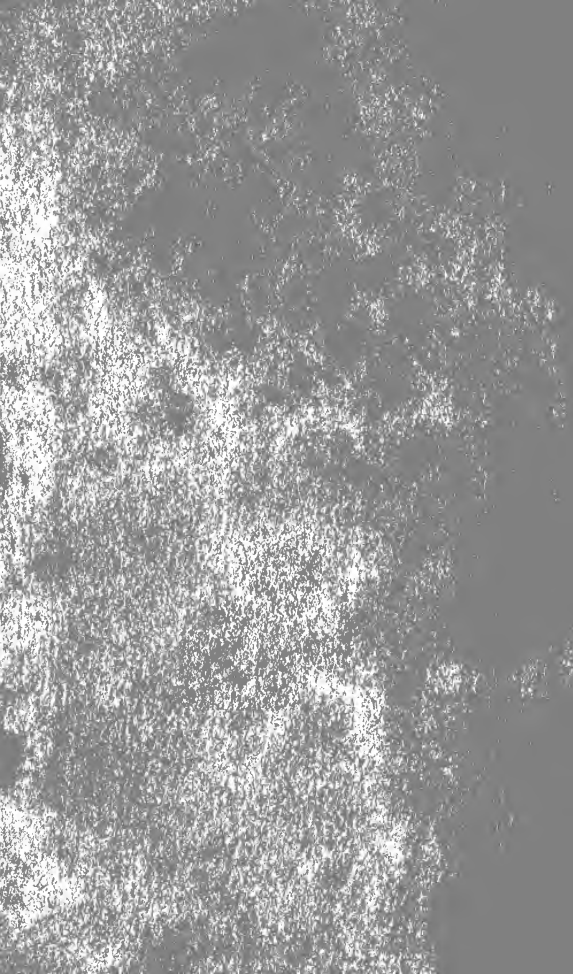
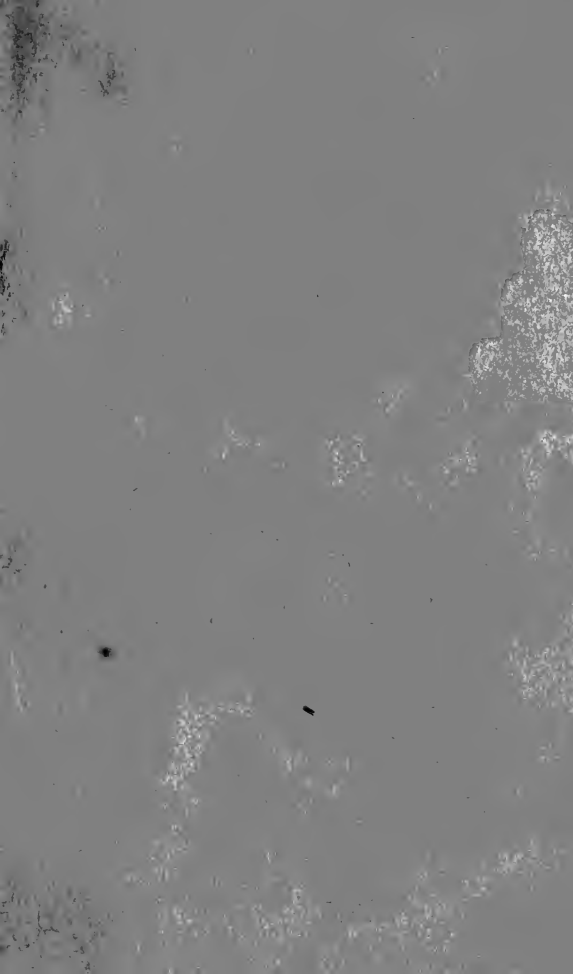




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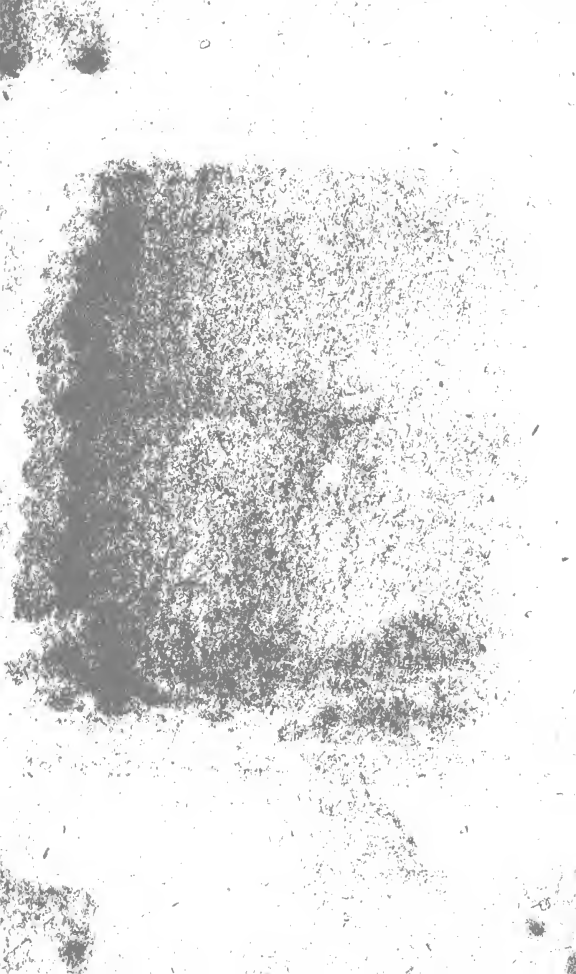


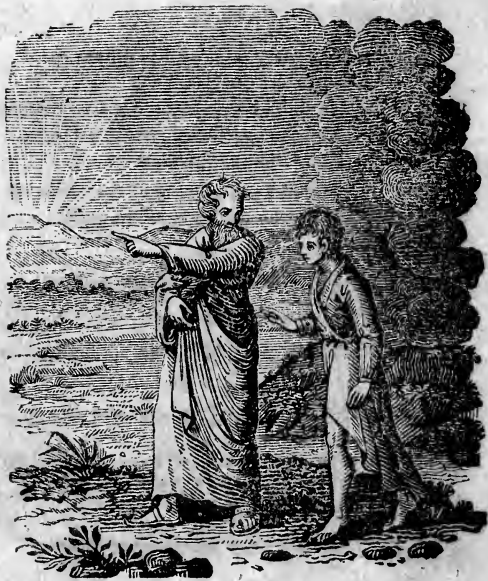
RECOMMENDATION.

THE "Sceptics Manual," while going through the press, has been seen by *Dr. S. S. Smith*, of Princeton College, and the Rev. *James Armstrong*, of Trenton, both of whom, have sent the Publisher special written testimonies of their approbation.

A part of the language of one, which is also the opinion (in substance) of the other, is, that "the nature of the work deserves approbation; also the manner in which it is treated; and the great object it is calculated to promote." The same writer also adds: "I am inclined to think it promises great usefulness; especially if those for whom it is intended, could be prevailed upon to give it an attentive and unprejudiced perusal."

This work is well adapted to the confirmation and edification of Christians, though it is more particularly designed for the instruction of Unbelievers.





“He that heareth reproof getteth understanding.”

THE
SCEPTIC'S MANUAL,

OR

CHRISTIANITY VERIFIED :

Being a new method of Appeal to the Understandings and Consciences of Deists, Jews, Sceptics, and Formal Professors :

For the truth, power, and efficacy of the Christian Religion; demonstrated in three parts :

BY THE

TRUTH OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,

BY THE CERTAINTY OF THE

MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT,

AND BY THE

INFLUENCE AND POWER OF RELIGION,

AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE CONVERSION OF NOTORIOUS SINNERS, AND IN THE LIVES OF DISTINGUISHED SAINTS.

“He that heareth reproof getteth understanding.”
PROV.

PHILADELPHIA :

PUBLISHED BY J. F. WATSON,
S. W. corner of Third and Chesnut-streets.

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1811.

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PREFACE.

IT is intended in the following pages, to offer to Unbelievers, AFTER THEIR OWN MANNER OF REASONING, reasons for the truth and certainty of the Christian Religion, both in its theory, and in its "power," deduced from, and confirmed by, *data*, to be found in their own judgments and consciences.

Those who disbelieve the Bible, do not allow their opponents to urge their arguments from *premises*, which their minds already reject, it is therefore the purpose here to convince them from "topics of reason" in which they can at once give their consent.—In this manner the Bible is demonstrated to be true.

It is next endeavoured to show, *how it is* that God, who is a Spirit, "and whom no man hath seen at any time," doth yet as certainly and *perceptibly* manifest Himself to the *mind*, as does the radiance of the natural sun to our outward senses at noonday. This being a doctrine of vital importance to christianity, though little regarded by some *theoretical* christians, is here proposed to the *reason*, and *understanding* of all objectors, and enforced by suitable Scripture concurrence.

Finally, as Religion is a *Scriptural* service, and is an affection and feeling of the heart, wrought there, *perceptibly* and *preternaturally* by the Holy Ghost, to the sure and *certain evidence* and consolation of all true Believers, it is endeavoured to show the energy and transforming effect of that spiritual power in convincing and convicting of Sin, and in "changing the heart," by exhibiting the operations of that spirit

in the death of convicted Sinners, dying in despair ; in Sinners reformed ; and in Saints who lived and died in the assurance of Faith.—The persons selected for this evidence, are such as are best known to the literary world, and to the truth of whose lives history has affixed her sufficient testimony.

This work is chiefly derived from the writings of Leslie, Fletcher, and Simpson.

PART I.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PART I

1891

THE TRUTH

OF THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES

BY MR. CHARLES LESLIE.

DEMONSTRATED IN HIS SHORT AND EASY
METHOD WITH THE

DEISTS,

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

The following letter of Leslie
was addressed to a Scotch
noblemen, who requested
him to furnish some short
and conclusive arguments,
with which to combat the
objections of infidels and
to establish the truth of
Christianity -

Dr Adam Smith was
aid to have tried for
years to invent some
fabulous tale to which
Leslie's "four marks" would
apply, but finally aban-
doned the attempt as
impracticable

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

METHOD WITH THE DEISTS.

THE controversy between Deists and Christians, is not so much respecting the morality or ethics of the gospel, (for honest Deists admit its precepts to be pure, and of real importance to the well being of society) as it is a dispute concerning the integrity and validity of the BIBLE itself. Christians *know* it to be an *inspired* book, because, besides its other evidences, it has "demonstration and power." But Infidels imagine it a delusive forgery, imposed upon the credulity of Christians, by the craft of designing men.

The *validity* of the BIBLE, being therefore, the chief matter at issue, the force of the following arguments of Leslie, supported (for this occasion) by *notes*, chiefly from Fletcher, are purposely limited to that kind of appeal to the understanding of unbelievers, which will best encounter and subdue *their* unbelief and prejudices.

The excellence of the moral and perceptive part of the gospel, is comparatively an easier task to prove. Its beneficial, and even purifying tendency, has been already conceded in a very remarkable manner, by

both Rousseau and Bolingbroke.* If however, further information is required upon this subject, the honest inquirer may find his utmost scruples amply combatted, by looking into Mr. Bogue's excellent "Essay on the Divine authority of the New Testament," a little book drawn up as a *gift* to the infidels of France, and most admirably adapted to subdue the anti-christian prejudices of any people.

Till you convince an Infidel that the WORD OF GOD is indeed *genuine*, you but "beat the air," to urge him to read it as his great rule of life: but when convinced...*he knows*, he must not only study it, but must obey it, or perish.

* Even Paine has not scrupled to say, that "Jesus Christ was a virtuous, and an amiable man; that the morality he preached and practised, was of the most benevolent kind; and that it has not been exceeded by any." Similar concessions have been made, at different times, by Blount and Tindal, and by Morgan, Toland, Chubb, and others.

SHORT AND EASY METHOD

WITH THE

DEISTS.

SIR,

I. IN answer to your's of the 3d instant, I much condole with your unhappy circumstances, of being placed amongst such company, where, as you say, you continually hear the sacred scriptures, and the histories therein contained, particularly of Moses, and of Christ, and all revealed religion, turned into ridicule, by men who set up for sense and reason. And they say, that there is no greater ground to believe in Christ than in Mahomet: that all these pretences to revelation are cheats, and ever have been, among Pagans, Jews, Mahometans, and Christians: that they are all alike impositions of cunning and designing men, upon the credulity, at first, of simple and unthinking people; till, their numbers increasing, their delusions grew popular, came at last to be established by laws; and then

the force of education and custom gives a bias to the judgments of after ages, till such deceits come really to be believed, being received upon trust from the ages foregoing, without examining into the original and bottom of them. Which these our modern men of sense, (as they desire to be esteemed) say, that they only do; -that they only have their judgments freed from the slavish authority of precedents and laws, in matters of truth; which, they say, ought only to be decided by reason: though, by a prudent compliance with popularity and laws, they preserve themselves from outrage, and legal penalties; for none of their complexion are addicted to sufferings, or martyrdom.

Now, sir, that which you desire from me, is, some short topic of reason, if such can be found, without running to authorities, and the intricate mazes of learning, which breed long disputes; and which these men of reason deny by wholesale, though they can give no reason for it, only suppose that authors have been trumped upon us, interpolated, and corrupted, so that no stress can be laid upon them: though it cannot be shown wherein they are so corrupted; which, in reason, ought to lie upon them to prove, who alledge it;

Y otherwise it is not only a precarious, but a guilty plea: and the more, that they refrain not to quote books on their side, for whose authority there are no better, or not so good grounds. However, you say, it makes your disputes endless, and they go away with noise and clamour, and a boast, that there is nothing, at least nothing certain, to be said on the Christian side. Therefore you are desirous to find some one topic of reason, which should demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion, and at the same time distinguish it from the impostors of Mahomet, and the old Pagan world; that our Deists may be brought to this test, and be either obliged to renounce their reason, and the common reason of mankind, or to submit to the clear proof, from reason, of the Christian religion: which must be such a proof, as no imposture, can pretend to, otherwise it cannot prove the Christian religion not to be an imposture. And whether such a proof, one single proof, (to avoid confusion,) is not to be found out, you desire to know from me.

And you say, that you cannot imagine but there must be such a proof, because every truth is in itself clear, and one. And therefore that one reason for it, if it be the true reason, must be sufficient; and if suffi-

cient, it is better than many; for multiplicity confounds, especially to weak judgments.

Sir, you have imposed a hard task upon me. I wish I could perform it. For though every truth is one; yet our sight is so feeble, that we cannot (always) come to it directly, but by many inferences, and laying of things together.

But I think, that, in the case before us, there is such a proof as you require; and I will set it down as short and plain as I can.

II. First, then, I suppose that the truth of the doctrine of Christ will be sufficiently evinced, if the matters of fact which are recorded of him in the gospels, be true: for his miracles, if true, do vouch the truth of what he delivered.

The same is to be said as to Moses. If he brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea, in that miraculous manner which is related in Exodus, and did such other wonderful things as are there told of him, it must necessarily follow, that he was sent from God: these being the strongest proofs we can desire; and which every Deist will confess he would acquiesce in, if he saw them with his eyes. Therefore the stress of this cause will depend upon the proof of these matters of fact.

1. And the method I will take, is, *First*, To lay down such rules, as to the truth of matters of fact in general, that where they all meet, such matters of fact cannot be false. And then, *Secondly*, to show, that all these rules do meet in the matters of fact of Moses, and of Christ; and that they do not meet in the matters of fact of Mahomet, of the heathen deities, or can possibly meet in any imposture whatsoever.

2. The rules are these.

I. That the matter of fact be such, as that men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, may be judges of it,

II. That it be done publicly, in the face of the world,

III. That not only public monuments be kept up in memory of it, but some outward actions be performed.

IV. That such monuments, and such actions, or observances, be instituted, and do commence from the time that the matter of fact was done.

3. The two first rules make it impossible for any such matter of fact to be imposed upon men, at the time when such mat-

ter of fact was said to be done, because every man's eyes and senses would contradict it. For example; suppose any man should pretend, that yesterday he divided the Thames, in presence of all the people of London, and carried the whole city, men, women, and children, over to Southwark, on dry land; the waters standing like walls on both sides; I say, it is morally impossible, that he could persuade the people of London that this was true, when every man woman, and child, could contradict him, and say, that this was a notorious falsehood; for that they had not seen the Thames so divided, or had gone over on dry land. Therefore I take it for granted, (and, I suppose, with the allowance of all the Deists in the world) that no such imposition could be put upon men, at the time when such public matter of fact was said to be done.

4. Therefore it only remains that such matter of fact might be invented some time after when the men of that generation wherein the thing was said to be done, are all past and gone; and the credulity of after ages might be imposed upon, to believe that things were done in former ages which were not.

And for this, the two last rules secure

us as much as the two first rules in the former case: for whenever such a matter of fact came to be invented, if not only monuments were said to remain of it, but likewise that public actions and observances were constantly used, ever since the matter of fact was said to be done, the deceit must be detected, by no such monuments appearing, and by the experience of every man, woman, and child, who must know that no such actions, or observances, were ever used by them. For example, suppose I should now invent a story of such a thing done a thousand years ago, I might perhaps get some to believe it: but if I say that not only such a thing was done, but that from that day to this, every man at the age of twelve years had a joint of his little finger cut off; and that every man in the nation did want a joint of such a finger; and that this institution was said to be part of the matter of fact done so many years ago, and vouched as a proof and confirmation of it, and as having descended, without interruption, and been constantly practised, in memory of such matter of fact all along from the time that such matter of fact was done: I say, it is impossible I should be believed in such a case; because every one could contradict me, as to the mark of cutting off

a joint of the finger; and that being part of my original matter of fact, must demonstrate the whole to be false.

III. Let us now come to the second point, to show, that the matters of fact of Moses, and of Christ, have all these rules or marks before mentioned; and that neither the matter of fact of Mahomet, or what is reported of the heathen deities, have the like: and that no imposture can have them all.

1. As to Moses, I suppose it will be allowed me, that he could not have persuaded 600,000 men, that he had brought them out of Egypt, through the Red sea; fed them forty years, without bread, by miraculous manna; and the other matters of fact recorded in his books, if they had not been true; because every man's senses that were then alive, must have contradicted it: and therefore he must have imposed upon all their senses, if he could have made them believe it, when it was false, and no such things done. So that here are the first and second of the above mentioned four marks.

For the same reason, it was equally impossible for him to have made them receive his five books as truth, and not to have rejected them, as a manifest imposture, which told of all these things as done be-

fore their eyes, if they had not been so done. See how positively he speaks to them, *Deut. xi. 2—8.* *And know ye this day: for I speak not with your children which have not known, and which have not seen the chastisement of the Lord your God, his greatness, his mighty hand, and his stretched-out arm; and his miracles, and his acts which he did in the midst of Egypt, unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land; and what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots, how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them as they pursued after you, and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day; and what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came unto this place; and what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliah, the son of Ruben: how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and their tents, and all the substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel. But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord, which he did, &c.*

From hence we must suppose it impossible, that these books of Moses, if an imposture, could have been invented, and put upon the people who were then alive when all these things were said to be done.

The utmost therefore, that even a *suppose* can stretch to, is, that these books were wrote in some age after Moses, and put out in his name.

And to this I say, that if it was so, it was impossible that those books should have been received as the books of Moses, in that age wherein they may have been supposed to have been first invented. Why? Because they speak of themselves as delivered by Moses, and kept in the ark from his time. *And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished; that Moses commanded the Levites, which bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee, Deut. xxxi. 24, 25, 26.* And there was a copy of this book to be left likewise with the king. *And it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them, Deut. xvii. 18, 19.*

Here you see that this book of the law speaks of itself, not only as an history or relation of what things were then done ; but as the standing and municipal law and statutes of the nation of the Jews, binding the king as well as the people.

Now, in whatever age after Moses you will suppose this book to have been forged, it was impossible it could be received as truth ; because it was not then to be found, either in the ark, or with the king, or any where else : for when first invented, every body must know, that they had never heard of it before.

And therefore they could less believe it to be the book of their statutes, and the standing law of the land, which they had all along received, and by which they had been governed.

Could any man, now at this day, invent a book of statutes, or acts of parliament, for England, and make it pass upon the nation as the only book of statutes that ever they had known ? As impossible was it for the books of Moses (if they were invented in any age after Moses) to have been received for what they declare themselves to be, viz. the statutes and municipal law of the nation of the Jews ; and to have persuaded the

Jews, that they had owned and acknowledged these books, all along from the day of Moses, to that day in which they were first invented : that is, that they had owned them before they had ever so much as heard of them. Nay, more, the whole nation must, in an instant, forget their former laws and government, if they could receive these books, as being their former laws. And they could not otherwise receive them, because they vouch themselves so to be. Let me ask the Deists but this one short question, was there ever a book of sham laws, which were not the laws of the nation, palmed upon any people since the world began? If not, with what face can they say this of the books of the laws of the Jews? Why will they say that of them, which they confess impossible in any nation or among any people?

But they must be yet more unreasonable. For the books of Moses have a further demonstration of their truth, than even other law books have ; for they not only contain the laws, but give an historical account of their institution, and the practice of them from that time : as of the passover, in memory of the death of the first-born in Egypt* and that the same day, all the first-born of Israel, both of man and beast, were, by a

* Numb. viii. 17, 18.

perpetual law, dedicated to God; and the Levites taken for all the first-born of the children of Israel: that Aaron's rod which budded, was kept in the ark, in memory of the rebellion and wonderful destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram: and for the confirmation of the priesthood to the tribe of Levi: as likewise the pot of manna, in memory of their having been fed with it forty years in the wilderness: that the brazen serpent was kept (which remained to the days of Hezekiah, *2 Kings* xviii. 4) in memory of that wonderful deliverance, by only looking upon it, from the biting of the fiery serpent. *Numb.* xxi. 9: the feast of Pentecost, in memory of the dreadful appearance of God upon mount Horeb, &c.

And besides these remembrances of particular actions and occurrences, there were other solemn institutions in memory of their deliverance out of Egypt, in the general, which included all the particulars: as of the Sabbath, *Deut.* v. 15; their daily sacrifices, and yearly expiation; their new moons and several feasts and fasts. So that there were yearly, monthly, weekly, daily remembrances and recognitions of these things.

And not only so, but the books of the same Moses tell us, that a particular tribe (of Levi) was appointed and consecrated

by God, as his priests; by whose hands, and none other, the sacrifices of the people were to be offered, and these solemn institutions to be celebrated: that it was death for any other to approach the altar: that their high priest wore a glorious mitre, and magnificent robes of God's own contrivance, with the miraculous Urim and Thummim in his breast-plate, whence the divine responses were given*: that, at his word, the king, and all the people, were to go out, and to come in: that these Levites were likewise the chief judges, even in all civil causes; and that it was death to resist their sentence†. Now, whenever it can be supposed, that these books of Moses were forged, in some ages after Moses, it is impossible they could have been received as true, unless the forgers could have made the whole nation believe, that they had received these books from their fathers; had been instructed in them when they were children, and had taught them to their children; moreover, that they had all been circumcised, and did circumcise their children in pursuance to what was commanded in these books; that they had observed the yearly passover, the weekly sabbath, the new moons, and all these several feasts, fasts, and ceremo-

* *Numb.* xxvii. 21. † *Deut.* xvii. 8. 13. 1 *Chron.* xxiii. 4.

nies, commanded in these books : that they had never eaten any swine's flesh, or other meats prohibited in these books ; that they had a magnificent tabernacle, with a visible priesthood to administer in it, which was confined to the tribe of Levi ; over whom was placed a glorious high priest, clothed with great and mighty prerogatives ; whose death only could deliver those that were fled to the cities of refuge* ; and that these priests were their ordinary judges, even in civil matters : I say, was it possible, to have persuaded a whole nation of men, that they had known and practised all these things, if they had not done it ? or, *secondly*, to have received a book for truth, which said they had practised them, and appealed to that practice ? so that here are the third and fourth of the marks above mentioned.

But now let us descend to the utmost degree of supposition, *viz.* That these things were practised before these books of Moses were forged : and that these books did only impose upon the nation, in making them believe, that they had kept these observances in memory of such and such things as were inserted in those books.

* Numb. xxxv. 25, 28.

Well, then, let us proceed upon this supposition, however groundless. And now, will not the same impossibilities occur as in the former case? for, *first*, this must suppose that the Jews kept all these observances in memory of nothing, or without knowing any thing of their original, or the reason why they kept them: whereas these very observances did express the ground and reason of their being kept; as the pass-over, in memory of God's passing over the children of the Israelites, in that night wherein he slew all the first-born of Egypt; and so of the rest. But,

Secondly, Let us suppose, contrary both to reason and matter of fact, that the Jews did not know any reason at all why they kept these observances; yet was it possible to put it upon them, that they had kept these observances in memory of what they had never heard of before that day, whensoever you will suppose that these books of Moses were first forged? For example, suppose I should now forge some romantic story, of strange things done a thousand years ago; and, in confirmation of this, should endeavour to persuade the Christian world, that they had all along, from that day to this, kept the first day of the week

COULD THEY THAT

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in memory of such a hero, an Apollonius, a Barcosbas, or a Mahomet; and had all been baptised in his name; and swore by his name, and upon that very book, (which I had then forged, and which they never saw before) in their public judicatures; that this book was their gospel, and law, which they had ever since that time, these thousand years past, universally received and owned, and none other: I would ask any Deist, whether he thinks it possible, that such a cheat could pass, or such a legend be received, as the gospel of Christians? and that they could be made believe, that they never had had any other gospel? the same reason is as to the books of Moses: and must be as to every matter of fact which has all the four marks before mentioned. And these marks secure any such matter of fact as much from being invented and imposed in any after ages, as at the time when such matters of fact were said to be done.

Let me give one very familiar example more in this case. There is the Stonhenge in Salisbury plain, every body knows it; and yet none knows the reason why those great stones were set there, or by whom, or in memory of what.

Now, suppose I should write a book to-morrow, and tell there, that these stones were

set up by **Hercules**, **Polyphemus**, or **Gargantua**, in memory of such and such of their actions ; and for a further confirmation of this, should say in this book, that it was wrote at the time when such actions were done, and by the very actors themselves, or eye-witnesses ; and that this book had been received as truth, and quoted by authors of the greatest reputation in all ages since ; moreover that this book was well known in **England**, and enjoined by act of parliament to be taught our children ; and that we did teach it to our children, and had been taught it ourselves when we were children : I ask any **Deist**, whether he thinks this could pass upon **England** ? and whether if I or any other, should insist upon it, we should not, instead of being believed, be sent to **Bedlam** ?

Now let us compare this with the **Stonehenge**, as I may call it, or twelve great stones set up at **Gilgal**, which is told in the 4th chapter of *Joshua*. There it is said, v. 6. That the reason why they were set up was, that when their children, in after ages, should ask the meaning of it, it should be told them.

And the thing in memory of which they were set up, was such as could not possibly be imposed upon that nation, at that time

when it was said to be done, it was as wonderful and miraculous as their passage through the Red sea.

And withal free from a very poor objection, which the Deists have advanced against that miracle of the Red sea: thinking to salve it by a spring-tide with the concurrence of a strong wind happening at the same time; which left the sand so dry, as that the Israelites, being all foot, might pass through the oozy places and holes, which, it must be supposed, the sea left behind it: but that the Egyptians, being all horse and chariots, stuck in those holes, and were intangled, so that they could not march so fast as the Israelites: and that this was all the meaning of its being said, that God took off their (the Egyptians) chariot-wheels, that they drove them heavily. So that they would make nothing extraordinary, at least not miraculous, in all this action.

This is advanced in Le Clerc's dissertations upon *Genesis*, lately printed in Holland.* And that part, with others of the like tendency, endeavouring to resolve other miracles, as that of Sodom and Gomorrah, &c. into the mere natural causes,

* Le Clerc lived to recant his opinion.

are put into English by the well known **T. Brown**, for the edification of the **Deists** in **England**.

But these gentlemen have forgot, that the **Israelites** had great herds of many thousand cattle with them; which would be apter to stray, and fall into those holes and oozy places in the sand, than horses, with riders, who might direct them.

But such precarious and silly supposes are not worth the answering. If there had been no more in this passage through the **Red sea** than that of a spring-tide, &c. it had been impossible for **Moses** to have made the **Israelites** believe that relation given of it in *Exodus*, with so many particulars, which themselves saw to be true.

And all those scriptures which magnify this action, and appeal to it as a full demonstration of the miraculous power of **God**, must be reputed as romance or legend.

I say this for the sake of some **Christians**, who think it no prejudice to the truth of the **Holy Bible**, but rather an advantage, as rendering it more easy to be believed, if they can solve whatever seems miraculous in it, by the power of second causes; and so to make all, as they speak, natural and easy. Wherein, if they could prevail, the

natural and easy result would be, not to believe one word in all those sacred oracles: for if things be not as they are told in any relation, that relation must be false; and if false in part, we cannot trust to it, either in whole, or in part.

Here are to be excepted mistranslations and errors, either in copy, or in press. But where there is no room for supposing of these, as where all copies do agree, there we must either receive all, or reject all: I mean in any book that pretends to be written from the mouth of God; for in other common histories, we may believe part, and reject part, as we see cause.

But to return: The passage of the Israelites over Jordan, in memory of which those stones at Gilgal were set up, is free from all those little carpings before-mentioned, that are made as to the passage through the Red sea; for notice was given to the Israelites the day before, of this great miracle to be done, *Josh. iii. 5.* It was done at noon-day, before the whole nation. And when the waters of Jordan were divided, it was not at any low ebb, but at the time when that river overflowed all his banks, *v. 15.* And it was done, not by winds, or in length of time, which winds must take to do it; but all on the sudden:

As soon as the feet of the priests that bare the ark, were dipped in the brim of the water, then the waters which came down from above, stood and rose up upon an heap, very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan, and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt-sea failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. The priests stood in the midst of Jordan, until all the armies of Israel had passed over. And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, were come up out of the midst of Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lift upon the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as they did before. And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and encamped in Gilgal in the east border of Jericho. And those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were

passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over; that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever, chap. iv. from v. 18.

If the passage over the Red sea had been only taking advantage of a spring-tide, or the like; how would this teach all the people of the earth, that the hand of the Lord was mighty? How would a thing no more remarkable, have been taken notice of through all the world? How would it have taught Israel to fear the Lord, when they must know, that, notwithstanding of all these big words, there was so little in it? How could they have believed, or received a book as truth, which they knew told the matter so far otherwise from what it was?

But, as I said, this passage over Jordan, which is here compared to that of the Red sea, is free from all those cavils that are made as to that of the Red sea; and is a further attestation to it, being said to be done in the same manner, as was that of the Red sea.

Now, to form our argument, let us suppose, that there never was any such thing

as that passage over Jordan ; that these stones at Gilgal were set up upon some other occasion, in some after age ; and then that some designing man invented this book of *Joshua*, and said, that it was wrote by Joshua at that time ; and gave this stonage at Gilgal, for a testimony of the truth of it : Would not every body say to him, We know the stonage at Gilgal ; but we never heard before of this reason for it, nor of this book of *Joshua* : Where has it been all this while ? and where, and how came you, after so many ages, to find it ? Besides, this book tells us, that this passage over Jordan was ordained to be taught our children, from age to age ; and therefore that they were always to be instructed in the meaning of that stonage at Gilgal, as a memorial of it : but we were never taught it when we were children, nor did ever teach our children any such thing : And it is not likely that could have been forgotten, while so remarkable a stonage did continue, which was set up for that, and no other end.

And if, for the reasons before given, no such imposition could be put upon us as to the stonage in Salisbury plain ; how much less could it be as to the stonage at Gilgal ?

And if, where we know not the reason

of a bare naked monument, such a sham reason cannot be imposed; how much more is it impossible to impose upon us in actions and observances which we celebrate in memory of particular passages; how impossible to make us forget those passages which we daily commemorate, and persuade us, that we had always kept such institutions in memory of what we never heard of before; that is, that we knew it before we knew it.

And if we find it thus impossible for an imposition to be put upon us, even in some things which have not all the four marks before-mentioned; how much more impossible is it, that any deceit should be in that thing where all the four marks do meet?

This has been showed, in the first place, as to the matters of fact of Moses.

2. Therefore I come now, *secondly*, to show, that, as in the matters of fact of Moses, so likewise all these four marks do meet in the matters of fact which are recorded in the gospel of our blessed Saviour. And my work herein will be the shorter; because all that is said before, of Moses and his books, is every way applicable to Christ and his gospel. His works and miracles are there said to be done publicly, in the face of the world; as he argued to

his accusers, *I spake openly to the world, and in secret have I said nothing*, John xviii. 20. It is told, *Acts ii. 41.* that three thousand at one time, and, *Acts iv. 4.* that above five thousand at another time, were converted, upon conviction of what themselves had seen, what had been done publicly before their eyes, wherein it was impossible to have imposed upon them. Therefore here were the two first of the rules before-mentioned.*

* The instantaneous conversion of thousands was wrought by means of public appeals to notorious matter of fact. Hear the language of the Apostles to the Jews: *This ye yourselves KNOW*, *Acts ii. 24.* *Ye KNOW the things done through ALL Judaea*, *Acts x, 37, 38.* *The king KNOWETH these things.* *This thing was NOT done in a corner.*, *Acts xxvi. 26.* Now if Christianity is not founded upon indubitable facts, might you not as well believe, that twelve men broke loose from Bedlam, last year, brought thousands of Deists over to Christianity, by saying to them, "*Ye know*"—what you are perfect strangers to; that is, "*Ye know*"—that we are a pack of bedlamites?

