



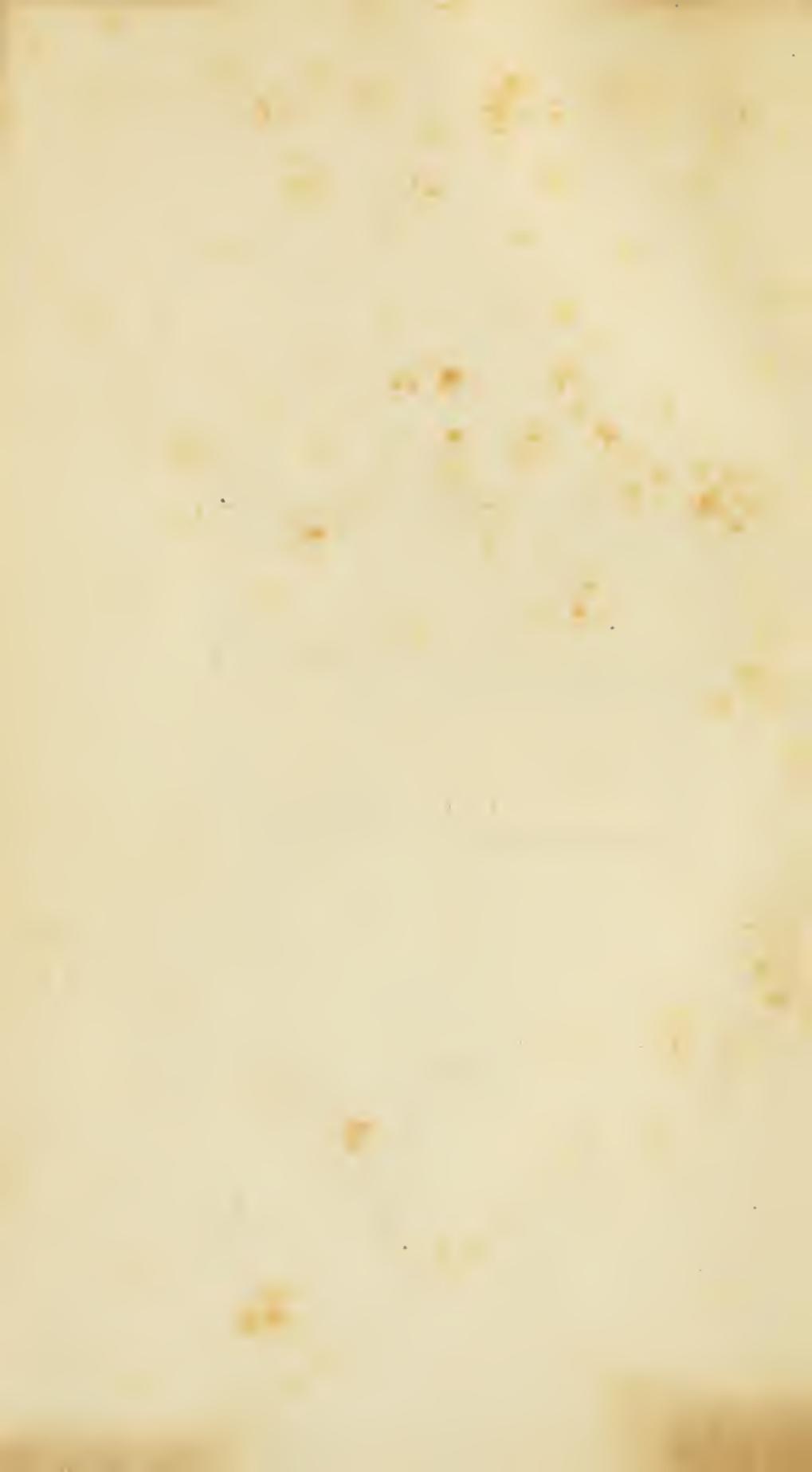
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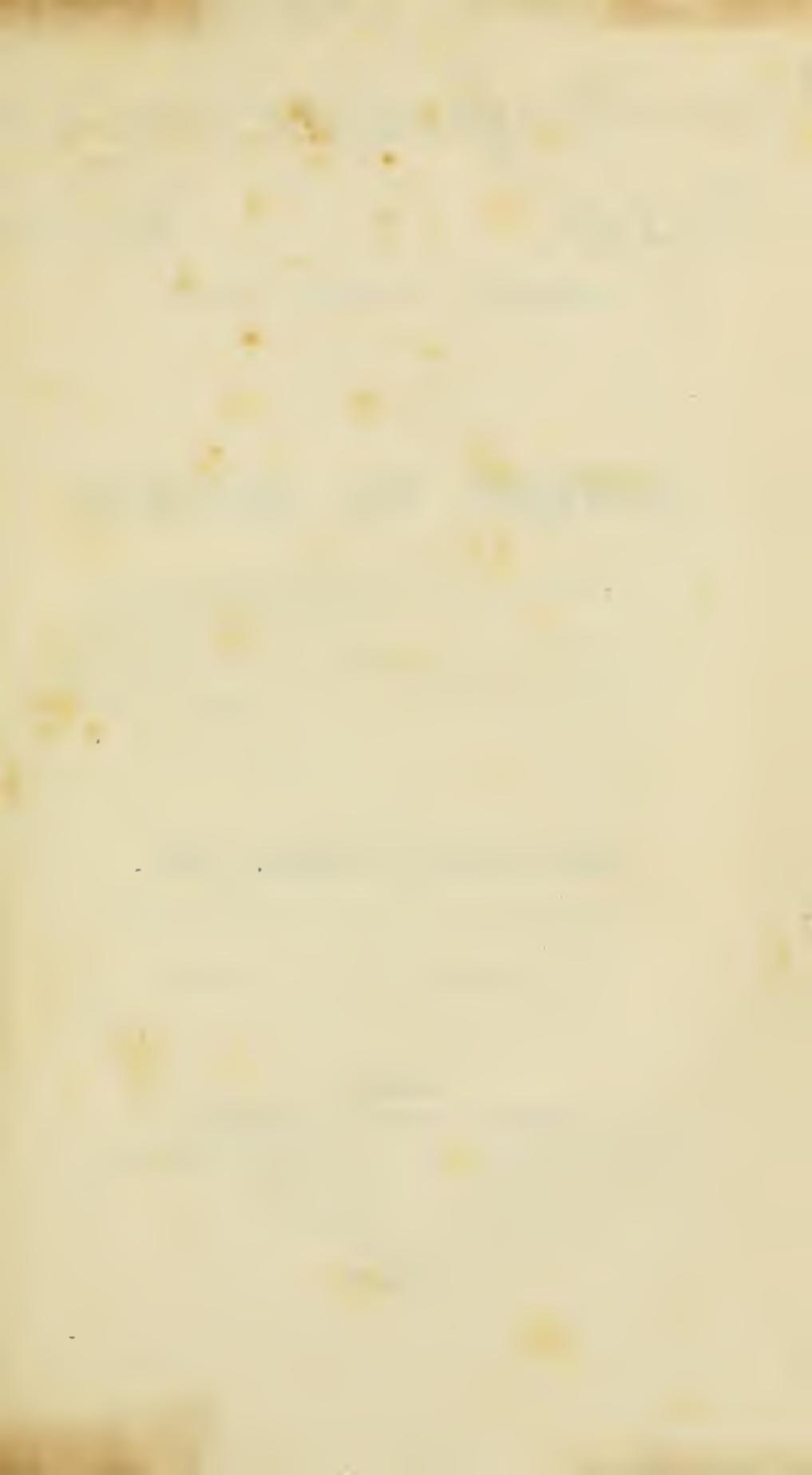
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