sinner on the account of any obedience he can give, is absolutely impossible. How should
sinners

created sea and land to feed us; the sun, moon and stars to give us light: These in their kind and nature are eminent favours: But the capital rare blessing Heaven reserved, to be procured and meritoriously purchased on the *Cross*. Faith's view of man's salvation being completed on the accursed tree, gives a zest and relish to all the temporal mercies we enjoy at the hand of God, as the God of nature and providence. If the work of our redemption had not been finished on the cross, what an awful prospect would the finishing of the mystery of God afford. But that being completed, the genuine Christian looks forward to that awful dreadful day with composure and delight: Yea with a certain triumph. Yes, when the mystery of God is finished, all his troubles, trials and sorrows are at an end; this is the day in which he will be put in the full possession of that kingdom prepared by God, from the foundation of the world, and purchased in time by his dear Son.

sinners exult, when they can contemplate on, and with safety trust in, the vicarious righteousness of the condescending and adorable surety. The obedience which our Lord gave to the law, did fully quadrate with all, and every precept and demand of it. It flowed from the most ardent love to God, and the most unfeigned affection to man. God who is the unerring judge of all excellency, bore testimony to the divine Redeemer. He spoke it once, yea twice, with an audible voice from the excellent glory; in him I am well pleased. Yea, thoughtless inconsiderate mortals, gave their suffrage to this testimony; they spoke what they scarcely understood, when they cried out, *he hath done all things well.*—It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." He fulfilled every jot and tittle of the divine law; nay he more than fulfilled it; he magnified it, he gave it good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. || He defied the most vigilant of his enemies to convince him of sin. A more malignant, and a far more sagacious adversary than the Scribes and Pharisees could detect no blemish in him. The prince of this world, that infernal tyrant, who had deceived and enslaved the nations of the earth, came and found nothing in him; not the least corruption in his nature, nor the least defect in his obedience.—“*It is finished.*” That life of obedience to the law which he lived for us, is now come to a happy period. For if by one man’s offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. † If one offence committed by one *mere* man, made all his posterity chargeable with guilt, and liable to death; how much more shall the manifold instances of our divine Redeemer’s obedience; his most consummate righteousness; how much more shall they absolve all his people from condemnation and punishment, and entitle them to the honours and joys of a blessed immortality.

It is finished. His days of suffering, as well as his life of obedience, were now terminated: Consequently, salvation from sin and wrath perfectly finished. For this end, was he sent into the world; he lived, he died, to purchase *an eternal redemption for us.* Upon this was his gracious heart set: For this he pressed forward, he longed, he was straitned until it was accomplished: O what labour and pains it cost the Son of God to redeem men † God created the world in six days; three and thirty years were spent in grief and sorrow, in pain and toil, in redeeming it. God had no more to do, than by an act of his powerful will to produce a world out of nothing; but to restore a lost world to the favour and kind embraces of an offended, a justly offended

Deity;

|| Luke vi. 38.

† Rom. v. 17.

Deity, the Son of God must suffer, bleed, and die. "It behoved the Son of man to suffer."—*It is finished*, all the promises and predictions respecting the future appearance, life, and sufferings of the Messiah were at this juncture fully accomplished—*It is finished*. Now is the period, in which the whole legal œconomy must be suspended, and for ever honourably laid aside. The law of carnal commandments contained in ordinances died with Christ. That dispensation which was but a figure of good things to come, yields to a better, and more glorious and permanent œconomy. The sacrifice which the high Priest of our profession offered up, has for ever superseded the Levitical. His appearance in the character of our high Priest, has for ever sunk the Aaronical priesthood. No more is the blood of innocent victims to be poured out at God's altar. No more is the Jewish high Priest to appear in the insignia of his priestly office: All are resigned up, and laid down at the foot of the cross. No more is the knowledge of the true God to be confined within the narrow limits of the Jewish Empire; but from the rising sun to where it sets, the news of salvation through Jesus Christ, and him crucified, are to be propagated. What a sudden change in the affairs of Zion! prior to this period, she sat almost solitary and alone: Between Dan and Beersheba were her children confined. Now she has in prospect a numerous offspring, numerous as the pearly drops of dew upon the tender herbage; begotten by the Gospel of Jesus, among the outcast Gentile nations—*It is finished*. The conflict which the Redeemer had with man's grand adversary the Devil, is now come to a glorious issue. It had been foretold near four thousand years prior to this, that the seed of the woman should have his heel bruised by the serpent; and that in return he should bruise his head: Now both are accomplished. The Redeemer of sinners is within a few moments of commending his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father by the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross. Now he has gloriously triumphed over principalities and powers; led them captive, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross.—Must he not (think you *Oneſimus*) have been more than a creature, before he could accomplish these great ends by his death? Yes certainly: He was "God manifested in the flesh." † The doctrine of Christ's vicarious obedience and death is the very essence of christianity; the glory of the Gospel; the foundation, and the *only* foundation upon which the salvation of men depends, and is secured.—Immediate'y upon uttering the above exclamation, Christ bowed the head and gave up the

Ghost.

† Let Arian pride before him bow,—
He's Jesus and Jehovah too.

Ghost.—The vail of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom; the Earth did quake, and the rocks were rent; the graves were opened, and many bodies of the Saints which slept arose. || What strange events were these, which happened on the death of the Lord of glory! Christ on the cross a dead corpse; and yet the power of his death reaches the temple, rends in twain the vail; shakes the Earth; breaks in pieces the flinty rock; pierces into the dark caverns of death. Death quickens the dead. Many great Princes there have been, who have caused their terror to spread far and wide while they lived; yet when they came to die, nothing more extraordinary attended their dissolution, than that of the meanest peasant. Never did the Earth tremble, never did the rocks rend, or the graves open at the death of any, but the divine Redeemer.—*The vail of the temple was rent.* † Was not this a symbol to us, that an entrance was procured for us into the immediate presence of God, by Christ's propitiatory sacrifice? This was the key which opened the gates of glory which our sins had shut: By this we are also taught the abrogation of the ceremonial law; the hand writing of ordinances that was against us, is now cancelled. ‡ He is our peace, (says the Apostle) who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh, the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for

|| The opening of some of the Saints graves is taken notice of by the evangelist Matthew, chap. xxvii. 52. as among the incidents which happened at Christ's death: And yet we are told v. 53. that they came out of their graves after his resurrection. Perhaps the meaning may be this, that although their graves opened at his death, the dead did not arise until his resurrection.

† The temple was divided into two parts. In the first, was the Table, the shew-bread, and the candlesticks; this was called the holy place. In the other, was the golden Censer, the Ark of the Testament overlaid with gold round about; wherein was the golden pot which had Manna, Aaron's rod which budded, and the Tables of the Law. There were also the Cherubims placed at each end of the Ark, and overshadowing the Mercy-seat. These two places were separated by a vail; which vail was rent in twain from top to bottom at the death of Christ.

‡ The Schoolmen say that there was a time when the ceremonial law was profitable, viz. before Christ; because, its observance was strictly enjoined. After Christ's death that law became dead, but not deadly until the gospel was planted, and then it became deadly; and therefore dangerous to introduce any of its ceremonies under the dispensation of the gospel.

for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. § This circumstance attending the death of Christ might perhaps allude to the rending of that vail between God and sinners, viz. *fin*. Nothing ever could have separated between God and his creatures but this accursed thing; and while it remained, God's face within the vail, we never could have seen; neither could we have participated of those rivers of pleasures which flow in, and water the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem. Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. † Now instead of the vail of our sins, through which the eyes of infinite purity could not behold the sinner but with detestation and abhorrence, there is another vail through which God looks on men with delight and complacency, the vail of Christ's flesh. ‡ Through this vail, an infinitely holy God sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel, so as to enter into judgment with Jacob and Israel.

Perhaps, there was something more typified by the rending of the vail of the temple, viz. the rending of that vail of ignorance which covered the minds of the Jews under the legal economy; this is done away by the preaching of the gospel under a clearer dispensation of grace.—Another circumstance attending Christ's death, was the rending of the rocks. Perhaps to point out the obdurate hardness and stupidity which seized the Jews at this period. And was it not strange, all things considered, that there was a whole heart among all that vast concourse of spectators that attended on this occasion? But why need we wonder at their obduracy and hardness of heart? Will not the same be found with multitudes in every period? Many will weep for the death of a friend, that never shed a tear for sin, the procuring cause of Christ's death. Perhaps, this was intended to convince us of this great truth, that unless a believing view of the death of Christ rend our hearts, nothing ever will. The law of the ten commandments was written on tables of stone, because it was never designed by God to melt the heart of stone; its threatenings may make the heart tremble, but never soften it into a gospel repentance. This is referred to Christ's death, by whose powerful energy the stones did cleave asunder.

Observe again, another circumstance attending the death of Christ; the graves opened, and many bodies of the Saints which slept arose. Some think that it was a current opinion among the Jews, that when their Messiah came, there should be a resurrection of some pious men. It was strange then, if this was true, that when they saw numbers who had been long in the dust appear

pear again in the holy city; that they were not immediately convinced, that he whom they crucified was indeed the promised Messiah. It is not easy to conjecture, neither is it very material for us to know who were the persons raised on this occasion. Some think they were the holy Prophets, who lived and died in the faith of his future appearance; and some imagine that they were some of those who believed in Jesus, as old Simeon; and died before his resurrection. It would appear however, that they were not long dead; at least, that there were some alive who had been acquainted with them before their death. If it had been otherwise, they would have rather passed for strangers in the holy city, than for persons raised out of their graves. Some think that our Lord's speech in John v. 25. has a particular reference to this: This notion seems not to be well founded.

The raising of some of the Saints at our Lord's resurrection was no doubt to teach us among other things, this awful interesting lesson; that there is a day coming, when all that are in their graves shall rise again by the powerful energetic voice of the same Jesus, who hung on the cross, coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory. Yes *Onesimus*, "the earth shall disclose her dead and no more cover her slain." The grave cannot keep its prey, death cannot retain its prisoners.—That my dear friend may be raised by virtue of his union with Jesus; and in that great and dreadful day, meet the great Judge as his Advocate, and be placed on his right hand, and received up into the mansions of endless bliss, and uninterrupted felicity; is the ardent wish, and most sincere prayer of his

PHILEMON.



L E T T E R X.

PHILEMON TO ONESIMUS.

Dear Onesimus.

I received yours, which brings me the agreeable news of the recovery of our dear friend Marcus. "Afflictions spring not out of the dust, nor trouble out of the dunghill." If our heavenly Father chastise his children, it is that they may be made partakers of his holiness. This is Heaven's grand end and design in
all

all the variegated conditions of believers in this life, to make them more and more conformable to the holy one of Israel. This is the ultimate wish of all Saints, to be thus conformed to the image of their heavenly Father. God's design, and their wish exactly quadrate. Observe the effect that an afflicted state had on the royal Psalmist: Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep thy word. † Welcome chastisements whose fruit has this tendency, to make us hate sin, and love Christ and holiness the more.—You hint in yours, that an argument for Christ's vicarious sufferings, and the propitiatory nature of his death, may be learned from the Jewish ritual; particularly that part of it respecting the rite of sacrificing. I think your observation is entirely just. As I formerly observed, it would be very difficult to assign a reason worthy the divine Being to have imposed such a variety of sacrifices on that people, without viewing them as types and shadows of a better sacrifice, which was actually to put away sin, and finish transgression which those could only do typically. It would be very difficult to make any sense of the Apostle's reasoning on this head in his epistle to the Hebrews otherwise.—Permit me then, to take a cursory view of the Jewish ritual on this head. The Levitical sacrifices may be reduced to these four kinds: || Burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, sacrifices for sin, and trespass-offerings. Some think that burnt-offerings were presented to God, as the Creator and preserver of all things, and so, eminently worthy of our worship and veneration: Peace-offerings respected God as the liberal beneficent giver of all these good things which regard this present life; and these as already obtained, and so they were called Eucharistical sacrifices; or only asked and expected by the interposition of a vow, and then they were called votive sacrifices; or without a vow, and then they came under the denomination of voluntary sacrifices, because they proceeded from the mere good will and pleasure of the offerer: The sin and trespass-offerings had a respect to God, offended by the sin and trespass of the offerer. ‡——Others divide the Jewish sacrifices

† Psal. cxix. 63.

|| Outram de sacrificiis.

‡ In the above division of the Jewish sacrifices, particularly in the reason assigned for their being offered; the holocaust or burnt-offering, and the peace-offering are excluded from being propitiatory sacrifices. That the burnt-offering was of a propitiatory nature, I think is evident from Levit. i. 4. And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make *Atonement* for him. We are further told, v. 9. That it should be a sweet savour unto the Lord, or a savour of rest; a sacrifice by which God would be *appeased*.

crifices into the burnt-offering; Levit. i. The meat-offering; chap. ii. The peace-offering; chap. iii. The sin-offering; chap. iv. The trespass-offering; chap. v. The burnt-offering was to be called, because it was to be wholly burned and consumed upon the altar by fire, except the skin. The Hebrew term *gnola*, comes from the root *gnala*, which signifies to ascend, because being wholly burned and consumed, it ascended up to Heaven in smoke and vapour — The particular occasions upon which they offered the burnt-offering, were such as were providential; when upon emergent occasions they had guilt, or judgments to be removed; or mercies to be bestowed, or acknowledged. Levit. xxii. 18. Again upon some incidental occasions, as at the consecration of the Priests; Exod. xxix. 18. and of the Levites; Num. viii. 12. at the purification of unclean persons; and upon various other occasions. Lastly at their stated festivals, and appointed seasons; which were both daily, weekly, monthly, and annually. There was a continual burnt-offering every day, the one in the morning, the other in the evening. Exod. xxix. 38, 42. Num. xxviii. 3, 4. This was called the *juge sacrificium*, of which Daniel predicts, that it should be profanely interrupted by Antiochus. Daniel viii. 11, 12. The end for which the burnt-offering was presented to God was, as I already hinted to make an atonement for sin. Levit. i. 4,—9 ——— Observe now *Onesimus*, the various mystical, and significant rites and ceremonies enjoined on the Jews, to be observed about the burnt-offering. The offerer was to bring it to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the face of the Lord. Lev. i. 3. Great stress was laid upon this, as appears from Lev. xvii.—1,—9. The high Priest durst not go to fetch it, or solicit the offerer to bring it; but it was to proceed of his own voluntary motion. From whence did that amazing and humiliating step that the *Son of God* made in his incarnation flow? Might it not be traced up to, and ultimately resolved in his own free grace and voluntary condescension. “Lo I come.” “I lay down my life of myself.” As he had no copartner in, he had no solicitor to the work of man’s redemption. He waited not for our intreaty. “He came leaping on the mountains, and skipping on the hills, unasked and unlooked for.” — The offerer

appeased. We find the Apostle in writing to the Ephesians, (chap. v. 2.) speaks of the sacrifice Christ offered almost in the very same terms here used with regard to the end for which the burnt-offering was presented to the Lord. “Christ gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling favour.” The notion therefore, that the burnt-offering was only offered to God as the Creator and preserver of all is antisciptural.

offerer was to lay his hands on the head of the offering. Lev. i. 4. † And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him. It is disputed here, whether he was to lay his right, or left hand, or both? But seeing here it is expressed in the singular number, and in Levit. xvi. 21. it is expressly enjoined on Aaron to lay on both his hands; this imposition of both his hands on the head of the sacrifice, probably intended the translation of his own, along with the guilt of the congregation; and that when an individual brought his offering to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation to be sacrificed before the face of the Lord, he laid but on one of his hands. It is also questioned, whether he that brought the offering, or the Priest, laid his hand on the burnt-offering? But this I think is easily resolved; certainly it was the person that killed the offering, that imposed his hands on its head; Lev. i. 5, 6. but that was only the function and office of the Priest.

What did this rite of imposing the hands of the Priest on the head of the sacrifice adumbrate? To testify the dedication, and consecration of the animal to God; but chiefly I think, to point out the translation of the offerer's guilt upon the head of the victim. Or, if this was not the case; why in many instances, was there such a solemn confession of sin, transgression, and iniquity that attended the imposition of hands? From this custom also flows the propriety of this phrase when applied to the victim, *to bear sin*. This is particularly said of the Scape-goat. Where were our sins translated, and upon whom conferred? But upon the Lamb of God, which only could accomplish that *really*, which the Levitical sacrifices could only do *typically*. "The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all." "He was made sin for us." Sin was imputed to him; and for its demerit he suffered the wrath of a justly incensed Deity. The sacrifice must be killed. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission, either typical, or real. The Messiah *must* be cut off" "And his soul made an offering for sin."—The sacrifice must be killed on the north-side of the altar. The same ceremony was to be observed concerning the sin-offering; Lev. vi. 25 and the trespass offering; Lev. vii. 1, 2. || The blood of the burnt offering

† It is to be observed here that this ceremony was not required in the sacrifice of fowls, but only of beasts. Exod. xxix. 10.

|| It is very probable, that there is no mystery contained here; but that the tabernacle-door, and the altar were so situated, that on the north-side there was more space to kill and dress the sacrifice. Some think this was enjoined on the Jews in opposition to the idolatrous practice of the Heathens, who sacrificed and directed their worship towards the east, and towards the sun. In opposition to this, they killed the sacrifice on the north-side, and poured forth the ashes towards the east-side.

fering must be poured out at the bottom of the altar. Lev. viii. 15. and sprinkled round about upon it. Levit. i. 5. Observe the language of the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles in writing to the Hebrews, chap. ix. 22. And almost all things were purged by blood: And without shedding of blood there is no remission. That the altar sanctifies the gift, is the express declaration of our Lord Jesus himself; Math. xxiii. 19. It was, because our Mediator was the supreme God, "*God over all,*" that his sufferings had such an infinite value and efficacy in them, as to be sufficient for the purgation of our sins. The pouring forth, and sprinkling the blood of the burnt offering upon the altar, adumbrated that near and intimate union and conjunction of the human nature to the divine; and the particular influence of that union in all the sufferings of the human nature for the pardon of sin, and the acceptation of our persons and services: Upon this account it is called *the blood of God*. Acts xx. 28. and therefore infinitely meritorious, being sanctified by the altar of the divine nature upon which it was offered: And hence it becomes adequate to make an atonement for an infinite offence.

Peace-offerings as well as burnt-offerings, were particularly enjoined by God on the Jews. The peace-offering was so denominated, because it denoted peace amongst all the parties; God, the Priest, and the offerer. And as an evidence and symbol of this all were partakers in the peace-offering. Hence some derive the term from a word which signifies to distribute, because each of the parties had a share in these peace-offerings; God, the Priest, and the people. These sort of sacrifices were of a mixed nature, partly hylastical, and partly eucharistical; i. e. they were designed both for atonement and thanksgiving. Some indeed are of the opinion, that they were entirely of the latter kind. But I find these as well as the rest were offered up upon the brazen altar; and from these as well as the burnt-offerings God is said to smell a sweet smelling savour. Levit. iii. 5. The ceremonial rites used on this occasion, seems to point at its propitiatory nature. It was slain, and burned upon the altar, its blood poured forth, and sprinkled upon the altar round about. Was not all this typical of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is indeed our true peace-offering? He hath made peace by the blood of his cross, Col. ii. 20. But yet I imagine *Onesimus*, that the particular and special ends of the peace-offering was to return their gratitude, and express their thankfulness for the peace and prosperity they enjoyed; and to implore the beneficent giver of every good and perfect gift, for that particular mercy and favour, they in their present circumstances stood in need of.—One special end I say, was for thanksgiving for mercies received.

Levit.

Levit. vii. 11, 12. Psal. cvii. 22. And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing; or for the impetration or obtaining of mercies wanted, either in the way of a vow, or a free-will offering. The difference between a vow and a free-will offering consisted in this; in the free-will offering, the thing was presented immediately to God; but in a vow, there was only an engagement for the present, that upon receiving the mercy, or good thing asked, they should pay according as they had vowed, e. g. The Mariners, Jonah, Jephtha, &c.—Free-will offerings generally took place, when the offerer was in no such pressing circumstances as to urge him thereto. Votive sacrifices on the contrary prevailed, when the person was in some present disagreeable circumstances; or in dread of some imminent danger, as was the case with Jephtha, in his war with the Ammonites; Jonah in the fishes belly, and with Absalom, when an exile from his native country. ||

As votive sacrifices took place in order to obtain some future good; so eucharistical sacrifices were intended to express the gratitude and thankfulness of the offerer for the good things he had already obtained: Particularly such whose prayer had been heard, and their petition granted for deliverance from some imminent danger. e. g. David, Psal. cxvi. 16, 17 Manasseh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 16. Nothing was more current among the Jews than this opinion, viz. that a sacrifice of thanksgiving should be presented to God, by every one for whom he hath wrought something like a miracle; who hath with safety sailed the seas, traversed the desert, been delivered from prison, or restored to health from some dangerous disease. †——To the sacrifice of the peace-offering, belonged the *Ram of the consecration*; Exod. xxix. 18. Levit. ix. 4. the Ram which was offered up by the Nazarite
at

|| Votive sacrifices prevailed very frequently among the Heathens; when obnoxious to any immediate danger, or about to engage in some dangerous enterprise. Thus in Gaul, as often as they were afflicted with any epidemical grievous diseases; or were engaged in any dangerous war, they voluntarily offered up human sacrifices, or vowed they would do so. Cæsar de bello Gallico. Lib. 6.—According to the same Author, it was customary for the Roman Pretors, before they set out to take possession of their respective provinces, to which they were appointed, to enter into a vow. Cæsar de bello Civit. Lib. 1.

This it seems was the form of the vow they entered into on such an occasion.—Quod si Jupiter faxis, tunc tibi bove aurato futurum vovemus.

† Outram de sacrificiis, Lib. 1.

at the expiration of his vow; Num. vi. 14. also at the dedication of the tabernacle, each of the twelve tribes of Israel brought for a sacrifice of peace-offering, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats of the first year; Num. vii. 17. and also, at the feast of the first fruits, two Lambs of the first year, were offered up for a sacrifice of peace-offering; Levit. xxiii. 19. also at the dedication of the temple. 1 Kings viii. 62, 63. To the sacrifice of thanksgiving, may be referred the dedication of all the first-born both of man and beast to the Lord. Exod. xiii. 12. Thou shalt set apart to the Lord, all that openeth the matrix; and every firstling that cometh of a beast, which thou hast: The males shall be the Lord's. A reason for this is assigned, v. 15. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, the first-born of man, and the first-born of beast: Therefore I sacrifice unto the Lord, all that openeth the matrix being males; but all the first-born of my children I redeem.—To these eucharistical sacrifices, may also be referred the Jewish decimations. Levit. xxvii. 32. And concerning the tythe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod; the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. †

I proceed now *Onesimus* to take a brief view of the sin-offerings which took place among the Jews. For understanding the nature, end, and design of this, you may consult Levit. iv. This was instituted for the Priest, the body of the people, the chief ruler, and for any private person. Part of the blood was sprinkled towards the Holy of Holies, part put upon the horns of the altar of incense and part poured forth at the bottom of the brazen altar of burnt-offering.—The general end and design of the sin-offering was *atonement*, or *expiation* of sin. But the question is, what kind of sins was the sin-offering designed to make an atonement

† *Outram* from *Maimonides* gives this account of the decimation of their flocks. They inclosed their Lambs, their kids, and their calves in a fold, with a door so narrow as not to admit but one at a time to come forth. This being done, their Mothers standing without and bleating, within hearing of their young; they in order to meet with their dams came out at this door, and special care was taken that no violence should be used in bringing them out, but that they should come out of their own accord; and in their coming forth they were numbered with a rod, thus, one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and the tenth whatsoever it was, was the Lord's; and was not by any means to be redeemed.—See the law for this, Levit. xxvii. 33. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it. And if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed. *Outram de sacrificiis*, Pag. 115.

atonement for, or expiate? The sin-offering may be taken in a large sense, as including the trespass-offering or as contra-distinguished to it. In the first sense, it may be viewed as extending to every sin whatsoever that is pardonable; and thus the sin-offering includes the trespass-offering in it, or any other kind of sacrifices whatsoever intended for expiation: And thus it stands opposed to presumptuous sins, for which no sacrifice was provided by the Jewish law. Num. xv. 27, 28, 29, 30. But besides presumptuous sins, sins of ignorance, or sins proceeding from the violence of a temptation or passion; or which might proceed from inadvertency, carelessness, or imprudence; these and the like were the sins for which the sin-offering was provided. You may see the whole law concerning the sin-offering, in Levit. iv. If the anointed Priest err, and miss the mark; his offering is to be a young bullock; v. 3. For the whole congregation, a young bullock; v. 13. for the ruler, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish; v. 22. for any particular person, a Kid, or else a lamb, a female without blemish. v. 27.

Some have thought, that the sin-offering had a reference to sins of omission; the trespass-offering to sins of commission. But we find, that the trespass-offering referred to sins of omission, as well as commission. Levit. v. 1. If he do not utter it, when he ought to do it: Here is a sin of omission mentioned, for which a trespass-offering was appointed.—Some have imagined that the sin-offering was instituted for sins against the second table of the moral law; and the trespass-offering for sins against the first. But it is evident, that the trespass-offering relates both to first, and second-table sins; such as deceit and violence to one's Neighbour, as well as perjury against God. Lev. vi. 2. Others have stated the difference thus. That there is *ignorantia facti*, ignorance of the fact in the one, and *ignorantia juris*, ignorance of the rule in the other. But the true difference I apprehend lies in this; that the sin-offering was for sins of ignorance and infirmity, but the trespass-offering extended to sins of knowledge. This may appear partly from the Hebrew term *Chattab*, *peccare*, which properly signifies to miss the mark a man aims at; *proprie est errare, vel aberrare a scopo*. Buxtorff.—The trespass-offering, *Asham*, although used for sin in general, yet it seems to imply in it, in a more especial manner sins of a higher nature; such as are committed with more deliberation, and with more consent of the will, and against more light and knowledge. The sin-offering then seems to relate to these involuntary infirmities, which are unavoidable, while a body of sin and death dwells in us, and which are consistent with a state of assurance and gospel sincerity: The trespass-offering to these con-

science-

conscience-wasting sins, which are inconsistent with a state of assurance and communion with God.

The Priest was ordered to dip his finger in the blood, and to sprinkle it seven times before the Lord; that is, before the veil of the sanctuary towards the Holy of Holies. Upon the great day of atonement, he was to sprinkle it within the veil; but because he was not to enter into the most holy place every day, nor upon every occasion, but only once a year; therefore at other times, he did but sprinkle it towards the holy place, upon, or towards the veil.

The blood of Jesus which was shed for the expiation of our sins, in allusion to this is called "the blood of sprinkling," intimating its effectual application to our souls, for our purification from the filth, and salvation from the guilt of sin. Heb. ix. 14, and 12, 24. And if, as some say, the number seven is a perfect number, it may suggest to us the perfection of Christ's sacrifice and atonement, to answer all the purposes of our redemption: It saves from sin's guilt, and thus frees from condemnation; it purges from sin's filth, and thus renders us meet for glory.—Part of the blood of the sin-offering was sprinkled upon the incense altar. "Neither, (says the Apostle) by the blood of goats, or calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." The high Priest of our profession is now no more hanging on the cross, but standing at the golden altar. Rev. viii. 3. There was given him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints, upon the golden altar. "I heard a voice, (says the beloved Apostle) from the four horns of the golden altar." Our prayers find acceptance with God, we may expect a gracious answer to our petitions, when they are presented in Christ's name, and perfumed with the incense of his atonement and merit. It is owing to his having entered into the holy place with his own blood, that a voice is heard from the four horns of the golden altar in answer to our prayers.—The rest of the blood of the sin-offering was poured forth at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offerings. Levit. iv. 7, 18, 25, 30, 34. The effusion of the blood of Jesus, as an offering for our sins to satisfy divine justice, purchase pardon, and procure our final salvation; and the relation of that blood to the altar of his divine nature, are here emblematically pointed forth. On the great day of atonement, the blood was carried in, and sprinkled upon the most holy place: Here it is sprinkled upon the altar of incense, and the rest poured forth by the altar of burnt-offerings. The blood of the slain Lamb of God, hath a particular influence in all the concernments of our salvation from first to last.

Would

Would you my dear *Onesimus*, see your sins forgiven, and atonement made? Behold the blood of atonement, whereby all your sins however numerous, however aggravated, forgiven, fully and for ever forgiven, never to be charged to your account, nor rise up in judgment as the cause of your condemnation. Would you experience your prayers accepted, and graciously answered? Behold the blood upon the horns of the golden altar. Would you behold the gates of the celestial mansions set open, and an abundant entrance administered to you, into the holiest of all? Behold the blood sprinkled before the vail; see, and firmly believe this great truth, that the blood of Jesus has a peculiar influence in all the precious concerns of your immortal interests both here, and hereafter.—What a source, an everflowing source of the most substantial comfort and unfading delight arises from this doctrine to sinners, sensible of their habitual failures. Do they complain that when they pray, their hearts wander; when they hear, they understand little, and remember less. They lament, they are so easily overtaken, and carried aside from the path of duty, and from that uniform practice of piety and holiness, which they should on all occasions pursue: In every thing they sin, they miss the mark. Here, (listen to the soul-ravishing theme) here, is a sin-offering provided, and provided by God himself. “There is not a just man upon earth that doth good and sinneth not.” Therefore God ordained this sin-offering, which, as it served for a legal expiation, and purgation of the sins of those who lived under that œconomy; so it did prefigure to them, the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanseth from all sin. Are we not my dear *Onesimus*, under the highest obligations in point of gratitude, to love, fear, and reverence him, who graciously condescended to be made sin, and a sin-offering for us to procure pardon, and pardon for our habitual failings.

Permit me now *Onesimus*, to take a brief view of the trespass-offering. The difference between this and the sin-offering as I already hinted lies here: The latter was particularly instituted for sins of infirmity and ignorance; the former extended to sins against light and knowledge.—The trespass-offering was provided by God for such as concealed their knowledge when called to testify the truth upon oath. Levit. 5, 1, 6. If a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, i. e. either the Judge adjuring, or calling him forth to testify upon oath; or hearing others swearing, cursing, and blaspheming. You may see an instance of the former in the High Priest, Matth. xxvi. 63. I adjure thee, (says he to Jesus) by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be Christ the Son of God. Unto which adjuration, or voice of swearing, our Lord Jesus Christ made answer, and did declare the

truth,

truth, though before this he held his peace. This was *casus confessionis*, a case wherein confession of the truth was called for. We have an instance of the latter, in Levit. xxiv. 10, 11. We are there informed, that the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed; the matter was reported to Moses, and he enquiring of the Lord what punishment should be inflicted on the blasphemer, he was ordered by God to be stoned to death. ||

The next case for which the trespass-offering was provided, was for ceremonial uncleanness, Levit. v. 2, 3. But in order that you may obtain a more comprehensive view of the several sorts of uncleannesses for which the trespass-offering was instituted, you may consult Levit. chap. xi. to the xvi. inclusive. The third case for which the trespass-offering was appointed; was swearing to do any thing that was unlawful, and expressly prohibited by God. Levit. ix. 4. Such was the oath that David took. 1 Sam. xxv. 22. Of this nature was Herod's oath, and theirs who swore to kill Paul; of this kind also was Jephtha's vow; nothing could have been more rash and presumptuous. What, if a dog, or a sow, had first met him, or some other creature legally unclean, and unfit to be sacrificed to the Lord? And indeed, the first object that presented itself after his return was as unfit to be offered up in sacrifice as any other possibly could be. Here then was ground for a trespass-offering.

The Jews refer swearing to these four heads: Swearing before a magistrate, in order to confirm the truth of what is avouched, Levit. i. this they call *jusjurandum testimonii*. Again, *jusjurandum de pignore*; of this kind of swearing, we have an account at large in Levit. vi. 2. if a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered to him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; v. 3 or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doth sinning therein. Again, *jusjurandum vanum*, a vain oath; this they divide into four parts, 1. When a man swears to any thing manifestly false; as if a man would swear, that marble was silver. 2. When a man would swear to any thing manifestly true; as when a man would swear that marble was marble. 3. When a man swears to do a thing absolutely unlawful, as Herod did when he swore
to

|| From this I think we may learn, that a man may contract upon himself the guilt of other men's sins, if he be properly called to make a discovery of them, and yet doth it not. The man that heard the voice of swearing and concealed it, was to confess his sin, and offer a trespass-offering.

to kill John. Lastly, when a man swears to do a thing absolutely impossible, as if a man would swear to fast for twenty or thirty days. The last kind of swearing taken notice of by the Jews, they call *jusjurandum pronunciatum*. Levit. v. 4. †

Now the remedy provided lies here, the offender must confess his sin, and offer his trespass-offering, Levit. v. 6. In order for expiation, he must bring a Lamb, or a Kid, a female, v. 6. for his trespass-offering; or, if he be not able to afford this, he must bring for his trespass offering two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, the one for a sin-offering, the other for a burnt-offering. The sin-offering was for that particular sin which at present burdened the man's conscience; the burnt-offering was for sin in general. But in case he could not, through poverty afford this, he must bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour. v. 11, 12, 13. Further, the trespass-offering was provided for such as trespassed ignorantly against the holy things of the Lord, Levit. v. 15 compared with chap. xxii. 14, 15, 16. The trespass-offering was also provided for sins done through ignorance and weakness; Levit. v. 17, 18, 19. and for those committed against light and knowledge; of which, we have a variety mentioned in Levit. vi. from the beginning to v. 8; such as injustice, and theft; force and violence; lying, fraud, and deceit; perjury, or swearing falsely about any thing. The remedy provided for these offences is threefold restitution, Levit. vi. 4. addition of a fifth part; v. 5. and a ram for a trespass-offering. v. 6.

How much of divine sovereignty is to be seen here; the trespass-offering, which had for its object greater sins than the sin-offering; yet a lesser sacrifice was appointed for expiation than was allowed in the sin-offering. A ram is the highest sacrifice required in the trespass-offering; but the sin offering, which had for its object sins of ignorance and infirmity, no less than a young bullock is required. The truth of the matter is, that if a real atonement had been, or rather could have been made, by these legal sacrifices, there would necessarily have been found a proper proportion between the sin, and the offering. But seeing there was only a typical expiation made by all those group of sacrifices, the will of the lawgiver in this various institution is enough for us; here we must acquiesce, where no other reason doth appear, or can possibly be given.—It is also very remarkable, that in all the meat-offerings, there were to be no mixture of leaven, or honey; but in the peace-offerings, there was leaven, and in the offering of the first fruits, there was honey.

God's

God's will as revealed to his creatures is to be the rule of their conduct in all things.

What infinite virtue and value is in Christ's atonement made by blood-shedding! He is our trespass, as well as our sin-offering. † “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth from all sin.”—What encouragement is here for the greatest of sinners to have recourse to his blood, for the pardon of all their sins however numerous, and however hainously aggravated in their nature. The redeeming virtue of the blood of Jesus, is far superior to the condemning, polluting power of sin. This intrinsic virtue flows from the dignity of the atoning person. It is the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. Sinners of every description, conscious of guilt, and trembling under the dread apprehensions of wrath, never should be discouraged to receive the atonement. Rom. v. 11, 17. but rather tremble for fear of rejecting it. Heb. iv. 1. Sinners never should be afraid of believing, but of not believing: For the gospel was never designed by God to fill men's heads with speculative notions, but to beget faith in sinners hearts. Rom. iv. 23, 24.

Onesimus, was not, think you, the gospel preached to the Jews in all their legal sacrifices, and in all the vast variety of rites and ceremonies that attended those sacrifices? And particularly, was not this great and important truth held up before their eyes, the substitution of the victim in the room of the offerer? And did not this adumbrate and point out the Lord Jesus Christ, our passover sacrificed *for us*?—The truth of this will evidently appear from the few following considerations.—Did not the pouring out of the blood plainly argue, that the offender ought to have suffered no less than death for his crimes? God expressly teaches this doctrine, that the blood of the sacrifice was shed *for*, or *instead* of the blood of the offerer. Levit. xvii. 11. “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. For this reason the blood was forbidden to be eaten, because it made a typical atonement for the soul. The Apostle has his eye on this in his epistle to the Hebrews, chap. ix. 22. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” i. e. God in a consistency with the purity of his nature, and the righteousness of his law, cannot pardon sin without a previous satisfaction; and prior to this, a violent death is requisite, prefigured by the pouring out of the blood. Such a death as was thus adumbrated by the particular

† In Isaiah liii. 10. we are expressly told that his soul should be made a trespass-offering. “When thou shalt make *Asham naphso*, his soul a trespass-offering.”

cular victims of old, Christ suffered.—What did the imposition of hands on the head of the victim point out? This I hinted at already; and this was such a necessary rite, that it could not be dispensed with. Levit. i. 1. Exod. xxix. 10. He that brought the offering, or the sacrificing Priest, were bound to lay their hands on the head of the sacrifice; not only to testify the dedication, and consecration of the animal to God, but chiefly and principally to signify the substitution of the victim in the room of the sinner, and the translation of his guilt upon the sacrifice. Hence the beast offered up in sacrifice is said to *bear sin*.—Was there not also a confession of sin made over the head of the sacrifice, either by the Priest, or the people, as I have shown already? Aaron was ordered to put his hands on the head of the Scape-goat, and confess over it all the iniquities, sins, and transgressions of the congregation. Doth not this evidently point out, that the goat sustained the place, and stood in the room of the whole congregation; and that all their sins were typically transferred on him for expiation? Was there not likewise in those legal sacrifices a deprecation of divine wrath? This invariably took place in the case of the unknown homicide. Deut. xxi. 8. When a man was found slain, and the person, and manner unknown; the men of that city which lay next the slain man, were ordered to bring a red Heifer down to a rough valley, and there strike off its head; and the Elders of the city were at the same time commanded to wash their hands over the head of the Heifer, repeating these words; “our hands have not shed this blood, neither have our eyes seen it. Be merciful unto thy people Israel, O Lord, which thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel’s charge.” Why all this ado about the red Heifer? But to let that people see that the guilt of innocent blood could not be removed by an act of mere mercy, without a sacrifice. “Pardon, (say they) thy people, by accepting this sacrifice; and impute not innocent blood to thy people Israel’s charge.” Plainly intimating, that the red Heifer sustained the place of the people, typically to remove that guilt which otherwise would have been imputed to them.—Again, the effect of those sacrifices clearly evince their vicarious nature, viz. expiation for sin, and appeasing an offended Deity. Where sacrifices took place according to Heaven’s institution and appointment, these two things were the immediate result. The *Greeks* have three terms expressive of the two *Hebrew* words to expiate, and appease, viz. propitiation, remission, and redemption: So that every sacrifice had a reference to these three following things, to God, to sin, and to the offerer. To appease and turn away God’s wrath, to expiate sin, and obtain redemption
from

from punishment to the offerer. These three great ends never could have been obtained, if the Levitical sacrifices had not been propitiatory, either typically, or really; neither could the offerer have reaped the smallest advantage by his sacrifice, abstracting from its vicarious nature, or its substitution in his stead. God could not have been appeased without shedding of blood, neither could sin have been removed without punishment.

From the consideration of these things, I think we may safely infer; that the Levitical sacrifices were both vicarious, and typically satisfactory. Without viewing them in this light, it would be difficult I think, to assign a reason for their institution. In this sense the Apostle Paul views them in his epistle to the Hebrews. In this light, we can read the Jewish ritual with spiritual profit and advantage: Abstracting from this view, the whole of that œconomy will appear dry, insipid, puerile, and trifling. What those sacrifices accomplished ceremonially, the sacrifice of Christ accomplished actually and really. That God, who could not without the most extreme aversion, behold the immolation of human sacrifices; that God, which often testified that he was by no means satisfied with the blood of Bulls and Goats; yet testified his utmost complacency and delight, in the one offering which his Eternal Son made of his holy human nature, to turn away his anger, and procure pardon and peace to sinners. “The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake.” &c.

Do you ask *Onesimus*, were all those piacular sacrifices under the legal dispensation typical of Christ's sacrifice of himself; or only some of them? Some contend, that only the anniversary sacrifices were typical of Christ's, and that the other sacrifices which obtained under that œconomy were figurative only of christian spiritual sacrifices.—I would imagine *Onesimus*, that not only those sacrifices which took place on the Jews anniversary, but all other hylastic, or propitiatory sacrifices, which were publicly offered up for all, or privately for individuals, pointed at Christ's sacrifice: For these following reasons.

Because the whole ceremonial law was typical of Christ. For whatever subordinate reasons may be assigned for that institution, yet the principal reason, according to the Apostle Paul was, to serve as a School-master to bring to Christ. Gal. iii. 25. And Christ is expressly said to be the end of the law. Rom. x. 4. That it was the shadow of good things to come, whereof Christ was the body. Coll. ii. 17. And as Christ is truly and really the foundation of the new covenant, or covenant of grace; so of the whole of divine revelation, and the centre in which the whole terminates. All the promises are in him yea, and in him
amen

amen. The faith of those old Testament believers was not only strengthened, and their hopes supported by words, but by actions. God not only delivered to them those promises and oracles which ascertained the future manifestation of the Messiah, and the several benefits resulting from his death; but by a variety of types and figures, exhibited the manner and the various circumstances of this admirable mystery: So as that people which were but in a state of minority might, by these rudiments, and worldly elements, be trained up to a clearer apprehension of those heavenly good things to be purchased by Christ in due time. Hence it comes to pass, that whatever Christ was, or performed, had its example previous to his mission, under that legal œconomy. Nothing illustrious, or memorable, either in persons, or actions, but what had an eye to the future Messiah. The Levitical priesthood, (particularly the High Priest) and sacrifices, prefigured the priesthood and sacrifice of Christ. Wherever these sacrifices were offered up, they served for types and shadows of the violent death and bitter passion of the Lord of Glory: Exhibiting at the same time, a striking lecture on the miserable state of mankind by nature, and the remedy provided by God's infinite wisdom and sovereign grace; in that victim of Heaven's providing, which was in some future period, to be manifested to Israel, for the remission of sins. What else can the Apostle mean, when he calls that dispensation a shadow, a pattern, a figure? &c. ||

Again, all those sacrifices were types of Christ, which were abrogated by his appearance and death in the human nature. For if those legal sacrifices had not had a respect to Christ's sacrifice of himself, as the shadow has to the body, the Apostle could not with propriety have demonstrated their abrogation, by Christ's coming and death. The type ceases, when the antitype comes; the shadow evanishes upon the appearance of the body. And that this is really the case needs no proof — If the burnt-offerings, and other sacrifices offered on the great day of atonement, (as Socinus confesses) had a respect to Christ, why should not the same sacrifices which were daily offered up, and upon other emergent occasions, point also at Christ's sacrifice? The end and effect of both were the same; the destruction, and death of the victim by blood-shedding, the expiation of sin, and the redemption of the sinner. No proper reason I imagine can be assigned, why the daily sacrifices should not have a respect to Jesus the Lamb of God, as well as their annual sacrifices.

The daily sacrifices among the Jews are by the Apostle Paul expressly referred to Christ's, as the shadow to the body;

see

see his reasoning on this head. Heb. vii. 27. chap. x. 11. In these texts you will find a twofold prerogative of Christ's, above the Aaronical priesthood; these were under a necessity daily to repeat the same sacrifices; but Christ only once; "by once offering up of himself, he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified." The latter were obliged to offer for themselves, as for the people: But Christ offered up himself *only* for us. Now, where would be the propriety in this reasoning of the Apostle, if these daily sacrifices had not adumbrated, and pointed at Christ's sacrifice of himself.

In a word, the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lamb, took place for private persons, and upon ordinary occasions, as in the daily sacrifices; But this evidently prefigured Christ's sacrifice of himself; hence he is so often termed a *Lamb*: Not only on account of his meekness, patience, and innocency, &c. but chiefly, because he is the Lamb of God, which by his death, was to take away sin. What an illustrious type of Christ was the Paschal Lamb: That it had a respect to Christ, the Apostle Paul evidently teaches, calling him by that very name: "Christ our passover." You know that the Paschal Lamb was slain, and its blood sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelitish houses, to preserve their first-born from that imminent destruction which befel the Egyptians by the destroying Angel. Thus by the blood of Jesus, our passover sacrificed for us, and sprinkled, not on our door-posts, but on our guilty consciences, we are actually redeemed from the dreadful storm of God's wrath: And, *Oneimus*, I know nothing that can screen guilty sinners from the divine indignation but this; "This man, (says the Prophet) shall be an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." However the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus, may be undervalued and slighted, this is the only and effectual mean of Heaven's appointment, for diverting the storm, and procuring the smiles of a justly provoked Deity. I am sure, that every other method that men can possibly strike out for this purpose, will be but as the dry stubble before the devouring flame.

There are two things carefully to be adverted to in the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb; viz. that it was both a *sacrifice*, and a *sacrament*. There was indeed in the passover, some thing extraordinary which differed from those rites afterwards given to regulate the mode of sacrificing: Whence according to some, it cannot with propriety be called a sacrifice. But, however much the ceremonies appertaining to the Paschal Lamb differed from those afterwards given, yet it is expressly called a sacrifice. Exod. xii. 27.—Then shall ye say it is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover. It was slain, and its blood sprinkled on the door-posts.—

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But further, it was a sacrament: It was eaten as a feast.—Now *Onesimus*, we will find these two things in the High Priest of our profession: He was slain to redeem us to God. In the word and sacrament, he is food for our souls. The Apostle Paul joins both these together, 1 Corinth. v. 7. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast. Let us by faith receive the Lord Jesus Christ, sacrificed for us, as food for our souls.

To sum up the whole in a few words, I think it is evident, that all those hylastic, or propitiatory sacrifices under the Old Testament dispensation, are to be referred to that sacrifice which Christ offered up to God of a sweet smelling savour. The sacrifice of the Lamb as I just now hinted, pointed at Christ the Lamb of God. The red Heifer, of whose ashes the water of purification was made, Numb. xix. 2. referred to Christ, Heb. ix. 14. That the sin-offering had also a reference to him, is evident from Rom. viii. 3. where the Apostle informs us, that God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that by being made a victim for sin, he might condemn sin in the flesh.—Again, in Heb. x. 5. The body which was prepared for Christ, and his oblation of that body, is opposed to the burnt-offerings and sacrifices under the legal dispensation. And in Heb. xiii. 12. Those sacrifices whose bodies were burned without the camp, and their blood carried into the holiest of all, are said to have their completion in Christ.

Permit me *Onesimus*, to drop a few hints respecting that memorable history of the dedication of the old covenant, and the various sacrifices that took place on that occasion. This is minutely described by the sacred historian Moses, Exod. xxiv. The mystery of this remarkable transaction is opened up, and explained by Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, chap. ix. 19, 20. Moses at the command of God builds an altar, and offers thereon burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings; part of the blood he sprinkles on the altar, part on the people; then sprinkles the book of the law, the tabernacle, and the sacred utensils; declaring at the same time, that this blood was the blood of the covenant which God had enjoined them.

Bishop Usher, and other Divines of note, are of opinion, that besides the burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings mentioned by Moses, there were also sin-offerings. But I think we have no reason to suppose that there were any other kind of sacrifices offered on the occasion, than these mentioned by the sacred Historian. This opinion would seem to insinuate that the Holocaust was not an expiatory sacrifice; but that it was so, was proven elsewhere from Levit. i. 4. The Syriac version saith, that the burnt-offering

offering was designed, *ad placationem obtinendam a Deo*; and the Chaldee Paraphrast, that the burnt-offering was instituted *ad expiandum pro cogitationibus cordis*.—It may here further be observed, that all the sacrifices previous to the giving of the law were Holocausts, and yet it is certain, that many were offered to expiate sin and turn away God's wrath. Thus, Noah after the flood offered burnt-offerings; Gen. viii. 20. which he did according to the opinion of the Jews to atone God, and appease his displeasure. The sacrifices which Job offered for his children, were burnt-offerings, yet they were also offerings for sin. Job i. 5. The reason of their oblation is thus assigned, it may be my Sons have sinned. The oblation which God commanded Job's friends to make, was a burnt-offering, Job xliv. 7. and yet it was offered to turn away God's wrath, and procure remission of their sin. And as was already observed, the Jews affirm, that the imposition of hands on the head of the burnt-offering, was always attended with confession of sin, which confession, was always concluded with a prayer, that the sacrifice might be an expiation for them. No more can be said of the sin, or trespass-offering, than of the burnt-offering, viz. to make an atonement. This ceremony ended, the Elders of the congregation who were strictly prohibited to come near, while the law was promulgated, now came near, saw the glory of the God of Israel, and drank in his presence, and he laid not his hands on them.—May we not learn from this *Onesimus*, some very important truths: That God cannot enter into a covenant with his creatures, as sinful creatures, without satisfaction made to his injured law, and offended justice, by bloodshedding. The old covenant must be dedicated with blood. Both the first, and second Testaments were made *upon a sacrifice*. The same truth was taught Abraham, in that covenant God made with him, Gen. xv. 9. What the blood of Calves and Goats did typically, the sacrifice of Christ did actually, and really: Hence his blood is called the blood of the New Testament, or covenant, shed for the remission of sins: And Christ's death was absolutely necessary in order for the remission of sins, and for ratifying and confirming the covenant of grace in which the promise of pardon and remission is contained. "For where a Testament, (or covenant) is, there must of necessity be the death of the Testator." "For a (covenant) or Testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no force while the Testator liveth."—Again, at the dedication of the old covenant, the blood was sprinkled upon the altar, the people, upon the book of the law, and upon the tabernacle. For, although neither the book of the law, nor the tabernacle are

mentioned

mentioned by Moses, as being sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice, yet these are to be understood by analogy, as comprehended in the sprinkling of the altar. † This blood was sprinkled upon the altar before God, for expiation and atonement; because it typically turned away his anger, and rendered him propitious; upon the people, for remission and sanctification. 1 Pet. i. 2. Heb. ix. 14; upon the book of the law to inform us, that by Jesus the law is fulfilled, its precept in that obedience he yielded to it in his life; and his bearing its penal sanction in his death; upon the tabernacle, for its consecration. The blood of Jesus, or his atonement and merit, has a particular influence to render all our religious services acceptable to God. “We are made accepted in the beloved.” Both our persons and our services, are accepted *only* for his sake. By the blood of Jesus, the way to the celestial tabernacle, is laid patent and open. Heb. ix. 23. chap. x. 19.—Observe the effect of this dedication of the old covenant with blood; viz. access and liberty granted to the Elders of the congregation into the presence of God. We are told they saw the God of Israel, they did eat in his presence, and he laid not his hand upon them. || Thus by virtue of the blood of Jesus, the great God is proclaiming himself to sinners propitious and gracious, and so well pleased with the death of his Son as our surety, that he invites the vilest of sinners, the most abandoned of men may come without the least intimidation to his throne, and instead of meeting with destruction, may expect to find grace and obtain mercy. May my *Onesimus* never presume to approach the throne of God, without having in his eye the death and blood-shedding of the Son of God. Let thoughtless men spurn at the doctrine of a vicarious satisfaction as they please, and trample under their feet the *blood of the covenant*, accounting it a common thing, unfit for procuring our access to God; I am sure, my dear friend, you see, you are firmly persuaded of this important truth, that we never could have appeared in the presence of an infinitely pure Being independent of the surety righteousness of our glorious High Priest.

From the above *Onesimus*, I think it is plain and evident, that the Jewish sacrifices, private, as well as public, the daily, as well as the anniversary, had all a respect to that one offering which Christ made of himself to take away sin.

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† Josephus saith, that Moses consecrated for God's service the tabernacle, and all the vessels of it, by anointing them with oil, and sprinkling them with the blood of Bulls and Goats.

Do you enquire again *Onesimus*, were all the propitiatory sacrifices which obtained among the Jews, designed to make a typical atonement for all manner of crimes, or only for some small violations of the law, i. e. for sins which were not so highly aggravated as others? Some maintain that there were no sacrifices offered up under the law, but for sins of ignorance, and infirmity; || and that no sacrifice was intended for great violations of the divine law, or sins wilfully, and presumptuously committed. This they do, with a view to enervate the argument taken from the Jewish sacrifices, to establish the satisfactory nature of Christ's sacrifice for sin.—It is freely acknowledged, that there were some sins for which no sacrifice was provided; such as by a divine sanction laid the perpetrators under the immediate sentence of death; as idolatry, incest, murder, the violation of the sabbath, or when any one took upon him to prophecy falsely in the name of the Lord, or turned rebellious against his parents, or used divination; or such as presumed to eat the fat of any animal which men make an offering by fire unto the Lord, or such as eat leavened bread on any of the days in which the passover was observed, &c. Whoever were found guilty of any of these crimes were to be cut off from the congregation. But from this we are by no means warranted to infer, that no sacrifice was designed but for some slight transgressions. The contrary of this will appear from the following considerations.

Did not the High Priest on the great day of atonement confess, by the imposition of hands on the head of the Scape-goat, sin in general, without any exception? Why was there such a general confession made, if there was no typical atonement made, but for sins of ignorance and infirmity, which rather polluted the body, than defiled, or wounded the conscience? The Apostle Paul speaks the very same language, Heb. x. 3. "But in these sacrifices, there is a remembrance made of sins every year." Why do these sacred penmen, (particularly the former) mention sin in general; all the sins, all the transgressions, all the iniquities of the children of Israel, if none but some slight transgressions could be typically purged by sacrifice? Add to this, that not only were all the sins, and transgressions of the congregation confessed over the head of the Scape-goat, on the great day of atonement; but we find a particular enumeration of some very gross sins for which sacrifices were designed. These you will find in Levit. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. chap. 6. v. 2, 3, 5. and Numb. v. 6, 7. Moreover, what a great sin was the murmuring of the Israelites against Moses, and Aaron; this offence

|| Of this opinion was Socinus in his book de serv. page 2 chap. xi. Volkellius entertained the same notion. Volkell. Lib. 3. chap. xxxviii.

fence struck immediately and directly against the wisdom of God, in the appointment of the one to be the Priest, and the other the Prince of that people. Upon this the wrath of God was so inflamed, that a great number perished under the indignant stroke of a justly incensed God. But in order to turn away his wrath, Aaron at the command of Moses, takes his censer full of incense, and running in between the dead and the living, expiates the crime of that people, and stops the plague which had already made dreadful havock in the camp. Numb. x. 45, 46, &c. Neither was the sin of David less in numbering the people, for which the Lord smote seventy thousand of them; but this was expiated by sacrifice, 2 Sam. xxv. 24, 25. The same way were the inhabitants of the city which lay next to the man which was found murdered, the person, and manner unknown. Deut. xxi. You will find *Onesimus*, in many places of sacred writ that God's anger was appeased, and his wrath averted when it began to burn hot against great transgressors, by sacrifice.

I find in your's *Onesimus*, this query, whether or not had the Levitical sacrifices any virtue in themselves to expiate the sin of the offerer? Permit me to observe that in the Levitical sacrifices we are to consider the guilt removed by them; and their end and design. The guilt is twofold, real, and ceremonial. The former respects the pollution of the conscience, the latter, the impurity of the body. The former was contracted by any breach of the moral law, which if not pardoned, laid the transgressor obnoxious to eternal destruction. The latter was contracted by some breach of the ceremonial law which could be removed by sacrifice; e. g. if any person touched a dead carcase, or any thing legally unclean, that man was found ceremonially guilty; and this guilt could be purged by sacrifice. He could not, properly speaking, be called a moral transgressor, because there was no thing in the touch of a dead body, or of a leper to defile and pollute the conscience; but notwithstanding of this he was reckoned ceremonially unclean, by virtue of that legal constitution pronouncing such polluted; and such were excluded from intermeddling with the sacred things of the tabernacle and temple, until they were by the law purified. And as there was a twofold guilt which might be charged upon the Jews, so there was a twofold expiation, or purgation provided; the one ceremonial and typical, the other real and mystical. This is taken notice of by the Apostle, Heb. ix. 13, 14. where he distinguishes between the purgation of the flesh, and conscience; the former he ascribes to the blood of the legal sacrifices; the latter

to the blood of Jesus. The former rendered the unclean person fit to attend the service of God in the tabernacle and temple, in conjunction with his fellow-worshippers; the latter rendered him fit to enjoy communion with God in the tabernacle and temple service. Again, the legal sacrifices may be considered either absolutely, or relatively. Absolutely, and in themselves considered, they were intended to purge from that carnal impurity of which I have already spoke, and thus freeing the person from that punishment which he deserved in *foro ecclesiastico*.—Relatively considered, they were, for another use, and a quite different end. The whole of the ceremonial law may be considered both legally, and evangelically. In the former sense, it is to be viewed as an appendix to the Covenant of works; in the latter sense, as subservient to the Covenant of grace. If we view the legal sacrifices in the first sense, they rather tended to explain, and aggravate the demerit of sin than take it away. For this reason they are called the “hand writing of ordinances which was against us, and contrary to us,” because they were clear and lasting evidences of human guilt, and in which there was rather a confession, than an expiation of sin. e. g. Circumcision pointed out to the Jews their native pollution; their legal washings, the filth and impurity of sin; their sacrifices, the capital guilt of the offerer. So that the whole Jewish œconomy, particularly the ceremonial part of it, consisted in little else, than an open profession of human misery. But if we view the Jewish sacrifices in an evangelical light, in their relation to the Covenant of grace, we will find them typically, and significantly expiating sin, i. e. adumbrating, and pointing out its expiation by the future appearance of the Messiah in the human nature, actually, and really to finish transgression by the sacrifice of himself. In this sense, they are said to be acceptable to God, and carried along with them a sweet favour of rest. ||

I come then to demonstrate that the Levitical sacrifices could not make an atonement for the smallest moral transgression; and yet at the same time, that they appositely prefigured the satisfactory nature of Christ's death, as a proper, and real atonement. Is not this truth expressly taught us by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, chap. ix. 9. which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, which could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience. This same truth is more amply insisted on by the same inspired penman, chap. x. v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. By reading these verses *Onesimus*, you will find that the Apostle holds forth this truth by various arguments; which may be re-

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duced to these two. 1st He teaches the impotency of these legal sacrifices. 2d He positively declares the divine will, and intention respecting them. He evinces the impotency of the legal sacrifices for three reasons; the first more general, the other two more special and particular. His more general reason is taken from the end of the ceremonial law, and the sacrifices which took place under that œconomy. For the law, (says he) had only the shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things themselves. The term *shadow* here used by the Apostle, may be understood, either as a natural, or artificial shadow; in the first sense it is opposed to the essential image, i. e. to the body, in which sense, it is used by this same Apostle, Coll. ii. 17. which are a shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ: In the latter sense, it signifies the rude representation of a thing, opposed to the image when fully expressed, and finished: In this sense I apprehend the Apostle here uses the term *shadow*. The legal sacrifices were only the *shadow*, not the express image of the things adumbrated by them, therefore could by no means atone for sin, nor make the offerer perfect: This was reserved to a better dispensation, when these shadows should fly away, and the whole of that typical dispensation be abrogated, by the intervention of a better, and more perfect sacrifice, which should make a proper, and complete satisfaction for all the injuries done against an infinitely holy, and just God.