If the gospel is forged, you believe that the Corinthians, &c. handed down to posterity, as a sacred treasure, Epistles where St. Paul mentions their amazing conversion from gross immoralities; congratulates them about the *spiritual* or miraculous *gifts*, in which they abounded, 1 Cor. xii. 1: and gives them particular directions, how to use the *gift of tongues* to edification; when yet they were totally unacquainted with any such things?

If you believe with some infidels, that the history

Then for the two second : **Baptism** and the **Lord's supper** were instituted as perpetual memorials of these things : and they were not instituted in after ages, but at the very time when these things were said to be done ; and have been observed without interruption in all ages through the whole Christian world, down all the way from that time to this. And Christ himself did ordain apostles, and other ministers of his gospel, to preach, and administer these sacraments, and to govern his church ; and that always, even unto the end of the world.* Accordingly they have continued

of Christ is "a mere fable," and that there never was such an extraordinary person, you believe that the Heathens, the Jews, and the Mahometans, have agreed with the Christians, their sworn enemies, to carry on a most amazing imposture. For Pliny, Tacitus, Lucian, and Suetonius, heathen authors, who lived soon after Christ, make express mention of him : as do also Mahomet, many of the Rabbies, and Julian the Emperor, that powerful and crafty apostate, who not only never denied Christ's existence, but openly acknowledged that Paul, Mark, Matthew, and Peter, were the authors of the gospels and epistles, which bear their name. Now is not this as ridiculous as to believe, that the Pope, the Mufti, and the inquisitors, have laid their heads with Messrs. Voltaire, Hume, and Rousseau, to favour a forgery subversive of popery, mahometanism, and infidelity?

* Matth. xxviii. 20,

by regular succession, to this day ; and, no doubt, ever shall, while the earth shall last. So that the Christian clergy are as notorious a matter of fact, as the tribe of Levi among the Jews. And the gospel is as much a law to the Christians, as the book of Moses to the Jews : and it being part of the matters of fact related in the gospel, that such an order of men were appointed by Christ, and to continue to the end of the world ; consequently, if the gospel was a fiction, and invented (as it must be) in some ages after Christ ; then, at that time when it was first invented, there could be no such order of clergy as derived themselves from the institution of Christ ; which must give the lie to the gospel, and demonstrate the whole to be false. And the matters of fact of Christ being pressed to be true, no otherwise than as there was, at that time, (whenever the Deists will suppose the gospel to be forged) not only public sacraments of Christ's institution, but an order of clergy likewise, of his appointment, to administer them ; and it being impossible there could be any such things before they were invented, it is as impossible that they should be received when invented. And therefore, by what was said above, it was as impossible to have imposed upon man

kind in this matter, by inventing of it in after ages, as at the time when those things were said to be done.

3. The matters of fact of Mahomet, or what is fabled of the Heathen deities, do all want some of the aforesaid four rules, whereby the certainty of matters of fact is demonstrated. First, For Mahomet, he pretended to no miracles, as he tells us in his Alcoran, chap. 6, &c. and those which are commonly told of him, pass among the Mahometans themselves but as legendary fables; and as such, are rejected by the wise and learned among them, as the legends of their saints are in the church of Rome. See Dr. Prideaux's Life of Mahomet, p. 34.

But, in the next place, those which are told of him do all want the two first rules before-mentioned. For his pretended converse with the moon; his mersa, or night-journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence to Heaven, &c. were not performed before any body. We have only his own word for them. And they are as groundless as the delusions of Fox, or Muggleton, among ourselves.

The same is to be said, in the second place, of the fables of the Heathen gods, of Mercury's stealing sheep, Jupiter's turn-

ing himself into a bull, and the like: besides the folly and unworthiness of such senseless pretended miracles. And moreover, the wise among the Heathen did reckon no otherwise of these but as fables, which had a mythology, or mystical meaning in them; of which several of them have given us the *rationale*, or explication. And it is plain enough, that Ovid meant no other by all his metamorphoses.

It is true, the Heathen deities had their priests: they had likewise feasts, games, and other public institutions in memory of them. But all these want the fourth mark, viz. That such priesthood and institutions should commence from the time that such things as they commemorate were said to be done, otherwise they cannot secure after ages from the imposture, by detecting it at the time when first invented, as hath been argued before. But the *Bacchanalia*, and other Heathen feasts, were instituted many ages after what was reported of these gods was said to be done, and therefore can be no proof of them. And the priests of Bacchus, Apollo, &c. were not ordained by these supposed gods, but were appointed by others, in after ages, only in honour to them. And therefore these orders of priests are no evidence to the truth of the matters of fact which are reported of their gods.

IV. Now to apply what has been said, you may challenge all the Deists in the world to show any action that is fabulous, which has all the four rules or marks before-mentioned. No ; it is impossible. And, to resume a little what is spoke to before, the histories of Exodus, and the gospel, could never have been received, if they had not been true ; because the institution of the priesthood of Levi, and of Christ, of the sabbath, the passover, of circumcision, of baptism, and the Lord's supper, &c. are there related, as descending all the way down from those times without interruption. And it is full as impossible, to persuade men that they had been circumcised, baptized, had circumcised, or baptized their children, celebrated passovers, sabbaths, sacraments, &c. under the government and administration of a certain order of priests, if they had done none of these things, as to make them believe that they had gone through seas upon dry land, seen the dead raised, &c. And without believing of these, it was impossible that either the law or the gospel could have been received.

And the truth of the matters of fact of Exodus and the gospel, being no otherwise pressed upon men, than as they have prac-

tised such public institutions, it is appealing to the senses of mankind for the truth of them: and makes it impossible for any to have invented such stories in after ages, without a palpable detection of the cheat, when first invented; as impossible as to have imposed upon the senses of mankind at the time when such public matters of fact were said to be done.

V. I do not say, that every thing which wants these four marks, is false; but that nothing can be false which has them all.

There is no manner of doubt that there was such a man as Julius Cæsar, that he fought at Pharsalia, was killed in the senate house, and many other matters of fact of ancient times, though we keep no public observances in memory of them.

But this shows, that the matters of fact of Moses, and of Christ, have come down to us better guarded than any other matters of fact, how true soever.

And yet our Deists, who would laugh any man out of the world, as an irrational brute, that should offer to deny Cæsar or Alexander, Homer or Virgil, their public works and actions, do, at the same time, value themselves, as the only men of wit and sense, of free, generous, and unbiassed judgments, for ridiculing the histories of

Moses and Christ, that are infinitely better attested, and guarded with infallible marks, which the others want.

VI. Besides, that the importance of the subject would oblige all men to inquire more narrowly into the one than the other. For what consequence is it to me, or to the world, whether there was such a man as Cæsar : whether he beat, or was beaten at Pharsalia ; whether Homer or Virgil wrote such books ; and whether what is related in the Iliads or Æneids, be true, or false ? It is not two-pence up or down to any man in the world. And therefore it is worth no man's while to inquire into it, either to oppose or justify the truth of these relations.

But our very souls and bodies, both this life and eternity, are concerned in the truth of what is related in the Holy Scriptures ; and therefore men would be more inquisitive to search into the truth of these, than of any other matters of fact, examine and sift them narrowly, and find out the deceit, if any such could be found : for it concerned them nearly, and was of the last importance to them.

How unreasonable, then, is it to reject these matters of fact, so sifted, so examined, and so attested, as no other matters of fact in the world ever were ; and yet to

think it the most highly unreasonable, even to madness, to deny other matters of fact, which have not the thousandth part of their evidence, and are of no consequence at all to us whether true or false?

VII. There are several other topics, from whence the truth of the Christian religion is evinced to all who will judge by reason, and give themselves leave to consider: As the improbability that ten or twelve poor illiterate fishermen should form a design of converting the whole world to believe their delusions; and the impossibility of their effecting it, without force of arms, learning, oratory, or any one visible thing that could recommend them; and to impose a doctrine quite opposite to the lusts and pleasures of men, and all worldly advantages or enjoyments; and this in an age of so great learning and sagacity, as that wherein the gospel was first preached: That these apostles should not only undergo all the scorn and contempt, but the severest persecutions, and most cruel deaths, that could be inflicted, in attestation to what themselves knew to be a mere deceit and forgery, of their own contriving. Some have suffered for errors which they thought to be truth; but never any for what themselves knew to be lies.

And the apostles must know what they taught, to be lies, if it was so; because they spoke of those things which they had both seen and heard, had looked upon and handled with their hands, &c.*

Neither can it be said, that they perhaps might have proposed some temporal advantages to themselves, but missed of them, and met with sufferings instead of them: for if it had been so, it is more than probable, that when they saw their disappointment, they would have discovered their conspiracy; especially when they might not only have saved their lives, but got great rewards for doing of it. How improbable, then, is it, that not one of them should ever have been brought to do this?†

But this is not all. For they tell us, that

* Acts iv. 20. 1 John i. 1.

† If you believe, that the gospel is the production of human deceit; and yet, that in the prodigious number of apostates once concerned in carrying on the amazing villany, such as Judas, Demas, Simon Magus, *Alexander the coppersmith, who did St. Paul much evil*, &c. not one was ever found, that would prove the forgery: might you not as reasonably believe, that if there were two violent parties in a state, and that one of them had been guilty of some egregious villany, which was known to many of the other party, yet that none of the latter could be prevailed upon to disclose and prove it to the world?

their Master bid them expect nothing but sufferings in this world. This is the tenor of all that gospel which they taught: and they told the same to all whom they converted. So that here was no disappointment.

For all that were converted by them, were converted upon the certain expectation of sufferings, and bidden prepare for it. Christ commanded his disciples to take up their cross daily, and follow him; and told them, that in the world they should have tribulation; that whoever did not forsake father, mother, wife, children, lands, and their very lives, could not be his disciples; that he who sought to save his life in this world, should lose it in the next.

Now, that this despised doctrine of the cross should prevail so universally, against the allurements of flesh and blood, and all the blandishments of this world, against the rage and persecution of all the kings and powers of the earth, must show its original to be divine, and its protector almighty. What is it else could conquer without arms, persuade without rhetoric, overcome enemies, disarm tyrants, and subdue empires, without opposition?*

* The sacred pen-men, the Prophets and Apostles, were holy, excellent men, and *would* not; art-

VIII. We may add to all this, the testimonies of the most bitter enemies and persecutors of Christianity, both Jews and

less, illiterate men, and therefore *could* not, lay the horrible scheme of deluding mankind. The hope of gain did not influence them, for they were self-denying men, that left all to follow a Master, who *had not where to lay his head*; and whose grand initiating maxim was, *Except a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple*. They were so disinterested that they secured nothing on earth but hunger and nakedness, stocks and prisons, racks and tortures; which indeed was all that they could, or did expect, in consequence of Christ's express declarations. Neither was a desire of honour the motive of their actions; for their Lord himself was treated with the utmost contempt, and had more than once assured them, that they should certainly share the same fate: Besides, they were humble men, not above working as mechanics for a coarse maintenance, and so little desirous of human regard, that they exposed to the world the meanness of their birth and occupations, their great ignorance and scandalous falls.

Add to this, that they were so many, and lived at such distance of time and place from each other, that had they been impostors, it would have been impracticable for them to contrive and carry on a forgery without being detected. And as they neither would, nor could *deceive* the world; so they neither could nor would be *deceived* themselves: For they were days, months, and years, *eye* and *ear* witnesses of the things which they relate; and when they had not the fullest evidence of important facts, they insisted upon new proofs, and even upon sensible demonstrations; as, for instance, Thomas, in

Gentiles, to the truth of the matter of fact of Christ ; such as Josephus and Tacitus ; of which the first flourished about forty

the matter of our Lord's resurrection, *John* xx. 25. And to leave us no room to question their sincerity, most of them joyfully sealed the truth of their doctrines with their own blood. Did *so many* and *such* marks of veracity, ever meet in any other authors ?

But even while they lived, they confirmed their testimony by a variety of miracles, wrought in divers places, and for a number of years ; sometimes before thousands of their enemies, as the miracles of Christ and his disciples ; sometimes before hundreds of thousands, as those of Moses. These miracles were so well known and attested, that when both Christ and Moses appealed to their authenticity, before their bitterest opposers, mentioning the persons upon whom, as well as the particular times when, and the places where, they had been performed ; the facts were never denied, but passed over in silence, or maliciously attributed to the Prince of the Devils. By such a *pitiful slander* as this, Porphyry, Hierocles, Celsus, and Julian the Apostate, those learned and inveterate enemies of Christianity, endeavoured (as the Pharisees had done before them) to sap the arguments founded upon the miracles of Christ and his disciples. So sure then as God would never have displayed his arm, in the most astonishing manner, for the support of imposture, the sacred pen-men had their commission from the Almighty, and their writings are his *lively oracles*.

To conclude : If the gospel (and consequently the scripture) is an imposture, you suppose that some poor Galilean fishermen, only by means of an *absurd lie*, which they told without wit, and wrote without

years after the death of Christ; and the other about seventy years after. So that they were capable of examining into the truth, and wanted not prejudice and malice sufficient to have inclined them to deny the matter of fact itself of Christ. But their confessing to it, as likewise Lucian, Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian the Apostate, the Mahometans since, and all other enemies of Christianity that have arisen in the world, is an undeniable attestation to the truth of the matter of fact.

IX. But there is another argument more strong and convincing than even this matter of fact; more than the certainty of what

elegance, foiled the multitude of the Jewish and Pagan priests, who had prejudice, custom, possession, learning, oratory, wealth, laws, governors, and emperors on their side; yea, and *truth* also, upon your principles, at least when they decried the gospel as a *cheat*. Would it be more ridiculous to believe, that David killed Goliah, with a grain of sand, and cut off his head with a spire of grass: or that our sailors sink men of war with a puff of breath, while our soldiers batter down ramparts with snow-balls.

O ye sons of worldly wisdom, drop your unjust prejudices; candidly weigh both sides of the question, and you will soon see, that in rejecting the gospel, as an imposture, you display a far greater degree of *credulity*, than we do in cordially receiving it.

I see with my eyes; and which the apostle Peter called a *more sure word*, that is, proof, than what he saw and heard upon the holy mount, when our blessed Saviour was transfigured before him and two other of the apostles: for having repeated that passage as a proof of that whereof they were eye-witnesses, and heard the voice from heaven giving attestation to our Lord Christ, 2 *Pet.* i. 16, 17, 18, he says, v. 19. *We have also a more sure word of prophecy*, for the proof of this Jesus being the Messiah; that is, the prophecies which had gone before of him, from the beginning of the world; and all exactly fulfilled in him.

Men may dispute an imposition or delusion upon our outward senses; but how can that be false which has been so long, even from the beginning of the world, and so often, by all the prophets, in several ages, foretold? how can this be an imposition, or a forgery?*

* Sometimes the plainest *prophecies*, the most public *miracles*, and the *annals* of kingdoms, well known when those books were first received, wonderfully concur to demonstrate their authenticity. Take one instance out of many: A prophet out of Judah, above 300 years before the event, thus foretold the pollution of Jeroboam's altar at Bethel, before Jeroboam himself, who was attended by his priests, his courtiers, and no doubt a vast number of

This is particularly insisted on, in the *Method with the Jews*. And even the Deists must confess, that that book we call the *Old Testament*, was in being, in the hands of the Jews, long before our Saviour came into the world.* And if they will be at the pains to compare the prophecies that are there of the Messiah, with the fulfilling of them, as to time, place, and all other circumstances, in the person, birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our

idolatrous worshippers: *O altar, altar, thus says the Lord, behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, who shall burn men's bones upon thee: and this is the sign: Behold, this very day, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it scattered.* King Jeroboam inflamed with anger, stretched forth his hand against the man of God, saying to his guards, *Lay hold on him: But his extended hand was dried up so that he could not pull it in again to him:* the rending of the altar, and the scattering of the fire, instantly took place; and the capital prophecy was exactly fulfilled by pious king *Josiah*, as you may see by comparing 1 Kings xiii. 1, with 2 Kings xxiii. 15. Can we reasonably suppose, that books, containing accounts of such public events, would have been received as *divine* by a *divided* people, if their authenticity had not been confirmed by indubitable matter of fact?

* Their wonderful preservation of that book, and consequently the prophetic history of Christ, whom they reject, is itself a proof, that infinite wisdom even overrules enemies to bear reluctant testimony to the truth.

blessed Saviour, they will find this prove what our apostle here calls it, *a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.* Which God grant. Here is no possibility of deceit or imposture:

Old prophecies, and all so agreeing, could not have been contrived to countenance a new cheat; and nothing could be a cheat, that could fulfil all these.

For this therefore, I refer the Deists to the *Method with the Jews.*

I desire them likewise to look there, *sect. 11.* and consider the prophecies given so long ago, of which they see the fulfilling at this day, with their own eyes, of the state of the Jews, for many ages past, and at present; without a king, or priest, or temple, or sacrifice, scattered to the four winds, sifted as with a sieve, among all nations; yet preserved, and always so to be, a distinct people from all others of the whole earth. Whereas those mighty monarchies which oppressed the Jews, and which commanded the world, in their turns, and had the greatest human prospect of perpetuity, were to be extinguished, as they have been, even that their names should be blotted out from under Heaven.

As likewise, that as remarkable of our

blessed Saviour, concerning the preservation and progress of the Christian Church, when in her swaddling-clothes, consisting only of a few poor fishermen; not by the sword, as that of Mahomet, but under all the persecution of men and hell; which yet should not prevail against her.

But though I offer these, as not to be slighted by the Deists, to which they can show nothing equal in all profane history, and in which it is impossible any cheat can lie; yet I put them not upon the same foot as the prophecies before-mentioned of the marks and coming of the Messiah, which have been since the world began.

And that general expectation of the whole earth at the time of his coming, insisted upon in the *Method with the Jews*, sect. 5. is greatly to be noticed.

But, I say, the foregoing prophecies of our Saviour, are so strong a proof, as even miracles would not be sufficient to break their authority.

I mean, if it were possible that a true miracle could be wrought in contradiction to them: for that would be for God to contradict himself.

But no sign, or wonder, that could possibly be solved, should shake this evidence:

It is this that keeps the Jews in their ob-

stinacy. Though they cannot deny the matters of fact done by our blessed Saviour to be truly miracles, if so done as said; nor can they deny that they were so done, because they have all the four marks before-mentioned: yet they cannot yield! Why? Because they think that the gospel is in contradiction to the law. Which if it were, the consequence would be unavoidable, that both could not be true. To solve this, is the business of the *Method with the Jews*. But the contradiction which they suppose, is in their comments that they put upon the law; especially they expect a literal fulfilling of those promises of the restoration of Jerusalem, and outward glories of the church; of which there is such frequent mention in the books of Moses, the Psalms, and all the prophets. And many Christians do expect the same, and take those texts as literally as the Jews do. We do believe, and pray for the conversion of the Jews. For this end they have been so miraculously preserved, according to the prophecies so long before of it. And when that time shall come, as they are the most honourable and ancient of all the nations on the earth; so will their church return to be the mother christian church as she was at first; and Rome must surrender to Jerusa-

lem. Then all nations will flow thither; and even Ezekiel's temple may be literally built there, in the metropolis of the whole earth; which Jerusalem must be, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall meet with the conversion of the Jews: for no nation will then contend with the Jews, nor church with Jerusalem for supremacy. All nations will be ambitious to draw their original from the Jews, whose are the fathers, and from whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. Then will be fulfilled that outward grandeur and restoration of the Jews, and of Jerusalem, which they expect, pursuant to the prophecies.

They pretend not that this is limited to any particular time of the reign of the Messiah. They are sure it will not be at the beginning; for they expect to go through great conflicts and trials with their Messiah, (as the Christian Church has done,) before his final conquest, and that they come to reign with him. So that this is no obstruction to their embracing of christianity. They see the same things fulfilled in us, which they expect themselves; and we expect the same things they do.

I tell this to the Deists, lest they may think that the Jews have some stronger arguments than they know of; that they

are not persuaded by the miracles of our blessed Saviour, and by the fulfilling of all the prophècies in him, that were made concerning the Messiah.

As I said before, I would not plead even miracles against these.

And if this is sufficient to persuade a Jew, it is much more, so to a Deist, who labours not under these objections.

Besides, I would not seem to clash with that (in a sound sense) reasonable caution, used by Christian writers, not to put the issue of the truth wholly upon miracles, without this addition, when not done in contradiction to the revelations already given in the Holy Scriptures.

And they do it upon this consideration, That though it is impossible to suppose, that God would work a real miracle, in contradiction to what he has already revealed; yet men may be imposed upon by false and seeming miracles, and pretended revelations, (as there are many examples, especially in the church of Rome,) and so may be shaken in the faith, if they keep not to the Holy Scriptures as their rule.

We are told, *2 Thess. ii. 9. of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; and Rev. xiii. 14. xvi. 14. and xix. 20. of*

the devil and false prophets working miracles. But the word in all these places is only *Semeia*, *signs*, that is as it is rendered; *Matth.* xxv. 24; which, though sometimes it may be used to signify real miracles; yet not always, not in these places: for though every miracle be a sign, and a wonder; yet every sign, or wonder, is not a miracle.

X. Here it may be proper to consider a common topic of the Deists, who, when they are not able to stand out against the evidence of fact, that such and such miracles have been done, then turn about, and deny such things to be miracles, at least that we can never be sure whether any wonderful thing that is shown to us, be a true or a false miracle.

And the great argument they go upon, is this, That a miracle being that which exceeds the power of nature, we cannot know what exceeds it, unless we know the utmost extent of the power of nature; and no man pretends to know that: therefore that no man can certainly know whether any event be miraculous: and, consequently, he may be cheated in his judgment betwixt true and false miracles.

To which I answer, That men may be so cheated; and there are many examples of it.

But that though we may not always know when we are cheated ; yet we can certainly tell, in many cases, when we are not cheated.

For though we do not know the utmost extent of the power of nature, perhaps in any one thing ; yet it does not follow, that we know not the nature of any thing, in some measure ; and that certainly too. For example : though I do not know the utmost extent of the power of fire ; yet I certainly know, that it is the nature of fire to burn ; and that when proper fuel is administered to it, it is contrary to the nature of fire not to consume it. Therefore if I see three men taken off the street, in their common wearing apparel, and, without any preparation, cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace ; and that the flame was so fierce, that it burnt up those men that threw them in ; and yet that those who were thrown in should walk up and down in the bottom of the furnace, and I should see a fourth person with them, of glorious appearance, like the Son of God ; and that these men should come up again out of the furnace, without any harm, or so much as the smell of fire upon themselves, or their cloaths : I could not be deceived, in thinking there was a stop put to the nature of fire as to these

men; and that it had its effect upon the men whom it burned, at the same time.

Again, though I cannot tell how wonderful and sudden an increase of corn might be produced by the concurrence of many causes; as a warm climate, the fertility of the soil, &c. yet this I can certainly know, that there is not that natural force in the breath of two or three words spoken, to multiply one small loaf of bread, so fast, in the breaking of it, as truly and really, not only in appearance and show to the eye, but to fill the bellies of several thousand hungry persons; and that the fragments should be much more than the bread was at first.

So neither in a word spoken, to raise the dead, cure diseases, &c.

Therefore, though we know not the utmost extent of the power of nature; yet we can certainly know what is contrary to the nature of several such things as we do know.

And therefore, though we may be cheated and imposed upon in many seeming miracles and wonders; yet there are some things wherein we may be certain.

But further, the Deists acknowledge a God of an almighty power, who made all things.

Yet they would put it out of his power,

to make any revelation of his will to mankind. For if we cannot be certain of any miracle, how should we know when God sent any thing extraordinary to us?

Nay, how should we know the ordinary power of nature, if we knew not what exceeded it? If we knew not what is natural, how do we know there is such a thing as nature? that all is not supernatural, all miracles, and so disputable, till we come to downright scepticism, and doubt the certainty of our outward senses, whether we see, hear, or feel, or all be not a miraculous illusion?

Which because I know the Deists are not inclined to do, therefore I will return to pursue my argument upon the conviction of our outward senses; desiring only this, that they would allow the senses of other men to be as certain as their own. Which they cannot refuse, since without this they can have no certainty of their own.

XI. Therefore, from what has been said, the cause is summed up shortly in this: That though we cannot see what was done before our time; yet, by the marks which I have laid down concerning the certainty of matters of fact done before our time, we may be as much assured of the truth of them, as if we saw them with our eyes; be-

cause whatever matter of fact has all the four marks before-mentioned, could never have been invented, and received, but upon the conviction of the outward senses of all those who did receive it, as before is demonstrated. And therefore, this topic, which I have chosen, does stand upon the conviction even of mens outward senses. And since you have confined me to one topic, I have not insisted upon the other, which I have only named.

XII. And now it lies upon the Deists, if they would appear as men of reason, to show some matter of fact of former ages, which they allow to be true, that has greater evidence of its truth, than the matters of fact of Moses and of Christ, as no other matters of fact of those times, however true, have, but these only: and I put it upon them to show any forgery that has all these marks.

This is a short issue. Keep them close to this. This determines the cause all at once.

Let them produce their Apollonius Tyanæus, whose life was put into English by the execrable Charles Blount;* and compared, with all the wit and malice he was

* Who became his own executioner.

master of, to the life and miracles of our blessed Saviour.

Let them take aid from all the legends in the church of Rome, those pious cheats, the sorest disgraces of Christianity; and which have bid the fairest, of any one contrivance, to overturn the certainty of the miracles of Christ, and his apostles, and the whole truth of the gospel, by putting them all upon the same footing; at least, they are so understood by the generality of their devotees, though disowned and laughed at by the learned, and men of sense, among them.

Let them pick and choose the most probable of all the fables of the Heathen deities; and see if they can find, in any of these, the four marks before-mentioned.

Otherwise let them submit to the irrefragable certainty of the Christian Religion.

XIII. But if, notwithstanding of all that is said, the Deists will still contend, That all this is but priestcraft, the invention of priests, for their own profit, &c; then they will give us an idea of priests far different from what they intend: for then we must look upon these priests, not only as the cunningest and wisest of mankind, but we shall be tempted to adore them as deities, who have such power as to impose at their

pleasure, upon the senses of mankind, to make them believe, that they had practised such public institutions, enacted them by laws, taught them to their children, &c. when they had never done any of these things, or ever so much as heard of them before: and then, upon the credit of their believing that they had done such things as they never did, to make them further believe, upon the same foundation, whatever they pleased to impose upon them, as to former ages: I say, such a power as this must exceed all that is human; and, consequently, make us rank these priests far above the condition of mortals.

2. Nay, this were to make them outdo all that has ever been related of the infernal powers: for though their legerdemain has extended to deceive some unwary beholders; and their power of working some seeming miracles has been great; yet it never reached, nor ever was supposed to reach so far, as to deceive the senses of all mankind, in matters of such public and notorious nature as those of which we now speak; to make them believe, that they had enacted laws for such public observances, continually practised them, taught them to their children, and had been instructed in them themselves from their childhood, if they

had never enacted, practised, taught, or been taught such things.

3. And as this exceeds all the power of hell and devils, so is it more than ever God almighty has done since the foundation of the world. None of the miracles that he has shown, or belief which he has required to any thing that he has revealed, has ever contradicted the outward senses of any one man in the world, much less of all mankind together: for miracles being appeals to our outward senses, if they should overthrow the certainty of our outward senses must destroy, with it, all their own certainty, as to us; since we have no other way to judge of a miracle exhibited to our senses, than upon the supposition of the certainty of our senses, upon which we give credit to a miracle that is shown to our senses.

4. This, by the way, is a yet unanswered argument against the miracle of transubstantiation, and shows the weakness of the defence which the church of Rome offers for it, (from whom the Socinians have licked it up, and, of late, have gloried much in it amongst us) That the doctrines of the Trinity, or incarnation, contain as great seeming absurdities as that of transubstantiation: for I would ask, Which of our senses is it which the doctrines of the Trinity,

or carnation, do contradict? Is it our seeing, hearing, feeling, taste, or smell? Whereas transubstantiation does contradict all of these. Therefore the comparison is exceedingly short, and out of purpose. But to return.

○ If the Christian religion be a cheat, and nothing else but the invention of priests, and carried on by their craft, it makes their power and wisdom greater than that of men, angels, or devils; and more than God himself ever yet showed or expressed, to deceive and impose upon the senses of mankind, in such public and notorious matters of fact.*

* Reason itself dictates, that nothing but the plainest *matter of fact* could induce so many thousands of prejudiced and persecuting Jews, to embrace the humbling, self-denying doctrines of the cross, which they so much despised and abhorred. Nothing but the clearest evidence, arising from undoubted truth, could make multitudes of lawless, luxurious heathens receive, follow, and transmit to posterity the doctrines and writings of the Apostles; especially at a time when the vanity of their pretensions to miracles, and the gift of tongues, could be so easily discovered, had they been impostors—at a time when the profession of Christianity exposed persons of all ranks to the greatest contempt, and most imminent danger. In this respect, the case of the primitive Christians widely differed from that of Mahomet's followers; for those, who adhered to the warlike, violent impostor, saved their

XIV. And this miracle, which the Deists must run into to avoid those recorded of Moses and Christ, is much greater, and more astonishing, than all the scriptures tell of them.

So that these men, who laugh at all miracles, are now obliged to account for the greatest of all :....how the senses of mankind could be imposed upon in such public matters of fact.

And how then can they make the priests the most contemptible of all mankind, since

lives and properties, or attained to honour, by their new, easy, and fleshpleasing religion: But those, who devoted themselves to the meek, self-denying, crucified Jesus, were frequently spoiled of their goods, and cruelly put to death; or if they escaped with their lives, were looked upon as the very dregs of mankind.

Add to this; that some of the most profound parts of the scriptures, were addressed to the inhabitants of polite Greece, and triumphant Rome, among whom philosophy and literature, with the fine arts and sciences, were in the highest perfection; and who, consequently, were less liable to be the dupes of forgery and imposture. On the contrary, gross ignorance overspread those countries, where Mahomet first broached his absurd opinions, and propagated them with the sword: A sure sign this, that the sacred writers did not, like that impostor, avail themselves of the ignorance, weakness, and helplessness of their followers, to impose falsehood upon them.

they make them the sole authors of this the greatest of miracles ?

XV. And since the Deists (these men of sense and reason) have so vile and mean an idea of the priests of all religions, why do they not recover the world out of the possession and government of such blockheads ? why do they suffer kings and states to be led by them ; to establish their deceits by laws, and inflict penalties upon the opposers of them ? Let the Deists try their hands ; they have been trying, and are now busy about it. And free liberty they have. Yet have they not prevailed, nor ever yet did prevail in any civilized or generous nation. And though they have made some inroads among the Hottentots, and some other the most brutal part of mankind ; yet are they still exploded ; and priests have, and do prevail against them, among not only the greatest, but best part of the world, and the most glorious for arts, learning, and war.

XVI. For as the devil does ape God, in his institutions of religion, his feasts, sacrifices, &c. so likewise in his priests ; without whom, no religion, whether true or false, can stand. False religion is but a corruption of the true. The true was before it, though it be followed close upon the heels.

The revelation made to Moses is elder

than any history extant in the Heathen world. The Heathens, in imitation of him, pretended, likewise, to their revelations. But I have given those marks which distinguish them from the true. None of them have those four marks before mentioned.

Now, the Deists think all revelations to be equally pretended, and a cheat; and the priests of all religions to be the same contrivers and jugglers: and therefore they proclaim war equally against all, and are equally engaged to bear the brunt of all.

And if the contest be only betwixt the Deists and the priests, which of them are the men of the greatest parts and sense, let the effects determine it: and let the Deists yield the victory to their conquerors, who, by their own confession, carry all the world before them.