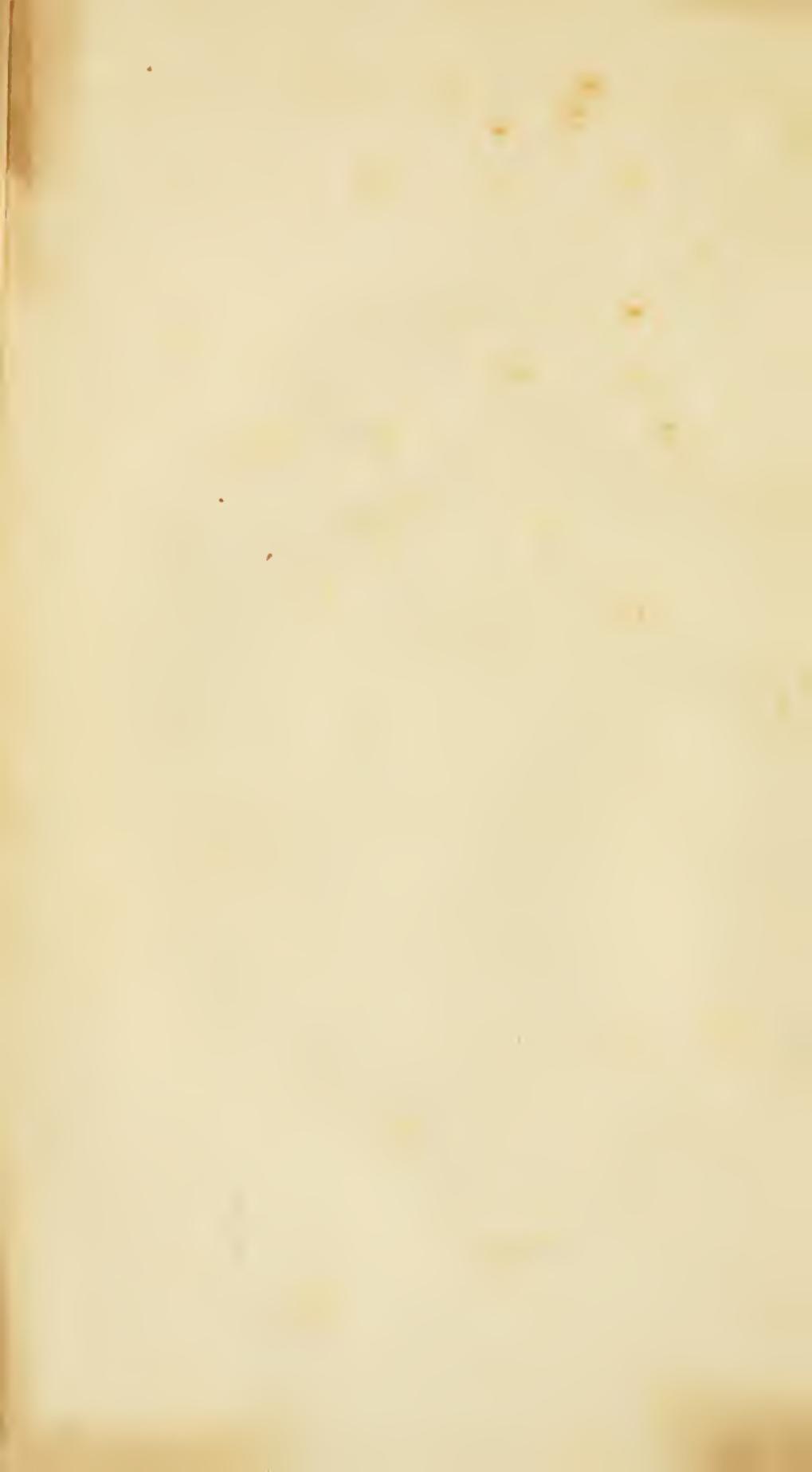
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George G. & James Benoist
New York SERMONS April 30th
Luke: ON 18 Ch. 2,