The Apostle again adduces a special reason for the support of this truth, taken from the repetition of the legal sacrifices; v. 2. Their continual repetition argued their imperfection and impotency to purge the conscience from moral pollution. For if these sacrifices had possessed that virtue and efficacy to answer the end of expiation, there would have been no necessity, either for a daily, or anniversary repetition of them; but having answered this end they would have been honourably suspended: For the worshippers being once purged, would have had no more conscience of sin. But while there lasted a constant reiteration of them, they taught the offerer this mortifying lesson, *that sin still remained unpurged*. The law, (says this same inspired penman) maketh nothing perfect. This was reserved for him, who in the end of the world died once for all.—Again, the Apostle argues from the impossibility that atonement could be made by the legal sacrifices, v. 4. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls, or goats should take away sin. This impossibility arises from the nature of the *subject*; sin must be expiated in the same nature that sinned: But between a man, a rational creature, and a beast, there is no communion of nature. Human nature fin-

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ned, and human nature must suffer, before it can be expiated. This was impossible with regard to the *object*, God; sin is immediately, and directly against God: And before he can pardon sin, he must be satisfied for the injuries he has sustained by sinning creatures. But it is absolutely repugnant to his nature, his wisdom, justice, and holiness, to accept of the blood of an irrational creature, as a compensation for all the wrongs done to his law, to the justice and holiness of his nature by men. Therefore it was impossible that he could accept of the blood of bulls, or goats, as an atonement for moral pollution. It was against the spirituality of his nature. "God is a spirit;" therefore his anger against the sinning creature never could be turned away, and therefore sin never purged by material blood: But beyond this, these sacrifices could never stretch: Psal. l. 13. Is it possible to conceive, that a Being so holy, could be appeased, and his anger averted, by such a vile object thing as the blood of a goat, or a bull? This was reserved for "God manifested in the flesh," who by the infinite dignity of his person, made an infinite atonement, for an infinite offence. "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." To have accepted these legal sacrifices as an atonement for sin, would have been repugnant to the *justice* of God. Justice required that there should be in a certain degree an equality between the sin, and the punishment: But between a moral transgression and the death of an irrational creature there was no correspondence. Again, the impossibility of the legal sacrifices to take away sin will appear, if we consider the *nature of sin*. In the expiation of iniquity, there must be some aptitude and fitness in the remedy, to the evil. Sin is not only a corporal, but a spiritual blemish. It hath its principal seat in the soul, and conscience. Is it possible that the blood of bulls, or goats, could wash away this spiritual stain? No more than nitre and soap could make the Ethiopian white. In order therefore to purge the conscience, and purify the soul, to deliver the sinner both from sins guilt, and pollution, it was requisite, that a sacrifice be found out, whose virtue and efficacy should reach the conscience, and purge it from dead works; it was absolutely necessary, that one be found out, who could give the most perfect and accurate obedience to the law; and out of love for God's glory, and the eternal salvation of men, suffer and die in their room and stead. This glorious, and admirable personage, the infinite wisdom of God found out. From the most generous and disinterested love, God sent his Son into the world; out of obedience to his Father's command he came. "To do thy will I take delight." In a word, the impossibility of the legal sacrifices to take away sin, and turn away

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God's wrath, will appear from the divine ordination respecting them. God all along testified that he would never accept of burnt-offerings, or offerings for sin, as a true and real satisfaction, Heb. x. 5, 6. Psal. xl. Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith, sacrifice and offerings thou wouldst not; but a body hast thou prepared me. In sacrifices and burnt-offerings, and offerings for sin, thou hast had no pleasure. It may here be enquired, why is God said not to will, or approve of those sacrifices, of which he himself was the sole institutor; and in the most strict and peremptory manner enjoined on the jewish nation? What way, or upon what account, were these sacrifices removed? "Above, (says the Apostle,) when he said sacrifice and offerings, and burnt-offerings, and offerings for sin, thou *wouldst not*, neither *hadst pleasure therein*."—It may here be observed, that God oftentimes expresses himself as displeased with those sacrifices, which he himself instituted, and strictly enjoined, not absolutely and in themselves considered, but comparatively; otherwise the all-wise God, would be repugnant to himself. The legal sacrifices, as they were of Heaven's institution, they behoved necessarily to have Heaven's approbation, and could not but be well pleasing to him, when performed in an agreeableness to their sacred institution and design. But when they came to be perverted by hypocrites, who placed the all of their devotion in the external rite, as if God required no more in the constitution of real piety, than the mere performance of the external ceremony: In this case God oftentimes speaks, as if he were displeased with the sacrifices themselves. In this sense the following Scripture phrases are to be understood, Psal. i. 11, 12. Psal. lx. 3. Psal. l. 8, 9.—Again, sacrifices are sometimes said to be rejected by God, in comparison of that internal and spiritual worship, which he principally requires, and in itself is more excellent, than the strictest adherence to any external mode, or rite whatever. The jewish sacrifices were never instituted by God, but with this view, to be subservient to that internal and spiritual worship which he principally respects. And when the jewish worshippers overlooked the life and spirit of religion, by resting in the external rite, God speaks but lightly of these sacrifices. See 1 Sam. xv. 22. Hosea vi. Micah vi. 6, 7, 8. Jerem. vii. 21, 22, 23, &c. In a word, these legal sacrifices are not only spoken of as rejected by God on the account of their profanation by hypocritical worshippers, nor in regard of that internal spiritual worship, which he above all requires; but in a particular manner, upon the account of that most perfect sacrifice of his Son, which in the fulness of time he was to offer up to take away the guilt, and cleanse from
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the pollution of sin, which all these legal sacrifices never could do, nor were ever intended by God for that end. “ Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: Burnt-offering and sin-offering, hast thou not required.” *Mine ears hast thou opened*; or in the language of the Apostle Paul, “ a body hast thou prepared me.” The phrase used by the Spirit of God in Psal. xl. is spoken in allusion to the custom which prevailed among the Jews; when a servant, or slave would not leave his master, but was willing to continue in his service, and would not go out free; his ear was bored with an awl to the door-post, Exod. xxi. 6, 7. And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife and my children, and I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him to the Judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever. See also Deut. xv. 17. This was symbolical of that solemn dedication which the servant made of himself, to perpetual servitude to his master; and although the boring of his ear, was no mark of infamy, yet it was still viewed as a voluntary mark of servitude. “ Mine ears, (says God’s servant) hast thou bored.” “ He took upon him the form of a servant;” and for us became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, when he might have freed himself of that servitude; but out of obedience to his heavenly Father, and love to lost sinners, he became man, God manifested in the flesh. “ A body hast thou prepared me.”—The septuagint, perhaps through an internal motion of the Holy Ghost, translated the phrase thus; and the Apostle Paul follows this translation. This reading the Apostle approves of, as the true meaning of the Hebrew phrase when applied by the Holy Ghost to Christ; or at least equivalent to it. The sense is the same, whether we say Christ’s ear was bored, or a body prepared for him. In both places, and by both phrases, the Spirit of God means nothing else than, that Christ in that human nature, which his Eternal Father prepared, and he assumed, was bound over as his servant to execute his will, and fulfil his pleasure by obeying, suffering and dying to glorify his Father, and purchase an eternal redemption for us. Wherefore these words are immediately subjoined: *Lo I come, to do thy will.* q. d. Seeing thou hast chosen and elected me, O my Father, to fulfil thy purpose and decree, and hast fitted and prepared me for this important work, here I am, to fulfil thy pleasure. If by my obedience and death, thy name be glorified, sinners saved; I cheerfully submit to satisfy the law’s precept by a sorrowful life, and its penal sanction by an accursed death. Let that legal dispensation cease, let those Levitical sacrifices

crifices be for ever superseded; let those shadows fly away, Lo I come, the true substance of them all.

From what has been advanced *Onesimus*, is it not evident that the legal sacrifices never could procure a proper and real atonement: And yet I think it is as clear, that they were typical of Christ's sacrifice, which was in every respect adequate to answer this important end. That those sacrifices were entirely insufficient for salvation, I have just now proven; and that an infinitely wise God never intended them for any such an end. But at the same time I think it is evident, that God never would have promulgated this œconomy, and with such solemnity enforced its observance; but for some weighty, and memorable cause, viz. to prefigure those good things which were to be acquired by the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ. The law was only the shadow of good things to come.—Christ is the substance; it was a figure for the time present; † a worldly sanctuary; patterns of things in the Heavens. As I told you already, in as far as those sacrifices were appendages of the moral law, they constantly accused the offerers of guilt, and depicted their miserable and helpless state; in as far as they were subservient to the covenant of grace, they proposed to their consideration the true atonement, and symbolically represented the remedy to be procured by Christ's once offering up of himself, in the fulness of time. Considered in themselves, and as appendages of the moral law, they never could make an atonement, neither could God be pleased with them in this respect; but considered as subservient to, and conjoined with the covenant of grace made with Christ; pardon and remission is oftentimes attributed to them in Scripture.

Onesimus, just as I had finished the last sentence, my friend *Superbus* made his appearance, and reminded me of my promise of favouring him with the reading of my letters to you. I acknowledged the promissory obligation; accordingly read over to him what I send you. He raised objections to several parts of it: But being afraid that the length of this might weary you, I postpone his objections, and my answers for the present, and conclude, assuring my dear *Onesimus* of that unremitting affection, and most sincere regard which at all times, and on all occasions dwells in the breast of his sincere friend

PHILEMON.

† Heb. ix. 9.



L E T T E R XI.

P H I L E M O N T O O N E S I M U S.

Dear Onesimus,

YOU may remember that in my last, I promised to give you a particular account of the objections which *Superbus* raised against what I had advanced on the subject of the Levitical sacrifices. *Superbus* as far as I recollect addressed me in the following terms.—“ I cannot conceive *Philemon*, how you can defend your point, in maintaining that the legal sacrifices were offered up in favour of great transgressors: If this was the case, how can you, or any one else, understand this plain assertion of the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles: Heb. ix. 7. But into the second, went the High Priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. Now *Philemon*, the word here used by the Apostle, and by which the efficacy of those sacrifices is confined, is used by Moses on the same occasion: Numb. xv. 25. And the Priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: And they shall bring their offering a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord, and their sin-offering before the Lord for their ignorance. Here is then the same truth taught in the same words, by an inspired Historian, and an Apostle.”

Superbus, I would have you carefully to notice, that the term *ignorance* here used by those inspired penmen, may with the greatest propriety be referred almost to every species of sin: What sin is there existing, but there is ignorance and error in it. Yea, I imagine from this source springs every moral transgression. The will of man can never choose evil as such, to commit iniquity, for the sake of iniquity, would be bad enough for the Devil himself; to choose evil, under the appearance of good, (which is oftentimes done,) is the most egregious folly. The will of man never yields to sin, without first an error in the understanding: And this doth not destroy the distinction between sins of ignorance, and sins of malice, which are committed contrary to knowledge and conscience. As there is a twofold knowledge,

So is there a twofold ignorance; speculative, and practical. They who sin out of ignorance, properly speaking, are supposed to be destitute both of this speculative and practical knowledge. They who sin against light and conscience are such, who speculatively know their Master's will, but practically, they know not how to do it. The highway-man cannot but know, that it is a moral transgression to attack the traveller and rob him of his purse; but he wants that practical knowledge of the evil of sin, which can only divert him from his present villainous conduct; at the same time, the crime is committed under the specious appearance of present good.

Observe *Superbus*, the uniform language of the holy Scriptures on this head, Psal. xiv. 1. There is none that understandeth: Eph. v. 8. Ye were sometimes darkness, Eph. iv. 18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them; because of the blindness of their heart. Was not the death of Christ by the hands of the wicked Jews, one of the most atrocious and wicked actions ever the sun beheld? And yet this was partly a work of ignorance. Acts iii. 17. And now brethren, (says Peter) I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your fathers. 1 Cor. ii. 8. If the princes of this world had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But why need I spend so much time in answering your objection? It is expressly done to my hand, and that by God himself, Levit. xvi. And the Priest shall confess over him, (viz. the live goat) all the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of the house of Israel. Now after all, can you, or any one else, be so bold as to affix this idea to those words, that in all this confession nothing was meant, but only sins of ignorance, and infirmity.—Moreover *Superbus*, I would imagine that the Apostle in the aforesaid text, || may be understood as teaching us this important lesson; that those sins which may seem to be but trifling in our apprehension, and of no great consequence, would be of themselves sufficient to condemn the sinner, if there was no atonement to be made for them. If sins of ignorance and infirmity cannot be forgiven without satisfaction made by blood-shedding, far less for sins against light and conscience: And that no sin whether lesser or greater can possibly be forgiven any other way, the Apostle utterly denies. “Without shedding of blood, there is no remission.” That there were sacrifices offered up for sins of ignorance and infirmity, is evident from Numb. xv. 25. but that there were none instituted, or admitted under the ceremonial law, but for sins of such a specification I utterly deny.

“ *Philemon*,

|| Heb. ix. 7.

“ *Philemon*, I am not yet satisfied on this head. I find from
 “ a variety of other places of holy writ, that wilful offenders
 “ were immediately punished without any expiation of their
 “ crime by sacrifice. I will confirm this assertion both from the
 “ Old and New Testament. Taking up the bible, he read
 “ Numb. xv. 30. But the soul that doth ought presumptu-
 “ tuously, (whether he be born in the land, or a stranger,)
 “ the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off
 “ from among his people; v. 31. Because he hath despised the
 “ word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that
 “ soul shall utterly be cut off: His iniquity shall be upon him.
 “ Must you not acknowledge that for murder, adultery, and
 “ other grievous crimes there were no sacrifices instituted, nor
 “ admitted in the room of the offender? Must you not own,
 “ that David spoke the truth, when he asserts that for his sin of
 “ murder and adultery, God required no sacrifice? Else, (says
 “ he) would I give it thee. † But I have the New, as well as
 “ the Old Testament on my side, in order to convince you of
 “ this. I shall read you a positive assertion of an infallible Apost-
 “ tle on this head; Heb. x. 26. For if we sin wilfully, after
 “ that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there re-
 “ maineth no more sacrifice for sin: v. 27. But a fearful
 “ looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall
 “ devour the adversaries. Now *Philemon*, if what you main-
 “ tain is true, what can the spirit of God mean in these forego-
 “ ing texts? Must you not own that at first view it would seem,
 “ that expiation for wilful transgressors was not allowed of?
 “ That David’s sins were pardoned I think is beyond all dispute,
 “ that they were not expiated by sacrifice needs no proof.

Superbus, that there were some sins for which there were no sa-
 crifices instituted I granted you already; such as murder, adul-
 tery, Idolatry, &c. not, because sacrifices could not be instituted
 for these, as well as other crimes; for this reason these sins were
 not beyond the reach of God’s pardoning mercy through Jesus
 the propitiation. That sacrifices then, were not allowed of in
 the case of such, was entirely owing to the sovereign good will
 and pleasure of the jewish legislator; these were pronounced by
 him capital breaches of his law: And such offenders thus capi-
 tally punished, their death became a certain public expiation.
 Neither was there any reason to institute sacrifices *which pertained*
to the flesh, for those who, for their offences were doomed to
 death. These Levitical sacrifices were oftentimes admitted,
 that the offender being ceremonially purged from his sin, might
 be received again into the communion of the church, from
 which,

which, for his crime he was cut off. But for such, whose offence laid them obnoxious to be cut off, there was no necessity to offer up a sacrifice for their introduction again into the fellowship of the church—I do not deny *Syrabus*, but that there is a very great difference between sins of infirmity, and ignorance, and sins committed with a high and uplifted hand; and that for the former, sacrifices were admitted, but not for the latter: But it will not from hence follow, that for all grievous and voluntary offences no sacrifices were admitted; the contrary of this, you know I have already proven. To sin presumptuously, or with an high and uplifted hand, I imagine signifies to sin out of malice and contempt; and from a wilful obstinacy to boast of, and glory in it. Such a mode of sinning excludes all hope of reconciliation between God, and the sinner. The man that was found gathering sticks on the sabbath-day, his offence would seem not to be among the greatest, in its nature; but if there were these adjuncts attending it, malice and contempt, together with a wilful obstinacy and rebellion against the immediate authority of Heaven interposed in the command to keep the sabbath-day: These were aggravations in the man's sin which would make it reach the very Heavens. If a man through forgetfulness had gone forth and thus violated the command in polluting the sabbath, and upon conviction of the immorality of the action, had confessed his sin, and turned penitent, I suppose a sacrifice for atonement might have been admitted, and thus have prevented his being stoned to death. || That text which you cited, Heb. x. 26. will by no means prove your point. The Apostle by no means affirms that there is no sacrifice for wilful transgressors; and for this plain reason, because in this case, there could be no atonement made, nor no pardon expected at the hand of God by any sinner; because there is no actual sin properly speaking but what is in a certain degree *voluntary*. Sin is an act of the mind and will; and the will you know cannot be forced. It is so far voluntary therefore, that no one can sin but by a certain motion of the will. The Apostle in the aforesaid text, I apprehend

|| The blasphemer, and sabbath-breaker underwent the same punishment. The same law for both was, to stone them to death. How holy must the sabbath be; it is the *Lord's day*. “My holy day.” It is hard to conceive, how men can carry on their merchandising, buy and sell; cast up their accounts; pay their debts; indulge themselves in wantonly spending that day in finding their own pleasure on that day; and yet plead not guilty; and cajole themselves in this delusive imagination; that God will overlook them, and not hold them guilty. I know not a more sure token of a graceless irreligious man, than to cast off all reverence for that holy day.

apprehend speaks of that sort of sin, which with the full consent of the will, has the most inveterate malice joined with it. We find some of the greatest Saints sinning wilfully, who yet obtained pardon. David was wilfully guilty of adultery, and murder; Peter of denying his Lord and Master; and yet we cannot, we dare not say, that these men sinned with a high hand. In their sin, there was more of Satan's malice against them, than of their's against God. There is a very great difference between sin reigning, and sin prevailing: The latter is oftentimes found in the best of God's Saints; "when they would do good evil is present with them." This is their habitual grief, their constant burden. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death. † In the unregenerate it is not every kind of reigning sin that excludes the merit and efficacy of Christ's death and sacrifice; but that sin, which is more immediately, and directly pointed against the truth, and that truth known, or at least might, and should be known. Knowledge and malice constitute the sin the Apostle here speaks of: Knowledge in the head, and malice in the heart: Or to speak more fully, and more after the apostolic dialect, it consists in these three things: Trampling the blood of the Son of God under foot; counting it an unholy thing, and doing despite to the spirit of grace. The first of these has a reference to the person and offices of Christ; the two last to these two great benefits which are the native result of his death, justification, and sanctification; the former flowing from his merit, the other from his spirit. The sin I apprehend that the Apostle has his eye on here, consists in a total defection from the truth; and that joined with a malicious impugning of it, after knowing it, and openly professing it.

Permit me to observe here *Superbus*, that a man may deny Christ through ignorance and error, who never knew him, and persecute him in his members with the most unrelenting fury, and yet not be guilty of this sin, for which there is no more sacrifice. This did Paul before his conversion; but he did all through ignorance. || Again, a man may be guilty of denying Christ through weakness and fear, and yet not be guilty of this sin. This did Peter, and many who were brought to the stake for the cause of Jesus, and recanted. Again, a man may deny Jesus, when neither ignorance, or fear of losing his life is the moving cause; but from a lustful desire of becoming rich and renowned in the world. For instance, for a christian to renounce christianity, and embrace the Alcoran upon provision of his being advanced to the highest post in the Turkish Empire. This would be a far greater sin, than either the sin of Paul, or Peter.

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† Rom. iii. 24.

|| 1 Tim. i. 13.

This would be very nearly approaching to the sin here mentioned by the Apostle: And I presume, that such a man would be on the very verge of destruction; and God in a way of righteous judgment might punish this sin, by suffering the Apostate to go all the length in sinning that the Apostle here mentions: To join malice and hatred to his recantation of christianity, and this would complete his ruin. There would remain no more sacrifice for such a presumptuous sinner. What way can he obtain pardon, that wilfully, and maliciously rejects the only remedy, the sacrifice of Christ for the expiation of sin? This is accounting the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, or a common thing, not sufficient to answer the ends of redeeming sinners to God, according to the divine ordination and appointment. Along with this, there is joined in the sin the Apostle here speaks of, a contempt of the spirit of God. "Doing despite to the spirit of grace;" the Holy Ghost, the third person in the ever blessed Trinity, which is sent by the Father and the Son, to apply the purchased redemption. This renders the salvation of such a man impossible. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men," i. e. there remains a sacrifice for these. Faith and repentance may yet open a door for an interest in the death of Jesus: "But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven, neither in this, or the world to come." If a man sin against the *Father*, Christ is the intercessor to plead his cause; if a man sin against *Jesus*, there remains the third person to intercede in his behalf; but doing despite to this divine agent, there is not another to operate on the soul for the production of those graces which are absolutely necessary to interest in the atonement of Jesus.

"Pardon me *Philemon* for troubling you at this rate; I wish
 "to have my mind satisfied, and my judgment informed in
 "every particular in which the salvation of my soul, and the
 "glory of God is concerned. You asserted, that the Levitical
 "sacrifices were insufficient to expiate sin, or make an atone-
 "ment for the transgressor. Now if this be true, might not I,
 "or any one else with propriety, argue the insufficiency of
 "Christ's sacrifice for this purpose? I prove the connexion thus;
 "because the shadow must bear a resemblance to the substance;
 "the type, to the antitype. Now that the antitype might cor-
 "respond with the type, salvation can no more be expected
 "from the sacrifice, and death of Jesus, than from those offered
 "up under the legal dispensation. e. g. The brazen serpent
 "was a figure of Christ lifted up upon the cross, and all that was
 "requisite for healing the stung Israelites, consisted in simply
 "looking to the serpent of brass; all therefore I would imagine,
 "that

“ that is necessary for our salvation lies in simply believing that
 “ Christ died, rose again, and ascended up into Heaven, there
 “ to make intercession, and not as you maintain, from any in-
 “ herent virtue and efficacy in Christ’s death to procure pardon,
 “ and turn away God’s wrath; consequently I infer that his
 “ death was not a proper, and real satisfaction for sin.”—*Superbus*, your reasoning on this head is easily overturned, if you remember the distinction I made of a ceremonial, and typical expiation. I readily acknowledge that there must be something in the shadow analogous to the body, in the type, to the antitype; otherwise it could be no type: But it is sufficient, that there be such an analogy, and similitude, as in a certain degree to warrant the relation between the type, and antitype. A perfect agreement and correspondence in every thing, would directly destroy the relation. That the brazen serpent was an eminent type of Christ, is an undoubted truth, if our Lord’s words are to be credited, John iii. 14. That there was a very great difference between the type, and antitype, is evident. Looking to the one, was the mean appointed by God for healing the body, and saving from death; looking to the other for healing the soul, and saving from destruction. The one respected the natural, the other the spiritual life of the sinner. The efficacy of the type depended solely on the ordination and appointment of God; the efficacy of the antitype, on its real intrinsic worth and value. You further observed *Superbus*, that the legal sacrifices expiated sin, not from any virtue in them, but from the faith of the offerer. That they did not, neither could expiate sin, or make an atonement for the sinner, considered in themselves, is true; that they did not typically make an atonement, is false. What is the reason *Superbus*, that expiation and atonement is constantly ascribed to these sacrifices? Must you not acknowledge, that the great and comprehensive blessing, pardon, is referred to those, and not to the faith of the offerer? Faith must have some object. What was the faith of those Old Testament believers? Did it consist in this, that the blood of bullocks, goats, and the ashes of an heifer could cleanse them from their moral pollution? If this was the essence of their belief, I think, you must conclude with me that their faith was not of a saving nature. In a word, the faith of those ancient believers was for substance, the very same with our’s who live under a better and more glorious dispensation of the covenant of grace. They believed that there was a time coming when the Messiah should make his appearance on the theatre of this world, suffer and die, really and actually to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, of which theirs were but faint shadows, and imperfect resemblances. In fine, Christ’s sacrifice

sacrifice is the sole meritorious cause of pardon, and every other spiritual blessing conferred on all believers, in every period of the world, and dispensation of the covenant. Faith is only the instrumental cause that interests the sinner in, and puts him in actual possession of the atonement and merit of Jesus. We have redemption, (says the Apostle) How? Doth he ascribe it to any work of the creature? Are we redeemed because we do the best we can to observe the moral law? Are we redeemed because we have repented of our former wicked course of life? 'This holy man of God cuts off all these as the meritorious cause, and shuts us up to this one thing, the blood of Jesus. We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Superbus being hastily called away, opens a door for your friend to resume the argument in proving the satisfaction and atonement of Christ, to be a proper and real satisfaction and atonement to the law and justice of God for procuring pardon, reconciliation, and consummate salvation. To this, and this alone, as the meritorious cause is the all of our salvation owing. I shall then conclude the whole, by showing you these absurdities which must necessarily follow upon ascribing our redemption and salvation to the doctrines which Christ taught, and the example he exhibited, without having recourse to his death, as a real and propitiatory sacrifice, not as merely exemplary, but properly satisfactory; not to confirm his doctrine *only*, but to turn away God's wrath from sinners by dying in their stead.

1st If he died only to exhibit to the world an example of patience and resignation, and to confirm the doctrines which he taught without regarding his death as meritorious for acquiring pardon and reconciliation; will it not then follow, that the Martyrs were not behind the Saviour in their death? Did not they seal the truth of what they taught with their blood? Did they not afford the most shining and eminent example of patience, charity, obedience, faith, and other christian virtues? But where is it ever taught us, or in the remotest degree hinted that they died *for us*? Where is it recorded that the blood of the most eminent Martyr that ever suffered, cleanseth from all sin, or reconciles us to God? But these precious and invaluable blessings are every where in the sacred Scriptures expressly attributed to Christ's death, as I have already noticed. Why *Onesimus*, if there was nothing peculiar in Christ's death more than in the death of the Martyrs; or if the principal intendment of it was *only* to confirm his doctrine, or exhibit an example to the world; why do the Scriptures constantly, and every where attribute more to it, and pass over these things almost in profound silence?

2d If Christ's death was intended for no other end than merely to confirm his doctrine, may not the same effect be ascribed to the life he led, and the miracles which he wrought, with as much propriety, if not more, than to his death on the cross? Did he not exhibit a most striking testimony in these, of holiness, constancy, faith, and love, and every other shining virtue which adorned the person, and character of our Lord Jesus Christ? But *Onesimus*, neither to the miracles which he wrought, nor the exemplary holiness of his obediential life only, is remission of sins and eternal redemption ascribed, but to his death and sufferings. Wherever mention is made of pardon, Christ's death is taken notice of as the meritorious cause almost throughout the whole New Testament. Hence the preaching of the gospel is emphatically termed, the preaching of the cross. 1 Cor. i. 10. And we are said to be baptised into Christ's death. Rom. vi. 3. The eucharist is said to be a memorial of his death. 1 Cor. xi. 28. And the cup in the Lord's supper, is expressly called the cup of the New Testament: This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for the remission of sins, Luke xxii. 20. But why all this ado about Christ's death, if there was not some causality in it for the impetration of pardon, peace, and reconciliation.

3d If by Christ's death no benefit accrues to us than what is merely exemplary, or for our imitation, then there can be no such a thing as the righteousness of Christ, which consists not only in the obedience of his life, but in his bloody sufferings on the accursed tree. But if there be no such a thing, why is it so often mentioned in Scripture? Why is Jesus expressly called "Jehovah our righteousness?" Or why said to be "made of God unto us righteousness?" Why doth the Apostle Paul glory in it as the sole ground of his acceptance with the Almighty? || I know not, neither can I learn from the whole of divine revelation any other footing upon which a sinner stands justified before God, but the righteousness of Emmanuel. This my dear *Onesimus*, is the source of all our consolation, the stay and support of our souls: Clothed with this we stand safe against all the accusations of Satan, and the curse of a broken law. Rom. iv. 7, 8. To maintain that all the benefit we receive from the death of Christ is owing to its exemplary nature, and that the righteousness whereby a believer stands justified in God's sight, consists in his faith and moral obedience; and that these are imputed to him as the ground of his justification: What is this, but an overturning of the whole evangelical system? If we are justified by any work of the creature, how can we vindicate the Apostle Paul for roundly telling us that "by the deeds of the law, no flesh living can be

be justified?" Is not that man of God worthy of our highest reprobation, for counting all his moral obedience, in point of justification before God, but loss and dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, || and teaching others so to do? If justification proceeds from any other source, or is claimed upon any other footing, than the surety righteousness of the Mediator; this inspired penman has led thousands astray to their utter ruin? What more unaccountable, than to confound the law, and the gospel, the covenant of works, with the covenant of grace: But this they do, who place a sinner's justification upon the footing of human obedience, and not upon the footing of Christ's satisfaction and atonement.

4th This absurdity will follow, that if by Christ's death there is no real, and proper satisfaction made to the law and justice of God in the room of the sinner, then all those places of Scripture which speak of our redemption and salvation, of remission of sins by his blood, of God's making him a propitiation for our sins, of his being our surety, &c. must be understood in a figurative, and metaphorical sense. But is it not strange *Onesimus*, that it ever could have entered into the heart of any man, or sect of men, that these precious truths, delivered by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, in such explicit terms, yet must be understood figuratively, and metaphorically? What warrant have any in all the word of God, for such an explication? Did ever the ancient Jews, or any of the heathen nations explain their propitiatory sacrifices, in the manner Socinians do the sacrifice of Christ? The notion the former entertained of their sacrifices I propose shortly to show you. In the mean time *Onesimus*, would not you think it strange, that in an article of such importance and moment, and in the belief of which our eternal salvation depends, that the spirit of God should have left it enveloped in so much darkness? Yea, would it not have been necessary, to have so certainly defined the matter that he that runs might read it? But I aver *Onesimus*, that there is no article of our holy religion, so often repeated, and in such explicit terms expressed, as the merit and atonement of Jesus and its imputation to us as our *justifying righteousness* before God.

5th This absurdity will follow, either the divesting Jesus of his sacerdotal office altogether; or confounding it with his prophetic and kingly offices: And that whether we view his oblation

¶ Phillip. iii.

tion on the cross, or his intercession in glory, which comprehends the two principal acts of his priestly office. With regard to his death on the cross, if the principal intendment of that was the confirmation of his doctrine, who can say, but he died as a prophet and teacher, and not as a priest; and with regard to his intercession in glory, this is entirely subverted, for this reason, because the ground upon which his intercession in his glorified state proceeds, and is founded, is upon the virtue and efficacy of his oblation here on earth. This was plainly adumbrated, and pointed out by the conduct of the legal High Priest; first sacrificing the victim, and then entering in within the vail with its blood, to make intercession for transgressors. These three offices of prophet, priest, and king, to the execution of which Christ was anointed, and solemnly invested, have entirely distinct objects in their execution. As a prophet he teaches by his heavenly doctrine; as a priest he atones for our guilt, by his sacrifice on the cross; as a king he rules and governs the faithful, subdues their foes, protects them by his power, conducts them with his counsel, and at last brings them to his glory. I may here observe *Onesimus*, we will find in some single actions of Jesus all these offices conjoined. e. g. In his death he acted as a priest, in respect of God; as a king in respect of Satan; as prophet, priest, and king with regard to us. As a prophet, he set before the world the most admirable example of love, constancy, patience, and resignation; as a priest by purging away our sins by the merit of his sacrifice; as a king, by gloriously triumphing over all his, and our enemies, sin, Satan, death, and hell. Now although he died properly as a priest, (for his death was a sacrifice) nevertheless, we will find him in a certain degree executing the offices of prophet, and king: But from thence it will not follow, that these offices are confounded, the one with the other; no, in his death they remain perfectly and entirely distinct. The same thing may be said with regard to his intercession: He lives in glory as a priest to present the merit and virtue of his sacrifice on the cross; he is there as our king, to see to the effectual application of the fruits of his death to all believers; to see to the implantation, and preservation of all saving graces in the hearts of his people; he appears there as our prophet, to lead his people into all truth, by sending the Holy Ghost, the spirit of wisdom and revelation, to teach and instruct them in the mysteries of the kingdom, in the knowledge of those truths which are absolutely necessary to be known in order to eternal salvation.

Lastly, this absurdity will necessarily follow, that all those who lived prior to the manifestation of Jesus in the flesh, beloved to perish; for this reason, his heavenly doctrine never founded in
their

their ears, his holy example was never presented before their eyes: Or, if they were saved, I would ask how? Was there one door for them, and another for us? Or were they saved by any virtue or efficacy in their sacrifices? The contrary of this I have already proven: Or were they saved by their moral obedience? This the Apostle flatly denies, Gal. ii. 16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, (any man indefinitely, whether high or low, rich or poor, Jew or Gentile; whether living under the mosaic, or christian dispensation) by any endeavour of his, by the merit of any good work he is capable of performing. || What way then were those Old Testament Saints saved? I answer, by the preaching of the gospel, which brought to their ears these glad tidings, that in the fulness of time the Son of God should come, and by his death put an end to sin, and bring in an everlasting righteousness. By the gospel, do you reply, this is something odd; to hear of the gospel under the law. It is a doctrine that will indeed sound very flatly in the ears of such as impugn the necessity of Christ's death as a propitiatory sacrifice. But what if it be true, that the gospel was preached to them, as well as to us? That this was really the case, the Apostle Paul puts it beyond all controversy; Heb. iv. 2. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them. Do you ask what is the gospel? According to the speculative opinion, and practical conversation of many in the christian world, it is this; the glad news of life and salvation to all men, according to their moral conduct and behaviour; and to save appearances, and make the definition run a little more smooth, and give it a little of an evangelical tincture, some will add *through Jesus Christ*. But *through Jesus Christ*, and yet deny his divinity, and the propitiatory nature of his death, is a doctrine perfectly unintelligible to me, because it has no sanction in the Scriptures of truth. But *Onesimus*, permit me to give you a definition of the gospel from the mouth of an Angel, Luke ii. 10. Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; v. 11. for unto you is born in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. This then is the gospel; the proclamation of pardon and remission, of eternal salvation from sin and wrath, through the Lord Jesus Christ, as crucified and slain. Doth not the Apostle plainly teach us, that Jesus was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world? Through the virtue and value of his atoning sacrifice, which in the fulness of time was to be presented to God, all the Old Testament Saints

were

|| Gal. iii. 10, 11. Rom. iii. 27, 28.

were received up into glory, and made perfectly happy in the full enjoyment of God. “ Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever.”

You ask in yours *Onesimus*, what was the opinion of the ancient fathers, and of the Jews themselves, respecting the Levitical sacrifices; and of the heathen world in regard to those sacrifices which obtained among them. I shall give you their sentiments from a very learned Author, extracted from the different Authors who wrote on this subject: † And we will find in the issue, that it was the joint opinion, and constant belief, that wherever piacular sacrifices took place, that they were still offered up in the room of the guilty person, or in other words, that they were of a vicarious nature.

Origen, from the imposition of hands upon the head of the victim, concludes, that this was emblematical of the sins of mankind laid upon Christ who is the head of the body, the church. ||

Theodoret, Quest. 1. ad Levit. entertained the same opinion: Whoever, says he, offered a sacrifice, put his hands on the head of the victim; intimating thereby the translation of his actions upon the devoted animal; the hands, (says he) signify the actions, and for these was the victim slain. †

The same Author, (Quest. 61, ad Exod.) plainly acknowledges it as his belief, that the life of the victim was poured out instead of the life of the offerer. The Priest, (says he) did not impose his hands in the case of all sacrifices, but for those which were offered up for sin: Symbolically representing, that the sacrifice was offered up in the room of the offerer. §

He further adds, seeing, (says he) thou art endued with an immortal soul; the blood of an irrational creature is given for thy soul. For this cause it is ordered that the life, or the blood of

† Outram de Sacrif. Lib. 1, chap. xxii. pag, 247, 248, 249, &c.

|| Posuit, inquit, & manum suam super caput vituli, hoc est, peccata humani generis imposuit super caput suum. Ipse enim est caput corporis ecclesie.

† Quisque victimam offerens capiti ejus manus suas, tanquam suas actiones ipsius imposuit. Manus enim actiones significant, pro his autem victimam offerebat.

§ Non omnibus victimis manus imponebant sacerdotes, sed illis, quæ pro se oblatae sunt, & precipue pro peccato factis. Cæteris autem offerentes ipsi manus imponebant, Hoc autem symbolice indicabat hostiam in locum offerentis pro quo mactabatur susceptam esse.

of a creature wanting reason, be offered up in the room of thy soul endued with reason and immortality. †

Eusebius of Cæsarea entertained the same opinion; that whoever brought his offering to the Priest, imposed his hands on its head; pointing out the offering up of the sacrifice for his head: And that this was done in all the sin-offerings, from whence is understood that the life of the victim was offered up instead of the offerer. ||

This was not the opinion of the ancient Fathers with regard to those sacrifices which were offered up under the Mosaic dispensation only, but of those which were offered up by Abel, Noah, and Abraham. Those good men who enjoyed communion with God, enlightened by a certain divine afflatus; saw it necessary that a remedy should be provided by which their deadly sins should be expiated; judged that some propitiatory sacrifice should be offered up to God, the Author of their soul and life, to procure their salvation. But seeing they had nothing better than their souls, or nothing more precious to consecrate to God, they sacrificed beasts for their souls; thus offering up the lives of others instead of their own. †

I come now to enquire into the opinion of the Jews concerning the immolation of their piacular victims, and this I shall give you from the aforementioned Author. §

R. Levi Ben Gerson, from the imposition of hands by Aaron and his Sons on the head of the bullock, *Exod. xxix. 10.* makes this observation. The imposition of the hands had a reference to

† Sicut enim, inquit, tu immortalis anima præditus es; sic animal rationis expers sanguinem habet, loco animæ. Quam ob causam præcipit, ut anima ejus ratione carens, hoc est, sanguis, vice animæ tuæ ratione præditæ, et immortalis offeratur.

|| Quippe quæ quemque, qui sacrificat victimæ suæ capiti manus imponere; ejusque caput manibus tenentem animal ad sacerdotem adducere jubet quasi victimam, pro capite suo offerentem. Id quod in omnibus hostiis factum est, nulla enim aliter oblata fuit. Unde intelligitur victimarum animas animarum offerentium vice datas esse.

† Quando quidem enim viri pii, Deoque familiares & afflatu divino illuminati magno sibi opus esse remedio viderent, quo mortifere peccata expiarent; Deo vitæ animæque datori *lutron* aliquod dandum judicabant salutis impetrandæ causa, de quidem cum animabus suis nihil melius, nihil præstantius, quod Deo consecrarent, haberent, pro eis bestias immolabant, ita scilicet animarum suarum vice animas offerentes. *Euseb. de demonstr. Evang. Lib. 1, chap. x. 11.*

to this, that the sins of the offerer might be understood to be removed and translated to the animal. *

The same Author has this observation. As often as a soul, (says he) shall sin through imprudence, or otherwise, he transfers his sin from himself and lays it upon the head of the victim. And to this belong these confessions, I have sinned, I have rebelled, I have acted perversely, as appears from the confessions of the High Priest over the bullock in the day of his expiation. †

But in case any one should doubt, that the Jews had no notion of a vicarious sacrifice to take away sin; these deprecatory expressions which were always used in the conclusion, will remove every scruple,——*hæc sit expiatio mea*, let this be my expiation, *quod ego ipse malum merui, id in victimæ meæ caput recidat.* i. e. Whatever evil, or punishment I have deserved, let it fall on the head of my sacrifice.

R. *Solomon Iarchi* explains the preceding formula, as the victim addressed the offerer in these words. We are thy expiation; we stand in thy room, whatever should justly fall on thee, let it alight on us. ||

Baal Aruch expresses the same sentiment, as if the victim addressed the offerer thus. I am in his place, to bear his iniquities; I am he by whom he may obtain pardon: I take his sins upon me. †

R. *Moses Ben Nachman* ad Levit. 1, expresses himself thus; it was just, (says he) that his blood should be poured out, and his body burned: The Creator out of love to thee, hath received this vicarious victim at thy hand as a propitiation; that the blood of the victim should be poured out instead of thy blood, and its life instead of thine. §

Isaac

* *Impositio hæc manuum ambarum erat, eoque spectabat, ut hinc intelligeretur removeri ab iis peccata ipsorum, & ad hoc animal quo dammodo transferri.*

† *Quoties quis anima sentiente imprudens, vel quidem prudens, transfert a se peccata sua, &c.*

|| *Nos expiatio tua sumus, sumus nos in locum suppositi; quod in te merito recidere possit, illud omne in nos recidat.*

† *Sim ipse ejus in locum suppositi ut iniquitates ejus portem; ego ipse, quo veniam consequaris in me peccata suscipio.*

§ *Æquum erat, ut sanguis ejus funderetur & ut cremaretur corpus suum. Creator autem pro clementia sua hanc ab eo accipit victimam, ut rem vicariam, &c.*

Isaac Ben Arama expresses himself almost in the same terms; the guilty person, (says he) when he beholds the victim slain, flay'd, cut in pieces, and burned with fire upon the altar; ought to consider, that he deserved to be thus treated, if God had not out of mercy and compassion accepted of a sacrifice instead of his soul. ||

You see *Onesimus*, that it was the universal and unanimous opinion of these Jews, that there was a translation of the guilt of the offerer upon the head of the sacrifice, pointed out by laying their hands on its head; and that from the pouring out of the blood of the sacrifice, and burning its flesh upon the altar, they concluded, that they should have been thus justly dealt with if it had not been owing to the mercy of God, which accepted the animal instead of the offerer: And farther that their sacrifices were not only of a vicarious, but a propitiatory nature, making an atonement for their souls. Indeed it is hard to conceive for what other end they were instituted, or what other idea they could entertain of them: And is it not equally difficult to conceive, for what other end Christ was offered up in sacrifice, than to make a true, and real atonement as our surety. The Son of man came not to be ministr'd unto, but to minister and to give his life a *ransom for many*.

I might now proceed to inform you, and that from the same authority of the opinion of the heathen world respecting the sacrifices which obtained among them. When any thing disastrous either beset them, or was dreaded by them, it was usual for them, to imprecate on the head of the devoted victim, the evil, or punishment either felt or feared. We will find also, that such as were engaged in the immolation of their sacrifices were reputed unclean; further that the life of the victim was poured out *instead* of theirs. These sentiments, as I already told you were the same with those the Jews entertained with respect to the Levitical sacrifices, and adduced several instances which I shall not again repeat.

Do you not see *Onesimus*, that the idea of an atonement made by sacrifice is no novel doctrine? Neither is it a singular doctrine. It was a part of the belief of all the enlightened Jews; it was adopted by the heathen world, particularly in their immolation of human sacrifices. Why should it be thought strange? Or rather, why should it in the least degree be disputed, that Christ died, *for us*? Offered up himself to God as a vicarious, and propitiatory sacrifice? Why should men act a part so diametrically

¶ *Reus cum victimam de peccato suo immolatam mactari, pelle exui profecari, igneque aræ comburi videt, secum ipse cogitare debet ita secum agi, & ita se tractari oportuisse, nisi Deus pro misericordia sua, pro nimia ejus piaculum.*

metrically opposite to their own interest? Why should they rob the Mediator of the glory, of having *purchased the church with his own blood?* Alas, what are our best services in the sight of an immaculate and pure Being, without being washed in the blood of the Lamb; rags, and filthy rags, lofs, and dung. I am sure my dear friend, it is far, very far, from being a part of your creed, to vilify the person, and depreciate the merit of *Emmanuel*.

The beloved Apostle obtains in a vision, a most glorious enrapturing sight; a great number, which no man can number, standing before the throne of God and the Lamb. But how stand they there? How can that holy city, that glorious throne; and more glorious Being that sits there admit of dust and ashes, and these polluted? How came they there? *They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* Are you anticipating that blessed, and happy period when you shall obtain your station among that innumerable company? Are you stretching forward with eagerness, and looking with a holy impatience for that desirable event? I would advise you, in your way to these peaceful, and blessed abodes, to keep your eye on Jesus. Trust in his all-sufficient merits; glory in him as Jehovah your righteousness. That my dear friend may obtain a place among those happy quiristers; and join in that new, in that excellent and never-fading song; “worthy is the Lamb that was slain and hath redeemed us to God by his blood,” † is the most unfeigned wish of

PHILEMON.



L E T T E R XII.

PHILEMON TO ONESIMUS.

Dear Onesimus,

I Received yours; nothing can afford greater pleasure to my soul, than to hear that your soul prospereth: May you habitually grow in grace, and in the love and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. You complain of the prevalence of sin in you;

† Worthy the Lamb that died they cry,
To be exalted thus;
Worthy the Lamb our lips reply,
For he was slain *for us*.

you; and who has not ground to take up the same complaint. Paul, one of the most steady believers, and one of the most mortified Saints, that perhaps any age ever produced, felt the same law of sin working in his members that you feel, which extorted this grievous complaint from this singular man of God: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death." The same gracious hand that supported him in the conflict, and made him ride triumphant over all the power of the enemy, will support you my dear *Onesimus*, and make you more than a conqueror. That was a notable expression of the Apostle, worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance; worthy the imitation of every follower of Jesus: "Through Christ strengthening me I can do all things." This most noble confession is but an echo to our Lord's express declaration, "without me ye can do nothing." What a mortifying stroke to human pride! how does it lay all self-gloriation in the dust: How doth it exalt a slighted, a vilified Redeemer. All our spiritual strength for work, or warfare, is lodged in him; and by faith's union to him must be derived from him. O thou despised Jesus! and yet by thee we can do all things; and without thee, we can do nothing. This brings to my remembrance the complaint of the evangelical Prophet on this head: He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. || Let us beware of reprobating the Jews for their conduct towards this benign and gracious Saviour: He meets with little, or no better treatment from us. Lately I saw this literally verified in a certain polite company, in which your friend was present. I must acknowledge to the honour of the company, that their conversation was by no means of the trifling insipid kind; for my own part, I was highly entertained. Some gentlemen of a liberal education, and well versed in ancient history, gave universal satisfaction on the subjects they spoke upon. One followed the Macedonian hero † through all his dangers and exploits; related his victories, his generosity and clemency, to great purpose; related and set forth his fatal end with such *pathos*, as made the whole circle sigh, and lament the untimely end of the *Royal Conqueror*. Another dwelt with peculiar accuracy, and judgment, upon the various exploits of the *Cartbaginian General*; ‡ his losses, and victories; particularly, he dwelt with peculiar pleasure, (which at the same time afforded the highest entertainment to the company) on the rout which that intrepid commander took over the Alps, with a view to lay siege to the mistress of the world. § In a word,

Pompey,

‡ Isai. liii. 3.

† Alexander.

‡ Hannibal.

§ Rome.

Pompey, Julius Cæsar, with many other heroes of antiquity were brought on the carpet, and many entertaining anecdotes related in a most agreeable entertaining manner of these great warriors. There is perhaps scarce any thing will give such universal satisfaction, as historic anecdotes. If we can credit ancient reports, the reading of history has had a peculiar influence in recovering persons from dangerous, inveterate maladies, even when the art of medicine has been at a loss for a remedy. || In the course of conversation there was a certain great personage † introduced by a very grave looking gentleman, and who seemed to be very highly entertained with the preceding discourses. He entered with life and spirit into the wars and victories of this glorious one, as recorded in the evangelists: Showed how he was attacked by the prince of the power of the air, but came off a glorious conqueror. Particularly he showed how at Jerusalem, and on Mount Calvary, he encountered with all the legions of hell, and by *dying* led them captive. He entered with peculiar energy upon those advantages that accrue to mankind upon the account of this signal defeat. These said he were our common foes, these attacked our common Lord; powerful as they were, what were they in the hands of this Almighty champion; long habituated as they had been in the hellish art of intrigue, they could not by all their policy extricate themselves out of his hand. What was Alexander, (added he) at the best, a murderer of mankind? What right had he to invade the territories, burn the cities, massacre the subjects of the Persian Monarch? But the Captain of our salvation executed judgment on these rebellious wicked spirits, these enemies of his person, and government, and of our salvation in justice and righteousness. The great end
and

|| History informs us that Alphonfus and Ferdinand, the one king of Spain, the other of Italy, were so charmed by reading Livy, and Quintus Curtius, that they were restored to their health when they were given over by all their physicians. The same thing is told of Lorenzo de Medici, commonly stiled the father of letters, that he was restored to his usual health from a very dangerous illness, by the relation of a passage out of the history of the Emperor Conrad III. which was as follows. This Emperor having reduced the rebellious city of Veinsberg, commanded it to be utterly destroyed; and moreover, ordered that its inhabitants should be all made prisoners, except the women only. Whereupon these women made their humble suit to the Emperor, that they might save at least, what they were able to carry away; which being granted, Conrad was so much surpris'd to see them march out, with their husbands and children on their backs, and moved with so much compassion thereby, that he immediately pardoned the whole city.

† The Captain of our salvation.

and design, (added he) why this powerful Prince, this King of Kings, and Lord of Lords appeared on the theatre of this world was truly benign, to emancipate the human race from that slavery and bondage they were in to sin, and Satan. In a word, from the picture he drew of human nature; from the account he gave of that divine philanthropy which glowed in the breast, and actuated the divine Saviour, in all his wars and victories in the behalf of miserable enslaved sinners; I imagined that nothing but the sacrifice of praise to the King, the Lord of Hosts, from the account given, would have been offered up by every one present: But to my great mortification it was quite otherwise. A flatness of spirit instantly seized the whole circle: They all wished the narration at an end: Yea I remember one gentleman in particular whispered to his fellow, that to introduce such a discourse, and dwell upon such a theme was very *impolite*. I am sure *Onesimus*, in a better place, and among better company, it will never be deemed *bad manners*, nor any breach of politeness and good breeding, to sing, and that in the most unceasing, rapturous manner to eternity, “unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in *his own blood*, be honor, glory, wisdom and riches, for ever, and ever.” That bloody sacrifice which Jesus our Mediator offered up on Mount Calvary, will be an eternal entertaining subject; it will swell the breasts, and dwell on the tongues of all the redeemed from among men.

You enquire *Onesimus* in yours, from whence did the rite of sacrificing derive its origin? Was it immediately instituted by God, or not? In order to answer your query, and for elucidating this point, we must here, as in every other article of our holy religion, make the Scriptures our rule, and walk precisely according to that light held forth through the lamp of divine revelation. We are told by an inspired penman, Heb. xi. 4. That Abel offered unto God, a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness, that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, and by it he being dead yet speaketh.—The sacrifices here mentioned by the Apostle to the Gentiles, are evidently those of which Moses gives us a brief account in Gen. iv. where he informs us, that in process of time Cain brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord; and Abel he also brought of the firstlings of the flock, and of the fat thereof: And the Lord had respect to Abel, and his offering; but unto Cain, and his offering, he had no respect.

Philo the Jew, according to Dr. Whitby, makes the defect of Cain's sacrifice to consist in two things; 1st that he did not offer it soon enough. 2d that he did not offer of the first fruits of the earth, as did Abel of the firstling of his sheep; but only of the

the fruits of the ground. But superseding this Jewish notion, I think we may with greater safety rely upon the reason the Apostle assigns which gives the preference to Abel's sacrifice, above that of Cain's, viz. *his faith*. We are also told, that God testified his acceptance of his sacrifice. He had a testimony from Heaven, that he was well pleased with him. Probably the external symbol of this acceptance, consisted in causing fire to come down out of Heaven to consume his sacrifice. Thus he discovered his acceptance of Abraham's sacrifice, Gen. xv. 17. In the same manner he manifested his acceptance of Aaron's sacrifice; of Gideon's, David's, Solomon's, and Elijah's. Accordingly the prayer of the Jews for their king runs thus: The Lord remember all thy offerings. and turn to ashes thy burnt-sacrifice. Psal. xx. 3. Whence could Cain certainly learn that God accepted the sacrifice of Abel, and rejected his, if it had not been owing to some external symbol? And very likely this was it, celestial fire.

Now *Onesimus* do you enquire, did those men offer their respective sacrifices to God, the one of the firstling of the flock; the other of the fruits of the ground, by the mere light of nature, flowing from a principle of gratitude to God the Creator, and gracious benefactor, or by an immediate command from God? Some very eminent and learned men entertained this notion and embraced this opinion; that the origin of sacrificing sprung merely from the dictates of reason, and the light of nature. I would rather suppose, that this rite owed its original, and derived its authority, immediately from God's special command, for the following reasons.

1st Can it possibly be supposed, that reason and the light of nature could ever dictate, that the first fruits of the ground, and the firstlings of the flock, could be acceptable sacrifices to God; considering the pure and spiritual nature of God? Could the light of nature, unassisted by some particular revelation from Heaven, dictate that the destruction of any creature could be a sacrifice well pleasing in his sight? Nature teaches, that the killing of an innocent creature cannot be said to be *doing well*: And therefore, since Abel is said to have *done well*, in killing, and offering up the firstling of his flock in sacrifice, it is evident, that he must have done this for some good, and just reason: and what reason could justify him but the command of Heaven?

2d Seeing the rite of sacrificing obtained generally, and universally throughout the world; must it not necessarily follow, that this universal practice must derive its origin, and obtain its sanction, from some dictate of reason, or some demand of nature; or some principle of interest, or some powerful influence, or in-
junction

junction of some being of universal authority? Now that the custom of sacrificing universally prevailed for many ages over all the regions of the known world, no one that makes the least pretensions to the knowledge of antiquity will deny: And that this practice did not prevail from any dictate of reason, or any demand of nature, I think is evident, when we consider, that mankind have no natural instinct, or appetite to gratify in shedding the blood of an innocent, inoffensive creature. What is there in the human mind to be gratified by killing, and cutting in pieces the firstling of the flock, and burning the body upon an altar? Could there be any temptation from appetite to do this in those ages when the whole sacrifice was consumed. Neither could it proceed from any principle of interest; what self-interest could a man have in offering in sacrifice the first of his fruits, and the firstling of his flock? How then could this practice obtain, and obtain so universally in the world, to which mankind were neither urged by the light of nature, nor any instinct and demand of nature; nor by any self-interest of any kind, but quite the contrary; in direct opposition to every principle of nature and interest? The only way I presume then, that this is to be accounted for, is from some powerful influence of example, or injunction of authority: And what example could influence these two brothers, Cain, and Abel to present their respective offerings to God, except that of Adam: And what authority could enjoin this on Adam, except that of God.

3d Did not God afford a sure proof of the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, and also of his having done *well* in that act of adoration? From whence I would conclude, that this rite owed its original to an immediate injunction from Heaven. For is it not certain, that the destruction of an innocent creature neither is, nor can be of itself, an action acceptable to God; and therefore nothing but duty could make it acceptable, and nothing but the command of God could make it duty? It is certain, that no man has any right to the lives of the creatures but God; or those, on whom he confers that right: And it is certain, that God had not yet given man a right to the creatures, even for necessary food, far less for unnecessary cruelty: Therefore nothing but a special command from Heaven could create a right to take away their lives.

Moreover, no human action is good, or acceptable in God's sight, otherwise than as it is conformable to the will of God, either revealed, or established in the nature of things: And that this action was conformable to the will of God, could only be known by revelation, i. e. by being commanded. If this act or worship had not obtained the immediate sanction of Heaven, would

not Abel have been guilty of will-worship? A species of devotion that in no age of the world was acceptable to God. In vain says our Lord, do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. Whatever superstition and will-worship has prevailed in the world, since that period, we certainly have no reason to accuse these primitive sacrificers of either.

4th The Apostle assures us that Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, *by faith*; and the nature of this faith he explains in some following instances, e. g. He tells us, that Noah prepared an ark by faith; Abraham left his own country, by faith, and went out not knowing whither; that Sarah, by faith, received strength to conceive seed. Now we know, that Noah built the ark by the express command of God, in order that he, and his house, should be saved from that alarming judgment threatened to fall upon the rest of the world. We are assured that Abraham left his country and kindred, by the express command of God, and went into a country which God had assured him, he should receive for an inheritance. Now what was the faith of Noah and Abraham, but a firm confidence in the assurances he gave them, however seemingly improbable, and unlikely to be fulfilled? And what was Sarah's faith, but a firm dependance upon God, for the performance of a thing naturally impossible to be fulfilled? Can we doubt, but that Abel's faith consisted in an assurance of being accepted, though in an act of duty, otherwise most unlikely to be pleasing to God, as that of the destruction of his innocent creatures? Certainly this was an action than which nothing could be more in appearance, ill fitted, to appease God's anger, or obtain the divine favour: And yet a ready obedience flowing from this divine principle of faith to that great Being who commanded it, made the action acceptable to God. "Without faith it is impossible to please God:" And a divine faith, necessarily presupposes some divine revelation. Without a special revelation, our seemingly most devout actions, will be found to be but superstition; and without a principle of faith, they will be at the best but hypocrisy. There is no doubt, but that the faith of Abel so much celebrated by the Apostle had Christ as its immediate object in view; who in the fulness of time, was to be manifested to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself; whereof his was but a shadow. He could not be ignorant of the gospel preached by God himself, to Adam before he left Paradise; it was wrapped up in these emphatic terms: That the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent; and that in return he should have his heel bruised. And herein probably lay the difference between Cain, and Abel; the former
expected

expected pardon and remission, without an atonement, although a worse man; Abel though a better man, offered such a sacrifice, as plainly implied a consciousness of guilt, which called for an atonement; which his sacrifice could not make, but by faith, he beheld through his sacrifice the Son of God making his soul an offering for sin. “ We are, (says Paul) made accepted in the beloved.” Since ever the entrance of sin into the world, this has been universally true, as much with regard to Abel, as Paul. ||

One might think it strange *Onesimus*, that Moses should be entirely silent on this head; gives not the remotest hint of any divine command for this act of devotion. But I presume it needs not be thought strange, when we consider the brevity of the sacred historian, in almost every subject he treats of. He never mentions the prophecy of Enoch, nor that molestation and grief of heart Lot met with from the corrupt manners, and lewd practices of the Sodomites, although mentioned by other sacred historians. †—Again, as Moses wrote particularly to the Jews, such a relation would have been unnecessary; they knew very well, that their own sacrifices were of divine institution, and that God manifested his acceptance of them upon the first solemn oblation after their institution, by miraculous fire from the divine presence; ‡ and they could have no reason to doubt, that they were so instituted, and so accepted from the beginning: Nor had they the least reason to be informed of a truth which, doubtless a clear, uninterrupted tradition, had long made familiar to them.

From the above *Onesimus*, I think that the rite of sacrificing owed its original to an immediate divine warrant, and not to the light of nature, or any dictate of reason or conscience. I imagine further, if we but reflect for a moment on the state and condition of the first pair immediately after their revolt from God, and their fatal transgression of his divine law; I think we will find much of the wisdom, goodness, and mercy of God displayed in the institution of sacrifices: More so perhaps than in any other mode of worship, or act of devotion, that could have been instituted. Was there not clearly exhibited in the killing, and burning of the sacrifice, this plain but important lesson; that man by his sin had forfeited his life, according to the threatening, “ in the

|| Whitby in his annotations says that according to the Targum of Jerusalem, and Jonathan Uzziel; the Jews say that Cain denied there would be any future judgment, or rewards to the just; but Abel, for maintaining the contrary was accepted.

† 2 Pet. ii. 5, 7, 8.

Jude, v. 14.