XVII. If the Deists say, That this is because all the world are blockheads, as well as those priests who govern them; that all are blockheads, except the Deists, who vote themselves only to be men of sense; this (besides the modesty of it) will spoil their great and beloved topic, in behalf of what they call natural religion, against the revealed, *viz.* appealing to the common reason of mankind. This they set up against revelation: think this to be sufficient for all

the uses of men, here or hereafter, (if there be any after state) and therefore that there is no use of revelation. This common reason they advance as infallible, at least as the surest guide; yet now cry out upon it when it turns against them. When this common reason runs after revelation, as it always has done, then common reason is a beast; and we must look for reason, not from the common sentiments of mankind, but only among the beaux, the Deists.*

XVIII. Therefore if the Deists would

* *Not many Noble, not many Wise are called,* says the Apostle; nevertheless some of both, even at the rise of Christianity, openly stood up for its truth. Among the *noble* we find Joseph, a member of the great Jewish council, Dionysius, one of the Judges at Athens, and Flavius Clemens, a Roman Senator; and among the *wise*, Quadratus, Aristides, and Athenagoras, Athenian Philosophers; Clemens, Arnobius, Ammonius, Annatolius, &c. men of great learning at Alexandria; and at Rome, Justin martyr and Tertullian, both famous apologists for the religion of Jesus, the latter of whom in the second century told the Roman governors, that their corporations, councils, and armies, and the emperor's palace, were full of Christians: nor is this improbable; since so early as St. Paul's days *the saints of Cæsar's household saluted* those of the Roman provinces. *Phil.* iv. 22. How credulous are they who can believe that persons of such rank and learning, could be deluded by Jewish fishermen, into the worship of a crucified impostor!

avoid the mortification, (which will be very uneasy to them) to yield, and submit to be subdued and hewed down before the priests, whom of all mankind they hate and despise; if they would avoid this, let them confess, as the truth is, That religion is no invention of priests, but of divine original: That priests were instituted by the same author of religion; and that their order is a perpetual and living monument of the matters of fact of their religion, instituted from the time that such matters of fact were said to be done; as the Levites from Moses; the apostles and succeeding clergy from Christ to this day: That no Heathen priest can say the same: they were not appointed by the gods whom they served, but by others in after ages: they cannot stand the test of the four rules before mentioned; which the Christian priests can do, and they only. Now, the Christian priesthood, as instituted by Christ himself, and continued by succession to this day, being as impregnable and flagrant a testimony to the truth of the matters of fact of Christ, as the sacraments, or any other public institutions; besides that, if the priesthood were taken away, the sacraments, and other public institutions, which are administered by their hands, must fall

with them: therefore the devil has been most busy, and bent his greatest force, in all ages, against the priesthood; knowing, that if that goes down, all goes with it.

XX. And now, last of all, if one word of advice would not be lost upon men who think so unmeasurably of themselves as the Deists, you may represent to them, what a condition they are in, who spend that life and sense which God has given them, in ridiculing the greatest of his blessings, his revelations of Christ, and by Christ, to redeem those from eternal misery who shall believe in him and obey his laws: and that God, in his wonderful mercy and wisdom, has so guarded his revelations, as that it is past the power of men or devils to counterfeit: and that there is no denying of them, unless we will be so absurd as to deny, not only the reason, but the certainty of the outward senses, not only of one, or two, or three, but of mankind in general: That this case is so very plain, that nothing but want of thought can hinder any to discover it: That they must yield it to be so plain, unless they can show some forgery which has all the four marks before set down. But if they cannot do this, they must quit their cause, and yield a happy victory over themselves; or else sit down under all that

ignominy, with which they have loaded the priests, of being, not only the most pernicious, but (what will gall them more) the most inconsiderate, and inconsiderable of mankind.

Therefore let them not think it an undervaluing of their worthiness, that their whole cause is comprised within so narrow a compass, and no more time bestowed upon it than it is worth.

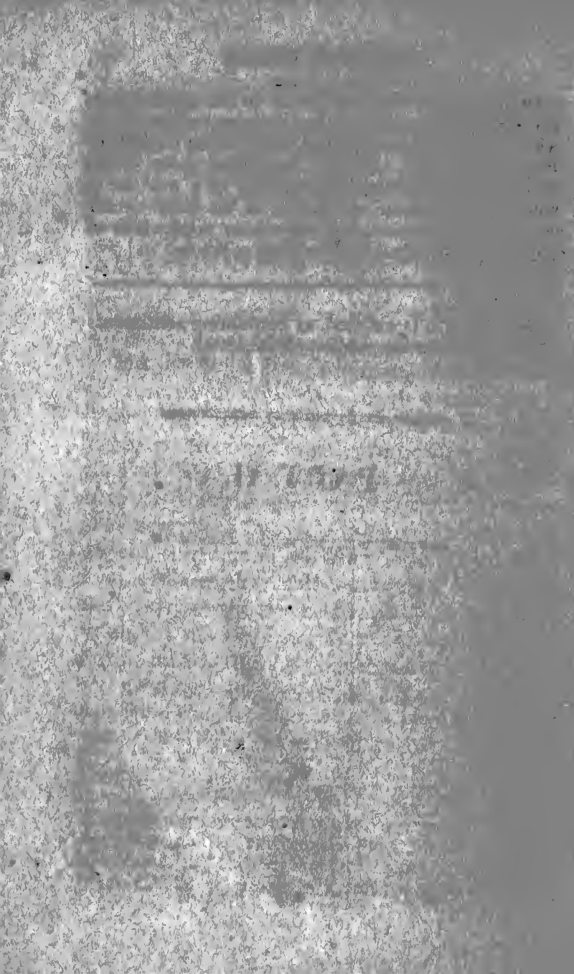
But let them rather reflect, how far they have been all this time from Christianity, whose rudiments they are yet to learn; how far from the way of salvation; how far the race of their lives is run, before they have set one step in the road to heaven: and therefore how much diligence they ought to use, to redeem all that time they have lost, lest they lose themselves for ever: and be convinced, by a dreadful experience, when it is too late, that the gospel is a truth, and of the last consequence.*

* It is exceedingly remarkable, that the more humble and holy people are, the more they read; admire, and value the scriptures; and on the contrary, the more self-conceited, worldly-minded, and wicked, the more they neglect, despise, and asperse them.

As for the objections which are raised against their perspicuity and consistency, those who are both pious and learned, know, that they are generally founded on prepossession, and the want of under-

standing in spiritual things; or on our ignorance of several customs, idioms, and circumstances, which were perfectly known when those books were written. Frequently also the *immaterial* error arises merely from a wrong punctuation, or a mistake of copiers, printers, or translators; as the daily discoveries of pious critics, and ingenuous confessions of unprejudiced enquirers, abundantly prove.

Sect. XIXth is omitted, as containing sentiments not essential to the subject of the letter,



PART II.



SIX LETTERS

ON THE

SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATION

OF THE

SON OF GOD.

BY THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER,

Vicar of Madeley.

I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak the words of truth and soberness. *Acts xxvi. 25.*

Wisdom is justified of her children. *Matt. xi. 19.*

1911

INTRODUCTION

TO THE

MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT.

HAVING in the "method with infidels" demonstrated, as it is believed, the truth and certain *validity* of the Holy Scriptures, we come next, in order, to prove the certainty of the manifestation of the Spirit of the Son of God to the souls and perceptions of men.

This is a doctrine every where taught in those Scriptures; and its belief is therefore vital to Christianity. Fletcher has, we conceive, proved the soundness of this doctrine in a most inimitable manner. As it is matter but little better *understood* by some Professors, than it is *misconceived* by all Unbelievers, (for some Professors "have the *form* of godliness, but deny the *power* thereof;") it is therefore sustained throughout, by the confession of Faith of the Episcopal Church, (of which he was an eminent Pastor,) as well as by the word of God.

Were the doctrine of regeneration more enforced, and of course better understood, even among many of those who assume the name of christians, Infidelity would be spoiled of many of its weapons against christianity. Sceptics have often but too much reason to cry out mystery! mystery! when they find those who should be able to speak intelligibly of the

new birth! as totally ignorant of the Scriptural acceptance of being "*born again,*" as was Nicodemus, the marvellous "*master in Israel.*"

The operation of the *new birth* ("being born again") is the grand commission which the Holy Ghost the Comforter was *sent* to effect. For this, Christ, the *Son of God* gave up *his life* upon the Cross! Let its *importance* therefore be estimated by the *means* taken to *cause it!* Proportionate to the *means* must be the *end.* The *End* is, that *millions* and *millions* of the human race have felt this *renewal* in their hearts by *spiritual tokens,* so sensible and certain, that had there been no Bible revelation, they would not have been the less certain of their communion and fellowship with God by his spirit. This is *strange* doctrine to the unbeliever, all of whom we may ask without expectation of answer, "who hath believed our report?" The truth, is, "*Spiritual things are Spiritually discerned,*" and those who have "eyes which see not, and ears that hear not," are as preposterous in their endeavours at spiritual discernments, as would be the blind at setting themselves up for judges of colours. So sure it is, that "the world, by (its) wisdom, knows not God." But, God has imparted this sure and certain testimony to the really good and great in every nation in Christendom: and the *End* which we would now wish to make of this gracious *means* is to avail ourselves of the *evidence* which the *manifestation* affords, of offering *certain* and *rational* assurance to the understanding of Deists in general, and Jews in particular, that Christ has really risen, and that the Comforter has actually come! The witnesses for this truth, are numerous, and *ever at hand!* Yea, they are actually *living* throughout Christendom, and will be living on the earth to the end of time. They are to be found in almost every society naming the name of Jesus! sure, certain, witnesses are they, to whom the evidence im-

parted has been so great, that they would not cease to believe, were the same manner of internal evidence perpetuated, though there should be no Bible! These are truths which every Christian "*knows*," because he has "the witness of the Spirit, testifying with his Spirit, that he has *passed* from death unto life." This then is the vital doctrine to charge home most upon unbelievers; but how shall they believe who have no spiritual faculties with which to apprehend? There is certainly an impediment on *their* part. But there is yet ample means for preliminary conviction, if they will be governed by *such* rules as prevail in every other kind of *received* testimony. The evidences then, are such, as may be found in every objectors city, village, or neighbourhood. There many have borne testimony to all around, that a sensible preternatural *change* has been wrought upon their heart.—That they know that all their former sinful affections and desires have been totally changed for those that are pure and holy—indeed, the world itself acknowledges the change of their manners and conduct; they see and confess the reform of a notorious debauchee and drunkard—When challenged with these obvious facts, the answer of the unbeliever is, it is mere *enthusiasm*! On other occasions they perhaps witness the tears and cries of "penitential sorrow," or the "joy unspeakable" of the soul "delivered from the burthen of sin too intolerable to be borne" (both of which, the Scriptures continually teach,) and they cry out sheer *enthusiasm*! This is a *word*, which having no known derivation, is well adapted to so vague a use; since it is evident those who use it, never consider its import, even in their own use of it. They offer it as an *explication* of the *cause*, when in fact they have at most but *named* the *effect*. The *cause* is still a mystery to all but the christian, to whom the Bible and the Spirit have revealed it. *Cries and tears*, let it

be well considered, are not *voluntary* emotions; neither are the opposite emotions of joy: they must therefore be *affected* by some *powerful* agency or *cause*. This therefore brings us to the original subject under consideration, to wit: the *certain* manifestation of the Spirit.

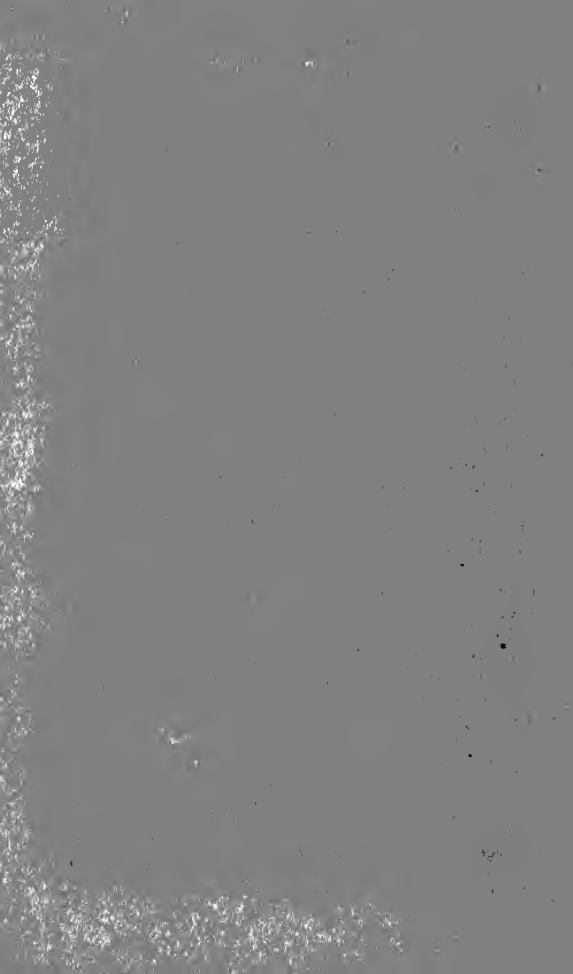
Where then shall we look for the explication of the mystery, but to the *possessors* of this "change of heart," and to the *concurrence* of Scripture? On what pretext could the *testimony* of these *witnesses* be rejected, but by taking out a statute of lunacy against them; and who would be so hardy and absurd as to either ask it, or to grant it! They would tell you with Saint Paul, "I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness:" Yea, you yourselves do know that all of these persons are at least *rational* in all their *other* concerns in life—And you yourselves also know, they make better members of Society—Perhaps many of these witnesses are members of your own families; perhaps your parents, your husbands, your wives, or your brethren—These you may have seen *surprisingly* transformed from gross wickedness to exemplary piety. In this state they continue uniform for their whole lives, during all which time they *testify* their *certain*, *perceptible*, communication with the holy Spirit—nay, many have sealed this truth with their blood; and many whom you may now familiarly know are still ready to offer their bodies as a witness—These are not maniacs, but as *discreet*, *sober men*, as you perhaps esteem yourselves to be. In short, if the case could be settled by *judicial judgment*, it would forever be put at rest: for *competent*, *rational*, *good* and *great* witnesses, would come even from the ends of the earth, to testify *on oath*, the *certain*, *sensible*, *perceptible* manifestations of God to their several souls: and what would be still more confirmatory, diversity of languages

and nations, would all have one spirit to speak of and to glorify?*

Reader, is it *strange*, that God who is a Spirit, and whom no man hath seen at any time, should have a *sure* and *certain means* of imparting a knowledge of himself to his creatures; or rather would it not be *stranger* if he *could* not, or even *would* not? Anything contrary to this *scriptural*, and even *necessary* means of keeping up the intercourse between God, and his creatures, since spirit must communicate with spirit, would be making the christian dispensation *less welcome* and *less "glorious,"* (which is the reverse of the promise) than it was under the Mosaic Era. Then Christ came in person and revealed himself: but *now* that he has risen, we have only the means of beholding *him*, in *letters* cast at the foundery and impressed at the printer's! And how many are they of us who cannot avail ourselves even of these helps; some have no money, and some cannot read. Alas! if there be no *manifestation* of the *Spirit*, who does not say, "Lord we beseech thee, bring us back to the times of Moses, whence thou didst converse with thy people: they beheld thy glory, and received thy answers from between the cherubim; but we, alas, can neither see thee, feel thee, nor communicate with thee!"

Reader be not self-willed and obstinate; but prepare thy heart for the reception of the truth as it will be offered in the following pages, which was written for one, who, like you, could not believe that God's *spirit* could *dwell* in the *hearts* of men!

* If objectors *will* still obstinately persist in *unbelief*, we will ask such, even on their own view of things, to discover some *cause* for the *effects* thus exhibited, which *philosophy* (which is never contrary to religion) may sanction. Surely we know of no delusion (if it be such) in any manner analogous: Men both sane and insane, at the same time!



LETTER I.

God, for purposes worthy of his wisdom, manifests himself, sooner or later, to *all* his *sincere* followers, in a *spiritual* manner, which the *world* knows not of.

SIR,

WHEN I had the pleasure of seeing you last, you seemed *surprised* to hear me say, that the Son of God, for purposes worthy of his wisdom, *manifests* himself, sooner or later, to all his sincere followers, in a *spiritual* manner, which the *world* knows not of. The assertion appeared to you unscriptural, enthusiastical, and dangerous. What I then advanced to prove, that it was scriptural, rational, and of the greatest importance, made you desire I would write to you on the mysterious subject. I declined it, as being unequal to the task; but having since considered, that a *mistake here* may endanger your soul or mine, I sit down to comply with your request: And the end I propose by it is, either to give you a fair opportunity of pointing out my error, if I am wrong; or to engage you, if I am right, to seek what I esteem the most invaluable of all blessings,—

the revelations of Christ to your own soul, productive of the experimental knowledge of him, and the present enjoyment of his salvation.

As an architect cannot build a palace, unless he is allowed a proper spot to erect it upon, so I shall not be able to establish the doctrine I maintain, unless you allow me the existence of the proper senses, to which our Lord manifests himself. The manifestation I contend for, being of a *spiritual* nature, must be made to *spiritual* senses; and that such senses exist, and are *opened* in, and exercised by regenerate souls, is what I design to prove in this letter, by the joint testimony of scripture, our *church*, and *reason*.

I. The scriptures inform us, that Adam lost the experimental knowledge of God by the fall. His foolish attempt to hide himself from his Creator, whose eyes are in every place, evidences the total blindness of his understanding. The same veil of unbelief, which hid God from his mind, was drawn over his heart and all his spiritual senses. He died the death, the moral, spiritual death, in consequence of which the corruptible body sinks into the grave, and the unregenerate soul into hell.

In this deplorable state Adam begat his

children. We, like him are not only void of the life of God, but alienated from it, through the ignorance that is in us. Hence it is, that though we are possessed of such an animal and rational life, as he retained after the commission of his sin, yet we are, by *nature*, utter strangers to the holiness and bliss he enjoyed in a state of innocence. Though we have, in common with beasts, bodily organs of sight, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling, adapted to outward objects; though we enjoy, in common with devils, the faculty of reasoning upon natural truths, and mathematical propositions, yet *we do* not understand supernatural and divine things. Notwithstanding all our *speculations* about them, we can neither *see* nor *taste* them truly, unless we are arisen with Christ, and taught of God. We may, indeed, *speak* and *write* about them, as the blind may speak of colours, and the deaf dispute of sounds, but it is all *guess-work*, *hear-say*, and mere conjecture. The *things* of the Spirit of God cannot be discovered, but by *spiritual, internal* senses, which are, with regard to the spiritual world, what our bodily, external senses are with regard to the material world. They are the *only* medium, by which an intercourse between Christ and our souls can be opened and maintained.

The exercise of these senses is *peculiar* to those who are born of God. They belong to what the Apostles call *the new man, the inward man, the new creature, the hidden man of the heart*. In believers, this hidden man is awakened and raised from the dead, by the power of Christ's resurrection. Christ is his life, the Spirit of God is his spirit, prayer or praise his breath, holiness his health, and love his element. We read of his hunger and thirst, food and drink, garment and habitation, armour and conflicts, pain and pleasure, fainting and reviving, growing, walking, and working. All this supposes senses, and the more these senses are quickened by God, and exercised by the new born soul, the clearer and stronger is his perception of divine things.

On the other hand, in unbelievers, the inward man is deaf, blind, naked, asleep; yea, dead in trespasses and sins: and of course, as *incapable* of perceiving *spiritual* things, as a person in a deep sleep, or a dead man of discovering outward objects. St. Paul's language to him is, "Awake, thou that *sleepest*, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." He calls him a *natural* man, one who hath no higher life, than that his parents conveyed to him by

natural generation—one who follows the dictates of his own sensual soul, and is neither born of God, nor led by the spirit of God. “The natural man,” says the Apostle, “receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness *unto him*, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” He has no *sense* properly exercised for this kind of discernment, his “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into *his* heart, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

The reverse of the natural man is the spiritual, so called, because God hath *revealed* spiritual things to him by his Spirit, who is now in him a principle of spiritual and eternal life. “The spiritual man,” says the Apostle, “judgeth, i. e. discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no one.” The high state he is in, can no more be discerned by the natural man, than the condition of the natural man can be discerned by a brute.* †

St. Paul not only describes the spiritual man, but speaks particularly of his *internal* moral senses. Christians, says he, of full age, by reason of use, have their senses exercised

* 1 Cor. ii. 10—15.

† To vain men this is a most humiliating doctrine.

to discern good and evil.* He prays, that the love of the Philippians "may abound more and more in knowledge, and *ev πᾶσιν αἰσθήσεσιν* in all sense or feeling."† The scriptures constantly mention, or allude to one or other of these spiritual senses:—Give me leave to produce some instances.

1. To begin with the SIGHT. St. Paul prays, that the eyes of his converts being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of their calling. He reminds them, that Christ had been evidently set forth crucified before their eyes. He assures them, that the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not the gospel; and declares that his commission was to *open the eyes* of the Gentiles, and turn them from darkness to light. Abraham saw Christ's day, and was glad. Moses persevered, as *seeing him who is invisible*. David prayed, *Open my eyes that I may see wonders out of thy Law*. Our Lord complains, that the heart of unbelievers is waxed gross, that their *ears* are dull of hearing, and that they have closed their *eyes*, lest they should see with their eyes, understand with their hearts, and be converted. He counsels the Laodiceans, to anoint their *eyes* with eye-salve, that they might see. He declares, that the world can-

* Heb. v. 14. † Phil. i. 9.

not receive the Spirit of truth, because it *sees* him not; that the things which belong to the peace of obstinate unbelievers, are, at last, judicially *hid* from their eyes; and that the *pure* in heart shall *see* God. St. John testifies, that he who does evil, hath not *seen* God; and that darkness hath blinded the eyes of him, that loves not his brother. The Holy Ghost informs us, that believers *look* at the things which are *not seen*, and behold the glory of God, shining in the face of Jesus Christ. These are the eyes, with which believers see the salvation of God. They are so *distinct* from those of the *body*, that when our Lord opened *them* in St. Paul's *soul*, he suffered scales to grow over his *bodily* eyes. And no doubt, when Christ gave *outward* sight to the blind, it was chiefly to convince the world, that it is he who can say to blind sinners, Receive your sight; see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living; look unto me and be saved.

2. If you do not admit of a spiritual HEARING, what can you make of our Lord's repeated caution, he that hath an ear *to* hear, let him hear? And what can be the meaning of the following scriptures—Hear, O foolish people, who have ears and *hear not*. Ye uncircumcised in heart and ears. Ye *cannot*

hear my words ; ye are of your father the Devil. He that is of God *heareth* God's words ; ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God ? Can it be supposed, that our Lord spake of *outward* hearing, when he said, 'The hour cometh, and now is, that the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live. My sheep hear my voice. He that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Do not all sinners stand spiritually in need of Christ's powerful Ephphatha, Be thou opened ? Is that man truly converted, who cannot witness with Isaiah, 'The Lord hath wakened my ear to hear as the learned ; and with the Psalmist, Mine ears hast *thou* opened ? Had not the believers at Ephesus heard Christ, and been taught of him ? When St. Paul was caught up into the third heaven, did he not hear words unspeakable ? And far from thinking *spiritual* hearing absurd, or impossible, did he not question, whether he was not then out of the body ? And does not St. John positively declare, that he was in the Spirit, when he heard Jesus say, I am the first and the last ?

3. How void of meaning are the following passages, if they do not allude to that SENSE, which is calculated for the reception of, what the barrenness of human language

compels me to call *spiritual* perfumes? The *smell* of thy ointments is better than all spices. The *smell* of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon. All thy garments *smell* of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; and because of the favour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth.

4. If believers have not a spiritual faculty of TASTING divine things, what delusion must they be under, when they say, Christ's fruit is *sweet* to their taste; and cry out, *How sweet* are thy *words* to my taste! they are *sweeter* than honey to my *mouth*? But how justly can they speak thus, if they have tasted the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and, as new born babes, desire the sincere milk of it? Surely, if they *eat* the flesh of the Son of God, *drink* his blood and *taste* that the Lord is gracious, they have a right to testify, that his love is better than wine; and to invite those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, to *taste* that the Lord is good, that they also may be satisfied with his goodness and mercy, as with marrow and fatness.

5. If we are not to be perfect *stoics* in religion, if we should have *one degree* more of devotion, than the marble statutes, which adorn our churches, we should have, I think, some FEELING of our unworthiness,

some SENSE of God's majesty. Christ's tender heart was pierced to atone for, and to remove the *hardness* of *ours*. God promises to take from us the heart of stone, and to give us an heart of flesh, a broken and contrite heart, the sacrifice of which, he will not despise. Good king Josiah was praised, because his heart was tender. The conversion of the three thousand, on the day of pentecost, began by their being *pricked* in their heart. We are directed to *feel* after God, if haply we might find him. Our Lord himself is not *ashamed* to be touched, in *heaven*, with a feeling of *our* infirmities. And St. Paul, intimates, that the highest degree of obduracy and apostacy, is to be past feeling, and to have our conscience seared as with a hot iron.

I hope, Sir, you will not attempt to set aside so many *plain* passages, by saying, they are unfit to support a doctrine, as containing empty *metaphors*, which amount just to nothing. This would be pouring the greatest *contempt* on the *perspicuity* of the oracles of God, the *integrity* of the sacred writers, and the *wisdom* of the Holy Ghost, who inspired them. As certainly as there is a spiritual life, there are *senses* calculated for the display and enjoyment of it; and these senses exist no more in metaphor, than the

life that exerts itself by them. Our Lord settled the point, when he declared to Nicodemus, that no man can see the kingdom of God, the kingdom of grace here, and of glory hereafter; except he is first born of God, born of the Spirit; just as no child can see this world, except he is first born of a woman, born of the flesh. Hence it appears, that a *regenerate* soul hath his spiritual senses *opened*, and *made capable* of discerning what belongs to the spiritual world, as a new born infant hath his natural senses unlocked, and begins to see, hear, and taste, what belongs to the material world into which he enters.

II. These declarations of the Lord, his prophets, and apostles, need no confirmation. Nevertheless, to show you, Sir, that I do not mistake their meaning, I shall add the testimony of our own excellent church. As she strictly agrees with the scripture, she makes also frequent mention of spiritual sensations, and you know, Sir, that *sensations* necessarily suppose senses. She prays, that God would "give us a due sense of his inestimable love in the redemption of the world, by our Lord Jesus Christ."* She begs, that he would "make us *know* and *feel* there is no other name than that of Je-

* Thanksgiving.

sus, whereby we must be saved."* She affirms, that true penitents *feel* "the burden of their sins intolerable;"† that godly persons "feel in *themselves* the workings of Christ's Spirit;"‡ that "the Lord speaks presently to us in the scriptures, to the great and endless comfort of all that have any feeling of God in them at all;" that "godly men *felt, inwardly*, the Holy Ghost *inflaming* their hearts with the fear and love of God, and that they are miserable wretches, who have no feeling of God within them at all:"§ And, that "if we feel the *heavy* burden of our sins *pressing* our souls, and *tormenting* us with the fear of death, hell, and damnation, we must steadfastly behold Christ crucified, with the *eyes* of our heart."¶ Our church farther declares, that "*true faith* is not in the *mouth* and *outward* profession only, but *liveth* and *stirreth inwardly* in the *heart*, and that if we *feel* and *perceive* such a faith in us; we *must* rejoice;"** that "correction, though painful, bringeth with it a *taste* of God's goodness:"†† That "if after contrition, we *feel* our consciences *at peace* with God,

* Office for the sick. † Communion. ‡ 17 Article § Hom. on certain places of scripture. ¶ 2 Hom. on the passion. ** Hom. on faith, 1st and 3d part. †† Hom. on the fear of death, 2d part.

through the *remission* of our sin, it is God *who worketh* that great *miracle* in us;” and she prays, that, “as this knowledge and *feeling* is not *in* ourselves, and as *by* ourselves, it is not *possible* to come by it, the Lord would give us grace to know these things, and *feel* them in *our* hearts.”* She begs, that “God would *assist* us with his Holy Spirit, that we may *hearken* to the voice of the good Shepherd.”† She sets us upon asking *continually*, that the Lord would “lighten our darkness,” and deliver *us* from the two heaviest plagues of Pharaoh, “blindness and hardness of heart.”‡ And she affirms, that if we will be profitable hearers of the scriptures, we must keep under our *carnal* senses, taken by the outward words, search the *inward* meaning, and give place to the Holy Ghost,” whose *peculiar* office it is to open our spiritual senses, as he opened Lydia’s heart.§

If I did not think the testimony of our blessed reformers, founded upon that of the sacred writers, of sufficient weight to turn the scale of your sentiments, I could throw in the declarations of many ancient and mo-

* Hom. for Rogation week, 3d part. † Hom. on repent. 2d part. ‡ Even. prayer and Litany. § Hom. on certain places of scripture.

dern divines. To instance in two or three only: St. Cyrill, in the xiii Book of his *Treasure*, affirms, that, "men know Jesus is the Lord, by the Holy Ghost, no otherwise than they, who taste honey, know it is sweet, even by its proper quality." Dr. Smith of Queen's College, Cambridge, in his select discourses, observes, after Plotinus, that "God is best discerned *νοεῖν τὴ ἀφῆ* by *intellectual* touch of him." We must, says he, "see with our eyes, to use St. John's words; we must hear with our ears, and our hands must handle the word of life, *ἐστὶ γὰρ ψυχῆς αἰσθητὸς τῆς* for the *soul* hath its sense as well as the body." And bishop Hopkins, in his treatise on the *new birth*, accounts for the papists denying the knowledge of salvation, by saying, "It is no wonder, that they who will not trust their *natural* senses in the doctrine of transubstantiation, should not their *spiritual* ones in the doctrine of *assurance*."

III. But instead of proving the point by multiplying quotations, let me intreat you, sir, to weigh the following observations in the balance of reason.

1. Do not all grant, there is such a thing as *moral sense* in the world, and that to be utterly void of it, is to be altogether unfit for social life? If you had given a friend

the greatest proofs of your love, would not he be inexcusable, if he felt no gratitude, and had absolutely no sense of your kindness. Now, if *moral sense* and feeling are universally allowed, between man and man, in *civil* life, why should it appear incredible or irrational, that there should be such a thing, between God and man, in the *di-*
vine life?

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4. To conclude, if *material* objects cannot be perceived by man in his present state, but through the medium of one or other of his *bodily* senses; by a *parity* of reason, *spiritual* objects cannot be discovered, but through one or other of the senses, which belong to the *inward* man. God being a *Spirit*, cannot be worshipped in truth, unless he is *known* in spirit. You may as soon imagine, how a blind man, by reasoning on what he feels or tastes can get true ideas of light and colours, as how one, who has no spiritual senses opened, can, by all his reasoning and guessing, attain an experimental knowledge of the invisible God.

Thus, from the joint testimony of scrip-

ture, of our church, and of reason, it appears that *spiritual* senses are a blessed reality. I have dwelt so long on the *proof* of their existence for two reasons. First, They are of *infinite* use in religion. Saving faith cannot subsist and act without them. If St. Paul's definition of that grace be just, if it is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," it must be a principle of spiritual life, more or less, attended with the exercise of these senses; according to the poetic and evangelical lines of Dr. Young,

" My heart awake,
 FEELS the great truths : To FEEL to be fir'd,
 And to believe, Lorenzo, is to FEEL."

Till professors see the *necessity* of believing, in this manner, they rest in a refined *form* of godliness. To the confidence of the Antinomians, they may indeed, join the high profession of the foolish virgins. They may even crown their partial assent to the truths of the gospel with the zeal of Pharisees, and the regularity of moralists; but still they stop short of the new creation, the *new birth*, the life of God in the soul of man. Nay more, they stumble at some of the most important truths of Christianity, and *think* the discoveries, that sound believers have of Christ and the spiritual

world, are *enthusiastical* delusions, or, at least, extraordinary *favours*, which they can very well do without. Thus, even while they allow the power of godliness in *others*, they rest satisfied without experiencing it in *themselves*.

Secondly, What I shall write will depend very much on the existence of spiritual senses; and if this letter convinces you, that they are opened in every newborn soul, you will more easily believe, Christ can and does manifest himself by that proper medium; and my letter on divine manifestations will meet with a less prejudiced reader.

That Emmanuel, the light of the world, may direct me to write with soberness and truth, and you to read with attention and candour, is the sincere prayer of, Sir,
Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

What is the *nature* of that manifestation, which makes the believer more than conqueror over sin and death.

SIR,

HAVING proved in my first letter, the existence of the spiritual senses, to which the Lord manifests himself; I shall now enter upon that subject, by letting you know, as far as my pen can do it,

I. What is the *nature* of that manifestation, which makes the believer more than conqueror over sin and death.

1. Mistake me not, Sir, for the pleasure of calling me *enthusiast*. I do not insist, as you may imagine, upon a manifestation of the *voice, body, or blood* of our Lord to our *external* senses. Pilate heard Christ's voice, the Jews saw his body, the soldiers handled it, and some of them were literally sprinkled with his blood; but this answered no spiritual end: They knew not God manifest in the flesh.

2. Nor do I understand such a knowledge of our Redeemer's doctrine, offices, promises and performances, as the *natural* man can attain, by the force of his *understanding* and *memory*. All carnal professors, all foolish virgins, by *conversing* with

true Christians, *hearing* gospel sermons, and *reading* evangelical books, attain to the *historical*, and *doctrinal* knowledge of Jesus Christ. Their *understandings* are informed; but, alas! their *hearts* remain *unchanged*. Acquainted with the *letter*, they continue ignorant of the *Spirit*. Boasting, perhaps, of the greatness of Christ's salvation, they remain altogether *unsaved*; and, full of talk about what he hath *done* for *them*, they know nothing of *Christ in them, the hope of glory*.