SEVERAL IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

CONNECTED WITH THE

GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of ME." JOHN. v. 39.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 TIM. iii. 16.

"PROVE ALL THINGS; hold fast that which is good." 1 THESS. v. 21.

BY THE

REV. ROBERT LOVETT, A.B.,

MINISTER OF MARBOUEF CHAPEL, 78, RUE DE CHAILLOT, PARIS;

AND

CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ROSSE.

PARIS,

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1832.



CHAPEL
OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY,

HOTEL MARBŒUF,

RUE DE CHAILLOT, 78, PARIS.

Divine Service on Sundays at Eleven o'clock, in the Forenoon; and at Three, in the Afternoon.

The Lord's Supper is administered on the first Sunday of each month — on Easter day, and Christmas day.

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

V. E. m'a fait l'honneur de m'annoncer qu'elle désirait obtenir du Gouvernement de S. M. la faculté de désigner, comme Chapelle de l'Ambassade de S. M. Britannique, un local qu'elle aurait choisi, et qui serait assez vaste pour que les personnes qui professent la religion anglicane puissent y assister au Service Divin. Elle m'a fait connaître verbalement que l'Hôtel Marbœuf, acquis par un sujet de S. M. Britannique, devait être destiné à cet usage, auquel ne suffisait pas la Chapelle placée dans l'hôtel de son Ambassade.