‡ Levit. ix.

the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die?" Now, if life be actually the forfeit of every transgression, is it not evident, that an institution which carries that document with it, must be a plan of infinite unerring wisdom? But that man forfeited his life by his transgression, is evident from the aforesaid threatening. The infinite wisdom of God concerted a plan to save man from death, and at the same time to provide for the justice, and holiness of his nature contained in the threatening. And seeing an infinitely holy, and just God saw meet to continue the lives of the first pair for the same reason for which he created them, i. e. for the manifestation of his own glory; in this case then, nothing could be more reasonable, than that he should continue it under some memorial of his own mercy, and man's demerit; here then was a noble and glorious memorial of the heinousness of man's sin, and the greatness of God's mercy. For if there was no standing evidence of man's sin kept up, guilt would soon lose its terror; and if this take place, corruption would carry sinners to endless enormity; and on the other hand, if there was no assurance of forgiveness after transgression, the effect would turn out to be the same; for despair would drive men to the same extreme of wickedness, to which impunity would tempt them. What of the manifold wisdom of God then is seen in the institution of sacrifices. Here is evidently painted before the first transgressors, a memorial of the greatest mercy, and at the same time, so displayed as to strike terror into guilt. That they were guilty, and that their guilt laid them obnoxious to death, they clearly saw in the death of the innocent victim. That God was good and gracious, they saw in its substitution in their room and stead. Now seeing sacrifices are fitted to effect this beyond any thing that we know of, is it not evident to a demonstration, that the wisdom and goodness of God, are remarkably and conspicuously manifested in the institution of them at this time?

Further, the wisdom and goodness of God will clearly appear in this matter if we consider, that Adam and Eve, were not only morally, but indecently naked: Decency then required, they should be covered: And besides this, the inclemency of the air, added to the infirmity of nature, which sin had introduced, had now made cloathing absolutely necessary; since otherwise, their life would soon have become miserable; or rather, must soon be destroyed, without some better protection than that of a few fig-leaves. Moreover this exigence would likewise be supplied and fully answered by sacrifices, which would yield them covering from the skins of the beasts so slain. Nor is there the least reason I think to doubt, but that the cloaths made for our first parents by divine appointment, immediately after the fall, were composed
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of the skins of the creatures offered up in sacrifice on this occasion, particularly for this reason. We can scarcely imagine, that any of the irrational tribe lately created in perfection would die so soon; or would naturally many years after: And at this early period, nor for long after, were they slain for food; until after the flood, there was no grant of the creatures to man for this end: Neither I think was there any necessity that God should slay them for that sole end and purpose, when all the ends to be answered by their death, would be fully answered in the single instance of sacrifices.

Again, as I already hinted, this was a noble expedient of infinite wisdom, to show that death was the penalty of disobedience: And since it was so, it was highly requisite that Adam should know what he was to suffer; and consequently, that he should see death in all its horror and deformity, in order to have a more adequate view, and a more clear perception of the turpitude and moral evil of sin. And what *Onesimus* could show this evil more strongly than the groans, and struggles of innocent creatures, bleeding to death for his guilt before his eyes, and by his own hands? Sights of this kind are shocking to humanity even yet, though custom hath long made them familiar. With what horror then, may we suppose they struck the souls, and pierced the hearts of our first parents: And how was this horror aggravated, when they considered themselves as the guilty authors of so much cruelty to the creatures around them.

Moreover, this institution, was yet more extensive in its influence; for since early impressions of the danger and horror of guilt, are the best security against a course of iniquity; nothing could be better fitted, to fix these impressions deep in the minds of children, than the necessity of shedding blood introduced by sin. And it was easy for a prudent parent to inculcate, and impossible for a pious parent not to inculcate this on every occasion of killing the sacrifice in atonement for sin. Especially this behoved to be the case, with the first sacrificer, when he himself felt all that horror of iniquity which he would impress upon his children on that occasion: And therefore the rite of sacrificing was not only wise and necessary with regard to Adam and Eve, but admirably contrived to convey an early abhorrence of sin into the minds of their offspring, from generation to generation.

Add to all this, that Adam was to be yet further instructed of death by sacrifices: When the groans and struggles of the dying victim were over, what ghastly and sad sights must the shut eyes, and cold carcase afford him, placed on the altar, and its ashes

afterwards,

afterwards. How dismal a meditation must it have been, to reflect on the beauty and excellency of animate creatures reduced to a handful of dust. What a shocking lecture of mortality must the remains of the sacrificed victims read to the first pair, in their several gradations from corruption to dust; especially when they could not behold them in that condition, but under the full assurance, that they themselves must follow the same steps to destruction.

And is it possible to conceive, how God could strike the human soul with a greater sense of misery arising from guilt, or more abhorrence of the cause of that misery than by this conduct? There is no doubt, but that Adam would feel all the horror on this occasion that can possibly be imagined; yea, reduced probably to such a state by this direful spectacle, that if the mercy of God had not caused some ray of hope to shine through this scene of mortality and misery, it is hardly to be conceived how he could have been supported without sinking into all the horrors of despair. Therefore it seems to have been absolutely necessary, that when the heart of man was pierced through with a thousand sorrows from a reflection of guilt and misery, upon viewing the innocent creature thus suffering; that those sacrifices should carry some intimation of pardon and atonement: And this naturally leads us forward to this glorious scene, the first promulgation of the covenant of grace. When the covenant of works made with our first parents was broken by the sin of man, and abrogated by the just judgment of God; wretched man was cast into the deepest gulph of ruin, whence there could be no escape. But it pleased God, according to the riches of his unsearchable wisdom, to lay this breach of the legal covenant as a foundation for the erection of a most stupendous work of grace, mercy and love. He took occasion to set up a new covenant of grace, in which, he might display, and more clearly unfold the inestimable treasures of his all-sufficiency, than if every thing had gone well with man according to the first covenant. And thus he discovered what seemed to surpass all comprehension and belief, that God, who is holy, just and true, could, without any diminution to, nay rather with a much more illustrious display of his adorable perfections, become the God and salvation of the sinner. He found out that admirable, and ever-glorious scheme, to reconcile the strictest justice, with the most condescending mercy: So that the one, should be no obstruction to the other. Such an illustrious exercise of these perfections could have no place under the legal covenant.

It was God's usual method in ratifying covenants with men in after ages, to do this by sacrifice: As in the case of Noah, and Abraham, &c. And can we imagine, that he failed to do
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so when mercy was more wanted than ever it was since the foundation of the world? Is it to be imagined, that God would see to the health and protection of the bodies of Adam and Eve on this occasion, and provide nothing for the restoration and tranquillity of their minds? No, the thing be far from God, the thought be far from us. He had lately promised mercy to them at the expense of the Devil; yea of his own Son, the seed of the woman: And now out of his gracious condescension, and infinite wisdom, he ratifies and confirms this covenant and promise by sacrifice. This covenant was cut upon a sacrifice. || Here was a shadow and symbol, of what the Messiah was to suffer in the last ages, in order to make a proper and real atonement for sin. Now a ray of hope begins to dawn upon the minds of this wretched pair. In the substitution of an innocent creature, they beheld figuratively, the holy Lamb of God: In the sufferings of the victim, they read this very important, exhilarating lecture, that the seed of the woman should be oppressed, afflicted, and bruised by God; and by his sufferings put an end to sin, and bring in an everlasting righteousness. They now behold with amazement and joy, the blood of the sacrifice adumbrating and pointing out that blood, which cleanseth from all sin; for Jesus was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. The glorious fabrick of this world was not long finished when sin, guilt, and misery entered. Scarce had these entered, when there was a gracious remedy revealed, and the way and manner of its purchase and application, typically discovered in the institution of sacrifices. There is little room to doubt, but Adam viewed the rite of sacrificing as figurative of a better sacrifice: For we cannot by any means suppose, that he entertained the least idea of any real virtue in the blood of an animal to take away sin. If it be said, that it is hardly supposable, that from all the revelation of the future Messiah which he received, that he could through the rite of sacrificing view him. The same thing may be said of Abraham, and yet our Lord tells us, that he saw his day afar off and rejoiced: He saw it not only in the promise, but in the confirmation of the promise by sacrifice. It is very possible, that Adam had a clearer, and more express revelation of the future Messiah, than the Holy Ghost has seen meet to transmit to us. It is very probable, that the reason why Cain's sacrifice was rejected, and Abel's accepted, was, that the former had not that faith in the future Messiah which Abel had.

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|| Psal. l. 5.

In a word *Onesimus*, it is I think hardly supposable, that either the light of nature, the dictates of conscience; or a sense of gratitude for favours received, could have suggested such an institution, in which, so much of misery and mortality, guilt and horror, is discovered: In which, so much of grace, love, and mercy shines; and typical of such inestimable blessings to be procured by the sufferings of the Messiah in due time. I imagine it is still safest, to refer this, as well as every other part of our religious exercises to the sole authority and appointment of Heaven: And as I said before, nothing could be better calculated to show our first parents the grievous demerit of sin, and at the same time, keep them from sinking into the dreadful gulph of despair, by the infinite and undeserved mercy of God displayed in this institution. This was a sufficient document to them, that if they were sinners, there was mercy in God's breast for them.

Before I close my letter, allow me to give you a brief account of a conversation which took place between *Superbus*, and your friend. I am indeed exceeding sorry to inform you of the occasion of this interview. There came a letter to my hand yesterday, containing an account of the dangerous situation of my friend. I set off without delay, and to my great surprise found him in the most languid state: It seems to be a hasty consumption with which he is affected. After giving a minute account of the rise and progress of his disorder, and of the small hopes which the physicians entertain of his recovery; he looked earnestly in my face, repeating this very pertinent, and important phrase; "all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: Surely the people is grass. † A few weeks ago, who would have imagined that I would have been reduced almost to a skeleton in such a short space of time. Robust and vigorous, I flattered myself that the days which an all-wise providence hath determined for me, and the number of my months, hid in his secret purpose and decree, were not so nearly elapsed, as they seem in all human probability to be. Mine age is departed, and removed like a shepherd's tent." The time is fast approaching, when I shall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world. O what a serious affair is it to die! And a matter of infinite importance to die well. You know *Philemon*, that we have had different conversations on religious subjects; and various disputes on this most momentous question, "how we are to be saved." These subjects in the days of my prosperity, were handled by me too much as matters of mere speculation. Herein I now

" see

† Isai. xl. 6, 7.

“ see and acknowledge my error. My prayer to God now is,
 “ that it may please God who separated me from my mother’s
 “ womb, to reveal his Son in, and to me. That I may know him,
 “ in the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his suffer-
 “ ings being made conformable to his death. Now *Philemon*, I
 “ find myself on the verge of eternity. Death is at the door;
 “ that dire messenger has already fixed his dart in my very vit-
 “ als. If you are possessed of that esteem, which, since the com-
 “ mencement of our acquaintance, you have always professed to
 “ have for me; yea, if you have any regard for my precious
 “ and immortal soul, tell me how I am to be saved. You may
 “ rest assured that I will listen to whatever shall drop from your
 “ lips with all that attention, that my present debilitated state
 “ and frame, will permit; and receive with cheerfulness, what-
 “ ever comfort the spirit of God may be pleased to distil into my
 “ soul, through your means.

“ You know *Philemon* perfectly well my manner of life; you
 “ are thoroughly sensible of my grievous sufferings at present.
 “ Do you think, that the honesty and sobriety of my deport-
 “ ment through life, and my grievous sufferings at present will
 “ avail nothing in the matter of my justification before God,
 “ when I must shortly stand before his impartial tribunal, and
 “ there be either justified or condemned? Is there, think you,
 “ that perfection in Christ’s atonement and satisfaction, upon
 “ which, I may by faith, rest assured of a complete acquittal
 “ from all the charges which God’s holy law, or strict justice
 “ may bring in against me?”

Onesimus, you may easily judge, that this behoved to be a very distressing scene to me. My heart full of grief for my dear friend; my mind full of anxiety about the manner how I should conduct myself in directing him with regard to those things which belonged to his eternal peace. I think, I never found myself in the same predicament. I was (in my judgment) about to lose my friend; he was afraid of losing his soul: Death seemingly at hand; but no inward comfort to counterbalance its terrors, or dispel its gloom. Nothing to give present comfort, or future hope. If he had reared any superstructure, it was on the sand. That foundation that God hath laid in Zion, which, whosoever builds upon shall never be confounded, was too much slighted by my friend. Imagining, there was not that perfection, virtue, and efficacy in Christ’s obedience which the Scriptures every where unanimously declare there is; a legal principle of pride wrought in his mind to his great confusion; suggesting that his former good works and present sufferings, could not, but be somewhat satisfactory, to the claim of the law for obedience, and of justice for satisfac-
 tion.

After pausing a few moments, and after a little recollection, I addressed *Superbus* in the following manner: My dear friend, I thought from what had passed in some of our preceding interviews, that your mind was more established in the truth as it is in Jesus, than at present it seems to be. However, I gladly embrace the present opportunity to display the riches, the unsearchable riches of Christ; and if possible to convince you, where your true comfort in life, and your future prospect of happiness at death, and through eternity, lies, viz. in the complete and perfect atonement and satisfaction of Jesus.

Consider the dignity of the person of the Mediator, and I think you must conclude with me, that what Christ did and suffered as our surety was in every respect complete to answer all the purposes of man's salvation. There were two things absolutely necessary in the constitution of Jesus the Mediator:—That he should be perfectly holy; for how could the Redeemer save lost sinners from sin, if he himself had been guilty? How could he purchase an eternal redemption for us, who stood in need of the same blessing himself?—Again, it was requisite that he should be endued with an infinite virtue, that his obedience and sufferings should counter-balance the infinite evil of sin. Now *Superbus*, were not these found in the most eminent measure and degree in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and man? “He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners.” So pure and holy, that he neither knew sin in his heart, nor practised it in his life. ||

As he was thus perfectly free from all contagion of sin, either in thought, word, or action; so he was the true, and Eternal God; and so possessed of that infinite dignity which stamped his obedience and death with that value and virtue as to render these in every respect adequate to the infinite evil, and demerit of sin. Hence we find a twofold fulness ascribed to Jesus; a fulness of grace and holiness. It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, Coll. i. 19. “That out of his fulness we should all receive and grace for grace.”—There is also in him a fulness of Deity; in this sense, the fulness of the God-head is said to dwell in him bodily. † Not mystically, as God dwelleth
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|| 2 Cor. v. 22.

† This fulness according to the Gnostics, was made up of their thirty *Æones*. The Heathens, besides the supreme God, owned many other local Gods presiding over nations, and so made up the plenitude of the God-head of them all; as so many partial Deities.—Against such opinions, the Apostle here asserts, that the whole fulness of the God-head

in his Saints; not symbolically, as he is seen in the sacraments; not typically, as under the law; but essentially, and really.

Now *Superbus*, if the Mediator was thus perfectly holy, and at the same time, a person of infinite dignity; will it not necessarily follow, that his satisfaction and atonement was of an infinite nature? And if so, must it not be perfect and all-sufficient for all the purposes and ends of our salvation? Can any thing more perfect, or greater, be added to what is infinitely perfect?

How derogatory my dear friend, to the infinite and perfect satisfaction of Jesus, is it for you to imagine, that the extreme sufferings under which you now labour, are intended by God to satisfy his justice, and atone for your former transgressions, in opposition to the all-perfect nature of the Redeemer's merit and atonement. Consider, that there is an essential difference between your sufferings, and those of the Saviour. His were properly penal; yours only castigatory: His were properly satisfactory, yours only intended by God for the trial of your faith and patience.

Have you any thing to object against what has been just now observed? Satisfy your own mind; let not your faith stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. It is with God, and not with men, that you have to do: God is both your witness, and your judge. To give an implicit faith to the dictates of men, will, in the issue, instead of making real christians, make downright hypocrites.

“ I imagined *Philemon*, that Christ by his obedience and death, only intended that mankind should be put in a capability to satisfy both by their works and sufferings, i. e. if men walked soberly, and honestly, or in divine providence were subjected to a suffering lot, God would account them righteous in his sight, and justify them in the judgment, and adjudge them to eternal happiness; upon the whole I imagined that Christ rather put men in a state of salvability, than in an actual state of salvation.

What was a little ago observed, contains a direct answer to your objection. But to give you all possible satisfaction on the head, let me ask you, where has your hypothesis any countenance from the word of God? If you would point out the place, I would be entirely obliged to you? Or where it can be deduced, by any rational

head dwelt in Christ and that bodily, i. e. personally. The Apostle here doth not roundly say that Christ is possessed of supreme Deity; but expresses the divine nature as above, partly to represent to the Jews the divinity of Christ, in allusion to the God of Israel dwelling in the temple; and partly, to oppose him to the *pleroma* of the Gnostics; and to the partial Deities of the Heathens.

rational consequence? I hope at least, you are as much of a scholar, as not to credit any doctrine however specious without being properly authenticated from the Scriptures; and as much of a christian, as not to trust your salvation to any thing, without being firmly convinced that there is salvation to be obtained by the object of your faith; i. e. whether by Christ alone, or by your own works of righteousness, in whole, or in part, or by your corporal sufferings. Is not this the universal language of the Scripture on this head, that Christ died for us; that he through the Eternal Spirit offered himself to God to purge our consciences from dead works; that he was made a curse for us to redeem us from the curse of the law? But no where in all divine revelation, are we told that he died for us, to put us in a salvable state; or procure strength for us to satisfy for ourselves. Was this really the case think you, that Christ died for our redemption, that we might be our own Saviours; or that he paid our debt, in no other sense, than that we might be rendered capable of paying it ourselves? If you recollect what was observed in some of our former conferences on this point, I hope you will soon see how fallacious your arguing on this head is.

But your objection is entirely repugnant to the very nature of the thing, and the common use of language; One can never be said to satisfy for another, unless he pays down the sum due by him to the creditor. To intercede with the creditor for a mitigation of the sum; or to plead to put off the time of payment; or entirely to remit the debt out of grace and favour; or put the debtor in a way of paying it himself; this is by no means to make satisfaction in the common acceptation of the word.

Again, if Christ has only satisfied for us, i. e. by his obedience and death procuring ability to satisfy for ourselves, then he cannot be said to have satisfied *once*, but often, and every day, and that neither by himself, but by us; and not for us, but in us; which positions are totally repugnant to the express declaration of the Holy Ghost on this head, and to the very nature of the thing. “Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, when he had by himself purged our sins. ||

Again, if Christ has only satisfied for us, in order that we might obtain grace and strength to satisfy for ourselves, by the same parity of reason, Christ may be said to believe and repent for us; because he communicates grace and strength to believe, and repent, which would be perfectly absurd. I acknowledge indeed, that the Apostle Paul exhorts sinners to work out their salvation with fear and trembling; and we are said to be co-workers with

with God. † But think you that this co-operation with God, and working out our salvation respects its purchase? No, this is the proper and incommunicable office of the Mediator. I believe that God would as soon call us to create a world, as to purchase our own salvation, by any thing we can either do, or suffer. These aforesaid Scriptures then, must have an entire reference to the application of the purchased redemption; and in this, we are co-workers with God: When he draws graciously and powerfully, we run willingly and cheerfully; when he begets in us faith and repentance, we believe and repent. Now in order to obtain these saving graces which are only the instrumental cause, we are bound to a conscientious observance of every ordinance of Heaven's institution.

Further, that Christ's atonement and satisfaction is complete to answer all the ends and purposes of salvation is evident, from the unity of the mediatorial office, and of that oblation of himself to God, to finish transgression and make an end of sin. That he stands the only, and alone Mediator between God and men, is the unanimous language of the sacred Scriptures on this head. ‡ The unity of his oblation and sacrifice by which they, who are sanctified, are for ever perfected, is every where also taught in the same Scriptures of truth. By his obedience *only*, many are made righteous; the price which was paid down for our redemption, was paid by him *alone*. || Now *Superbus*, if the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus was not absolutely perfect to answer every demand of law and justice; but in order also for this, that our obedience and sufferings were also absolutely requisite, he certainly does not deserve the name of the *alone* Mediator and Redeemer. Who can with propriety say, that by the obedience of one, many are made righteous; and by once offering up of himself, he hath for ever perfected them who are sanctified; if our obedience and good works are absolutely necessary in order for our justification before God; or if there remain for the same reason corporal afflictions to be endured, either in this, or some *unknown* world.

Remember *Superbus*, if what you say was true, the glory of redemption and salvation must be divided between Christ and his Saints: But the song in the celestial regions attributes the whole praise to him for completing and perfecting the whole work of salvation and redemption for them. Hear their song of praise, and then conclude, that our Lord Jesus is a rock, and his work is perfect. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins
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† Philip. ii. 11.

‡ 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2.

§ Acts iii. 24.

¶ 1 Tim. ii. 4.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 14.

|| Rom. v. 18. Heb. x. 11, 12. chap. ix. 26, 28.

in his *own* blood; unto him be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen. The whole scheme of man's redemption is calculated entirely, to bring down the pride of man, that the Lord alone may be exalted, and God that is high be glorified. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded: By what law? Of works: Nay, but by the law of faith." How difficult is it, to purge the human heart of the leaven of pharisaical pride, with which it is tinged from our earliest infancy. To be saved, is the natural wish of every one; to be his own Saviour, is the natural inclination of every man.

Consider again *Superbus*, the greatness and grievous nature of those sufferings which the Mediator bore, and from these, you may warrantably conclude, the perfection and all-sufficient nature of his atonement and satisfaction for the salvation of sinners. That he bore that punishment, and endured those sufferings which we ought to have borne, and suffered in our own persons, I have (you know) already proven. Did he omit any thing which the law or justice of God required, in order to lay a foundation for God to receive the sinner in mercy, in a consistency with the other perfections of his nature? And I may add, for the sinner to build upon for eternal life? It is hard to conceive, why the Lord should have made to meet on him the iniquities of us all; why he should have bruised and put him to grief; why he should have made his soul an offering for sin; delivered him into the hands of his malicious foes; permitted the Devil to wreak his vengeance on him; and poured his own wrath into his soul; I say, why did all these things happen to the Mediator? What meant the heat of this great anger? If yet after all, our redemption is incomplete, and our salvation still precarious, depending upon the moral obedience, and the temporal sufferings of the sinning creature, with regard to its purchase. Do you imagine, (I am sure it is far from your thought) that God would be so unjust, as to require a double satisfaction; first to charge the Mediator with our debt of obedience and suffering; and after all to charge the same debt upon the believer in Jesus, i. e. in order to purchase salvation Jesus must die, and suffer, and after all to render redemption complete the believer in Jesus, must fulfil the law as a covenant, and fall into the hands of the living God, and suffer for his personal transgressions. I think I may answer for you, my dear friend, that such an injurious reflection upon the justice and holiness of God never entered your mind. Beware then of concluding, that your present, or any after sufferings in this life, which an all-wise and sovereign God may inflict on you, can, in the smallest degree make an atonement for your soul, or meritoriously procure the remission of your sins.

Permit me again, to exhibit to you, the perfection of Christ's sacrifice for all the ends and purposes of salvation, independent of creature-merit, or creature-sufferings, and that from Heaven's approbation both of the person and sacrifice of the Mediator. If God the party offended was so well pleased with the surety and his righteousness, as upon this account to turn away his wrath, and proclaim reconciliation with the sinner; can you, or any one doubt of the perfection of his atonement and satisfaction. Far be it from us to imagine, that God who is holy and just, should accept of an imperfect satisfaction, detrimental to the perfections of his nature, and repugnant to the rights of his justice, and insufficient to answer the demands of his law; so as to exhibit a testimony from Heaven, and perpetuate a standing memorial of his complacency and acquiescence therein, in his word.

If you ask *Superbus*, how doth it appear that God is thus well pleased both with the person and oblation of Jesus? I answer, from his destination and appointment of him to his mediatorial offices: This flowed entirely from the good will and pleasure of God. || Now, seeing God is omniscient, and knows perfectly every future event; can we imagine, that he would have appointed one to satisfy in the room of many, if the surety was not in every respect adequate to the undertaking? Again, at his inauguration into his mediatorial offices, the divine approbation was explicitly given by a voice from the excellent glory, Math. iii. 17. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, or in whom I entirely acquiesce, as (by my own appointment) the surety of my lost sinning people.—Again, in his resurrection from the dead, which was an act of the Father as judge, as well as of the Son as conqueror, he not only exhibited a memorial of his Deity to the world, (for he was declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, Rom. i. 4.) but a most illustrious and convincing argument of the perfection of his sacrifice to answer all the ends and purposes of salvation. For if he had not in the most perfect manner and degree, accomplished the whole will of the Father respecting man's redemption; how then can we imagine, that the Father who was judge, and as such, delivered him up to the death, would have raised him up again from the dead? Can we imagine that the just judge of all, would have either liberated the surety, or the debtor, without a plenary satisfaction being made, and the debt fully paid? But that the surety is set free from the bands of death, we are absolutely certain; and there are an innumerable company which no man can number, now about the throne, who have washed their robes, and made them white in the *blood of the Lamb*, is as certain.

tain. Could we expect amity, and reconciliation to take place between God and sinners, upon the account of what Christ hath done, if he must after all exact the debt, either in whole, or in part, of obedience and suffering at our hand? But the Apostle expressly informs us that God was *in Christ*, reconciling the world to himself: And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself, *by Jesus Christ*. Now, God's being reconciled to us, originates entirely from his approbation of the surety, and his righteousness.

Further, as an evidence that he hath fully accomplished the whole council of Heaven with regard to man's redemption, and that fully, without any recourse had to the obedience and sufferings of the creature; is evident also from this consideration, viz. the Father exalted him with his own right hand, and crowned his sufferings with the most ample reward, Phil. ii. 8, 9. &c. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, &c. He is also said to be justified in the spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16. and raised again for our justification, Rom. iv. 25. and why? Because he was first justified of the Father, as having accomplished the whole of man's redemption with regard to purchase; and we justified in him, when by faith, we obtain the plenary remission of our sins of which his resurrection from the dead was a document and proof.

Again, let me prove to you the perfection of Christ's atonement from the effects ascribed to it in Scripture. If you carefully search these inspired writings, you will find a three-fold effect ascribed to the obedience and death of Jesus; which will prove beyond a doubt its absolute perfection to answer all the purposes of our salvation, without having recourse, either in whole or in part, to our legal obedience, or temporal sufferings; to lay a foundation for our justification and acceptance with an infinitely holy and just God. These three blessed effects are, *expiation, remission, and complete salvation*. In these three things consists the complete happiness of the sinner. Now, if these flow immediately from the satisfaction of Jesus, must it not be absolutely perfect and complete. The perfection of the effect argues the perfection of the cause. And I am sure, that you must agree with me in this, that there is nothing more requisite to render you as happy as you would wish to be, than the expiation of your sins, their actual remission, and a complete salvation: But these, every believer in Jesus is put in the possession of, as the immediate fruit and effect of his obedience and death.

If your strength would permit, I would crave your attention a little in opening up and explaining the nature of these three glorious, and inestimable blessings: It may be, that the spirit of wisdom and revelation may enlighten your mind, and establish your judgment in this important, and very self-interesting article. It would be the most happy day ever dawned on you, if that legal principle of pride which still tinctures all your religious exercises, and keeps you in a spirit of bondage was eradicated, and you brought to adopt the words of the great Apostle of the Gentiles.—But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea doubtless, I count all things but loss, for the excellency of Jesus Christ my Lord:—And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. †

Your present situation my dear friend, calls aloud upon you in a particular manner to see that your hope for eternal life be well founded: In all human probability the period is not far distant, when you must appear before an impartial Judge; and as the tree falls, so it must lie.

The first fruit and effect of Christ's atonement and satisfaction is *expiation*. This the Scriptures every where teach: Their constant and uniform language on this head is, that we obtain a full, and complete purgation from all our sins through Christ's blood. When he had by himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. ‡ This truth is confirmed by the same inspired penman, Heb. ix. 14. How much more shall not the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself to God without spot, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God. This doctrine obtains the suffrage of another inspired Apostle, 1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Now, observe how the beloved Apostle joins our communion with God with the purgation of our sins, v. 3. This is the immediate fruit and effect of the former, for how can we have access into the presence of an infinitely holy God, if we are still lying obnoxious to punishment upon the account of sin's guilt?

There is an immediate fruit and effect of expiation taken notice of by Paul, viz. non-condemnation. || There is therefore now no more condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, &c. 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, &c. Do not these phrases plainly hold forth the plenary nature of Christ's satisfaction and merit.

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† Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9.

‡ Heb. i. 3.

|| Rom. viii. 1.

If believers in Jesus were personally punished for their transgressions, this would argue, that they were still in a state of condemnation, contrary to the afore-cited texts. But believers properly speaking, if they are afflicted, yet are not punished; their sufferings are corrective, not judicial. God may afflict them as a Father, but he cannot punish them as a judge; for this reason, the punishment of their sin was exacted at the hand of the surety, and he gave ample satisfaction; and a double satisfaction he will never require, nor a double punishment will he ever inflict.

Do you ask then, why are believers in Jesus obnoxious to so many trials and afflictions in this life? I answer, an infinitely holy and all-wise God may, and daily experience teacheth us that he doth afflict and chastise those whom he dearly loves; but for what reason? It is not to satisfy any claim of divine justice, but for the trial and exercise of their faith, patience and humility, &c. Their sufferings are by no means any part of their justifying righteousness, (as you seem most erroneously to think) but to promote their sanctification and holiness; to wean their hearts from this present evil world; and also to make them more and more conformable to Jesus their glorious head in all things.

Another fruit and effect of Christ's atonement and satisfaction is, *remission*. || Now is it not evident, that where a plenary remission of sin takes place, it always presupposes a plenary satisfaction given? Pardon of sin wherever it is granted, is an inseparable effect of satisfaction. Now if the effect be perfect, so must the cause, i. e. if we obtain a perfect plenary remission, it must flow from a perfect and complete atonement.

If you but observe the Scripture phrases on this head, you cannot but be convinced, that in the act of a sinner's justification there is a total, thorough and an everlasting removal of his sin, of all his sins, past, present, and to come: His past, and present sins, by a formal remission; his future offences by a non-imputation of them. View then the act of God with regard to pardon, expressed in such metaphorical terms as these; to blot out sin; to cover it from his sight; not to impute it; to cast it behind his back; to cast it into the depths of the sea; and not to remember it, &c. † Who can with any propriety say, that the judge forgot, cast behind his back, blotted out, and did not impute the crime of the guilty criminal, who although, he did not actually condemn him to death, yet sentenced the poor culprit to suffer a variety of the most grievous punishments. But our glorious surety hath given such an ample satisfaction in the room of the sinner,

|| Eph. i. 7. Heb. ix. 15. Math. xxvi. 28.

† Psal. xxxii. 1, 2, 103, 12. Isai. xxxviii. 17, 42. 22.

Micah .vii. 19. Jer. xxxi. 34. &c.

ner, that God the judge will never reckon with him, either as to the debt of obedience, or punishment which he justly owed to his law and justice.

The third and last effect of Christ's atonement and merit, is *complete salvation*. Now, if Christ for ever perfects them who believe by his obedience and death; it will necessarily follow, that these must be every way complete and perfect; seeing they are the foundation and cause of our christian perfection. This is Paul's very language on this head, Heb. x. 14. For by one offering he hath for ever perfected them who are sanctified. The term to perfect in this passage is used here by the Apostle in opposition to the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices, who could not by often offering up the same sacrifices take away sin, nor lay patent and open the way to Heaven and eternal glory: But in this doth the complete salvation of believers consist. The law, (the Apostle observes) made nothing perfect; because it was weak through the flesh. † It was impossible, that by the most strict observance either of the moral or ceremonial law, that the guilt of sin could be expiated, its filth cleansed, or an introduction into the celestial mansions procured. But in these three things, the utmost felicity of the rational creature consists. A deliverance from sin's guilt, and a partial purgation from its filth constitute our perfection in a state of grace: The former we obtain by justification, the latter in our sanctification. Our perfection in Heaven consists, in our admittance into glory, and in our immediate enjoyment of the vision and fruition of God in a state of perfect holiness and happiness for ever and ever. So that for the procurement of these invaluable blessings, there is no necessity for any other sacrifice; nor is there any room left either for the suffering or obedience of the creature: Because Christ, by the efficacy of his merit and satisfaction hath actually acquired, and in due time really confers, on all them who believe, these blessings which he hath by his obedience to the law in his life, and his satisfaction to justice in his death, purchased. Why do the Scriptures every where ascribe our absolution from sin's guilt, our purgation from its filth, and our entrance into glory to the atonement of Jesus, if it was not absolutely perfect, and adequate in every respect for such glorious ends and purposes? And more particularly, if our legal obedience and temporal sufferings were so necessary (as you seem to think) for the perfection of the believer in Jesus; Why doth not the Holy Ghost join these in the account? Why doth he expressly restrict our complete salvation to the one sacrifice which Christ offered up to God to put away sin, and bring in an everlasting righteousness. From the whole I conclude that
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† Heb. vii. 19.

Rom. viii. 3

the whole of man's salvation as to purchase, is fully completed by our Lord Jesus; our sins remitted, our consciences purged, and an entrance into Heaven procured; so that nothing is required of the believer, either of obedience or suffering, as the meritorious cause of his justification before God, but what Christ hath actually accomplished.

“ *Philemon*, if the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus be thus perfect and complete to answer all the ends and purposes of salvation independent of any good work of the creature; then, will it not necessarily follow, that we are under no obligation of observing the moral law ourselves: Because no demand can justly be made on the principal debtor, for what the surety has performed in his room: And in this case then, do not you by your opinion open a door for all manner of licentiousness?”

Superbus, this is an old hackneyed objection against the doctrine of free grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It was objected to Paul by those who went about to establish a righteousness of their own, without submitting to the righteousness of God. In the fifth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, he is proving there, free justification by the gift of righteousness, against the legalists of that age, who trusting in their own legal obedience as the ground of their justification and acceptance with God, derogated from, or rather plainly denied either the perfection, or necessity of Christ's atonement and merit. For as, (says the inspired Apostle, Rom. v.) by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous, v. 19. Whose obedience is this by which we are accounted righteous in God's sight? I think you must anticipate me here, by answering that it was none but Christ's; the head and surety of the new covenant, and is here set in opposition to the first Adam, by whose disobedience all his natural offspring are in God's account reckoned sinners. That as sin, (adds he) hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, v. 22.

This doctrine was too evangelical, and so inimical to the interests of legal pride in the heart of a sinner; that upon the publication of it, he is immediately branded with the odious character of a teacher of licentiousness. That their objection raised against the doctrine of free grace was of a like nature with yours, we learn from chap. vi. v. 1, 2. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound; i. e. shall we live as we list, and do what we please, since there is a complete and plenary satisfaction made by the Son of God to answer all
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the ends and purposes of salvation without our obedience to the law, either in whole or in part. The Apostle answers this vile objection in terms expressive of the greatest detestation. God forbid: Shall we continue in sin, that grace may, or because grace doth abound, and that to the very chief of sinners, through the gracious ordination and appointment of God in the substitution of his Son as our surety, to fulfil all righteousness in our room? God forbid: How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? In his epistle to Titus he exhorts him to be instant in pressing upon christians the practice of holiness, and enforces his exhortation from the revelation made of the grace of God in our salvation, by the gospel: For, (says he) the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men, teacheth us to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Tit. ii. 11, 12. The grace of God, i. e. the gospel of God's grace; that gospel which informs the most unworthy, the most vile and abandoned, that the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanteth from all sin: And that by faith applying the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus, sinners of this description are constituted righteous in the sight of God. Now this gospel of God's grace is so far from being inimical to the interests of holiness, and the practice of piety, that, at the same time in which Christ and his atonement is revealed, and held forth as the immediate object of justifying faith; it strongly inculcates, and strenuously presses, holiness of life and conversation.

But to be a little more particular here, let me observe, that our obedience to the law of God may be considered either, as the duty of the rational creature to his sovereign Lord; or as a condition upon which eternal life is suspended; or in other words as the ground and foundation of a sinner's justification before God. In this view Christ was made under the law, and fulfilled it for all his seed; so that as a covenant of works, the believer in Jesus is not under it, and as such, it neither doth, nor can, require obedience as the ground and reason of his justification before God. But in the former respect the believer owes all manner of obedience to it; and his obligation to obedience is rather increased than diminished by this instance of Christ's love in giving a full and complete satisfaction to the law in all its demands in the sinner's room. And you will find, that wherever true faith lays hold on Jesus as the propitiation for sin, the believer finds himself prompted to all manner of gospel obedience, not only from a sense of duty, but privilege. He cannot but acknowledge him for his Lord who has purchased him for himself with his own blood;

blood; and that as an adopted Son, he can decline no obedience to his heavenly Father, when he considers how cheerfully and cordially his Eternal Son fulfilled his will. “ The love of Christ constraineth us.”

It is strange *Superbus*, that you do not at first sight see the vast difference between the obedience of Christ to the law, and that of believers. God never exacts of his people obedience to his precepts as the foundation of their reception into his favour, and their final and complete salvation: This was exacted of the surety; this he voluntarily gave: For by the obedience of *one* shall many be made righteous. An infinitely holy and just God will by no means renew the exaction; and call upon the seed of Christ to obey and fulfil that law which their surety did in their room and stead. God calls upon his justified and sanctified people to give a cheerful and ready obedience to his whole revealed will, not, that they *may* live; but because they *do* live: Not, that by their obedience or good works they may acquire a right to the heavenly inheritance, but to make them meet to enter upon the possession of that inheritance already purchased; not as the cause of their inheriting the kingdom, but as the way to it. || Without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Because Christ by his obedience and death purchased the forfeited inheritance, is the proper and sole cause why any are admitted into that celestial region where the king the Lord of hosts is seen in the fulness of his glory.—The way to the possession is holiness of heart, life, and conversation.

How horrid and antisciptural would this position be, yea how derogatory to the glory of the Mediator, to maintain that by Christ's obedience to the law, ours is not only relaxed, but entirely superseded. This would make him the minister of sin with a witness. It is true indeed, as I just now hinted, that the law in its covenant-form has no demand upon the believer in Jesus to fulfil its precepts in order to acquire eternal life; in this sense he is not under the law, but under grace: Christ was made under the law to redeem such who were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of Sons.—But the law as a rule of life and duty, no state of grace or glory in their highest eminence and perfection can exempt the creature from yielding the most perfect, constant, and unremitting obedience to whatever the law enjoins.

It is strange *Superbus*, that you would urge a plea in your justification before God which would in the end tend to your everlasting

|| It was an observation of Bernard, that God required obedience and good works from his people.—*Non ut causa regnandi; sed ut via regni.*

lasting confusion. You seem at present to be so elated with your by-past conduct, as in the words of the proud Pharisee to thank God that you neither are, nor have been as other men; you seem to build on this that you have been no extortioner, no adulterer, you have rendered to every one his due; you have fasted, you have prayed, you have paid tithes of all you possess: These things are all good, and characteristic of the genuine christian. God in his law hath enjoined all these on you, and every rational creature. But is it on the footing of these things that God hath promised, or that you expect eternal life? You may believe me, however necessary good works are in their own place, they are no part of a sinner's justifying righteousness before God. I hope you may be yet brought to entertain other views of your moral obedience, and of that imperfection which cleaves to your best and most sincere services. You may rest assured my dear friend that even these are so far from laying a foundation for you to build on for eternal life, that if God was strict to mark iniquity against you, and enter into judgment with you, he would in justice condemn you for the sinful failures which have attended you in those very services which you deem might recommend you to his favour, and entitle you to eternal life. May the grace of God open your eyes to see the all-sufficiency and perfection of Christ's atonement and merit in such a light, as to adopt the language of the church for yourself. "I am as an unclean thing, and all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

"*Philemon*, I would wish to know wherein lies the difference between the obedience which the law as a covenant, and as a rule of life in the hand of a Mediator, requires."

I answer *Superbus*, that the obedience required by the law as a covenant, must be performed in our own strength: For the law as such, neither knows, nor can direct to any aid extrinsecal to the person's self. On the other hand, as a rule of duty in the Mediator's hand, the obedience it requires is the fruit of the spirit of God dwelling in the heart of the believer in Jesus; it flows from a new vital union to him, by whom, and through whom, we can do all things, and without whom we can do nothing, either glorifying to God, or advantageous to ourselves. Do you imagine, or can you seriously believe, that as a descendant of fallen Adam, there is yet in you, or any of his natural offspring such a stock of spiritual strength, as to answer the laws demand of obedience for eternal life? And if there is not, you never can obtain the purchased possession but by faith in Christ's blood.

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|| Gal. v. 21.

The law like its glorious author is immutable; it changes not with mutable and fallible man: If he lost his power to fulfil its demands, it still retains its authority to enjoin, and that under penalty of the curse. But the ability of the believer in Jesus to render an evangelical obedience to all God's commandments is unquestionable: God writes his law in his heart; his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and his soul the subject of his gracious operations: Moreover his stock of grace and strength is treasured up in Jesus, from whose fulness, he receives and grace for grace.

Again, with regard to the obedience which the law as a covenant requires, God appears in the garb of a just, righteous, and holy judge, demanding perfection of obedience, or threatening the delinquent with death, and that upon the least breach. Curied is every one that continueth not in *all things* written in the book of the law to do them. † But on the other hand, in the obedience required by the law in the hand of a Mediator, we behold God clothed with the amiable and endearing relation of a merciful and propitious Father in the Lord Jesus Christ: And out of his infinite clemency and compassion accepting our persons, and services, graciously pardoning our defective obedience, and reckoning our sincere endeavours gospel-perfection.

In a word, the law as a covenant requires obedience under the notion of debt, in order to merit eternal life; but in the hand of a Mediator, it requires obedience under the notion of gratitude; to express our thankfulness to God for all the blessings of his providence and grace; particularly, for bestowing on us the title, and conferring on us the privileges of his children.

I think *Superbus*, that nothing but the most inveterate prejudice against the doctrine of free justification through the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus, could ever move any one to entertain the least suspicion, that it opens a door for licentiousness, and relaxes the creature's diligence in holiness and virtue: Or, that where such a doctrine is propagated and credited, nothing but vice and immorality will be the consequence. We could wish that such would, without partiality read the Scriptures, and without prejudice view the moral conduct of its professors.

Bear with me for a moment, in taking a cursory view of the whole progress of God's grace in man's salvation, and I hope to make it appear from the Scriptures of truth, and that with the greatest perspicuity and evidence, that the whole of the divine conduct from first to last, has a special regard to the sanctification and holiness of the sinner. Wherefore were we redeemed, and bought with a price? But to serve God in holiness and righte-

ousness

ousness without fear all the days of our life. || Why did Christ bear our sins in his own body on the tree? But that we being dead to sin might live unto righteousness. † Why are our guilty consciences sprinkled with his most precious blood? But to purge them from dead works to serve the living God: ‡ And that every one might know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. Why are we made his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus? But to walk habitually in all godly conversation. Why are we called out of darkness into his marvellous light? But to show forth the praises, (the virtues) of him who hath vouchsafed to make us sharers of this invaluable blessing. Were we chosen in him before the foundation of the world? Was it to live as we please, and act in opposition to all the rules of morality and virtue? No: But we were chosen that we might be holy, and without blame before him in love. Eph. i. 4. And were we not chosen from the beginning to sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth? 2 Theff. ii. 13. Why are sinners justified, and their sins pardoned? But that, being graciously delivered from sin's guilt, they should not turn again to folly. Why are we called, to be in due time made partakers of his glory? But that, as the mean for obtaining this end, we might be holy as God is holy. 1 Pet. i. 18 — I may observe here, that the two great benefits of justification and sanctification, are so inseparably connected, that wherever the former takes place, the latter inevitably follows. No man is justified, without at the same time being in part sanctified: None are delivered from sin's guilt, but who are at the same time cleansed from its filth. Christ, who is made unto us righteousness, is also made at the same time sanctification. He came by water and blood; by blood, for the expiation of sin's guilt; by water, for the purgation of its filth. These were under the old covenant the two great mediums of propitiation and purgation: In allusion probably to this, there came forth from the pierced side of Jesus, blood and water. John xix. 34. In a word, why are we made new creatures? But that we should no longer walk in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the spirit. Rom. vii. 6, and vi. 14.

Pardon me my dear friend, if I should enquire a little further into this subject and see whether, to hold forth salvation by the death and atonement of Jesus without any work of the creature, has the least tendency to the introduction of immorality into the world; or rather the contrary, i. e. that there cannot possibly exist, a more powerful argument to all manner of holiness, than flows from this very doctrine believed, and applied.

And

|| Luke i. 74.

‡ Heb. ix. 14.

† 1 Pet. ii. 24.

1 Theff. iv. 4

And here let us consider one great end of the death of Christ: He was sent into the world clothed in our human nature, not only to be a propitiation for sin, but to sanctify the sinner: Not only to give men a title to Heaven and glory in their justification, but to purge their consciences, purify their natures, and render them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light: To set them an example which they ought to imitate and follow. See this particular end of Christ's death specified by Paul in his epistle to Titus, chap. ii. v. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and so eternally deliver from the guilt of sin, and ascertain an undoubted title to the heavenly inheritance: But adds this inspired Apostle, to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. To maintain therefore, that to preach up one end of Christ's incarnation and death, viz. redemption from all iniquity, by his atonement, is destructive of another great end of it, sanctification and holiness, is somewhat odd. Did he die for sin, to finish transgression by the sacrifice of himself, that we might live in sin; and not rather, that we should be eternally divorced both from the love and practice of it? *Paul* we find entertains quite other views of this matter than many seem to have; he informs us that a freedom from the guilt of sin, not only gives a title to be the servants of righteousness, but a capacity to act as such. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. ||

Do you imagine *Superbus*, that if you had been sold for a slave, or had forfeited your life by the laws of your country, for some capital crime, but by the kind interposition of a friend you were released from the former, and saved from the latter; would this kind and generous act of your friend afford you any handle against him, to fill your mind with resentment, and on every occasion, and whenever it lay in your power, to provoke and offend him? Did not Christ, the best and most generous friend ever existed interpose for us, when in captivity to sin and Satan, and graciously paid down our ransom? Did he not by his blood purchase our redemption, and by his heavenly doctrine proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound? To save sinners from death, he died, he gave his life a ransom for many. He died to sanctify and purify to himself a peculiar people. To inform sinners of these great gospel-truths, to inculcate faith in the atonement of Jesus; is this the way think you to turn the world upside down, to open a wide door,
and

and an effectual for the practise of every species of iniquity? Do you think that the glad news which Christ brought the leper of his being cleansed, would be improven by him as an argument for his future offending that kind and gracious physician? Behold thou art made whole, go and sin no more. || You may believe my dear friend, a genuine believer never will defeat this great end of Christ's death, sanctification and holiness

These will be the native reflections of his heart, the genuine effusions of his soul. " Did Jesus become incarnate, obey, " and gave full satisfaction both to the law precept and penalty " for me; were my sins made to meet on him, and for their ex- " piation did he suffer and die; and shall I recognize this gra- " cious condescension, and unparalleled love of the most gene- " rous and compassionate Saviour, only, to provoke him the " more, because he hath done and suffered so much for me: " No; God forbid: Let me rather walk softly all the days of " my life in the bitterness of my soul, for being guilty of those " crimes which brought the Son of God, my Redeemer, to the " accursed tree, and to the dust of death: Shall I sin because " grace doth abound; and abounded towards me?" Whoever will thus improve the doctrine of free-justification by Christ's atonement, the believer in Jesus never will.

Again let us consider, whose we are by right of redemption. By whom we are redeemed, his we are, to serve and obey: This is the law of redemption among men. Much more are we obliged by right of redemption to serve and glorify God in our souls and bodies, which are his. This is the language of Zacharias Luke i. 74. That we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of our life. These words not only point out the obligation incumbent on the redeemed, but the spiritual capacity conveyed by redemption, and contained in its very nature; whereby the ransomed of the Lord are enabled to the evangelical performance of every duty which the law enjoins. The same doctrine is taught by Paul, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Ye are redeemed with a price, therefore glorify God in your souls and bodies, which are his. q. d.—“ Consider O ye Corinthians, “ what ye once were, in a state of the most abject slavery, and “ bondage to sin, Satan, and the world; but God who is rich “ in mercy, out of the depths of his infinite sovereign love and “ grace, sent his Son into the world, who gave himself up to “ the death for you, died to purchase you to himself; and consi- “ der, by this astonishing act of the Son of God, he hath pur- “ chased

“ chased you for himself, and ye are no more your own; your
 “ souls and bodies are his. You cannot at your own pleasure
 “ alienate without the guilt of sacrilege what belongs to God.
 “ By right of redemption, God has a right to your servi-
 “ ces.” Now, do you think from this account of our redemp-
 tion by Jesus that there is any encouragement given to the re-
 deemed of the Lord to dispose of what is the Lord’s, to the ser-
 vice of sin and Satan ?

Again let us consider the invaluable blessing of pardon confer-
 red on the believer. I am sure you must agree with me in this,
 that the more and the greater the blessings communicated from a
 gracious God to the sinner are, he is the more obligated to render
 all manner of holy obedience to that bountiful giver. Our Lord
 teaches us this doctrine in express terms in the case of Mary
 Magdalen, and inculcates the same mode of behaviour upon all
 such as are justified and have obtained the invaluable blessing of
 pardon and remission, which this woman pursued. Luke vii.-47.
 Her sins which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much: For
 to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.—Would it
 not seem strange *Superbus*, such reasoning as this, in the mouth
 of a genuine believer? “ God hath in his infinite mercy par-
 “ doned my transgressions; transgressions numberless as the
 “ hairs on my head, countless as the particles of sand on the
 “ sea shore; and in their aggravations reaching the very Hea-
 “ vens? Therefore I may go on for the future in adding iniqui-
 “ ty to sin, for there is still mercy with God that he may be
 “ feared, and sufficient value in the atonement of Jesus for all
 “ my future debts.” No, let others reason as they will, and
 act as they choose, this is far from being the conduct of the ge-
 nuine believer. Hear his language on this head: “ Shall I thus
 requite the Lord; I know he speaks peace to his people, and to
 his Saints in gracious remission, but at the same time, he hath
 left the most solemn charge upon them not to turn again to fol-
 ly.” Do you think that God in the dispensation of his grace to
 sinners confers any blessing on them which might in the issue,
 prove a stumbling-block to them, or open a door for their more
 freely provoking the eyes of his glory? You shudder I see at the
 very idea; and no wonder, this would be in direct terms laying
 sin at the Almighty’s door. I ask again, whether or not was
 there ever a real christian, who through faith in Christ’s blood
 received the atonement, and because he had done so, paid no
 regard to his future conduct, but run on in an habitual course of
 wickedness? I aver *Superbus*, never such a man was found in the
 visible church, never had God such a Son in his family; nor
 Christ such a member in his mystical body. As God confers
 grace

grace with a view to the obedience and future holiness of the sinner, so doth he cordially accept of the favour with the same view. The design of God, and the resolution of the sinner in this case are identically the same.

Again let me offer to your consideration another article securing the interests of holiness upon the gospel scheme of salvation through Christ's atonement, viz. the grievous nature of his sufferings, and the abominable nature of sin. If the payment of our debt cost Christ so dear, shall we take encouragement from this to add to the enormous sum. Shall we take encouragement from this that Christ suffered, and that his sufferings were so grievous, to cherish in our hearts, or practise in our lives, those crimes which subjected the Son of God to suffer so much for their expiation? If sin be of such a deep dye, and crimson colour, that nothing but the blood of Jesus could wash out, shall the justified in Christ Jesus, take encouragement presumptuously and deliberately to wallow in it for the future, as the sow in the mire, and return to it as the dog to his vomit? God forbid; this would be with a witness to crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; to trample under foot the blood of the covenant, and count it an unholy thing. No my dear friend, instead of such conduct in a believer, the universal tenor of his practice and conversation evinces the contrary. When at any time he through the weakness and imperfection of his nature, or the temptations of Satan acts contrary to the obligations which lie on him from his high calling, we will always find him looking to Jesus, whom he by his sins hath thus pierced, and *mourning*.

Let me put you in mind of another consideration on this head; viz. the greatness, the immense greatness of the love of God towards sinners. Is this the way think you, to encourage licentiousness to hold forth the height, breadth, the depth, and the length of the love of God; and proclaim the love of Christ which passeth knowledge? What unparalleled love was this in the Eternal Father, to send his beloved and only begotten Son into our world, not to be a spectator of our misery, but to be made sin, and a curse for us: Made the arrows of his indignation stick fast in his holy innocent soul; brought him to the dust of death in the most cruel and ignominious manner, and all this out of pure disinterested love and affection for sinners: This was the impulsive cause, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Now, from these considerations, is it possible that a believer in Jesus should repay evil for good, hatred for love; cherish and foment those lusts, for the expiation of which, the great God out of his transcendent love made his Eternal Son to suffer? "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge,

judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; that they who live, should no longer live to themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again."

From these considerations *Superbus*, may we not with the greatest truth and safety aver, that maintaining and believing the perfection and necessity of Christ's atonement and satisfaction for all the ends and purposes of salvation, is a doctrine, so far from encouraging licentiousness, that it will be found in the issue, to be the most efficacious motive, and the most prevailing argument, for the practice of every moral virtue propounded in the divine law to mankind: And not only so, but is the only sovereign medicine for the healing and removal of all our spiritual maladies; is that from which pardon of, and preservation from a course of back-sliding is secured.

There are not any two articles in all divine revelation which agree more harmoniously, nor are better founded, than the atonement of Christ for our sins, and the absolute necessity for all manner of holy obedience in the justified in Christ Jesus. How indissolvably connected, and how amicably do they conspire to promote, carry on, and finally to perfect the salvation of the sinner. Without Christ's death as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, we could have no title to Heaven, and without holiness, we could have no meetness for it. What an egregious mistake then must it be, to inculcate holiness or good works in order to procure a title to eternal life. Our good works can have no influence in the least degree in our justification before God. They are not, neither can they be, the meritorious cause for which we obtain the remission of our sins, and the acceptance of our persons, and a title and right to the heavenly inheritance. || But at the same time, and while believers are in an imperfect state, we are to urge, and from all the arguments in divine revelation, to press holiness upon men as the *way* to the kingdom. How is it possible, that a man who lives in the glorious persuasion of Christ's satisfaction for sin, and for his in particular, and is looking out and longing for a blessed immortality, can persist in a course of iniquity, and neglect the study and practice of holiness?

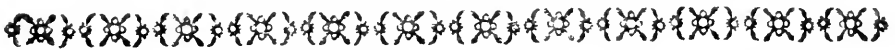
I should have conversed a little farther with you on this subject, if your spirits and strength had not been so much exhausted as I find they are: If the Lord will, I will wait on you to-morrow for this purpose. Adieu in the mean time my dear friend; may the spirit of truth lead you into all truth, and discover to you this most cheering, and important truth, that Christ died for the ungodly; and died not only to purchase the forfeited inheritance, but by his all-atoning blood to sanctify and make meet for that

holy

holy place. May you be brought, in the like full assurance of faith to adopt the language of Paul, “ who loved me and gave himself for me.”

I am afraid *Onesimus*, that you are quite out of humour at the length of this epistle: And if it was not that I regard your spiritual welfare, and look upon myself under the deepest obligations to promote, by all means in my power, your spiritual growth in virtue and holiness; I should certainly have suppressed the foregoing conversation with *Superbus*. If you receive the least advantage from it, my labour will be abundantly recompensed; and that this may be the issue, is the sincere wish of your's, &c.

PHILEMON.



L E T T E R XIII.

PHILEMON TO ONESIMUS.

Dear Onesimus,

ACcording to my engagement with *Superbus* I waited on him yesterday. I find his disorder is making a rapid progress: It seems to baffle every effort of the physicians. How brittle is this clay tabernacle of ours: From our earliest infancy, the seeds of disorders and wasting diseases lurk in our constitution. “ We are born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.” “ Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.” How should those troublesome few days be employed by frail mortal man, to the best advantage, and for the best of purposes. How should that short space in which we enjoy health and strength, be improved with a view to days of adversity, sickness, and death. Let the gay, the healthy recollect but for one moment, that in a few years, perhaps a few days, or hours, their prosperous state in this sublunary world will come to a period. Yes, the days are fast approaching in which we shall say there is no pleasure in them. And when the days determined for us are finished, and the number of the months allotted for us by an all-wise providence are come to a period; then we must go the way whence we shall never return until the Heavens be no more. Every returning day has certainly a loud call to us, to be laying up for ourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and
where

where thieves break not through to steal. We have no certainty of another day, no, nor another hour. How often do we hear of some of our fellow creatures cut off in a moment, by some unforeseen accident: We know not, but this may be the manner in which our course may be finished. The language of such a providence is certainly alarming; it undoubtedly bespeaks us after this manner, “be ye also ready, for in an hour you expect not the great Arbitrer of life and death may come.” Either this way, or by pining sickness God will bring each of us to death. To anticipate in our thought these gloomy days, is by no means an evidence of a distempered brain, nor an enthusiastic turn of mind; but a very strong proof that we are engaged as rational, mortal, and accountable creatures should be

What is it my dear *Onesimus*, that is capable of soothing the mind, and proving a sufficient antidote against that fear and anxiety which naturally seizes every thinking man, upon a serious reflection on sickness and death? I know of no better antidote than faith in the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus. I am afraid too many in order to dispel their fears of death and judgment fly into this sanctuary: *They have lived a good life.* I am persuaded my dear friend you would rather meet the king of terrors, and combat this last enemy, in the words of Paul; “I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” When the beloved disciple was overwhelmed at that glorious, and tremendous appearance which he had of Jesus, he fell down at his feet as dead: In order to revive his troubled mind, to chase away his fears, and revive the spirit of his servant, Jesus laid his hand upon him, spoke comfort to his distracted mind from the consideration of his own death, and resurrection. Fear not, I am he that was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death. || You see the topic our Lord chooses to insist upon in order to exhilarate the spirit of a dejected Apostle, and to pour the balm of consolation into his fearful mind, is taken from his death and resurrection. If ever we would wish to see our fellow creatures, and our fellow-sinners, dying comfortably and safely as christians and believers, let us hold forth to them the propitiatory, and vicarious death, and the glorious resurrection of the Son of God our Saviour.

Onesimus, after conversing a few minutes with *Superbus* with regard to his present disorder, and the uncertainty of every sublunary enjoyment; he proposed, according to my promise to open up, and explain a little farther the nature and necessity of holiness.—“You know, (said he) that I was still an advocate

for

“ for good works, and for their efficiency and efficacy in the
 “ matter of a sinner’s *justification* before God, and to *entitle* him
 “ to glory. I would wish to know how you secure the interests
 “ of holiness, and what place good works occupy, upon what you
 “ call the gospel plan; or, holiness in connexion with the satisfac-
 “ tion and atonement of Christ, meritoriously purchasing par-
 “ don, reconciliation, and complete redemption.”

My dear *Superbus*, I voluntarily and freely undertake the task I imposed on myself; and most cheerfully embrace the present opportunity, to convince you, that those who expect and look for salvation through the blood of Jesus, are by no means enemies, (as they have been sometimes unjustly branded) to gospel holiness: Yea, that they are so far from maintaining that the obedience of the surety supercedes our obedience to the law as a rule of life, they every where, and on all occasions, strenuously maintain, and that in an agreeableness to the language of the Holy Ghost on this subject; that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

But to be somewhat more particular here; those who maintain the necessity of Christ’s obedience and death, as the meritorious and procuring cause of our redemption, and final salvation; maintain at the same time that there is such a necessity for holiness of heart, life, and conversation, that without it, it is vain to expect to behold God’s face in glory. † And at the same time also, they assert, that wherever faith in the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus takes place, for the purgation of the conscience from dead works, you will as soon find fire without heat, or the sun without light, as you will find such a man without holiness. So that holiness is as necessary in the formation and constitution of the christian, as light is to the being of the sun, or heat to the existence of fire.