3. Much less do I mean such a representation of our Lord's person and sufferings, as the *natural* man can form to himself, by the force of a *warm imagination*. Many, by seeing a striking picture of Jesus *bleeding* on the cross, or hearing a pathetic discourse on his *agony* in the garden, are deeply affected and melted into tears. They raise in themselves a lively *idea* of a great and good man unjustly tortured to death; their soft passions are wrought upon, and *pity* fills their heaving breasts. But, alas! they remain *strangers*, to the revelation of the Son of God by the Holy Ghost. The murder of Julius Cæsar, pathetically described, would have the same effect upon them, as the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. A *deep play* would *touch* them as

easily as a *deep* sermon, and much to the *same* purpose; for in either case, their impressions and their tears are generally wiped away together.

4. Nor yet do I understand good desires, meltings of heart, victories over particular corruptions, a confidence that the Lord can and will save us, power to stay ourselves on some promises, gleams of joy, rays of comfort, enlivening hopes, touches of love; no, not even foretastes of christian liberty, and of the good word of God. These are rather the delightful *drawings* of the Father than the powerful *revelation* of the Son. These, like the star, that led the wise men for a time, then *disappeared*, and *appeared* again, are helps and encouragement to come to Christ, and not a divine union with him, by the revelation of himself.

I can more easily tell you, Sir, what this revelation is *not*, than what it *is*. The *tongues* of men and angels want *proper* words to express the *sweetness* and *glory*, with which the Son of God visits the souls that cannot rest without him.* This bless-

* Let the reader mark the *fervor* and *energy* of those words, as well as many more, which will be found in the following letters. They are the *common* language of christians, and must not by any means be considered as hyperboles or metaphors of speech.

ing is not to be *described*, but *enjoyed*. It is to be *written*, not with ink, but with the *Spirit of the living God*, not on paper, or tables of stone, but in the *fleshly tables of the heart*. May the Lord himself explain the mystery, by giving you to eat of the hidden manna, and bestowing upon you the new name, which no man knows, save he that receives it! In the mean time, take a view of the following rough draft of this mercy; and, if it is agreeable to the letter of the word, pray that it may be engraved on your heart, by the power of the Spirit.

The *revelation* of Christ, by which a *carnal* professor becomes a holy and happy *possessor* of the faith, is a *supernatural*, *spiritual*, *experimental*, manifestation of the *Spirit*, *power*, and *love*, and sometimes of the *person* of God manifest in the flesh, whereby he is *known* and *enjoyed* in a manner altogether *new*: as new, as the knowledge a man who never tasted any thing but bread and water, would have of honey and wine, suppose, being dissatisfied with

Reader, can a *sane* man, so far *fancy* himself *happy* when he is not! And is it christians only, who use *energetic* words without *import*! The truth is, they use words with the most studious *selection*, and yet find the fittest style *inadequate* to the full expression of their consciousness.

the best descriptions of those rich productions of nature, he actually tasted them for himself.

This *manifestation* is, sooner or later, in a higher or lower degree, vouchsafed to every sincere seeker, through the *medium* of one or more of the *spiritual* senses opened in his soul, in a *gradual* or *instantaneous* manner, as it *pleases* God. No sooner is the *veil* of unbelief which *covers* the heart rent, through the *agency* of the Spirit, and the *efforts* of the soul *struggling* into a living belief of the word : no sooner, I say, is the door of faith opened, than Christ, who stood at the door and knocked, comes in, and discovers himself full of grace and truth. Then the tabernacle of God is with man. His kingdom comes with *power*. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost *spread* through the *new* born soul ; eternal life begins ; heaven is opened on earth ; the conscious heir of glory cries Abba, Father ; and from blessed experience can witness, that he is come to "mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels ; to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made per-

fect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

If this manifestation is duly improved, the *effects* of it are *admirable*. The believer's *heart*, now set at *liberty* from the guilt and dominion of sin, and drawn by the love of Jesus, *pants* after great conformity to his holy will, and mounts up to him in prayer and praise. His life is a course of *cheerful* evangelical obedience, and his most common actions become good works, done to the glory of God.* If he walks

* The Sceptic may, if he chooses to make the *experiment*, become himself a convert to this truth. Let him but impose upon himself the task of "*prayer and praise*," (which all mankind acknowledge *due* from the creature to the creator) and he will soon discover, he *must* have *new* dispositions to be even able to *endure* the painful *toil*, though it be but a duty of a single week. Such an experiment might *convince* the *unwilling* devotee, that even, heaven itself, where prayer and praise is the perpetual business of spirits, would be a misery too intolerable to be borne! But sinners hope to be "*changed*" in *Heaven*! Alas! they must be changed *here*, or never be with God. Who does not see *their certain*, though indirect, confession of the *necessity* of a *change of heart*? Sinners, your *pleasure* or *pain*, in *prayer* and *praise*, is the *test* by which *you* may *know* whether you are depraved and unfitted for death and judgment, or not.

up to his privileges, outward objects entangle him no more. Having found the great **I AM**, the eternal substance, he looks upon all created things as shadows. Man, the most excellent of all, appears to him altogether lighter than vanity. Yea, doubtless, he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord; esteeming them but dung, that he may win Christ, and, to the last, be found in him, not having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ: that, by new discoveries of himself, he may know him and the power of his resurrection every day more clearly. In the mean time, he casts his sins and miseries upon Jesus, and Jesus bestows his righteousness and happiness upon him. He puts on Christ, and becomes the partaker of the divine nature. Thus, they are mutually interested in each other; and to use

It may not be amiss here, to say further, that if the sinner would make the *experiment of sincere prayers* to his creator, for his enlightening wisdom to be bestowed upon him, in the discernment of his *will*, and granting he is but willing to follow that *will*, if revealed, such a one shall surely *feel* in himself *new* emotions to which he was all his life *before* a stranger. Sinner make the experiment unfeignedly, and "you shall (surely) know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or of man."

St. Paul's endearing expressions, they are espoused and married. Joined by the double band of redeeming love and saving faith, they are one spirit, as Adam and Eve, by matrimony were one flesh. "This is a great mystery," says the Apostle, but, thanks be to God, it is made *manifest* to his saints."*

II. If you ask, Sir, how can these things be? Describe to me the *particular* manner of these manifestations. I reply in our Lord's words to Nicodemus, "Art thou a master in Israel," nay more, a Christian, "and knowest not these things?" Verily, I say unto you, though we cannot fix the *exact* mode, and *precise* manner of the breathing of the Spirit, yet we speak what we do *know*, and testify what we have *seen*, but you receive not *our* witness. Marvel not, however, if *we* find it *impossible* to tell you *all* the particulars of a divine manifestation. You *yourself*, though you *feel* the wind, *see* its amazing *effects*, and hear the *sound* of it, cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: much less could you describe it to the satisfaction of *one*, who never heard or felt it himself. Many *earthly* things cannot be conceived by *earthly* men.

* Eph. v. 32.

The blind, for example, can never conceive the difference of colours; what wonder then if *natural* men do not understand us, when *we* tell them of *heavenly* things?

Nevertheless, I would in general observe, that the *manner*, in which the manifestation of the Son of God is vouchsafed, is not the same in *all* persons, nor in the same person at all times. The wind bloweth where it listeth, much more he spirit of the living God. His thoughts are not as our thoughts: he dispenseth his blessings, not as we expect them, but as it pleases him. Most commonly, however, the sinner, driven out of all his refuge of lies, feels an aching void in his soul. Unable to *satisfy* himself any longer, with the husks of empty vanity, dry morality, and speculative christianity; and tried with the best *form* of godliness which is not attended with the *power* of it, he is brought to a spiritual famine, and hungers after heavenly food. *Convinced* of unbelief, he feels the want of the faith of God's operation. He sees, that nothing short of an immediate display of the Lord's arm can bring his soul into the kingdom of God, and fill it with righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Sometimes, encouraged by lively hopes, he struggles into liberty of heart, and prays with groanings, which can-

not be uttered : at other times, almost sinking under a burden of guilty fear, or stupid unbelief, he is violently tempted to throw away his hope, and go back to Egypt ; but an invisible hand supports him, and, far from yielding to the base suggestions, he resumes courage, and determines to follow on to know the Lord, or to die seeking him. Thus he continues wandering up and down in a spiritual wilderness, until the Lord gives him the rest of faith, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

This evidence comes various ways. Sometimes the spiritual *eye* is first opened, and chiefly, though not only, wrought upon. Then the believer, in a divine, transforming light, discovers God in the man Christ, perceives unspeakable glories in his despised person, and admires infinite wisdom, power, justice and mercy in the blood of the cross. He reads the scriptures with *new* eyes. The mysterious book is *unsealed*, and every where testifies of him whom his soul loves. He views *experimentally*, as well as doctrinally the suitableness of the Redeemer's offices, the firmness of his promises, the sufficiency of his righteousness, the preciousness of his atonement, and the completeness of his salvation. He sees, and feels his

interest in all. Thus he beholds, believes, wonders, and adores. Sight being the noblest sense, this sort of manifestation is generally the brightest.

Perhaps his spiritual ear is first opened, and that voice, which raises, the dead, "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee," passes with power through his waiting soul. He knows, by the gracious effect, it is the voice of him, who said once, "Let there be light, and there was light." He is sensible of a new creation, and can say, by the testimony of God's Spirit, bearing witness with his spirit,—This is my beloved's voice; he is mine, and I am his. I have redemption, through his blood, even the forgiveness of my sins: and having much forgiven, he loves much, and obeys in proportion.

Frequently also Christ manifests himself, first and chiefly to the spiritual feeling. He takes the burden of guilt, dejection, and sin, from the heavy-laden soul; and, in the room of it, imparts a strong sense of liberty, peace, love, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The ransomed sinner, enabled to overcome racking doubts or dull insensibility, believes now with the heart unto righteousness, and makes confession with the mouth unto salvation. Surely, says he, In the Lord, I have righteousness and strength. This is

the finger of God. This day is salvation come to my soul. None but Jesus can do this for me. The Lord he is God; he is my Lord and my God. This manifestation is generally the lowest, as being made to a lower sense; therefore great care ought to be taken, not to confound it with the strong drawings of the father, on which it borders. Some babes in Christ, who, like young Samuel, have not yet their senses properly exercised to know the things freely given to them of God, are often made uneasy on this very account. Nor can they be fully satisfied, until they find the effects of this manifestation are lasting, or they obtain clearer ones by means of the nobler senses, the sight or hearing of the heart.

III. Though I contend only for those discoveries of Christ, which are made by the *internal* senses, because such only are promised to all; yet I cannot without contradicting scripture, deny, that the *external* senses have been wrought upon in some manifestations. When Abraham saw his Saviour's day, he was, it seems, allowed to wash his feet with water,* as afterwards the penitent harlot did with her tears. And Saul, in his way to Damascus, saw Jesus's glory, and heard his voice both externally

* Gen. xviii. 3.

and internally, for they, "that journeyed with him, saw the light, and heard a voice," though they could not distinguish the words which were spoken.

Sometimes also manifestations, though merely internal, have *appeared* external to those, who were favoured with them. When the Lord called Samuel, in Shiloh, the pious youth supposed the call was outward, and ran to Eli, saying, Thou calledst me: but it seems the voice had struck his *spiritual* ear only, otherwise the high priest, who was within hearing, would have heard it, as well as the young prophet. And though Stephen stedfastly looked up to heaven, as if he really saw Christ there with his bodily eyes, it is plain he discovered him only with those of his faith, for the *roof* of the house where the court was held, bounded his outward sight; and had Christ appeared in the room, so as to be visible to common eyes, the council of the Jews would have seen him, as well as the pious prisoner at the bar.

Hence we learn—1st, That the knowledge of spiritual things received by spiritual sense, is as *clear* as the knowledge of natural things, obtained by bodily sense. 2dly, That it is sometimes possible to be doubtful, whether the outward eye or ear is not concerned in particular revelations; since

this was not only the case of Samuel, but of St. Paul himself, who could not tell whether the unspeakable words, he heard in paradise, struck his bodily ears, or only those of his soul.* 3dly, That no stress is to be laid upon the external circumstances, which have sometimes accompanied the revelation of Christ. If aged Simeon had been as blind as old Isaac, and as much disabled from taking the child Jesus in his arms as the paralytic, the internal revelation he had of Christ could have made him say with the same assurance, now let thy servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen thy salvation. If the Apostle had not been struck to the ground, and his eyes dazzled by outward light, his conversion would not have been less real, provided he had been inwardly humbled and enlightened. And, if Thomas, waving the carnal demonstration he insisted upon, had experienced only in his inner man, that Christ is the resurrection and the life, he could have confessed him, with as great a consciousness he was not mistaken, as when he cried out, My Lord, and my God! I am, Sir, Yours, &c.

* Let the reader, see a strong parallel case in the remarkable conversion of Col. Gardner. [*vide his life.*]

Every man who disbelieves the power of God to "change" the heart, should read that book. He became emphatically a "renewed" man!

LETTER III.

Why the Lord manifests himself to the children of men.

WHY the Lord manifests himself to the children of men is an important question, which I now come to consider. It is not, we may easily think, for the gratification of their curiosity, but for purposes worthy of his wisdom: and what these are, we shall soon learn, if we reduce *divine manifestations* to three general classes, *extraordinary*, *ordinary*, and *mixed* ones; and then consider the *design* and *use* of each, as it may be collected from scripture.

I. To begin with manifestations of the *Extraordinary* kind: they are such as are either merely external or vouchsafed to a few only on particular occasions, and are by no means essential to salvation.

1. Some of these are calculated to rouse the thoughtless into consideration. Of this kind was the manifestation some were favoured with, a little before our Lord's passion. "As he prayed, there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified

my name, and will glorify it again. The people, that stood by, and heard it, said, it thundered ;” they looked upon the extraordinary call as something common and natural. “ Others said, An angel spake to him. But Jesus said, this voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.”

2. Others are intended as a last warning to notorious sinners. Of this nature was the terrifying sight Nebuchadnezzar had, in his second dream of “ a Watcher and Holy One coming down from heaven, and crying aloud, cut down the tree.” And that of the mysterious hand, which wrote Belshazzar’s doom on the wall, while he profaned the sacred vessels in his night revels.

3. Some are designed for the protection of God’s people, and the destruction or humiliation of their proud enemies. As when the “ Lord looked to the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire, and troubled their host :” When “ he cast down great stones from heaven” upon the armies of the five kings, who fought against Israel : Or when he manifested his presence in Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace, to quench the violence of the flame, preserve the three confessors, and convince the raging tyrant, that God’s kingdom ruleth over all.

4. The design of others is to encourage the children of God in dangerous enterprises, or direct them in important steps. Of this kind was that to Joshua, before he began the conquest of Canaan; and that to St. Paul, when the Lord stood by him in the prison, and informed him he must bear witness to him also at Rome.

5. Some are calculated to appoint some persons to uncommon services and trials, or to the prophetic and ministerial offices. As that in which Noah was commissioned to build the ark, Abraham to offer up Isaac, Moses to deliver Israel, Nathan to reprove David, Balaam to bless Israel, and Jeremiah to preach to the Jews.

6. Others again are designed to answer providential ends for the deliverance of the people of God, as those of Gideon; or spiritual ends of reproof, instruction, and consolation to the church throughout all ages, as most of the revelations vouchsafed to the prophets, and to St. John.

II. The manifestations essential either to the conversion of sinners, or edification of saints, and which the word of God, and the experiences of christians show to be common to all believers, in all ages of the church, are of the *Ordinary* kind, and their use or design is,

1. To make the word spirit and life,

“ quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit,” that the gospel may not come to sinners “ in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.”

2. To ease an anguished conscience, and impart the peace of God to a troubled mind: as in the case of broken-hearted David, mourning Hezekiah, weeping Peter, and Paul agonizing in prayer.

3. To reveal Christ to us, and in us, so as to make us sayingly believe, and know, in whom we have believed, according to the experiences of Peter, Lydia, Cornelius, and every living member of Christ.

4. To open a blessed intercourse, and keep up a delightful communion with Christ; as appears from the experiences of believers illustrated in the Canticles.

5. To silence the remains of self-righteousness, and deepen the humiliation of our souls; as in the case of Job. To make us grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. To bruise satan under our feet, yea, to bruise the serpent's head in our hearts, and seal the exceeding great and precious promises given to us, that we might be partakers of the divine nature, and continue immoveable, always abound-

ing in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love. In a word, to “strengthen us with might, by God’s Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and we may be filled with all the fulness of God.”

6. To prepare us for great trials, support us under them, and comfort us after them. This was our Lord’s experience before his temptation, after he had overcome the tempter, and when he was in the height of his agony. This was also the case of David, St. Paul, and of all the apostles, when they had been scourged for the name of Jesus; and it is still the case of all true and deep mourners in Sion.

7. And lastly, to make us depart in peace, as Simeon; or die in perfect love with our enemies, and the full triumph of faith, as St. Stephen. All who live and die in the Lord partake, more or less, of these ordinary displays of his powerful presence, and I desire you, Sir, to remember, that it is chiefly, if not only, in support of these important manifestations I take up the pen.

III. The third class of manifestations is that of *Mixed Ones*; so called, because they are partly extraordinary and partly ordinary. Some are ordinary in their design, and extraordinary in their circumstances. Of

this sort was the manifestation to the apostles, Acts iv. 31. The design of it was merely common, i. e. to comfort them under contempt, and encourage them to do good and suffer evil; but the *shaking the place where they were assembled* was an uncommon circumstance. The same thing may be said of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the 120 who were assembled in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, and some time after upon Cornelius and his soldiers. That they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost and spiritual fire was not extraordinary, since it is the common blessing, which can alone make a man a Christian, or confirm him in the faith: but that the sound of a rushing wind should be heard, and luminous appearances seen resting upon them, and that they should have been enabled to speak the wonderful works of God in other tongues, were uncommon circumstances attending their spiritual baptism.

Some manifestations are mixed, both as to their design and circumstances. That the iniquity of Isaiah should be put away, and St. Paul converted, were not uncommon things; they are the common effects of ordinary manifestations: But that the prophet should be commissioned to preach

to the Jews, and the apostle to open the eyes of the Gentiles were extraordinary circumstances, as also, a flying cherub appearing to the one, and a light brighter than the sun, blinding the other.

For want of distinguishing properly between what is ordinary and extraordinary in mixed manifestations, persons who are not possessed of a *clear head*, or what is worse, of an *honest heart*, conclude, that none but *enthusiasts* speak now of *divine* manifestations. If they hear it affirmed, they must be *converted* as well as St. Paul, they *pertly* ask, Whether they are Jews, and whether they must be struck to the earth by a voice from heaven? They *wilfully* forget, that our Lord spake to his hearers as sinful men, and not as bigoted Jews, when he said, "Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." They obstinately refuse to see, that the circumstances of the apostle's falling to the ground, &c. were not essential to his conversion, and had no other use, than to make his call more remarkable for the conversion of the Jews, and comfort of the Christians. When the same prejudiced persons are told, that they must be born of the Spirit, and receive the Holy Ghost, as well as Cornelius and his servants, overlooking the ordinary baptism of

the Spirit, they pitch upon the extraordinary circumstance of the gift of tongues, imparted for a season, to remove the prejudices of the Jews, and to draw the attention of the Gentiles; and think, with a sneer, and a charge of enthusiasm, to overturn the apostolic saying, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." *Be not deceived, Sir, by these persons.* Acknowledge that, so sure as you want the regenerating knowledge of Christ, you want the manifestation of his Spirit, without which he can never be known savingly. To return,

Though I contend only for the ordinary manifestations of Christ, I am far from supposing, that all extraordinary or mixed manifestations have ceased. Such a concession would favour too much of the spirit of *infidelity*, which *prevails* in the church. They are more frequent than many imagine. To instance in one particular how far I am from acquiescing with that infidel spirit, I am so attached to that old book the Bible, as to say of *many*, who pass for ministers of Christ, Woe to the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit and have seen nothing: that say, The Lord says, and the Lord hath not sent them. I think the desire of being stiled Reverend, or Right Reverend, and the prospect of a living or a

mitre, are very improper motives for assuming the sacred character. And I am such an *enthusiast* as to believe our church in the right, for requiring that *all* her ministers should not only be *called*, but even **M**OVED by the Holy Ghost to take the office of Ambassador for Christ upon themselves.*

IV. Having mentioned the design and use of ordinary manifestations, it may not be improper, to touch upon the abuse of them. Their genuine tendency is to humble to the dust. The language of those, who are favoured with them, is,—Will God indeed dwell on the earth! Lord what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of

* Ordination.*

* The “ordination” requires that the candidate should have been “*moved*” by the Holy Ghost: yet such is sometimes the spiritual ignorance of some, that they have regarded that *moving* as either a *dead* letter, or at most an unimportant *metaphor*. All such are doubtless “blind leaders, of the blind.” Many it is feared have gone into orders thus unqualified and of course as ignorant of the *new birth* as was Nicodemus. But thank God, some of them have lived to have that “*change*” pass upon themselves, and to bear *their testimony* to their former “unrenewed” state. This was the case with the celebrated Wesley, with his friend Dr. Coke, with Creighton, with Grimshaw, with Walker, with Roe, with Cowper, the brother of the poet: and even the poet himself, owed his long disconsolate spirit to the want of that change of heart.

man, that thou visitest him! Now, that I see thee, I abhor myself. I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies. I am dust and ashes.—But as there is nothing, which the *heart* of man cannot be *tempted* to corrupt and pervert, so as soon as the power attending the manifestation is a little abated, Satan begins to shoot his fiery darts of spiritual pride, You are a peculiar favourite of heaven, whispers that old serpent, few are so highly blessed.* All your enemies are

* It is obvious from what is here said, that there is also a *danger* through *spiritual* pride, of men fancying themselves *moved* by the Holy Ghost, to teach others when they are most moved by self conceit. This is a “temptation;” for satan can transform himself into an angel of light. But this error, does no more *invalidate* real inspiration, than base coin corrupts the purity of the genuine. Such preachers, however who like Ahimaaz, run *without* their errand, are soon apt to faint and to perceive their barrenness and retire. But the really *moved* say “woe is me, if I preach not the gospel” in season and out of season.” Such “*continue*” and “give themselves *wholly* to reading, exhortation, and doctrine.”

St. Paul has summed up the requisities of a preacher in his advice to Timothy. Such an one must “*desire*” the office as “not greedy of filthy lucre,” but, because “he desireth a good work” or wishes *above all things*, to see the work of the Lord abound and prosper. He must therefore be “*vigilant*” in all his “*good work*;” and *lastly* “he must be apt to teach.” If he has not this *aptness* in *teaching*

scattered; you need not be so watchful in prayer, and so strict in self-denial; you shall never fall. If the believer is not upon his guard, and repels not these fiery darts with his shield, as fast as the enemy throws them, he is soon wounded, and pride kindles again upon him.

St. Paul himself was in danger from this quarter. "There was given him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations." Aaron and Miriam, fell into this snare, when they spake against Moses, saying, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses?"

either by natural, acquired, or inspired abilities, he cannot be *divinely* "moved" to the office: For "no man goeth at his own charge."

For want of *duly* considering what an *aptness* to teach does imply, there are probably also many *humble* and good souls, who *mistake* their *moving*, because they *feel* the "*desire*" to preach Christ in an ardent degree, and yet *have not* the *aptness* which is *equally* required. Such do not sufficiently consider, that the "*desire*" to win souls to Christ is not *special* or peculiar to *them*, but is an emotion *common* to every regenerate soul, and is most especially felt in those who are most *recently* and most *powerfully*, brought into the light of the Gospel.

For further notice of the office, and call to the ministry, see Fletcher's masterly "Portrait of St. Paul."

Hath not he spoken by *us* also?" David likewise acknowledges his error in this respect: "In my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved; thou, Lord, of thy goodness hast made my hill so strong;" but my heart was lifted up, and my confidence partly carnal, therefore, "thou didst turn thy face from me, and I was troubled." The way to avoid the danger is to foresee it; to look much to the lowly Jesus, and upon the first approach of a temptation to pride, to give, with double diligence, all the glory to him that graciously bestowed all, and to take, with double care, all the shame of our sins to ourselves. St. Paul's direction in this case is excellent: "Because of unbelief some were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear."

Another genuine effect of divine manifestations is an increase of confidence in the Lord, and of activity in his service. What holy boldness filled the souls of those worthies, who, through faith, wrought righteousness, and turned to fight the armies of the aliens? How did the love of Christ constrain the disciples to speak and act for God after the day of Pentecost? Nothing could exceed their fortitude and diligence. Nevertheless, if the temptation to pride is yielded to, the Comforter is grieved, and

carnal security, indolence of spirit, and indulgence of the flesh, insensibly prevail. The deluded professor, though shorn of his strength, like Sampson, fancies himself the same. Soul, says he, thou hast goods laid up for many years, even for ever; though the Lord manifests himself to thee no more, be neither uneasy nor afraid; he changes not. Sometimes the delusion grows to that height, that the farther he goes from the kingdom of God the stronger he imagines his faith. He even speaks contemptuously of that kingdom. He calls righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, a frame, a sensible feeling, a low dispensation, beyond which he has happily got. He thanks God he can now rest upon the bare word, without an application of it to his heart; that is to say, he can be fully satisfied with the letter without the Spirit, he can feed upon the empty husks of notions, and opinions, as if they were power and life.

The end of this dreadful mistake is generally a relapse into gross sin; witness the falls of David and Solomon; or what is not much better, a settling in a form, without the power of godliness, as the Laodiceans of old, and too many now, who have a name to live and are dead. The only way to avoid this precipice, is to follow the light

of the first manifestation, and look daily for new visits from Christ, till he makes his abode with us, and we walk in the light, as he is in the light. A manifestation of the Spirit *last year* will no more support a soul *this year*, than air breathed yesterday will nourish the flame of life to day. The sun which warmed us last week, must shine again this week. Old light is dead light. A notion of old warmth is a very cold notion. We must have fresh food daily, and though we need not a new Christ, we need, perpetually, *new displays* of his eternal love and power. The Lord taught us this important lesson, by making the manna he gave Israel in the wilderness to disappear every day, and causing that which was not gathered afresh, to breed worms and stink. Nevertheless, as the mysterious food kept sweet in the golden pot in the ark, so does the heavenly power in Christ, to whom every true Israelite will come daily for new supplies of hidden manna; for fresh manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Thousands by not considering this, seek the living among the dead, fancying that a living Saviour is to be found in dead experiences, and that all is well though they live after the flesh, and are perhaps, led captive by the devil at his will. But when their souls awake out of this

dangerous dream, they will be sensible of their mistake, and frankly acknowledge, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" and that, "if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

Leaving these lukewarm, formal, Laodicean professors to the mercy of God, I subscribe myself, Sir, Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

Our Lord suits the manifestations of himself to the various states of the church, and considers us as rational creatures, in a state of probation.

SIR,

V. THAT some persons are blessed with clearer, stronger, or earlier manifestations than others, is undeniable; and why it is so, is one of the mysteries of God's kingdom, that shall not be explained until the day of judgment. In the mean time, the following reflections may possibly cast some light on that dark subject, and help us to say, He does all things well.

1. Our Lord suits the manifestations of himself to the various states of the church. Under the Mosaic dispensation, which consisted much in externals, divine manifestations had, generally, some external circumstances: but the Christian church, being formed upon a more spiritual plan, is favoured with revelations of a more spiritual and internal nature.

2. The Lord considers us as rational creatures, in a state of probation. Were he to indulge us with powerful, incessant, overwhelming discoveries of himself, he would rather violently force, than gently lead us to repentance and obedience. Every day is not a day of Pentecost. Soon after the Son of God had seen the heavens open, he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; and so is his spouse after him.* St. Paul, by observing, that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, and that he kept his body under, lest he should become a cast-away, intimates his bright manifestation was not of such continuance and force, but he might have disobeyed, as Jonah did in a similar case. Some have, in fact, resisted bright manifestations in their

* Hos. ii. 14.

day: witness Cain, Judas, Balaam, Saul, Nebuchadnezzar, and the Israelites who perished in the wilderness; and too many backsliders are resisting them now. So sure, then, as there is a time of trial for faith, hope, and patience, there is also an abatement of the power, which attends divine manifestations.

3. Our wise Redeemer proportions the means to the end. If the effect of a manifestation of his love is to be exceeding great, the manifestation must be exceeding bright. Suppose the burden of guilt and hardness, temptation, and sorrow, under which one groans is ten times greater than that, which oppresses another, it is plain the manifestation, which is to remove the tenfold weight is to be ten times stronger. The same rule holds also with regard to sufferings and labours. The hotter the fight of afflictions God's children are to go through, the stronger and the brighter also is the celestial armour put upon them, at the revelation of the Captain of their salvation.

4. Neither can it be doubted, but that our good God, in fixing the degree of divine manifestations, hath a peculiar respect to the state and capacity of the souls to whom he discovers himself. The deeper sinners mourn for him, the deeper he makes

them drink of the cup of salvation at his appearing. Blessed are they that greatly hunger and thirst after righteousness; their souls are thereby greatly enlarged to receive the oil of gladness, and the wine of the kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those, whose souls are empty as the vessels of the desolate widow, in the days of Elisha: when the heavenly Prophet shall visit them, the streams of his fulness shall certainly flow according to the degree of their emptiness.

5. A skilful physician prescribes weaker or stronger medicines, according to the state of his patients. So does the Physician of souls; he weighs, if I may so speak, every dram of the heavenly power in the scales of goodness and wisdom. He knows what quantity of the heavenly cordial our spirits can bear, and will not, without the greatest care, put the strong wine of his powerful love into a weak vessel. He sees, that as some persons can stand, for a time, the sight of the meridian sun, when others are hurt by the first appearance of a taper, so some Christians can bear the strong beams of his gracious presence, while others are almost overpowered by his fainter rays.

6. If some live and die without any manifestations of the Redeemer's love and

glory, the reasons of it may possibly be found in the abysses of his justice and goodness. They grieve and quench the Spirit, that convinces the world of sin; and it is very fit they should not have him as a Comforter, whom they obstinately reject as a reprover. Add to this, that as our Lord foresees, that if such people were favoured with tokens of his more distinguishing condescension, they would only abuse them, as Cain and the Pharisees did, he puts them not to the trial, nor suffers them to enhance their guilt by trampling richer mercy and love under foot: so that this seeming severity is, in fact, real benignity.

7. The Lord not only proportions the degree of his powerful appearance to the weakness of our souls, but also to that of our bodies. He knoweth whereof we are made, and remembers that we are but flesh. If the natural sun, that glorious emblem of our Emmanuel, was to approach as near our earth, and shine as bright as possible, the insufferable blaze and heat would instantly blind and consume us. By a parity of reason, was our bright Sun of righteousness to manifest his unclouded glory, or to appear without the tempering medium of his manhood, no flesh could support the sight. The brain, unable to bear the high

operations of the soul, would turn; the heart of the wicked, swelled with intolerable pangs of fear, and that of the righteous, dilated by overwhelming transports of joy, would instantly burst. God therefore says, "No man can see my face," without some dimming veil, "and live." Hence arose likewise the grateful exclamations of Manoah and others, when the Lord had manifested himself to them concealed under human appearance, **We have seen God, and live! We have beheld him and are not consumed!**

8. This may, perhaps, help us to account why the Lord still hides his face from some of his sincere seekers. They sit begging by the way side of his ordinances, and yet he does not pass by, so as to restore to them their spiritual sight, that they might know him. In all probability he designs them such a bright manifestation, as they are not yet able to bear. When their hearts are strengthened for the heavenly vision, it shall speak. Let them only wait for it. Let patience have its perfect work, and faith in the word be tried to the uttermost; and he that cometh, will come and will not tarry. He will bring his reward with him, and a moment of his presence will make them abundant amends for the waiting of an age.

Were he to appear, before they are prepared by the humiliation of repentance and the patience of hope, they would be in the case of those carnal Israelites, who, far from being able to commune with God, could not so much as speak to Moses, when he came down from the mount, without first obliging him to put a veil over his shining face.

Peter, James, and John were, it seems, the foremost of the apostles in spiritual strength and boldness; nevertheless, the manifestation they had of Christ on the mount almost overwhelmed them. Their body sunk under the weight of his glory, and when they came out of their sleep or trance, they could not recover themselves, "they knew not what they said." This had been before the case of Daniel, and was once more that of St. John. The comeliness of the man greatly beloved was turned to corruption; he retained no strength. And the beloved Apostle, when he saw his Saviour with some additional beams of glory, fell at his feet as dead. St. Paul not only lost his sight on such an occasion, but was near losing his life, being unable to take any refreshment for three days and three nights. And it is also generally supposed, that Moses actually died under the overpowering displays of the Redeemer's

love. Hence we learn, that God's way and time are best, and that we are to leave both to his gracious wisdom; using the means, in which he has promised to manifest himself to those who diligently seek him.

VI. What those means are, is what I come in the last place to consider. The agent or author of every divine manifestation is the eternal God, one in three, and three in one. The Father reveals the Son freely, the Son freely discovers himself, and the Holy Ghost freely testifies of him. Nevertheless, the Scriptures, in general attribute this wonder of grace to the blessed Spirit. "No man can," experimentally say, "that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost." It is his peculiar office to convince the world of righteousness, by giving us to know savingly the Lord our righteousness. "He shall glorify me," says Christ, "for he shall take of mine, and show it unto you." And this he does, without any merit of ours, in the means which God hath appointed, and which he enables us to use aright.