Je me suis empressé de consulter le Ministre de l'Intérieur sur l'objet de votre demande; et, d'après sa réponse, je puis annoncer à V. E. que le Gouvernement du Roi consent volontiers à ce que l'Hôtel de Marbœuf soit affecté à l'usage qu'elle lui destine, et considéré comme CHAPELLE DE L'AMBASSADE D'ANGLETERRE; le tout en réciprocité de ce qui a lieu à Londres pour la Chapelle de l'Ambassade du Roi.

SIGNÉ J. DE VILLEÈLE.

S. E.

Sir Charles STUART,
etc. , etc. , etc.

TO

THE CONGREGATION

OF

MARBŒUF CHAPEL,

THESE SERMONS,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

AND HAVING NO OTHER PRETENSION THAN AS THEY SHALL

BE FOUND TO AGREE WITH THE

ORACLES OF GOD,

ARE INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE MINISTER,

ROBERT LOVETT.





PREFACE.

THE subjects upon which these Sermons are written are the most momentous that can engage the attention of man. The positive denial of them by some—and these not a few—and the awful and as general perversion of them by others, who yet profess to be Christians, are imperative calls upon those who occupy the high station of Ministers of the Gospel, to “take unto them the whole armour of God,” “earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the Saints” (Jude, verse 3). It is deeply to be lamented, although not matter of surprise, that any men, professing to be “Masters in Israel,” Teachers of “the common Salvation,” should be ignorant of, or opposed to the Doctrines enforced in the following pages—that they who stand up as bearers of Jehovah’s message

should not know what are “the first principles of the oracles of God”—that, instead of preaching the “unsearchable riches of Christ,” and declaring “the way of salvation,” they should “desire to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm” (1 Tim. i. 7). It is also much to be deplored, that men should be so indifferent to their own best interests as to adopt the sentiments of their Ministers, or of the Denomination with which they find themselves connected, without comparing, with a scrutiny the most rigid, and investigation the most patient, whatever is advanced by the one or maintained by the other, with the Scriptures of God. To this indifference we may trace the gross ignorance that prevails among Protestants generally, upon those glorious truths in the knowledge of which eternal life is had, and in the conscientious and intelligent abiding in which victory over “the desires of the flesh and of the mind” is achieved ; truths—to establish which, “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” ; truths—which, embodied in the articles of the Church of England, have ever been her only glory, her only safeguard.

Impressed with the responsibility which attaches to him to whom the mind of Christ has been made known

by the teaching of the Eternal Spirit, the Author is desirous, so far as in him lies, to record and to disseminate, so plainly and intelligibly “that he may run that readeth,” “the Testimony which God hath given of his Son.”

The Lord has not left Himself without witness to the power of the truth set forth in these Sermons. Many precious instances have occurred in Marbœuf Chapel, during the last year, which demonstrate that, however “the preaching of the Cross is, to them that perish, foolishness,” it is now, as it ever has been, and as it will be unto the end, “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. i. 16).



MAN'S HELPLESSNESS.





MAN'S HELPLESSNESS.

"Without me, ye can do nothing."

JOHN, xv. 5.

HOWEVER repugnant to the taste of the world the doctrine of man's native helplessness be, it is a truth, not merely derived by inference from certain doctrines, clearly and unequivocally laid down in the Sacred Volume, but is one that is fully, and frequently, and unambiguously defined: and were there no other passage upon which to found it, the words that I have read from the 15th of John are sufficiently explicit for its establishment. The want of relish for a statement purporting to proceed from the Spirit of God—the want

of disposition towards it, becomes no argument against the truth thereof, nor does it make the detail of the statement in its several particulars, unnecessary. On the contrary, this very indisposition to what comes from God—this very disrelish to what His Spirit affirms, corroborates the doctrine inculcated in this passage ; affords a most powerful argument for its support ; and proves the necessity of its being peculiarly insisted on. It is useful to enter into the *particulars* of this native helplessness of man, because we find many, who, while they admit a general statement of the subject, recoil with undisguised horror and aversion from the details which such a statement logically includes. It is useful to bring them before the view of *the unconverted*, because, by a clear and scriptural exhibition of them, such persons may perceive how erroneously they proceed, and with what little sanction from the Scriptures, in supposing themselves capable of doing what is plainly the expression of spiritual life ; thus deluding themselves with the notion that they are alive from the dead, and not so “ poor, and miserable, and wretched,