But on the other hand, they maintain that there is nothing of causality or efficiency in any good work of the creature, for meritoriously procuring salvation. || This was the sole work of the one Mediator: His own arm meritoriously brought about salvation. To him alone, the glory of our salvation from first to last belongs. The same blood by which we are justified, is that by which

† A man cannot possibly fall into a greater delusion, than to expect salvation, and future happiness, and yet living in the neglect of commanded duty; or in the habitual practice of any known sin. Heaven will never be composed of such christians, if they deserve the name.

|| Good works are a *conditio sine qua non*, as Divines term it, but not the *causa efficiens* of a man’s salvation, i. e. we cannot be saved without good works, but yet they do not procure it.

which we are sanctified. "For Jesus that he might sanctify the people suffered without the gate." What a strange thing after all, to talk of the efficiency or causality of good works in the matter of our salvation. This is the great error my dear friend, you labour under at present; you are for placing your good works in the room of Christ's atonement and merit, and look upon your legal obedience as the channel through which all divine communications flow. If any good work of the creature could be effective in procuring Heaven and eternal glory, it is hard to account for the extreme sufferings of the Son of God. But that there is no such thing as merit on the part of the creature I shall show you by and bye.

Again, those who maintain the necessity of Christ's atonement and satisfaction as the only, and alone meritorious cause of our justification before God; do also assert and maintain the absolute necessity of good works as a mean for accomplishing our final salvation; and in this view, they assert that there is a necessary connexion and dependance established between holiness, and final salvation; so as, in the very nature of the thing holiness must necessarily precede the final salvation of our souls, and render us meet to be partakers of that glory which is in a little to be revealed. Holiness I apprehend will be found to be a principal ingredient in Heaven's happiness; at least, I suppose it is that which will give a zest and relish for that good which God hath laid up for them that fear him.

I may observe to you here, that there is a twofold necessity: A necessity arising from the nature of the things; and a necessity founded only upon the precept, or in other words upon the sole good pleasure of the legislator. In this sense the observation of the whole ceremonial law was necessarily binding on the whole body of the Jewish nation: Under the New Testament dispensation the sacraments of baptism, and the Lord's supper are enjoined on us by the same authority, and their observation necessarily binding. But observe here, that holiness considered as a mean for obtaining complete salvation, doth not so much depend upon the will of the law-giver, as it is founded in the very nature of things; and in a reciprocal and mutual relation to one another, e. g. faith we commonly say is a necessary mean of salvation; not only because God hath enjoined it, but because there is a necessary indissoluble connexion between faith and salvation, so as without it salvation cannot be expected, neither in the nature of the thing can be conferred. Now, good works are necessary in both these respects: In respect of the precept, because they are enjoined by God, and therefore are necessarily to be performed by us, because commanded. They are also absolutely necessary

as a mean, because they are indispensably connected with salvation. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." This necessity of holiness arises both from the precept enjoining it, and is also founded in the very nature of the thing; good works are every where enjoined, and pressed upon sinners in the whole word of God. This is the will of God even your sanctification; that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. || Let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in Heaven. † Believers are oftentimes called debtors, which they never could be, but with reference to that obedience which they necessarily owe to the command of God.

In order to let you see in what sense believers may be called debtors, it is necessary to inform you that the term debt may be considered as twofold, legal, and evangelical. The former consists in that debt of obedience which the law as a covenant of works requires in order to acquire eternal life. In this sense, Adam in a state of innocency was a debtor; and all such to this day, who are under the law as a covenant of works; hence says the Apostle, Gal. v. 3. for I testify to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. From the imbecillity and weakness of the sinful creature to pay this debt of obedience, he necessarily involves himself in a debt of punishment; and this he lays himself obnoxious to pay, both for the omission of the duties the law requires, and the commission of those sins which it prohibits: Hence in this sense sinners are called debtors, Math. xviii. 34.—Now *Superbus*, from this debt of obedience and punishment Christ has set all believers free. He fulfilled the law precept, he bore the curse which the law threatened as their surety. But besides this legal debt, there is an evangelical debt, from which believers are never freed; a debt of new obedience to every precept contained in divine revelation; this is strictly enjoined on all the justified, and sanctified in Christ Jesus. "Therefore brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live after the flesh." This evangelical debt he pays, this new obedience to every moral precept he gives, not to merit Heaven, or in the least to procure his title to the celestial inheritance; but to testify his love and gratitude to Jesus, who died for him and rose again.

Superbus, you seem to be such an advocate for the merit of good works, and their causality in the matter of our justification before God; in order to convince you of your mistake, permit me to offer the few following things to your consideration. Consider the state and condition of all mankind as the descendants of fallen Adam,

as

† 1 Thess. v. 3. † Math. v. 10. vide John xv. 34. † John iv. 21.

as drawn by the spirit of all truth. Are they not described under the character, and by the title of servants? From this their character then, is it not clear and evident, that whatever they do, is but their duty, and if so, how can it be meritorious? When ye, (says our Lord) have done all these things, which are commanded you, say we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do. Thus, the very condition we are in, plainly proves that there can be no causality in any good work of the creature to merit any thing at the hand of God.

Again consider, if we credit the Scriptures of truth, we are there informed that we are not only servants, but impotent servants too; without any inherent strength to perform any thing good, or praise-worthy of ourselves: And if this be our condition, it is not very likely that we can merit any thing at the hand of God. However mortifying such a position is to the pride of corrupt man, yet the Scriptures are every where clear on this head. “By the grace of God I am what I am,” is the language of Paul. † Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves, is the language of the same Apostle. ‡ For it is God that worketh in you, (is his language to the Phillipians) both to will, and to do of his good pleasure. § Now is it not clear and evident, that if all the good we do, we are entirely beholden to the grace, and Almighty power of God for the performance, where can lie the merit of our good works?

Let us consider again the imperfection that cleaves to our best services; in every thing we do, we offend in all. Did ever any yet since the fall of Adam, perform a good work in which there was no blemish? Now if in every action of our life, even in our good works themselves, there is so much sinful imperfection, where can be the merit? ||

In a word, let us consider that there is no proportion between God's justice, and our good works. Merit takes its arise from, and is founded upon commutative justice; which requires that so much reward be given for so much work: Weight for weight. Believe me *Superbus*, that if a man should suffer, (if it was possible) and undergo all the afflictions which the whole of God's people, yea, the whole of mankind have suffered from Adam to
this

|| It was a prayer of Augustine, *lava meas lacrymas Domine*, i. e. O Lord wash my tears; implying that these very tears which flowed from him as a true penitent, were not so pure but they had need of washing.

† 1 Cor. xv. 10.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

§ Philip. ii. 13.

this day, and at the same time possessed all the virtues of the most godly ever existed, yet upon the account either of his sufferings, or the merit of his good works, he could not be reckoned worthy of the glory that is to be revealed; and why? Because there is no proportion between either his sufferings, or obedience, and that future glory. From these things I think it is evident, that although however sinful proud man may cajole himself in the supposed goodness of his nature, disposition, or works; yet these can have no causal influence on God to adjudge him worthy of eternal life. I would rather, in an agreeableness to the holy Scriptures place our right and title to the heavenly inheritance to the account of the merit and satisfaction of Jesus; and yet in so doing, I stand up an advocate for holiness and good works, and plead for their necessity as strongly as you can possibly do: But with this difference, that I can never place them in the room of Christ's merit. In the glorious scheme of our salvation they hold a most conspicuous place, and wherever the believer in Jesus casts his eye, and in whatever point of view he contemplates the gospel scheme of salvation, he plainly, and strongly discerns, the absolute necessity he is under to live soberly, righteously, and godly: Soberly and temperately with regard to himself; righteously and honestly with regard to his neighbour; devoutly and piously with regard to God. This is a brief epitome of the whole of the christian life. In the exercise of these graces and virtues doth his character as a christian, and a believer in Jesus consist. Innumerable are the motives, and pressing and cogent are the arguments to holiness, which present themselves daily to the consideration of the genuine believer in Jesus.

But to be a little more particular here; let us consider the covenant of grace into which God hath entered with the believer: This consists in a promise of every grace, and evangelical blessing to be bestowed on the believer, on God's part; and a promise of all holy obedience and faithfulness on the believer's part. God promises to be our God, we on our part engage to serve him, in holiness, and righteousness all the days of our life. By virtue of faith in God's promise and covenant of grace, every true believer enters in the most express manner, into a covenant of duty. Hear his language; "what have I any more to do with Idols." "O Lord, other Lords besides thee have had the dominion over me: But by thee only will I make mention of thy name." This is no more than what is promised every believer in Jesus should do: "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with
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his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel. || God promises all manner of favour and protection; and requires of us all manner of service and obedience. He engages and that by oath, to deny nothing that is conducive either to our present welfare, or future happiness; and requires on the other hand, that we refuse no part of that evangelical obedience to all his commandments enjoined on us by his authority. This covenant-engagement is briefly comprehended in these words, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." And you must carefully advert to this, that this mutual stipulation between God and the believer is founded upon the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus. He cannot be our God, but as reconciled in Christ; but there was no way of turning away his anger and restoring peace, but by the death of his Son.

Consider here my dear friend, the all-gracious bounty of Heaven. See the benignity of an infinitely condescending God! If he requires our payment of this evangelical debt of obedience, he at the same time promises sufficient furniture. This is the very genius and nature of the covenant of grace; that all the duties incumbent on us to perform, there is grace always promised for the performance. Doth he require faith? It is given to the christian in the behalf of Christ to believe. Doth he require to fear and reverence him, and never to backslide and turn away from him? This is also promised; I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall never depart from me, &c. † See then the necessity which lies on the believer from this consideration, to abound in every good word and work.—“I will be a God to thee,” says he to Abraham. Could the Almighty promise more? Could Abraham desire more? This promise in Christ which was made to Abraham, was the foundation of all that faith, obedience, and resignation to the will of Heaven, which marked the character, and distinguished the conduct of the Father of the faithful. Might it not be rationally expected that these, or the like would be the natural effusions of Abraham’s heart on this occasion? “And hath God, God all-sufficient graciously con-
 “descended to be my God; Why then, should I refuse to per-
 “form any duty he enjoins me, or bear any burden, which
 “he in his all-wise providence may see meet to impose on me.
 “Should not I resign up to his sovereign will and pleasure, all
 “that I am, or possess. Can I refuse any manner of service to
 “him, who promises to be my shield and exceeding great re-
 “ward. Should I not walk in all manner of holy obedience,
 “to his most just commandments, and behave in every respect,
 “as one so dear to Heaven; should I take encouragement to
 “provokes

|| Isai. xlv. 5.

† Jer. xxxii. 40.

“ provoke the eyes of his glory, because he hath promised to bless me, and make me a blessing.”

The future conduct of this great believer verified all that has been just now said of him. He was all obedience to the heavenly call, to leave his country, kindred, and father's house: He never murmured when called to go to a place which he knew not. “ He went out, not knowing whither he went.” When commanded to offer up his Son in sacrifice upon mount Moriah, he withdrew not his shoulder from the burden. A hard task indeed, to part with a beloved, and an only Son. When God calls for our earthly comforts, which perhaps, are dear to us, if not dearer than our right eye, or our right hand; we are loth to part with them: But to be commanded of God to sacrifice them ourselves, is still more difficult. But this was Abraham's case. The promise, “ I will be your God,” still sounded in his ears; so that there was no command too hard, nor any trial too difficult for faithful Abraham. And indeed, it would be a miracle to see a genuine believer who has taken hold of God's covenant to act in any other line, than to render the most ready and unreserved obedience to the dictates of Heaven.

Again, let us take notice of that necessity to holiness and good works, arising from our dedication to the service of God, and to all holy obedience in our baptism. We are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these three adorable persons are respectively concerned in the œconomy of our redemption. The Father choosing us in Christ before the foundation of the world, and in time adopting us into his family; putting us among the number of his children, and bestowing on us the privileges and immunities of his Sons.—The Eternal Son, the Redeemer purchases us in time by his own blood, makes us his peculiar treasure, and members of his mystical body.—The Holy Ghost consecrates, and forms us to be a temple for himself to dwell in: And he doth this by applying that redemption purposed from eternity by the Father, and in time purchased by the Son. Now, I will submit it to yourself, if not all worship and holy obedience, is not due from us to these three glorious persons? In them as one God, ought all our religious services to terminate; and to them an unlimited obedience is due.—The Eternal God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are to reverence and obey as his children. 1 Pet. i. 14, 15. As obedient children,—be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Eph. v. 1. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children. To the Son the Redeemer, we owe this piece of obedience and service, to follow his footsteps, and imitate him in the example
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and pattern he hath set us: § To behave on every occasion as his peculiar people, zealous of good works.—To the Holy Ghost the sanctifier, we are bound never to grieve him, nor defile that temple in which he graciously dwells. † Now is it possible that the justified in Christ Jesus can be bound with stronger ties, or overcome by more persuasive arguments to all manner of holy conversation, than these which originate from their relation to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? They are the Sons of God by adoption; they are the members of Christ's mystical body by purchase; and they are the temples of the Holy Ghost by his mystical inhabitation.—How is it possible, we can call God our Father, if we yield not all manner of filial obedience to his commands, and pay a proper, and becoming regard to his sovereign authority? If I be a Father where is mine honour? ‡——How can we acknowledge ourselves the disciples of Jesus, if we pay no respect to his commandments, and walk not even as he also walked. *——How can we say that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, or our hearts the subject of his gracious operations if we can deliberately and wilfully defile his temple, and habitually provoke, grieve, and vex him? If we live in the spirit, let us walk in the spirit. I shall conclude this article by observing, that if the supreme Deity of Christ, his satisfaction and atonement, the existence, and necessary existence of the Holy Ghost be not acknowledged what was just now said falls to the ground.

Farther, the communion that takes place between Christ the head, and all the members of his mystical body is calculated to secure the interests of holiness, and enhance their obligation to all evangelical obedience: And not only so, but has a peculiar causality in their formation to a holy life. They have communion with him in his death; as he died *for* sin, they die *to* sin: The death of Christ as it procures the life of their souls, it likewise proves the death of their sins. I am crucified with Christ, (says Paul) yet nevertheless I live, and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Gal. ii. 20.—They have communion with him in his resurrection: “That ye may know him in the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.” For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Rom. vi. 5.—They have also communion with him in his ascension, and session at the Father's right hand. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is at the Father's right hand: Col. iii. 1. Let us observe likewise the pathetic exhortation

§ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

Eph. iv. 30,

† 1 Cor. vi. 16.

‡ Mal. i. 4.

* John xiv. 15.

1 John ii. 3.

Rom. viii. 9.

exhortation of the Apostle in consequence of that communion which believers entertain with Christ at the Father's right hand, v. 5. mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry: Plainly intimating that living in the habitual practice of these, or other similar lusts, is entirely inconsistent with any pretensions to communion with Jesus.

It may further here be observed, that believers have not only communion with Jesus in the aforesaid respects, but in a certain measure and degree in his Mediatorial offices. By the same heavenly unction whereby he was constituted the prophet, priest, and king of his church, they are anointed to execute these offices.—They are by the Holy Ghost anointed to be *prophets*, in order to preach and show forth to the world, by all manner of godly conversation, the glory and virtues of their heavenly Father. Observe the language of the Apostle *Peter* on this head: But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises, (the virtues) of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. What pretensions I pray, could any one have to claim communion with Christ in his prophetic office, whose habitual custom was, to profane, vilify, and blaspheme that great and dreadful name *the Lord our God*? The unction wherewith all believers are anointed inspires them with the most fervent desire to glorify God in their souls and bodies which are his.

By the same anointing they are constituted *Priests*; not to present their souls and bodies sacrifices upon an altar, to procure pardon and avert the divine displeasure; no, but for quite different ends. I beseech you, (says Paul) by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. † The prophet *Isaiah* speaks of all believers as sustaining the character, and executing the priestly office: But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord, men shall call you the ministers of our God: *Isai. lxi. 6.* And as sustaining this character, the Apostle gives this exhortation how the priests of the Lord, the ministers of our God should walk and act: And be ye not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. §

In a word, they are by the same anointing constituted *Kings*; to contend against, and overcome those spiritual foes which beset them in their way to the promised Canaan: And these are principally the Devil, the world, and the flesh. The believer's warfare

† Rom. xii. 1.

§ Rom. xii. 2.

fare is far from being over when his peace with Heaven is concluded. Peace with God issues in an immediate war with hell.

Do you not see *Superbus*, that this anointing wherewith all believers are made sharers of, is so far from being inimical to the interests of holiness, that it is exactly calculated to promote virtue, and that upon the ruin and destruction of sin.—You will find the high station to which believers are advanced, in consequence of this unction of the Holy Ghost recognized in the song of all the redeemed from among men; who have safely escaped the dangers and pollutions of a present world, and have reached that place where no sin can enter. They sing unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests to God, and his Father: To him be glory, &c. †

Again, the necessity that lies on believers to the practice of holiness and good works will farther appear, when we consider the nature of the gospel, by which they are called to a participation of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherein consists the nature of the gospel? Is it merely theoretic, or speculative? Tending only to feed the mind with truths of a speculative nature? No, it leads rather to correct the will, and purify the affections of the believer, and to excite him to the practice of universal holiness. Hence it is emphatically termed, “the truth according to *godliness*;” and “the mystery of *godliness*.” Must you not acknowledge, that none can seriously and ingeniously embrace the gospel of God’s grace, but are at the same time obligated to walk worthy of it? And the truth is, there is none who believes the former, but what will practice the latter: Such I say, will give all diligence “to add to their faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.” If sinners were but once persuaded to embrace a God in Christ as revealed in the gospel, there is not the least danger of holiness and good works being turned out of doors; but until this take place, you will as soon find good fruit on a crab-tree, as you will holiness and good works with gospel-despisers.

In order to convince us of the necessity of holiness and good works from the nature and genius of the gospel, we find that it frequently comes under the denomination of a *law*: The law of faith; the law of the spirit of life; the law of liberty, and the law of Christ. Now, it is more than probable, that the gospel is thus characterized, upon the account of its obligatory nature upon all
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who receive and embrace it, to yield all manner of gospel-obedience to the whole of God's revealed will. Christ's yoke is easy, but at the same time it is a yoke: Yes, a yoke which by all means believers are bound and obliged to take on them. || By the law, (says Paul) I am dead to the law, i. e. by the law of Christ, I am dead to the law of Moses in its covenant-form. The law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death, * i. e. the gospel which is the ministration of life, and the word of life hath freed all believers from that law which irritates and makes sin exceeding sinful; and at the same time also, threatens death upon the slightest transgression. Although therefore, we are freed from the law in its covenant-form by Christ, so that we are no more under the law, but under grace; we are not for this reason, to live as without law, "but as under law to Christ." As free (says the Apostle Peter) but as servants of God. † And being freed from sin, we become the servants of righteousness. ‡ By our believing in Jesus as offered in the gospel, our state of servitude is by no means abolished; it is indeed changed: From being servants of sin, we become servants of righteousness; and from groaning under the iron yoke of Satan, we take on us the easy yoke of Christ.

In a word, if we consider the nature of the grace of faith implanted in the soul in the day of regeneration and effectual calling, we will clearly see what an indispensable obligation lies on all believers to practise holiness in the fear of God. There are three things attributed to faith in Scripture, which beyond a doubt, secures the interests of holiness: Faith works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. Now, I might appeal to yourself, can that man in whose heart this grace is implanted, walk in the flesh, or act according to the course of a licentious and libertine world? Certainly no. Doth not the Apostle James expressly assert that faith without works is dead. § Although good works are by no means the procuring cause of this supernatural grace, it being the free gift of God bestowed on the sinner without any causality on his part; yet where it is inherent in the soul, holiness of heart and life is always its concomitant. Upon what ground can any man scripturally determine that he is possessed of this heavenly gift, when he deliberately, and habitually indulges himself in the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind? Can the tree be good, when the fruit is bad? Can the fountain be sweet, when the streams are bitter? It is very true, that in the matter of a sinner's justification before God, nothing can be more diametrically

|| Math. xi. 29.

* Rom. viii. 2.

† 1 Pet. ii. 13.

‡ Rom. vi. 18.

§ James ii. 20.

diametrically opposite than faith and works. This is evident from the constant antithesis and opposition placed by the Apostle Paul between these two: But this never hinders their amicably conspiring, and harmoniously agreeing, in the person and conduct of the justified in Christ Jesus, in order for the promoting and carrying on a work of grace in the soul, until grace be swallowed up in glory. What a presumptuous, and antiscrptural notion must it be for a man to conclude that he is possessed of a saving faith, when it has no farther influence on him than by an external profession to cry *Lord, Lord*; without being in the least degree solicitous whether his external deportment be agreeable to God's revealed will or not. The *Libertines* in the Apostle James's time, and the *Antinomians* in ours, mistaking the design of Paul's reasoning, in confining our justification to faith as the instrumental cause, without the deeds of the law; drew this unaccountable conclusion that believers were under no obligation to pay the least regard to the moral law as the rule of their conduct. To combat, and overthrow this antiscrptural hypothesis, the Apostle James writes, and roundly tells these *Solifidians*, that they had no greater reason to boast of their faith than the Devils had: But that, (with them) if their faith was not accompanied with good works, they had the greatest reason to tremble. Thou believest there is a God, thou doest well: The Devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know O vain man, that faith without works is dead. || In a word, as faith is the instrumental cause of our justification, so it is the root of our sanctification: purifying their hearts by faith. †

“ *Philemon*, how comes it to pass that seeing according to your
 “ opinion faith alone justifies, and if so, is sufficient to answer
 “ all the ends and purposes of salvation, that good works are es-
 “ sentially necessary too? Would not one be tempted to think
 “ that good works were superfluous, since faith answers all the
 “ ends of salvation? I am far from charging you as the author
 “ of this hypothesis, I find the Apostle Paul of the same opinion,
 “ Rom. iii. 8. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified
 “ without the works of the law. Now, what I would wish
 “ to know is, wherein lies the great necessity of good works, af-
 “ ter a man is justified by faith, his sins pardoned, his person
 “ and services accepted, and his title to Heaven ascertained?
 “ Doth not that which suffices for justification answer all the
 “ purposes of complete salvation?”

Superbus, in order to remove your objection, and satisfy your mind on this head, allow me to observe; that there is more requisite to final salvation than is to justification. Justification is not

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the whole of a sinner's salvation, i. e. there is more necessary to render a sinner completely happy, yea, to put him in a capacity for complete happiness, than mere pardon, and the ascertaining of his title to glory. It is one thing to confer a right to eternal life; another, to give a meetness for the actual possession of eternal life; the former is granted in justification, the latter is accomplished in our sanctification. Although good works are entirely precluded in the act of justification, because by the alone righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith, we are justified, yet they are absolutely necessary in all the justified in Christ Jesus, as means for accomplishing the great end of complete salvation. You must observe here *Superbus*, that although faith alone as the instrumental cause justifies, yet it is not so alone, but all the other graces of the Holy Ghost are always supposed, and really are co-existent with it in the believer. We say the eye alone sees; but it is always supposed in conjunction with the other members of the body. Neither indeed is that faith which justifies the sinner by apprehending Christ's righteousness ever found without good works; although, *as it justifies*, it precludes every good work, or in the language of the Apostle, the works of the law. Good works then necessarily accompany justifying faith, but are by no means co-workers with it in the act of justification; are always in the justified, not to purchase salvation but as means of Heaven's institution to make meet for it.

“ But *Philemon*, is not what you maintain rather inimical to
 “ the practise of holiness, in asserting that the whole of man's
 “ salvation from first to last, is entirely owing to free grace
 “ through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? Now, if all be
 “ solely lodged in the hand of free grace as you maintain, might
 “ not your doctrine tend, if not to licentiousness, yet to encourage sloth and indifferency in using the means of Heaven's
 “ institution.”

Superbus, if I have erred in asserting that the whole of man's salvation is entirely owing to the free grace of God, the Scriptures have led me astray. Is not the constant language of the Holy Ghost on this head to this very purpose? “ It is God which worketh in you, both to will, and to do of his good pleasure.” “ By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God.” “ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us,” &c. And you will find that the unanimous language of all Saints is, as if they had but one heart, and one mouth; “ not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise.” “ According as he hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose
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and grace, which he purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Now *Superbus*, do you really think that there can be any one so weak, or wicked to draw this conclusion from the above premises, that because we are saved by grace there is no necessity for any endeavour on the part of the creature? Is not God's grace, and our duty necessarily and inseparably connected? Yea, so joined together, that no man can disunite them. It was an observation of *Augustine* that though God, (says he) created thee without thee, yet he will not save thee, without thee. † I own in first conversion, and in the act of regeneration, the sinner is to be considered as entirely passive: He can contribute no more to the effectuating this glorious change than the infant in the womb to its own existence; or a dead man, to his rising out of the grave: But being born again, and raised from his moral death in sin, he is made alive unto God, and capacitated to prosecute the end of his high calling. Now that God's grace and the sinner's duty are inseparably connected, will appear from that fore-cited text, Phil. ii. 3. where the Apostle ascribes every good word, and work, and even every pious inclination of the soul to the energetic grace and power of God; and yet we are called in the preceding verse, to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

You know, that God as the God of nature, hath absolutely promised that there shall be by a constant rotation summer, and winter, seed-time, and harvest: Now would you not judge that man to be exceeding presumptuous, who would expect a crop in harvest, without improving the seed time, in committing his grain to the earth, to reap the same in its due season? Job expressly tells us that our days are determined, and the number of our months are with him: He hath appointed our bounds, that we cannot pass. ‡ Now, would you not deem that man to be very presumptuous that would draw this conclusion from the above text, that all endeavours for the preservation of his health, and life were entirely superfluous? And why? Because to that period God hath fixed for the termination of his life he will arrive, let him do what he will, and act as he pleases. I may just observe to you here, that the same decree which hath fixed the period to which we shall arrive, hath also appointed the means for the prolongation of our life until the period thus determined by God shall come; so that the end and the means are wrapt up, and inseparably connected in the same decree.

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† Qui creavit te sine te, non te servabit sine te.

‡ Job xiv. 5.

In order therefore to obtain the complete and eternal salvation of our souls, holiness of life and conversation is absolutely necessary; or in other words, the exercise of those graces implanted in our souls by the Holy Ghost in the way of commanded duty, in all its extent: And although the implantation of these graces is entirely owing to the sovereign good will and pleasure of God, yet the acting and exercise of them is entirely ours. Although the Holy Spirit be the gracious donor of the grace of faith, repentance, love, &c. yet he will not believe for us, nor repent, nor love God for us. These are our personal acts. The grace is Gods, the duty is ours — To which of the Saints will you turn, and propose this interesting question, “how do you expect salvation?” They would with one heart, and one voice answer; we look for it, we earnestly expect it as co-workers with God. We never expect it, either by living a life of licentiousness, or carelessness. We look for the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ with exceeding great glory, in an habitual performance of all the duties which God hath enjoined on us in his word, either respecting God, ourselves, or our neighbour. In a word, we look for it in the constant exercise of prayer, reading, hearing, meditation, &c.

Did not God send an Angel as the messenger of glad tidings to Paul, when in the utmost hazard of being ship-wrecked, and assured him that not a soul of the whole crew should perish? A little afterwards some of the mariners endeavouring to leave the ship, Paul expressly told them that except these would abide in the ship they could not be saved; why? Because God who had determined the end, had at the same time also fixed on the means to accomplish that end. — Doth not the Apostle expressly assure us, Eph. i. 4. that he, (viz. God) hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, (i. e. from all eternity) that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. The meaning is, we were chosen to holiness as the mean, as well as to eternal glory as the end — I may just add, that salvation being by the free grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, is so far from being inimical to the endeavours of the creature, that it is upon this plan, and this only infallibly secured. And by thus uniting the endeavour of the sinner, with the efficacious grace of God, as it clearly demonstrates the necessity of holiness, against the security of a libertine licentious world; so it effectually shuts the door against all sacrilegious pharisaical pride.

I shall only make this observation further on this head, namely, that all the various phrases expressive of our sanctification point out both the free grace of God in our salvation, and the duty of
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the creature as inseparably connected. It is called a work, which we are to work out; and yet it is God which worketh in us, both to will, and to do of his good pleasure. || It is called a talent which we are to improve; the talent is Gods, the improvement is ours. † It is called a seed, from which we are to send forth fruit. ‡ The seed is Gods; it is to appear in us in all manner of godly conversation. It is called a race set before us to run. § It is Gods to mark out the way; it is ours to run. A light which is to be kept burning unto the perfect day. * The light is Gods, it comes from the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift doth come; and yet is called our light.

“ My dear *Philemon*, I am perfectly satisfied from what you
 “ have advanced, that the doctrine and belief of Christ’s satis-
 “ faction and atonement, and the grace of God appearing in
 “ men’s salvation from first to last, tends neither to licentious-
 “ ness, nor to the encouragement of sloth and indolence. How
 “ difficult is it to eradicate these prejudices in favour of any
 “ system which have been long and deeply rooted in the mind.
 “ I was still taught the belief of your doctrine, could not consist
 “ with the good works of the creature; or at least, that they
 “ were rendered by it superfluous, and of no effect. But I am
 “ firmly convinced, that it is not possible not to love, and pay
 “ all manner of respect to the law of that most gracious Saviour,
 “ who died to deliver from the wrath to come, by bearing our
 “ sins in his own body on the tree. The love of Christ con-
 “ straineth us; to what? To live a life of licentiousness, sloth
 “ and carelessness: No, but that we should no longer live to
 “ ourselves, but unto him who loved us and died for us. Too
 “ long, I must acknowledge I have lived to myself, self was my
 “ principle aim in all my actions. From a slavish fear, and a
 “ servile spirit, originated all my religious services. From a
 “ principle of worldly applause proceeded all those actions which
 “ redounded in any measure to the good and welfare of my fel-
 “ low-creatures: If my right hand gave, my left hand observed
 “ the gift; I gloried in these at least before God, that by such
 “ beneficent charitable actions I might at least recommend my-
 “ self to God. I never could until now, understand what Paul
 “ meant by this expression; “ to me to live is Christ.” I per-
 “ ceive now, that this great and eminent man had a view to the
 “ advancement of the glory of Christ in all his actions: That
 “ in all the eminent services he did the church, it was his prin-
 “ cipal intention that the great king and head of the church
 “ should

|| Phil. ii. 13. † Math. xxv. ‡ Gal. v. 24.

§ Heb. xii. 1.

* Math. v. 20.

“ should receive all the glory.—Neither until now could I
 “ possibly understand, nor by any means apprehend, what he
 “ could mean by this phrase, God forbid that I should glory in
 “ any thing else save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 “ Now I conceive, that from this glorious personage that hung
 “ on the cross, he expected all the spiritual blessings conveyed in
 “ a state of grace; and all the good in reversion to be communi-
 “ cated in glory. Mean and ignominious as Jesus appeared on
 “ the cross, the Apostle saw in his person an exceeding great glo-
 “ ry; and in his accursed death benefits accruing to sinners of
 “ the most valuable, and inestimable nature.—But I must
 “ desist for a little, as I feel my strength and spirits exhausted,
 “ and almost failing.”

My dear *Onesimus*, you may easily conceive the state or my
 mind on this occasion: I was almost on the eve of calling the
 disconsolate family together to take a long and lasting farewell of
 the husband, and father. But waiting for a few minutes, and
 observing his pulse; I perceived that death was not as yet at the
 door. At length heaving a deep sigh, he opened his eyes, and
 stretching out his hand, took a fast hold of mine, and repeating
 these words; “ Lord what is man that thou art mindful of him;
 and the Son of man that thou shouldest visit him.” At the re-
 petition of these words, I was quite overcome. How strong are
 the ties of cordial friendship; how loath are we to part with a
 bosom friend, and a beloved companion.—*Superbus* observing
 me in this state, with tears running down his pale cheeks, ad-
 dressed me in the following terms.—“ *Philemon*, if the departed
 “ soul in a future state, can have any recollection of past trans-
 “ actions here below, your kindness and friendship will be re-
 “ membered by me, yea written on my heart in such indelible
 “ characters that eternity will not be able to efface. You have
 “ indeed acted the part of a friend in the care, and uncommon
 “ concern, that you have taken about the eternal welfare of my
 “ precious and immortal soul; which in a few days, or hours,
 “ must take a long farewell of this clay-tabernacle. To save a
 “ soul from death, is certainly one of the noblest actions in which
 “ ever any was engaged. And now since divine providence
 “ hath brought me back once more from the gates of death; if
 “ it would not disoblige you, or detain you too long, I have a few
 “ more queries which I wish to have resolved.”

“ Doth not the doctrine of Christ’s satisfaction and atonement
 “ in the way that you hold it forth rather cast a vail upon some
 “ of the perfections of the divine nature; particularly, the *mer-*
 “ *cy*, and *omnipotency* of God? Suppose that God will not remit
 “ sin without an atonement made by Jesus the surety, doth not
 “ this

“ this obscure the glory of his mercy? Supposing again he cannot; doth not this obscure the glory of his omnipotence?”

Superbus, I answer God could not remit sin without a satisfaction: From the perfect purity and sanctity of his nature, he cannot tolerate, nor suffer it to pass unpunished.—Neither could he, in respect of his justice which requires that every one should receive according to his works. † Neither could he in regard of his truth: The word has gone out of his mouth, and it shall be accomplished, “ the soul that sinneth shall die.” Death, according to this threatening must be inflicted either on the sinner, or a surety in his stead. Therefore, in a consistency with the glory of these perfections he *could* not pardon sin without a satisfaction. ‡ Neither is the omnipotency of God in the least obscured by this method of grace and salvation in admitting of a surety, and making him *to be sin, and a curse* in order for remission, because, this is by no means owing to any defect in his power, but to the infinite and unchangeable perfection of his nature.

And as from the above considerations he could not pardon sin without a satisfaction; neither *will* he. That this is the case, is evident from all the declarations made of his will on this head in the sacred oracles. Is it not every where in the whole book of God (where the sacred penmen treat on this subject) plainly asserted, that sin cannot pass unpunished? Neither is the glory of the divine mercy thereby obscured; because if he is merciful, he is also just: And the exercise of his justice against sin, never impedes that of his mercy towards the sinner, in a consistency with the other perfections of his nature. And this reconciliation of these seemingly opposite perfections and attributes in the case of the sinner, can only take place in virtue of the atonement of the surety.—By the same parity of reason, I might argue, that God is both cruel, and weak; if he will not save all mankind. I ask, why doth he not save the impenitent? Either because he cannot, or because he will not: And that all men are saved, I believe you will not maintain. If he cannot, according to your phrase, he is not omnipotent; if he will not, he is not infinitely merciful. But I am sure you are far from asserting, that these perfections and attributes are not in the Divine Being in the most eminent manner and degree. If you reply, that God cannot, because it would be repugnant to the holiness and justice of his nature to receive impenitent sinners into communion with himself; and also to his will, because he hath in his own word plainly declared the contrary.—This is all that I affirm: And I may just add, that independent of this method of salvation through the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus, the whole human race would
have

† Rom. i. 32.

‡ 1 Theff. i. 6.

‡ See Letter 2d.

have remained in such a state, as it would have been entirely contrary to the nature, and to the revealed will of God in his word, to have received them into communion and fellowship with himself.

Moreover, this method of salvation through the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus, is so far from obscuring the glory of the divine perfections, that they shine forth in the most eminent manner and degree.—In what a glorious point of view do we contemplate the justice of the divine nature; which, before sin should go unpunished, it must be imputed to the surety, and he suffer its demerits. By this method the justice of God is vindicated from all the aspersions which might be cast on it, either by Devils, or wicked men; and at the same time, the most illustrious document given to men, that as in a glass they might see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and thereby be deterred from its commission either in thought, word, or deed: And also at the same time, to prove a perpetual caveat never to abuse mercy, in a way of expecting salvation in a course of iniquity.

The glory of the divine mercy is also by this method of salvation, illustriously displayed. This perfection was so eminently great, and prevalent in the divine breast towards miserable sinners, that when no other method of salvation, (at least known to us) could save men from destruction, he clothed his own Son with our nature, and subjected him in that nature, to the most direful torments both of soul and body. † Herein appears the riches of his mercy in the substitution of his Son in the room of the guilty.

How eminently doth his infinite wisdom appear in this plan of salvation by the atonement of Jesus. Herein appears the manifold wisdom of God; and the wisdom of God in a mystery. By a wonderful temperament of justice and mercy, he hath solved this perplexing question. How can man be saved, without any detriment to, or casting any slur upon the other perfections of the divine nature? O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and

† *Philemon* would wish to speak very modestly on this question, viz. whether God could have saved sinners any other way than by the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus. Rather than appealing immediately to his absolute power, might not the state of the controversy be summed up thus: Whether God's requiring Christ to give satisfaction in the room of sinners previous to their restoration to the divine favour; was owing to the mere good pleasure of his will; or whether the essential holiness, the justice of his nature which he cannot possibly part with, required a satisfaction to be made? The last of these states of the question, is certainly the most scriptural.

and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

How gloriously doth the Almighty power of God shine forth in this admirable scheme! Power which hath most eminently triumphed over the Devil, the world, sin, death, Hell, and the grave! These formidable foes which rode triumphant over God's creature are vanquished and overcome, and that with their own weapons. The Almighty power of God hath, by the most admirable dexterity brought life out of death; happiness out of the deepest misery; and glory out of the greatest ignominy; and eternal salvation, from an infamous cross; and from (as to external appearance) an ignominious sufferer——Deny the satisfaction and atonement of Jesus, and you will in very deed greatly obscure the glory of the divine perfections.——To pass over transgressions of the law, or to connive and wink at them, is an evidence, either of a negligent judge, who from carelessness permits them; or an iniquitous judge, if he freely and voluntarily passes them over, without calling the transgressors to an account. But far be it from the Almighty to delight in iniquity. Fools shall not stand in his sight, he hates, and hating, he cannot but punish all the workers of iniquity.

“ *Philemon*, was not Christ made under the law for himself, i. e. did he not owe obedience to it for himself? How then in this case could his active obedience be imputed to us, as a principal and particular part of that righteousness which being imputed to the sinner, he becomes justified, and accepted in God's sight?”

Superbus, considering the Son of God, the Saviour of the world precisely as God, he neither was, nor possibly could be subject to any law, to any superior: That being diametrically opposite to the nature of the God-head. This I think at first view you must confess to be the truth. Some consider the Mediator as man, to be subject to the moral law, as it is the rule both of the nature, and actions of rational creatures, for himself. I would rather imagine that in all the obedience of his life, as well as his sufferings unto the death, he is to be considered purely as *surety*. So that sustaining this character, and standing in this relation, he was made under the law solely for us. I say under the law, as enjoining the condition of perfect obedience, in order to purchase eternal life and happiness for those for whom he engaged, as well as suffer the penalty due for their sins. So that the whole of his perfect and consummate obedience which he yielded to the law as a covenant, through the whole of his humbled state, is to be considered as *surety-obedience*.—Besides such an hypothesis has no countenance in the Scriptures; we never read that he

was

was made under the law, or gave obedience to its precepts for himself; but we read that God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, but how, or for what end? For himself? No, but for us, to deliver them who were under the law. † We are also told that by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. ‡ Now this obedience by which we are constituted righteous, must be in the nature of the thing surety-obedience; or in other words obedience given to the law *for us*, and imputable to us as the ground of our justification before God.

“ *Philemon*, I will not detain you much longer; but as I wish
 “ to obtain all possible satisfaction on this head, I hope you will
 “ bear with me a little.—I ask you then, whether upon
 “ supposition that the atonement and satisfaction of Christ was
 “ sufficient for the justification of sinners in the sight of God, and
 “ that actually accounted theirs for pardon and acceptance; yet
 “ after all may they not finally perish? Is it not possible after all,
 “ through a course of sinning, that those who are the children
 “ of God, may become the children of wrath and finally perish?
 “ In this case then, would not these two things necessarily fol-
 “ low; either, that Christ’s satisfaction and atonement although
 “ sufficient for the pardon of sin, yet was not sufficient to open,
 “ and keep open the way into the holiest of all, and consequent-
 “ ly there must be a sad defect in all that Christ did and suffer-
 “ ed; or, will not this follow, that he hath died in vain, and a
 “ vain application made of the merit of his obedience and death
 “ to sinners?—I begin to entertain such an opinion of the whole
 “ scheme of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, as the con-
 “ trivance of an infinitely wise God, and executed by an all-
 “ gracious Redeemer, and applied by the all-powerful agency
 “ of the Holy Ghost; that I cannot persuade myself, but that
 “ there was such a sufficiency and perfection in the death of Jesus,
 “ as would infallibly secure the eternal salvation of all them who
 “ believe: Neither can I persuade myself, that God could be
 “ frustrated of his design in contriving, the Son in executing,
 “ and the Holy Ghost in applying this glorious scheme of salva-
 “ tion: And yet I was still made to believe, that a man might,
 “ after he was actually in a state of grace, his sins really pardon-
 “ ed, his person and services accepted, his title to eternal glory
 “ ascertained; yet after all I say he might relapse, and from be-
 “ ing a child of God, become a child of the Devil, from being
 “ an heir of glory, lose all right and title to it, and fall under the
 “ everlasting displeasure of a sin-revenging God.”

My

† Gal. iv. 4.

‡ Rom. v. 19.

My dear *Superbus*, I coincide with your sentiments, in avowing the insufficiency of the death of Christ for bringing many Sons to glory, if after all that he has done and suffered for procuring salvation, and after the application of his meritorious obedience and death to the sinner, he perish eternally. But is it possible to conceive, that God can be frustrated of his purpose? Who hath resisted his will? What a strange position! Christ sees, and yet doth not see the travail of his soul! He sees it to day in the flourishing state of a believer: To-morrow he sees it not; the state of the believer is altered, his grace is gone; he is no longer the travail of his soul, he is a child of the Devil, and an heir of hell — We have a common phrase, “God and nature doth nothing in vain;” or with more propriety the phrase might run thus, “the God of nature doth nothing in vain.” But it would seem the God of grace may do a great deal in vain: He may contrive, purchase, and apply salvation, and all in the issue to no purpose. — Doth it not savour of blasphemy to assert that the great, omnipotent, and all-wise God can be frustrated in any of his counsels, purposes and designs? Do you reply, how is he frustrated? I answer, did not God apply the purchased salvation, did he not forgive the sinner, did he not ascertain his title to the heavenly inheritance, with a view to conduct him to glory? But alas! his whole scheme of grace which was intended for the eternal welfare of the sinner is turned abortive: Satan the mighty one besets the sinner, and rapaciously pulls him out of the hands of omnipotence; for in his Almighty hand, and encircled with the everlasting arms, all his Saints are. But I am rather anticipating myself here. — Permit me then to present you with my views on this head: And the arguments which I shall propose to you for the confirmation of the Saints infallibly persevering in a state of grace until they reach glory, shall still be connected with, and have a reference unto the scheme of our salvation through the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus.

It may not be amiss to define and specify the persons who shall persevere unto the end, and in the end receive the complete and eternal salvation of their souls: And yet some are pleased to tell us that they may finally perish. — They are such, whom God hath chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, † i. e. we were chosen in him from eternity; for time never existed until the foundation of the world was laid, time and the world are coeval. ‡ They are also redeemed, and bought with a price, viz.

† By the bye, to talk of a time-election is entirely antisciptural; that is to say, when a man chooses to believe, God then elects him. For once

viz. the precious blood of Christ, from the bondage of sin, the tyranny of Satan: They are also made partakers of a divine nature, having escaped the pollution of the world through lust; they are made sharers of a new life, are quickened together with him: They are Believers in Christ; possessed of that vital principle which unites them into such a close connexion with Jesus, as the branches have with the tree, or the superstructure with the foundation, or the corner-stone with the whole building: Yea, they oftentimes arrive to such a full assurance of faith as makes them with the greatest confidence say with Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." In fine, they are possessed of such a faith as is productive of all the fruits of holiness; a faith that works by love, that purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. They are such as are sanctified in soul, body and spirit, through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus as the meritorious cause, and the word and ordinances as the instrumental cause. They are such, as are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation; are safely lodged in the hand of the Father, and of Christ. They are such, whom God, in the act of justification hath freely pardoned all their iniquities, and cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. In a word, they are such who shall be made more than conquerors through him that loved them, and from whose love nothing shall be ever able to separate them. They may bid a defiance to death, to life, to Angels, principalities and powers, to things present, and things to come, to height, to depth, yea to every creature whatever, to cause a divorce between God and them. ||—Now *Superbus*, these are the persons (whom the Scriptures thus characterize,) whom some are pleased to maintain may fall away from a state of grace. But would not you think, that a gracious God had done too much for them, and wrought too much in them, to lose them after all, either through the subtilty of Satan, or the allurements of a present evil world, or the strength of sin in them?—These are the persons *Superbus*, whom I propose to show you shall persevere un-

to

once then, we behold an independent, and a *dependent* God: His electing act suspended upon the mere good pleasure of the creature. He cannot elect, until the creature render himself an object worthy of it. Strange doctrine indeed! highly flattering to human pride, degrading to the free grace of God, pernicious to the salvation of precious souls.

|| Rom. viii. 37, 38, 39.

to the end, and in the end, receive the complete, and eternal salvation of their souls: And this secure God's eternal purpose of grace and love towards them; and thus prove the sufficiency and perfection of the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus; and the powerful and gracious operations of the Holy Ghost on their souls; all which are annihilated, by denying the Saints final perseverance.

Let us enquire a little into the Saints original, from whence I think we may warrantably conclude their perseverance, and secure the perfection and all-sufficiency of Christ's atonement. From whence then have they their origin and extraction? From God. "They are born of God:" "Begotten of the incorruptible seed of the word of God." "They are God's workmanship, they are God's building." They are created again in Christ Jesus, unto good works.—Here you see their heavenly descent. What a glorious piece of architecture must the Saint be! He resembles his heavenly Father; a partaker of a divine nature; displaying in his character and conduct the beauties of holiness: And having his original from above, he must possess every virtue and gracious qualification, constitutive of his high birth, and ornamental to his christian profession; such as love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith; and above all, an habitual propensity of soul in order to reach the glorious fountain from whence all these graces spring; and all that comfort and support, which from day to day, he experiences in the way of religion and godliness.—But alas! what a sad reverse in the state and case of this *Noble Creature*. In a moment the spiritual building is demolished: And without being rebuilt it lies in ruins to eternity. All that we can say of this celestial building, of that temple of the Holy Ghost is, that God was once there. It is a pity that the Holy One of Israel should have been banished his dwelling place. But the temple of the Holy Ghost is deserted; Christ's death frustrated; his satisfaction and atonement demonstrated to the world, in opposition to all that the Scriptures have said to the contrary, to be insufficient to salvation: And the poor miserable sinner, is poor and miserable indeed. God is gone; grace is left; the secret inspiration of the Almighty which made him long after a blessed and glorious immortality is no more. His earnest expectation blasted, and his hope cut off like the spider's web.

Do you remember *Superbus*, that alarming prediction of *Isaiab*, with regard to the destruction of *Babylon*? How inimitably is the catastrophe of that once flourishing city drawn by the inspired prophet. I shall read to you the divine record concerning that once flourishing city. And *Babylon*, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty

ty of the *Chaldees* excellency, shall be, as when God overthrew *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* — it shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in, from generation to generation. — Neither shall the *Arabian* pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there — But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. — And wild beasts of the island shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces. † — Who could have beheld ancient *Babylon* in all its pomp and glory reduced to such a miserable state as is here predicted without tears? But let us turn our eyes from the destruction of earthly grandeur, glory and excellency, to a more lamentable scene. Behold a man once the workmanship of God, adorned and embellished, not with human sculpture, but with the finger of the living God; once gloriously shining in all the graces of the Holy Ghost; but now, alas! the works of the flesh are predominant, these rapacious lusts take up their habitation where God once dwelt. The heart of man admits of no *vacuum*: Either God, or Satan dwells there. Either the graces of the spirit, or the works of the flesh have the mastery.

But can you imagine my dear friend, that the Almighty will suffer this most excellent of all his hand-works to be brought to ruin either by sin, or Satan? I see you shudder at the very thought. Ask the prophet *Zechariah* and he will inform you, how well secured God's people are. Certainly if what this inspired penman says be true, they are altogether impregnable against all attacks from hell, or earth. For I saith the Lord, will be a wall of fire to her round about, and the glory in the midst of her. ‡ Not only a wall to ward off the approaching enemy, and secure his people from all danger; but a wall of fire, to keep them at the greatest distance; or, if they dare approach, to consume them in their enterprise.

Let us again enquire a little into the nature of the covenant of grace, and we will find the Saints perseverance in a state of grace until they reach glory, absolutely secured. And if so, the atonement and satisfaction of Christ is not in vain, but will assuredly answer all the valuable ends and purposes for which it was designed. Now the sum and substance of this covenant of grace on this head with regard to believers, is this: That God will absolutely so provide for the preservation of his people, that they shall never lose his favour, nor relapse from a state of grace and salvation, into a state of condemnation and wrath. — If you enquire where the covenant-promise for this end lies? I shall read it

† *Isai.* xiii. 18, 19, 20, 21.‡ *Zech.* ii. 5.

it to you. The mountains shall depart, and the hills 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 on thee. † Here you see mention made of God's covenant with his people as a covenant of peace and reconciliation, a covenant by which amity and concord is introduced between the parties at variance with one another, and also a covenant by which the peace is secured. And one would imagine, that if God's anger be turned away, he will never turn away his people.—Moreover this covenant is ratified and confirmed by the blood of Jesus: “For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of the Testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no force at all while the Testator liveth.” But why all this ado about the covenant of grace? Why doth God swear it shall never be removed? Why did Christ die for its confirmation, if after all it can be broken? Do you reply, God will keep his covenant, if we keep it. And will you still subject the unchangeable God to the capricious changeable will of the creature. He is of one mind, and who can turn him. But is there any such condition as this mentioned in this covenant of peace? No, it is expressed in the most absolute terms that it shall never be removed. “He will not break it, for he is faithful, and he cannot deny himself.” He entered into this covenant with all believers for this very end, that by virtue hereof they should be preserved in a state of grace until they reach glory. God hath so made it, that if we cannot keep it, it will keep us.

If the covenant which God made with our first parents had had this confirmatory clause in it, which the covenant we are now speaking of has, the Devil might have spared his pains in tempting them. But the promise of life to them was entirely suspended upon their perfect, personal, and unremitting obedience to the will of their creator. It is very strange that men have such an inclination to turn the covenant of grace into a covenant of works. For, if God in entering into a covenant with his people, would address them in this language, I now pawn my word, and pledge my faithfulness for the performance, that if you do not break this my covenant, I will be your God for ever and ever, and in due time ye shall reap everlasting life: But I leave it to yourselves; for notwithstanding of my mercy and faithfulness contained and manifested in my covenant; notwithstanding of the sorrowful life, and bitter agonies of my Son on the cross, in procuring your salvation, you must work for eternal life, and

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if ye fail in this ye shall perish for ever. † Why, is not this placing the Saints now on the very same footing with Adam in his primitive integrity? If this be not turning the covenant of grace into a covenant of works, I profess myself ignorant both of the one, and the other. In a word, such an hypothesis is entirely subversive of the whole scheme of salvation by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

But further, to put this matter beyond all dispute, we find this covenant-promise more amply insisted upon, and in more explicit terms by another inspired prophet. ‡ I shall read the whole text to you.—And they shall be my people, and I will be their God:—And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me *for ever*. And I will make an *everlasting covenant* with them, that *I will not turn away from them to do them good*: But I will put my fear in their hearts, that they *shall not depart from me*. Why, what greater security for the final perseverance of the Saints could we wish for, than is contained in these words: Unless we are determined at all hazards, implicitly to follow the dictates of fallible men, without resolving our faith into the testimony of a God of infinite veracity, and immutable stability. It is strange, that notwithstanding all that God hath promised, and sworn for the security of his people, yet men will maintain the contrary. If his covenant be everlasting, if he will not turn away from his people to do them good; if he puts his fear in their hearts for this very end, that they shall never depart from him; doth not these things place the security of their state upon the most firm basis, and prove to a demonstration that the Saviour hath not shed his blood in vain?

May not the final perseverance of the Saints in a state of grace until they reach glory be proven, from the Fathers donation of them to Christ, and their union to him as their blessed head? My Father, (says he) which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. || Now can we possibly imagine, that the Eternal Father will suffer the inheritance bestowed upon his Son by virtue of his surety undertaking, to be alienated and become the possession and propriety of any other? We can scarcely imagine that sin, Satan, or the world, are possessed of so much power or influence as to make a seizure of Christ's possession thus safely lodged in the hands of omnipotence.—

† By the gospel-scheme of salvation through the atonement of Christ, men work not for, but from a principle of life, from Christ the prince of life.

† Jer. xxxii. 38, 39, 40.

|| John x. 29.

omnipotence.—All thy Saints are in thy hand. §—Perhaps you may reply, that it is true that none shall be able to pluck them out of God's hand, unless they do it themselves. But I hope you will grant, before this can be done there must necessarily take place a total change of the will, and a thorough destruction of these good and perfect gifts, (I mean the graces of the Holy Ghost implanted in their souls,) which cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Upon this supposition, and in order to make good your objection, the immutability of God must be denyed. These graces come from him, “with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning:” But he never can change in his purpose, nor alter the word that is gone out of his mouth. The gifts and callings of God, are without repentance: And why? Because these gifts partake of his own invariableness. They cannot die, nor be changed to any other purpose or end, than what their blessed donor designed them for. Do you imagine, that it is possible that those to whom these invariable gifts are bestowed can be guilty of any unworthy action, or fall into any atrocious crime that an omniscient God did not foresee prior to the bestowment of grace on them? And in this case, can it be supposed that any subsequent cause can possibly happen, why an immutable God should withdraw these graces, which would not as well have hindered his bestowment of them at first?

I hope you will agree with me that a natural body once in being can never be reduced to nothing: And upon this principle, why should things of a spiritual substance be annihilated? Are not all believers born of incorruptible seed, which liveth, and abideth for ever? And as is the seed, such undoubtedly will be the fruit. Holiness is the seed of glory; grace is glory in the bud, glory is grace in perfection: “He that believeth hath everlasting life.” † Now if this plain and express assertion of our Lord's means

§ Deut. xxxiii. 3.

† Some maintain that in order for actual salvation, it is not only necessary that we have faith, but the full assurance of it; i. e. unless that we are fully assured that we shall be saved we are in a state of condemnation. I would refer such to the decision of an inspired prophet on this head; and if I can understand the plainest language, he is decidedly against such an hypothesis. *Isai. l. 10.* Who is among you that *fear-eth the Lord*, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that *walketh in darkness, and hath no light*, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God. To sound this alarming sentence in the ears of poor ignorant sinners, that unless they are certain that they shall be saved, or in other words, *that they sell Christ in them*; is certainly not the way

means any thing, it certainly conveys this idea to us; that faith secures the christian against all attacks from the Devil, the world, and the flesh; that neither one nor all of these shall ever be able to pluck them out of the Father's hand. Destroy it not for a blessing is in it: *Isai. vi. 5, 8.*—Moreover, let us carefully attend to our Lord's reasoning on this head; is it not to assure all believers, that their enemies shall never have it in their power to make a prey of them, or tempt them to make such a foolish bargain as voluntarily to resign their former master, and engage in the service of sin, Satan, and the world.—Our Lord's argumentation here must be very inconclusive, if after his sheep are safely lodged in his hand, and the hand of the Father, they can cease to be his sheep, and of their own accord, by their sin, fly out of his hands, although not plucked out by any of their adversaries. It makes no odds, whether the Devil, or ourselves, pluck us from God: Whether it were ourselves, or Satan that demolished the spiritual building, and brought the temple of the Holy Ghost to destruction. The truth is, all genuine believers are in better hands than their own, preserved by a power which neither hell nor earth can overcome, and which no temptations can baffle. By this means do you reply, an end is put to all self-gloriation, and the sinews of pharisaical pride for ever cut; and that he that glorieth must glory in the Lord: And why not. Stand by I am holier than thou, is not the language of a genuine christian, but of a proud pharisee.

Again let us consider the union of all believers to Christ their head, which will confirm the truth of their absolute and final perseverance in a state of grace, until they obtain the end of their faith the salvation of their souls. The bonds of this union are two; faith on our part, and the Holy Ghost on God's part: Now, these are a twofold cord which will not be easily broken. I told you already, that after the implantation of the grace of faith in the heart of a believer, it could not be lost nor destroyed; neither can the Holy Ghost after he hath taken possession of the soul be banished from thence, unless by a power superior to his Almighty arm. Now it is not easy to conceive after a believer is thus united to Christ, how he can be separated. The nearness of this mutual union is held forth in Scripture by a variety of metaphors; such as the relation between the foundation and the building; between the vine and the branches; the Father and children; husband and wife, head and members: Yea, we find
Christ

way to make genuine converts: But I know not a more ready method to make downright hypocrites: To send men to the other world with their eyes shut.

Christ and his people both interchangeably obtaining the same name, *Jacob* and *Christ*. † Believers are so nearly related to Jesus that they are said to be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, yea to be one spirit. ‡ Jesus and his people are actuated by one spirit, as the head and members of the same body, by one soul; and this is the reason why believers cannot walk after the flesh. The spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus their head and root rules in them, and subdues every thought and affection, passion, and desire to the obedience of Christ. Now, their being thus united to Christ, they are preserved in him as Noah was in the ark, as the branches in the stock. “ They are complete in him.” They are so one with him, that whatsoever he did, the same are they said to do: Circumcised with him; crucified with him; buried with him; and they are said to rise, and ascend with him, and to sit in heavenly places with him. Believe me *Superbus*, it is as impossible for believers to miscarry totally and finally, as it was for Christ to be held under the power of death. There is one law for both: “ This is a faithful saying, if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall be also glorified together.” As Christ once mist, dieth no more; so none of all his spiritual seed, raised with him to a life of grace here, can possibly miss a life of eternal glory hereafter. His care of them is so peculiar, that of all that the Father hath given him he will lose nothing, but will present them faultless and blameless, without spot or wrinkle at the last day: This will be his triumphant language, “ behold I, and the children which thou hast given me.”——I shall just add further here; that Christ and his seed being one body mystical, if one member of that body was lost, the body would be imperfect; but how harshly doth the phrase *an imperfect Christ*, sound.

Again, I might argue for the perseverance of the Saints in a state of grace, from their being the purchase of his blood, the travail of his soul. Did he purchase them with such corruptible things as silver and gold? No, but with his precious blood; with the dreadful horrors of his soul, and the most extreme tortures of his body; by an accursed death, accompanied with the pains of spiritual and eternal death. Can any one reasonably suppose, that Christ would suffer those whom he purchased at so dear a rate, to fall by their rapacious enemies from him, and so fall under the power of another, and even of him who is his most implacable enemy? What, will not Jesus protect and defend them who are now become his own peculiar property, and that by right of

† Psal. xxiv. 6.

1 Cor. xii. 12.

‡ Eph. v. 30.

1 Cor. vi. 17.

of redemption? Why did he condescend to purchase them at all, particularly at such a vast expence, if after all he must lose his labour, and believers their souls? And cannot he preserve them, unless they are willing to keep themselves? "The hearts of all men are in his hand." Cannot that Almighty Saviour who extricated them in first conversion from the hands of the Devil, and the reigning power of sin, preserve them by the same all-efficient power from falling a prey to these deadly foes? Yes, he is both able and willing to preserve and keep them from all evil, and will actually do so. Those, (says he) whom thou hast given me, I have kept, and none of them is lost but the Son of perdition; for this reason, because he was not given to the Saviour to be either redeemed by his blood, or sanctified by his spirit. He called Judas to the Apostleship, but he never bestowed on him his grace. "Jesus knew who were his." He knew from the beginning, that Judas was a Devil.