These means are both outward and inward. The outward are what our church calls "the means of grace;" particularly hearing or reading the word, partaking of the sacraments, and praying together with

one accord for the manifestation of the Spirit, as the primitive Christians did.* These means are to be used with the greatest diligence, but not to be trusted to; the only proper object of our confidence is God, who works all in all. It was not Moses's rod, which parted the red sea, but that Almighty arm, which once divided the water from the water without a rod. Nevertheless, as Moses was not to throw his rod away, under pretence of trusting in God alone, neither was he to rely on the weak instrument, as if the divine power resided in it.

Though the Lord in general works by means, he ties himself to none, and sometimes works without any. The same spirit, which fell from Cornelius, while Peter preached, fell upon Peter on the day of Pentecost without any preaching. And the same Lord, who opened Lydia's heart by the ministry of St. Paul, opened the heart of St. Paul by the sole exertion of his power. We hence learn, that as on the one hand, we ought not with the profane and enthusiasts to tempt the Lord, by neglecting the use of any of the means he hath appointed; so on the other hand, we must beware of confining God to particular means, times, and places, as the bigotted

* Acts ii. 1.

and superstitious do; remembering, that when we are cut off from all outward means, it is our privilege to wait for the immediate display of God's arm, in the use of the inward means.

Of these the first is a believing there will be a performance of the Lord's promise, and that he is willing and able to manifest himself to us *as he does not to the world*: this is the very root of prayer, fervency, hope, and expectation. Without the actings of this preparatory faith, the soul droops, and becomes an easy prey to despondency, vanity, or sloth. Where this talent is buried, the Lord seldom works. Believest thou, that I am able to do this for thee? is generally the first question, that he puts to the seeker's heart. If it is answered in the negative, he can do no great miracle, because of this unbelief. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged, that St. Paul was blessed with the revelation of the Son of God, without any previous desire or expectation of it. In him, and others was this scripture fulfilled, "I was found of them that sought me not, I was manifested to them that asked not after me."* But,

* In confirmation, let the reader read the wonderful *providential* life of the late Rev. John Newton. A more interesting life of the *kind* is not to be found

the Lord will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do this ; and if he visits any with conviction, as he did St. Paul, it is only to make them pray, as that apostle did, until he manifests himself, by the Holy Ghost, in a way of consolation and love.

The 2d inward means of the manifestation of Christ is resignation, as to the particular manner, time, and place of it. Through patience, as well as faith and prayer, we inherit this promised blessing. Some, according to their carnal wisdom and forward imagination, mark out the way in which salvation is to come to their hearts ; but the Lord, generally, disappoints those unhumbled seekers, though, as in the case of Gideon, he may gratify one in a thousand : for believers are “not born of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” The Jews expected the Messiah, and there they were right : but they expected him in their *own way*, and there they stumbled and fell. While they looked for a mighty conqueror, another Alexander, to make them *great*, they overlooked the lowly Prince of peace, who came

in any language. Its *incidents* are so various and striking, as to be capable of *pleasing* those who most love adventures and romances.—Reader, do not fail to read it.

to make them *good*; and, at last, they crucified him as a base impostor. This Jewish disposition, is in *all* by nature. Hence Christ is commonly rejected in the *Spirit* by Christians, as he was in the *flesh* by the Jews. We would have him come to give us an idle rest, but he appears to teach us to deny ungodliness, and fight the good fight of faith: this we do not like. Our nature wants to step at once into a throne; but he offers first to nail us to the tree, and to crucify our flesh with its affections and lusts: and from this we shrink as from the grave. We expect to be carried at once to the top of mount Tabor, to see unutterable glory; but he leads to Gethsemane to watch and pray, or to calvary to suffer and die with him: here we recoil, and do not chuse to know him. Our forward impatience dictates, that he shall instantaneously turn our midnight into noonday; but instead of manifesting himself at once as the meridian sun, he will, perhaps, appear as the morning star, that our light may shine more and more unto the perfect day. This defeats our counsel, we despise the day of small things, and do not think so low an appearance worth our notice and thanks. If you, Sir, ever seek the saving knowledge of Jesus, never stop till you can witness your

sun goes down no more ; but, in the mean time, never slight the least ray of heavenly light. The least may open into the broad day of eternity. Cease from your own false wisdom, and become as a little child, or you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, and see the king in his beauty.

The 3d and last inward means, I would recommend to mourners in Sion, is a tender regard for the reproofs of the Spirit, a constant attention to the drawings of the Father, obedience to the calls they have to secret prayer, and a fear of depending upon their duties, and not solely upon the faithfulness of Jesus. Whoever follows these directions, according to the grace given him, will of course cease from outward evil, and do, as he can, the little good his hand finds to do. This is a better way of waiting for the revelation of Christ, than to lie down in dejection and hopeless unbelief. All those, who sullenly bury their one talent, and wilfully retain the accursed thing, complain in vain that their Lord makes long tarrying. They obstinately grieve his convincing Spirit, and then absurdly clamour, because he does not reward them for it, by the comforts of his heavenly presence. Let us not be so unreasonable. Let us "strive to enter in at the

strait gate," remembering, that "many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." But let us strive lawfully, not making ourselves a righteousness of our own seeking, knocking, and striving. The sun shines not because we deserve it, by undrawing our curtains, but because it is its nature. Jesus visits us, not because of any merit in our prayers, &c. but for his own sake, because his truth and compassion fail not. Free grace opens the door of mercy, not to works and merit, but to want and misery. That you and I may knock and press in, with all needy, penitent, believing sinners, is the earnest wish of a heart, which prompts me to subscribe myself, Sir, Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

Manifestations recorded in the Old Testament.

SIR,

WHEN I told you, that, in all ages, Jehovah Jesus manifests himself in a peculiar manner to his people, you exclaimed against the assertion as altogether *new* and unscriptural. It lies upon me therefore to prove, that antiquity and scripture are on

my side. I shall then in this letter appeal to the manifestation recorded in the Old Testament. You cannot expect *all* the revelations of any child of God, much less those of every one, to be mentioned in so short a history as that of the Bible. Nevertheless, enough is said on the point to convince *us*, that, in every age of the church, God has favoured the sons of men with peculiar displays of his presence.

Let us go back as far as Adam himself. Did not the Lord familiarly converse with him before the fall, both when he presented him with a partner, and when he brought every beast of the field before him, to see what he would call them? Did he not visit him after the fall, to pronounce his sentence, and to promise, that he would become the woman's seed, and bruise the serpent's head? Was not this manifestation granted to Abel, when the Lord had respect to his sacrifice, the very cause of Cain's envy, wrath, and murder? Did not Enoch's walking with God imply a constant union and communion with Emmanuel? And how could this union have taken place, if the Lord had not first revealed himself to the Patriarch? Must not two persons meet and agree, before they can walk and converse together?

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and, in consequence of it, was made acquainted with his righteous designs, and received directions how to escape from a perishing world. The history of Abraham is full of accounts of such manifestations. In one of them, the Lord called him out of his sins, and from his kindred to go both to the heavenly and earthly Canaan. In others he promised him Isaac and Isaac's mysterious seed. Several years after, for the trial of his faith, he commanded him to sacrifice that favourite son; and when the trial was over, he testified his approbation of Abraham's conduct. He went farther. Read Gen. ch. 18, and you will see, how the divine Philanthropy, or the love of God towards man appeared, in condescending to clothe himself, before hand, with the nature he was to assume in the virgin's womb, and to converse in this undress with the father of the faithful, as a prince with his favourite, or a friend with his confident.

Sarah and Agar, Isaac and Rebekah, had their divine manifestations; but those of Jacob deserve our particular attention. When he fled to Syria from the face of his brother Esau, and lay desolate in a field, having only a heap of stones for his pillow, the God of all consolation appeared to him;

“and behold the Lord stood above the mysterious ladder, on which the angels of God ascended, and descended, and said, I am the Lord—behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places, whither thou goest. And Jacob called that place Bethel, the house of God, and the gate of heaven;” as if he had wanted to intimate, no one ever found the gate of heaven, but by a manifestation of Christ, who is alone the way to the Father, and the door into glory. When the same patriarch returned to Canaan, and was left alone one night, there wrestled a man with him till the breaking of the day. And when this extraordinary person said, “Let me go for the day breaketh; he replied, I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me;” and he blessed him there, acknowledging that he had power with man and God, even with him, whose name is Emmanuel, God with us. “And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (the face of God) for he said I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” The design of this manifestation was merely to strengthen his faith, and we learn from it, that the children of faithful Abraham wrestle in prayer with the God-man, as Jacob did, till they prevail, and are blessed as he was.

Moses was favoured with numberless

manifestations, sometimes as prime minister of the King of the Jews, and at other times only as a common believer. "There appeared to him, in the wilderness of mount Sinai, the angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush; and when Moses saw it, he drew near, and the voice of the Lord came unto him saying, I am the God of thy fathers," &c.* Many partook of a sight equally glorious: "Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were of the body of heaven in his clearness; and upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand; also they saw God, and did eat and drink."† "Behold," said Moses upon this occasion, "the Lord our God hath showed us his glory, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire, and we have seen this day, that God doth talk with man and he liveth."‡ All Israel shared sometimes in the glorious manifestation. They all drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, says St. Paul, and that rock was Christ. The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day,

* Acts vii. 30. † Ex. xxiv. 10, 11. ‡ Deut. v. 24.

says the Jewish historian, and fire was upon it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel. "It came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses, and all the people saw the cloudy pillar, and rose up and worshipped every man in the door of his tent. And the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend."* So indulgent was Emmanuel to him, that when he said, "I beseech thee show me thy glory, the Lord answered, I will make all my goodness pass before thee; but thou canst not see my face (without some veil) and live. And (Oh astonishing condescension!) the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him, and proclaimed the name of the Lord." Jehovah, Jesus passed before him, and proclaimed Jehovah, Jehovah, i. e. revealed to him the Father and the Holy Ghost one merciful God together with himself. And Moses made haste, bowed his head towards the earth and worshipped. These displays of divine goodness and glory left a divine impression on the countenance of the man of God; his face shone so transcendently glorious, that the children of

* Ex. xxxiii. 9.

Israel were afraid to come nigh him ; and he was obliged to put a veil upon it, before he could converse with them. Though this appears very extraordinary, the apostles inform us, that what happened to the *countenance* of Moses, happens to the *souls* of all believers. By faith they behold the Lord through the glass of gospel promises, and beholding him they are made partakers of the divine nature ;—they are changed into the same image from glory to glory.

Joshua, Moses's successor, was blessed with many such manifestations, each of which conveyed to him new degrees of courage and wisdom. To instance in one only : “ When he was by Jericho, he lift up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went to him, and, said, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries ? And he said, nay, but as Captain of the Lord's host am I come. And Joshua (sensible it was Jehovah) fell on his face to the earth, worshipped, and said to him, What says my Lord to his servant ? And the Captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground ; and Joshua did

so."* Every true discovery of Christ hath a similar effect. It humbles the sinner, and makes him worship in the dust. He sees holiness to the Lord written upon every surrounding object: he is loosed from earth and earthly things, and the towering walls of sin fall before him, as those of Jericho, soon after this manifestation, did before Joshua.

When that chief was dead, the same heavenly Person, called the angel of the Lord, came from Gilgal to Bochim and spake such words to all the children of Israel, that the people were universally melted; they lift up their voice, wept, and sacrificed.† Nothing can so effectually make sinners relent as a sight of him whom they have pierced. When they have it, whatever place they are in, becomes a Bochim, a valley of tears and adoration.

Not long after the Lord manifested himself to Deborah, and by the wisdom and fortitude communicated to her in that revelation, she was enabled to judge Israel, and lead desponding Barak to certain victory through nine hundred chariots of iron.

The condescension of our Emmanuel appears in a still more striking light, in the

* Josh. v. 13. † Judg. ii. 1.

manifestation, which he vouchsafed to Gideon. This mysterious "Angel of the Lord (again and again called Jehovah) came and sat under an oak in Ophrah, appeared to Gideon and said, The Lord is with thee and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And the Lord looked upon him, (what a courage-inspiring look was this! as powerful no doubt, as that which met cursing Peter's eye, and darted repentance to his heart!) and he said, Go in this thy might; have not I sent thee? And Gideon said, Alas! O Lord God, for because I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shalt not die. Thus strengthened and comforted, he built an altar to Jehovah-Shalom, and threw down the altar of Baal.*. Hence we learn, that, when Jesus manifests himself to a sinner, he fills him with a noble contempt of Baal, an effectual resolution to break down his altars, and a divine courage to shake off the yoke of the spiritual Midianites. He imparts to him a comfortable assurance, that the bitterness of death is past, and that Jehovah Shalom, the God of peace, even Christ our peace, is with him;

* Judg. vi. 11. &c.

and the sinner, constrained by the love of Christ, gives him his believing heart, and offers sacrifices of thanksgiving on that best of altars. Here begins such a free intercourse between the Redeemer and the redeemed, as we find began between the Lord and Gideon, only of a far more spiritual and delightful nature.

Some years after, the same Angel of God appeared to Manoah's wife and promised her a son. Her husband prayed for the same manifestation. God hearkened to his voice. The heavenly Personage manifested himself a second time. Manoah asked him his name, and the "Angel said to him, Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is a secret:" I am not yet called JESUS. Manoah offered a burnt-offering, the Angel received it at his hands: and, while he ascended in the flame of the altar, Manoah fell on his face to the ground, knew that he was the Angel Jehovah, and said to his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. She comforted him under his fears; and the birth of Sampson, instead of their death, was the consequence of this twofold manifestation.

There was a time when Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord, that Word which was after-

wards made flesh, yet revealed unto him. The devoted youth worshipped in the dark, till "the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, came, stood, and called, Samuel, Samuel; for the Lord revealed himself to him there, by the Word of the Lord." From that memorable time, "the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." The intercourse between God and his prophet soon grew to so great a degree, that the sacred historian says, "the Lord told him in his ear" what he wanted him to be informed of.*

David had many manifestations of Christ, and his pardoning love; and, far from supposing this blessing peculiar to himself as a prophet, he declares that "for this every one that is godly shall pray to God, when he may be found."† He knew his Shepherd's inward voice so well, that, without it, no outward message, though ever so comfortable, could restore peace to his troubled mind. When he had been convinced of his crimes of adultery and murder, by the close application of Nathan's parable, the prophet assured him the Lord had put away his sin, he should not die. This report would have contented many of

* 1 Sam. iii. 7. and ix. 15. † Ps. xxxii. 6.

our modern penitents ; but nothing short of an immediate manifestation of the forgiving God, could comfort the royal mourner. "Wash thou me, says he, and I shall be clean." Nathan's words, though ever so true, cannot do this ; speak thyself merciful Lord, "make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."

Exceedingly remarkable was the revelation his son Solomon was favoured with. "In Gibeon, where he was gone to sacrifice, the Lord appeared unto him, in a dream by night, and God said, Ask what I shall give thee." Conscious of his greatest want, "he asked an understanding heart. The speech pleased the Lord, and God said, Because thou hast asked this thing, I have done according to thy word ; lo, I have given it thee ; and that also which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour." Though this promise was made to him in a dream, he knew by the change, which he found in himself, when he awaked, and by the powerful evidence, which accompanies divine manifestations, that it was a glorious reality. Fully persuaded of it, he scrupled not to offer peace-offerings,

and make a feast to all his servants on the occasion*. Nor was this the only time Solomon was thus favoured. When he had built the temple, and prayed for a blessing upon it, "the Lord appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him in Gibeon, and said, "I have heard thy prayer."†

Elijah is so famous for the power he had to obtain divine manifestations by the prayer of faith, that St. James, who had seen him on the mount with Christ and Moses, proposes him to the church for a pattern of successful wrestling with God. And who is the Lord God of Elijah, but the God that manifests himself to his worshippers, in opposition to Baal and other false gods, from whom neither visits nor answers can be obtained? the Lord answered him by fire at the foot of Mount Carmel, and by showers on the top; and "when he lodged in Mount Horeb in a cave, behold, the Word of the Lord (Jehovah Jesus) came to him and said, What doest thou here Elijah? Go forth, stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold, the Lord passed by;" and in his still small voice comforted, supported, and directed him.‡

* 2 Kings iii. † 1 Kings ix. 2. ‡ 1 Kings. xix. 9.

Micaiah, another man of God, “saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.”* Elisha was not only blessed with frequent manifestations of the Lord and his power, but of his heavenly retinue also. He saw in an hour of danger, “the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire,” ready to protect him; and at his request, the Lord condescended to open his servant’s eyes, that his drooping spirits might revive at the sight.†

Eliphaz, one of Job’s friends, related to him, that “in thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear and trembling came upon him. Then a spirit passed before his face; it stood still, but he could not discern, i. e. clearly distinguish the form thereof. An image was before his face, and he heard a voice saying, Shall mortal man be more pure than God?” As for Job, when he had long contended with his friends, the Lord answered him out of the whirlwind, and manifested himself in a manner, to which that good man was before a stranger. “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore, I, abhor

* 1 Kings xxii. 19. † 2 Kings vi. 17.

myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Hence we learn, that nothing but a discovery of the Lord can silence the vain reasonings of self-righteous pleas and unbelieving fears: this alone makes us to lie in deep prostration at our Maker's feet.

St. John informs us, that *Isaiah saw* Christ's glory, and spake of him, when he described the glorious manifestation, in which he received a new seal of pardoning and sanctifying love. "I saw the Lord, says he, sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up; his train filled the temple. The Seraphims covering their faces with their wings, cried one to another, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts. Then said I, wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. Then flew one of the Seraphims, and touching me with a live coal from off the altar, he said, Thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged."* Many never witness the forgiveness of their sins, till they see by faith the Lord of Hosts, and are melted into repentance, and inflamed with love at the glorious sight. *Isaiah* not only

* *Isa.* vi. 1. &c.

beheld Christ's glory, but was blessed with the clearest views of his sufferings. He saw him as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs;" and asked him, "Why he was red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth the wine vat?" These revelations were not only calculated for the good of the Church, but also for the establishment of the prophet's faith.

I shall not mention those of Ezekiel; they are so numerous, that a particular account of them would alone fill a letter. I refer you to the book itself. Jeremiah, speaking of God's people says, in express terms, 'The Lord hath appeared of old unto me saying, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Daniel enjoyed the same favour. "He saw the ancient of days, and one like the son of man coming with the clouds of heaven." We may naturally suppose, that Daniel's three companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were sensible of their heavenly deliverer's presence. They were more concerned in the discovery than Nebuchadnezzar, who cried out, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

It would be absurd to suppose, that the lesser prophets, and other men of God, to whom the word of the Lord came, had no discovery of the Lord himself, the essential word. If some display of his presence had not attended their every revelation, might they not have said, Thus says my warm imagination,—thus says my enthusiastic brain, as well as, Thus says the Lord?

From the variety and authenticity of these manifestations left upon sacred record, I conclude, that the doctrine I maintain, far from being new and unscriptural, is supported by the experiences of God's children for 3600 years, viz. from the creation of the world till the close of the Old Testament.

With respect to what is extraordinary, as to the design, and barely external, as to the circumstances of some of these manifestations, I refer you to the distinctions I made on that subject in my second letter. Should you object, that the contents of this prove only, that God favoured the Patriarchs and Jews with immediate revelations of himself, because they had neither the gospel nor the scriptures: I answer,

1. The gospel was preached to them, as well as to us. The Patriarchs had tradition, which answered the end of the scriptures,

in their day. The Jews, in the time of the judges, had not only tradition, but a considerable part of the scriptures, even all the writings of Moses. Under the kings, they had the Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes, the Proverbs, and a thousand and five songs of Solomon, one of which only has been handed down to our times. They had also the book of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer, which are now lost. These contained the substance of the Bible.

2. When the Lord answered Saul no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams, the reason assigned for it by the Holy Ghost is, not that the canon of scripture was filled, and there was no more occasion for immediate revelations; but that the Lord was departed from him, and was become his enemy.

3. David, who had the honour of being a sacred writer himself, after his relapse into sin, could not be satisfied with the Psalms he had penned down, but mourned, prayed, and watered his bed with his tears, inconsolable till the Lord immediately revealed his pardoning love, and said to his soul, I am thy salvation.

4. If, because we have the letter of scripture, we must be deprived of all immedi-

ate manifestations of Christ and his Spirit, we are great losers by that blessed book, and we might reasonably say—"Lord bring us back to the dispensation of Moses. Thy Jewish servants could formerly converse with thee face to face, but now we can know nothing of thee, but by their writings. They viewed thy glory in various wonderful appearances, but we are indulged only with black lines telling us of thy glory. They had the bright Shekinah, and we have only obscure descriptions of it. They were blessed with lively oracles, and we only with a dead letter. The ark of thy covenant went before them, and struck terror into all their adversaries; but a book, of which our enemies make daily sport, is the only revelation of thy power among us. They made their boast of Urim and Thummim, and received particular, immediate answers from between the Cherubim; but we have only general ones, by means of Hebrew and Greek writings, which many do not understand. They conversed familiarly with Moses, their mediator, with Aaron their high priest, and Samuel their prophet; these holy men gave them unerring directions in doubtful cases; but, alas! the apostles and inspired men are all dead, and thou Jesus, our Mediator, Priest, and Prophet, canst

not be consulted to any purpose, for thou manifestest thyself no more. As for thy sacred book, thou knowest that sometimes the want of money to purchase it, the want of learning to consult the original, the want of wisdom to understand the translation, the want of skill or sight to read it, prevent our improving it to the best advantage, and keep some from reaping any benefit from it at all. O Lord, if, because we have this blessed picture of thee, we must have no discovery of the glorious original, have compassion on us, take back thy precious book, and impart thy more precious self to us, as thou didst to thy ancient people."

5. St. Paul declares, that though the Mosaic dispensation was glorious, that of Christ exceeds it in glory. But if Christ revealed himself immediately to the Jews, and to Christians only mediately, by the letter of a book, it is plain, the apostle was mistaken; for no one can deny, it is far more glorious to see the light of God's countenance and hear his voice, than merely to read something about them in a book.

6. That particular manifestations of Christ, far from ceasing with the Jewish, have increased in brightness and spirituality under the Christian dispensation, I shall endeavour to prove in my next. I am, Sir, &c.

LETTER VI.

Manifestations of Christ, have increased in brightness and spirituality under the Christian dispensation.

SIR,

ACCORDING to my promise, I shall now prove, that the New Testament abounds, as well as the Old, with accounts of particular revelations of the Son of God.

Before his birth, he manifested himself to the blessed virgin, by the overshadowing power of the Holy Ghost. She rejoiced in God her Saviour, and glorified more, in having him revealed as God in her soul, than in finding him conceived as man in her womb. Soon after Joseph, her husband, was assured in a heavenly dream, that the child she bore was Emmanuel, God with us. He revealed himself next to Elizabeth. When she heard the salutation of Mary, she was filled with the Holy Ghost, and made sensible, that the virgin was the mother of her Lord. So powerful was this manifestation, that her unborn son was affected by it—The babe leaped in her womb for joy, and was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.

So important is a particular knowledge of Jesus, that an angel directed the shepherds, and a miraculous star the wise men, to the place where he was born : and there the Holy Ghost so revealed him to their *hearts*, that they hesitated not to worship the seemingly despicable infant, as the majestic God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain.

Simeon who waited for the consolation of Israel, had it revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. The promise was fulfilled ; and while his *bodily* eyes discovered nothing but a poor infant, presented without pomp in the temple, his *spiritual* eyes perceived him to be the light of Israel, and the salvation of God. Nor was this extraordinary favour granted only to Simeon ; for it is written, all flesh shall see the salvation of God ; and St. Luke informs us, that Anna partook of the sight with the old Israelite, gave thanks to her new born Lord, and spake of him to all that waited for redemption in Jerusalem.

When he entered upon his ministry, he first manifested himself to his forerunner. " I knew him not " personally, said John ; " but he that sent me to baptize with water, said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see

the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he, who baptizes with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bear record, that this is the Son of God, the Lamb, that taketh away the sins of the world."

Jesus had manifested himself spiritually to Nathaniel under the fig tree; and the honest Israelite, being reminded of that divine favour, confessed the author of it: Rabbi, said he, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel. Our Lord pleased with his ready confession, promised that he should see greater things, enjoy brighter manifestations, than these; that he should even see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

The bare *outward* sight of our Saviour's person and miracles rather confounded than converted the beholders. What glorious beams of his Godhead pierced through the veil of his mean appearances, when, with supreme authority, he turned the buyers and sellers out of the temple: When he entered Jerusalem in triumph, and all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? And when he said to those who apprehended him, I am HE, and they went backward, and fell to the ground! Nevertheless, we do not find, that one person was blessed with

the saving knowledge of him, on any of these solemn occasions. The people of Galilee *saw* most of him, and yet *believed* least in him. "What wisdom is this, which is given to this man, said they, that such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter the son of Mary? and they were offended at him." Some went even so far as to ascribe his miracles to a diabolical power, affirming, that he cast out devils by **Belzebub** the prince of the devils. Hence it appears, that if he had not in some degree, revealed himself to the *hearts* of his disciples, when he said to them, Follow me, they would never have forsaken all immediately and followed him. He manifested forth his glory, says St. John, and his disciples believed on him; and yet, when the manifestation was chiefly *external*, how weak was the *effect* it produced even upon *them*? How was our Lord, after all, obliged to upbraid them with their unbelief, their little faith, and, on a particular occasion with their having no faith? If we know, savingly, that Jesus is God with us, flesh and blood, i. e. mere man with all his best powers, hath not revealed this to us, but our Father, who is in heaven. As no man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him; so no man

knoweth the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Spirit proceeding from the Father does reveal him. For no man can savingly say, that Jesus is Jehovah, the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost: and he, that hath seen me, by this divine revelation, says Jesus, hath seen the Father also; for I and the Father are one.

Had not our Lord revealed himself in a *peculiar* manner to sinners, no one would have suspected him to be God manifest in the flesh. Till he discovers himself, as he does not unto the world, he hath no form nor comeliness, says Isaiah, and when we see him, there is no beauty in him, that we should desire him; we hide as it were our faces from him; he is despised, and we esteem him not. He was obliged to say to the woman of Samaria, I that speak to thee am he; and to say it with a *power* that penetrated her heart, before she could believe with her heart unto righteousness. Then, indeed, divinely wrought upon, she ran and invited her neighbours to draw living water out of the well of salvation she had so happily found.

If our Lord had not called Zaccheus *inwardly* as well as *outwardly*; if he had not made him come down from the pinnacle of proud nature, as well as from the sycamore

tree; if he had not honoured his *heart* with his *spiritual*, as he did his *house* with his *bodily presence*; the rich publican would never have received him gladly, nor would the Lord have said, 'This day is salvation come to thy house, forasmuch as thou art a son of faithful Abraham.'

Salvation did not enter into the *heart* of Simon, who admitted our Lord to his house and table, as well as Zaccheus. The penitent woman, who kissed his feet, and washed them with her tears, obtained the *blessing*, which the self-righteous Pharisee despised. It was to her contrite spirit, and not to his callous heart, that the Lord revealed himself, as the pardoning God.

The blind man, restored to his bodily sight, knew not his heavenly benefactor, till a second and greater miracle was wrought upon the eyes of his blind understanding. When Jesus found him, some time after he was cured, he said to him, "Doeſt thou believe on the Son of God? He answered, Who is he Lord, that I might believe on him?" And Jesus, opening the eyes of his mind, and manifesting himself to him, as he does not unto the world, said, "Thou haſt both ſeen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." Then, and not till then, he could ſay

from the heart, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him.

Both the thieves, who were crucified with him, heard his prayers and strong cries; both saw his patience and his meekness, his wounds and his blood. One continued to make sport of his sufferings, as though he had been a worse malefactor than himself; while the other, blessed with an *internal* revelation of his godhead, implored his mercy, trusted him with his soul, and confessed him to be the King of glory, at the very moment, when he hung tortured and dying as the basest of slaves.

St. Peter speaks so highly of the manifestation, with which he and the two sons of Zebedee were favoured on mount Tabor, that we ought not to pass over it in silence. They saw the kingdom of God coming with power; they beheld the king in his beauty. "His face did shine like the sun, and his raiment became white as light; a bright cloud overshadowed him, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

Nor did our Lord reveal himself less after his resurrection. Mary sought him at the grave with tears. As she turned herself, she saw him standing, but knew not

that it was **Jesus**. He said unto her, **Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?** She, supposing him to be the gardener, enquired after the object of her love; until **Jesus**, calling her by her name, manifested himself to her as alive from the dead. Then she cried out, **Master!** and in her transport, would have taken her old place at his feet.

With equal condescension he appeared to **Simon**, that he might not be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. True mourners in **Sion** weep, some for an absent **God**, as **Mary**, others for their sins as **Peter**; and they will not be comforted, no not by angels; but only by him, who is nigh to all that call upon him, and is health to those that are broken in heart. He, that appeared first to weeping **Mary**, and next to sorrowing **Peter**, will shortly visit them with his salvation. He is already with them, as he was with **Mary**, though they know it not; and he will soon be in them the sure and comfortable hope of glory.

This observation is farther confirmed by the experience of the two disciples, who walked to **Emmaus**, and were sad. **Jesus** drew near, joined and comforted them. He made their hearts to burn within them

while he talked with them by the way, and opened to them the scriptures.* But still their eyes were held, that they should not know him, before they were prepared for the overwhelming favour. And it was not until he sat at meat with them, that their eyes were opened, and they knew him in the breaking of bread. By a fatal mistake, many professors in our day *rest satisfied* with what did not satisfy the two disciples. They understood the Scriptures, their hearts burnt with love and joy; Jesus was with them, but they knew him not, until the happy moment, when he fully opened the eye of their faith, and poured the light of his countenance on their ravished spirits! Happy those, who, like them, constrain an unknown Jesus by mighty prayers to tarry with them, until the veil is taken away from their hearts and they know in whom they have believed!

Frequent were the manifestations of Jesus to his disciples before his ascension. An angel appeared to two of the holy mourners, and said to them, "Fear not; for I know, that ye seek Jesus who was crucified. He is risen from the dead. As they

* This *burning* expresses the *emotions* of the heart, which till this day, is *felt* in believers.

ran with fear and great joy to tell his disciples, Jesus met them saying, All hail! and they came, held him by the feet, and worshipped him." The same day in the evening, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst. They were terrified, but with his wonted goodness he said, Peace be unto you! He showed them his hands and his feet; ate with them as he had done of old with Abraham; and, to testify an inward manifestation of the Holy Ghost, which he imparted to them, breathed upon them, as his Spirit breathed upon their minds; and thus he opened their understandings, that they might understand the scriptures. Out of condescension to Thomas he showed himself to them a second time, in the like manner; and a third time at the sea of Tiberias: and afterwards he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.

You will perhaps say, Sir, that these manifestations ceased when Christ was ascended to heaven. This is true with respect to the manifestation of a body of such gross flesh and blood, as may be touched with material hands. In this sense believers know Christ after the flesh no more. Our Lord, by his gentle reproof to Thomas,

discountenanced our looking for carnal manifestations of his person, and I have declared again and again, that they are not what I contend for.

But, that spiritual manifestations of Christ ceased at his ascension is what I must deny, if I receive the scripture. On the contrary they became more frequent. Three thousand were pricked to the heart on the day of Pentecost, and felt their need of a visit from the heavenly Physician. He then came revealed in the power of his Spirit, with whom he is one. They received the gift of the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to manifest the Son. For the promise was unto them and their children, and to as many, as the Lord our God shall call; witness the last words of Christ in St. Matthew's gospel, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Time would fail me to tell of the five thousand converted some days after, of Cornelius and his household, Lydia and her household; in a word, of all who were truly brought to Christ in the first age of Christianity. "The Lord opened their hearts. The Holy Ghost fell upon them; and they walked in his comforts. Christ was evidently set forth crucified before their spiritual eyes. He dwelt in their

hearts by faith ; they lived not, but Christ lived in them." They agreed in saying, with St. Paul, If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, by whom he is savingly known, he is none of his.

Stephen's experience is alone sufficient to decide the point. When brought before the council they all saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel. Being full of the Holy Ghost, he wrought no miracle, he spake no new tongue ; but "looked steadfastly up into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God ; and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." This manifestation was calculated only for the private encouragement and comfort of the pious Deacon. It answered no other end, but to enrage the Jews and make them account him a greater blasphemer and a wilder enthusiast, than they did before. Accordingly they cried aloud, stopped their ears, ran upon him, cast him out of the city, and stoned him ; while Stephen under the powerful influence of the manifestation, kneeled down, called upon God, saying, Lord Jesus receive my spirit, and lay not this sin to their charge. Hence we learn, first, that *nothing* appears so *absurd* and

wicked to Pharisees and formalists, as the doctrine I maintain. They lose all patience, when they hear that Christ really manifests himself to his servants. No blasphemy like this in the account of those, who are wise, learned and prudent in their own eyes.* Secondly, that the most exalted saints need a fresh manifestation of the glory, love, and presence of Christ, that they may depart this life in the triumph of faith.

If you object, that Stephen was thus favoured, because he was about to suffer for Christ, and, that it would be great presumption to expect the like support, I reply, in the five following observations. 1. We are called to suffer for Christ as well as Stephen, though perhaps not in the same manner and degree. 2. We often need as much support from Christ, to stand against the Children of men that are set on fire, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongues a sharp sword; and to quench the fiery darts of the devil, as the martyr did to stand a shower of stones. 3. It is perhaps as hard to be racked with the gout, or to burn several days in a fever on a sick bed, as you or I may be forced to do, as to be for a few

* Reader, if this appear so to thee, thou hast need of better teaching.

minutes with Shadrach and his companions in a burning furnace, or to feel for a fleeting moment the anguish of bruised flesh and a fractured skull, with our triumphant martyr. No one knows, what pangs of body and agonies of soul may accompany him through the valley of the shadow of death. If our Lord himself was not *above* being strengthened by an angel that appeared to him from heaven, surely it is no *enthusiasm* to say, that such feeble creatures as *we* are, stand in need of a divine manifestation, to enable us to fight our last battle manfully, and to come off more than conquerors. 4. We betray unbelief, if we suppose, that Christ cannot do for us what he did for Stephen; and we betray our presumption, if we say, *we want* not the assistance, which this bold champion stood in need of. 5. The language of our church is far different: "Grant," says she, in her collect for that saint's day, "O Lord, that in all our sufferings here on earth for the testimony of thy truth, we may steadfastly look up to heaven, and, by faith, behold the glory that shall be revealed; and, being *filled* with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors, by the example of thy first martyr, St. Stephen, who prayed for his murderers, 'O blessed Jesus, who stand-

est at the right hand of God to succour all those, who suffer for thee."

You see, Sir, that I have the suffrage of the Church of England; and yours too, if you do not renounce our excellent liturgy; so that, if I am an enthusiast for expecting to be *filled* with the Holy Ghost, and by faith to behold the glory that shall be revealed, as well as St. Stephen, I am countenanced by a multitude of the best and greatest men in the world.

But suppose you reject the testimony of St. Stephen, and of all our Clergy (when in the desk) touching the reality and the necessity too of our Lord's manifesting himself on earth, after his ascension into heaven, receive at least that of St. Luke and St. Paul. They both inform us, that "as Saul of Tarsus went to Damascus, the Lord, even Jesus, appeared to him in the way." Suddenly there shone a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, so that he fell to the earth, and heard a voice, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. So powerful was the effect of this manifestation of Christ, that the sinner was turned into a saint, and the

fierce, blaspheming persecutor, into a weeping, praying apostle.

Methinks I hear you say, True, into an *apostle*; but are we called to be apostles? No, Sir, but we are called to be christians—to be converted from sin to holiness, and from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son. St. Paul's *call* to the apostleship is nothing to his being *made* a child of God. Judas was a Christian by profession, an apostle by call, and a devil by nature. And what is Judas in his own place to the meanest of God's children?—to poor Lazarus in Abraham's bosom? All, who go to heaven, are first turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. This turning sometimes begins by a manifestation of Christ; witness the authentic account of Colonel Gardner's conversion, published by his judicious friend Dr. Doddridge; and the more authentic one of our apostle's conversion, recorded three times by St. Luke. And I dare advance upon the authority of one greater than St. Luke, that *no* one's conversion ever was completed without the revelation of the Son of God to his *heart*.* I am the way and the door, says Jesus, no

* Reader! believest thou this?

man cometh to the Father but by me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth. Our looking to him for salvation would be to as little purpose, was he not to manifest himself to us, as our looking towards the east for light, if the sun were not to rise upon us.

The revelation of Christ, productive of St. Paul's conversion, was not the only one with which the apostle was favoured. "At Corinth the Lord encouraged and spake to him in the night by a *vision*. Be not afraid but speak and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall hurt thee." On another occasion, to wean him more from earth, Christ favoured him with the nearest views of heaven. "I knew a man in Christ, says he, whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, who was caught up into the third heaven into paradise, and heard words, which it is not possible for man to utter." And he informs us farther, that lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, a messenger of Satan was suffered to buffet him. When he had been brought before the Sanhedrim for preaching the gospel, St. Luke informs us, that "the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, be of good cheer, Paul; for as"

thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." The ship, in which he sailed, being endangered by a storm, there stood by him, "the angel of God, whose he was, and whom he served, saying, Fear not, Paul, &c."

St. Paul was not the only one to whom Christ manifested himself in this *familiar* manner. Ananias of Damascus was neither an apostle, nor a deacon; nevertheless, to him "said the Lord in a *vision*, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord; and the Lord said, Arise, and go into the street, which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus; for behold he prayeth." In like manner Philip was directed to go near and join himself to the Eunuch's chariot. And St. Peter being informed, that three men sought him, Arise, said the Lord, and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them.

Whether we place these manifestations in the class of the extraordinary, or of the mixt ones, we equally learn from them, 1st, That the Lord Jesus revealed himself as much *after* his ascension as he did *before*. 2dly, That if he does it to send his servants with a gospel message to particular persons, he will do it much more to make

that message effectual, and to bring salvation to those who wait for him.

As for the revelations of Christ to St. John, they were so many, that the last book of the New Testament is called the Revelation, as containing chiefly an account of them. "I was *in the spirit* on the Lord's day, says the apostle; and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, I am the first and the last. I turned to see the voice, that spake with me, and I saw one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt with a golden girdle. His head and hair were as white as snow, and his eyes as a flame of fire, his feet like unto fine brass burning in a furnace, his voice as the sound of many waters, and his countenance as the sun shining in his strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead; and he laid his hand upon me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he, that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and death. Write the things which are and shall be." One of the things, which our Lord commanded John to write, is a most *glorious promise*, that he stands at the door of the *human heart*, ready to manifest himself even to poor lukewarm Laodiceans; and

that, if any man hear his voice and open,— if they are made conscious of their need of him, so as to open their hearts by the prayer of faith, he will come in, and feast them with his gracious presence, and the delicious fruits of his blessed Spirit. Therefore the most extraordinary of all the revelations, that of St. John in Patmos, not only shows, that the manifestations of Christ run *parallel to the canon of scripture*, but also gives a peculiar sanction to the ordinary revelations of him, for which I contend.

Having thus led you from Genesis to Revelations, I conclude by two inferences, which appear to me undeniable. The first, that it is evident our Lord before his incarnation, during his stay on earth, and after his ascension into heaven, hath been pleased, in a variety of manners, to manifest himself to the children of men, both for the benefit of the Church in general, and for the conversion of sinners and the establishment of saints in particular. Secondly, that *the doctrine, I maintain, is as old as Adam, as modern as St. John, the last of the inspired writers, and as scriptural as the Old and New Testament, which is what I wanted to demonstrate.* I am, Sir, &c.

It is not to be understood that I mean to say that the doctrine of the Trinity is as old as Adam, or that it is as modern as St. John, or that it is as scriptural as the Old and New Testament, but that the doctrine of the Trinity is as old as Adam, as modern as St. John, and as scriptural as the Old and New Testament.

CONCLUSION.

SUCH, reader, was the language of that great, good, and wise man, John Fletcher, when he was yet but a young man in years, and a child in grace. All his after experience, as has been manifested in his various writings, tend more and more to convince us of the divine realities of all these things. Those who are curious to see this subject still further extended and enlarged upon, may gratify themselves in the perusal of Pearson "on the Creed"—It conveys a death stroke to all empty *formal* Religion.

The reader too, will do well to remember how eloquently both Cowper and Young have written upon this subject. The latter, as if in bitterness at the blindness and folly of his formal-professing readers, exclaims,

"O, ye cold-hearted, frozen *formalists* !

On such a theme, 'tis *impious* to be calm :

Passion, is reason ; *transport*, temper here.

Shall Heav'n, which gave us *ardour*, and has shown
Her *own* for man so strongly, not disdain

What smooth emollients in Theology,

Recumbent-*Virtue*'s-downy-doctors, preach ;—

That *prose* of piety, a *lukewarm* praise !

Rise odours sweet from incense *uninflam'd* ?

Devotion, when *lukewarm*, is undevout ;

But when it glows, its heat, is struck to Heav'n ;

To *human* hearts the golden harps are strung ;

High Heav'n's orchestra chaunts *amen* to man."

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PART III.



EXEMPLIFICATION

OF THE

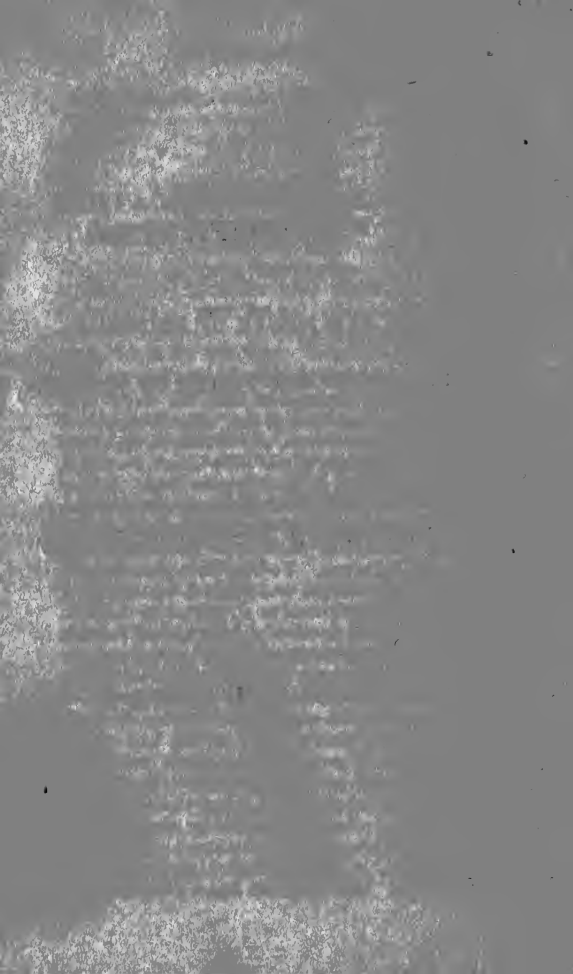
INFLUENCE AND POWER OF RELIGION,

IN THE

Contrasted Lives and Deaths

OF

SAINTS AND SINNERS.



INTRODUCTION

TO THE

INFLUENCE AND POWER OF RELIGION.

THE reader, who has bestowed his attention thus far, has, no doubt, discovered that the Scriptures do really teach the doctrine of the "Manifestation of the Spirit," and that *men* can, and do, know, that they have, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, a *sensible, perceptible*, intercourse with an *unseen* God. It now only remains to confirm this doctrine, by that *further evidence* which results from the declarations, experiences, and conduct of those who have lived and died under its influence. To illustrate this important truth, the life, death, and general testimony of Christians are adduced: and as a *contrast* to these,.... the life, remorse, and death of distinguished Infidels are given. The *names* selected for this purpose, are such as are most generally known. As *death scenes* are best calculated to develop the real character of the man, so most of the characters chosen, strongly pourtray the good man's hope, or the bad man's fear. The truth, if ever, is then made manifest: "Fools men *may* live, but fools they *cannot* die". The hour of death is a solemn time, when the soundness of principles can be best estimated by their result. Whilst the Christian goes off in triumph; the Infidel sighs out his last, in bitterest reflections, or in distracting despair! The Christian has a *preternatural*

hope of heaven, and a *real consciousness* of present happiness, even though his *body* be in *pain*; while the Deist, if not in miserable ravings, has, at best, a *misplaced* "heroic want of thought," or an *ill-timed* affectation of indifference, like Gibbon and Hume. If he has not these, he either feigns levity, like Diderot; or cherishes a vain ostentation, like Rosseau. The best actions of the most philosophic Infidels have been no more than *apathy*.

But even granting that some Deists, through "*hardness of heart*," have really encountered death without concern; still the comparison must utterly fail, when we challenge Unbelievers to bring one solitary instance of a Deist who was ever *desirous to die*, that he might *enjoy* the *reward* of his *good deeds*: But Christians we see, "*long to depart*," and receive their expected "*immortal crown*." Again, while *none*, on the one hand, ever *lament* a *loss of time* in practising the good works required by the Gospel, so *none*, on the other hand, have ever *rejoiced* in the contemplation of their success in rooting out supposed error, or in implanting the germ of their baleful Infidelity.

This evident *difference* in times "*which try men's souls*," asks the understandings and consciences of men, with a voice as alarming as a Spirit's risen from the dead, *why* these things are so? There is a *Cause*: and *that cause*, is the *effect* of Religion.* Those who bear this testimony, know *in themselves* that Religion is true—Besides, they *have been in*

* "Tell, if thou knowest, why conscience acts
With tenfold force, when sickness, age, or pain
Stands tottering on the precipice of death?
Or why such horror gnaws the guilty soul
Of dying sinners, while the good man sleeps
Peaceful and calm; and with a smile expires?"

DR. GLYNN.

the *secret* of Sin, and have therefore *two* sides of comparison *in themselves*, whilst the unregenerate, know only their own,....*one* dark side.

Reader, behold the following *Examples*, and determine as you shall answer hereafter before God, which are the lives and deaths, you would chuse to be yours. An ancient sinner beholding the ways of the righteous, could not forbear to exclaim, “ may I die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his !”

... of the

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EXAMPLES

Of the happiness and reality of Religion, as exemplified in the conduct, declarations, lives, and deaths of Christians.

“The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileg'd beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life,.....quite in the verge of heav'n.”

“What is death, that I should fear it?
To die! why it is to triumph; 'tis to join
The great assembly of the good and just;
Immortal worthies, heroes, prophets, saints!
'Tis to behold, oh, rapture to conceive!
Those we have known, and lov'd, and lost below!
—— who would not die for this?
Who would not die, that they might live for ever!”

REV. JOHN JANEWAY.

IF ever mortal lived the life of an angel upon earth, (says Simpson) Janeway seems to have been the man. Though he had at an early age run the round of human learning, he could say of it, (though he had no wish to disparage it,) “all this I count but dung and dross, in comparison of the more excellent knowledge of Christ, and him crucified.” Though but young when

he died (in 1757,) he had learned much, and studied deep, in the school of his adored master. During the greater part of his illness he talked as if he had been in the third Heavens: breaking out, every now and then into ectacies of joy and praise. At one time he said: "Come look upon a dying man and wonder! Was there ever greater kindness? Were there ever more sensible manifestations of rich grace? Why me, Lord? Why me! Sure this is a kin to Heaven. If I were never to enjoy more than this, it were well worth all the torments men and devils could invent. If this is dying, *dying is sweet*. Christ's arms, his smiles, and visits; sure they would turn hell into heaven! Oh! that you did but *see* and *feel* what I do! Come and behold a dying man, *more cheerful* than ever you saw any healthful man in the midst of his *sweetest enjoyments*! Ah, why should any of you be so *sad*, when I am so *glad*!"*

* After such *rapturous* expressions as these, and the *sober* appeal to the *eyes*, *ears*, and *senses* of men, which is made immediately following, by Halyburton, how is it that men of sense, and *soi disant* philosophers, will still discredit their testimony? Surely the *recipient* of pleasure or pain is himself the best, and indeed only competent judge of its effect and degree. To say, such men are *enthusiastic* and *fana-*

A little before his dissolution he again said, "Come let us lift our voices in *praise*.—It is now my work.—I have done with *prayer*, and almost done conversing with mortals.—In a few hours I shall be in eternity, singing the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb. I shall hear the voice of much people; and be one amongst them who say.—Hallelujah! salvation, glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God! Who, (exclaims he,) can choose but rejoice in all this!"

In this rapturous frame he continued full of joy and admiration, 'till he expired.

HALYBURTON,

Professor of Divinity, in the college of St. Andrews, born in 1674, died in 1712. His memoirs written by himself, have long been held in the highest estimation in the Christian world. They were so much esteemed for their usefulness, by Dr. Watt's, as to have received a very large commendatory epistle from his pen. He died as he lived, in the full comfort and confidence of his

tic, when they make *wills* and other *sane* acts, obligatory in law, (the guardian of right) is making the objector, as *wild* an observer as ever offered *insane* opinions to sane men.

God—When on his death bed, he said to a friend, “I have fought the good fight; I have kept the faith. The Lord hath filled my mouth with a new song. I shall shortly get a different sight of God from what I have ever had. The thoughts of an incarnate God are sweet and *ravishing*! And Oh! how I wonder that I do not love him more! I bless the Lord, I have seen that holiness yields *peace and comfort*.” He then said,—“here is a *demonstration* of the reality and power of faith and godliness! I, a poor, weak, and timorous man, once as much afraid of death as any one; I who was many years under the terrors of death, come, in the mercy of God, and by the power of his grace, composedly and with *joy* to look death in the face. O, Sirs, I could not have believed that I should bear, and bear cheerfully, as I have done, this rod which hath lain on me so long. This is a miracle: pain without pain! and this is not the fancy of a man disordered, but of one who is fully composed. I know that a great deal of what is said by a dying man will pass for canting and raving: But I bless God, he hath so preserved the little judgment I had, that I have been able to reflect with composure on his dealings with me. I am sober and composed, if ever

I was sober. And “whether men will forbear, or whether they will hear,” this is a testimony. The death of the saints is made a derision in our day; But if I am laughed at, I can laugh again—” A few moments before his end, when unable to *speak*, being asked if he encouraged himself still in the Lord, he raised his feeble hands, and clapped them and expired! Such was the end of a Saint.

TOPLADY

Was supported with divine consolations during his last sickness. A few days before his death he said to a friend, “It is impossible to describe how good God is to me. This afternoon I have enjoyed such a season, such sweet communion with God, and such delightful manifestations of his presence with, and love to my soul, that it is impossible for words, or any language to express them. I have had peace and joy unutterable. The comforts and manifestations of God’s love are so abundant, as to render my state and condition the most desirable in the world. I would not exchange my condition with any one upon earth.”

The same friend calling upon him a day or two before his death, he said, with hands

clasped, and his eyes lifted up and starting with tears of the most evident joy: "I cannot tell you the comforts I feel in my soul. They are past expression. The consolations of God to such an unworthy wretch are so abundant, that he leaves me nothing to pray for, but a continuance of them. I enjoy a heaven already in my soul. My prayers are all converted into praise.—

"O how this soul of mine longs to be gone! Like a bird imprisoned in a cage, it longs to take its flight. O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away to the realms of bliss, and be at rest for ever! O that some guardian angel might be commissioned; for I long to be absent from this body, and to be with my Lord for ever.—

"O what a day of sun-shine has this been to me! I have not words to express it. It is unutterable. O, my friends, how good is God! Almost without interruption his presence has been with me.—

"O what delights! Who can fathom the joys of the third heaven? The sky is clear; there is no cloud; come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

—

REV. JOHN WESLEY.

The life of this great apostle of Methodism has been written by Dr. Whitehead, as well as by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore. Friends and foes agree that he was the most extraordinary character of modern times; whether we regard him as a scholar possessed of various talents, or as a saint enlightened by grace, and stimulated by pious zeal. After a wellspent life of 88 years, more than 60 of which were most usefully employed in the public ministry, the benefits of which will even be felt by generations yet unborn, he died as became his saint-like character. When he came to be upon his dying bed, and was so weak as to be scarce able to speak, his desire to his friends around him, was, that they should "pray and praise." He even feebly sang

"I'll praise my maker while I've breath,

And when my *voice* is lost in death,

Praise shall employ my *nobler* powers."

After this, endeavouring to say something to those near him, which they could not comprehend, he paused a little as conscious of his inability to be understood, and then with his utmost energy exclaimed—"The best of all is, God is with us"! and again lifting his hands with increased emphasis,

he once more repeated the "best of all is, God is with us"! Soon after he articulated the word "Farewell," and expired without a groan, or the slightest token of pain.

His last words, ("God is with us"!) have been considered so *prophetic*, as well as *characteristic* of the subsequent successful spread of his Religious principles, as to have given idea to the inscription on the society's official seal, the *motto* of which is, "God is with us"!

This circumstance has given occasion to one to observe, that when the patriarch Joseph was about to expire, he said, "I die, but God *shall* be with you: but the patriarch Wesley's words were, "The best of all is, God *IS* with us"!

REV. JOHN FLETCHER,

A native of Geneva, and many years Vicar of Madeley, (born in 1729, and died in 1785) has been greatly distinguished in the Christian world as a peculiarly acute writer in polemic divinity; but above all, as possessing the deepest communion with God, and the highest measure of inward holiness, that has distinguished any modern Saint. From the aspiring disposition of a soldier, to

which life he had originally intended to devote himself, he became the most extraordinary example of *humility*. By nature of a fiery and passionate spirit, he became *meek*, like his master, as well as *lowly in heart*. In short, through the power of divine grace, he became "blameless and harmless, a Son of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and a perverse generation: shining among them as a light in the world." Such a one, was prepared to meet his reward with joy. Accordingly we find him welcoming death's embrace with Christian triumph. We are indebted to the Rev. Mr. Gilpin, Vicar of Wrockwardine, for some notice of his dissolution. "He appeared (says he) a few days before his death, to have reached that desirable point, where the last rapturous discoveries are made to the souls of dying saints. Roused as it were with the shouts of angels, and kindled into rapture with visions of glory, he broke into a song of holy triumph, which began and ended with the praises of God's unfathomable love. He laboured to declare the secret manifestations he enjoyed, but his sensations were too powerful for utterance; and after looking inexpressible things, he contented himself with calling upon all around him, to celebrate

and shout that *adorable love*, which can never be fully comprehended, nor adequately expressed. While he could *speak* the spake as one whose lips had been touched with a *live coal from the altar*; and when deprived of that power, his *countenance* discovered that he was sweetly engaged in the contemplation of heavenly things."

REV. SAMUEL PIERCE,

Who, next to the celebrated Dr. Gill, was among the most conspicuous characters in the Baptist Society, has most deservedly had his memoirs preserved for our edification and Christian comfort, by Dr. Fuller. When this laborious and highly useful servant of the Most High, came to give an account of his stewardship, he could rejoice in the pains of death. He was enabled to say to a friend—"This sick bed is a Bethel to me; it is none other than the house of God and the gate of Heaven! I can scarcely express the *pleasures* that I have enjoyed in this affliction. The nearer I draw to my dissolution the *happier* I am. It can scarcely be called an affliction, it is so counterbalanced with *joy*." So true it is,

"Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are."

REV. SAMUEL WALKER,

Was a minister of no ordinary rank in the church of Christ. His excessive labours speedily ruined his constitution, and he died at the age of forty-eight. When his dissolution drew near, after much former darkness, but the most assured confidence in God, he broke out to his nurse in this rapturous expression:—"I have been upon the wings of the cherubim! Heaven has in a manner been opened to me! I shall soon be there!"—Next day to a friend who came to see him he said, with a joy in his countenance more than words can utter:—"O had I strength to speak, I could tell you such news as would rejoice your very soul! I have had such views of heaven! But I am not able to say more."

HERVEY

Was an excellent scholar, and a believer in the bible, with its most distinguishing truths. When he apprehended himself to be near the close of life, and stood, as it were, on the brink of the grave, with eternity full in view, he wrote to a friend at a distance to tell him what were his sentiments in that awful situation. "I have been too fond,"

said he, "of reading every thing valuable and elegant that has been penned in our language, and been peculiarly charmed with the historians, orators, and poets of antiquity: but were I to renew my studies, I would take leave of those accomplished trifles; I would resign the delights of modern wits, amusement, and eloquence, and devote my attention to the scripture of truth. I would sit with much greater assiduity at my divine Master's feet, and desire to know nothing in comparison of Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

After this, when his dissolution drew still nearer, he said to them about him:—
 "How thankful am I for death! It is the passage to the Lord and Giver of eternal life.—O welcome, welcome, welcome death! thou mayest well be reckoned among the treasures of the christian! To live is Christ, but to die is gain! Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy most holy and comfortable word; for mine eyes have seen thy precious salvation."

LEECHMAN,

Late principal of the college of Glasgow, at the close of his life, thus addressed the

son of a worthy nobleman, who was designed for the church, and the early part of whose education had been much under the doctor's eye:

“ You see the situation I am in : I have not many days to live : I am glad you have had an opportunity of witnessing the tranquillity of my last moments. But it is not tranquillity and composure alone ; it is joy and triumph ; it is complete exultation.”— His features kindled, his voice rose as he spoke. “ And whence,” says he, “ does this exultation spring?—From that book, pointing to a bible that lay on the table— from that book, too much neglected indeed, but which contains invaluable treasures ! treasures of joy and rejoicing ! for it makes us certain that this mortal shall put on immortality.”

GROTIUS,

Possessed the brightest genius ever recorded of a youth in the learned world, and was a profound admirer, and a daily reader, of the sacred writings ; yet after all his attainments, reputation, and labour in the cause of learning, he was constrained at last to cry out, “ Ah ! I have consumed my life in a laborious doing of nothing !—I would

give all my learning and honour for the plain integrity of John Urick!

This John Urick was a religious poor man, who spent eight hours of the day in prayer, eight in labour, and but eight in meals, sleep, and other necessaries.*

Grotius had devoted too much of his time to worldly company, secular business, and learned trifles; too little to the exercises of the closet. This is forsaking the fountain of living waters, and hewing out to ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water.

ADDISON

Was a very able and elegant advocate for the bible, in life and death. Just before his departure, having sent for a young nobleman nearly related to him, who requested to know his dying commands—his answer was—"See in what peace a christian can die!"

* Alfred, king of England, who fought fifty-six battles with the Danes, many of which were gained by his own personal courage and great example, dedicated, with strict punctuality, eight hours every day to acts of devotion, eight hours to public affairs, and as many to sleep, study, and necessary refreshment.

He spake with difficulty, and soon expired.—Through grace divine, how great is man! Through divine mercy, how stingless is death!

“He taught us how to live; and, oh! too high a price for knowledge, taught us how to die.”

LELAND,

After spending a long and exemplary life in the service of the gospel, closed it with the following words:—“I give my dying testimony to the truth of christianity. The promises of the gospel are my support and consolation. They, alone yield me satisfaction in a dying hour: I am not afraid to die. The gospel of Christ has raised me above the fear of death; for I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

PASCAL

Was one of the most humble and devout believers in Jesus that ever lived. Bayle saith of his life, that “an hundred volumes of sermons are not worth so much as this single life, and are far less capable of disarming men of impiety. The extraordinary humility and devotion of Pascal gives a more sensible mortification to the libertines.

of the age, than if one was to let loose upon them a dozen missionaries. They can now no longer attack us with their favourite and darling objection, that there are none but little and narrow spirits, who profess themselves the votaries of piety and religion: for we can now tell them, and boldly tell them, that both the maxims and practice thereof, have been pushed to the strongest degree, and carried to the greatest height, by one of the profoundest geometers, by one of the most subtile metaphysicians, and by one of the most solid and penetrating geniuses that ever yet existed on this earth."

"This great man, during some of the latter years of his life, spent his whole time in prayer, and reading the Holy Scriptures; and in this he took incredible delight."

LEIGHTON

Was a most exemplary character, both in his private and public capacity. The life and writings of few men are more worthy of imitation and perusal. He laboured hard to bring about some reformation in the state of things in his own day, and when he found all his efforts ineffectual, he quietly withdrew, resigned his preferment, and

lived in private. What Burnet says of him can never be too often repeated, and too generally known.—“ He had the greatest elevation of soul, the largest compass of knowledge, the most mortified and heavenly disposition, that I ever yet saw in mortal. He had the greatest parts, as well as virtue, with the most perfect humility that I ever saw in man; and had a sublime strain in preaching, with so grave a gesture, and such a majesty both of thought, of language, and pronounciation, that I never once saw a wandering eye where he preached, and I have seen whole assemblies often melt in tears before him; and of whom I can say with great truth, that in a free and frequent conversation with him for above two and twenty years, I never knew him to say an idle word; or one that had not as direct tendency to edification; and I never once saw him in any other temper, but that which I wished to be in, in the last moments of my life.”

POCOCKE.

Locke gives us a similar account of Pococke. “ I can say of him what few men can say of any friend of theirs, nor I of any other of my acquaintance; that I do not remem-

ber that I ever saw him in one action, that I did, or could in my own mind blame, or thought amiss in him."

LAW.

When Law came to die, he seemed to enjoy the full assurance of faith: "Away with these filthy garments," said the expiring saint; "I feel a sacred fire kindled in my soul, which will destroy every thing contrary to itself, and burn as a flame of divine love to all eternity."

RALEIGH,

One of the most illustrious heroes that England ever bred, a man equally celebrated for valour, for genius, and for learning, was not ashamed to address his wife in the views of approaching dissolution in the following pious strain:—"Love God, and begin betimes. In him you shall find true, everlasting, and endless comfort. When you have travelled and wearied yourself with all sorts of worldly cogitations, you shall sit down by sorrow in the end. Teach your son also to serve and fear God whilst he is young, that the fear of God may grow up in him. Then will God be an husband

to you, and a father to him; an husband and father that can never be taken from you."

This is true heroism! Such was Sir Walter Raleigh!

LOCKE.

For fourteen or fifteen years he applied himself closely to the study of the holy scriptures, and employed the last period of his life hardly in any thing beside. He was never weary of admiring the grand views of that sacred book, and the just relation of all its parts. He every day made discoveries in it, that gave him fresh cause of admiration. And so earnest was he for the comfort of his friends, and the diffusion of sacred knowledge among them, that even the day before he died he very particularly exhorted all about him to read the holy scriptures, exalting the love which God showed to man in justifying him by faith in Jesus Christ, and returning him special thanks for having called him to the knowledge of that Divine Saviour. To a person who asked him, which was the shortest and surest way for a young gentleman to attain to the true knowledge of the christian religion, in the full and just

extent of it, he replied—“ Let him study the holy scripture, especially the New Testament. Therein are contained the words of eternal life.—It hath God for its author—Salvation for its end—and Truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.”

LOUIS,
 One of the late dukes of Orleans, expressed the delight he found in piety and devotion in the following terms; “ I know by experience, that sublunary grandeur and sublunary pleasure are deceitful and vain, and are always infinitely below the conceptions we form of them. But, on the contrary, such happiness and such complacency may be found in devotion and piety, as the sensual mind has no idea of.”

OLYMPIA FULVIA MORATA,
 Was one of the earliest and brightest ornaments of the reformation. She could declaim in Latin, conversé in Greek, and was a critic in the most difficult classicks. But after it pleased God, by his grace, to open the eyes of her mind to discover the truth, she became enamoured of the sacred

scriptures, above all other books in the world, and studied them by day and by night. And when dissolution approached, she declared she felt nothing but “an inexpressible tranquillity and peace with God through Christ.”—Her mouth was full of the praises of God, and she emphatically expressed herself by saying—“I am nothing but joy.”

LORD RUSSEL

Delivered himself, just before his execution, in the strongest terms of faith and confidence. He said:—“Neither my imprisonment nor fear of death have been able to discompose me in any degree. On the contrary I have found the assurances of the love and mercy of God in and through my blessed Redeemer; in whom I only trust. And I do not question but I am going to partake of that fullness of joy, which is in his presence; the hopes of which do so wonderfully delight me, that I think this is the happiest time of my life, though others may look upon it as the saddest.”

OXENSTIERN,

Chancellor of Sweden, was one of the most able and learned men of his time, and yet he was not too great and too wise to be above being taught by the sacred writings. "After all my troubles and toilings in the world," says he, "I find that my private life in the country, has afforded me more contentment, than ever I met with in all my public employments. I have lately applied myself to the study of the bible, wherein all wisdom, and the greatest delights are to be found. I therefore counsel you to make the study and practice of the word of God your chief delight; as indeed it will be to every soul that savours the truths of God, which infinitely excel all worldly things."

SELDEN,

The lawyer, whom Grotius calls "the glory of the English nation," was, as Hale declared, "a resolved serious christian, and a great adversary to Hobbes's errors." He was one of the most eminent philosophers, and most learned men of his time. He had taken a diligent survey of all kinds of

learning, and had read as much, perhaps, as any man ever did; and yet, towards the latter end of his days, he declared to Usher, that notwithstanding he had been so laborious in his inquiries, and curious in his collections, and had possessed himself of a treasure of books and manuscripts upon all ancient subjects; yet "he could rest his soul on none, save the scriptures."

SIR JOHN MASON,

On his death-bed, said, "I have lived to see five princes, and have been privy-counsellor to four of them. I have seen the most remarkable things in foreign parts, and have been present at most state transactions for thirty years together; and I have learnt this after many years experience—That seriousness is the greatest wisdom, temperance the best physic, and a good conscience the best estate. And, were I to live again, I would change the court for a cloister, my privy-counsellor's bustle for a hermit's retirement, and the whole life I have lived in the palace, for an hour's enjoyment of God in the chapel."

ROMAINE

Was a zealous and successful preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and adorned it by a suitable character, above fifty years. In his last illness not one fretful or murmuring word ever escaped his lips. "I have," said he, "the peace of God in my conscience, and the love of God in my heart. I knew before the doctrines I preached to be truths, but now I experience them to be blessings. Jesus is more precious than rubies, and all that can be desired on the earth, is not to be compared to him." He was in full possession of his mental powers to the last moment, and near his dissolution cried out, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Glory be to thee on high, for such peace on earth, and good will to men."