Further, the final perseverance of the Saints may be evinced from Christ's intercession for them. Here it might be asked, whether or not, is our Lord Jesus Christ prevalent in all his suits with regard to his people? He resolves this query himself; John xii. 42. I know that thou hearest me always. What then if he intercedes that his people be preserved from all evil? This we find is one particular part of his intercession for them. John xvii. 15, 21. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the *evil*. By the *evil* here which our Lord prays that his people may be preserved from, we may either understand, the evil one, the Devil, or the evil thing, sin. Now if our Lord is heard, and his people preserved both from the power of sin and Satan, what besides these can possibly injure their immortal interests, and what can possibly prevent their finally persevering in a state of grace unto salvation? And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee, Holy Father keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, &c. In this prayer of our Lord, is there the least conditionality? Why then do men frame conditions, where there are none? Is the condition this, that our Lord prays for the preservation of his people from the evil, providing they will keep themselves? But their preservation consists in this, that they *shall* be preserved by the power and grace of God from all such moral evils as might endanger their salvation, or lay them obnoxious to eternal condemnation.

Perhaps there are few or none on record, that fell into such an atrocious crime as *Peter* did; who after the most solemn and explicit profession that his Lord and master was the "Son of the living God," yet after all, not only simply denied that ever he

knew him, but confirmed his allegation with an oath. But you will find previous to this, Jesus told him of the malice of Satan against him, and at the same time, informed him of the prevalence of his intercession for him. I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, i. e. with regard to its principle and habit; it was not in the power of that malicious spirit to eradicate that vital principle by which *Peter* was most intimately united to, and connected with his Lord and master.

I imagine, a very strong argument for the final perseverance of the Saints, may be drawn from the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost in their hearts. The spirit of grace having vanquished Satan the strong man, and expelled him from his throne, takes possession of the believer's soul, resides there alone, and for ever. This inestimable privilege flows to the Saints both from Christ's death and intercession. The former procures a vent, the latter secures his actual mission into their hearts. We have a specimen of what he is now interceding for, and will persevere in, until all his spiritual seed be brought home to glory in John xiv. 16, 17. And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter, that he may *abide with you for ever*, even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: But ye know him, for he *dwelleth with you*, and shall be in you. It is true, that the Holy Ghost may be so grieved by believers, as sometimes to depart with regard to his influences for their comfort and consolation; yet he abides in them continually as the source of their spiritual life, and the bond of their union with Christ. In this sense David prays that God would not take his Holy Spirit from him, i. e. that he would grant him those influences of the Holy Ghost for restoring him to that life, love, and liberty, which he formerly experienced; but were now suspended on the account of his apostasy and backsliding from God. "Restore to me, (says he) the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit."—The Holy Ghost dwells in all believers, as the spring and source of eternal life; for this among other reasons, is he called the spirit of life. † He is figuratively described as a well of living water, springing up to eternal life. § Now the nature of that life infused into believers in the day of regeneration and effectual calling, is very different from that which was in *Adam* in a state of innocency, even although that originated from the very same principle; for in that state, man was left to himself without any promise of the constant inhabitation of the spirit.

The life of believers whereof the Holy Ghost is the source and spring, flows also from the life of Christ. Gal. ii. 20. Nevertheless

† Rom. viii. 3.

§ John iv. 14.

theless I live, yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me. The Lord Jesus Christ is not only personally with the Father, on his glorious throne in Heaven, but he is also living by his spirit in the hearts of all believers.—The life of the Saints is the fruit and effect of Christ's atonement and merit, and therefore must be perpetual and eternal, unless we maintain that Christ has lost his pains: But he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.—Let us take notice of that remarkable expression of Paul, Col. iii. 3. Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. If you ask, to what are believers dead? I answer, to sin, Satan, and the world. This life of believers, or that holy energy and activity, which results from that communion of the spirit of Christ which commences in grace, and terminates in glory, is oftentimes hid from themselves. It is impossible to attain to an adequate knowledge of the manner in which the Holy Ghost infuses this divine principle into their souls. The wind bloweth where it listeth, we hear the sound thereof, but we cannot tell from whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit. || How mysterious and inexplicable are the effects of this divine energy whereby, believers are oftentimes filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. †

The life of believers is hid from the view of the world: For as Christ who is their life, is not seen by the world, so neither doth the world know how they live in Christ, and Christ in them. And as the life of believers is hid in point of secrecy in a great measure from themselves, and with regard to the world an entire secret; so it is hid with Christ in God, in point of security and safety. The life of God's children like a precious treasure, is laid up in a secret place, where the evil spirit cannot reach it, nor take it away, either by open force, or secret stratagem. The Devil, the world, and the flesh, may consult, but consult in vain against God's hidden ones. ‡ Their life is hid with Christ, to whose care and custody it is committed; and who but he is able to keep that good thing which is committed to him against that day. § Our life is hid with Christ in God, i. e. it is contained in the decree and love purpose of God, who, in his own time will make it manifest for what end he loved us in Christ. The bosom of God is the sacred repository, and the secure asylum in which that precious treasure is hid. Is it possible, think you *Superbus*, that the life of a believer can be lost when thus secured with Christ in God?

It may also be noticed here, that the same spirit who is the author of eternal life to believers, is also the seal wherewith they are sealed,

|| John iii. 5.
‡ Psal. lxxxiii. 3.

† 1 Pet. i. 5.
§ 2 Tim. i. 12.

sealed, and that to the day of redemption. To seal any thing consists in leaving the impresson of the image which is on the seal upon the thing sealed, in order for the greater confirmation of the contents. This sealing of believers unto the day of redemption, consists in the effectual communication of that divine light, purity, holiness and righteousness, goodness, blessedness, and joy; which in part are to be found in all believers, of which the first lines are drawn in regeneration; and in this consists the writing on the heart by the Holy Spirit. "Ye are our epistle, (says the Apostle Paul) written, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God." And after faith reaches to more strength and stability, after it comes to be more energetic and operative, all these things come to be more strengthened, increased, and more deeply imprinted by the Holy Ghost; and in this deeper impresson consists the sealing of believers, by the view and sense of which, they come to the full assurance of faith that they are the children of God.

Now is not this sealing of the spirit an indubitable evidence that the believer shall never be shaken, but shall persevere unto the end? Therefore we find the Apostle with good reason joins their establishment in the faith with this sealing. "He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us is God; who hath also sealed us." The almost incredible goodness of God here appears; he not only promises the believer that he will not depart from him, but will so order it, that he shall never depart from him; and this he not only ratifies and inviolably confirms by his sacred promise and oath, but with his own finger engraves these promises on the hearts of all believers, to confirm his faith in this important and consolatory doctrine.

The Holy Ghost not only seals believers to the day of redemption, but is also an earnest of their inheritance. Eph. i. 14. Which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. Now, you know that an earnest is a part of the price given before hand, and an assurance that the rest shall in due time follow. Those gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost which were already mentioned, are a part of the future happiness of all believers, and a certain and sure token, that in some future period, they shall obtain the whole sum. That inheritance of which the spirit is an earnest, is called the inheritance of the children of God, because it is perpetual, and can never be alienated from the possessors. Whoever has it, has it continually from the very first moment of possession in regeneration, through all the ages of eternity.—Therefore it may safely be concluded, that they who have once received the Holy Ghost, cannot possibly make ship-wreck of their faith, nor forfeit

the

the heavenly inheritance; because in this case the Holy Ghost behoved to be a fallacious earnest, which would be the height of blasphemy once to suppose.

I shall have done *Superbus* by adding one argument more, taken from the end for which God created believers anew in Christ Jesus; which certainly must be to glorify God, and to be glorified with God: Now, neither of these can possibly be attained by believers without their persevering in a state of grace unto the end; not the former, for there can be nothing so provoking to the eyes of God's glory as apostacy and back-sliding; neither the latter, for it is he only that endureth to the end that shall be saved. If the doctrine of non-perseverance were true, the great God would be frustrated in his great design of creating sinners after his own image for his glory, and for glorifying them with himself in the regions above. That this was the very end which an infinitely wise God had in his view is evident from the holy Scriptures. Isaiah xliii. 7. I created him for my glory. v. 21. This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise. Observe also the language of Paul on this head, 2 Cor. v. where speaking of that celestial building prepared for believers, he informs us, that they were wrought for that self same thing. God therefore in our regeneration had this in his view that we might not only be capacitated to show forth his glory here, but be put in the possession of it hereafter. Now if God intended this, it is hard to conceive how believers can miscarry, or God be frustrated of his scope and design. God's being the author of this great and gracious work, lays the most firm basis for the faith of all believers to rest upon, that they shall be carried forward to perfection; that he who hath begun the good work in them will carry it on to the day of Christ. Far be it from us to imagine that the great God is like some ignorant, rash, or fallible agent, which may be surpris'd by some unlooked for accident, circumvented by a sublimer understanding, over-born by a superior power, or recede from his purpose through levity or fickleness of nature. No, "he is wise in heart, and mighty in strength." He had eternity before him to plan his designs, and these he laid so surely, that they never can miscarry. "He declareth the end from the beginning" It is therefore impossible for him either to do, or suffer to be done, any thing whereby his counsel can be frustrated. But,

This is further confirmed by this compendious promise, Jer. xxxi. 33. I will be their God, and they shall be my people: And upon the footing of this every believer may adopt this confident language; "this God is our God for ever and ever, and he will be our guide 'over death.'"—You see here God's fixed resolution,

resolution, "I will be your God," without any limitation of time or circumstances; q. d. though other *lords* have had the dominion over you, and although there still exists a propensity in your natures to backslide; I will heal your backslidings, and remain your God for ever and ever. I will carry towards you as becomes a God to do, and by my grace will form you, and preserve you such a people as becomes God to own: After creating you for my glory, I will never be ashamed to be called your God.

Now my dear *Superbus*, I would be very far from pressing you to an implicit belief of what I have just now advanced. But I hope, that if there has been any thing advanced which you think repugnant to the holy Scriptures, you will be so candid as to speak your mind freely; or, if you have any objections to the doctrine which I have been endeavouring from the word of God to establish, I could wish that without any reserve, you would propose them. You must certainly acknowledge, that in views of eternity, there is an absolute necessity for some sure ground to walk upon, when passing through the dark valley and shadow of death.

"*Philemon*, I acknowledge that, both in point of safety and comfort we should have some sure foundation to rest upon in that critical and awful period of our dissolution. To be tossed about with every wind of doctrine, or trusting the salvation of our souls to such ways and means as God never instituted, is a most dangerous, and uncomfortable state to enter the lists with the king of terrors, or appear before an impartial tribunal.—But to save time, I would ask you, whether doth not the doctrine of the Saints perseverance open a door to profaneness and carnal security. I am of the opinion, that that system of doctrine, however specious it may appear, and however attracting, yet, if it in the least degree tends to encourage licentiousness cannot be of God."

Superbus, I perfectly coincide with your conclusion, I cordially adopt your sentiment. But I hope to make it appear that the doctrine of the final perseverance of the Saints has the very contrary tendency. I hope you will agree with me in this point, that this doctrine is highly conducive to the comfort and consolation of believers providing it is true. This being granted then, I answer, that nothing can be effectual for promoting the comfort and consolation of a Saint, which, at the same time, is not as effectual for securing the interests of holiness.—My reason for saying so is this; that in all the comforts and consolations which a believer is made a sharer of here, there is still a demonstration of the unbounded love of God towards him as a wretched forlorn
sinner;

finer; a sinner anxious and solicitous about the eternal salvation of his soul; and the clearer the demonstration of that divine love is, and the more particular the application, the stronger is the consolation. Let therefore moralists, or high soaring hypocrites pretend to what they please, there cannot possibly be a more powerful argument to inflame the heart with love to God, than the experimental knowledge and sense of the love of God shed abroad in the heart. Whoever therefore most amplifies the powerful grace of God in his consolation, presents to the Saints the most powerful argument, and the most invincible motives to the love of God and its consequences — Your objection deserves no quarter; because it reflects the greatest dishonour on the goodness and faithfulness of God. Why, the very language of it is, “that God had given his people a scorpion instead of a fish.” Would not this be in fact the case, if he by giving them absolute promises, (such as I have already taken notice of) would prove an indulgence to the flesh? But *Superbus*, would it not be necessary in order to make good your objection, to produce a few instances in which the doctrine of perseverance has proven fatal to the watchfulness and holy activity of the Saints. If you could but produce one, the truth of the doctrine at least might be suspected. But I might safely aver, that from the beginning of time to this present hour, there never existed, nor ever will, a genuine believer who reasoned after the following manner: “Because God hath absolutely promised that I shall persevere unto the end, and to keep me by his mighty power through faith unto salvation; therefore, there is no danger of my soul, although I should relax the reins of my diligence, give swing to my predominant corruptions, and restrain prayer before God.” I say such an instance cannot be found. — But I might muster up a great cloud of witnesses to corroborate this comfortable truth that, the doctrine of final perseverance is a strong motive, and a most prevailing argument to all manner of holy activity and diligence in our christian calling.

Let me present you with a specimen of the conduct of those holy men of God, who have obtained the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. See with what holy caution and circumspection they walk, behold them all attention to their every footstep, and that even when they are within sight of the goal, and in the full assurance that they shall run so as to obtain. When Christ who is our life (says Paul) shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Take notice of his exhortation.

Mortify

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth. †—— We know says the beloved Apostle, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him. And what is the fruit of this knowledge? Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure. ‡—Observe again Paul's language to the Corinthians. For we know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. See the effect of this assurance. Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him. § I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty. Upon the footing of this absolute promise, the Apostle takes occasion to found an exhortation to all manner of gospel-holiness: Having therefore these promises, (dearly beloved) Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. vi. 18. chap. vii. 1. From what source did the knowledge of these men with regard to their final perseverance flow? From no other, than the absolute promise of God: For if God had not absolutely ascertained it by promise, that they had a building with God; that they should appear with him in glory; it would have been the highest presumption, and the most arrogant boldness to have talked at such a rate.

If an Angel was to descend from Heaven and announce to you that fifteen years were to be added to your days, as was the case with Hezekiah: Would you for this reason, refrain from food, and slight every mean for the preservation of your life? Did not God absolutely promise that he would save Jerusalem from the hand of the King of Assyria who then besieged it? Did they upon the footing of this promise, draw off their guards, and grow remiss and careless? No such a thing; common sense would teach them otherwise.—*My dear friend*, grace is a spark of that celestial fire which cannot survive out of its own element, nor can all waters under Heaven quench it. The true christian is a partaker of the divine nature, and so, loves and hates whatever God loves and hates. According to the measure of grace granted him, he will cleave to God in every state. “If he save me I will serve him, If he slay me yet will I trust in him.” In life and death, I will be the Lord's. This is the natural disposition of the new creature; it favours only the things which are of God: And the higher his assurance rises, the more he is aloft and above the allurements of all carnal gratifications.

“ I ask

† Coll. iii. 2, 5. † 1 John iii. 2, 3. § 2 Cor. v. 1, 9.

“ I ask *Philemon*, if the doctrine of final perseverance be true,
 “ how can the glory of the divine perfections be ascertained?
 “ Would it be for the glory and honour of an infinitely holy
 “ God to preserve the divine principle of grace in the heart of
 “ a sinner, notwithstanding a course of apostacy and backsliding?”

Superbus, I answer nothing has a greater tendency to illustrate the glory of the divine perfections than the preservation of his sinning people in a state of grace and salvation, notwithstanding of their daily failings; and their yielding to Satan's temptations, and the deceitful working of their own minds, in an unguarded hour: Yea, I dare affirm, that the contrary doctrine tends to obscure and cast a veil over all the perfections of the divine nature.

Is not the Almighty power of God gloriously displayed when, notwithstanding all the power of our invisible foes, and the strength of inward corruption, he preserves that divine spark of grace, and at length makes “ worm Jacob thresh the mountains, and beat them small as the dust;” makes him ride triumphant over all the power of the enemy. When we proclaim the power and might of our spiritual foes, we can triumphantly celebrate our glorious guardian as *Almighty*.—Is not the faithfulness and veracity of God illustriously displayed when we maintain, that notwithstanding of the partial apostacy of his Saints, he will not deny himself, by breaking the word which has gone out of his mouth: That the promises of the new covenant ratified and confirmed to them, shall never be disannulled.—We also proclaim the goodness of the divine nature when we maintain, that God never will reject or disinherit his children after he has proclaimed “ ye are my people, and I will be your God.” The goodness of his nature will never permit to cast them out of his family, and from all communion with himself; but if they forsake his law and walk not in the way of his commandments, then by his fatherly chastisements he graciously recovers them, and stirs them up again to renew their faith and repentance.

By asserting the final perseverance of the Saints, we at the same time assert and maintain the all-powerful advocacy of our Lord Jesus Christ within the veil; whereby having obtained an eternal inheritance for his people in glory, he is able by his continual intercession to preserve his weak and sinning people for that inheritance, notwithstanding of all the obstructions and difficulties which may occur in their way to that blessed land.

In a word, we by asserting the final perseverance of the Saints proclaim the all-efficacious power of the Holy Ghost, who, so preserves his mystical temple, that it can neither be destroyed, nor be
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made an habitation of impure spirits.—Now *Superbus*, the contrary doctrine tends to obscure the divine perfections, enervate the intercession of Jesus, and proclaims the impotency of the Holy Ghost, who for the prevalency of Satan, must desert his habitation.

“ I ask you again *Philemon* if one in whose heart this divine principle of faith is wrought cannot certainly love it; why is it necessary to caution believers to take heed lest they fall, and to look to themselves that they lose not the things which they have wrought?”

I answer *Superbus*, that a righteous man may fall, yea, the greatest Saints have stumbled and fallen; but the question is, did ever a righteous man fall into mischief? No, the righteous man may fall seven times a day, but as often doth he rise again; while the wicked fall into mischief. And why doth the righteous man rise again? Because the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. The Lord upholdeth all that fall, i. e. either to support them when falling, or to order the matter so, that they shall triumphantly rise again. The greatest Saints that we have on record in Scripture fell, and fell into the most grievous sins, and the most heinous transgressions; but can we say, or have we any warrant to say, that they fell from a state of grace, into a state of condemnation? There are a variety of weighty considerations to move a true believer to take heed to his ways, and ponder his paths, to prevent him from falling, without supposing his final apostacy: As the danger of breaking a man's bones is ground sufficient for care and watchfulness, although he were sure that his neck should be safe. The dishonour done to his heavenly Father, the reproach cast upon his dear Redeemer, the grieving and vexing the Holy Ghost, the scandalizing the good ways of God, casting a stumbling before the weak, strengthening the hands of the wicked; in a word, interrupting the believer's communion and peace with God; these considerations I say will have their due weight and influence on him to take heed to his ways lest he fall, without supposing him to fall from a state of grace into damnation.—Let me here further observe, that God brings about his purposes of grace with reference to believers by means, of which cautions to watchfulness are a part; and by which he preserves his Saints from the evil cautioned against. I shall illustrate this from 1 John ii. 28. where the Apostle exhorts believers to abide in Christ, whom certain professors had relinquished, v. 19. And, as purposely intending to obviate this objection, he tells them, that they shall abide in him, v. 27. using this as an argument and motive to excite them to a conscientious and careful performance of their duty.—As for the other Scripture

ture you advanced, viz. look to ourselves that we lose not the things which we have wrought; I answer thus, that believers have more to lose than their souls. May they not for a season lose the comfort and feeling sense of the safety of their state? This is evident from the case of *David*, *Heman*, and others. This a man may lose without losing his soul. “But *Philemon*, are we not expressly told in Ezekiel, chap. xviii v. 24. that a righteous man may turn from his righteousness and certainly die? But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: In his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Now is it not evident from this that a righteous man may not only lose his righteousness, but turn so abandoned as to be positively guilty of all the deeds of the wicked, and consequently lose his soul at length; for are we not positively told that he shall die?”

Permit me to observe to you *Superbus*, that there is a twofold righteousness, a moral and an evangelical righteousness; the former may be lost, but not the latter. The former Paul had in an eminent degree, “for as touching the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless;” this you know he abandoned and gave up with as the ground of his justification before God, for that righteousness which is of God by faith. †——This righteousness a man may have, and yet lose, from the paths of morality he may turn, and run into all manner of vice and impiety, and everlastingly perish: And even this a man may retain to the last, and yet at the last perish; for this reason, it is not the righteousness which is of God by faith, the only ground of a sinner’s justification in the sight of God. How often have we seen men of seemingly virtuous characters, and who have made at the same time a most flaming profession, turn entirely profligate, and trampling under their feet the laws both of God and man.

But besides this, there is an evangelical righteousness; and this is either imputed or inherent; which, whoever are possessed of can never lose, nor finally perish. The former consists in the obedience and sufferings of the Lord of Glory imputed to the sinner, and received by faith alone. “Their righteousness is of me saith the Lord.” “Surely shall one say in Jehovah have I righteousness.” There is also an inherent righteousness, consisting in the communication of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, by which we are made partakers of the divine nature.

Now

Now these two are inseparably conjoined, and can by no means be lost. Whom God justifies, he also sanctifies, and whom he sanctifies he will assuredly glorify. — The righteousness spoken of in the afore-cited text consisted in an external conformity to the moral law; and this was the condition upon which the Jews possessed the land of Canaan with the promise of long life and prosperity. If they turned from this, or in the words of the text, if they lost this righteousness, they run directly into a forfeiture both of life and property.

But to be a little more particular here *Superbus*, as you seem to lay a great stress on the text you last cited; you are to take notice that you will find a key for opening up and explaining the whole chapter in v. 2. What mean ye, (saith God) that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? The plain meaning of this proverb when stripped of its figurative dress is this, a complaint that their fathers had sinned, and they were made to bear their iniquities. From hence they concluded the injustice of the Lord's procedure with them; v. 25. yet ye say the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now O house of Israel, is not my way equal; v. 29. Yet saith the house of Israel, the way of the Lord is not equal. That generation entertained a very flattering opinion of their own righteousness, they could not see in a consistency with the justice of God, how he shou'd take such exemplary vengeance on them as to give them into the hands of their enemies, except it was for the sins of their fathers. — The Lord shows them in order to convince them of the rectitude of his procedure, that whatever their fathers did, or whatever enormities they had been guilty of, if they had not followed their footsteps, but had done that which was lawful and right, no enemy should have entered into the land which the Lord gave them for a possession, their souls should have lived, their temple should not have been laid in ashes, nor their country depopulated. Hear the Lord's reasoning on this head with that sinful people; v. 5. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right. — v. 6. And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman; v. 8. And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, &c. — He is just; he shall surely live saith the Lord. Now upon the footing of this righteousness the Lord promises long life and prosperity in the land which he gave them to possess: And also that this righteousness might be lost is clear from v. 24.

But

But when the righteous, (namely such a one as was just now described) turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: In his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.

Permit me to observe here *Superbus*, that both the threatening of death, and the promise of life upon the footing of their obedience or disobedience was purely of a temporal nature. God doth not here prescribe and lay down the conditions upon which their souls were to be saved, but how their lives were to be prolonged. I imagine, that the righteousness of *Paul* in his unconverted state was in breadth and length equal to that here prescribed, as the condition of temporal (not eternal) life. Yet I presume you will not be so bold as to maintain that that righteousness would have been sustained valid by the justice of God to deliver him from condemnation, and ascertain his title to eternal life. Or, if the righteousness here mentioned was fully sufficient to procure eternal life; I might ask, why was Christ promised, or why did he come? Why did he live a sorrowful life, and die an accursed death *for us*?

Again I might observe here, that the *death* and *life* mentioned in this chapter are used to signify the external dispensations of God's providence as to what concerned the good or evil which he would bring upon his people in consequence of their obedience or disobedience to his word: This I think will evidently appear by consulting the 28, 29, and 30 chapters of Deut. In these chapters you will find that after Moses had promised the greatest worldly felicity and happiness in the land which the Lord was to give them for a possession, if they would obey the voice of the Lord: And also at the same time had threatened them with the most dismal calamities in consequence of their disobedience; he adds, chap. xxx. v. 15. See I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; v. 16. In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments that thou mayest live and multiply: And the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it; v. 17. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other Gods, and serve them; v. 18. I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordon, to go to possess it. Upon the whole we may learn that the temporal felicity of the Jews was suspended upon their moral righteousness; and in case of a failure

lure here, or in case of backsliding and apostacy from that righteousness, nothing but an awful scene of the most dismal calamities and miseries, and even temporal death was to be the consequence. And observe *Superbus*, there is no more either threatened or promised in this chapter now under consideration: And no other righteousness spoken of here, but what any may be possessed of, and yet may lose, and eventually perish. That that righteousness which is the ground of eternal life, is not suspended upon any act of the creature, I have (you know) elsewhere proven: And because it is not so, it cannot be lost. Nothing I think but the most unbounded attachment to a party; and the most inveterate prejudice to a favourite system could tempt any one to explain the terms *life* and *death*, of eternal life and death, and suspend the ground and rea'on of our possessing eternal life upon the footing of the moral righteousness of the sinful creature. I am sure *Superbus*, you would not wish that your title to eternal life was suspended upon such a precarious footing. If, by the performance of the duties here mentioned was to give us a claim to eternal life, then let us blot the name of *Jesus* out of the sacred records: Let us no longer rejoice in him as Jehovah our righteousness: Let us no longer glory in that endearing name, Saviour: But rather let us glory in this, (instead of glorying in Christ's cross) that by the deeds of the law we shall be saved.

We are here told that if the righteous turn from his righteousness he shall surely die. Are we not told of many of Christ's Disciples who forsook him, of others who concerning the faith made shipwreck; also of *Simon Magus* who once believed, and yet afterwards was found in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Allow me to observe here *Superbus*, that the term faith is very often taken in the New Testament for an external profession of the faith. Gal. i. 33. But they had heard only that he which had persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the *faith* which once he destroyed. There has been nothing more common in all periods of the church than for hypocrites and formal professors to make shipwreck of the faith, i. e. of their profession of it: And for Christ's reputed Disciples to forsake him, when a strict adherence to their profession would expose them to persecution; or run counter to their deep-rooted prejudices; or thwart their carnal schemes, and prove detrimental to their secular interests. But,

There is all the difference in the world between a hypocrite's abandoning his profession, and a real believer losing his faith. They went out from us, (says the beloved Disciple) but they were not of us: For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: But they went out, that they might be
made

made manifest that they were not all of us. † This intimates that these Apostates once made a joint profession of religion along with the Apostles, and other real believers, for (says he) they went out from us. But because they had no more than a bare profession of religion, they easily, and soon abandoned it. For if they had been possessed of the same faith with these genuine christian believers, they would have continued with them. They had nothing to lose, but what might be easily lost: They wanted that divine principle of faith which could only strengthen and establish their hearts in the truth as it is in Jesus.

How often are many weak, but real christians non-plussed when they behold some, who in respect of knowledge, zeal and forwardness in their profession far out-stripped them, yea, were the head and shoulders above them; and yet after all turned their back on their profession, and apostatized from the truth.—Let weak believers consider, that the seed sown among thorns was easily, and soon choked; and that sown in stony places, grew up fast, but was soon scorched.—There is no danger of Christ's Disciples being left to forsake him, or make ship-wreck of faith and a good conscience. Indeed, all things considered, it is a wonder how hypocrites hold out so long as oftentimes we see they do: There is so little in religion externally considered, to attract the attention, or command the affections of any, but a genuine believer.

Happy my dear friend is it for real christians, who constantly experience so great a proneness to backslide, that the safety of their eternal state doth not depend on their frames, or conduct, but on that *foundation* which stands stable and sure. And notwithstanding of the awful apostacy of some, perhaps eminent professors, “the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them who are his.” They shall be as assuredly kept as the seven thousand in Israel from bowing the knee to Baal. Would it not be exceeding little comfort for a believer to hear of a foundation, a sure foundation laid in Zion for them to build on for eternal salvation; if after all, they might be blown off it; or it sink under them, and they perish in the gulph of endless misery?—Doth God take care for the brutal part of the creation? Doth he feed and clothe, and preserve them? And will he not much more by his grace and providence, see to the preservation, and eternal well-being of those holy and humble souls, who have fled for refuge to the hope set before them? Will he not preserve them through faith unto complete and eternal salvation, who have committed this important trust into his hand? Let the fowler use his utmost endeavour, let him exert all his strength

strength and skill, yet not a sparrow shall fall to the ground, without the will of our heavenly Father. The same all-over-ruling providence which determines that such a sparrow shall not fall; determines also to prevent that which might cause it fall: And therefore, either the fowler shall not find it, or the sparrow shall discern his approach and make his escape; or if he shoot and wound, he shall not kill. Observe the language of the royal Psalmist on this head, thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: But (he adds) my Lord helped me. † An inspired prophet uses the same confident language: Rejoice not against me O mine enemy, though I fall, I shall arise again; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. ‡

What a comfortable reflection my dear friend, in views of encountering the king of terrors, in walking through the dark valley and shadow of death, to be assured that he who hath begun the good work, will also finish it. “ He hath made, and he will bear.” He will guide his people with his counsel, and will assuredly bring them to glory. Nothing shall ever be able to separate them from the love of God; or cause him to change his love, break his covenant, or violate his oath.—Happy art thou O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places. §

Onesimus, I have just to add, that a line came to my hand requesting my returning home without delay; this broke up our conversation for the present. Accordingly, I with reluctance left my dying friend for the present; but engaged, (God willing) to return the next day. What conversation may take place in our next interview, I shall not fail in communicating to you — In the mean time, that my *Onesimus* may be preserved by the power of God through faith unto salvation, is the earnest wish, and fervent prayer of his

PHILEMON.

L E T.

† Psal. cxviii. 13. ‡ Micah vii. 8. § Deut. xxxiii. 29.



L E T T E R XIV.

P H I L E M O N T O O N E S I M U S.

Dear Onesimus,

YOUR kind favour came safe to my hand: And I have now to inform you, that according to my promise I waited on my dying friend, on the day I had fixed.—He is exceedingly weak; the clay-tabernacle is fast mouldering down to its primitive earth. “Dust thou art, and to the dust thou shalt return,” is among the first lessons taught our first parents immediately after their fatal revolt from their gracious sovereign; and through all succeeding ages death hath passed upon all their natural offspring because they all, by representation, and in their own persons have sinned.—*Superbus* is quite sensible that in a few days he must sleep in the dust, from whence he shall not return, until the Heavens be no more.—O! may he sleep in Jesus. O! may that cold and silent grave prove a bed of rest to his wearied, and emaciated body. May his precious and immortal soul be carried by the Angels into the celestial paradise, and enrolled among the number of the Spirits of just men made perfect.—After insinuating a little on the nature and prevalence of his disorder, and the impossibility of his holding out much longer, considering the debilitated state of his frame, and rapid growth of the disease; he addressed me after the following manner:

“ My dear *Philemon*, you have removed all my doubts; and
 “ as an instrument in the hand of a kind and gracious providence, have poured day-light into my darkened and benighted mind, respecting this important, and self-interesting question, how a man is to be justified in the sight of an infinitely
 “ holy and just God; and in the issue obtain the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul —I cheerfully acquiesce in;
 “ and cordially embrace this gracious and benign device of
 “ Heaven, in bringing many sons and daughters to glory by
 “ the propitiatory and vicarious obedience of the Captain of our
 “ salvation. My heart’s desire and prayer to God is, that my
 “ sins may be pardoned, my person and services accepted upon
 “ the sole footing of the sinless and perfect obedience, and most
 “ exquisite

“ exquisite sufferings of the one Mediator.—“ God forbid
 “ that I should glory in any thing else, save in the cross of our
 “ Lord Jesus Christ.” My sole confidence is in “ Jehovah my
 “ righteousness and my strength.” Since I have seen the glory
 “ of his person, and the perfection of his atonement, “ the
 “ shadow of death is turned into the morning ” I now no long-
 “ er view the last enemy armed in all his horror ; nor the grave,
 “ that irksome dreary place, as I once did. I can triumphantly
 “ sing, “ O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy
 “ victory.” “ I know that my Redeemer liveth:” And that
 “ he shall ransom me from the power of the grave, and will re-
 “ deem me from death.

“ Ever since the commencement of our acquaintance, you
 “ have expressed a more than ordinary concern about the eter-
 “ nal interests of my soul ; you have followed me with your sa-
 “ lutory instructions, and friendly advice, almost to the very
 “ brink of the grave.—I hope, while this fluttering soul con-
 “ tinues in this clay-tabernacle you will not supercede your
 “ constant attendance, nor remit your usual diligence in in-
 “ structing, comforting, and strengthening my mind in the good
 “ ways of God.—There is yet one article, concerning which
 “ I would wish for further information ; I mean Christ’s *supr me*
 “ Deity. You know, that you have all along rather taken this
 “ for granted than directly proven it. This I desire, not that I
 “ am in any hesitation about the doctrine ; but I wish to have
 “ some objections which I have heard raised against it, answer-
 “ ed ; and the truth of it from Scripture elucidated : And if my
 “ strength permit, I will fairly propose the objections, and I
 “ hope you will be as candid and ingenuous, as to give a fair
 “ and an impartial solution.”

My dear friend, you may believe me, that I would think it my
 honour as well as my duty, to be the happy instrument of contrib-
 uting in the least degree to the confirmation of your faith and
 belief in this, or any other article of our holy religion ; and par-
 ticularly such as have an immediate connexion with, and a par-
 ticular influence in the eternal salvation of our souls.

“ *Philemon*, I have often heard it said that the doctrine of
 “ Christ’s supreme deity, is rather of the speculative than practi-
 “ cal kind : And that it is so exceedingly difficult and obscure,
 “ that the generality of men cannot understand the terms in
 “ which it is expressed ; and therefore, that it would be far bet-
 “ ter not to intermeddle in it, nor insist upon it : And indeed to
 “ acknowledge the truth, this in a great measure hindered me
 “ from pursuing this subject with that carefulness and diligence
 “ which

“ which I should have done, and the nature of the subject required.”

Superbus, I apprehend none will look upon this article of our faith to be a matter of little or no consequence, nor applaud those wise and prudent men, who upon all occasions industriously shift the theme, but such, who are indifferent about vital religion and real godliness, in any point of view: And should the unmeaning cavils of persons of such a stamp deter you, or any one from making a scriptural inquiry into the constitution of the Mediator, the Saviour, “ by whose stripes we are healed;” and through whose sufferings we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins? But granting this article was a point purely speculative, if it be a divine truth, and capable of being proven from the holy Scriptures, you, and every one else must agree with me in this, that it ought to be believed, and if God requires our assent even to a merely speculative doctrine, he has reason for it; and in this case, how dare any be so bold and presumptuous as contradict him.—But besides this, the assertion is not true; the supreme deity of Christ is by no means a matter of mere theory, but in a great measure practical. Did the Eternal Son of God assume human nature with a view to deliver from the guilt, and cleanse from the pollution of sin; and doth not the consideration of this tend to practise? Doth it not show clearly as in a glass, the exceeding evil and malignity of sin, which made such a propitiation necessary? This it doth beyond any other argument whatever. If ever you would wish to obtain a view of sin in all its enormity and baseness, you must repair to mount Calvary, and there behold the Son of God suffering, bleeding, and dying for its expiation? And if ever we would raise in our own souls, or infuse into the minds of our fellow-sinners, a just indignation against this vile and abominable thing, we must look to Jesus who endured the cross, and despised the shame, to put an end to sin, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness.—Viewing sin in this glass, and through this medium, will, you may credit me, be infinitely more efficacious for the destruction of sin in our souls, than all the thunders from Sinai’s flaming mount; or the collected examples from those who are reckoned virtuous heathens; yea, than from all the examples of the most pious and holy men recorded in the divine oracles. What is the reason that iniquity of every kind is rearing up its accursed forehead without a blush? This is one great and principal reason, the denial of Christ’s divinity, and of consequence, his propitiatory and vicarious sufferings: And hence the main and most efficacious argument for all manner of holiness of life and conversation, is lost in the rubbish of doctrines little superior, and of as little value

value to answer the purpose of universal holiness, as heathen morality. But,

That the doctrine of Christ's supreme deity is not purely matter of theory, but in a great measure practical will appear, and in connexion with what was just now observed; that if there was such a malignity in sin that nothing else, and nothing less, than the sufferings of Christ could expiate; it teaches us also at the same time, that if we do not lay hold on this redemption we are lost for ever, because it is impossible there should be any greater. How hazardous a venture must they run, who depreciate his glorious dignity, and thus undermine in as far as possibly they can that foundation which God hath laid in Zion, for sinners to build on for eternal salvation? How can they be secure of that life and immortality he hath brought to light by the gospel, while they renounce that faith which, according to that gospel is necessary to it? And how dismal and irretrievable must their disappointment be at the last, when they come to appear before his awful and dreadful tribunal, if after all, Christ should prove to be the most High God, and should reject them for rejecting him under that character now, contrary to his plain revelation of it, and of its vast importance to ourselves? Can it be a matter of pure theory, how we are to be saved? Whether by the infinite dignity and efficacy of the surety, or by the "filthy rags" of our own righteousness.—Let us suppose for once, that those who believe the divinity of Jesus expected more from him, and his righteousness than what he will really answer; yet still they have as much from him as they who expected less than they did: And they have moreover the same personal righteousness to trust in, as well as others have. And undoubtedly it will be no blemish in their righteousness, nor any bar to its acceptance, that it is overlaid with so much humility, as to make them own it to be wholly of God, and utterly renounce all trust and confidence in it. But if it should prove at the great day of accounts, that salvation becomes ours no otherwise than through the infinitely perfect righteousness of the Saviour God and man; what a dangerous case must they be in, who have never received or trusted in him as such, and will never have the benefit of his atonement and satisfaction to answer for them.—I think if men are not entirely lost to all sense of religion, and perfectly indifferent with regard to the present and future interest of their precious and immortal souls, they can never appear as advocates for the non-importance of this point, or reckon it a matter of mere indifference whether Christ the Mediator appear to them in the character of the *true God*, or only a creature.

But

But further, will it not appear that this point is by no means a matter of mere theory, when we take into the account the religious worship that is paid to Christ. It is to be expected that the generality of christians are not so far lost to all sense of religion as to restrain prayer before God: To such who are habitually guilty of a neglect of this part of religious worship, it will be a matter of no great moment, whether they consider the Mediator to be God equal with the Eternal Father, or a creature formed by his Almighty hand. I say then if the Son, (and I may add here) the Holy Ghost be God; ought they not to be honoured, adored, prayed to, and glorified as such? If they be not God, ought they to be honoured, adored, prayed to, and glorified as such? If they be not, the believers of this doctrine are in the strict sense of the word idolators, because they worship an object which is not by nature God. Again, if they be God, the opposers of this system, and oppugners of this doctrine are blasphemers. Nay all the *Arians*, and those of the *Socinians*, who pay divine honours to Christ, (for they are divided on that point) are in a most miserable dilemma upon this subject. If Christ the Mediator be God; they are guilty of blasphemy for denying his divinity: If he be not God, they are idolators for worshipping a creature: And if the true worship of God, and idolatry, recognizing him on the one hand, and blaspheming on the other, be not practical points, I freely acknowledge I know not what are. But I shall explain myself more fully to you on this head in its proper place.

I shall just add here, that that can be no purely speculative point in which our faith is so much concerned. Is it a matter of no moment whether our faith be fixed on the Saviour as “the true God, and eternal life,” or only as a *made God*, or a *mere creature*? I maintain that without a true faith, there can be no true christian practise. The adversaries of Christ's supreme deity value themselves upon their high encomiums of morality, or a good life; as if none but they had any regard to it. But alas! do they not inculcate christian practise, while they deny the christian faith? What, to secure the superstructure, by undermining, and digging up the foundation! Doth it not appear evidently throughout the whole of the New Testament, that a right faith is as necessary to salvation, as a right practise? Nay, that without the former, there cannot be the latter: Or, (if you please) in a large sense, practise includes faith. And I presume, if we carefully consult the same Scriptures of truth, we will find that the best of our morality is unavailable without the merits of Jesus Christ: And that the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus cannot be of any service to us, unless we have a true faith in him.

him; and that we cannot have a true faith in him, unless we believe him to be the *true and Eternal God*, as I shall show you afterwards.

As to the other prejudice you mentioned against treating on this subject, viz. that it is exceeding difficult, and even unintelligible, especially to the unlearned and common people.—I have already shown you, that the doctrine is important, and shall endeavour afterwards to show that it is true: And certainly that which is important, and capable of being proven to be true, can never be so difficult as to be incapable of being understood. It is very true, that the most learned will never be able to comprehend the mystery; but even the unlearned, and the common people are capable of apprehending enough to yield the obedience of faith to the article: And indeed the doctrine of the Trinity is as intelligible as the doctrine of God's omniscience, omnipresence, eternity, simplicity, and self-existence. Is not the whole nature of God infinitely beyond the grasp of the most enlarged capacity? And yet we all profess our faith and belief in this ever-glorious, and first cause. How sublime and mysterious is the doctrine! A being which neither made itself, nor was made by any other; a first cause, without a beginning; infinite without extension; in every place, yet circumscribed in no place; eternally and perpetually existing, without any succession of time; a present, without past or future! &c.

“*Philemon*, I would wish to know what are the particular tenets which the *Socinians* and *Arians* hold.”—It would be a very difficult task *Superbus*, to point out the various antisciptural positions which are scattered here and there in their writings; and perhaps it would be very unfair to charge the *Socinians* in gross with all the absurd tenets maintained by some of them. The *Socinians* according to a very eminent writer † maintain a plurality of Gods; (this I will show you afterwards) they undermine the authority of the Holy Scripture. They deny not only the imputation, but the contagion and corruption of original sin; the satisfaction of Christ; the eternity of future punishments, nay the certainty of any future punishment at all. They maintain that God is not angry with men for their sins; and that Jesus Christ did not come into the world to redeem it. They advance human reason above divine revelation; and affirm that nothing is to be admitted into religion as the object of our belief which exceeds the reach of our understanding. They teach that God is not infinite in his essence, but confined to the Heavens: That he is not omniscient, but limited in his knowledge; particularly,
that

† Dr. Edward's preservative against Socinianism.

that he is ignorant of future events. They moreover teach us, that God is mutable, or subject to change; that he has the same passions as we have; and finally, that he is material, or made up of bodily parts.—These positions are certainly as absurd as they are impious; and as contrary to reason, as they are to revelation. As for the *Arians*, they agree with the *Socinians* in degrading the Son of God to the rank of a creature: Although they differ in this, that the former look upon him as the first, and most excellent creature the Almighty formed; whereas the latter maintain that he never existed prior to his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary. *Arians* join hands with *Socinians*, in denying the infinite merit and atonement of Jesus; and consequently if ever we are saved, we must be our own *Saviours*. They are both unanimous in this, that the death of Christ was neither propitiatory, nor vicarious. *Arians* tell us that the Holy Ghost is the creature of the Son, and subservient to him in the work of the creation: While some of the *Socinians* deny his personality altogether, and look upon him only as the power and wisdom of God. *Arians* look upon the Holy Ghost to be a person chief of the heavenly Spirits, prime minister of God and Christ; and deny that he is to be worshipped, glorified, or prayed to. † They teach us that our Saviour's eternal generation is a mere romance, the contrivance of some idle trifling person who had little else to do, but to invent such incredible and absurd notions.—I may just add here, that it is even shocking to the human mind to consider the impious and abominable practices of the *Arian Bishops*, when that faction was countenanced by the secular power: Especially *Eusebius of Nicomedia*, and *George of Alexandria*. How was that excellent and pious man *Athanasius* calumniated, and persecuted by them: Banished, and hunted from place to place; accused of the most horrid crimes, treason, murder, magic, &c. But all these accusations were disproven by such clear and incontestable evidence, that even their malice and power made his innocence and virtue shine the brighter; particularly, as to the charge of murder the person upon whom it was pretended to have been committed being produced alive in open court. ‡ At that period, and in main-
tenance

† See the Athanasian Creed analyzed and refuted.—Also Mr. Charles Leslie on the Socinian controversy. Dial. 4.

‡ Upon the appearance of *Arsenius*, (the person supposed to have been murdered, and whose hand he had cut off) *Athanasius* addressed the court thus: Gentlemen, *Arsenius* you see has both his hands, but,
where

tenance and defence of that heresy, christian blood was spilt like water, by *Arians*, *Heathens* and *Jews*, acting in conjunction: Yea, great numbers of all ages, and both sexes, were massacred and butchered by them, even in the churches, and in time of divine service. The Arian persecution against the Orthodox, was as bloody, if not more so, than ever any of the heathen persecutions had been.

“ Can you inform me *Philemon*, of the circumstances of *Arius*’ death; I have often heard, that he died in an extraordinary manner.”

He did *Superbus*, in such a particular and extraordinary manner that I think without breach of charity, it may be affirmed that the immediate hand, and just judgment of God, were visible in it: And that the God to whom vengeance, and the vindication of the true religion belong, did by the death of this man declare his abhorrence of the heresy. It was when he was in the very height of his prosperity and greatness, that he met with his tragical end. *Alexander* Bishop of *Constantinople* received an express order from the Emperor to receive *Arius* into communion; the Bishop absolutely refused to obey the command; and shutting himself up in the church the night before, prostrated himself at the altar, implored Almighty God to take the matter into his own hand. || The next morning *Arius* going to the church attended by his followers in great pomp and triumph, was upon a necessity of nature forced to turn aside out of his way, where his spirits suddenly failing him, the fate of treacherous *Judas* became his portion, he fell head-long and burst asunder in the midst, and immediately expired. His friends all the while impatiently expected his return; and staying longer than they thought he should, some went to call him, and *Eusebius* more forward than the rest, reproached his backwardness and neglect both of himself, and his friends; but hearing no answer, they went in and found him

where the third hand that was cut off, I leave my accusers to discover. See Dr. Cave’s life of *Athanasius*.

|| Dr. Cave gives the form of prayer used on this occasion by the Bishop which was to the following purpose; “ if, Lord, thou permittest *Arius* to communicate to-morrow, suffer me thy servant to depart, and destroy not the righteous with the wicked. But if thou sparest thy church, as I know thou wilt, have respect to the threatnings of the *Eusebian* party, and give not over thine heritage to ruin and reproach. Take *Arius* out of the way, lest entering into the church, heresy enter in with him; and hereafter piety and impiety be accounted both alike.” Thus he prayed, and Heaven heard his prayer, and signed a warrant for the execution.

him wallowing in his own filth and blood. Nor is it to be wondered, (as one remarks, †) that he who denied our Saviour as to his divine nature, should not feel a less heavy punishment than he who betrayed him in his human.

“ Can you inform me *Philemon* of the lineage and pedigree of “ both these heresies.”

Yes *Superbus*, they may be both easily traced up to their fountain-head and true original — The *Socinians* had theirs from *Photinus*, as he had it from *Paul of Samoseta*. The heresy of *Arius* as I already told you is indeed different in some respects, although they agree in this, that they deny the Son, or second person of the Trinity to be consubstantial with the Father. *Carpocrates*, *Ebion*, *Cerintus*, and many more maintained this heresy, prior to any of these above-mentioned. And to what sect did these belong? Why, to the most wild, enthusiastical, lewd, and in all respects diabolical sect of the *Gnosticks*, who were the disciples of *Simon Magus*. Therefore to trace the pedigree of those heresies upwards to their original; they pass through *Socinus*, *Photinus*, and *Arius*, to *Paul of Samoseta*; from him to *Ebion*, *Cerintus*, *Carpocrates*, &c. and so on to *Simon* the forcerer the first broacher, and renowned father of heresy. ‡

Permit me now *Superbus*, to propose a few arguments in order to the further establishing of your mind in this important article of our holy religion — And the first that I shall mention is taken from that which is often ascribed to Christ in Scripture, the *Son*, the *only begotten Son* of God: And his being thus so called, I would conclude that he is consubstantial, or of the same essence with the Father. That he is the Son, the *only*, the *only begotten* Son of God cannot be denied. He that believeth on him, (are the words of our Saviour himself) is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he believeth not in the name of the *only begotten Son of God*. He that believeth not the *Son*, shall not see life. But 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. §

From these Scriptures we are taught this among other things, that this doctrine is not a purely speculative point. Eternal life

is

† Dr. Trapp's Sermons on the Trinity.

‡ Vide Hieron. Zanchius de tribus *Elohim*. Pag. 2.

§ John iii. 18. v. 36. Chap. xx. 31.

is referred to our believing in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Now, they who believe that his being called the Son, and the only begotten Son of God, because consubstantial with the Father, place their salvation in him as thus co-equal with him in all the essential perfections of deity: And that he in the fulness of time, assumed the human nature, and in that, obeyed, suffered and died; put an end to sin, and brought in an everlasting righteousness, imputable to all who believe for their justification. *Arians* again, they believe in his name for eternal life, as some super-angelic creature, the first of the handy-works of the Almighty. *Socinians* believe in him for eternal life, only as a *God by office*: And that so far from being Eternal, or first created, that he never existed until his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary.—What an immense difference between the faith of these believers! Upon what a different footing must they wear the crown in glory!

That Christ being called the *only begotten Son of God*, proves him to be God co-eternal, and co-equal with the Father in all the essential perfections of deity, from the import and propriety of the phrase itself;—and from all those places of Scripture in which the term *only begotten* is applied to him —Hear his own words on this head: “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him,” &c. Now if the term *only begotten Son* doth not imply much more than either the *Socinians* pretend, or will admit; yea, if it doth not imply Godhead in the strictest and highest sense, then the argument urged by our Lord and his Apostles, will be found to be inconclusive, and vain; and God by thus giving and sending his Son, showed more love to him, than to the world. I prove what I have just now advanced thus; if he who is called Christ is by the mere good pleasure of the Father so highly honoured, that after a short life of obedience and suffering here on earth, he is made a *God*, receives divine honours, not only from men, but from Angels, and Archangels, and universal empire and dominion over all creatures in Heaven and earth granted him. Do you not see *Superbus*, that according to this scheme, that God’s love to Christ rose far superior to his love to the world? To which I may also add, that for the same reason, that Christ’s love to a guilty world in coming to obey, and suffer in their stead doth not appear so very extraordinary, and doth not deserve the magnificent character it bears in Scripture; because, upon the *Socinian* and *Arian* hypothesis, he himself was the greatest gainer. It would have been indeed an act of great and undeserved love to have saved such vile and execrable sinners as we are, by any means becoming God’s infinite wisdom, justice and holiness: And
certainly

certainly that love would have commanded the highest admiration, and would have been deserving of our highest praise, in giving up to the death such an excellent creature as *Arians* suppose Christ to be: *if the death of such a creature could have purchased salvation.* But what would that love have been to the love of God, in freely giving up to the death such an infinitely great, and glorious person as his beloved and only begotten Son, who is consubstantial with himself. And if Christ had been merely a creature, however excellent, he might have got such glory and advantage to himself, by his humiliation and death, as would have made it infinitely worth his while, for his own interest's sake to be born, suffer, and die: He might have been a real gainer by a death from which he was to be raised to such degrees of glory and honour, as are the consequences of it. Therefore whatever encomiums the Scriptures pass on Christ's love to us, yet according to the *Arian* and *Socinian* scheme what he did and suffered was really for his own advantage, he was truly the gainer.—But let us consider Jesus in another point of view, as the true God, because the only begotten Son of God, and so infinitely glorious and blessed in himself, to which nothing can be added; and so he can get nothing by all that he hath done and suffered for us, or by all that we can do in return for his love; no real accession of glory, or advantage can by any means be made to him, who is exalted in himself “above all blessing and praise.” Upon this principle then, and this only, doth God's love to sinners in sending, and Christ's love in coming to do and suffer, appear transcendent and amazing, as it is every where in Scripture said to be: And upon this principle only, will the argument urged by our Lord and his Apostles setting forth the love of both the Father and the Son as non-such, be found conclusive.

Again, that his being the *only begotten Son of God* proves him to be consubstantial, or of the same nature and essence with the Father, will appear from the very import of the phrase itself. For he alone can be called the *only begotten Son* who is solely and singly the Son of his Father, has no co-partner in the Son-ship, no brother in that kind of filiation or Son-ship; and moreover who is a Son by nature, not by adoption, of the substance, and not by the choice, or mere good will of the Father: That this is the plain meaning of *only begotten* is evident of itself, and must be acknowledged by every one. I come then to prove, that Christ cannot be called the only begotten of the Father any otherwise, than by his divine and eternal generation from the Father.

That this title cannot belong to him as man, or a creature however excellent, will appear from these four considerations by which Christ as man is said to be eminently the Son of God;

and

and it will appear in the sequel, that by them he is not the *only begotten Son of God*.

1. He is eminently the Son of God as he was conceived by the Holy Ghost. But the first man *Adam*, was formed by the power of God without a Father, or Mother either; and is therefore expressly called the Son of God. † Now if Christ be no otherwise the Son of God than by *creation*, it will necessarily follow, that he cannot with propriety be called the only begotten Son of God, seeing he has *Adam* a co-partner in this kind of filiation or Son-ship.

2. He is the Son of God with respect to his extraordinary mission and office. But with regard to this, he is neither begotten, nor only begotten. In this sense he is a Son by grace, not by nature; and has as many brothers, as there were prophets sent with any special mission or mandate.

3. Neither is he the Son, the only begotten Son of God by virtue of his resurrection from the dead; for this reason, all good men who rise from the dead to a blessed and glorious immortality are stiled the Sons of God, as being children of the resurrection. ‡ Nor,

Lastly can he be called the only begotten Son of God upon the account of his being made sole Lord and heir of all things. He could not upon this account be called the Son of God at all, much less, the only begotten Son of God: For this reason, an heir, (as every one knows) is not necessarily the Son of him whose heir he is.

Now *Superbus*, is it not evident that in all the afore-mentioned respects, Christ is not neither can be the only begotten Son of God.—But concerning the two last of which respects, I may observe; that in all those places of Scripture in which the term *only begotten* is applied to him, such as when the Father is said to have sent his only begotten Son into the world, &c. it evidently carries this in it, that he was his only Son, prior to his manifestation in the flesh; and did not become so by his incarnation, or his being raised from the dead, or constituted heir and Lord of all things.

Again, we find wise *Agur* giving this title to Christ antecedent to his incarnation, and without any respect to his mediatorial character: When speaking of the omnipotence, majesty, and incomprehensibleness of God, represents his name, and his *Son's* name as equally unsearchable. Who hath ascended up into Heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the winds in his fist? Who hath bound up the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, or his

Son's

† Luke iii. 38.

‡ Luke xx. 36.

Son's name, if thou canst tell? Doth not this man speak of both their names as alike inexplicable? Which I conceive is true, not of the name of God, and of Christ considered merely as the *Messiah*; but of those ineffable and glorious persons, Father and Son, considered in their divine nature, and original relation to each other.—And it is very observable here, that he speaks of omnipotent works in the creation, preservation, and government of the world, which are common to the Father and Son; but can relate to the Son only as he is a divine person, the same in nature with the Father who made the worlds by him, and by whom all things do consist.

Further, in order to convince us that this title the *Son of God* has a reference to his pre-existent nature, or in other words, to his intrinsic relation to the Father in the Godhead; let us take notice of the account he gives of it himself. † The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. When there were no depths, before the mountains were settled; before the hills was I brought forth, then was I by him as one brought up with him; like a Son in the bosom of the Father. —In this account I apprehend, we will find Christ the personal wisdom of God, speaking of himself in a two fold character; the one pointed out by this phrase, “The Lord possessed me, (or begat me) in the beginning of his ways.” The other, by this “I was set up from everlasting.” He was set up from everlasting, as Mediator and head of the church, to show that he was then really subsisting with the Father, and therefore was capable of bearing a part in that eternal covenant-transaction. There is therefore a plain difference between his being brought forth, and his being set up; the one respects his peculiar manner of subsistence, and the other his office.

Doth not an inspired prophet in the most explicit terms confirm the same truth? ‡ But thou Bethlehem-Ephratah though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, or, *from the days of eternity*. Here is plainly intimated a two-fold egress, or going forth of Christ; the one in his incarnation, as Mediator; the other in his eternal generation from the Father as his only begotten Son. The expression is the same by which the eternity of God is pointed out, Psal. xc. 2. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

We find the Eternal Father confirming the same truth, in this address to his Son, Psal. ii. 7. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten

† Prov. viii. 22, 23, 24, 25, 30.

‡ Micah. v. 2.

I begotten thee. His generation here is spoken of as a permanent thing, pointing at its Eternity: Hence some render the words, and very justly too, “I am this day begetting thee:” Holding forth his generation as a permanent thing of which it hath ever been, is, and will be said, “this day have I begotten thee,” to denote an eternal, abiding, unbeginning, and never-ending act.

Again, that he is the only begotten Son of God as to be consubstantial with him, will appear from the following Scriptures. John x. 3. I and my Father are one. He is so essentially, and necessarily one with him, that “he that hath seen the Son, hath seen the Father also.” For he is in the Father, and the Father in him. † And moreover he is that Son who is the brightness of his glory, and the express character of his person. § And in John v. 18. he calls God his own *proper* Father, and thereby showed his equality with God, as the Jews rightly understood him. And he is also the Father’s own *proper* Son, and the Son of himself: ‡ And he is thus denominated to distinguish him from Angels, who are the Sons of God by creation; and believers, who are his Sons by adoption; and also from those who are called his Sons by office, as are sometimes magistrates.—He is also called the Son of the living God, || “and the Son of the Father in truth and love,” truly, and really partaking of his nature, and beloved by him.

What do all these, and several other Scriptures of a like strain mean? But that the title the Son of God, and the only begotten Son of God, is not to be taken in an improper, and distantly metaphorical sense; but in as proper and natural a sense as possibly can be, to express the sameness of his nature with the Father, or to denote, that he is such a Son as naturally proceeds from; or is begotten of the Father, in distinction from all others who may be called the Sons of God in the afore-mentioned senses.

To confirm this sense of the words only, and only begotten as applied to our Saviour in the highest signification by the sacred writers, we have the judgment and interpretation of the primitive church. For the three first centuries and prior to the Nicene council, the title of the only begotten, or only Son of God, as applied to our Saviour was by the constant and perpetual use of it by the Catholic Doctors, determined to signify his eternal generation from God the Father. That of *Tertullian* is in substance common to them all, and with one voice affirmed by them all.

“He

† John xiv. 9, 10.

‡ Rom. viii. 3, 32.

§ Heb. i. 2, 3.

|| Math. x. 16.

“ He is the first-born, as begotten before all things; *only as alone*
 “ begotten by God, truly and properly.” †

Before I proceed further on this subject, allow me to make these few remarks from what has been said above.

Is it not evident that the article of our Saviour's divinity is of such vast importance, that the faith of a christian, yea christi-
 nity itself, cannot subsist without it? That Jesus is the Christ; that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, and that it is necessary to salvation to believe both, all sects and parties who can in any tolerable sense be called christians do expressly acknowledge, and zealously contend. But I presume from what has been advanced that he can be neither the Saviour, nor the only begotten Son of God, if he be not God; I mean God in the strictest sense, and of the same essence and substance with the Father. What then can we think of those who pretend to be the true disciples of Jesus, and yet deny his divinity?