THESE Examples could have been easily increased without end. They are multiplying in every age and in every nation in Christendom. Even in these United States, we might, were we disposed to seek them, *see*, weekly, and perhaps daily instances of like

christian assurance and triumph.—We will, however, add the bare names of some few other distinguished men and women, who believed in the christian Religion and adorned the Gospel they professed: such were the *divines* Newcombe, Warburton, Cotes, Beveridge, Tillotson, Burtler, Bentley, Lowman, Hales, Baxter, Lardner, Robertson, Doddridge, Pearson, Berkeley, Sherlock, Taylor, Clarke, Barrow, Usher, Chillingworth, Wilkins, Bochart, Cudworth, Watts, Hervey, &c. &c. Such were the *statesmen*, Hyde, Somers, Cullen, Pulteney, Howard, Harrington, King, Barrington, Littleton, and others, and last, though not less esteemed, our beloved Washington was a sincere and serious christian—Such too, were the *Poets*, Spencer, Waller, Cowley, Prior, Thompson, Gray, Young, Milton, Cowper, &c. So also were the *moralists*, Steele, Hawkesworth, Johnson, &c.—also, the *physicians*, Arbuthnot, Cheyne, Browne, Boerhave, Pringle, Hartley, Haller, Mead, Fothergill,

&c.—and lastly, Such were the *lawyers*, Hale, Melmoth, Forbes, Hailes, Pratt, Blackstone, Jones, &c.—not to omit the *philosophers*, Ray, Cotes, Ferguson, Adams, Euler, Newton, Boyle, &c.

Of female characters we name Queen Catharine Parr, Queen Mary, Lady C. Courten, Lady M. Houghton, Lady Cutts, Lady E. Hastings, Lady M. Armyne, Lady A. Halket, Lady Jane Gray, Lady Langham, Lady E. Brooke, Lady M. Vere, Lady Guion, Mrs. C. Phillips, Mrs. I. Ratcliffe, Mrs. C. Bretterg, Mrs. A. Baynard, Mrs. A. M. Schurman, Mrs. E. Bury, Mrs. E. Burnet, Mrs. E. Rowe, Mrs. Carter.

EXAMPLES

Of the cheerless, and even wretched nature of infidelity, as exemplified in the life, conduct, dying sayings, and death of thoughtless, impenitent sinners, or in the bitter reflections of untimely remorse. Also, in the dismay and anguish of those who have strove by repentance to efface their conscious guilt, or have been deeply sensible of a great change wrought upon their heart and manners by Divine grace.

“ In that dread moment, how the frantic Soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,
Runs to each avenue and shrieks for help;
But shrieks in vain! ... How wishfully she looks
On all she's leaving, now no longer hers:
Oh might she stay to wash away her stains,
And fit her for her passage! ... Mournful sight!
Her very eyes weep blood; ... and every groan
She heaves is big with horror. . . . But the foe
Pursues her close through every lane of life,
Till forc'd at last to the tremendous verge,
At once she sinks to everlasting ruin!”

HOBBS

Was a celebrated infidel in the last age, who, in bravado, would sometimes speak very unbecoming things of God and his word. Yet, when alone, he was haunted

with the most tormenting reflections, and would awake in great terror, if his candle happened but to go out in the night. He could never bear any discourse of death, and seemed to cast off all thoughts of it. He lived to be upwards of ninety. His last sensible words were, when he found he could live no longer, "I shall be glad then to find a hole to creep out of the world at." And, notwithstanding all his high pretensions to learning and philosophy, his uneasiness constrained him to confess, when he drew near to the grave, that "he was about to take a leap in the dark." The writings of this old sinner, ruined the earl of Rochester, and many other gentlemen. As that nobleman himself declared, after his conversion.

SERVIN.

"He was" says Sully, "both a wonder and a monster; I can give no other idea of that assemblage of the most excellent and most pernicious qualities. Let the reader represent to himself a man of genius so lovely, and an understanding so extensive, as rendered him scarce ignorant of any thing that could be known; of so vast and ready a comprehension, that he immediately

made himself master of what he attempted; and of so prodigious a memory, that he never forgot what he had once learned; he possessed all parts of philosophy and the mathematics, particularly fortification and drawing: even in theology he was so well skilled, that he was an excellent preacher whenever he had a mind to exert that talent, and an able disputant for and against the reformed religion indifferently; he not only understood Greek, Hebrew, and all the languages which we call learned, but also the different jargons or modern dialects; he accented and pronounced them so naturally, and so perfectly imitated the gestures and manners both of the several nations of Europe, and the particular provinces of France, that he might have been taken for a native of all or of any of these countries; and this quality he applied to counterfeit all sorts of persons, wherein he succeeded wonderfully: he was, moreover, the best comedian and greatest droll that perhaps ever appeared; he had a genius for poetry, and had written many verses; he played upon almost all instruments, was a perfect master of music, and sung most agreeably and justly; he was of a disposition to do, as well as to know, all things: his body was perfectly well suited to his

mind, he was light, nimble, dextrous, and fit for all exercises; he could ride well, and in dancing, wrestling, and leaping, he was admired: there are not any recreative games that he did not know; and was skilled in almost all the mechanic arts. But now for the reverse of the medal: here it appeared that he was treacherous, cruel, cowardly, deceitful; a liar, a cheat, a drunkard and glutton: a sharper in play, immersed in every species of vice, a blasphemer, an atheist; in a word, in him might be found all the vices contrary to nature, honour, religion, and society; the truth of which he himself evinced with his latest breath, for he died in the flower of his age, in a common brothel, perfectly corrupted by his debaucheries, and expired with a glass in his hand, cursing and denying God."

It is evident from this extraordinary case, that "with the talent of an angel, a man may be a fool."—There is no necessary connection between great natural abilities and religious qualifications. They may go together, but they are frequently found assunder.

AN ATHEIST.

Barnaby, a Physician in London, was intimately acquainted with an atheist. After some time, he was seized with a violent fever, and sent for the doctor. He came, and prescribed several medicines, but none of them took effect. At length he told him plainly, "Sir, I know nothing more that can be done; you must die. Upon this, he clenched his fists, gnashed his teeth, and said with the utmost fury, God! God! I won't die!" and immediately expired.

FRANCIS NEWPORT,

Who died in the year 1692, was favoured both with a liberal and religious education. After spending five years in the university, he was entered in one of the Inns of the Court. Here he fell into the hands of infidels, lost all his religious impressions, commenced infidel himself, and became a most abandoned character, uniting himself to a club of wretches who met together constantly to encourage each other in being critically wicked. In this manner he conducted himself for several years, till at length his intemperate courses brought on

an illness, which revived all his former religious impressions, accompanied with an horror of mind inexpressible. The violence of his torments was such, that he sweat in the most prodigious manner. In nine days he was reduced from a robust state of health to perfect weakness, during all which time his language was the most dreadful that imagination can conceive. At one time, looking towards the fire, he said, "Oh! that I was to lie and broil upon the fire for a hundred thousand years, to purchase the favour of God, and to be reconciled to him again! But it is a fruitless vain wish; millions of millions of years will bring me no nearer the end of my tortures, than one poor hour. O eternity! eternity! who can properly paraphrase upon the words—forever and ever!"

In this kind of strain he continued till his strength was exhausted, and his dissolution approached; when, recovering a little breath, with a groan so dreadful and loud, as if it had not been human, he cried out, "Oh! the insufferable pangs of hell and damnation!" and so died; death settling the visage of his face in such a form, as if the body, though dead, was sensible of the extremity of torments.

EMERSON was an infidel, and one of the first mathematicians of his age. Though, in some respects, he might be considered a worthy man, his conduct through life, was rude, vulgar, and frequently immoral. He paid no attention to religious duties, and both intoxication and profane language were familiar to him. Towards the close of his days, being afflicted with the stone, he would crawl about the floor on his hands and knees, sometimes praying, and sometimes swearing. What a poor creature is man without religion! Newton died of the same disorder, which was attended, at times, with such severe paroxysms as forced out large drops of sweat down his face. In these trying circumstances, however, he was never observed to utter the smallest complaint, or to express the least impatience. What a striking contrast between the conduct of the infidel and the christian!

VOLTAIRE,

During a long life, was continually treating the Holy Scriptures with contempt, and endeavouring to spread the poison of infidelity among the nations. In his last ill-

ness he sent for Tronchin. When the Doctor came, he found Voltaire in the greatest agonies, exclaiming with the utmost horror—I am abandoned by God and man. Doctor, I will give you half of what I am worth, if you will give me six months life. The doctor answered, Sir, you cannot live six weeks. Voltaire replied, Then I shall go to hell, and you will go with me! and soon after expired.

This is the hero of modern infidels! Dare any of them say,—Let me die the death of Voltaire, and let my last end be like his? That he was a man of great and various talents, none can deny; but his want of sound learning, and moral qualifications, will ever prevent him from being ranked with the benefactors of mankind. If the reader has felt himself injured by the poison of this man's writings, he may find relief for his wounded mind, by perusing Findlay's Vindication of the Sacred Books from the misrepresentations and cavils of Voltaire; and Lefanu's Letters of certain Jews to Voltaire. The hoary infidel cuts but a very sorry figure in the hands of these Sons of Abraham.

During Voltaire's last visit to Paris, when his triumph was complete, and he had even feared that he should die with

glory, amidst the acclamations of an infatuated theatre, he was struck by the hand of Providence, and fated to make a very different termination of his career.

In the midst of his triumphs, a violent hemorrhage raised apprehensions for his life. D'Alembert, Diderot, and Marmon- tel, hastened to support his resolution in his last moments, but were only witnesses to their mutual ignominy, as well as to his own. Rage, remorse, reproach, and blas- phemy, all accompany and characterize the long agony of the dying atheist.

On his return from the theatre, and in the midst of the toils he was resuming to acquire fresh applause, Voltaire was warn- ed, that the long career of his impiety was drawing to an end.

In spite of all the sophisters flocking around him, in the first days of illness, he gave signs of wishing to return to the God whom he had so often blasphemed. He called for the priest. His danger increas- ing, he wrote the following note to the Abbé Gaultier:—"You had promised me Sir, to come and hear me. I intreat you would take the trouble of calling on me as soon as possible.—Signed VOLTAIRE. Pa- ris, 26th Feb. 1778."

A few days after he wrote the following

declaration, in presence of the Abbé Gaultier, the Abbé Mignot, and the Marquis de Villevieille, copied from the minutes deposited with Mr. Momet, notary at Paris :

“I the underwritten, declare, that for these four days past, having been afflicted with a vomiting of blood; at the age of eighty-four, and not having been able to drag myself to the church, the Rev. the Rector of Sulpice, having been pleased to add to his good works, that of sending to me the Abbé Gaultier ; I confessed to him ; and if it pleases God to dispose of me, I die in the Church, in which I was born ; hoping that the divine mercy will deign to pardon all my faults. Second of March, 1778. Signed VOLTAIRE ; in presence of the Abbé Mignot, my nephew, and the Marquis de Villevieille, my friend.”

After the two witnesses had signed this declaration, Voltaire added these words, copied from the same minutes :—“The Abbé Gaultier, my confessor, having apprized me, that it was said among a certain set of people, that I ‘should protest against every thing I did at my death ;’ I declare that I never made such a speech, and that it is an old jest, attributed long since to many of the learned, more enlightened than I am.”

This declaration is also signed by the Marquis de Villevieille, to whom, eleven years before, Voltaire wrote, "Conceal your march from the enemy, in your endeavours to crush the wretch!"*

Voltaire had permitted this declaration to be carried to the rector of Sulpice and to the archbishop of Paris, to know whether it would be sufficient. When the Abbé Gaultier returned with the answer, it was impossible for him to gain admittance to the patient. The conspirators strained every nerve to hinder the Chief from consummating his recantation, and every avenue was shut to the priest, whom Voltaire himself had sent for. The demons haunted every access: rage succeeded to fury, and fury to rage again, during the remainder of his life.

D'Alembert, Diderot, and about twenty others of the conspirators, who had beset his apartment, never approached him, but to witness their own ignominy, and often he would curse them, and exclaim: "Retire! It is you that have brought me to my pre-

* It had been customary during many years for Voltaire to call our blessed Saviour—The Wretch. And he vowed that he would crush him. He closes many of his letters to his infidel-friends with the same words—crush the wretch!

sent state! Begone! I could have done without you all; but you could not exist without me! And what a wretched glory have you procured me!"

Then would succeed the horrid remembrance of his conspiracy. They could hear him, the prey of anguish and dread, alternately supplicating or blaspheming that God against whom he had conspired; and in plaintive accents would he cry out, "Oh Christ! Oh Jesus Christ!" And then complain that he was abandoned by God and man. The hand which had traced in ancient writ the sentence of an impious and reviling king, seemed to trace before his eyes, "Crush then, do crush the Wretch." In vain he turned his head away; the time was coming apace, when he was to appear before the tribunal of him whom he had blasphemed; and his physicians, particularly Mr. Tronchin, calling to administer relief, thunderstruck, retired declaring the death of the impious man to be terrible indeed. The pride of the conspirators would willingly have suppressed these declarations, but it was in vain. The Mareschal de Richelieu fled from the bed side, declaring it to be a sight too terrible to be sustained; and Mr. Tronchin, that the furies

of Orestes could give but a faint idea of those of Voltaire.*

HUME.

The last days of David Hume were spent in playing at whist, in cracking his jokes about Charon and his boat, and in reading Lucian, and other entertaining books. This was a *consummatum est* worthy of a clever fellow, whose conscience was seared as with an hot iron! Dr. Johnson observes upon this impenitent death-bed scene—"Hume owned he had never read the New Testament with attention. Here then was a

* Diderot and D'Alembert, his friends and companions in infidelity, died with remorse of conscience somewhat similar to the above.

This account of the unhappy end of Voltaire is confirmed by a letter by M. de Luc, an eminent philosopher, and a man of the strictest honour and probity.

Cowper has alluded to the above circumstances in the character of this arch-infidel.

"The Frenchman first in literary fame,
Mention him if you please—Voltaire!—The same,
With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied,
Liv'd long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and died;
The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
Bon-mots to gall the Christian and the Jew.
An infidel in health; but what when sick?
Oh then, a text would touch him to the quick."

man, who had been at no pains to inquire into the truth of religion, and had continually turned his mind the other way. It was not to be expected that the prospect of death should alter his way of thinking, unless God should send an angel to set him right. He had a vanity in being thought easy." Dives fared sumptuously every day, and saw no danger: But—the next thing we hear of him is—In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments!

It is much to be lamented that a man of Hume's abilities should have so prostituted his talents. With all his pretensions to philosophy, he was an advocate for adultery and suicide. The reader will find a sufficient answer to his sophistry in Horne's letters on infidelity, Beattie's essay on the nature and immutability of truth, and Campbell on the miracles of Christ.

Gibbon says, "He died the death of a philosopher!" If philosophers die in such a manner, may it be our happy lot to die like an old fashioned and enthusiastic christian!

GIBBON

Was one of the most respectable Deists of the present age, and more like Hume, than any other of the opposers of christianity. Very sufficient reasons, however, are

to be given for his infidelity. Porson, in the preface to his letters to Travis, after giving a character of Gibbon's history, seems to account for his rejecting the gospel in a satisfactory manner, from the state of his mind. "He shows, so strong a dislike to christianity, as visibly disqualifies him for that society, of which he has created Ammianus Marcellinus president: and we must blame him for carrying on the attack in an insidious manner, and with improper motives. He often makes, when he cannot readily find an occasion to insult our religion; which he hates so cordially, that he might seem to revenge some personal injury. Such is his eagerness in the cause, that he stoops to the most despicable pun, or to the most awkward perversion of language, for the pleasure of turning scripture into ribaldry, or of calling Jesus an impostor.—A rage for indecency pervades the whole work, but especially the last volumes.—If the history were anonymous, I should guess that these disgraceful obscenities were written by some debauchee, who, having from age, or accident, or excess, survived the practice of lust, still indulged himself in the luxury of speculation; and exposed the impotent imbecility, after he had lost the vigour of the passions."

Such are the opposers of Jesus and his gospel?—Let us see how this sneering antagonist of christianity terminated his mortal career.

Eager for the continuation of his present existence, having little expectation of any future one, he declared to a friend about twenty-four hours previous to his departure, in a flow of self-gratulation, that he thought himself a good life for ten, twelve, or perhaps twenty years.—And during his short illness, it is observable, that he never gave the least intimation of a future state of existence. 'This insensibility at the hour of dissolution, is in the language of scepticism, dying like a clever fellow; the death of a philosopher!

Among all the numerous volumes that Gibbon read, it does not appear that he ever perused any able defence, or judicious explication of the christian religion.—Consult his memoirs and diary written by himself.—His conversion and re-conversion terminated in deism; or rather perhaps in a settled indifference to all religion. He never gave himself any concern about it.

CHESTERFIELD.

Of all the accounts which are left us, of the latter end of those, who are gone before into the eternal state, several are more horrible, but few so affecting as that which is given us, by his own pen, of the late lord Chesterfield. It shows us incontestably, what a poor creature man is, notwithstanding the highest polish which he is capable of receiving, without the knowledge and experience of those satisfactions which true religion yields; and what egregious fools all those persons are, who squander away their precious time, in what the world, by a strange perversion of language, call pleasure.

“ I have enjoyed all the pleasures of this world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which in truth, is very low; whereas those who have not experienced, always over-rate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with their glare; but I have been behind the scenes. It is a common notion, and like many common ones, a very false one, that those, who have led a life of pleasure and business, can never be easy in retirement; whereas I am persuaded that they

are the only people who can, if they have any sense and reflection.—They can look back without an evil eye upon what they from knowledge despise; others have always a hankering after what they are not acquainted with. I look upon all that has passed, as one of those romantic dreams that opium commonly occasions, and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose, for the sake of the fugitive dream.—When I say that I have no regret, I do not mean that I have no remorse; for a life either of business, or still more of pleasure, never was, and never will be, a state of innocence. But God, who knows the strength of human passions, and the weakness of human reason, will, it is to be hoped, rather mercifully pardon, than justly punish, acknowledged errors. I have been as wicked and as vain, though not so wise as Solomon: but am now at last wise enough to feel and attest the truth of his reflection, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. This truth is never sufficiently discovered or felt by mere speculation: experience in this case is necessary for conviction, though perhaps at the experience of some morality.—My health is always bad, though sometimes better and sometimes worse; and my deafness deprives me of the comforts

of society, which other people have in their illnesses. This you must allow, is an unfortunate latter end of life, and consequently a tiresome one; but I must own too, that it is a sort of ballance to the tumultuous and imaginary pleasures of the former part of it. I consider my present wretched old age as a just compensation for the follies, not to say, sins of my youth. At the same time I am thankful that I feel none of those torturing ills, which frequently attend the last stage of life; and I flatter myself that I shall go off quietly, and with resignation. My stay in this world cannot be long: God, who placed me here, only knows when he will order me out of it; but whenever he does, I shall willingly obey his command. I wait for it, imploring the mercy of my Creator, and deprecating his justice. The best of us must trust to the former, and dread the latter.—I think I am not afraid of my journey's end; but will not answer for myself, when the object draws very near, and is very sure: For when one does see death near, let the best or the worst people say what they please, it is a serious consideration. The divine attribute of mercy, which gives us comfort, cannot make us forget the attribute of justice, which must blend some fears

with our hope.—Life, is neither a burden nor a pleasure to me ; but a certain degree of ennui necessarily attends that neutral state, which makes me very willing to part with it, when He who placed me here, thinks fit to call me away. When I reflect, however, upon the poor remainder of my life, I look upon it as a burden that must every day grow heavier, from the natural progression of physical ills, the usual companions of increasing years ; and my reason tells me, that I should wish for the end of it ; but instinct, often stronger than reason, and perhaps oftener in the right, makes me take all proper methods to put it off. This innate sentiment alone makes me bear life with patience : for I assure you I have no farther hopes, but, on the contrary, many fears from it. None of the primitive Anachorettes in the Theebais could be more detached from life than I am. I consider it as one who is wholly unconcerned in it ; and even when I reflect upon what I have seen, what I have heard, and what I have done myself, I can hardly persuade myself that all the frivolous hurry and bustle, and pleasures of the world, had any reality, but they seem to have been the dreams of restless nights. This philosophy, however, I thank God, neither makes me sour nor

melancholy ; I see the folly and absurdity of mankind, without indignation or peevishness. I wish them wiser, and consequently better than they are.”

The letters of this nobleman, which he wrote to his son, contain positive evidence, that, with all his honours, learning, wit, politeness, he was a thorough bad man, with a heart full of deceit and uncleanness. Those letters have been a pest to nations. It may be questioned whether Rochester's poems ever did more harm. This nobleman was accounted, not only the most polite and well-bred man of his time, but the greatest wit.

This is the life, these are the mortifying acknowledgments, and this is the poor sneaking end of the best bred man of the age ! Not one word about Mediator ! He acknowledges, indeed, his frailties ; but yet in such a way as to extenuate his offences. One would suppose him to have been an old heathen philosopher, that had never heard the name of Jesus, rather than a penitent christian, whose life had abounded with a variety of vices.

ALTAMONT.

Says Dr. Young, the sad evening before the death of the noble Altamont, I was with him. No one was there, but his physician, and an intimate friend whom he loved, and whom he had ruined. At my coming in, he said;—"You and the physician, are come too late. I have neither life, nor hope. You both aim at miracles. You would raise the dead."—Heaven I said was merciful. "Or I could not have been thus guilty. What has it not done to bless, and to save me:—I have been too strong for omnipotence! I plucked down ruin!" I said, The blessed Redeemer—Hold! hold! you wound me!—This is the rock on which I split—I denied his name." Refusing to hear any thing from me, or take any thing from the physician, he lay silent, as far as sudden darts of pain would permit, till the clock struck. Then with vehemence; "Oh, time! time! it is fit thou shouldst strike thy murderer to the heart.—How art thou fled forever!—A month!—Oh, for a single week! I ask not for years; though an age were too little for the much I have to do." On my saying, we could not do too much: that heaven was a blessed place—"So much the worse. 'Tis lost!—Heaven is to

me the severest part of hell!" Soon after I proposed prayer.—"Pray you that can. I never prayed. I cannot pray—Nor need I. Is not heaven on my side already? It closes with my conscience. Its severest strokes but second my own." His friend being much touched, even to tears, at this—who could forbear? I could not;—with a most affectionate look he said: "Keep those tears for thyself. I have undone thee.—Dost weep for me? That's cruel.—What can pain me more?" Here his friend, too much affected, would have left him. "No, stay. Thou still mayest hope. Therefore hear me. How madly have I talked? How madly hast thou listened and believed? But look on my present state, as a full answer to thee, and to myself. This body is all weakness and pain; but my soul, as if strung up by torment to greater strength and spirit, is full powerful to reason, full mighty to suffer. And that which thus triumphs within the jaws of mortality is doubtless, immortal.—And, as for a deity, nothing less than an Almighty could inflict what I feel."—I was about to congratulate this passive, involuntary confessor on his asserting the two prime articles of his creed, extorted by the rack of nature; when he thus said, very passionately: "No, no! let

me speak on. I have not long to speak.— My much injured friend! my soul, as my body, lies in ruins; and scattered fragments of broken thought: remorse for the past, throws my thoughts on the future. Worse dread of the future, strikes it back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel the mountain that is on me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flames: that is not everlasting flame; that is not an unquenchable fire.” How were we struck? Yet, soon after, still more. With what an eye of distraction, what a face of despair, he cried out; “My principles have poisoned my friend; my extravagance has beggared my boy; my unkindness has murdered my wife! And is there another hell? Oh! thou blasphemed, yet most indulgent, Lord God! Hell is a refuge, if it hides me from thy frown.”

Soon after his understanding failed. His terrified imagination uttered horrors not to be repeated, or ever forgotten. And ere the sun arose, the gay, young, noble, ingenuous, and most wretched Altamont expired.

It is not easy for imagination itself to form a more affecting representation of a death-bed scene than that of this noble youth.

CASE OF A GENTLEMAN,

Says the Rev. D. Simpson, who was an eye and ear witness, and also saw his body borne to the grave,—I found him no more that sprightly and vivacious son of joy which he used to be; but languishing, pining away, and withering under the chastising hand of God. His limbs feeble and trembling: his countenance forlorn and ghastly; and the little breath he had left, sobbed out in sorrowful sighs! his body hastening apace to the dust, to lodge in the silent grave, the land of darkness and desolation. His soul just going to God who gave it; preparing itself to wing away unto its long home; to enter upon an unchangeable and eternal state. When I was come up into his chamber, and had seated myself on his bed, he first cast a wishful look upon me, and then began as well as he was able to speak: “Oh! that I had been wise, that I had known this, that I had considered my latter end. Ah! death is knocking at my doors: in a few hours more I shall draw my last gasp; and then judgment, the tremendous judgment! How shall I appear, unprepared as I am, before the all-knowing and omnipotent God? How shall I endure the day of his coming!” When I

mentioned among many other things, that strict holiness, which he had formerly so slightly esteemed, he replied with a hasty eagerness: "Oh! that holiness is the only thing I now long for. I would gladly part with all my estate, large as it is, or a world to obtain it. Now my benighted eyes are enlightened, I clearly discern the things that are excellent. What is there in the place whither I am going but God? Or what is there to be desired on earth but religion?"—But if this God should restore you to health, said I, think you that you should alter your former course? "I call heaven and earth to witness," said he, "I would labour for holiness, as I shall soon labour for life. As for riches and pleasures, and the applauses of men, I account them as dross and dung, no more to my happiness than the feathers that lie on the floor. Oh! if the righteous Judge would try me once more; if he would but reprieve and spare me a little longer; in what a spirit would I spend the remainder of my days! I would know no other business, aim at no other end, than perfecting myself in holiness. Whatever contributed to that; every means of grace, every opportunity of spiritual improvement, should be dearer to me, than thousands of gold and silver. But

alas! why do I amuse myself with fond imaginations? 'The best resolutions are now insignificant, because they are too late. The day in which I should have worked is over and gone, and I see a sad, horrible night approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness for ever. Heretofore; woe is me! when God called, I refused; when he invited, I was one of them that made excuse. Now, therefore I meet the reward of my deeds; fearfulness and trembling have come upon me: I smart, and am in sore anguish already! and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows! it doth not yet appear what I shall be; but sure I shall be ruined, undone, and destroyed with an everlasting destruction!"

ANTITHEUS.

Cumberland, gives us a most mournful tale concerning a gentleman of infidel-principles. "I remember him, in the height of his fame, the hero of his party; no man so caressed, followed and applauded: he was a little loose, his friends would own, in his moral character, but then he was the honestest fellow in the world; it was not to be denied, that he was rather free in his notions, but then he was the best creature

living. I have seen men of the gravest character wink at his sallies ; because he was so pleasant and so well bred, it was impossible to be angry with him. Every thing went well with him, and Antitheus seemed to be at the summit of human prosperity, when he was suddenly seized with the most alarming symptoms ; he was at his country house, and which had rarely happened to him, at that time alone ; wife or family he had none, and out of the multitude of his friends no one happened to be near him at the moment of his attack. A neighbouring physician was called out of bed in the night to come to him with all haste in this extremity : he found him sitting up in his bed supported by pillows, his countenance full of horror, his breath struggling as in the article of death, his pulse intermitting, and at times beating with such rapidity as could hardly be counted. Antitheus dismissed the attendants he had about him, and eagerly demanded of the physician, if he thought him in danger ; the physician answered that he must fairly tell him he was in eminent danger.—*How so ! how so ! do you think me dying ?*—He was sorry to say, the symptoms indicated death.—*Impossible ! you must not let me die : I dare not die : O doctor ! save me if*

you can.—Your situation, sir, is such, that it is not in mine, or any other man's art, to save you; and I think I should not do my duty, if I gave you any false hopes in these moments, which, if I am not mistaken, will not more than suffice for any worldly or other concerns, which you may have upon your mind to settle.—*My mind is full of horror, and I am incapable of preparing it for death.*—He now fell into an agony, accompanied with a shower of tears; a cordial was administered, and he revived in a degree; when turning to the physician, who had his fingers upon his pulse, he eagerly demanded of him, if he did not see that blood upon the feet-curtain of his bed. There was none to be seen, the physician assured him; it was nothing but a vapour of his fancy.—*I see it plainly, in the shape of a human hand: I have been visited with a tremendous apparition. As I was lying sleepless in my bed this night, I took up a letter of a diseased friend, to dissipate certain thoughts that made me uneasy: I believed him to be a great philosopher, and was converted to his opinions: persuaded by his arguments and my own experience, that the disorderly affairs of this evil world would not be administered by any wise, just, or provident being, I had brought myself*

to think that no such being could exist, and that a life produced by chance, must terminate in annihilation; this is the reasoning of that letter, and such were the thoughts I was resolving in my mind, when the apparition of my dear friend presented itself before me; and unfolding the curtains of my bed, stood at my feet, looking earnestly upon me for a considerable space of time. My heart sunk within me; for his face was ghastly, full of horror, with an expression of such an anguish as I can never describe; his eyes were fixed upon me, and at length with a mournful motion of his head—Alas, alas! he cried, we are in a fatal error!—and taking hold of the curtains with his hand, shook them violently and disappeared. This I protest to you, I both saw and heard; and look! where the print of his hand is left in blood upon the curtains!”

Antitheus survived the relation of this vision very few hours, and died delirious in great agonies.

What a forsaken and disconsolate creature is man without his God and Saviour.

ROUSSEAU

Was born at Geneva; and, at a proper age, was bound apprentice to an artist. During his apprenticeship he frequently robbed his

master as well as other persons. Before his time was expired he decamped, fled into the dominions of the king of Sardinia, where he professed to be a catholic. By an unexpected turn of fortune he became a footman; in which capacity he forgot not his old habit of stealing. He was detected with the stolen goods; swore that they were given him by a maid servant of the house; the girl was confronted with him; she denied the fact, and, weeping, pressed him to confess the truth; but the young philosopher still persisted in the lie, and the poor girl was driven from her place in disgrace.

Tired of being a serving man, he went to throw himself on the protection of a lady, whom he had seen once before, and who, he protests, was the most virtuous creature of her sex. The lady had so great a regard for him, that she called him her little darling, and he called her mamma. Mamma had a footman, who served her besides, in another capacity, very much resembling that of a husband; but she had a most tender affection for her adopted son Rousseau; and, as she feared he was forming connections with a certain lady which might spoil his morals, she herself, out of pure virtue, took him—to bed with her!—This virtuous effort to preserve the purity of Rousseau's

heart, had a dreadful effect upon the poor footman, for he poisoned himself.—Rousseau fell sick, and mamma was obliged to part with little darling, while he performed a journey to the south of France, for the recovery of his health. On the road he dined with a gentleman, and debauched his wife. As he was returning back, he debated with himself whether he should pay his lady a second visit or not; but fearing he might be tempted to seduce her daughter also, virtue got the better, and determined the little darling to fly home into the arms of his mamma: but, alas! those arms were filled with another. Mamma's virtue had prompted her to take a substitute, whom she liked too well to part with, and our philosopher was obliged to shift for himself. While the little darling resided with his mamma, he made a tour with a young musician. Their friendship was warm, like that of most young men, and they were, besides, enjoined to take particular care of each other during their travels.—They went for some time together, agreed perfectly well, and vowed an everlasting friendship for each other. But the musician, being one day taken in a fit, fell down in the street, which furnished the faithful Rousseau with an opportunity of slipping off

with some of his things, and leaving him to the mercy of the people, in a town where he was a total stranger.

We seldom meet with so much villainy as this in a youth. His manhood was, however, worthy of it. He turned apostate a second time, was driven from within the walls of his native city Geneva, as an incendiary, and an apostle of anarchy and infidelity: nor did he forget how to thieve, At last the philosopher marries; but like a philosopher. He has a family of children, and like a kind philosophical father, for fear they should want after his death, he sends them to the poor-house during his life time!—The philosopher dies and leaves the philosophess his wife to the protection of a friend; she marries a footman and is turned into the street.

This man has the impudence to say, in the work written by himself, which contains a confession of these his crimes, that no man can come to the throne of God, and say, I am a better man than Rousseau.

Notwithstanding the above circumstances, it must be owned that Rousseau's writings have great literary merit, but they contain principles the most vitiating. He has exhausted all the powers of reasoning, and all the charms of eloquence in the cause

of irreligion. And his writings are so much the more dangerous, as he winds himself into favour with the unwary, by an eternal cant about virtue and liberty. He assumed the mask of virtue for no other purpose than that of propagating with more certain success the blackest and most incorrigible vice.

Rousseau expired with a lie in his mouth, and the most impious appeal to the Divine Being, that was ever made by mortal man.

“Ah! my dear,” said he just before he expired, “how happy a thing it is to die when one has no reason for remorse or self-reproach!”—And then addressing himself to the Almighty, he said, “Eternal Being! the soul that I am going to give thee back, is as pure at this moment, as it was when it proceeded from thee; render it a partaker of thy felicity!”

OKELY.