Again I would observe, that although the distinct manner of the divine subsistence, and consequently the eternal generation of the Son, and their relations *ad intra* are inconceivable, and infinitely beyond all that we are acquainted with; yet I presume, if there be not eternal intrinsic relations between them, by which they are distinct persons, without regarding their oeconomic actions, *Sabbellianism* is unavoidable. It seems therefore necessary to consider these distinct titles of Father and Son, as names belonging to, and expressive of their original relations to each other. And while these relations, and consequently the generation of the Son, are considered as *absolutely necessary* and *Eternal*; they neither can be proved to be impossible, or inconsistent with the independency and necessary subsistence of the Son, in the self-existent God-head.

It will therefore necessarily follow, the Son exists not by a mere act of the Father's will, as all creatures do; and therefore his existence is not arbitrary as theirs is.—There was no necessity of nature why any of them should have been brought into a state of existence: And that they actually do exist, is entirely owing to the sovereign good will and pleasure of the great Creator: “ For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.” But we read of nothing like this of the existence of the Son. He being *the Son* in the highest signification of the word, his existence cannot but be absolutely necessary. He could not but exist, and that from everlasting to everlasting. He claims this very essential attribute of Deity *I am*, denoting the necessity and eternal permanence and existence of his being. The Father can no more subsist without the Son, than the Son without the
 Fathers

† See Dr. Trapp's Sermon on the Trinity.

Father: The non-subsistence of either is changing the God-head, and making it infinitely different from what it is. But the infinite perfection of the Godhead unavoidably requires the necessary subsistence of the Son, as well as of the Father.

In a word I think we may see how much of the infinite wisdom, love and goodness, both of the Father and Son is displayed in the work of our redemption; particularly in the preparation and assumption of our human nature. — I have already shown you *Superbus* that Christ is the only begotten Son of God, and therefore consubstantial with him. But he is also real man, and his manifestation in the flesh was to purchase an eternal redemption for us, by his obedience and sufferings. That he is as truly and really man as he was God, is evident from his being called a man, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and the Son, and the offspring of David. The accounts we have of his conception and birth, and of his whole life and death on the cross, in which he appeared, acted, and suffered altogether as man, and in ways peculiar only to himself, irrefragably prove the truth of his manhood. He had a true human body, of the same flesh and blood with the church which he redeemed. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. He had a true human soul; for he as man increased in wisdom, as well as in stature. This could not, without the highest blasphemy be said of his God-head: And his soul we find was subject to the same passions of grief, joy and sorrow as ours are; although without sin. Hence we read of his rejoicing in spirit, of his being grieved in spirit, and of his groaning in the spirit; and that his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death; and that he poured out his soul unto the death, and gave up the Ghost. All these, and such like expressions show that he had a true human soul, as well as body. He was sent to redeem the souls as well as the bodies of men, therefore he must have a soul to be made a sacrifice for our souls. In a word he is said to be made like unto his brethren; which is spoken with respect to his taking our nature that he might be fit to act therein as a substitute High-priest for us sinful men, and therefore imports that he is as truly a man as any of us are: And on this account, he is frequently called *the Son of man*, as on account of his divine nature he is called *the Son of God*. ||

And

|| The *Arians* Super-Angelic Spirit, the first created of all God's handy-works, and which supplied the place of Christ's human soul, the Scriptures know nothing of. As the *Socinians* make him all man, the *Arians* rob him of his human nature entirely: Seeing a human soul and body are the constituent parts of human nature.

And from this two-fold consideration of Christ, as the Son of God, and the Son of man, we can consistently explain the doctrines and actions of Jesus while here on earth, and the various accounts which the sacred penmen both of the Old and New Testament give of him; which from any other consideration are entirely inexplicable, e. g. when he is said to be sent; upheld in the execution of his Mediatorial offices; that he of himself could do nothing; that the Father was greater than he; that he knew not the day; that he came to do the Father's will not his own; and that the words which he spake were not his, but the Father's that sent him, &c. Now all these phrases and others of a similar nature may be justly affirmed of Jesus as man, and in his official capacity. But how are we to reconcile what is predicated of him otherwise, without taking into the account at the same time, that he is as truly and really God, as he is as man? Can a *creature* raise the dead, create all things in Heaven and in earth, support universal nature in its existence? Can a *creature* be endowed with the divine properties and essential perfections of deity, as omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, &c. Can a *creature* authoritatively forgive sin, justify and sanctify sinners, be the object of religious worship, be prayed to, honoured, and believed in equally with God the Father? All these things belong to Jesus; but how? As a *creature*, as a *mere man*: No, but as God, and that God who was manifested in the flesh.—I say then *Superbus* that viewing Christ in this two-fold character, we can easily, and consistently reconcile what is affirmed of him with regard to each of his natures respectively, which otherwise would be impossible.

“ *Phil. mon*, I perfectly coincide with your sentiments on this
 “ head; I freely confess that I have been prodigiously puzzled
 “ how to reconcile the *seemingly* inconsistent account the Scrip-
 “ tures give of Jesus. When I read his own words “ the Son
 “ can do nothing of himself;” I was naturally led out to con-
 “ clude, that he believed to be vastly inferior to the Father; and
 “ yet at the same, that he created the worlds, forgave sin, raised
 “ the dead, and opened the eyes of the blind; I could not re-
 “ concile these actions with that impotence he at the same af-
 “ cribed to himself. When I read that he was ignorant of the
 “ day of judgment, and yet that he knew all things; and parti-
 “ cularly, that he was to be the judge. These things seemed
 “ entirely paradoxical to me. But viewing Jesus as *God* and
 “ *man* I can now account for all these different phrases consistent-
 “ ly, and to my entire satisfaction. I now behold him not on-
 “ ly inferior to the Father, but made a little lower than the An-
 “ gels; yet, God supreme, “ exalted above all blessing and
 “ praise.”

“ praise.”—But before you proceed any further to confirm the
 “ doctrine of Christ’s supreme deity, I wish you would solve an
 “ objection which I have heard produced against a Trinity of
 “ persons in one Godhead; viz. that it implies a contradic-
 “ tion.”

To give you all possible satisfaction on this head, and show you at the same time how groundless this objection of the adversaries to Christ’s divinity is; let me observe that according to the unanimous language of the sacred Scriptures on this head; in the unity of the God-head there are three distinct persons, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. “ There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father,” &c. By the term *person* is generally understood, “ a particular manner of subsisting and acting in an intelligent Being:” Or according to a very learned writer; a *person* is an intelligent agent, having the distinctive characters of *I, Thou, He*; and not divided or distinguished into more intelligent agents capable of the same characters. † By the persons in the Godhead we do not mean three distinct attributes of deity; this would land us directly into *Sabbellianism*, as when the same man may be at the same time a king, a prophet, and a father: The Scriptures manifestly make a greater distinction between them than this amounts to: Nor on the other hand, we do not mean three distinct substances, minds, or spirits; for then (each of them being God) it would, according to the ideas which we have annexed to these other words unavoidably follow, that there were three Gods; a position, not only contrary to Scripture, but to reason and common sense. But positively we mean as I already hinted, an understanding and voluntary agent.

Neither is there any contradiction in the doctrine of the Trinity, as is most unjustly alledged. Because the terms are not affirmed of the same thing, and in the same respect, as they always must be to make a contradiction. To say that three Gods are one God, or that three persons are one person would be a flat contradiction: But to say that there are three persons in the Godhead, or that the three persons are one God, is no more a contradiction than to say that there are three lines in one triangle, or that there are three faculties in one soul, the understanding, will, and memory. I may here further observe to you, that that may be a contradiction in one nature that is not so in another. For instance, is it not a contradiction that with us, yesterday should be to day, or that to day should be to morrow? But God is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever: With him all things are present, there is no past or to come in eternity. Would it not be a flat contradiction for me to say, that at the same time that I am
 here,

† Dr. Waterl. 2 def. from page 364 to page 369.

here, I am in another place at a thousand miles distance ? But it is no contradiction in the nature of God to say, that at the same time that he is in Heaven he is also on earth, yea in the same instant every where, and filling all things.—In a word I think it would be the highest presumption to charge the account which the Holy Scriptures give of this sacred mystery, viz. that there are three that bear record in Heaven,—and these three are one, as a contradiction.

The believers of this doctrine never presume to explain the manner of this ineffable mystery ; (for it would cease to be a mystery, if it could be explained) yet it is clear from Scripture, that there is a distinction between the three persons as such ; so that what is personally ascribed to one, cannot be personally ascribed to the other two ; though they are the same God, and the essential attributes of deity common to them all. They are not three distinct persons as three men are ; but in a manner of subsisting to us quite incomprehensible. I shall sum up the whole in the words of a very pious and learned author †

“ We maintain, (says he) that the persons in the blessed
 “ Trinity are truly distinct, in opposition to *Sabellianism* ; and
 “ yet that they are proper persons subsisting in the same undi-
 “ vided substance or essence. That the generation of the Son
 “ is a proper generation : The procession of the Holy Ghost, is
 “ a proper procession ; such as doth properly, and did eternally
 “ take place among the glorious persons subsisting in the God-
 “ head. But we deny that they are proper persons in the sense
 “ that men and Angels are proper persons, who are distinct
 “ substances, and have distinct understandings and wills.—The
 “ persons of the Trinity are not so distinct as to be independent
 “ of, separate from, or alien to each other. They are proper
 “ distinct persons, though no man, nor perhaps Angel, can de-
 “ fine what a divine person is, or account for the distinction
 “ among themselves. The like may be said of the generation
 “ of the Son, which is, no doubt, most proper, though not to be
 “ defined by the notions of generation among men. “ For
 “ who can declare his generation.” And therefore the gene-
 “ ration of the Son will still remain a mystery, let bold men
 “ quibble as they will. Among men, in the very name of Fa-
 “ ther, there is implied something greater than in that of Son :
 “ But it doth not follow, that it must needs be so in the deity,
 “ where the Son no more had any beginning of being than the
 “ Father ; nor could in any instant not have been, any more
 “ than the Father himself could not have been. A parallel be-
 “ tween

† *Moncrieff* on the supreme deity of Christ, page 194, 195.

“ tween Father and Son amongst men, and Father and Son in
 “ the deity cannot with any show of reason, be drawn; the dif-
 “ ference being so wide between them as might be shown in
 “ many particulars.

“ Among men, Father and Son are two, not only divided per-
 “ sons, but they have different endowments: In the deity, Fa-
 “ ther and Son are one; not one person, but one in all excel-
 “ lencies and perfections. Amongst men, the Father has his
 “ things, and the Son has his; but in the deity, the Son hath all
 “ things, without exception that the Father hath. Among men,
 “ the Son doth some things, and the Father other things; but
 “ in the deity, whatever things the Father doth, these doth the
 “ Son likewise. Amongst men, though the Son is from the
 “ Father, yet he is not in the Father; and though the Father
 “ produced the Son, yet he is not in the Son; and though a Son
 “ may be like the Father, yet it cannot, strictly speaking, be
 “ said, that he that has seen the Son has seen the Father. But
 “ in the deity, the Father is so in the Son, and the Son in the
 “ Father, that he that has seen the Son, has also seen the
 “ Father.”

But I proceed *Superbus* to another argument in favour of the
 supreme deity of Christ; and this I found upon the name *God*
 given him in Scripture. The adversaries of Christ's deity rather
 than acknowledge their Saviour to be God, have laboured hard to
 distinguish away the meaning of the term *God* by affixing this
 idea to it, as if it was no more than merely an official word. So
 that we must not think (as it has been vulgarly and erroneously
 imagined) that the word *God* in the sacred writings denotes es-
 sence, nature or substance, but office only, dominion, or authori-
 ty, particularly when applied to Christ. But if this be true, I
 am afraid that such an explication of the term will affect the
 Father, as much as the Son; and this way we will soon have no
 God at all. Is he not in John i. 1. expressly called God? In
 the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and
 the word was *God*. Is not the term *God* applied to Christ in as
 absolute a sense, as it is or can be applied to the Father, without
 any limitation or note of inferiority? Would you not think it
 strange *Superbus*, that the Holy Ghost would give the same iden-
 tical term to the Son that is given to the Father, and leave us to
 explain it thus? The Father is called God, because he is a God by
 nature, the Son is called God, because he is so by office, as being
 the Father's deputy and ambassador to men, just as Moses was a
God to Pharaoh, by giving him authority to speak unto him in
 his name. I have made thee *Elohim* a *God* to Pharaoh. † And
 magistrates

† Exod. iv. 16. chap. vii. 1.

magistrates are sometimes called *Gods*. “ I said ye are *Gods*.” But what is this to the point in hand? Is it any where predicated of Moses, or those other *Gods*, that they are eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, and the like? Was Moses to be worshipped by the Israelites? Is it any where said that he made the worlds, or that he is God over all blessed for ever? Is he any where called Jehovah? Neither is he *absolutely* called *Elohim*, but only with regard to *Pharaoh* and *Aaron* to whom he was to deliver God’s message. Is it not somewhat strange, if he be but a God by deputation, and not in the strict and absolute sense of the word as applied to the Father, that he is said to be Eternal, and works ascribed to him which none but God properly speaking can do? He was in the beginning, i. e. from eternity with God, and from eternity he was God, and in time created all things; and without him was not any thing made that was made. Now is not creation-work the peculiar prerogative of deity? In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth. But we have no account here, nor any where else that God created the Son: And if the Son be among the rank of the creatures, yea in very deed a creature, and yet at the same time the Creator, he made himself; which is certainly as great a contradiction as a Trinity in unity. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made; which exactly answers to the Mosaic account of the creation in Gen. i. 1.—He is expressly called “ the mighty God,” and “ God manifested in the flesh.” And he is so denominated by the Father himself, Heb. i. Thy throne O God is for ever and ever. According to some the term *Elohim* here absolutely used signifies as much as *Elohe Elohim* the God of Gods. What a bold attempt to pervert the words of the Holy One, and without any sense, to render the phrase thus; God shall be thy seat or throne for ever and ever. This is directly contrary to the received opinion even of the Jews themselves. The Targum on the 45th, Psalm from which this is borrowed renders the words thus; “ thy throne O God is in Heaven for ever and ever.” We would wish to know in what sense God is the throne of Christ? What idea doth it convey? Has it any countenance from the original? I look upon this address of the Father to the Son as a plain and explicit acknowledgment of the Son’s supreme deity.

Again he is emphatically called the great God. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, or the great God, even our Lord Jesus. These titles belong to one and the same person as that form of speech is commonly used, and often translated; particularly when the Father is called “ the God and Father of our Lord

Lord Jesus," which very phrase at other times is rendered " God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And the Apostles speaking of the appearing of this great God, determines us to understand it here. Doth he not certainly mean Christ's second and glorious appearance? The Scripture never represents the Father as the person who will make that appearance; but constantly appropriates it to Christ, who shall come in all his glory, and the glory of his Father to judge the quick and the dead. And although Christ shall come in his Father's glory, as well as his own, yet it is not the person of the Father, but that of the Son that shall then come and make his glorious appearance.

But in order to remove all jealousy of any thing figurative or improper in this appellation of Christ, he is called the *true God*, not a true God, as if there might be more true Gods than one, but by way of emphasis, *the true God* as having the true and only Godhead in himself.—And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. † This is, or, he is the true God and eternal life. Now the true God whom the Apostle here speaks of is Jesus; and what more can possibly be affirmed of the Father than that he is the true God? Doth not the natural order and grammatical construction of the words lead us to this sense? And particularly doth not his joining the title of *eternal life* with that of the true God clearly point us to Jesus, as the true God here spoken of? We find that as the beloved disciple began, so he concludes his epistle, with these titles of Christ, *his Son Jesus Christ*, and *eternal life*, and inserts between them, this is the true God, that we might be sure, not to mistake, who he means thereby. So that if the plainest words taken in their genuine sense and connexion, are of any weight with us, Jesus Christ is declared to be *the true God* to the exclusion of all inferior notions of his Godhead, as if it was different from that, which is the only true one. *Socinians* and *Arians* in order to get free of this crabbed text, are reduced to this pitiful shift, which by the bye is not true, viz. that the article is here added to the word God; which is never done when Christ is called God. Among other places which prove the falsity of this we might refer them to John xx. 28. where the article is added both to Lord and God. Now if the addition of the greek article to the word God, infallibly proves that the person meant is God in the most strict and absolute sense; our Lord Jesus Christ is so. But if this objection is untenable they have another yet in reserve; but it unfortunately happens that it is of as little validity as the other to overturn the genuine meaning of this text; their objection is this; that relative particles, such as that in the text, often-times

times refers to what is more remote. To this it may be answered that the necessity of referring the particle to what is more remote is evident from the text, and necessary from the nature of the thing. § In a word, to refer this to the true God going before makes the *Apostle* guilty of a tautology, by saying, *the true God*, he is *the true God*. Perhaps they may object against his true consubstantiality with the Father and say, that he is *a true made God*; but to swallow such an interpretation requires more reason and common sense, than ever fell to the share of any man, since God created man. A *true, created God*, is a position at which reason itself revolts.

I shall only mention one text more on this head, and this you will find in Romans ix. 5. Whose are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for ever. Amen. Some in order to evade the force of this text as an argument for the supreme deity of Christ, would most perversely turn the last clause of the verse into an *Ecphronema* and grateful exclamation for the blessings conferred upon the Jews, thus, *God who is over all be blessed for ever*. But this sounds so harsh, and without any like example in the New Testament, that (according to a very learned Author †) it never came into the head of any *Arian*; and *Socinus* himself rejects it for this very good reason, that *God be blessed*, is an unusual and unnatural construction. The phrase occurs twenty times in the Old Testament, but in every place the term blessed goes before, and the article is prefixed to the word God, which is a plain demonstration that this is no *Ecphronema*, or grateful exclamation. The plain and most obvious sense of the words is this; the Apostle having said in the preceding context, that Christ came from the Fathers according to the flesh, or as to his human nature; is it not reasonable to conceive that he should proceed to show what he was as to his divine nature? Is it not unreasonable to think he should say nothing of the superior nature of Christ? Especially if we consider, that the limitation *according to the flesh*, plainly intimated that there was another nature in him, according to which he came not from the Fathers. Upon the whole, I presume that the argument from hence to prove him truly and properly *God* is invincible. *God over all*, is the *periphrasis* by which all

§ See Acts iv. 11.
2 Theff. ii. 9.

Acts vii. 19. Chap. x. 5, 6.
2 John vii.

† Dr. Whitby on the place.

all the heathen Philosophers did usually represent the supreme God; And so is God the Father described both in the Old and New Testament, as he that is over all. † This is the constant epithet of the great God in the Old Testament. || And this character here ascribed to Christ, is given to the most high God, as distinguished from all creatures whatsoever; Rom. i. 25. where the Apostle charges the Gentile world with worshipping and serving the creature more than (or beside) the Creator; who is God blessed for evermore. Amen.—The creatures the Gentiles served, were demons, and such deceased heroes as they supposed to be subordinate powers, but raised to the dignity of Gods; from all these, the Apostle distinguishes the true God, the Creator of the world by this title, “*God over all, blessed for evermore;*” q. d. that God to whom alone the blessing and adoration of all intelligent creatures is, and will be for ever due. The polytheism of the Gentile world is here exposed by the Apostle, representing the weakness and folly of any subordinate deities under one as supreme, which the God of Israel always disclaimed. His constant language was this; “I am the Lord, and there is none else: There is no God besides me.”—“I am God, and there is none like me.” “Before me there was no God formed, neither will there be after me.” What absurdity for christians to talk of one God that is supreme, and another that is God in a subordinate sense!—I apprehend upon the whole, that nothing but the most determined opposition to the supreme deity of the Son of God, could ever induce any one to force and strain a text from its plain, genuine, and grammatical construction and meaning, as the other interpretation doth. The Scripture was certainly written for the common use of all, and is generally to be understood in its most obvious and easy sense; but if this text is not to be understood in the sense already given, but must be understood, (the latter clause I mean) as a doxology; I despair of ever understanding any one text delivered in the plainest terms imaginable. The truth is, it requires a great deal of the most unhappy ingenuity to bring divine revelation *seemingly*, to support a bad cause. I conclude then, that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God consubstantial with his Eternal Father; even the most high, and infinitely blessed God.

In connexion with the foregoing Scriptures, permit me *Superbus* to offer another to your consideration in support of the supreme deity of the Son of God.—Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:—But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,
and

† Eph. iv. 6. || 1 Chron. xvi. 36. Psal. xli. 13, and 89, 52.

and was made in the likeness of men. † The Apostle in this text seems to have foreseen, and obviated the *Socinian* heresy; for he doth not only call Christ, *God*; but he informs us how he is *God*. Not by gift or donation, or that he was made *God*: That being a contradiction in the very terms; but that he was in the form and essence of *God*, and so equal to *God*, which he could not pretend to without the highest robbery.

“ But *Philemon*, might not the *form of God* (as I have often heard it so explained) be understood as to mean only, that there was a communication made to him of divine and miraculous powers over diseases, Devils, the grave, the wind, the seas,” &c.

I answer *Superbus*, by asking you this question, was there not a communication of this divine and miraculous power given to Prophets, Apostles? &c. But where do we ever read, that they were in the form of *God*? Every one that understands terms knows what is meant by *matter* and *form*. The form of a thing is its essence, not its shadow or likeness: And therefore whatever is in the form of *God*, is of his essence, and consequently must be *God*. And this is the inference the Apostle here makes; that because he was in the form of *God*, therefore he was equal to *God*; and it was no presumption in him to claim this equality, because being in the form of *God*, he was by nature truly and properly *God*.

But if Christ was originally a creature as *Socinians* and *Arians* maintain, and only advanced through the mere good will of the Father to divine honour, then indeed he could not be excused from the charge of robbery and presumption, yea of blasphemy to pretend to be equal to *God*.

“ But *Philemon*, I have heard some read the words thus; who committed not robbery by equalling himself to *God*, i. e. did not rob *God* of his honour by arrogating to be *God*, or equal to *God*.”

Superbus this was explaining the text like an oracle! It bears these two meanings, either that Christ did not arrogate to himself to be *God*, or equal to *God*; and therefore did not rob *God* of his honour. Or otherwise, it may be understood, that though he did arrogate to himself to be *God*, or equal to *God*, yet this was not a robbing *God* of his honour. In this last sense then it must mean, that Christ is *God*, or that it is no dishonour to *God* to have a creature made equal to him. But what a gross perversion of the phrase, who thought it not robbery to change it into this, who

† Philip. ii. 6, 7.

who committed not robbery; as if the greek word meant both *thought* and *committed*; or that *thought* and *committed* are the same thing.

The form of a servant which Christ is here said to take, was his taking upon him our flesh, or our human nature, as appears from the following words. “And was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man.” And this form of a servant, is compared with the form of God, in which he was before he took upon him the form of a servant. The same word is used in both branches of the comparison, and therefore must be taken in the same sense, unless we would make the comparison fallacious. “Being in the form of God,—he took upon him the form of a servant.” Therefore he was as truly God as he was man; he was as really possessed of a divine, as he was of a human nature.—And moreover, he was God before he was man; for observe, it is not here said, that he took upon him the form of God, because he was always in that form, and so could not take it.

I might just add here, that we have two other phrases similar to this which I have been speaking of, and as expressive of the supreme deity of Christ. He is called the image of the invisible God: † And the express image of his person. ‡ Now a picture or a shadow is a man's image, but not in the same respect as his Son, who is the express image of his person, because he partakes of his identical nature.

Would you wish *Superbus* to know the hypothesis of the *Socinians* on this head; which, in the issue may be applied to the *Arians* also? Their doctrine then is this; that our Lord Jesus Christ is by nature a mere man; but by the will of the Father advanced to the dignity of a *God*: And being so advanced, he is *Deus verus* truly and properly a God. Allow me to present to your view their principles on this head, from the learned *Dr. Edwards's* preservative against *Socinianism*, and that in his own words. §

“It we consider God in his attributes, we will find that the
 “first great, and (if I may so call it) fundamental attribute
 “which the Scriptures reveal, and indeed natural reason dic-
 “tates, concerning him, is the unity of the Godhead. Deut.
 “vi. 4. Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord. Deut.
 “xxxii. 39. See now, that I, even I am he, and there is no
 “God with me.—Here undoubtedly it will be said, that the
 “*Socinians*

† Collos. i. 15.

‡ Heb. i. 3.

“ *Socinians* are beyond all suspicion orthodox: All their studies
 “ and labours being employed in asserting and vindicating the
 “ unity of the Godhead, in opposition to the doctrine of the Trini-
 “ ty; which according to their apprehension must infer a plura-
 “ lity of Gods. But for all their boasts concerning this matter,
 “ and assuming to themselves upon that score the name of *unita-*
 “ *rians*, we must not be too hasty in acquitting them from the
 “ imputation of *Poletheism*. For although they deny the eternal
 “ generation of Christ and his divinity, and say, he had no ex-
 “ istence before his being formed in the womb of the *Virgin*
 “ *Mary*, and his appearance in the world; and that the being
 “ which he then had was purely human: Yet after his resur-
 “ rection from the grave, and ascension into Heaven, they say
 “ that God the Father, as the reward of his obedience and
 “ sufferings exalted him to the honour and dignity of a God;
 “ not indeed to be the supreme and eternal God, but however
 “ *Deus verus*, distinct, and separate from the Father. And
 “ *Socinus* takes it ill of his adversaries that they should charge
 “ him with denying Christ to be God; and complains against
 “ them that will not be brought to confess and worship him for
 “ their Lord and God, who was once a weak and infirm man.
 “ And herein he saith the power and goodness of God was dis-
 “ covered, and his admirable wisdom displayed, in extolling,
 “ and deifying this man beyond what we can imagine.

“ And to the objection against this opinion, as that which
 “ did unavoidably infer a plurality of Gods. *Woltzogenius* will
 “ tell you, that if by two Gods you mean *one* of whom are all
 “ things, and we in him, and the *alter* by whom are all things,
 “ and we by him; we are so far, saith he, from being ashamed
 “ of worshipping two such Gods, that we rather glory in it. But
 “ if it shall be further said, that to do them right, they acknow-
 “ ledge but one supreme God by nature; and that Christ is
 “ only God by appointment and office, not *natus*, but *factus*, not
 “ begotten, but made; and deified after his ascension by a com-
 “ munication of the divine power, wisdom, and goodness to
 “ him:

“ I answer that this is so far from abating, that it rather in-
 “ creases the difficulty, and makes the *Socinian* notion both im-
 “ pious and absurd; as may be shown more at large hereafter
 “ when we come to lay the charge of idolatry at their door.
 “ Indeed one would think it should be a debasing of the name,
 “ and honour that is due to God, to give either of them to any
 “ but him who is from all eternity. The same *Woltzogenius* will
 “ tell you, you may, if you please reproach them for so doing;
 “ but he values it not a rush, *nos non erubescimus*, says he, we are

“ not ashamed to own that we worship *Deum factum vel factitium*, a made God; not made by a goldsmith, or engraver, *ab aliquo scultore, vel auri fabro*: But they acknowledge with *Peter*, Acts ii. 36. That God hath made Jesus who was crucified Lord and Christ, i. e. saith he, *Deum eximium fecerit*, hath made him a great and eminent God.

“ If this be not enough, if you please to consult *Smolcius*; he will give you all the satisfaction on this head that you can possibly desire. For first he will tell you, that whereas the Scriptures assure us that there is but one only true God; yet this must be taken *sano sensu*, not as if there were no other true God, besides God the Father; but that there is none that is God *codem prorsus modo*, just in the same manner as he is. For otherwise the thing is certain and past all doubt, that there are more true Gods than one. And let the inspired writers be never so positive; yet he and his friends can, and will, with equal confidence advance this contrary position that the true God is not one only true God. Nay, it is not an indifferent matter; but a truth which they firmly believe, and earnestly contend for: And therefore pronounce it without hesitation, that there are more true Gods than one.

“ And indeed they have reason to contend earnestly for this opinion; if it be true what he saith in the same place, that to acknowledge, and confess, and adore one only *chief and supreme* God, is purely judaical, and a renunciation of the christian religion. Here he speaks as home to the point as you can possibly desire; and it is enough in all conscience. Thus whereas the Scriptures tell us there is but one God; the *Socinians* say there are two: One God by nature, another by grace; one supreme, another inferior; one greater, another lesser; one elder and eternal; another a junior and modern God. And this by *Socinus* is made the great mystery of the christian religion! Greater indeed, if true, and more incomprehensible than any other; or rather than all the stupendous and adorable mysteries of our faith put together.”

What this learned Author observes with regard to the *Socinians*, is applicable at the same time to the *Arians*: These latter make Christ a creature, (though a more excellent one) and a made, yet real God as well as the former. But I pray what notion can any one have of a *made*, or *created* real God? i. e. a God and no God? Is there not an infinite distance between God and any creature, be that creature never so excellent? In a word, is our Saviour in their opinion, strictly and properly God; or is he not? If he be; why do they not say so? If he be not; why do they worship him? Seeing the Scripture is to the last degree,
and

and indeed beyond expression, careful to guard against idolatry. But of this more afterwards.

“ But *Philemon*, if Christ be God in the strict and absolute sense of the words; why is God the Father said to be the only true God, in exclusion of all others. John xvii. 3 — To know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

The meaning of these words *Superbus*, I apprehend is this; to know thee the only true God, &c. i. e. that the Gentiles quitting their dumb idols, and false Gods, may own thee alone to be the living, and true God who made Heaven and Earth; and that the Jews may own me to be thy Son sent to them from Heaven, and that Messiah, which, according to the promise to Abraham and David, thou hast sent to them: For by knowing thee fully, they shall know me also, whom all men are to worship as they worship the Father; and whom he that doth not worship, doth not truly honour the Father; for I and the Father are one.

But more particularly here; the term God is to be understood of God essentially considered, in opposition to all false Gods, and by no means exclusive of the Son or Holy Ghost, but inclusive of them as divine persons with the Father in the same Godhead. If the adversaries of Christ's supreme deity should say that the word *solus* only, excludes all other things from any communion with that of which it is predicated, and so imports that the Father alone is the true God; this assertion may be confuted from many instances both of the Old and New Testament. Doth not *Solomon* say of God, “ thou only knowest the hearts of all men,” and yet saith Christ, “ all the churches shall know I am he that searches the heart and tries the reins, to give every man according to his works.” It may further be remarked here, that Christ speaks of himself in distinction from the only true God, not with regard to his own nature as God, but with respect to his office-capacity, as he intimates by adding these words, “ whom thou hast sent,” viz. to be Saviour, the knowledge of whom, as such, is as necessary to eternal life, as the knowledge of the true God in distinction from idols. If Christ be excluded here from being the true God, I cannot possibly see but there must be the most palpable contradiction between this and the first verse of this gospel, where the Evangelist plainly informs us, that the word was not only with God, but that the word was *God*, strictly and properly taken.

This will receive further confirmation from *Jude*, v. 4. denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. These words may be as properly rendered thus; denying the only Lord God,

even our Lord Jesus Christ: Or according to some; and denying Jesus Christ our only master, God, and Lord. † Now that they ought to be so rendered is evident; because one article only is put before all these words; and because the person who is the only master and God, is by *Peter* called the Lord that bought us: Now was it not Christ that bought us with his own blood?

“ But *Philemon* would not what we have in 1 Corinth. viii. 6. seem to exclude Christ from being God in the strict and absolute sense of the word: But to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by him.”

Superbus, I hope it will not be urged here, that when the Apostle speaks of one Lord Jesus Christ, that the Father is excluded from being the *Lord* of christians, neither by saying, there is but one God the Father, ought it to be supposed, that he excludes Jesus Christ from being also the God of christians. Especially if we consider, that he is here stiled that one Lord by whom all things are created, Eph. iii. 9. all things which are in Heaven, or in Earth, Coll. i. 16. for he that made all things is God, Heb. iii. 4. and by the work of creation is the Godhead known. Rom. i. 20. And this is elsewhere made the very description of God the Father, that it is he by whom are all things. Rom. xi. 35.—Again it is here said that all things were not only created by this *Lord*, but *for him*, also Coll. i. 16. consequently as he is the last end, he must be the first cause, and therefore God in the most strict and proper sense of the word — But further, it is evident that the Apostle in this place is speaking of God in opposition to idols; for he had laid down this position, viz. that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. And he goes on in the subsequent verses to prove this assertion; for though there be that are called Gods many, &c. but to us there is but one God, &c. and one Lord Jesus Christ, &c. Now can we suppose that the Apostle here meant one subordinate God, distinct in nature from the one supreme God? If he did, he at once overthrew what he was proving: And at the same time, doth he not land us in the very bosom of idolatry, by supposing one supreme, and another subordinate God? And at the same time also, did he not give a very strong handle to the Heathens to defend their idols and the worship of them? For many of them believed there was but one supreme God, but at the same time thought divine worship was due to some inferior deities; and therefore if Christ was not truly the most high God, and yet is to be worshipped, as most of the opposers of his Godhead

† See Dr. Whitby on the place.

head allow; would not this rather confirm than confute the Heathens opinion, that inferior deities may be worshipped.

But supposing that the Apostle here speaks of the one God, according to two different manners of subsistence and operation, viz. the Father of whom are all things, and the Son, the cause by whom are all things, the Father working by the Son according to their order of personal subsistence in the Godhead, then he argues suitably to his design of proving that “there is no other God but one,” and that all inferior deities are nothing.

“*Philemon*, is not Christ called the first-born of every creature? If so, how can he be truly and properly God? Can any thing be the first-born of creatures, but a creature? Is not the eldest Son of the number, and of the same nature with the rest of the brethren?” †

Superbus, this text can never fit *Socinians* for proving Christ to be a creature and not the true God equal to the Father. For if he was the first-born of every creature, (granting him to be no more than a mere creature) he certainly had a being prior to his conception in the womb of the *Virgin Mary*; which yet they deny. It will neither fit *Arians* nor *Socinians*, for this reason; because the Apostle asserts all things were created by him: Now if all things were created by him which are in Heaven, and which are in earth, visible and invisible, &c. must he not be among the number of these creatures? Or else there were some things which were not created by him; but this would be a flat contradiction to what the Apostle asserts. But if all things were created by him it will necessarily follow, that he created himself. But very properly is our Lord here called the first-born, or rather, as the words may be very properly rendered the heir of all things. Now to act as an heir, is to act as a Lord. And this is the grand character of Jesus: He is the heir or Lord of all things, because he created all things, animate, and inanimate, rational, and irrational, which are in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath. Is he not expressly called v. 18. the first-born from the dead, as being Lord over the dead; since for this cause he died, and rose again, that he might be Lord over the dead and over the living. Rom. iv. 9. The first born is necessarily the heir, and so Lord of the family; therefore the first-born was by the ancients denominated Lord as well as heir; pointing out his great authority over the other branches of the family. The right of primogeniture is solely lodged in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is prince over, and high above all creatures, they being the workmanship of his hands. And therefore the Apostle assigns a reason why he is called the first-born, heir, or Lord of all creatures, because

because he is their Creator; all things were created by him as the first cause, and for him as the last end.

According to a very learned Author, † the *Socinian* gloss on the foregoing text is to the following purpose; viz. that to Christ here is not ascribed the creation of the old world and all things that are in it; but only the creation, that is, the renovation of all things under the gospel-state, or the reformation of mankind by Jesus Christ.

What an antisciptural interpretation! How foreign and remote from the most usual sense of the words. How flat and uncouth to say, that Jesus Christ was before every new creature, i. e. before the renovation made by him, or rather his Apostles, after his exaltation. Is it not evident, and that upon the slightest observation, that the Apostle speaks here of such things as are incapable of this moral creation, viz. the creation of all things visible upon earth? Doth not these *all* things comprise all things without life, inanimate as well as animate, metals, stones, elements, all vegetables, and all beasts? And did Christ, and his Apostles preach to stones, trees, and beasts for their renovation? Did he come to make a moral renovation upon things invisible, viz. the Angels? Good Angels needed it not, and bad Angels are shut up in utter darkness beyond the reach of mercy. And yet *Crellius* tells us that Jesus is exalted, and hath received power and authority to reform and renew men and Angels. The most favourable construction we can put upon this man's hypothesis on this head is, that he had certainly forgot himself. ‡

In a word I would prove the consubstantiality of the Son of God from this objected text, from what he is called in the preceding verse, “the image of the invisible God.” Did he not make him who is invisible in his essence, conspicuous to us by the divine works which he wrought, they being such as plainly showed, that “in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” For an invisible God can only be seen by his effects of power, wisdom, and goodness, by which saith the Apostle, from the creation of the world the invisible things of God, viz. his eternal power and Godhead, have been made known by the things which are made. § He is so the image of God, that he
that

† Dr. Whitby on the place.

‡ Quia ex Christi exaltatione et divino quod accepit imperio, consecuta est hæc Angelorum, hominumque reformatio, ac renovatio, per illum, et in illo facta esse dicitur, seu illi creati, id est renovati dicuntur. *Crellius* in locum.

that hath seen him hath seen the Father; because in their nature they are one, and in their glory undivided. I conclude then that he who is “the image of the invisible God;” the Creator of all things in Heaven and earth, must be far more excellent than the most excellent among all creatures; that he is the first-born, the supreme Lord over all.

I have just to add *Onesimus*, that for the present I was obliged to leave my sore afflicted, and dying friend. I received the call to return home with great reluctance, and with far greater did I leave my affectionate *Superbus*. However my heart is with him, and my most earnest request is for him — Do not forget to acquaint me first opportunity of the state of your affairs. — And may the Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of the Father in truth and love; who is God over all blessed for ever, be the God and Saviour of my dear

ONESIMUS.



L E T T E R XV.

P H I L E M O N to O N E S I M U S.

Dear Onesimus,

YOUR favour of the 7th inst. came safe to my hand. It breathes the language of one who is acquainted with vital religion and experimental godliness. May your path be like that of the just man's which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. May you go on from one degree of glorious grace unto another, until you appear before God in Zion, when grace shall be swallowed up in glory; when you shall “see no more darkly as in a glass, but face to face.”

I returned as soon as possibly I could to my dying friend. I found him quite disconsolate. The comforter that can only relieve the distressed soul stood (in his apprehension) aloof from his sore. He addressed me as far as I remember in the following terms. “My dear *Philemon*, since you left me I have had a
“sore conflict; nothing presents itself to my view but what is
“truly alarming and shocking. When I take a view, of my
“past life, I am filled with the utmost confusion; when I look
“before me I tremble. I am about to die; and immediately I
“am to be sifted before the impartial tribunal of an holy, just,
“and righteous Judge. What must I do to escape condemna-
“tion?”

“ tion? My hypaſt offences are muſtered up before in horrid
 “ array. I find a vail hung up between me and pardoning
 “ mercy, that I cannot behold that darling attribute of the divine
 “ nature. Satan is injecting this horrid ſuggeſtion that “ the
 “ Lord hath ſhut up his tender mercy in his wrath.” I find
 “ little or no comfort either from the abſolute promiſes of the
 “ new covenant, or from the all-atoning merits of the Son of God.
 “ O that the “ Son of righteouſneſs would ariſe on me with heal-
 “ ing in his wings;” and diſſipate my fears, ſtrengthen my faith,
 “ invigorate my almoſt dying hope, and pour into my diſcon-
 “ late benighted ſoul, the oil of joy and conſolation. Have pity
 “ upon me dear friend, have pity upon me, and tender me your
 “ beſt advice in my preſent melancholy caſe.”

My dear *Superbus*, I feel with you in your preſent downcaſt condition; may he “ that turneth the ſhadow of death into the morning,” come and reſolve your doubts and chaſe away your fears. — Perhaps you are labouring under a very ſad miſtake, and a very fatal one too with regard to your preſent comfort; viz. that if the genuine humble chriſtian has given his aſſent to this true and faithful ſaying, “ that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners,” and to ſave him, that he ſhould no more doubt of it. To eaſe your mind with regard to this, remember the expreſſion of a very exerciſed chriſtian on this head: “ Doubtleſs
 “ that faith, (ſaid he) which is never aſſaulted with doubting,
 “ is but a fancy; aſſuredly that aſſurance which is ever ſecure,
 “ is but a dream.” † Although there is no intermixture of faith and unbelief, yet where the former is implanted, there the latter is ſure to haunt it. There are indeed ſome happy intervals in the chriſtian’s life in which this celeftial grace arrives at its *pl rophoria* or full aſſurance, and in this caſe, the mouth of his unbelief may be ſtopped, but even then it is far from being extirpated. God for wiſe and holy ends permits it to be thus with the chriſtian: Particularly to keep him humble. My dear friend, pride and a fond conceit of ourſelves are interwoven in our very natures. The Lord in mercy thus exerciſes his people to keep them from ſpiritual pride, and to teach them to live habitually on that grace that is in the fountain. The Apoſtle’s thorn in the fleſh ſeems rather preventive than corrective: To keep him humble after his rapture, rather than to chaſtiſe him for any preſent prevailing pride of ſoul. And if ſo holy a perſon needed it, what do we think of ourſelves?

But *Superbus*, in order to reſtore peace to your troubled mind conſider, that no ſenſe of your unworthineſs ſhould drive you
 from

† Bolton’s directions for walking with God.

from that physician who can restore health and cure to your soul. Believe in him now as if you had never done it prior to this very period. If you were as brim full of sin as the sea is of water, the sun of light, and hell of darkness; yet remember your sins are not infinite, but the mercy of God, and the merits of Christ are. Let your case be as bad as the Devil and an awakened wrangling conscience can make it; yet here lies your comfort, “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin.” Has God heard thousands as it were out of the belly of hell, and shall you now despair of mercy? Is his hand shortened that it cannot save? Or his bowels shut up that he will not? Is that glorious luminary the sun emptied of light, for shining? Or weary of bestowing his beams on dunghills? Dare your unbelieving heart say that there are no rays in the Son of righteousness for you? When you see they have darted on benighted souls, upon the very verge of the bottomless pit. Would you be willing to give up your part in the all-atoning merits of the Son of God, and resign up the exceeding great and precious promises of the new covenant to others.—“No *Philemon* I never will.” Your own unbelieving heart and the accuser of the brethren have kindled this flame in your bosom. Satan’s finger is in this finishing stroke of wickedness, in order to dishonour your God, and disturb your peace. Though walking in darkness, seeing no light; yet stay yourself on the Lord, whose thoughts of mercy are as much above yours, as the heavens are above the earth—Wrestle with him in prayer till he return and bless you. A holy violence and reiterated importunity will never displease the Holy One of Israel. Say with the *leper*, “Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.” Wait with the *Syrophœnician* woman, in great humility, though his countenance be stern, and his answer rough at the first, yet in due time you will find him the meek, gentle Lamb of God. If the Devil and your misgiving heart attempt to stop the breath of your prayers, cry the louder with the blind man, “thou Son of David have mercy on me.” “He waits to be gracious;” and by poor broken penitent sinners he will be intreated. †

In a word my dear friend, believe me that notwithstanding of all this combustion raised in your soul by the Devil and your unbelief, God has gracious designs towards you. Be of good cheer

† *Greenham* informs us of an *Arian* put to death at *Norwich*, who a little before his execution, asked if he might be saved by Christ? And being told he might; broke out into this blasphemous speech; “If your Christ is so easily to be intreated as you say, then I defy him, and care not for him.”

cheer, the great physician calls you, though by harsh methods, yet with gracious intentions.

Permit me now *Superbus*, to offer to your consideration another argument in support of the supreme deity of that great Lord by whose obedience and death in the human nature, you expect justification at the great tribunal of God, and eternal glorification.

That he is the true God I prove from another name attributed to him in Scripture; viz. *Jehovah*. Now this is the incommunicable name of the one true God; a name so peculiar to him, "that he whose name *alone* is Jehovah is the most high over all the earth." This name is so peculiarly appropriate to himself, that he will not give it, nor the glory and perfection signified by it, to another. † It is equivalent to that name which the great God takes to himself, Exod. iii. 14. *I am that I am*. I am that I was, I will be that I am. The primary signification of the name Jehovah is *being*; and the most obvious reason of the name is, that God is being itself, independently, necessarily, and immutably existing. "I am Jehovah, I change not." In him is the whole nature of entity; and nothing hath any absolute perfect being but God himself. It is a word of absolute signification expressing the eternity, independence, and immutability of the one true God. And that this is the import of the word is plain from Scripture, and obtains the suffrage of all critics, Jews and christians, ancient and modern. The question then is, hath our Lord Jesus Christ this name attributed to him in Scripture? If he has it will necessarily follow, that he must possess all the glory and perfections signified by it. Must he not be eternal, independent, immutable, and necessarily existing? Must he not be the foundation and fountain of all that is, or that can possibly be?

That this name belongs to him is evident from Jer. xxiii. 6. This is the name whereby he shall be called the Lord, (or Jehovah) our righteousness. Jehovah, expressive of his absolute supremacy, eternal and independent nature: And yet astonishing that he is our righteousness. He, by the assumption of our nature into a personal union with the divine, becomes by his obedience and death, the ground and foundation of our justification before God. That the name Jehovah is a name peculiar to him is evident from a number of other texts. ‡ And in all those places where the Angel of Jehovah, is called *Jehovah*; which can relate to none but Jesus the Angel of the covenant — *Arians* sometimes amule

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† Isai. xlii. 8.
Zech. iii. 8, 13.

‡ See Jer. xxxiii. 6.
Isai. vi. 3, &c.

us with the phrase *Jehovah Angel*; if they mean this of any created Angel be who he will, let them reconcile their idea with the term *Jehovah*, as implying eternal, necessary existence.—To talk of a *Jehovah-Angel*, and yet his existence purely arbitrary, depending upon the mere good will and pleasure of God, is the grossest absurdity, if not the greatest impiety. For this reason it is attributing that incommunicable name which God will yield to no creature whatever, whether angelic, or *super-angelic*. It is somewhat strange to talk of a *Jehovah* mutable in his being and existence! But such a *Jehovah* do *Arians* and *Socinians* make Jesus the Son of God. Time was when this *Jehovah* had no existence; time was when he was only a creature; afterwards he assumed another form, he was made a God; and who can tell but he may be undeified after all? By the same mere good pleasure of God, which created him, and deified him, he may be reduced to the rank of a mere creature again. Who can say to the contrary?

Seeing then these names of the only true God are given to Christ in a proper and strict sense; and some of them are so peculiar to God, that they can be given in no sense at all to others: Seeing he is frequently stiled in Scripture, *Lord* and *God*, “the Lord God of the prophets;” “King of kings and Lord of lords;” “the true God,” the only wise God,” “God over all, blessed for evermore;” and particularly *Jehovah*; he must needs answer these high titles, and be by nature true and proper God. To suppose otherwise, is to suppose that these high titles, peculiar to the only true God are applied to Christ without their meaning, to amuse or deceive, and lead us into mistakes; but as that would be blasphemy once to imagine, so the names given to Christ should stand in our thoughts for the things they are signs of, and command our belief, that he really is what they declare him to be, the great and true God, God over all, immutable, and eternal in his being and existence.

What an infinite and condescending stoop did this great *Jehovah* make, in the assumption of human nature in its mean, lost, and ruined state! How distinguishing and sovereign was the grace that prompted this infinitely great personage to pass by the more excellent nature of the angelic tribe, and apprehend the sinking nature of men. To what an amazing height of dignity is human nature now raised! God will surely dwell with men, and men shall dwell with God. Hear the astonishing news ye Sons of licentiousness and riot; ye who by your prodigal courses do all that in you lies to debase that nature in you, which in the person of the Son of God, is so highly exalted. Hear the awful threatening pronounced by this incarnate *Jehovah* himself; “if

ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." And if it come to this issue with you, ye shall never see but *once* your dignified nature in the person of the Son of God: And this, instead of raising your admiration, and attracting your esteem, will cover you with everlasting shame and confusion. Hear it ye who with the most strenuous efforts, endeavour all you can to rob the Son of God of that divine glory and majesty, which as *Jehovah* he essentially and necessarily possesses. And, what if in some future period you find him to be, what the Scriptures unanimously declare him to be, *Jehovah*, the true and eternal God, as true to his threatenings, as to his promises. "They that honour me I will honour; and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

What a comfortable reflection my dear *Superbus*, to think that you and every humble christian who have taken up your standing for time and eternity on this foundation which God hath laid in Zion, the righteousness of *Jehovah*: What infinite perfection and value, (as I lately informed you) must be in that sacrifice which he offered, when he offered up himself. And what a glorious as well as unexceptionable righteousness must that be, which he by his obedience and death hath wrought out, and by the offer of the gospel is brought nigh, to all to whom the glad tidings have reached. Believe me you may venture your dearest interests on this bottom; you may, without being afraid venture your appearance before his awful tribunal, by laying hold on him, who "is made of God unto us righteousness." And seeing he is God, as well as man, he cannot but be mighty to save. He is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. He is *Jehovah*, he changes not. He is infinite, eternal, and unchangable. He is infinite in wisdom, to teach and guide us with his counsel while we are here; he is infinite in his power, to protect and defend us, to help and succour in every exigence and strait; he is infinite in his holiness, to sanctify and renew our natures, and to make us holy as he is holy; he is infinite in his goodness, to supply all our wants, to perfect our felicity: In a word, he is infinite in his truth, to make good all his promises to us, and all this because he is *Jehovah*; and therefore they that know, and acknowledge this name, may with the greatest safety put their trust in him, who never did, and never will forsake them that truly seek his face.

I proceed now *Superbus*, to confirm the truth of Christ's supreme deity from some of these properties and attributes which essentially belong to deity absolutely considered; and if we can find any, or all of these attributed to Jesus, no one can deny but this consequence will unavoidably follow, that he is truly and properly

perly God. If he that hath the true nature, and essential distinguishing properties of man, is in the properest sense true and real man; so he that hath the true nature, and essential distinguishing properties of the only true God, is in the properest sense truly and really God. It certainly must be the greatest absurdity and contradiction in nature to suppose otherwise. With regard to the relation he stands in to us in his office-capacity as Mediator, he is said to be “full of grace and truth;” with regard to the relation he stands in to his Eternal Father, as the second person of the ever blessed Trinity, the “fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily,” i. e. personally or substantially. The Godhead dwells in him, that is, the nature or essence of God, yea, all the fulness of the Godhead, which takes in all its essential perfections, glory and blessedness; this not only dwelt, but dwells, that is, abides constantly and for ever, not only with him, but *in him*. So that he has the same fulness of the Godhead in him, as the Father has, which speaks him to be truly and properly God.

More particularly here, he is *Eternal*, and if so he must be God in the most strict and absolute sense of the word; for eternity is an incommunicable and essential perfection of deity; and if he is eternal, he necessarily exists. The first Scripture proof I shall produce in order to confirm the eternal existence of Christ you will find in Prov. viii. 22, &c. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When he prepared the Heavens I was there; when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then was I by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, &c. That it is a person, and not an attribute or perfection of the divine nature that here speaks, I apprehend no man will question. Some of the *Arians* themselves own, that the speaker here is the Son of God. Now what is predicated of him? Just the very same that is affirmed of the one God in Psal. xc. 2. From everlasting to everlasting thou art God. The Lord possessed me (by generation) in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; i. e. before any thing was created, I existed; and if so he was from eternity; for this reason, nothing was before creation but eternity; the creation of the world and time were coeval. The Apostle Paul we find uses a phrase almost similar to what we have in the foregoing text; Coll. i. 17 — And he is before all things. Now what is it to be before all things? But to be from eternity. And if he was before all things, i. e. from eternity, he must necessarily be God supreme, for an eternal creature

ture is a flat contradiction. Why doth the Apostle in the foregoing text say the Christ was before all things? But to prove him the Creator of all things; and is it not absolutely requisite that the Creator exist before the things created?

Again, we have another illustrious text to the same purpose in *Isai. ix. 6.* Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, &c. If you would wish to know the exposition of this text by a certain *Socinian*, I will give it in his own words. “Unto us a child
“ is born, unto us a Son is given,—the wonderful counsellor;
“ the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, shall name him
“ the peaceable prince, his government shall be multiplied, (i. e.
“ he shall reign long, even twenty and nine years) and he
“ shall have very great peace,—from henceforth to the end of
“ his life. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this,
“ i. e. God’s love to his chosen people, shall make good this
“ prophecy.” || What prodigious trifling not to say worse of it is this, to interpret such lofty, and mysterious words, each of which should command the highest admiration, only to mean that King *Hezekiah* should reign twenty and nine years in peace.—The words in the original literally run thus; a child is born to us, a Son is given to us, and the principality shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called admirable counsellor, God strong, Father of eternity, prince of peace, to multiply principality, and to peace no end. With what solemnity should the word of God be treated, how should men take care not to add, nor diminish from the words of the holy one.—Now is not the child born, and the Son given, expressly by the Holy Ghost called the Father of eternity: And is it possible, that either the *Arian* or *Socinian* hypothesis can agree with the name here given him. The Father of eternity, and yet the first creature ever God made; the Father of eternity, and yet never had an existence before his conception in the womb of the *Virgin Mary*. Should we hesitate a moment *Superbus*, whether we ought to resolve our faith into, this faith *Arius*, this faith *Socinus*; or this faith the Holy Ghost? In a word is it possible to believe that Christ is the Father of eternity, and yet himself not eternal?

We find our Lord Jesus Christ himself appropriating this attribute and perfection of the divine nature to himself, *Rev. i. 8.* I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end saith the Lord, which is, which was, and which is to come the Almighty. In the fourth verse of that chapter we find the Father described from his eternal being, without all beginning or ending; and our Lord Jesus Christ asserts in the *aforecited* text in the very same

same terms his own absolute eternity, and that the description there given is to be understood of Christ, and as spoken by himself, is evident both from the preceding and subsequent context. But if our adversaries dispute this; can they call in question, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the speaker in Rev. xxii. 13? And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his works shall be. Here he gives an account of himself as he into whose hands all power and authority to judge the world is committed. After this account of himself as coming quickly to judgment he adds, I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. †—— Might it not be asked, what doth God mean by that description he gives of himself in Isaiah, chap. xlv. 6. I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no God? Is it not descriptive of the absolute eternity of the one God? Wherein then lies the difference of this phrase when applied by God to himself, and significative of his eternal existence, and the same phrase when applied by Christ to himself? If the one is descriptive of God's absolute eternity, so must the other be of Christ's; or else our Lord has arrogated to himself an essential attribute and perfection of the divine nature which did not belong to him, and in so far, the accusation of the Jews against him for blasphemy was not groundless. But *Superbus*, faithfulness is the girdle of his loins, and righteousness the girdle of his reins; let our Lord Jesus Christ be true and every man a liar.

We have another illustrious proof of Christ's eternity in Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. And thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the Heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they shall wax old as doth a garment: And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years fail not. That these words have an immediate reference to Christ is evident from the connexive particle *Kai*, and, which connects this with the former citation, and makes it to run thus; of the Son it is said thy throne O God is for ever and ever, *Kai*, and, of him it is also said, thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth. Again from the Scope of the Apostle, which, both before and after, is, to bring testimonies to

† “ The Author of the history of the *Unitarians* reads the words “ thus; Christ (says he) was the first, that is the most honourable, and “ the last, that is the most despised of men; the first with good men, “ and the last with evil men.”

to prove the excellency of the *Messiah*, and the truth of what he had asserted of him, v. 2, 3. and therefore he pursues the same design here. Now is it not evident that these words, they shall perish, but thou remainest, are plainly spoken of the same person who founded the world in the beginning, and therefore must belong to Christ? The foregoing words are taken from Psal. cii. 26, 27. and spoke of there as descriptive of Gods eternity; and mentioned here, and applied by the Apostle to Christ to point out his eternal existence. And there are two things attributed here to Christ; the creation of the Heavens and the earth; and the abolition, or change of them: And then the Apostle proceeds to point out the eternity and immutability of their Creator. It is here affirmed of Christ that he *remaineth* or abideth; that he is the same, and his years fail not. One and the same thing is intended in all these expressions, even his eternal and absolutely immutable existence.—Eternity is sometimes described as a *nunc stans*; wherein, or whereunto nothing is past or future; it being always wholly present in, and to itself. These phrases are synonymous with that name God designs himself by to Moses, *I am*; that is, who is of himself, and in himself, always, absolutely and unchangeably the same. The last expression although metaphorical, is of the same import, “thy years fail not.” That is, the creature whose duration is reckoned by years shall fail and come to an end; but of his being and existence who is Creator, there is neither beginning nor end; because he is absolutely eternal. †

Again our Lord Jesus Christ is omnipotent, and if so, he must be the supreme God, and consubstantial with his Eternal Father. Is it possible that the term *Almighty*, without the highest blasphemy can be attributed to any creature however excellent in its nature? Can any being whatever, without being possessed of Almighty power create the world, preserve the creatures in their being and existence; raise the dead; forgive sins; redeem the world? &c. But these works are expressly attributed to him; consequently he must be omnipotent. But do you ask, is this perfection and attribute of deity any where in Scripture ascribed to

† The Author of the Athanasian Creed analyzed and refuted, in his endeavouring to prove the non-eternity of Christ, very artfully passes over the Scripture texts above mentioned. “The only considerable text produced, (says he) in support of it, viz. Christ’s eternity is, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*” He either thought that the texts which have been mentioned were not worth his while to take notice of them; or too stubborn to compute; it is very likely the last was the truth.

to Christ? I answer it is, in Rev. i. 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the *Almighty*. In the preceding verse Christ is described in his appearance to judgment; behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, &c. Immediately upon this it is added, to strike us with the greater awe at the thoughts of his tremendous and awful appearance, and of our appearance also to be judged, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord,—the *Almighty*.

In order to convince you *Superbus*, that this title peculiarly belongs to Christ, I cannot do better than give you the sentiments of a pious and learned Divine on this head, and that in his own words.—“ But that which seems to me to put the case beyond all dispute is, that it is Christ, and not the Father, who speaks, or is personated in speaking through this book of revelations, and Alpha and Omega are constantly used by him, as his special distinguishing denomination. In the beginning of this book we are told, “ this is the revelation of Jesus Christ,”—and he sent and signified it by his Angel to his servant John.” And at the close of the book, Christ calls himself Alpha and Omega, and adds, “ I Jesus have sent mine Angel to testify to you these things in the churches.” Though several things are said of the Father in this book, yet I cannot find, that he ever calls himself, or is called Alpha and Omega, or that he is ever represented as speaking at all in any other parts of it; which makes it highly irrational to suppose him to be the person speaking of himself under this character here.” † What shall we say of the boldness and effrontery of the aforementioned Author, who roundly tells us “ that there is no text in the New Testament wherein our Saviour is described by the character of the Lord God Almighty.” ‡ I am afraid in the issue he will be found to have given Christ the lie. He knew perfectly well, that to yield up this text, and call Christ *Almighty*, his *mighty* fabric fell to the ground at once. So the easiest and the most expeditious way of getting rid of it, and imposing on his credulous readers was, to deny at once, that Christ never spoke these words, and that he is no where in all the New Testament called *Almighty*.

I may further confirm the truth of Christ's supreme deity from his *omniscience*. He is *Almighty* and can do all things; he is omniscient and knows all things. Is he not expressly said to know all

† See Dr. Guyse's Sermons on the Trinity, page 71. ‡ See page 39.

all men and all things absolutely and without limitation? We are told that Jesus did not commit himself to them, (viz. the Jews) because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man. † And now (say the disciples) are we sure that thou knowest all things.—By this we believe that thou camest forth from God, viz. in his divine nature by eternal generation. If it be here replied, that the disciples only understood him of his coming forth from God the Father as a prophet, or in his official capacity complexly. How were they sure from this that he knew all things? They certainly were apprised of this truth that it was by no means essential to the prophets to know all things. And further, our Lord plainly distinguishes between his eternal generation and his temporal incarnation in these words. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. ‡ It neither was, nor possibly could be, that by the Father's mission of him into the world he knew all things, but entirely owing to his consubstantiality with the Father. It might be queried here, whether or not is it possible for infinite power to cause a finite creature know all the thoughts, desires, and motions which pass through the hearts of all men at once? Or in the last judgment to have all the thoughts, words and actions of all men, in all ages, so immediately before him as to pass sentence accordingly; but such (I may say) infinite knowledge Christ must have, as he is to be the judge at the last day?

That to know the hearts of all men, is the sole prerogative of Jehovah, is clear from 1 Kings viii. 39. Thou *only* knowest the hearts of all the children of men: And this Jehovah himself claims as a peculiar perfection of his nature. I the Lord search the heart, and try the reins, Jer. xvii. 9, 10. God here speaks of the absolute impossibility of any other knowing the heart as the foregoing verse shows. What shall we say then, when we are assured that Christ is possessed of this very knowledge? “He knew what was in man.” He inspects the heart of every man; he knows their thoughts, and the inward reasoning of their souls. But what if he knows before hand what will be the particular inclinations of mens hearts, before these inclinations spring up, or are formed in them? And that this the truth is evident from John vi. 44. for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

We find when *Peter* expressed his strong resolution that he would never forsake his Master, and boldly avowed that though all men should be offended, yet he would not; yea although he should

† John ii. 27, 25.

‡ John xvi. 28.

should die with him, yet he would not deny him in any wise; the same language was adopted by all the disciples: Yet Christ at this very time knew that he, and all his fellow disciples would drop their resolution and basely desert him. He hath the most perfect knowledge of mens hearts on earth, although now in glory, and hath left this peculiar prerogative of his Godhead so clearly on record, as pertaining to himself, that it is become a common principle of faith, and a known maxim in all the churches. For says he, all the churches shall know that I am he who searcheth the reins and heart; and will give unto every one of you according to your works. † And that his knowledge is infinite is evident from what he himself tells us with regard to his knowledge of the Father; viz. that he knew the Father, even as the Father knew him. ‡

That objection which is the great *Achilles* of *Arians* and *Socinians*, viz. Christ's ignorance of the day of judgment, militates nothing against what was just now observed; and is impossible that it could be true of Christ, in that consideration of him as God, which I have been just now speaking of. For the infinite knowledge which the Scriptures ascribe to him, and which he claims as the essential prerogative of his nature, absolutely excludes this ignorance: As I already told you, Christ is to be considered here as man, and so the context leads us to understand. For he there speaks of himself as the Son of man, and in his official character in human nature. "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory," &c. And in the next verse, "the Son of man, is as a man taking a far journey," &c. And we are sure, that he increased in wisdom and knowledge as man, and so had not all knowledge in that consideration of him; but that this is no way inconsistent with the perfection of his Godhead I have already shown.—That Christ as man could be omniscient we flatly deny, unless we were to maintain with the *Lutherans* that the infinite perfections and attributes of the divine nature were communicated to the human, which is absurd, yea absolutely impossible. His infinite knowledge of all persons and things, proves him to be God; his increasing in wisdom and knowledge proves him to be truly and really man.—The same answer will serve to solve any difficulty which may arise from such expressions as these; that all things which he had heard of the Father, he declared to his disciples; and "I speak to the world (says he) the things which I have heard of him," &c.

I may

† Rev. ii. 23.

‡ Joha. x. 15.

I may observe to you here *Superbus*, that the Author of the *Athanasian creed analyzed and refuted* looks upon Christ's claiming this prerogative of searching the reins and hearts, to be one of the strongest proofs in all the New Testament for the deity of the Son of God. And he falls upon a very strange method to evade the force of that text, Rev. ii. 23. by connecting it with the latter clause of verse 27. "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts:"—Even as I received of my Father. † With as great propriety he might have connected it with these words; "in the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth." If any one will be at the pains to read the intervening verses in the most transient manner, he will immediately see the truth of the observation. Such a far-fetched connexion may pass with such who, instead of looking into the Scriptures, only look into the book. But with regard to such as wish to resolve their faith into the divine testimony, they will certainly be cautious of swallowing down every thing that this man avers to be true, without searching the Scriptures to see with their own eyes, whether it will quadrate with the unerring rule of Gods word.

I might also confirm the truth of Christ's supreme deity from another essential attribute of the divine nature ascribed to him, viz. *omnipresence*. Is it possible to conceive that a creature however excellent, and dignified in its nature, can be every where present? "Do not I fill Heaven and earth," is the language of the one true God. But what if we find the same attributed to Christ? We have his own word for it; John ii. 13. And no man hath ascended into Heaven but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of man, who is in Heaven. Christ as God was in the beginning with God, and came down from Heaven to do, and declare his Father's will. He came down from Heaven, not by any local descent, or by quitting Heaven, but only by a manifestation of himself on earth. Now is it possible to conceive that a mere creature can be in Heaven, and on earth at the same time? In order to evade the force of this text for proving the *omnipresence* of Christ, the *Socinians* and *Arians* will tell us, that the latter clause of the verse should be rendered thus; "even the Son of man which *was* in Heaven;" and this say they is apparent, because Christ speaks of himself as the Son of man. In answer to this, I might observe that Christ here speaks of himself, as "the Son of man who is in Heaven," as *Peter* speaks of the prince of life being crucified, and *Paul*, that the Lord of glory suffered, and that God purchased the church with his own blood. The Son of man is in Heaven, not *as* the Son of man,

† See page 43.

man, but as the Son of God. But what fundamentally destroys this answer is this consideration, that it is not true that Christ, as to his human nature *was with God*, or was in Heaven. Yes say *Socinians*, after his baptism he was taken up into Heaven there to be made acquainted with the will of God. But if any one can swallow such an absurd notion they may, it is scarcely worth the refuting. If men would not shut their eyes against the clearest light, they must learn from the above text, that our Lord Jesus Christ is omnipresent; in one and the same time filling Heaven and earth with his presence.

When about to leave his disciples he teaches them the same comfortable truth, and inculcates the belief of it on them in order to support them in all the trials, difficulties and dangers they had to encounter with. Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

“ *Philemon*, I have heard it objected by the adversaries of Christ’s supreme deity that there are some titles and attributes which singularly belong to deity, and are the principal criterion of the one God, which are never applied to Christ; such as the one God and Father of all.”

It would be strange indeed *Superbus*, if these titles were applied to the Son; because taken all together they are personal titles, peculiarly belonging to God the Father. And it must remain a standing monument against the adversaries of Christ’s deity to their shame and confusion, that after the doctrine has been clearly proven from the word of God; that no proof shall be thought sufficient, unless it be a proof of what was never pretended, of God the Son’s being the very same person with God the Father. And herein lies the mystery of their heresy, viz. in this one false principle, that the Son cannot be strictly God, unless he be the person of the Father.

“ *Philemon*, I have often heard it urged, and that with great vehemence against your hypothesis, that all the glory, dignity, veneration and worship, which is due to the Son of God, follows in consequence of his humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto the death of the cross; and that the names, titles, and attributes, which you have been discoursing of, did not originally belong to him, but conferred on him by virtue of his obedience to the will of the Father. Do not you think this notion has some countenance from what an inspired penman informs us? Philip. ii. 8, 9, 10. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should

“ should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and
 “ things under the earth: And that every tongue should
 “ confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the
 “ Father.”

In answer to this *Superbus*, allow me to observe that the Apostle is not here speaking of the exaltation of Christ's divine nature, but of the exaltation of that nature which suffered.—Because he became obedient unto death, —Wherefore God hath highly exalted him. This exaltation is represented in Scripture, either as the *reward*, or the *consequence* of his sufferings unto the death; for “ we see him (saith the *Apostle*) who was made a little lower than the *Angels*, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour.” And the elders about the throne say, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory. † Moreover the Evangelist John expressly informs us, that this dominion and power was given to the Son of man, because he was so. The Apostle doth not say of Christ as the *Socinians* contend, that he is exalted to the glory of God the Father, though that be true of the exaltation of his human nature; but he saith, that being thus exalted, he is to be acknowledged of all tongues and nations as their *Lord*, to the glory of the Father; nothing more tending to his glory, then that all persons owning Christ as their Lord, and yielding obedience to him, should abound in these works of righteousness “ which are through Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father.”

There are some Divines who rather view the Apostle's words as intended to point out a more illustrious manifestation of Christ, and a solemnly proclaiming him to be what he always was. I shall give you the sentiments of a very celebrated Divine on this text. “ Certain it is says he that one who is in a proper sense
 “ God, cannot be exalted. Hence it is, that as many of
 “ the ancients as have understood this text of a proper exal-
 “ tation, have interpreted it of the human only, not the divine
 “ nature of Christ. So that here again the *Arians* understand-
 “ ing it of a proper exaltation to a better state, and of Christ
 “ considered in his highest capacity, run counter to the ancients
 “ before the Nicene council, in a very material article respect-
 “ ing this controversy —If a proper exaltation be intended;
 “ it can only be meant of Christ as receiving these honours and
 “ titles in his human or mediatorial capacity, which he had al-
 “ ways enjoyed in another.—This, in the main, is true, and
 “ right: But there is some reason to think, that it is not pre-
 “ cisely

“ cifully and accurately the meaning of this text, which seems
 “ not to speak of any proper exaltation, but of the more illustri-
 “ ous manifestation of him for the solemn proclaiming him to
 “ be what he always was — But even this though true in part,
 “ I take not to be the full meaning of the text before us. Though
 “ the absolute essential dignity of our blessed Lord was always
 “ the same, and in respect of which he was ever equal with God;
 “ yet his relative dignity towards us, founded in the obligations
 “ we have received from him, never so signally appeared, as in
 “ that amazing condescension, and goodness, his becoming man,
 “ and dying for us. We are hereby “ bought with a price,”
 “ becoming servants to Christ, and Christ a Lord to us, in a
 “ peculiar sense, and under a new and special title. Upon this
 “ occasion, and upon this account, it pleased God in the most
 “ solemn and pompous manner, to proclaim the high dignity
 “ of God the Son, to reinforce his rightful claim of homage, and
 “ to command Heaven and earth, Angels and men to pay him
 “ all honour, reverence, and adoration, suitable to the dignity
 “ of so great, so good, so divine a person, as the Son of God.
 “ We may observe how, under the Old Testament, it pleased
 “ God often to insist upon what great things he had done, (though
 “ slight in comparison to the work of redemption) in order to
 “ move the persons concerned to receive him as God. Thus
 “ Gen. xv. 7. I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of
 “ the Chaldees; and Exod. xx. ii. Deut. v. 6. I am the
 “ Lord thy God which brought thee out of the Land of *Egypt* :
 “ To omit many other places, proving that even God the Father
 “ asserted his claim to the adoration of his people from the good
 “ and great things he had done for them.” †

I proceed now to confirm the truth of Christs supreme deity
 from the works ascribed to him in Scripture; and if we find they
 are such as none but *God* strictly and properly speaking can per-
 form, or are claimed by him as his *sole* prerogative, then we may
 warrantably conclude that our Lord Jesus Christ is co-equal
 with the Father.

Observe how our Lord speaks of his joint operation with his
 Father in the same absolute and sovereign way with respect to all
 these works in general, when he says, “ my Father worketh
 hitherto, and I work.” — “ and what things soever he doth,
 these also doth the Son likewise,” or in the same manner:

The work of creation is ascribed in a proper sense to Christ. In
 the first place let us attend a little to the voice of Scripture on this
 head, and see how *peculiarly* and *exclusively* it appropriates this
 great

† Dr. Waterland's Serm. page 170, &c. to 181.

great and glorious work to the one true God. Thus saith the holy one of Israel.—I have made the earth, and created man upon it; I, even my hands have stretched out, the Heavens, and all their host have I commanded. † I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the Heavens *alone*, that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself*. ‡ Accordingly we find him distinguishing himself from all that are not the true and living God by his creating all things. The Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King.—Then shall ye say to them, the *Gods* that have not made the Heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these Heavens. He hath made the earth by his power; he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the Heavens by his discretion. Now *Superbus* I will appeal to you, do not these, and many other similar places of Scripture which might have been cited, ascribe the work of creation to the one Jehovah, so peculiarly as to exclude all others from being so much as instruments, much more from being principal agents in it? For he could not be said to do it *alone*, and *by himself*, if he employed any others in it. What is it to create? Or what is the proper work of the efficient cause? Creation is an immediate effect of the divine will, exerting absolute omnipotence. God spake and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast. Believe me my dear friend, the notion of an agent subordinate to the Godhead in creation-work, when there was *nothing* for that agent to work upon; and the notion of an *infinite* power residing in, and exerted by any being that is not absolutely infinite, shocks all the principles of natural reason, and carries the most open face of an impossibility. And therefore the Apostle speaks of the creation of the world as a clear evidence and incontestible proof, and that to the very Heathens, of the eternal power and supreme Godhead of him that made it. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. § From all this we may assuredly depend on the truth of this maxim, “He that built all things is God.”

Now doth not the Scriptures assert in the properest and plainest terms, that Christ created all things?—“All things were made by him, and without him, was not any thing made that was made—He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” In order to favour the scheme of our adversaries the above words should have run thus; in

† Isai. xlv. 11, 12. ‡ Chap. xlv. 24. § Rom. i. 20.

in the beginning God created his Son, and then, by him all things were made, &c. But the words as they run, plainly import, that he was never made himself; but was from eternity with God, and was God. The Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Colossians. chap. i. 16, 17. expressly extends the work of creation by Christ to all things of the upper and invisible, as well as to the lower and visible world, to all which he had a prior existence. For by him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things. Is it possible that Christ's creating all things, and his existence before any created being, could be expressed in more clear and comprehensive terms? What can be more fully, and clearly said in the case? Are we not taught in the most explicit terms, that all things were made by Christ as the first cause, and for him as the last end? All things were created *by* him, say *Socinians* as the instrumental cause; but what if we find creation-work as performed by the one God, expressed in the very same terms as is here spoken of with regard to Christ? I am Jehovah,——that spreadeth abroad the Heavens *by* myself. I hope it will never be said the great Jehovah was only an instrument in the work of creation. Neither can we look upon the Son of God in this light, unless we are determined at all events to contradict the clearest and plainest Scripture testimonies. The distinction which our adversaries make between *by whom*, and *from whom*, can stand them in no stead to prove the Son only an instrument in creation. The preposition *dia*, *by*, with a genitive after it, is frequently used to express the efficient cause, e. g. Rom. xi. 36. of whom, and *through whom*, and to whom are all things. To whom be glory for ever. If they understand this of the Father; then by their own way of reasoning, they make him no more than an instrumental cause. Are we not said to be called *by* God the Father? Is he only the instrumental cause? If he be, who is the principal efficient cause? God is faithful *by* whom ye were called to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ. † Now, it cannot with any propriety be inferred against Christ's creating the worlds by his own proper efficiency, from its being said that God made them by him. But what if we find creation-work expressly appropriated to Christ, by God the Father himself? And this we will in Heb. chap. i. 8, 9, 10, 11. But to the Son he (viz. God the Father) saith, thy throne O God, is for ever and ever.—— And thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,

† 2 Cor. i. 9.

earth, and the Heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest, &c. This is quoted word for word, from Pſal. cii. 25, 26, 27. where without all controverſy the proper work of the one only true God, as the firſt ſupreme cauſe in the creation of all things, is ſpoken of. And the whole context in the Hebrews ſhows, that Chriſt is the perſon to whom that text, and the efficiency there ſpoken of belongs; for it is placed in the miſt of a diſcourſe, wherein the Father all along ſpeaks to the Son. From the third verſe there is a compariſon carried on between Chriſt and the Angels, and ſeveral particulars are reckoned wherein he had the preheminance above the Angels, all joined together with the copulative, *and*, viz. Chriſt had the preheminance in theſe reſpects; unto which of the Angels ſaid he thou art my Son. *And* again, I will be to him a Father.—*And* again to the Son, he ſaith, let all the Angels of God worſhip him.—*And*, thy throne O God, is for ever and ever.—*And*, thou Lord in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth. What a wonderful arbitrary & abſurd interpretation, to turn copulatives into diſjunctives; which is done by *Socinians*, and *Arians* in the text now under conſideration. To refer all the copulatives mentioned to Chriſt in the chapter, except that in the 10th verſe: And good reaſon they have for ſo doing, for grant this and their *Babel* building falls to the ground. But I am afraid in ſo doing, they give the lie to the “ Holy One of Iſrael.” Upon the whole can any thing be more plain, than that Jeſus Chriſt is in his original nature the only true, and moſt high God; ſince this work which is done by that God *himſelf* and *alone*, and can be done by none other, is ſo often in ſuch expreſs terms aſcribed to the Son, yea by the Father himſelf, as done by him.

The Author of the Athanaſian Creed analyzed and refuted, in one ſentence contradicts all that the Prophets and Apoſtles, yea what the great Jehovah himſelf hath ſaid, reſpecting Chriſt as the Creator of all things; and at once gives them the lie. “ Let it be obſerved (ſays he) that our Saviour is never ſtyled the Creator of Heaven and Earth.” † A bold and moſt impious ſentence indeed. One would be apt to imagine that he entertained ſome inward rancour and ſpite againſt the Son of God; yea, that he had an underſtanding far ſuperior to Prophets or Apoſtles, or the great God. Theſe all unanimoſly ſtile him the Creator of Heaven and Earth. No ſays our Author he is never ſo ſtyled. But let us purſue him a little further.—“ We read (ſays he) in “ the New Teſtament that God created all things by Jeſus “ Chriſt;

“ Christ; that God made the worlds by his Son, or established the ages by his Son; and that the world was made by him, and through him.” But granting he was only an inferior instrument as he maintains he was in the creation, doth he not deserve the name of Creator? Doth not the Scriptures plainly and expressly attribute this character to him? If “ all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made;” is he not the Creator in some sense or other? Our Author might be asked; what degree of power doth it require to create, or bring a thing out of nothing into being? Infinite power he must reply. I would ask then; is it possible for infinite power to reside in a finite creature? I would ask again; how did Christ upon his own principles as an *inferior instrument* co-operate with the Father in creation? What hand had he in creation? Was he a mere spectator, or did he really create the world? Why would God employ an inferior instrument in creation, when he could do nothing without infinite power? And if he could bestow infinite power upon a creature, this was in very deed making that creature equal to himself, which is an absurdity. Let us hear his own words with regard to Christ’s instrumentality in the work of creation. “ He (*viz.* Christ) is plainly represented as an inferior instrument whom God employed in the creation of the world. Neither is this inconsistent with what we read in the prophet Isaiah xlv. 24. I am the Lord that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the Heavens alone, that spreadeth the earth by myself. Almighty God may consistently be said to be the alone maker of Heaven and Earth, because he received help from none; he worked by his supreme and underived power, though he might think fit to employ another as an inferior instrument.” †—Again says he, “ there is no sort of difficulty in God’s being represented as the alone Maker of Heaven and Earth, although it be declared in the New Testament, that God created all things (by or through) Jesus Christ.” ‡ But might it not be enquired at our Author where do we read in all the New Testament that God employed his Son Jesus Christ as an inferior instrument in the work of creation? How is our *common sense* to inform us that this is a scriptural truth. Have we no other proof but this; that Almighty God created all things (by or through) Jesus Christ? But will not the same common sense inform us that *of God and through him*—are all things. § Here our common sense is at a stand; were both Father and Son only instrumental in this great and glorious work? And if what our Author says be true, they were

† Page 48.

‡ Page 59.

§ Rom. xi. 36.

were no more. And who was the efficient cause? He thinks there is no sort of difficulty in viewing God as the alone Maker of Heaven and Earth; and Jesus Christ a subordinate instrument. I freely own there seems to be such a difficulty in it to me, that I have not the least conception of it. And I might ask any one, how they can reconcile the idea of a creature and creator together?

I proceed now *Superbus* to confirm the divinity of Christ from another glorious work ascribed to him, viz. the preservation of all things. No one I suppose will question the truth of this common maxim, that it requires the same Almighty power to preserve the world in existence, which gave it a being. Preservation has, and very justly too been commonly called a continued creation. The Scriptures countenance such an expression, when they speak of Gods acts of providence towards his creatures, under the notion of creation. Thou sendest forth thy Spirit; they are created. † And the scope of the Apostles argument leads us to understand him to speak of God as a *preserver*, when he calls him a faithful Creator. ‡ And we will find these two, viz. creation, and preservation joined together as the distinguishing criterion of the one true God. Thou, even thou, art Lord alone, who has made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their hosts, the earth, and all things that are therein,—and thou preservest them all. §

And hence by way of emphasis and peculiarity, and in exclusion of all others, the one true God is said to preserve man and beast. || But what if we find this peculiar prerogative of the one true God ascribed to Christ? Will it not necessarily follow, that he is God strictly and properly speaking? But this godlike work of preservation is, with great fulness and strength of expression ascribed to him. He is before all things, and by him all things do *consist*. All those several ranks and individuals of creatures, of both the visible and invisible worlds; from the highest Cherub that surrounds the throne of his glory, to the meanest insect that crawls on his footstool; his Almighty arm preserves all; they all stand and continue in him. In him we live, move, and have our being.* Upholding all things by the word of *his* power: † Not by any delegated power from the Father, as a subordinate agent as *Socinians* would teach us; but by a power essentially residing in him as the great God. The same Almighty word of his that gave the worlds a being, preserves them in existence. “He commands, and they stand fast.” He acts the God, or the

part

† Psal. civ. 30.

‡ 1 Pet. iv. 19.

§ Neh. ix. 6.

|| Psal. xxxvii. 6.

* Acts xvii. 28.

† Heb. i. 3.

part which God only can act, in constant and almighty energy to maintain the world, and all creatures in it, and speaks of himself as acting herein jointly with, and in the same absolute sovereign manner as the Father doth. “ My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;” viz. in a way of supreme providence, with a commanding power and influence on the course of nature, which equally and at all times obeys me and him; as you see by what I have now done in making this impotent man whole by the word of my power. And this the Jews understood him to speak in such an absolute strain, as bespoke him equal to their only true God, and therefore sought to kill him.

The Author of the Athanasian Creed analyzed and refuted, &c. expresses himself on this article to the following purpose. “ As to the preservation of all things being ascribed to Christ, Coloss. i. 17. by him all things consist; the form of the expression is the same with that already examined; as God created all things by (or through) Christ, so he preserves or governs all things by (or through) Christ; to which Heb. i. 3. is parallel, upholding all things by the word of his power, his power means the power of God the Father.”—But is it God the Father that is described in the first clause of the verse; “ who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.”? Was it God the Father that purged our sins, and sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high? The very same person who was the brightness of his glory, &c. and who by himself purged our sins, upholds all things by the word of his power. But perhaps our Author’s meaning is, that both Father and Son are joint in this glorious work of preservation; as undivided in essence so in operation; and in so far he was right. But alas! if we read on our expectations from this quarter are blasted. “ The full import of these expressions (says he) taken in the highest (*Arian*) sense, is; that God employs Christ as an inferior instrument in the government of the world.” To spend any more time on the absurd impious notion of Christ’s being an *inferior instrument* in the work of creation and providence, would be entirely fruitless. I shall leave him and his friends in the full possession of a doctrine, which I am sure they can put no determinate sense upon.

The truth of Christ’s supreme deity may be confirmed from the miracles which he wrought, while in his state of humiliation here on earth. A miracle indeed of itself, is no proof that the immediate visible agent therein is God; but it always imports, that the power of the only true God is put forth to work it. We find that both the prophets under the Old, and the Apostles under the New

Testament:

Testament dispensation did many miracles; but they took special care to declare by express words, or by the plain interpretative manner of their deportment, that it was not by their own power, but only by the power of another that they did such things. So that none could, without the most stupid ignorance, mistake them for God. But our Lord Jesus Christ in the general course of his working miracles behaved in a quite different manner: And his high sovereign and absolute way of acting peculiar only to the true God, is a strong and undeniable proof of his Godhead.

Our Lord usually wrought his miracles without the least appearance of a previous application to his Father, thereby practically avowing to the world, that he was sufficient of himself for them; and thereby also testifying to the world that the works which he wrought were such as none but God could work, and are even recommended by our Lord as such. The Prophets before Christ, and the Apostles after him, performed miracles: God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, Heb. ii. 4. But the prophets did all their miracles by calling upon the name of God, invoking the divine power. *Elijah* when he raised the widow's Son, he laid the child upon his own bed, and he cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn by slaying her Son! And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the Lord, and said O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again: And he revived. † When the same *Elijah* had challenged the Priests of Baal to bring with them each a sacrifice, and wait for an answer from Heaven by prayer. He prays to God to hear him, and to work the miracle, and to vindicate his own glory, by sending fire, which was done, to the amazement of all that beheld it. ‡

When *Elisha* was mocked by the children of Bethel, he cursed them in the name of the Lord. 2 Kings ii. 24. When the same prophet divided the waters of Jordan, he calls upon the name of the Lord God of *Elijah*.

Again when the Apostles wrought miracles after the ascension of their Lord, they wrought them in the name of Christ. The healing of the impotent man is the first instance; and observe *Peter's* words on this occasion; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up, and walk. § And so far was the Apostle from assuming any power to do that miracle in his own name; that he declares to the people that came about him, on that occasion, that

† 1 Kings xvii. 20. ‡ 1 Kings xviii. 37. § Acts iii. 9.

that he disclaimed all pretensions to it. Why marvel ye at this? And why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power, or holiness, we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus.—And his name, through faith in his name hath made this man strong whom ye see, and know. † The same Apostle being questioned before the Rulers and Elders of the people on the same subjects, answers to the same purpose. If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole. Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised up from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. ‡——Thus the Apostle Paul acted after the same manner in the case of the damsel possessed with a Spirit of divination, Acts xvi. 18. Paul being grieved, turned and said to the Spirit; I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Many other examples might be brought in to support this observation that the miracles, signs, and wonders wrought by the Prophets and Apostles, were not wrought *in their own names*, but upon the invocation of the name of Jesus. Whereas our Lord put forth his acts of sovereignty and omnipotence, *in his own name*, acted openly by his own authority, and commanded the Devils, the winds, the seas, and the dead without invoking any name, or any superior power.

It is no objection against what was just now observed that our Lord addressed himself to his Father, when he was about to raise Lazarus out of his grave. He lifted up his eyes, and said, Father I thank thee, that thou hast heard me. § But let us observe what he immediately adds, to convince us that his conduct on such an occasion, was not owing to any insufficiency in himself; “but because of the people which stood by, that they might believe that the Father had sent him.” He suitable to his mediatorial character, made this application to the Father for this very good reason; that the people might be convinced of the wickedness and falsehood of their frequent blasphemies, whereby they accused him, as performing his miracles by a confederation with the Devil, or by a power which the Devil possessing him, exerted
by

† Acts iii. 6, 12, 16.

‡ Acts iv. 9, 10.

§ John xi. 41, 42, 43.

by him. And therefore to convince them that he acted by no diabolical power, but that as the true Messiah, he came from God, and acted by a divine power, he in the presence of them all applied to his Father, as owned and approved of him in what he was going to do. And yet, at the same time to convince them, that he acted not merely as a delegate, in a dependent way, and not immediately by his own power together with the Father, he adds in the next verse, and I knew that thou hearest me always, thereby intimating that his will and the Father's were always the same, so that he never willed any thing, but the Father willed it likewise; and therefore he, in a most sovereign absolute manner, like the most High God, spoke in his own, and not in his Father's name, and "cried with a loud voice *Lazarus* come forth," and he came forth immediately. He managed this whole affair with admirable skill, suitable to his different characters, as God on the one hand, and as man and his Father's servant in human nature on the other, and so as to show that he was really the Messiah, the *sent* of God, whom he owned; and at the same time what an infinitely great Messiah he was. †

But *Superbus*, what think you was the greatest miracle of this kind ever our Lord wrought? I think you will be apt to reply, his raising himself from the dead: And that this was his own act, is evident from his own words; "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.—But he spoke of the temple of his body. ‡ And to evince to the world that he had an inherent power sufficient for this, he peremptorily declared, that he had power "to take his life again." This is so evident a proof of his Godhead, that the Apostle took it for a demonstration, saying, he was *declared* or demonstrated to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, or his divine nature, by the resurrection from the dead.

Another strong argument for the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, may be drawn from the power committed to others to work miracles in his name. The Apostles were free on all occasions, and embraced every opportunity to declare, that all the power which accompanied them for working miracles, was simply and wholly a power derived from Christ; a power entirely *his*, and not at all their own, and that they acted therein altogether in *his* name, and in no respects in their own. Hence we find *Peter* who cured *Æneas* of the palsy, ascribing the cure entirely to Christ: *Æneas*, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise
and

† See Dr. Guyse Serm. on the Trinity, page 96.

‡ John ii. 19, 21.

and make thy bed; and he arose immediately. § And when he sent forth his twelve Disciples we are told, he, like an absolute and sovereign Lord “gave them power and authority over all Devils, and to cure diseases.” With what an absolute authority doth he deal out these commissions in his own name, speaking of himself as their principal, and as the fountain of all the power they had for all those marvellous works — And whenever he was pleased to suspend his power, and did not own an attempt to do any thing in his name, all such an attempt was ineffectual; as appeared in those seven Sons of *Secva*, who pretended to cast out Devils in the name of Christ; but the mention of his name not being owned by him on that occasion, nor attended with his power, they were so far from succeeding, that the Devils prevailed against them and insulted them. — In a word we may confidently affirm, that none of the Disciples could have performed such miracles as they did, except God had been with them. And the *God* who was with them was the Lord Jesus Christ.

Permit me *Superbus* to insist a little on the sovereign and absolute manner in which Christ performed all his miracles; and this was always in such a stile and manner as became the great and all-sufficient *Jehovah alone*, and plainly showed he was that *Jehovah*, who by his own power performed them. With what sovereignty and authority did he, as the God of nature and providence, rebuke the unruly elements the winds and the seas, and they instantly obey him. He arose and rebuked the winds and the seas, and there was a great calm; and the men marvelled, saying, what manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him? In this glorious act of sovereignty over the elements our Lord doth not rebuke them *in the name of God*, but in his *own name*, and by his own authority. † In what a lofty pe-remp-tory and God-like manner did he at his pleasure command away Devils, diseases, and death. The prince of the power of the air was shocked at his presence, and never could make a stand against him. They were forced to own that he was the Son of God, and could expel them from this terrestrial globe, and shut them up in the prison of darkness, and at once complete their misery. When he acted like himself as God, and appeared in all the awful majesty of his God-head, legions of Devils trembled at his appearance. They were constrained to cry out with consternation, fear, and agony, “what have we to do with thee Jesus thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?” With what uncontrollable majesty did he command the legion of Devils to come out of the man, and they
dared

dared not dispute his command? "Come out of the man thou unclean Spirit."

In the same sovereign God-like manner he rebuked and healed diseases. "I will (said he to the leper) be thou clean." And to the man with the withered hand, "stretch forth thy hand; and he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole like as the other." And to the impotent man, "rise, take up thy bed and walk, and immediately he did so." In all these, is there the least appearance of his acting as an inferior subordinate instrument? No, he acted by no other power than what was necessarily and essentially resident in himself, as the true and eternal God. Virtue we are told came out of him and healed many. And was he not the subject of that virtue and power? Was it not a principle inherent in himself, which he could exert whenever he pleased?

And what shall we say my dear friend, to that sovereign Almighty power which so gloriously displayed itself in raising the dead. When he raised the Ruler of the synagogue's daughter he proceeds without the least stop; takes the father and mother of the maid, and those who were with them in the room, and speaking in his own name, he says with all the authority of an omnipotent God "*talitha cumi* which is being interpreted, damsel I say unto thee arise." He only touched the bier, on which one lay, when they were carrying him to his grave, and said "young man I say unto thee arise," and immediately he was restored to life, to the amazement and wonder of all present. What grandeur, majesty, and sovereignty displayed themselves in this God-like way of expressing himself, and making the dead to live at his word. If the Eternal Father had visibly appeared among the sons of men, and exerted the power of his Godhead; could he have acted in any other manner? The manner of our Lord's acting on these occasions carries the same state, supremacy, and efficacy with it, as he acted at the creation of the world, saying, let it be so, and it was so. He commanded, and it was done.

Now, can any but that great and Almighty Being which created all things by the word of his power, and by the same power rules and governs all, could thus, both immediately and mediately over-rule, controul, and change the laws of nature at his pleasure, and make all its powers yield to him, and obey his word? We know the short cut the Author of the *Athanasian Creed analysed*, &c. would have taken to evade the force of this argument, (but in his wisdom he passes it over) viz. that he did all these miracles, just as he created, and preserves the world, as an *inferior instrument*.

I proceed now to another God-like action of our Lord Jesus Christ, which will in the issue demonstratively prove his supreme deity; I mean his *forgiving sin*. Who can forgive a debt but the creditor? Who can pardon the affronts offered to majesty, but the sovereign himself? The moral law being a transcript of the divine nature, none but the legislator can pardon the commission of those sins which that law prohibits, or the omission of those duties which it requires. But if Christ be but a *creature*, or a *mere man*, that law is not his: neither can he authoritatively pardon a breach of that law. We find forgiveness of sins is claimed by the great Jehovah as his special prerogative. I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions. † But if our Lord Jesus Christ is not God, he cannot be the party sinned against; for sin is a transgression of the law of God; it is only the great God that is the formal object against whom, sin, as sin, is immediately committed. “Against thee, thee only have I sinned,” said David; but Christ being truly and properly God, the same in essence with the Father, all our numberless and aggravated sins are as immediately and directly against him, as against the Father. They are committed against God *as God*, against the *Godhead* in all the persons of it, and so against the *Son* as well as the Father, he together with the Father being Lord of the law, as being “Lord of the sabbath” imports; since by his Lordship over the sabbath, he could interpret his own law concerning it, and transfer the obligation to observe it from the *seventh* to the first day of the week. Yea, the Apostle Paul views him as that God who gave the law at mount Sinai, whose voice then shook the earth. ‡ Hence the rebellions, murmurings, and provocations which Israel committed against God in the wilderness, whereby they tempted him, are spoken of as committed against Christ, and as tempting of him; on which account the Apostle cautions us to take heed of the like sins against him. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. §

Now it is a common and rational principle, that none can authoritatively and properly forgive sins but God, because he is the object against whom sin is immediately committed: Hence the Jews were so far right when they said, who can forgive sins but God only? || And yet Christ at that very time, and in that very sense, in which they spoke, claimed and exercised that authority, and proved it was his right, by removing the effect of sin in healing the sick of the palsy; saying to him, “Son, thy sins be forgiven

† Isai. xliii. 25.

§ 1 Cor. x. 9.

‡ Heb. xii. 26.

|| Mark ii. 7.

forgiven thee." The Jews who were present, hereupon reasoned in their hearts, saying, why doth this man speak blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God only? Our Lord Jesus Christ who knows the secret reasonings of all mens hearts, was sensible of the inward reasonings of their minds; and to take off the charge of blasphemy, he did not tell them, that he forgave sins only declaratively, or as his Father's delegate pronounced it in his name, but vindicates the power of doing it in his *own* name, by doing another god-like work in as absolute and authoritative a way, which also took off the temporal punishment of the sins he had then forgiven. " But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy) I say unto thee arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." In the same authoritative strain he said unto *Mary*, " thy sins are forgiven thee." So that they who were with him were astonished at the majesty and grandeur of his behaviour therein, and said, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? †

And now in his exalted state he more fully displays his absolute sovereign authority to this purpose; being exalted—to give—forgiveness of sins. ‡ And accordingly *Stephen* in his last prayer applied to him in an absolute way for forgiveness of his enemies, saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit, and he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. §

I proceed again *Superbus*, to take notice of another god-like work ascribed to our Lord Jesus Christ, which will also strongly evince his eternal power and Godhead; viz. *the resurrection of the dead*.

Doth not the resurrection of the dead carry in it an evidence of such an immense wisdom, dominion, power, and presence, as infinitely exceeds all our thoughts; yea, the most exalted conceptions of Angels, and Archangels; and for this reason, the doctrine has been denied by many, because they cannot conceive how God can work through all the difficulties, and master all the impossibilities, which they imagine their reason can suggest against it. There is indeed something very awful, astonishing, and incomprehensible in this amazing effect of infinite power. And we christians, who believe the truth of that doctrine which is so clearly and expressly revealed in God's word, believe it barely upon the unerring veracity of Gods own testimony concerning it, adoring his infinite greatness and almighty power, who is able to make good his own word. We by no means

† Luke vii. 48, 49. ‡ Acts iv. 31. § Acts vii. 59. 60.

means pretend to adjust the conduct of the great God in this matter, by our inquisitive reasonings about it. Must it not appear altogether impossible that any but the only true God should raise the dead, though not impossible that *he* should do it? Hence the Apostle lays the belief of this great and interesting article merely upon the greatness of God, when he says to King *Agrippa*, why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? † To suppose this great and glorious work to be done by any being inferior to the great and Almighty God, is indeed of all things the most incredible. Is not the doctrine of the holy and blessed Trinity far more comprehensible, than a mere man's raising the dead to life? And yet this incredible thing, upon any other supposition than that of the absolute power and omnipresence of the Godhead, is familiarly spoken of in the Scriptures as done by Christ, and that by his own power. This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and *I will* raise him up at the last day. ‡ Yea, he speaks of himself as having equal liberty and power with the Father for it; for as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. In what a sovereign and independent manner doth he speak these words, even when he is speaking also of the Father? And with what supreme majesty and grandeur doth he inform us how he, the Son, will effect this tremendous and glorious work? Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. But if these words should be meant of the powerful energy of his voice attending the gospel dispensation, for raising up sinners morally dead in trespasses and sins; the following words are confinedly to be understood of the resurrection at the last day. Marvel not at this: And the reason he assigns, why they should not marvel at it, is, because he was a person every way equal to it, having still greater power in himself; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, 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. § And is this astonishing event to be the production of a mere man, or of any creature, however dignified? No; let us observe the Apostles reasoning on this head, and we will learn that this is not to be effected by any power delegated to Christ (which

† Acts xxvi. 8.

‡ John vi. 39, 40, 44, 54.

§ John v. 28, 29.

(which supposition by the bye is impossible) but by a power inherent in himself; when speaking of the second coming of the Lord Jesus, says, he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body; and observe, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. † Undoubtedly, such a work wrought by that infinite inherent power in Christ is a pregnant evidence, that he is more than a creature, yea, the true and most high God.

Superbus, I may again add here the consideration of the future judgment, which is in a full and proper sense ascribed to Christ. He shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom. ‡ “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.” Hence it is also said, that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. §

It is freely acknowledged, that the special plenary execution of all judicial power is by dispensation from the Father committed to the Son, in his office capacity: For otherwise the principal part of that judgment would fall into the Father's hands, as the first person of the adorable Trinity: But that the nature of this work is such, as peculiarly belongs to the only true God, and is manageable by none but him. All our natural notions, as well as the Scriptures, refer this work to the supreme God only. And therefore had not Christ in his original nature been a divine subsistent in the Godhead, the full decisive unrepealable exercise of this ultimate judgment would not have been committed to him. ¶ And who but the only true God can judge the world; Devils and men? Who but he can exactly and perfectly know the secrets of all hearts, the innumerable thoughts that are continually springing up there, and the different principles and ends that govern them all, and determine their moral nature respectively? What mind but *his*, that is absolutely infinite, can find out all the train of thoughts, words, and actions of all that have been, are, or shall be, and comprehensive enough to take them all in, and to know them exactly and infallibly in their several orders, relations, and circumstances, and pass a right judgment accordingly? In

† Phil. iii. 21.

‡ 2 Tim. iv. 1.

§ 2 Cor. v. 10.

¶ To prove Christ Mediator, is to prove him God: To prove his æconomical supremacy, is at the same time, to demonstrate his essential dignity. Christ, as Mediator had not been capable of an æconomical supremacy, if he had not, as God, been naturally supreme governor of the world. Moncrieff on the deity of Christ.

In a word, it seems beneath the dignity of the Godhead to commit the full, final, and irresistible decision of all its rights with regard to us, to any creature whatever, but to God manifested in the flesh. How doth it sound *Superbus* to be taught that a creature, or a mere man, or a made God shall, at the consummation of all things mount the great white throne, and there sit umpire and judge for God. Is not this a burden too weighty for any, but he who possesses infinite wisdom, and omnipotent power? Yes: The great Jehovah clothed in human nature, will be “judge of all the earth.”

Onesimus, I have just to inform you that *Superbus* having fixed this day to settle his family affairs; I begged leave to return home; promising at the same time (God willing) to return the next day. A few days I think will put a final period to my friends existence in this world; he is quite sensible of it himself, and entirely resigned to the will of providence. Since his last victory over the temptations of Satan, and the unbelieving suggestions of a wicked heart, his faith is growing more consistent, stable, and strong. He has learned, that the most comfortable way of living, and the most glorifying to God, is to live by faith on the Son of God, and to trust in God when he cannot trace him. He has learned that however changeable and fleeting his frames and exercise are; the foundation upon which his faith is built cannot be removed. He has learned that although the Lord for the exercise of his faith, patience, and humility, may hide his countenance, and draw a veil between his benighted soul and the glorious Son of righteousness; yet he that hath begun the good work, will in his due time consummate the same.

Wishing that my *Onesimus* may obtain a safe conduct through this troublesome, dangerous, and sinful world, and a glorious entrance into *Emmanuel's* land, where the inhabitants shall not say I am sick. I remain yours most affectionately

PHILEMON.

L E T.



L E T T E R XVI.

P H I L E M O N to O N E S I M U S.

Dear Onesimus,

I am very sorry to learn in yours, that our beloved friend *Aristobolus* is no more. Holiness is no security against afflictions, trials, and death. From the external dispensations of providence in this life, no conclusive argument can be drawn from God's love or hatred, to any man. In this respect all things happen alike to all: As the fool dies, so dies the wise man. It is more than probable, that the conclusion of this will carry to you the melancholy news of the death of my dear friend. The glimmering taper of life is almost burned into the socket; here I think he cannot shine much longer; but I hope he dies to live, and shine in eternal glory.

I waited on *Superbus* according to my promise. After informing me how he had settled the affairs of his family, and who he had appointed his executors; he took me by the hand repeating the following words.—“ *Philemon*, I see that faith in the satisfaction of Jesus is my surest holding for eternity, more sure than present sense, or past experience, or even begun possession; for all these may be interrupted and overclouded; but faith, in the promise of God will hold fast when all things else fail. I wish you would in the mean time pursue the argument in support of Christ's supreme deity. I find my love enflamed, my soul comforted, whenever I either think, or hear of that glorious personage who loved me, and gave himself for me. May he be my *Alpha* and *Omega*; the last in my thoughts, and on my lips here, and the first in glory.”

Superbus, I most cheerfully embrace the opportunity of holding forth to you that Jesus in all the dignity, power, and glory of his eternal Godhead to your contemplation. Who can estimate his worth, or fathom his boundless love?

I shall proceed to show you that he is the true and eternal God, consubstantial with the Eternal Father, from the consideration of the *work of mans redemption*. This you know *Superbus*, I have already insisted on at large in some of our former conferences,

but

but if your strength and my time will permit, I will offer a few thoughts farther on this head, in confirmation of the present argument.

Let me observe here then, that the rights and honour of God's justice, holiness, veracity, law and government require that a proper legal satisfaction be made for sin, in case any of the descendants of fallen Adam be saved; and because as far as we can learn from the Scriptures, no such satisfaction could be otherwise made than by Jesus, he became our great High Priest, and offered up himself as an expiatory sacrifice for sin. But unless Christ is *God*, the sacrifice he offered could not answer its end in satisfying divine justice, and so obtaining eternal redemption for us. The notion of a true and proper satisfaction imports two things, viz. that reparation be made equal to the offence; and that the person who makes it did not owe it on other accounts to the offended party. And the real Godhead of Christ was necessary to both these.

Satisfaction imports that reparation be made equal to the offence. Whatever is admitted short of this is mere *mercy* and *grace*; and to say that justice is satisfied by yielding to mercy, and giving up its right to a mere act of grace, is the greatest impropriety and contradiction in terms, and a direct opposition to the Apostle who says in the case before us, God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his *righteousness*,—that he might be *just*, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. But if the Mediator was not God, he could not make this full reparation to the law and justice of God for our transgressions. For sin is an offence *objectively* considered, of an infinite nature, as it is committed against an infinite God, and is the highest treason and rebellion against his crown and dignity: And therefore proper satisfaction for it must be some way *infinite* too, or else it is not proportioned to the offence: And no satisfaction can be any way infinite, but either by an infinite continuation of it, or by its infinite dignity. For want of infinite dignity or worth, it must be continued to an infinite duration, on which account those who are not interested in Christ's satisfaction must suffer to an endless eternity, without ever being able to give that satisfaction requisite to answer the high, but just demands of law and justice. And it would be hard to reconcile the eternal duration of their sufferings with the justice and goodness of God on any other footing, than that justice demands an infinite satisfaction for sin. But where there is an infinite worth and dignity in the satisfaction itself, this entirely supercedes an eternity of sufferings; but such was Christ's satisfaction, as I elsewhere told you.

And

And although strictly speaking, it was Christ's human nature that suffered and died, his deity being absolutely impassible; yet that human nature being personally united to the divine, and so his sufferings became the sufferings of *himself*, and rose in value and dignity in proportion to what he was who underwent them. As suppose a person strikes his sovereign, he doth not properly speaking strike his *dignity*, for that is impossible, it not being subject to corporal impressions; he only strikes his body; and yet the injury done thereby is rated by the dignity of the person, more than by the natural hurt of his body, which was no greater than the same stroke might have done to the body of his meanest vassel. But the difference of their characters makes such a vast difference in the laws account of these wounds, that one is reckoned high treason to be punished with death, and the other hardly criminal enough to be punished at all, or at most but very slightly. Thus although Christ could not suffer as to his Godhead, yet the just and proper estimate of his sufferings arose from the dignity of his person.

Accordingly, as his person is so are his sufferings: If his person is not of infinite worth and dignity, it is impossible his temporary sufferings, and the satisfaction made thereby should be so. And this infinite dignity could not be in his person; unless he is properly and by nature God. For according to all the notions we have of *infinite*, the true God can only be *properly* so. And let us advance the character of Christ as high as ever we can, yet if he is not by nature the only living and true God, he is so far from being infinite in dignity, that he is infinitely less worthy and excellent in himself than the infinite God is; and consequently every one must see how impossible it is that his sufferings, and satisfaction thereby, should be *subjectively* infinite, after the same manner that our sin is *objectively* so. But seeing our Lord Jesus Christ is originally the supreme God, his sufferings in our nature, and his satisfaction thereby, is *subjectively* as infinite, as our sins are *objectively* so; and consequently reparation is thereby made every way *equal* to the offence, and no sins can be too great or many, for such a sacrifice to make a complete atonement for them.

Hence the Scripture speaks of Christ in his highest character as *God*, when it displays the dignity and efficacy of his sacrifice. He is represented as the brightness of the Fathers glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, who *by himself* purged our sins. And it is very observable that the main design of Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews, being to demonstrate the infinite perfection, and never-failing efficacy of Christs most excellent priesthood and sacrifice, he

he made his way to that design by firmly establishing his highest character as *God*, throughout the first chapter of that epistle. He like a wise master-builder, carefully lays the doctrine of Christ's Godhead, as the foundation on which he builds the whole glory and virtue of his priesthood and sacrifice in the following parts of the epistle.

Satisfaction as I observed imports, that the person who makes it, did not owe that, by which he makes it to the offended party on other accounts, or was not bound by prior obligations to pay it, for all that such an one doth, is only paying the offended party with what was his own before, and in answering obligations and demands of a different sort from those, which satisfaction for an offence requires. And to pay many debts of *different* kinds, by the payment of one of those kinds, destroys the nature of satisfaction. Much less can one pretend to satisfy for another by yielding that, which could be demanded from himself on his own account, and which it would be his sin to refuse.

It will follow then of course, that if Christ is not truly and by nature the supreme God, he owed himself, and all that he is and hath to God, and was infinitely obliged, as an entire dependent on him, to do and suffer all that he could for his honour, and at his command. He had no pretence of right to refuse or decline it, but it was His duty to do and suffer whatever the sovereign God should call for, and it would have been his sin, and destructive to himself, to have designedly neglected it. By yielding to it he did but pay the debt, which he owed to God's supremacy, and therefore that could not answer for others, much less could it be a payment of their debts of that and a different kind too, which they owed to God's justice, as well as his supremacy.

And how excellent a being soever we suppose Christ to be, yet if he was not by nature the supreme God, it does not at all help the matter; for that vast excellence of his being, if he owes it to God, and is obliged to him, and depends on him for it, is so far from dissolving this obligation to do his utmost for God's glory, especially at his express call to it, that it really increases that obligation, and makes it so much the more his duty. For the more any one receives from him, the more he is indebted to him; and he is the less at his own disposal. So that on supposition Christ was not really and properly God, all that he did and suffered for his Father's glory was unavoidable by him, and was rather a proof of Gods abundant grace to him, than a satisfaction to his justice for others.

But on the other hand, if Christ was in his original nature truly God, and necessarily existed in that nature, he was Lord and Master of himself, and so was accountable to none antecedent

to his own will and choice. Prior to this obligation, he might, or he might not have assumed human nature, he was not obliged to do it; and after he had assumed it, setting aside his agreement to the contrary, he might have refused to submit to that state of humiliation, which was necessary to make satisfaction for sin. It could not have been imposed upon him without his own free choice. His will determined his obligation to this obedience, and not his obligation his will. His will was to do the will of his Father, before it could be said he ought to do it. The essential rights of his proper Godhead plainly imports all this, and his absolute supremacy thereby so fully exempts him from all original obligations to debase himself in order to a display of the glory of vindictive justice in his redemption of lost sinners, as makes his voluntary sufferings in our nature for that purpose truly satisfactory.

Upon the whole *Superbus*, it unavoidably follows, that to deny the natural and absolute supremacy of Christ, is to deny his satisfaction: And this is so evident, that they who deny the former, have likewise *expressly* and professedly denied the latter. But my dear friend, if we would not lose the benefit of Christ's satisfaction, and all our hopes of salvation founded upon it; if we would not run the desperate risk of having the righteousness of God's nature, law, and government against us; if we would not venture to answer for ourselves to an unsatisfied, unappeased, and provoked deity; let us believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth that Jesus Christ is in his original nature the supreme God, and that by his death we have redemption, even the forgiveness of our sins.

I may just add here, that his *intercessory* work now within the veil, and the prevalency of that intercession is an irrefragable proof of his supreme deity. If you ask upon what doth the prevalence of his intercession depend? I answer; upon the *value* of his sacrifice. His intercession is the plea of his blood, as a righteous advocate for us. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins. † He entered into the holy place by his own blood. ‡ And he appears in Heaven as a *Lamb* that had been slain, presenting the virtue and value of his death before the throne of God for us. If therefore that blood hath not satisfied divine justice, and purchased all blessedness for us, his intercession can be of no effectual avail to us, since it is only by the interest of that blood that he intercedes for us. But if that precious blood was truly satisfactory; its real value is unexceptionably infinite, its plea
for

† 1 John ii. 1, 2.

‡ Heb. ix. 12.

for us at the throne of God cannot but secure our interest there; justice itself will readily admit them, and yield to mercies triumphs in all the instances of gracious vouchsafements that are needful for us.

Moreover, doth not his intercession at the Father's right hand suppose that now, while he appears in our human nature there, he hath an infinitely perfect knowledge of all the persons for whom he intercedes, and all their cases, of all the secret thoughts of their hearts, of all the distresses they labour under, and of all the suitable supplies of mercy they want in every time of need? Now, he *could* not have this omniscience necessary to his intercession, unless he was God; but if he is really God, all our wants and straits are constantly under his eye; and none of our groanings are hid from him. Hence the Apostle, encouraging us to come in all our straits and troubles to the throne of grace, draws his argument from the greatness of our High Priest, as the *Son of God*, that is passed into the Heavens for us, and so knows all our wants, and is able to succour us; as well as his being in our nature well affected towards us. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the *Son of God*.—Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. †

Before I proceed to the last head of argument in favour of the supreme deity of the Son of God, I shall make a little digression to review a few passages in the *Athanasian Creed analyzed and refuted*. The Author gives in a very few words a confession of his faith on the article of the Trinity. I shall present you with his sentiments on this head in his own words. “ Admitting
 “ that, by means of this treatise, or any other help, you are
 “ deeply convinced that God Almighty is one supreme intelli-
 “ gent Being or person, one supreme Lord and governor. The
 “ God and Father of our Lord Jesus; and that Christ and the
 “ Holy Spirit are persons inferior to him, and employed by his
 “ supreme authority in very high offices for the salvation of
 “ men; Christ being appointed Mediator, Head, and King of
 “ the Church, and the Holy Spirit first Minister in its govern-
 “ ment, who has Angels for his assistants: In this case, as christi-
 “ ans and disciples of Christ, you have an undoubted right to
 “ make

† Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16. See Dr. Guyse's Sermons, pag. 132. &c.

“ make a serious and solemn protest against the doctrine of the
 “ *Athanasian Creed.*” †

Now what doth our Author mean by this summary of his faith on this head? Would he have us damn the *Athanasian Creed*, and adopt his in its stead? No doubt; for he elsewhere informs us (as shall be noticed afterwards) that unless this be done we need never expect the conversion of the *Jews*, *Heathens*, and *Mahometans* to the christian faith. It would appear that *Arians* are by no means enemies to creeds and confessions; for here we have our Author's in so many words. But might it not be enquired, in what part of divine revelation will we find “ that
 “ Christ and the Holy Spirit are persons inferior to the Father,
 “ and employed by his supreme authority, in very high offices
 “ for the salvation of men; Christ being appointed Mediator,
 “ Head, and King of the Church, and the Holy Spirit first Mi-
 “ nister in its government, who has Angels for his assistants?”
 Is there not as little foundation for this man's strange Creed in the word of God, as for the *Athanasian*? With regard to the latter the Scripture is plain and decisive. There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are *one*, † one thing, viz. essence or substance. God we are told has employed by his sovereign authority these two persons in very high offices respecting man's salvation. If he had been as candid and explicit as he should have been in such an important article, upon which the conversion of *Jews*, &c. depends; he should have told us the particular offices which these two persons execute in the business of man's salvation. He indeed informs us that Christ is appointed Mediator, &c. of the church. But what is the formal ground and reason of his mediation? Is it by shedding his blood for the purgation of our sins? Is it by offering himself to God through the Eternal Spirit, to purge our consciences from dead works. § Or in a word, is it by making a vicarious satisfaction as our surety to the law and justice of God, for the sins of a guilty world? But this I already told you was impossible without his supreme deity. We may reasonably suppose then, that according to him, the mediation of Christ in its fullest extent here on earth amounted to no more, than what was merely exemplary with regard to his death, and instructive with regard to his doctrine. — But what if it was objected to our Author, that we are said to have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins; || what if he had listened to the song of all the redeemed from among men, who applaud the divine Saviour
 for

† Page 96, 97.

§ Heb. ix. 14.

† 1 John v. 7.

|| Eph. i. 7.

for washing them from their sins in his own blood. * What if he had seen that blessed company which stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, having their robes washed, and made white in the Lamb's blood. † I apprehend, such is his attachment to an inferior God, that if he had explained himself on this head it would have been to the following purpose; " I assure you my
 " christian brethren, (for whose sake I offer my creed to your
 " serious consideration) that although I have said that Christ is
 " the Mediator of his church, you are not to suppose that he is so,
 " by any *satisfaction* he made to the law and justice of God as
 " your surety. If you want pardon, I refer you not to the *blood*
 " of Jesus, but to the unbounded mercies of the one supreme
 " God; if you wish to appear in glory with your robes washed
 " and made white, this must be accomplished by the tears of
 " repentance, and a good life. For you may credit me, that all
 " these high expressions in Scripture with regard to the effects
 " of Christ's death are to be understood *metaphorically, or figura-*
 " *tively*. For considering Christ as infinitely inferior to the
 " supreme God, all that he did and suffered he was bound to,
 " by the law of his creation, and the will of his heavenly Father.
 " And although he is every where in the New Testament stiled
 " the Saviour of sinners, yet not exclusively of others; for I
 " may tell you, if ever you are saved, you must be your own
 " *Saviours*; and not any satisfaction he hath given in his life
 " and death, or any atonement he hath made will save: Trust in
 " your good works for your future happiness; for if there is no
 " merit in these, you may believe me there is none in Christ's." Such sentiments as there are the necessary consequence of his absurd impious doctrine of an *inferior God*.

And that I may not be blamed for putting such words in the mouth of our Author which he never spoke, neither ever thought, we will find in his book a brief summary of the christian doctrine he lays down to his readers as the ground of their possessing that glorious and immortal life promised to God's faithful servants. ‡ Now in order to obtain this, one would have thought he might have had as much regard to the holy Scriptures, and paid as much deference to the sacred penmen, yea, to Christ himself, as to have followed their example in directing his christian brethren how to obtain the
 eternal

* Rev. v. 9.

† Chap. vii. 14.

‡ To save the trouble of transcribing what is referred to above, the reader will find it in page 112.

eternal salvation of their souls. What is the language of our Lord on this head? "Unless ye believe that *I am*, ye shall die in your sins." God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. *Paul* exhorts the Philippian jailor to faith in Jesus in order to salvation. "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And we find the Apostle *Peter* following the same example: To him gave all the Prophets witness, that through this name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins. Acts x. 43. But our Author seems to entertain a very mean opinion of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ in order to eternal happiness; and yet after all, it is the very root and principle of all our good works. "purifying their hearts by faith." "And this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith." And from this divine principle flows all our love to God, and to one another; for, "faith worketh by love." Did our Author imagine that the performance of the duties he exhorts to, were of any avail in the sight of God, without this celestial principle? If he did, he forgot "that without faith it is impossible to please God." But he has a salvo for this; "I make no doubt, (says he) but that, "if ye profess and practise according to your consciences, in "religious matters, you will be enabled by God's Spirit, to conquer all the temptations of the world, the Devil, and the flesh, "and go on in the uniform discharge of every christian duty." Strange! at once the word of God is laid aside as the rule of our faith and practise, and *conscience*, no matter whether it be right or wrong, is set up as the unerring rule; and faith hissed out of doors, and conscience laid as the foundation and ground-work of all our religious practise. But what if upon reading the *Alcoran*, I was persuaded in my conscience, that *Mahomet* was a prophet far superior to Christ, and that I should view him as an object worthy of my adoration; and that the account he gives of a future state was truly genuine, and far superior to the Scripture account. That there are *Millions* who believe, and that in their *conscience* too, all the idle, unaccountable and absurd stuff contained in the *alcoran*, no one will question. Now, because they believe these things *conscientiously*, will they be enabled by God's Holy Spirit to conquer all the temptations of the world, the Devil, and the flesh? &c. I see *Superbus*, you shudder at the inference. I firmly believe that *Jezabel* and her vast train of prophets, did from conscience believe that some divinity resided in the image of *Baal*. If they did, O cruel, narrow-minded, and begot-
Elijab, for putting these men of conscience to death. But it makes no odds what the great God reveals, what his unerring
word

word dictates, although our Author and his christian brethren believe the very reverse; (providing they believe it conscientiously) they may expect the assistance of God's Holy Spirit to conquer all the temptations of the world, &c.