Dr. Okely published an octavo volume, entitled, "Pyrology, or the connection between natural and moral Philosophy, with a Disquisition on the Origin of Christianity;" in which it was completely exploded, together with the doctrine of a future state. It has pleased God, however, to show Dr. Okely, the vanity of his philosophy, and he has done himself the honour to publish the following manly renunciation of his errors:*

"The author of Pyrology feels himself irresistibly impelled to make known, that he is now thoroughly convinced of the moral government of God, the immortality

* There are other conversions in the present day from deism to christianity, besides this of Dr. Okely. Dr. Vanderkemp, a Dutch physician, was convinced and recovered from infidelity by an alarming providence, and devoted himself as a missionary for the conversion of the Heathen. Captain Wilson is another remarkable instance, who, in gratitude to God for his goodness to him, undertook to convey the missionaries to the Southern Ocean, and has accomplished the undertaking with great and surprising success, without putting the Society to the smallest expense.

Henry Redhead Yorke, who was sentenced to a long imprisonment for sedition, is another instance of a person, whose mind has undergone a great change during his imprisonment, and he has been open and honest enough to avow it.

of the human soul, or future state, and of the truth of Christianity in its fullest extent. For his involuntary error he confidently hopes to be pardoned by Almighty God, through the merits of Jesus Christ; but at the same time he thinks it his duty, in this public manner to solicit the pardon of his readers for having, as much as in him lay, though he trusts ineffectually, contributed to lead them astray."

THOMAS PAINE.

THIS grand champion of modern infidelity, in whom its thoughtless abettors, placed their last, best hopes, expired at New York, in the year 1809. No deist, so slenderly acquainted with his subject, had ever so fatally succeeded to corrupt the generation of his day, as Paine. Presumptuous, witty, and bad at heart, he was enabled by a *style* at once popular and nervous, to sneer, revile, and ridicule, with sad effect, the most sacred, and most valued truths.

One who had so maliciously aimed to plunge his poisoned arrows into the vitals of christianity, and had so destructively succeeded to debauch the understandings of the giddy, rash, and tumultuous populace, (who are ever bad enough, even under the

restraints of Civil as well as Religious obligations,) could not fail to call the attention of the Christian world to his expiring moments. It was therefore generally anticipated that something *signally awful* would distinguish his death: and so indeed there was, though not in the manner most generally expected. Like one given up to the “strongest delusions to believe a *lie*,” and “with a conscience seared as with an hot iron”, he seemed, in his last illness to acquire an awful *insensibility* to every thing of a religious nature; or at best, seemed most concerned, to keep out the intrusion of those visitors, and those reflections, which mostly press upon the sick and the needy at the approach of death. He therefore lingered out a dark and gloomy period of several months, in a sullen, determined opposition, to every religious thought or suggestion. The very *name* of Christ was dreadful to his ear: whether from fear, or from scorn, or from anguish, is not so certainly known. It is certain, he showed a continued and marked hostility to the Clerical character, and would not endure that any of them, under any pretext, should visit him. The Rev. Mr. Ketchum however, in the common garb of a citizen, succeeded to approach him, and to bring him

into some desultory conversation; but he had no sooner drawn towards the object of his visit, by indirectly naming the *name* of Jesus, than the enraged infidel, fired at the sound, and lost to all sense of decorum, actually drove him from his presence! He would not endure any expostulation. But, though dreadful was the *sound* of that name, whom he had pierced, yet he afterwards actually repeatedly exclaimed in his agonies of pain, in the presence of his physician **Doctor Manly**, **O, Lord help me, O Jesus help me!** Upon being questioned by the **Doctor**, as to his confidence in the succour of that name, he would make no reply. But being further urged, he said with a previous thoughtful pause: "**I have no wish to believe on that subject.**"*

It has been the opinion of those who had the best means of seeing the last days of this hoary incendiary, that it was his labour and aim to maintain to his last, the *appear-*

* **Doctor Manly**, has written a letter explanatory of his death. We are informed by him, that whenever he fell into paroxysms of pain, which were frequent before his death, he would cry out without intermission, **O Lord help me, O Jesus help me! God help me, Jesus Christ help me, &c.** His conduct was as singular as his conversation was equivocal. He would not be left alone night or day. He would actually scream and holloa if left alone but for one moment.

ance of firmness and undismay in his principles. This false and vainglorious pride, was natural to such an heart; and makes the opinion extremely probable. But the inquietude and uncertainty consequent to a mind so alienated from God, kept him awakened to continued fear, lest his courage, which was forced and fluctuating, might be overruled by his distrusting, though feeble conscience, if he once submitted to *hear* the arguments which a Christian could at *such a time* enforce. Besides he was too conscious of his blasphemy against Christ to even *hope* in his name. He had therefore no alternative but to *sustain* his character, or loose his wretched fame.

All concur in describing him as possessing the most peculiarly awful *visage* that ever saddened a dying bed. It was an *unique* face; possessing an assemblage of every vitious and dismal passion. It was indeed too terrific to suffer some who knew him, to repeat their visits.

As he would never tolerate any conversation respecting religion, so he died leaving no other evidence behind him, than his general aversion to Christ and his disciples. He has now gone to his reward, where the realities of eternity are made known to him.

[Those who are curious to learn more of Paine, may find enough in Cheetham's "life of Paine" lately published, to give them a complete disgust of his character. He was insincere as a politician, was too aspiring for names and *titles* to be a real Republican, and was an habitual drunkard and a most disgusting sloven. He was also *avaricious*, and base in the fulfilment of his *pecuniary* promises. In short, he was a compound of all those vices which are generated in the breast of every infidel who wantonly sets the laws of God at defiance.]

[*The names which follow, are such Unbelievers as reformed their Lives, and bore their testimony to the truth.*]

CHARLES GILDON,

Author of a book called the **Oracles of Reason**, was convinced of the fallacy of his own arguments against religion, and the danger of his situation, by reading Leslie's **Short Method with a Deist**. He afterwards wrote a defence of **Revealed Religion**, entitled the **Deist's Manual**, and died in the christian faith.

LORD LYTTLETON,

Author of the **History of Henry the Second**, and **Gilbert West**, had both imbibed the principles of unbelief, and had agreed to-

gether to write something in favour of infidelity. To do this more effectually, they judged it necessary to acquaint themselves pretty well with the Bible. By the perusal of that book, however, they were both convinced of their error : both became converts to the religion of Christ Jesus ; both took up their pens and wrote in favor of it : the former his **Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul** ; the latter, his **Observations on the resurrection of Christ** ; and both died in peace.

Johnson tells us, that, “ Lord Lyttleton, in the pride of juvenile confidence, with the help of corrupt conversation, entertained doubts of the truth of christianity ; but he thought afterwards it was no longer fit to doubt, or believe by chance, he therefore applied himself seriously to the great question. His studies being honest, ended in conviction. He found, that religion was true, and, what he had learned, he endeavoured to teach, by observations on the conversion of St. Paul ; a treatise to which infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer.”—Two days previous to his dissolution, this great and good man addressed his physician in these memorable words :—“ Doctor, you shall be my confessor. When I first set out in the world,

I had friends who endeavoured to shake my belief in the christian religion. I saw difficulties which staggered me, but I kept my mind open to conviction. The evidence and doctrines of christianity, studied with attention, made me a most firm and persuaded believer of the christian religion. I have made it the rule of my life, and—it is the ground of my future hopes.”

PRINGLE,

One of the first characters of the present age, though blessed with a religious education, contracted the principles of infidelity, when he travelled abroad. But as he scorned to be an implicit believer, he was equally averse from being an implicit unbeliever. He therefore set himself to examine the principles of the gospel of Christ, with all caution and seriousness. The result of his investigation was, a full conviction of the divine original and authority of the gospel. The evidence of revelation appeared to him to be solid and invincible; and the nature of it to be such as demanded his warmest acceptance.

SOAME JENYNS,

By some means had been warped aside into the paths of infidelity, and continued in this state of mind several years. Finding his spirit, however, not at rest, he was induced to examine the grounds upon which his unbelief was founded. He discovered his error; was led to believe in the Saviour of mankind; and wrote a small treatise in the defence of the gospel, entitled, a view of the internal evidences of christianity; a work worthy the perusal of every man, who wishes to understand the excellency of the religion which he professes.

OLIVER,

A famous physician, was a zealous unbeliever till within a short time of his death. Being convinced of his error, and the danger of his situation, he bewailed his past conduct with strong compunction of heart, and gave up his spirit at last, in confident expectation of mercy from God, through the merit of that Saviour, whom, for many years, he had ridiculed and opposed. "Oh," said he, "that I could undo the mischief that I have done! I was more ardent to poison people with the principles of irreligion and unbelief, than almost any christian can be to spread the doctrines of Christ."

GENERAL DYKERN

Received a mortal wound at the battle of Bergen, in Germany, A. D. 1759. He was of a noble family, and possessed equal abilities as a minister in the closet, and a general in the field, being favoured with a liberal education. Having imbibed the principles of infidelity, he continued a professed deist, till the time he received his fatal wound. During his illness, however, a great and effectual change was wrought upon his mind by the power of divine grace, and he died in the full assurance of faith, glorying in the salvation of Jesus, and wondering at the happy change which had taken place in his soul.

EARL OF ROCHESTER,

was a great scholar, a great poet, a great sinner, and a great penitent. His life was written by Burnet, and his funeral sermon was preached and published by Mr. Parsons. Dr. Johnson, speaking of Burnet's life of this nobleman, says, "The critic ought to read it for its elegance, the philosopher for its argument, and the saint for its piety."

His lordship, it appears, had advanced to an uncommon height of wickedness, having

been an advocate in the black cause of atheism, and an encomiast to Beelzebub. He had raked too in the very bottom of the jakes of debauchery, and had been a satyrist against religion itself. But when, like the prodigal in the gospel, he came to himself, his mind was filled with the most extreme horror, which forced sharp and bitter invectives from him against himself; terming himself the vilest wretch that the sun ever shone upon; wishing he had been a crawling leper in a ditch, a linkboy, or a beggar, or had lived in a dungeon, rather than offended God in the manner he had done.

Upon the first visit of Mr. Parsons to him, on May 26th, 1680, after a journey from the West, he found him labouring under great trouble of mind, and his conscience full of terror. The earl told him—“When on his journey, he had been arguing with greater vigour against God and religion, than ever he had done in his lifetime before, and that he had been resolved to run them down with all the argument and spite in the world; but like the great convert, Paul, he found it hard to kick against God.” At this time, however, his heart was so powerfully affected, that he argued as much for God and religion, as ever he had done against them.—He had such tre-

mendous apprehensions of the Divine Majesty, mingled with such delightful contemplations of his nature and perfections, and of the amiableness of religion, that he said, —“ I never was advanced thus far towards happiness in my life before; though upon the commission of some sins extraordinary, I have had some considerable checks and warnings from within; but still I struggled with them, and so wore them off again. One day, at an atheistical meeting in the house of a person of quality, I undertook to manage the cause, and was the principal disputant against God and religion; and for my performances received the applause of the whole company.—Upon this my mind was terribly struck, and I immediately replied thus to myself—“ Good God, that a man that walks upright, that sees the wonderful works of God, and has the use of his senses and reason, should use them to the defying of his Creator!—But though this was a good beginning towards my conversion, to find my conscience touched for my sins, yet it went off again: nay, all my life long, I had a secret value and reverence for an honest man, and loved morality in others. But I had formed an odd scheme of religion to myself, which would solve all that God or conscience might force upon

me; yet **I** was never reconciled to the business of christianity; nor had **I** that reverence for the gospel of Christ, which **I** ought to have had."

This state of mind continued till the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was read to him, together with some other parts of the sacred scriptures; when it pleased God to fill his mind with such peace and joy in believing, that it was remarkable to all about him, upon which he used to enlarge in a very familiar and affectionate manner, applying the whole to his own humiliation and encouragement.

"O blessed God, would he say, "can such a horrid creature as **I** am be accepted by thee, who have denied thy Being, and contemned thy power? Can there be mercy and pardon for me? Will God own such a wretch as **I**?"

In the middle of his sickness he said still farther:—"Shall the unspeakable joys of heaven be conferred on me? O mighty Saviour, never but through thine infinite love and satisfaction! O never but by the purchase of thy blood!"—adding—"that with all abhorrence he reflected upon his former life—that from his heart he repented of all that folly and madness of which he had been guilty."

He had a strong and growing esteem for the sacred scriptures, and evidently saw their divine fulness and excellency: "For, having spoken to his heart, he acknowledged, all the seeming absurdities and contradictions fancied by men of corrupt and reprobate judgments, were vanished; and the excellency and beauty of them appeared conspicuously, now that he was come to receive the truth in the love of it."

During his illness he had a hearty concern for the pious education of children, wishing "his son might never be a wit, one of those wretched creatures who pride themselves in abusing God and religion, denying his Being or his Providence; but that he might become an honest man; and of a truly religious character, which only could be the support and blessing of his family."

One of his companions coming to see him on his death-bed, he said to him:—"O remember that you contemn God no more. He is an avenging God, and will visit you for your sins; and will, I hope, in mercy touch your conscience, sooner or later, as he has done mine.—You and I have been friends and sinners together a great while, therefore I am the more free with you.—We have been all mistaken in our conceits and opinions; our persuasions have been

false and groundless ; therefore I pray God grant you repentance."

When he drew towards the last stage of his sickness, he said, "If God should spare me yet a little longer time here, I hope to bring glory to his name, proportionably to the dishonour I have done to him in my whole life ; and particularly by my endeavours to convince others, and to assure them of the danger of their condition, if they continued impenitent ; and to tell them how graciously God hath dealt with me."

And when he came within still nearer views of dissolution, about three or four days before it, he said,—“I shall now die : but, Oh ; what unspeakable glories do I see ! What joys, beyond thought or expression am I sensible of ! I am assured of God's mercy to me through Jesus Christ ! Oh ! how I long to die, and to be with my Saviour !”

For the admonition of others, and to undo as much as was in his power, the mischief of his former conduct, he subscribed the following recantation, and ordered it to be published after his death :

“For the benefit of all those, whom I may have drawn into sin by my example and encouragement, I leave to the world this my last declaration : which I deliver in the

presence of the great God, who knows the secrets of all hearts, and before whom I am now appearing to be judged; That from the bottom of my soul I detest and abhor the whole course of my former wicked life; that I think I can never sufficiently admire the goodness of God, who has given me a true sense of my pernicious opinions and vile practices, by which I have hitherto lived without hope, and without God in the world: have been an open enemy to Jesus Christ, doing the utmost despite to the holy Spirit of grace; and the greatest testimony of my charity to such, is to warn them, in the name of God, as they regard the welfare of their immortal souls, no more to deny his Being or his Providence, or despise his goodness; no more to make a mock of sin, or contemn the pure and excellent religion of my ever-blessed Redeemer, through whose merits alone, I, one of the greatest of sinners, do yet hope for mercy and forgiveness. Amen."

DUNCOMB COLCHESTER.

The case of Ducomb Colchester was somewhat like this of Rochester. He was a gentleman of excellent parts, a generous spirit, and undaunted courage. Having,

however, spent many years in sundry extravagances, he was at length, by a long and painful sickness, brought to a very serious sense of the excellency of religion, and of his own great sin and folly in the neglect and contempt of it. He accordingly, by way of making some small reparation for the mischief he had done by his wickedness, drew up an address to his friends and the public, somewhat like to the above of Rochester, signed by divers witnesses, and caused it to be read in two neighbouring churches, and spread abroad among all his friends and neighbours through the country, as extensively as he was able.

GEORGE VILLIERS,

Duke of Buckingham, was the richest man, and one of the greatest wits in the court of Charles II; and yet such were his vices and extravagances, that before he died, he was reduced to poverty and general contempt. In this situation, however, he seems to have been brought to a sense of his folly, and the danger of his condition, from the letter which he wrote to Dr. Barrow, of whom he had an high opinion, on his death bed; and which is worthy the attention of every man of pleasure and dissipation.

“ Dear Doctor,

I always looked upon you as a man of true virtue : and know you to be a person of sound judgment. For, however I may act in opposition to the principles of religion, or the dictates of reason, I can honestly assure you, I had always the highest veneration for both. The world and I may shake hands ; for I dare affirm, we are heartily weary of each other. O what a prodigal have I been of the most valuable of all possessions, time ! I have squandered it away, with a persuasion it was lasting ; and now, when a few days would be worth a hecatomb of worlds, I cannot flatter myself with a prospect of half a dozen hours. How despicable is that man who never prays to God, but in the time of his distress ! In what manner can he supplicate that omnipotent Being in his affliction, with reverence, whom in the tide of his prosperity, he never remembered with dread ? Do not brand me with infidelity, when I tell you, I am almost ashamed to offer up my petitions to the throne of grace ; or of imploring that divine mercy in the next world, which I have so scandalously abused in this. Shall ingratitude to man be looked on as the blackest of crimes, and not ingratitude to God ? Shall an insult offered

to the king be looked on in the most offensive light; and yet no notice taken when the King of kings is treated with indignity and disrespect? The companions of my former libertinism would scarce believe their eyes, were you to show them this epistle. They would laugh at me as a dreaming enthusiast, or pity me as a timorous wretch, who was shocked at the appearance of futurity. They are more entitled to my pity than my resentment. A future state may very well strike terror into any man who has not acted well in this life: and he must have an uncommon share of courage indeed, who does not shrink at the presence of his God. You see the apprehensions of death, will soon bring the most profligate to a proper use of their understanding. I am haunted by remorse, despised by my acquaintance, and, I fear, forsaken by my God. There is nothing so dangerous, as extraordinary abilities. I cannot be accused of vanity now, by being sensible that I was once possessed of uncommon qualifications; as I sincerely regret that I ever was blest with any at all. My rank in life still made these accomplishments more conspicuous; and, fascinated with the general applause which they procured, I never considered about the

proper means by which they should be displayed. Hence, to purchase a smile from a blockhead whom I despised, I have frequently treated the virtuous with disrespect; and sported with the holy name of heaven, to obtain a laugh from a parcel of fools, who were entitled to nothing but my contempt. Men of wit look on themselves as discharged from the duties of religion; and confine the doctrines of the Gospel to people of meaner understandings; and look on that man to be of narrow genius who studies to be good. What a pity that the holy writings are not made the criterion of true judgment!—Favour me with a visit as soon as possible. Writing to you gives me some ease. I am of opinion this is the last visit I shall ever solicit from you. My distemper is powerful. Come and pray for the departing spirit of the unhappy

BUCKINGHAM.”

DILLON,

Earl of Roscommon, contemporary with Buckingham, was also a man of considerable learning and abilities, but a man of dissipation and licentious principles. He addicted himself immoderately to gaming, by which he was engaged in frequent quar-

rels and brought into no little distress. But, however we may be disposed to play the devil when we are in no apparent danger, there is a time coming, when we shall see all things in a more serious point of view. Accordingly, we are told, at the moment this merry nobleman expired, he was constrained to utter, with an energy of voice that expressed the most ardent devotion—

“ My God, my Father, and my Friend,
Do not forsake me in the end.”

A NOBLEMAN.

We have also an uncommon alarm given us in a letter from another nobleman on his death-bed, to an intimate companion ; which no man can seriously read, and not be deeply affected.

“ *Dear Sir,*

“ Before you receive this, my final state will be determined by the judge of all the earth. In a few days at most, perhaps in a few hours, the inevitable sentence will be passed, that shall raise me to the heights of happiness, or sink me to the depths of misery. While you read these lines, I shall be either groaning under the agonies of

absolute despair, or triumphing in fullness of joy.

It is impossible for me to express the present disposition of my soul—the vast uncertainty I am struggling with! No words can paint the force and vivacity of my apprehensions. Every doubt wears the face of horror, and would perfectly overwhelm me, but for some faint beams of hope, which dart across the tremendous gloom! What tongue can utter the anguish of a soul suspended between the extremes of infinite joy, and eternal misery? I am throwing my last stake for eternity, and tremble and shudder for the important event.

Good God! how have I employed myself! what enchantment hath held me? In what delirium hath my life been past? What have I been doing, while the sun in its race, and the stars in their courses, have lent their beams, perhaps, only to light me to perdition!

I never awakened till now. I have but just commenced the dignity of a rational being. Till this instant I had a wrong apprehension of every thing in nature. I have pursued shadows, and entertained myself with dreams. I have been treasuring up dust, and sporting myself with the

wind. I look back on my past life, and but for some memorials of guilt and infamy, it is all a blank—a perfect vacancy! I might have grazed with the beasts of the field, or sung with the winged inhabitants in the woods to much better purpose, than any for which I have lived. And oh! but for some faint hope, a thousand times more blessed had I been, to have slept with the clods of the valley, and never heard the Almighty's fiat, nor waked into life at his command!

I never had a just apprehension of the solemnity of the part I am to act till now. I have often met death insulting on the hostile plain, and, with a stupid boast, defied his terrors: with a courage as brutal as that of the warlike horse, I have rushed into the field of battle, laughed at the glittering spear, and rejoiced at the sound of the trumpet; nor had a thought of any state beyond the grave, nor the great tribunal to which I must have been summoned;

“Where all my secret guilt had been reveal'd,
Nor the minutest circumstance conceal'd.”

It is this which arms death with all its terrors; else I could still mock at fear, and smile in the face of the gloomy monarch. It is not giving up my breath; it is not being

forever insensible, that is the thought at which I shrink : it is the terrible hereafter, the something beyond the grave at which I recoil. Those great realities, which, in the hours of mirth and vanity, I have treated as phantoms, as the idle dreams of superstitious beings ; these start forth, and dare me now in their most terrible demonstration. My awakened conscience feels something of that eternal vengeance I have often defied.

To what heights of madness is it possible for human nature to reach ? What extravagance is it to jest with death ! to laugh at damnation ! to sport with eternal chains, and recreate a jovial fancy with the scenes of infernal misery !

Were there no impiety in this kind of mirth, it would be as ill-bred as to entertain a dying friend with the sight of a harlequin, or the rehearsal of a farce. Every thing in nature seems to reproach this levity in human creatures. The whole creation, man excepted, is serious : man, who has the highest reason to be so, while his affairs of infinite consequence are depending on this short uncertain duration. A condemned wretch may with as good a grace go dancing to his execution, as the greatest part of mankind go on with such a thoughtless gaiety to their grave.

Oh! with what horror do I recall those hours of vanity which we have wasted together! Return, ye lost neglected moments! How should I prize you above the Eastern treasures! Let me dwell with hermits; let me rest on the cold earth; let me converse in cottages; may I but once more stand a candidate for an immortal crown, and have my probation for celestial happiness.

Ye vain grandeurs of a court! Ye sounding titles, and perishing riches! what do ye now signify! what consolation, what relief can ye give me? I have a splendid passage to the grave; I die in state, and languish under a gilded canopy; I am expiring on soft and downy pillows, and am respectfully attended by my servants and physicians: my dependents sigh, my sisters weep, my father bends beneath a load of years and grief; my lovely wife pale and silent, conceals her inward anguish; my friend, who was as my own soul, suppresses his sighs, and leaves me to his secret grief. But, oh! who of these will answer my summons at the high tribunal? Who of them will bail me from the arrests of death? Who will descend into the dark prison of the grave for me?

Here they all leave me, after having paid a few idle ceremonies to the breathless clay

which perhaps may lie reposed in state, while my soul, my only conscious part, may stand trembling before my judge.

My afflicted friends, it is very probable, with great solemnity will lay the senseless corpse in a stately monument, inscribed with,

Here lies the Great ———

But could the pale carcass speak, it would soon reply:—

False marble, where?

Nothing but poor sordid dust lies here!

While some flattering panegyric is pronounced at my interment, I may perhaps be hearing my just condemnation at a superior tribunal; where an unerring verdict may sentence me to everlasting infamy. But I cast myself on his absolute mercy, through the infinite merits of the Redeemer of lost mankind. Adieu, till we meet in the world of spirits."

LACKINGTON.

This man, celebrated as the greatest bookseller in the world, as well as for the many and large editions of his own "Memoirs," written generally to bring Religion, particularly the more spiritual part of it, into ridicule and disrepute, furnishes us with a very remarkable exhibition of the power of Divine Grace. These "Memoirs," and his subsequent "Confessions" of remorse and repentance, display in a very conspicuous manner, *why* and *how*, men can contemn the truth: and how confused and ashamed they may be by Grace, at their supposed best and most extolled sinful performances.

From a very humble origin, he rose through the assistance of religious friends, to an elevation seldom equalled in men of his low sphere and scanty education. Being of an acute and enquiring mind, he read with eager avidity an astonishing variety of books, which by a very tenacious memory, soon gave him a stock of knowledge, which because not well chosen, nor received with becoming humility, puffed up his aspiring vanity, till like a full blown bladder it burst in infidelity. He had in humbler life, when he needed the consolations of

the Spirit, been an engaged and sincere christian ; but from the causes just mentioned, and an inattention to the seductions which a flattering world can use, he lost not only his sense of Religion, but even became so *forgetful*, perverted, and base, as to write his “memoirs” on purpose to vilify and disparage that same religion he had professed and enjoyed. So true it is, as he himself afterwards confessed, that men *can* forget that they “were purged from their sins,” and *can* like Peter, even curse and swear, that “they know not the man.” In doing this, he hoped to have effected much by slandering the character of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, his former benefactor ; so ungrateful is infidelity ! But in process of time, Mr. Wesley died, and his “life and death” being published, Mr. Lackington was induced to look into it, that he might ascertain how he died. In reading this Book, behold how strange are the ways of Providence ! he felt himself alternately “delighted, confounded, instructed and troubled.” That divine power (says he, in his “confessions,”) which has been felt by thousands under the preaching of Mr. Wesley and his preachers, *again* humbled me in the dust. I sunk down at the feet of Christ and washed them with my *tears*.

Sorrow, joy and love, were sweetly mingled together in my soul. "I was now *convinced* that the pardoning love of God which was *first manifested* to my soul, was a divine reality, and not the effect of a heated imagination."

From that time as the reading world all knows, he has been doing his utmost, by the publication of **Religious tracts** and the spread of his recantations, to atone for his wretched endeavours to vilify the power and efficacy of the most **Holy Scriptures**.

Every infidel ought to read **Lackington's "Confessions."** They are a mirror, in which they may often see themselves reflected; particularly if they have previously read his conceited and reproachful "memoirs."

CONCLUSION.

THE patient reader, who has accompanied us to a close, must now determine for himself, whether the **Religion of Jesus**, be a divine reality, or a base imposition upon the credulity of mankind.

The comparison of the lives and deaths of sinners and of saints, sufficiently *demonstrate* the *superior* degree of *happiness* enjoyed by the christian. If it be a delusion,

facts still declare, that no such measure of joy and transport encircle the languishing bed of the infidel. Even that elegant genius, the aspiring, disappointed, young Chatterton, (who impiously terminated his own existence) could not forbear, as a token of his *best* wishes to a friend, to wish him "all the consolations which the christian Religion affords to those who can believe it, but of which (alluding to his own supposed superior sagacity) *I* can have none."

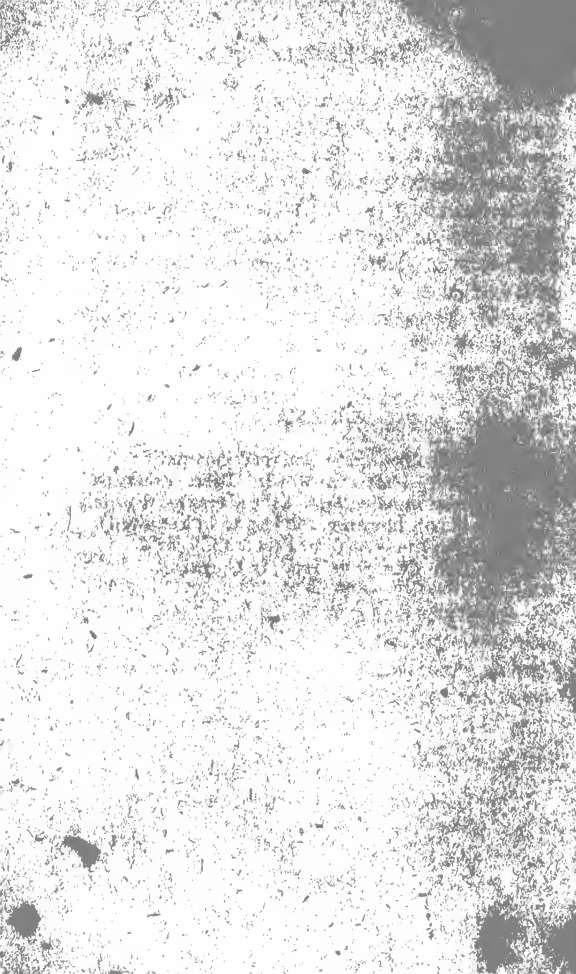
Those who are still incredulous, we awfully fear, will discover their error when it is forever too late to remedy it. The error of such an one's *judgment* will not serve his defence; it will be proved to be nothing short of the *depravity* of his *heart*. Those who remain firm and unshaken in their infidelity, under the still small voice of peaceful reason and the ordinary teachings of grace, must be considered as hopeless, unless awakened from their dream of damning illusion, by the tremendous thunders of Mount Sinai!

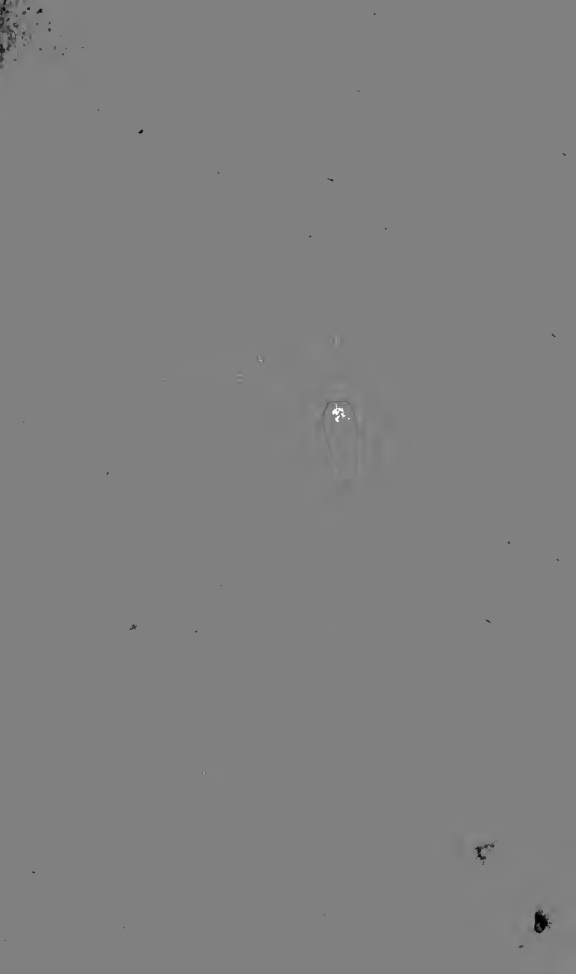
"Since then we die but once, and after death
Th' immortal spirit goes
To endless joys, or everlasting woes;
Wise is the man, who labours to secure
The mighty and important stake."

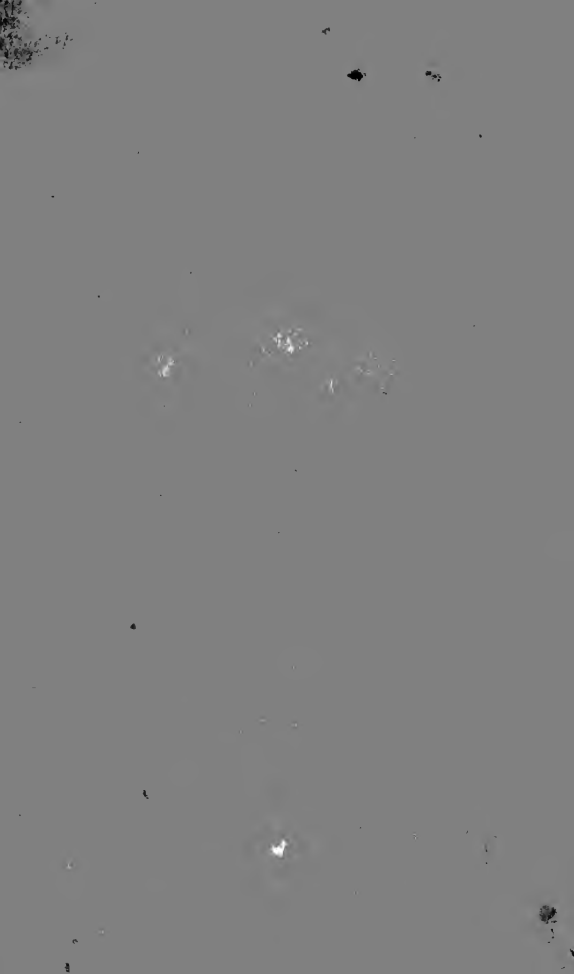
FINIS.

ERRATA.

- page 65,—1st line—carnation read incarnation.
„ 80, 13th „, after the words “Bible revelation”
read in *parentheses*, (the *necessity* for which
is not, however, the less to be required).
„ 100, 15th line—read, to Feel *is* to be fir'd.
„ 138, 17th do.—*from*, read, *on* Cornelius.











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