But for our Author to have mentioned the grace of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as essentially necessary to salvation, and also in the practice of every moral virtue, so as to render them acceptable; perhaps he was aware that this question might be put; what are we to believe? “ Negatively; you must not believe “ the *Athanasian* creed, for that would be the height of absurdity “ and impiety; this teaches you that there are three that bear re- “ cord in Heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, “ and these three are one; but you must, as I have from the “ Scriptures abundantly demonstrated to you, that Christ and “ the Holy Ghost are persons inferior to God, and employed by “ his supreme authority in very high offices for the salvation of “ men; Christ being appointed the Mediator, Head, and King “ of the Church, and the Holy Spirit first Minister in its govern- “ ment, who has Angels for his assistants: And although this “ my creed is not so very clearly expressed in the holy Scrip- “ tures, yet my christian brethren, from the unbounded affecti- “ on which I have for your spiritual and eternal interests, you “ ought to believe it. And I expect your compliance with it “ the more readily, because you are men of reason and common “ sense, and will not I am sure set your seal to the senseless “ *Athanasian* Creed, nor admit any thing as an article in your “ belief which your reason cannot comprehend.”

It might be here enquired at our Author, what particular hand has the Holy Ghost in our salvation? For he, together with Christ, is employed in very high offices for the salvation of men. As he has left us in the dark on this head, I shall leave it to his christian brethren to bring him to the light any way they think proper. But let it be briefly noticed here, that all the offices of that Eternal Spirit respecting our salvation are such, as the one true God appropriates to himself, and which cannot be performed by any thing less than Almighty power. What an impious horrid expression! how derogatory to the dignity of the ever blessed Spirit. “ The Holy Ghost is appointed first Minister in the government of the church, and has Angels for his assistants.” This is indeed blasphemy against the Holy Ghost with a witness! I perfectly agree with our Author in the inference he draws from the belief of the confession of his faith by his christian brethren. “ In this case, as christians and disciples of Christ, you have an undoubted right to make a serious and solemn protest against the doctrine of the *Athanasian* Creed. Amen. You cannot be of- fended

fended if I, in the name of all who believe that there are three that bear record in Heaven,—and these three are one; to make, as serious and solemn protest against your creed.

Permit me now *Superbus* to present to your view, the account which our Author gives of the sentiments of the church prior to the council of Nice. “ It is very remarkable (says he) the christian doctrine is set forth very strongly in the first article, (viz. of the creed.) “ I believe in one God the Father Almighty maker of Heaven and Earth.” I am very glad by the bye that he is so candid as not to impute to the Ante-Nicene Fathers the grossest idolatry, in believing in two Gods as he and his friends the *Socinians* do.—But adds he, “ this was the old christian language in all the christian churches for the first three hundred years, after Christ. And it is well known to the learned, that the expressions excepted against in the Nicene Creed, or rather in the *Constantinopolitan* Creed concerning our Saviour, as not warranted by the Scripture, did not obtain in any genuine Creed, till the year 325, and that the antisciptural expressions concerning the Holy Spirit were not added till the year 381.”

Now might there not be an appeal made to the common sense of every man, whether or not, our Author has not laid himself out to impose upon his readers, in a most egregious manner? I would ask any one who has in the most transient manner read his Bible, if he can find his Creed in it, viz. that the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are persons inferior to the Father.—And that the Holy Ghost is prime Minister in the government of the Church, and has under him Angels for his assistants? Stand forth ye readers of the book of God, and declare if ever you found any such expressions from the beginning, to the end of divine revelation. And yet he would impose this Creed upon you: But I advise you not to swallow it too hastily, lest it turn out to be like *Ezekiel's* roll, sweet in your mouth, but bitter in the issue.

But why does he think to impose this untruth on his readers, by insinuating that for the first three hundred years there was not such a doctrine known or taught, as the co-equality of the persons in the ever blessed Trinity?—I shall present to your view *Superbus*, a few testimonies to the contrary.

Dionysius of *Alexandria*, a little before his death, in an epistle to *Paul* of *Samosata*, asserts the doctrine of the Trinity in the clearest and most express manner; he mentions the Son as being “ the true God, and to be worshipped by every creature, with the Father and the Holy Ghost.” † According to some ancient
Arabick

† See the second review of Mr. Whiston's account, &c. pag. 74.

Arabick manuscripts at Oxford, it was required that every church should have three gates, to represent the Holy Trinity; the Son is declared to have been from Eternity, *begotten*, not *made*; and there is this express form of Doxology: Praise and honour and glory is due to thee (the Father,) and to him, (the Son,) and to the Holy Ghost, before all the worlds, and now and always, even to eternity. †

Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with *Trypho* the Jew, pag. 285, explains how Christ was the image of God, viz. Not on account of his corporal generation, but of his eternal generation from the Father, by which he was with the Father before all creatures. † He calls it a heresy to say that these words, “let us make man after our image,” was spoken to the Angels, or that the body of man was the workmanship of Angels. But he says the Father here speaks to the Son, who came from the Father before all creatures. He confutes those *Rabbis* who depraving the Scripture, (says he) pretend that God spoke to himself, when he said let us make man, or to the elements, or to the earth, or any the like. He says that expression shows there was a number, at least two that were together, and those he makes to be the Father, and the Son: And that without all doubt, says he, the Father there speaks to *one numerically* distinct from himself, and to an intelligent person. ‡

Tertullian is still more express on this head. God, says he in the afore-mentioned text did not speak to the Angels as the Jews interpret, who do not acknowledge the Son, but that he spoke to the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and from hence he proves the Trinity in unity, in express words, and as positively as *Athenasius* himself. He says, *Scripturæ omnes et demonstratiorem, et distinctionem Trinitatis ostendunt.* i. e. all the Scriptures show both a demonstration and distinction of the Trinity. ||

Justin Martyr, in his explication of this text, the Lord, (Heb. Jehovah) rained fire from the Lord (Jehovah) out of Heaven, interprets it of the Son, as a distinct person from the Father — *Ireneus* says the same, and proves Christ to be *definitive et absolute Deum*, and that he is *verus Deus et ex sua persona*. True God absolutely, and in his own person, and that the Lord rained fire from the Lord, was meant of him. — *Tertullian* says the same, and proves both the Trinity in unity. *Deos duos non præferimus*, we do not profess two Gods; and then he explains himself, — *non quasi non et Pater Deus, et Filius Deus, et spiritus sanctus Deus,*
ct

‡ Second review, &c. pag. 75.

† Leslie on the Socinian controversy, p. 48, § p. 35. || p. 36.

et Deus unusquisque. Not that the Father is not God, and the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and each of them God. †

I might have added to the foregoing a great many more testimonies from the *Ante-Nicene* Fathers in support of the present argument; and to convince you how insincerely our Author deals with his christian brethren when he insinuates that for the three first centuries the doctrine of the *Athanasian* Creed concerning the consubstantiality of the Son and the Holy Ghost with the Father was neither asserted nor known.

I shall just quote one evidence more for the support of what I have just now said; and that from as bitter an enemy to christianity as almost ever it had; I mean the vile, but ingenious *Lucian*, who lived about 170 years after Christ. A man of his sagacity, and who took upon him to ridicule the christian faith, could not but know what it was, as then generally owned and professed by christians. Especially if as some tell us, that he was once a christian and turned apostate. Among other reproaches cast upon the christian religion in his *Philopatris*, the following expressions are remarkable.—“ God reigning on high, great, eternal, heavenly, the Son of the Father, proceeding from the Father, one out of three, and three out of one.”—I know not what thou sayest; one that is three, and three that are one.—Some imagine that the *Philopatris* was not wrote by *Lucian*, but by some other about the year 261. Which answers my purpose just as well, to prove that the doctrine of the Trinity was received and believed in the christian church long before the council of *Nice*.

I shall have done with our Author for the present, after showing you of what importance the belief of his Creed is to the world at large, and how detrimental to the interests of true christianity, the belief of the *Athanasian* Creed is. I shall present you his opinion on this head in his own words.

“ There have been of late years, very humble and christian applications made to the governors of the church, to reform several parts of our public service. But no point can, I think, more deserve the attention of christian governors, than what I have thought it my duty to propose to your examination, as it has done infinite mischief to the cause of Christ’s religion; it being in vain to expect the conversion of *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Heathens*, whilst they are taught to believe, that the doctrine of the three persons and one God, and the worship practised in consequence thereof, are fundamental points of the gospel of Christ. But if this great offence was removed from the
“ churches

† Leslie on the Socinian controversy, pag. 38.

“ churches of Christ, we might then reasonably hope, that the
 “ time was drawing on apace, when, according to the prophe-
 “ cies of Scripture, the gospel will be preached in its original
 “ purity and simplicity, among all nations; and the kingdoms
 “ of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of
 “ his Christ. In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name
 “ one. Rev. xi. 15. Zech. xiv. 9.”

Now *Superbus*, if this be all true, what should be done? Here is a point of doctrine believed, and a form of worship practised according to that belief; and what is the consequence? Infinite mischief is done to the cause of Christ's religion; the poor *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Heathens* are all kept close in the chains of unbelief, ignorance, and idolatry, in consequence hereof; the glory of the latter days is retarded by a judicial stroke from the *one supr. me* God for teaching and believing the doctrine of the *Athanasian Creed*, in which we are commanded to believe and worship a Trinity in unity. It is somewhat surprizing that no greater efforts have been made within these thirty years, for so long as I can learn this expedient has been proposed by our Author; and yet except a very few, none have had either the courage or honesty to engage in this godlike work (as our Author expresses it) of purging this *Athanasian* leaven out of the church.

In order then to extirpate this noxious weed, that it should no longer do such infinite mischief to the church, and hinder the spreading of the gospel throughout the world; there should be a general council held of the Clergy, Archbishops and Bishops, &c. along with the Presbyterian Clergy of all denominations, who are infected with this deadly poison. The Clergy of the church of England to bring along with them the *thirty-nine* articles; those of the Presbyterian persuasion, the confession of faith; and there and then, in the face of the sun, consign these pestilential wicked creeds, confessions, and articles to the flames. But do you reply, why burn the whole *thirty-nine* articles and the confession of faith, for one single point of doctrine? By all means; for this reason, the most of the other points of doctrine contained in these vile wicked books, are so inseparably connected with the doctrine of a Trinity, that there is no separating of them; and if the belief of this has done such infinite mischief to the christian church, so must the belief of those other points which are so inseparably connected with it; particularly, the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction and atonement. The doctrine of Christ's supreme deity, and his vicarious and satisfactory sufferings, and his prevalent intercession, stand and fall together. With regard also to our manner of worship; we are taught you know, to worship Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; now we are the grossest idolat-
 tors

tors for paying any divine worship to persons who are not by nature God. So that to cut the work short, and effectually purge the church, let all go the same way.

Do you reply, is the work then finished? After these mischievous doctrines as contained in the aforesaid articles and confession of faith are condemned, may we expect the glorious day our prophet predicts? Will the *Jews* own the *Messiah*, the *Mubometans* quit their *Alcorn*, and the *Heatbens* abandon their idolatry? My dear friend you ought not to be in such a haste; the work is not half done, even when creeds and confessions are solemnly condemned.—To strike effectually at the root of the evil, the *Bible* must come under review. The doctrines contained in the *thirty-nine* articles and confession, are so built upon the word of God, that unless you dig up the foundation you never can cleanse the *leprous house*. What, although there was no creeds or confessions asserting a Trinity of persons; what, although the christian governors of Christ's church would take it in their head to damn these to perpetual oblivion, because they contained the doctrine of the Trinity in unity, and the other doctrines which are inseparably connected therewith; yet if the common people in reading their *Bible* would light upon these texts, "there are three that bear record in Heaven,——and these three are one."—"I and my Father are one:" &c. What, although we should get our Creeds destroyed which assert, that by Christ's obedience and death we are justified before God; yet would not the people murmur, and almost be ready to rise in rebellion when they read in the Scriptures,——"that by the obedience of *one*, shall many be made righteous?" Would not the people think you sooner believe the word of God, than they would their christian governors? And would in a fit of desperation condemn them, for condemning their creeds and confessions, which, according to God's word contain such doctrines? The greatest obstacle that I see in our Author's plan of reformation, as a happy omen of glorious days, is the *Bible*. For the doctrines which he wants out of the way in order for the purgation of the church, the Scriptures are so expressly and decidedly in their favour, that "he that runs may read."

O strange infatuation! thus to treat the prime distinguishing articles of our holy religion; to deny "the only Lord God, who is our Saviour;" "to count the blood of the covenant an unholy (a common) thing," not adequate to answer the great and gracious purposes which Heaven designed by it; to join with the peerless majesty of Heaven, a *creature*, in our religious acts of worship; to do despite to the Spirit of grace, to blaspheme his holy name, and deny his divine nature, and all this with a view

to the conversion of *Jews*, *Mahometans* and *Heathens*. Can we believe that our Author was serious when he so roundly tells us, that the doctrine of the Trinity has done infinite mischief to the religion of Christ? A doctrine which has obtained a place in the most ancient creeds and doxologies in the christian church from its earliest infancy, to this very day, as will be shown afterwards? Is it possible to conceive that, an infinitely holy, wise, and good God would have suffered such a plant to continue so long in his church without rooting it up? There is I think, one standing evidence of the Lord's displeasure against the Eastern churches for their virulently oppugning this article, and their bitterly persecuting the orthodox, viz. his judicially giving them up to strong delusions to believe a lie. Who without shedding a tear, can view the standard of *Mahomet* set up in many famous and renowned churches in *Asia*, *Africa*, and *Europe*, where the Lord Jesus Christ once displayed the banner of the everlasting gospel; when to this ensign the nations fled as clouds, and as doves to their windows; where instead of this divine anthem, "glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" we hear nothing but, "there is no God, but God, and *Mahomet* his prophet. Would this last be sweeter melody in the ears of our Author, than the former?

In the Lord's own time and way, he will open the eyes of the blinded *Jews*, whom for a time he, in a way of righteous judgment "hath concluded in unbelief." God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. † In his own time, he will destroy the false prophet which hath deceived such a considerable part of the world. The stone cut out of the mountains without hands, shall crush to pieces all the interest of that abominable deceiver: In *Constantinople* itself, shall yet songs be heard, "even glory to the righteous one." The time is approaching, God hasten it, when these nations which never saw the glory of our *Emmanuel*, nor heard his fame, shall see the former, and gladly embrace the latter. Yes, although Jesus is now despised, and that by his professed friends, and most injuriously vilified in his nature, person, offices, atonement, and intercession; yet I say the time is on the wing, when they that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him: And his enemies shall lick the dust. When the Kings of *Tarshish*, and of the isles shall bring presents: The Kings of *Sbeba* and *Seba* shall offer gifts. Yea, when all Kings shall fall down before him: When all nations shall serve him. § But in the mean time we may say with *Balaam*, Alas, who shall live when God doth this! And when the Lord will bring about this happy æra, you may believe my dear friend,

† Rom. xi. 32.

§ Psal. lxxii. 9, 10, 11.

friend, it will never be in a way of stripping divine revelation of its glory, nor the Son and the Holy Ghost of that divine honour and majesty, which is their natural and essential right, as distinct subsistences in the one Godhead, as our Author wildly imagines.

I proceed now to another argument for proving the supreme deity of the Son of God, viz. that the same religious or divine worship is given to him in the holy Scriptures, which is appropriated to the most high, and only true God. And as the nature of the argument will of itself lead me out to speak of God essentially considered, as the only proper object of all our religious worship and adoration, I shall at the same time prove, that the Holy Ghost is equally the object of religious worship with the Father and Son. Upon our entry on the argument, it may not be amiss to ask the adversaries of the supreme deity of the Son and Holy Ghost, wherein consists the formal reason of all the religious worship and adoration, due to deity from his creatures? Doth it not consist in, and is it not founded upon the absolute, and unlimited supremacy of the divine nature, and all its other infinite and unlimited perfections; such as omniscience, omnipresence, all-sufficiency, omnipotence? &c. Again, might it not be enquired, whether, when the object is not possessed of these perfections, or where there is not this formal reason of divine worship, ought it to be given? And is it not the most gross idolatry to offer it? For certainly it is giving that glory to another, which is due to God alone, and which he, in his jealousy for his own honour, hath solemnly declared against: "How should my name be polluted?" "I will not give my glory to another." To give religious worship where there is not this formal reason for it, is the grossest idolatry; to withhold it from that object which is essentially and naturally infinite, eternal, and omnipotent, &c. is downright atheism. That the Lord Jesus Christ is possessed of those truly divine perfections, which entitle him to divine worship, I have endeavoured already to prove, in the foregoing considerations of him according to the Scriptures. I shall now prove the same thing by an argument *a posteriori*, and likewise the divinity of the Holy Ghost by the same manner of reasoning.

That divine religious worship is solely and exclusively attributed to the only true and most high God in Scripture, and is to be given to none else, is so plainly expressed in the first commandment, as that there can be no just reason to doubt of it: And is so placed in the very front of the moral law, as fundamental to all the rest, and so fundamental, that without it, it would lose its moral nature, and obligation upon us. Observe the language of
the

the great Jehovah on this head. “Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.” This command is repeated afterwards more fully and expressly, “hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord,” one *Jehovah*, one self-existent original Being; and with regard to this great and glorious *Jehovah* it is added, “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”—“Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, &c. And to show that this command is of eternal obligation, and is exclusive not only of the *gods* of the Heathens, but of all that are not the only living and true God, Christ hath recited it again, with a still more express and evident limitation of it, to that God alone. It is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve. † These words of Christ are an answer to Satan’s proposal, that he should fall down and worship him. § The worship Satan demanded was of a *religious* nature, otherwise this answer of Christ, taken from the divine law, would have been nothing to the purpose, for that law only respected religious worship: And yet the religious worship Satan demanded, seems not to be that of the highest kind, but only of a relative and subordinate nature; for the reason and ground of his demand was his pretence, that he could give to Christ all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. || But he did not pretend to give them, as things that were originally his own, but as deposited in his hands to be at his disposal. All this power will I give thee and the glory of them, viz. (of the kingdoms of the world) for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. Here he only speaks of himself as a *constituted* God, and demanded only a worship suitable to that character, which might be pretended would ultimately and reductively terminate in the true God, who gave that power to him. Now Christ in answer to this, does not say (as he justly might) that the Devil’s claim of that power was but a vain and false pretence, or that Christ was a greater person than Satan could pretend to be; but he tells the Devil, that even on supposition that what he alledged was true, (which Christ did not then think fit to dispute with him) yet he ought not to be worshipped, for this plain reason, because he was not that only true God, who had said, “thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and shalt serve him.” And to make the sense still more evident and convincing adds, “him *only* shalt thou serve.” The plain meaning of our Lord’s answer is this, viz. that there is no power or authority delegated

† Luke iv. 8. Math. iv. 10. § Math. iv. 9.

|| Math. iv. 9.

delegated to any, no generous or beneficent action which any one may be authorised by God to do us, is or can be the formal cause of our worshipping that creature. The object of our religious worship and service must be a God by nature.

Arians and *Socinians* will tell us, that God alone is to be worshipped as the first and supreme cause of all things, and the chief cause of our salvation; but yet religious worship and service may be paid to Christ as the immediate cause of that salvation, which God intended by him to procure, and bring to pass for us. But the question is, where is such a distinction found in all the Scriptures? Were not Moses and Aaron intermediate causes of the preservation and happiness of the Israelites, whom God by them brought out of Egypt? Did they not by their prayers supplications and intercessions, preserve them many times from present death? Might they therefore pay religious worship to them, provided it was directed to the glory of the one true God whose ministers they were? Might they not do this to Joshua, who carried salvation in his very name? The Apostles are called co-workers with God for our salvation, their doctrine is called "the Saviour of life unto life," and they are said to "save them that hear them:" Must we therefore pay religious adoration to them? Vain therefore is this subterfuge by which the *Socinians* endeavour to justify their religious adoration of that Jesus whom they maintain to be a creature only, and whose divinity they deny. Hence also we find the Apostle blaming the Galatians when, in their state of heathenish idolatry, they "did service to them which by nature are no Gods." The strength and emphasis of the Apostles argument to show the blind idolatry of their gentilism, lies in the object of their worship, that they served not the true God, who is God by nature, originally so, but Gods of another sort, who, however they came to be Gods, were not so *by nature*, and therefore had not *that* in them, which is the only proper ground and formal reason of divine worship. If Christ is not God *by nature*, might not the Galatians have retorted the argument on the Apostle, and said, you worship Christ, and have taught us to do so too, and therefore by your own argument, both you and we are guilty of the like idolatry still, in worshipping one that is not by nature God? We have only changed the object, but are still committing the same sin against the only true God. But is it possible to conceive, that the Apostle would have argued at such a rate as would have overthrown the whole worship of the christian church, supposing Christ to be then worshipped by it, as I shall show afterwards? And by this very argument we may be assured that the Apostle believed and preached that Christ is *by nature* God.

And further here let it be observed, that so fully possessed were the Apostles of this fundamental principle of all true religion, that when any pretended to offer religious worship to them, they utterly rejected it, and that with the highest indignation. Thus when *Peter* apprehended that *Cornelius* meant him religious worship, by falling down at his feet, he immediately put a full stop to him on this ground, that he was only a man, and therefore no religious worship was due to him; *Peter* (we are told) took him up, saying, stand up, I myself also am a man. † And when the Apostles *Paul* and *Barnabas*, were treated with religious rites at *Lysra*, because of the miraculous power God had there put forth, with what detestation and abhorrence did they reject that assiont to the deity? They directed them to pay all religious worship to the deity only, who made the world. They rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things therein. § We find also that when the beloved Apostle offered to worship an Angel, he forbad him for this reason, because he was not God, and directed him to pay that honour to God only. “ See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant.—Worship God.” Thus it is evident, that divine worship is by the doctrine of the Scriptures to be confined wholly and alone to the only true God, and to be given to him, and to none besides him.

Before I quit this I shall give you the sentiments of a very learned and ingenuous Author on the text already cited in Gal. iv. 8. “ Hence we learn (says he) the consequence of the “ *Socinian* hypothesis, that Jesus Christ is not God by nature, “ and yet is to be worshipped with the same worship which all “ christians give to him who is by nature God, seeing it teach- “ eth us to do what *Paul* here condemneth in the *Heathens*. “ And surely it must be absurd to make that an article of christ- “ tian faith, and a part of christian worship, which the Apostle “ here makes the great crime of the heathen world, and a certain “ evidence of their ignorance of the true God — That the “ *Socinians* cannot answer this objection appears from what they “ here return to it, viz. that Gods by nature is not opposed to “ Gods by grace, or to those who have received their divinity “ from the one true God, for to serve and worship such a God “ by reason of the empire which he hath received from God is “ not profane and wicked, but pious and necessary. Now in “ answer to this, I say,

“ That

† Acts x. 25, 26.

§ Acts xiv. 14, 15.

“ That it is very evident from the text, that those who are
 “ not Gods *by nature*, are opposed to him who is God by nature,
 “ viz. to him whom the Heathens knew not, and to him whom
 “ the *Galatians*, being christians, knew, and by whom they
 “ were known. Since then the *Socinians* God by grace, is not
 “ a God by nature; since he is not the God intended in these
 “ words, “ ye know not God;” he must be ranked among
 “ those which are here opposed to him.

“ I have elsewhere showed (says he) that the Heathens had
 “ the very same sentiments with the *Socinians*, as to the worship
 “ of their inferior *Deities*; and it is wonderful to see how they
 “ concur in sense, and almost in words. Indeed there is scarce
 “ any plea they use for the worship of Jesus Christ as a *made*
 “ *God*, which was not before used by the *Philosophers* for the
 “ worship of their inferior *Deities*.” ‡

But to be a little more particular here, if we particularly attend to the voice of divine revelation on this head we will find, that that divine worship which is peculiarly appropriated to the only true God, is by Scripture warrant given to Christ, and required to be paid to him.

We will find those Angels who refuse divine worship from others because they are not God, pay it to Christ because he is God; and that by the Father's express command. When he bringeth in his first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the Angels of God worship him. § And in order to obviate any difficulty which might arise respecting his being the proper object of religious worship, the Father calls him by a title expressive of his eternal, independent, and necessarily existent Being, which perfections as I already told you, are constitutive of the formal reason of all our worship: “ Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” Jacob we find on his death-bed worshipped him, when he applied to him for blessings on Joseph's Sons, saying, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads, which Angel could be none other than Christ the Angel of the covenant.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was here upon earth in the days of his tabernacling among men, he admitted of divine worship as his due, and never made the least objection, or entered the least caution against it, or put the least restraint upon those who offered it. Now is it possible to conceive, that he should be less careful of his Father's honour, than the Angels or his Disciples were? Or can we imagine, when he found those who worshipped him running headlong into the grossest idolatry by paying divine honours to him, that he would not have protested against it?

‡ Dr. Whitby upon the place.

§ Heb. i. 6.

it? But we meet with no reproofs, nor the least hint to those who worshipped him, that they were in an error; but instead of this he readily accepted of all that religious worship and service, that was given him. We are told that severals who came to this glorious physician to be healed of their bodily disorders, fell down and worshipped him. And that these instances are to be understood of religious worship, appears from their *faith* expressed in him at the same time, as in one that was able to do whatever they wanted; which faith in him was an exalted act of divine worship.— There came a leper (we are told) and worshipped him, saying, “ Lord, or Jehovah, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.” Christ we find in a godlike manner, replies, “ I will, be thou clean.” Christ we find approved of this man’s faith in him as an Almighty agent, and granted his request. When Peter at the command of Christ left the ship to go to him on the water, and when in this attempt he found himself ready to sink, he cried out, “ Lord save me.” And it is very observable that Christ was so far from reproving him for this act of worship, that he reproved him for not being more strong and confident in it, saying unto him, “ O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

And when he came into the ship, and had by his godlike power stilled the wind, the whole company joined with *Peter* in worshipping him, as the Son of God: Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, thou art the Son of God. ¶ We find also when Jesus arose from the dead, and appeared to his disciples, that some worshipped him, while some doubted: They who worshipped him did their duty; and it was the sin of those that doubted. And is it to be questioned that this was divine worship; since by that his appearance to them, he proved his godhead, according to what he had told them, that he would raise himself again? And as soon as *Thomas* saw the proofs of his resurrection, he worshipped him in an address of faith, saying to him, “ my Lord, and my God.” And we find, that Christ was so far from finding fault with that adoring expression of his faith, that he commended him for it.

And we find *Superlus*, after his ascension to Heaven, and the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, (by which the evidence and glory of his godhead appeared in greater lustre than was consistent with his humbled state) the Scriptures speak abundantly of the divine worship that is paid to him, and demanded

manded for him. Is he not represented as well as the Father, the object of our faith, love, obedience? &c.

He is the object of prayer equally with the Father. Stephen in his last moments, and when he was full of the Holy Ghost directed his prayer to Jesus. “ Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit.” † “ And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge.” Is not the prayer of this *protomartyr* exactly the same for matter and form, with that which Christ prayed, as man, to his Father in his last moments?—The great Apostle of the Gentiles did, in as direct a manner, and as far as appears, ultimately directed his prayer to Jesus as the proper object of this act of religious worship. For this thing (*viz.* the thorn in his flesh) I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said, my grace is sufficient for thee: And my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

We find it made the distinguishing character of christians as such, that they are those who call upon the name of Christ, which includes the whole of religious worship, and prayer particularly as a leading part of it. Observe the Apostle’s description of them is, that they “ call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.” And Annanias speaking to Christ of Saul’s commission against his people said, he had authority from the chief Priests to bind all that call on thy name. Acts ix. 14. And as soon as God by his grace had called Paul to the work of the ministry, and when he actually exercised that function, “ all that heard him were amazed, and said, “ is not this he that destroyed them, which called on this name in Jerusalem.” And to show still farther, that Christ was addressed in prayer in the same manner with the Father, they are frequently joined together in the same petitions, without the least appearance of a higher honour given therein to one, than to the other. Now God himself, and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you. 1 Thess. iii. 11. Many instances of this joint worship of the Father and Son, in a way of prayer for grace, mercy, and peace, are to be found at the beginning and close of most of the epistles.

And.

† Some have such a reluctance in allowing any thing that is divine to Jesus, read the words thus; Lord of Jesus receive my Spirit. One would imagine by giving such a turn to the text, that this was the last breathings of a desperate cause. But what reason is assigned for such a reading? None but this; because the word *Jesus* is indeclinable; that makes it no more of Jesus than *in, by, with, or from Jesus*. And this text is as much *Lord Jesus*—as it is possible for either *Greek* or *Latin* to express it.

And sometimes grace is asked absolutely from Christ, without any notice taken of the Father. The prayer of the whole church to Christ, and the Apostle's prayer to him for them, shut up the whole canon of the Scripture.—Surely (says Christ) I come quickly. Amen, says the church even so come Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (says the Apostle) be with you all. Amen. What can more express the sameness of this kind of worship, which is offered to the Son, with that which is offered to the Father.

Again, Christ is the object of praise equally with the Father. Are they not joined together in these acts of adoration with equally lofty and exalted strains? I beheld, (says John) and heard the voice of many Angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, &c. †

Now *Superbus*, is not every creature here represented as paying this solemn supreme homage equally to the Lamb, and to the Father? And doth not this evidently exempt Christ from being a mere creature, since he, together with the Father, is the *object*, and not the *offerer*, of this adoration? I beheld, (says the same inspired penman) and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb,—saying, salvation, to our God, which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb. Rev. vii. 9, 10. Now if the expressions in these places are understood as acts of the most adoring supreme worship when applied to the Father, why should they not be so understood when applied to the Son? Since they are offered to them jointly in the same breath, and in the same sublime manner, without any appearance of different degrees of regards to them respectively. When these, and such like acts of adoration are given only to the Father, *Socinians* and *Arians* never call in question, but the Father is the proper object of these: And why should it be questioned, when the very same are offered only to the Son, without mentioning the Father at all? Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; to him be glory both now and for ever. Amen. ‡ And “to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.” These and the like doxologies, which are applied to Christ, are exactly of the same strain, and in the very same words, with those applied to the Father. Now unto God and our Father, be
glory

† Rev. v. 11, 12, 13, &c.

‡ 2 Pet. iii. 18.

glory for ever and ever. Amen. § But the God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by Jesus Christ.—To him be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

Permit me *Superbus*, to offer to your consideration what the Author of the *Athanasian Creed*, &c. offers on this head.—“To worship one supreme God, (says he) and him only, does not preclude God from a right to appoint an inferior worship to be paid to a person in the capacity of a Mediator: Which we find to be a plain matter of fact recorded in the gospels.” †

One would imagine that our Author had collected a great part of the New Testament in support of his hypothesis; but let the reader peruse these Scriptures never so carefully, he will (I can assure him) not meet with one, either directly or indirectly to establish this point, which he has the effrontery to palm upon his incautious reader, as an article, beyond all dispute authenticated by the Spirit of truth. I could wish to be informed where in all divine revelation any such position can be found; viz. “that God has a right to appoint an inferior worship to be paid to a person in the capacity of a Mediator.”—And that this must be true our Author speaks with all the assurance of an oracle; “which we find (says he) to be a plain matter of fact recorded in the gospels.” But perhaps you will reply *Superbus*, that I am not doing the Author justice; has he not been endeavouring all along to introduce the word of God, to support the doctrine of an inferior God; why should he now be blamed to summon in the same evidence in support of an inferior subordinate worship? But might it not without any impeachment on the good sense of our Author be enquired, what are the things essentially requisite to constitute an inferior God; and an inferior subordinate worship? Might it be asked again, whether in his opinion this inferior God is really and essentially God? If he answer in the affirmative; I ask again what divinity, or philosophy will endure such doctrine? If this supposed inferior God be not truly and essentially God, then he is a mere creature; for there is no medium between these two: And doth not the Scriptures over and over assure us, that no divine honours whatsoever are to be paid to any creature?

While we are discoursing upon the worship and nature of God who made us, we are certainly treading upon holy ground, and consequently should take good heed to our steps, and walk with all manner of holy reverence and caution. I shall suppose then that our Author, or any of his adherents, enter their closet, and shut the door upon them, according to our Lord's direction, and
in

§ Phil. iv. 20.

† pag. 93, also pag. 94, 95.

in an act of religious worship, address the Saviour of sinners in the words of Peter, "Lord save me." Again, in the same religious exercise, let them adopt the Publican's prayer; "God be merciful to me the sinner." What an intermixture and confusion of ideas in the same duty. That Christ is to be worshipped is acknowledged, but care must be taken that in our offering him the sacrifice of prayer and praise, that we thus worship an inferior God, with inferior worship. Even the Saints in glory must be to eternity on their guard, that when they are ascribing salvation, power and glory to the Lamb, they attribute these not in their full latitude and extent, but in a limited manner and degree.

Our Author argues in defence of inferior Mediatorial worship to Christ, and lays a great stress upon it, from his appearance on the throne under the character of a Lamb. Let us hear his own words.—"This is really arguing in defiance of the plain doctrine of the New Testament, wherein we are required to pay absolute supreme honour and worship to the one God and Father of all, and inferior or mediatorial worship to the one Mediator Jesus Christ, who is represented, at the very time he is receiving the greatest honour recorded of him by the sacred writers, under the character of a Lamb that was slain; a character absolutely inconsistent with the notion of his title to supreme honour and worship." † It is very strange to find our Author so peremptory and dogmatic, with regard to the New Testament command to pay inferior or mediatorial worship to Christ: God, no less than *requires* us so to do. I am sure such a command is not contained in the moral law; for there, we are positively prohibited from a knowledging, or worshipping any but the one only living, and true God: And if contained in the New Testament, I own I never found it. But he imagines, the appearance our Lord Jesus makes on the throne as a slain Lamb, is a most invincible argument to prove both the inferiority of his nature, and of that worship which is to be given him. But I ask, in what other form, and under what other character can the Son of God the Saviour, appear in the midst of the throne, than that of a Lamb? Although our Author and others, should improve this astonishing condescension to his dishonour and degradation; yet thanks be to God, that the same God who was "manifested in the flesh," and seen wearing our human nature here on earth, hath not laid it aside, now when he is on the throne! And as I already told you *Superbus*, that very same divine, and infinitely glorious person, appearing in the form of a
Lamb;

Lamb; has salvation, honour and glory ascribed to him, as well, and with the same breath as to the Father. As an inferior God, so inferior and mediatorial worship, is a doctrine unknown in Heaven: I wish it had never been heard of on earth.

But *Superbus*, it is not easy to discover what our Author means by mediatorial worship. Is it possible to define it? Is it religious inferior worship? Doth it consist in constituting Christ the *medium* of worship; or, in worshipping him under the character of Mediator? Let us examine these a little more particularly. An image has been sometimes thought a medium of worship, when God is supposed to be worshipped by, and through the image; as in the instance of the golden calf, and the calves set up at *Dan* and *Bethel*. Such mediatorial worship as this, leaves very little honour to the medium: All is supposed to pass through to the ultimate object. Thus the Egyptians in worshipping the sacred animals, supposed the worship to pass to the deity whereunto the animals belonged. Our Author has some expressions which would seem to look this way.—“ It being declared by them, (viz. the Apostles) in great numbers of instances, that the one God and Father of all is the only supreme object to whom, or to whose ultimate glory, all religious worship should be directed.”—“ Again, (says he) absolute supreme worship and honour are due to the person of the Father, as the one supreme God; and the worship of Christ is inferior or mediatorial, redounding to the glory of God the Father.” † I will not from these expressions absolutely say, that our Author meant that Christ is to be considered in no other point of view than merely as the medium of worship, if it was so, his notion of mediatorial worship is low enough.

Again, doth our Author mean by mediatorial worship, as if we were to pray to Christ only to pray for us? Thus Saints and Angels are prayed to by the Church of Rome, in order that they may be their intercessors. This brings the Son of God to a very low ebb; he can give nothing to us, nor do any thing for us; but only asks another to give, and do what we want. But is there any warrant to pray to any but God? How dishonourable to the ever blessed Redeemer to suppose that he can of himself do nothing for us! Has he not declared the very contrary. ‡ But we need not be at any great loss to find out our Author's meaning, which seems to be this; that “ Christ is to be worshipped with an inferior mediatorial worship redounding to the glory of God the Father.” And again, adds he, “ the one God and Father of all is the only supreme object to whom, or to whose
ultimate

† pag. 92.

‡ John xiv. 13, 14.

ultimate glory, all religious worship should be directed." Now here he supposes, that Christ may be directly worshipped, but that that worship redounds to the glory of God the Father, through him, as through a medium. Now might not our Author be asked, whether the worship that he supposes may be paid to Christ, is supreme, or inferior? He has answered this query himself, by plainly, and in the most peremptory terms declaring, that supreme worship is not his due. It must then be inferior; and if so, I maintain that it can never pass on to the supreme object, who would not be honoured, but greatly affronted with inferior worship. It must therefore rest in the inferior object, and so cannot be called mediate, but ultimate worship. And I may just add here, (let our Author and his friends say what they will) that no worship of a *creature*, supposing that creature never so highly dignified, can terminate in the *Creator*, or be for his glory, because he has absolutely forbidden all creature-worship; and in the very highest consideration of Christ in the opinion of the *Arians*, he is but a *Creature*. Doth not the Scriptures alway suppose that all our religious worship terminates in the object to which it is directed? Is it not evident, that all image-worship, or creature-worship, terminates in the image, or creature to which it is directed? When the Israelites worshipped the calf, they offered sacrifices to an idol, not to God; and they worshipped the molten image, not God, in doing it; however they might intend, and mean it (as certainly they did) for Jehovah. They are said to have "forgot God their Saviour," notwithstanding their intention to remember him in it; because it was not remembering him in a manner suitable to his commandment, which was to offer worship to God only: So also *Jereboam* is said to have made other *golds*, and to have cast God behind his back, notwithstanding his intention to terminate all the worship in the true Jehovah. Might it not here be queried, whether paying religious worship to any thing, is not in Scripture stile making a God of it? This is true even of what is called mediate, or relative worship: e. g. in the case of the golden calf, and the calves of *Dan* and *Bethel*.

What then, doth our Author ask, is the result of all this? Doth not the worship of Christ terminate in the glory of God the Father? Admit that it does so: Then certainly the worship of Christ is not creature-worship.

For, since all worship terminates in the object to which it is directed, or offered, if the same act of worship offered to Christ terminates in God the Father; then the case is plain that it terminates in *both*, and both in this case are one undivided object.

I may just observe here *Superbus*, that all religious worship has an immediate respect to the divinity of the person to be worshipped. That must be presupposed in all religious worship; otherwise such worship must be downright idolatry. This foundation being laid, whatever personal characters, or offices we consider the person worshipped under; *divine* goes along with it. Christ is a divine Mediator, a divine Priest, a divine Prophet, and a divine King: And so our worship of him never wants its proper object, never moves from its proper foundation, but remains constantly the same. Our considering the Son of God under the character, or office of Mediator, does not hinder us from considering him as God at the same time; (indeed strictly speaking if he had not been God, he could not have been a fit Mediator) any more than our considering the Father as King, Judge, Preserver, hinders us from considering him also as divine.

All the acts and offices of Christ relative to us, are only so many manifestations of his goodness, power, wisdom, and other attributes; which attributes are founded in his divine nature, which nature is common to the Father and him: Thus all our religious acknowledgments centre and terminate in one and the same divine nature, and all our particular acts of worship, amount to no more than one worship, one divine worship belonging equally to the Father and Son.

“ *Philemon*, I would be very glad if you could inform me of
 “ the practice of the christian church, with regard to the article
 “ of religious worship, for the three first centuries? Did they
 “ pay divine worship, and give divine honour, to Father,
 “ Son, and Holy Ghost, as three co equal, and co-eternal per-
 “ sons.”?

Superbus, I am very happy to think that I am able to satisfy you on this head; and to give you incontestible proofs, that the constant practise of the church in that period was, to ascribe all praise, honour and glory to the undivided Trinity.

The brethren of Smyrna conclude their epistle concerning the martyrdom of *Polycarp* in these words: Brethren we bid you farewell, adhering to the precepts and gospel of Jesus Christ; through whom, and with whom, be glory and honour, to God the Father, and the Holy Ghost.—Parallel to this, is that in the acts of *Ignatius's* martyrdom: Glorifying our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom, and with whom, to the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be glory and power, in the holy church, throughout all ages. Amen. † Nothing can be more express on this head than the following passage of *Gregory Thaumaturgus*: For so I believe,

† See Trapp's Serm. pag. 86.

believe, and may whosoever is my friend agree with me to worship God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, three persons, one Godhead, not divided in glory and honour, and essence and kingdom. †

I may just observe to you here *Superflus*, that the christians during the three first centuries, as they believed that in the unity of the Godhead, there were three distinct subsistences, and whilst they worshipped these three divine distinct persons from this principle of faith, they were not so careful with regard to the mode of expression: But when the subtleties of the *Arian heresie* had spread a very dangerous contagion through the church, and wrested such general expressions, which were used, while “the multitude of believers were of one heart and of one soul,” to that pernicious scheme of divinity, departing from the orthodox sense in which they were originally intended, and framing such new modes of worship as to suit their hypothesis, the famous council of Nice was assembled under *Constantine* to remedy this growing evil. The Fathers in that council declared the catholic doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father in the most explicit terms, as is to be seen in the Nicene Creed.

The question which was then agitated with so much heat and contention, related only to the nature of the Son. In that matter therefore the *Nicene* Fathers declared themselves at large, and in some subsequent councils confirmed and ratified what they had done. But with regard to the Holy Ghost, they only briefly professed their belief in him, as not thinking it needful to enlarge farther upon a subject which was not then in debate.

But it was not long until the *Macedonian*, or *pneumatomachian* heresie gave the church the same disturbance upon this article, as the *Arian* had done upon the other. Whereupon another council in the same century was held at *Constantinople*, wherein the Holy Ghost was declared to be *Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who together is worshipped and glorified*: And this was added to that creed or confession of faith, which the *Nicene* Fathers had drawn up before. We are by no means to imagine as our adversaries alledge, that this was the first rise of such doctrines being held in the church, for though the use of some new words was found necessary for the clearer explication of the primitive faith, and to guard it against the new subtleties of those who were studying to pervert it, yet these councils never assumed an authority to alter “the faith which was once delivered to the Saints,” but only to declare what had been taught from the beginning.

“ *Philemon,*

† See more to the same purpose in the Lord Bishop of London's Letter defended, pag. 37.

“ *Philemon*, is it true what I have oftentimes heard asserted, that few of the learned and impartial *Athanasians*, from the very days of their founder, till some controversial writers such as Bp. *Bull*, Dr. *Grabe*, and Dr. *Waterland* denied the truth of this fact; viz. that the *Ante-nicene* Fathers were generally against the *Athanasian*, and for the *Eusebian* doctrines?” §

Superbus, it would be a most a material point gained if it could be proven by the *Arians*; that the tenets embraced by them were handed down successively from the Apostles, and generally embraced by the christian church until they came to be found fault with, and even anathematized by that hot-headed innovator *Athanasius*: That is, if they could prove that the Apostles, and the christian church for the three first centuries were *Arians*: In this case it is certainly high time for those whom we call the Orthodox to be looking about them. If this be true, the Lord knows, they are in a most horrid mistake.

In order to find out whether this be truth or not, let us trace this matter down from the first beginnings of *Arianism*, about the year 319. And it may be known from *Alexander* Bishop of *Alexandria*, what opinion the catholicks in general then had of the novelty of the *Arian*, or *Eusebian* † doctrines.

In the year 321 he with his clergy, in their circular letter, represents the *Arians* as fallen into a great apostacy, and as fore-runners of *Antichrist*. They exclaim against the *Arian* doctrines in this manner, and in these words. Whoever heard such things as these? Or who, that now hears them, is not astonished at them, or does not stop his ears for fear of polluting his ears with such impurity of doctrine? Who that hears *John* declaring that “in the beginning was the word,” does not condemn those that say that he once was not? In the conclusion of the epistle, they compare them with *Hymenæus* and *Philetus*, and the traitor *Judas*: And they anathematize them as enemies to God, and subverters of souls. Now can any one suppose that these good men would ever have gone these lengths in their censure, had they had the least suspicion, that the *Arian* doctrines were at all agreeable to the faith of the *Ante-nicene* churches? ¶

Two years after this, the same *Alexander* in his letter to *Alexander* of *Constantinople*, goes on in the same warmth of zeal against

§ See Mrs. Whiston's reply to the Earl of *Nottingham*, pag. 3.

† They were called *Eusebians* from *Eusebius* of *Nicomedia*, one of the chief promoters of the *Arian* cause.

¶ See the preface to Dr. *Waterland's* second defence, pag. 7.

against the *Arian* doctrines. The abettors and favourers of them he ranks with the *Ebionites*, *Artemonites*, and *Semofatnians* (condemned hereticks) brands them as novellists of late appearing, as men that thought none of the ancients worthy to be compared with them, pretending to be the only wise men themselves, and to be inventors of doctrines which never before entered into man's head. Little did this man imagine that the *Ante-nicene* church adopted the doctrines introduced by the *Arians*.

About the year 352, *Athanasius* wrote his epistle concerning the decrees of the *Nicene* Council. What was his opinion of the *Ante-nicene* church, will sufficiently appear from this one passage, which runs thus — We give you demonstration that our doctrine has been handed down to us from Father to Father. But you, ye revivers of Judaism, and disciples of *Caiphas*, what writers can you bring to father your tenets? Not a man can you name of any repute for sense or judgment: All abhor you excepting only the Devil, who has alone been the Father of such an apostasy.

I may add further *Superbus*, the testimony of *Epiphanius* on this head; who about the year 371, says that the Apostolical faith continued pure and uncorrupted till the time of *Arius*, who divided the church: And who, by the instigation of the *Devil*, and with an impudent forehead let his tongue loose against his Lord. So little did he imagine that *Arianism* was primitive christianity. He further observes, that had it not been for the subtle practices of *Eudoxius*, Bishop of *Constantinople*, in perverting and corrupting the most pious Emperor *Valens*, the very women and children, and all that had been in any tolerable measure instructed in christian principles, would have reproved and routed the *Arians*, as blasphemers and murderers of their Lord. Such was the assurance the *Athanasians* then had, that their faith was the settled and standing doctrine of the primitive churches, all the world over, till the time of *Arius*. †

My dear *Onesimus*, I have just to inform you, that I had scarcely finished the last sentence when *Superbus* fainted away; and continued for such a length of time in that state, as made me apprehensive that he had indeed paid the last debt of nature: Nothing else was judged by the disconsolate family. Loth was the affectionate wife to part with the object of her affections. Fain would she have recalled (as she imagined) the departed soul.

O! what

† See more to the same purpose in the preface to Dr. Waterland's 2d defence.

O! with what reluctance did the tender offspring of a tender hearted parent yield him up, who was their present comfort, and the hope of their future support. But alas! who can retain the Spirit winging its way to another world; or who can obtain a discharge in that war? However for the present, we were all disappointed, agreeably disappointed. Enfeebled nature made one struggle more. The soul seemed unwilling to leave its present habitation, and launch into unknown regions. He opened his eyes once more, and speech returning, he soothed the griefs, and comforted the hearts of his disconsolate weeping family. He tendered each of them respectively his dying advice. Grace seemed to be poured into his lips. Raising himself on his pillow, he took an affectionate farewell of all present. Holding his wife by the hand, he addressed her in the following terms.

“ You, the dear object of my affections I must leave. The
 “ union between you and me must shortly be dissolved. You
 “ will be no more mine: I will be no more yours. Where I
 “ am going, all the relations by which we stand connected to
 “ one another in this world, shall only be remembered as waters
 “ that fail. I leave you under a burden of cares; but remem-
 “ ber, God, the Almighty God, defendeth the cause of the wi-
 “ dow. Trust his faithfulness pledged in his promise; “ let
 “ your widows trust in me.” Let this support the wife of my
 “ bosom, and the object of my tenderest affections. What more
 “ could you desire than the promise of an infallible Jehovah.
 “ Consider that “ he is not a man that he should lie; nor the
 “ son of man that he should repent. Hath he said it and shall
 “ he not do it, hath he spoken it, and shall it not come to pass:”
 “ Let this then comfort you in all your straits, and support you
 “ in every difficulty.”

After this, with an eye of the most complacential affection he looked round upon his children, addressing them in the following terms:—“ I die my dear children, but God, the everlasting
 “ God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be with you.
 “ It is your mercy, it is my present comfort, that you have a
 “ Father in Heaven, which lives for ever and ever. You have
 “ I often dedicated to the fatherly care and protection of this
 “ kind and generous Parent. You are no more mine: O!
 “ may you be the Lord’s. Seek him early, and ye shall find
 “ him. When finners would entice you to go along with them
 “ into the paths of immorality and vice, tell them you are not,
 “ you dare not be the servants of sin: Tell them, you are chil-
 “ dren of the living God, and him you will serve, and him you
 “ will obey. I leave you my dear children, but I leave you on
 “ the paternal care and protection of that God before whose tri-
 “ bunal

“ bunal I must in a few moments appear: Let these my dying
 “ words have their due influence on you; and O! may the
 “ blessing of the God of Jeshurun, and the blessing of your dy-
 “ ing Father rest on you through life.”

After a short pause he cast his eye on me who was sitting close by his bed-side, full of the most pungent grief; and stretching out his hand, he said, “ *Philemon*,” here the tears came trickling down his pale cheeks; this gave some relief, and added new strength to more than overburdened nature. Being supported in his bed, and ordering all present to listen attentively to what he had to say, he thus began.

“ My dear *Philemon*, what I am now to declare needs not to
 “ be construed as the effusions of a weak and disturbed imagina-
 “ tion, but as the words of truth and soberness. I bless God, my
 “ understanding is as quick, my memory as strong as ever. To
 “ know that we are mortal, and to depart out of this mortal state,
 “ are, I find very different things. When our breasts are full of
 “ milk, and our bones moistened with marrow; if we admit the
 “ thought of a future dissolution, we admit it rather as an intrud-
 “ ing guest. Sceldom do we ruminate on this great truth as we
 “ ought, *that we are mortal*. In the gaiety of our spirits, how
 “ transiently do we think upon an *hereafter*. It is not the hap-
 “ piness of every one to *die daily*. This grim messenger has
 “ now a hold of me: I can neither plead a discharge nor a de-
 “ lay. All arguments would be of no avail to that relentless
 “ tyrant. I die; in a short time, I must depart to that place
 “ from whence I shall not return until the Heavens be no more.
 “ I must say to corruption thou art my Father, and to the worm
 “ thou art my sister and brother. Dreary thought! And if it
 “ was not for the joyful prospect of a blessed immortality, the
 “ thought would be entirely insupportable. I bless God that I
 “ can in some measure say with *Paul*, I know in whom I have
 “ believed.

“ *Philemon*, I bless that kind auspicious providence that sent
 “ you my way. You know my dear friend, that the current
 “ of our disputations turned upon points with which the salva-
 “ tion of our souls are nearly, and necessarily connected. I
 “ spoke my mind without reserve; and I spoke nothing,
 “ but what, from my infancy I was taught, and eagerly imbibed.
 “ Long did my mind weaver: Sometimes almost a prosy-
 “ lite to your principles; no, but to these contained in the ora-
 “ cles of the living God: At other times, new objections were
 “ started to my mind which drove me back, and I soon lost what
 “ I had gained. But he that commanded the light to shine out
 “ of darkness, hath shined into my benighted mind; and hath
 “ given

“ given me an understanding to know him that is true. He
 “ hath given to me his Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of wisdom and
 “ revelation in the knowledge of Christ.

“ And now *Philemon*, I will, if your time and my strength
 “ will permit, give you a brief summary of my faith and belief,
 “ the sincerity of which I think you cannot dispute — I believe
 “ that there are three persons in the one undivided Godhead,
 “ Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; equal in power and glory.—
 “ I believe that none but one who is possessed of infinite power,
 “ could have expiated our sins, and made an atonement for our
 “ souls. I believe therefore, that the second person in the ever
 “ blessed and adorable Trinity, and who is the supreme God,
 “ equal with the Father, in the fulness of time, assumed our
 “ human nature into a personal union with the divine; and in
 “ that human nature, lived a sorrowful life, and died the cursed
 “ death of the cross: And that from this union of the two na-
 “ tures, flows the virtue and efficacy of his death as a ransom
 “ for our sins.—I believe the obedience of his life to the law
 “ precept, and his sufferings unto death in consequence of the
 “ law threatening, constitute that righteousness, upon the footing
 “ of which I must stand justified before the impartial tribunal of
 “ God — I believe that no righteousness of the creature, will
 “ be pleadable at God’s bar as the ground of our acquittance
 “ there. On this head, I utterly, and for ever renounce my
 “ former pharisaical Creed, this I cordially disclaim, and for
 “ ever abandon. I look upon all my moral endowments and
 “ qualifications to be but filthy rags; yea, but lofs and dung for
 “ the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord. I
 “ believe independent of Christ’s atonement and satisfaction in
 “ the room of the guilty, no flesh living can be justified; and I
 “ am persuaded, that all who believe in him, shall be justified
 “ from all things, from whence they could not be justified by the
 “ law of Moses.—I believe the absolute necessity of the vica-
 “ rious death of the Lord of glory, in order for pardon, and
 “ acceptance with God; and that all those who have reached the
 “ throne, obtained the end of their faith, the salvation of their
 “ souls, upon the footing of his atoning righteousness.—I be-
 “ lieve that those who lived prior to his incarnation and death,
 “ were received into glory by virtue of their faith in him as the
 “ future Messiah; who was the Lamb slain from the foundation
 “ of the world: And that he was the sum and substance of all
 “ the promises under the Old, as well as under the New Testa-
 “ ment dispensation: That he was the substance of the whole
 “ ceremonial law; and that the Jews had the gospel preached
 “ to them under that legal dispensation, as well as we who live

“ under

“ under the gospel œconomy, although vastly different with regard to
 “ perspicuity and evidence.—I believe also, with regard to the second
 “ person of the ever blessed Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ, that he is
 “ the centre where all the great lines of divine revelation do meet;
 “ that he is the sum and substance of all gospel-preaching; and that to
 “ preach Jesus and him crucified, as the great ordinance of Heaven for
 “ the salvation of sinners, is the only and effectual mean, to put a stop
 “ to the progress of vice and immorality, and to promote the interests
 “ of holiness among gospel-professors: In a word, that to preach Jesus,
 “ and his vicarious propitiatory death, will be found in the issue, to be
 “ the only grand mean to promote the glory of God, humble the pride
 “ of human nature, and promote piety in the world.

“ I believe that the third person in the holy Trinity, the Holy Ghost,
 “ is equal with the Father and the Son, in all the essential and glorious
 “ perfections and attributes of deity; that he is equally the object of
 “ our religious worship and services with the Father and the Son.—I
 “ believe, that in the œconomy of man’s redemption, he is that divine
 “ agent who works in the hearts of sinners, and begets in them all saving
 “ gifts and graces; and that independent of his gracious supernatural
 “ agency, no man will ever be convinced of sin, or converted to the
 “ love and practise of holiness. I am persuaded, that sooner can the
 “ *Ethiopian* change his skin, and the *Leopard* his spots, than men who
 “ are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well, independent of his all-
 “ gracious operations on their souls.—I believe that moral suasion is en-
 “ tirely incompetent to answer this great end.—I am persuaded that men,
 “ along with their holiness, have lost all power and ability to perform any
 “ action acceptable in the eye of infinite purity; and that although the
 “ religious actions of wicked men may be, as to the matter of them, such
 “ as the law requires, yet formally considered they are but splendid sins
 “ in the sight of God.

“ I am further verily persuaded that, to deny a Trinity of persons in
 “ the one undivided Godhead, is subversive of the whole scheme of sal-
 “ vation as revealed in the Scriptures. That it tends in the issue to
 “ pour the greatest contempt on the grace of the Father, and to vilify
 “ the blood of the Son, in counting it a common thing; and that also,
 “ such an opinion doth despite to the Spirit of grace, by divesting him
 “ of his supreme deity, and taking these offices which he executes in
 “ the application of redemption out of his hand, and lodging them in
 “ the hands of poor, sinful, and impotent creatures.

“ I believe the absolute necessity of faith to interest a sinner in Christ’s
 “ atonement and satisfaction; and that it is only through faith in his
 “ blood, that we come to be actually and formally pardoned. I am
 “ persuaded that this grace is the gift of God; an effect of his omni-
 “ potent power: And that wherever this supernatural grace is implanted,
 “ it will evidence its genuine and saving nature by its fruits; it will
 “ work by love, purify the heart, and overcome the world. In a word,
 “ its genuine tendency will be to lead forward the believer in the
 “ practise of universal holiness.—And I am also persuaded, that there is
 “ no man living that will lead a godly life, or can do it, but a genuine
 “ believer in Jesus.

“ I further

“ I further believe in the absolute sovereignty of God, who may do
 “ without any impeachment on the holiness and justice of his nature,
 “ in the armies of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of this lower
 “ world, what he sees meet. I am persuaded, that he may do with, by,
 “ and upon his creatures what pleaseth him: And that the sovereignty
 “ of his grace and love to sinners, runs through the whole scheme of
 “ our salvation from its commencement, to its final consummation.

“ I believe the absolute necessity of holiness in order to render us
 “ meet for happiness; and that without holiness no man shall see the
 “ Lord; and that no man living and dying in the practice of any known
 “ sin, or in the omission of any known duty, shall ever see God's face
 “ in glory. And I am firmly persuaded, that without faith in Christ's
 “ blood there can be no holiness of heart or conversation; that his
 “ blood which is the meritorious cause of our justification is also the me-
 “ ritorious cause of our sanctification. I believe there is no scheme that
 “ will fully answer the end to promote holiness and virtue, but that
 “ which directs the sinner immediately to that blood which cleanseth
 “ from all sin, and to that Holy Spirit, the beginner and promoter of
 “ all genuine holiness in the heart of a believer.

“ I believe and am firmly persuaded, that all true believers shall
 “ persevere unto the end, and in the end obtain the salvation of their
 “ souls; that Christ shall never lose one of those whom the Father
 “ gave him to be saved from wrath, through the virtue and efficacy of
 “ his all-atoning obedience and death, but shall be preserved through
 “ faith unto complete and eternal redemption.”

After having expressed himself in the foregoing manner, he desired
 to be laid down on his pillow, which was accordingly done. After
 pausing a few minutes, I asked him, if he was under any dread of his
 approaching dissolution; to which he replied, “ no. I know in whom
 “ I have believed. Insupportable would the thoughts of my entering
 “ into the world of Spirits be if it was not for this, that I know that my
 “ Redeemer liveth.”—I asked him again, if he was now thoroughly
 sensible, that there is more requisite to beget confidence and courage in
 a dying hour, and secure a happy death, than the obedience and righte-
 ousness of the sinful creature. To which he replied: “ Yes *Philemon*,
 “ how could I face death with comfort, or appear before God with
 “ safety, upon the footing of that righteousness, which at best is as fil-
 “ thy rags. I thank God he hath effectually broken my proud heart,
 “ and hath discovered to me a rock upon which I may build with safe-
 “ ty.” With a low and saultering voice he added. “ I have waited
 “ for thy salvation O Lord.” “ Though I walk through the valley
 “ and shadow of death, I will fear none evil.” “ Lord Jesus receive
 “ my Spirit.” And having thus spoken, he fell asleep in the Lord.

Farewel my dear *Onesimus*: That you may die the death of the
 righteous, and that your last end may be like his; is, and ever will be
 the most fervent prayer of

PHILEMON.