and blind, and naked," as the Word of God describes them to be (Rev. iii. 17). It is useful to bring them before *the converted*, because, when rightly apprehended, they serve to keep them abiding in Christ, and to preserve them from trusting in an arm of flesh. Men are perpetually depending in a greater or less degree, upon their own strength and attainments, and the children of God, even as others, are liable in this respect to be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; but the remembrance of this truth, in connexion with the Redeemer's fulness, is calculated to preserve them from "making shipwreck concerning the faith" (1 Tim. i. 19); and the consciousness of Jesus' all-sufficiency, in connexion with man's utter inability to help or benefit himself in things pertaining unto God, is calculated to arouse the disciples of the Lord to a more urgent and affectionate display of the Gospel of His grace; and to a more zealous and unwearied pressing of its high authority upon the consideration of their fellow-sinners, since Christ is therein revealed as doing, in the sinner's room and on his be-

half, that which he can never do himself, for the reconcilement of his soul with God.

My design at present is, to point out some of those particulars which make up the idea of man's spiritual helplessness. I shall first state what the unconverted man can *not* do—and next, I shall shew wherein the spiritual privileges of the regenerate consist, I shall state what the children of God *can* do.

But, previously to our proceeding to an enumeration of the several topics contained under those heads, it may be necessary to enquire, what is meant by being without Christ, and by having Christ: and I would here remind my own soul, and the souls of those whom I address, that without Christ standing with the preacher, and teaching him, and strengthening him, what he preacheth cannot be fully known (2 Tim. iv. 17); and I would, under this persuasion, look up myself, and beg those who have access to the throne of grace, to look up to Him who sitteth thereon, both for me and for themselves, that he may be pleased to vouchsafe a copious effusion of the Spirit of Truth, that our considera-

tion of these subjects may be “for the better, and not for the worse” (1 Cor. xi. 17).

We learn what it is to be without Christ, by attending to what Paul says concerning the state of the Ephesians in the sight of God, before the Gospel came to them, “preaching peace by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians, ii. 11, 12); “Wherefore remember, that ye being in times past Gentiles in the flesh—that at that time ye were *without Christ*, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world”—Although they were obviously involved in guilt, their own consciences testifying against them, by their having recourse to propitiatory sacrifices, yet were they without a Saviour—they had no “Days-man” (Job, ix. 33) between God and their souls—no one upon whom they might roll the burden of their iniquities, and in whose Almightiness to save they might take refuge. They were not reckoned among the subjects of Jehovah, but were servants of the “god of this world”—they had no Divine Revelation to guide them into

the way of peace—they had no hope of eternal life ; and although they had what they “ called gods, many, and lords, many,” (1 Cor. viii. 5) yet being in ignorance of Jehovah’s real character as declared by His Son, with all their devotion and religious zeal they were in His sight “ Atheists” (*Aθεοι*) in the world.

The beloved disciple John, in his first Epistle, informs us what is meant by having Christ, and how the union takes place between him and his people. “ This,” saith he (1 John, iii, 23, 24), “is God’s commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as He (Jesus) gave us commandment, and he that keepeth his commandments” (those he had just specified, viz.: —*believing* on the Lord Jesus, and *loving* those that bear his image; he who doeth so), “dwelleth in Him, and He in him.” Again (chapter iv. 14, 15), “ and we have seen, and do testify, “ that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world :” not to be the Saviour of the Jews only (the blessings He communicates not being confined to that nation, as they vainly imagined that the Divine

favour extended not beyond them); but the Saviour of sinners of all nations, languages, and kindreds, and people (Salvation, by the command of Jesus, being now to be proclaimed to all the ends of the earth, no distinction of nation, or family, or condition, or circumstance whatsoever, excluding any from its beneficent announcement): the Apostle proceeds—“ whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God *dwellleth in Him*, and he in God.” Again (chapter v. 12), “ He that *hath* the Son, hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.”— He that hath the persuasion that Jesus is the Holy One of God, and that he *finished* the work which the Father had given him to do, hath life, spiritual life—is made “ a partaker of the Divine nature”—is capable of putting forth into act the spiritual principle within him; but he who does not know and intelligently believe the dignity of Jesus’ person, together with the nature and object of his work, has not spiritual life—is dead in trespasses and sins”—has no union with Christ—is destitute of all spiritual energy, and cannot perform any of the

acts which evidence and express the possession of Divine life within.

This subject is further illustrated in the 15th chapter of John. The Lord is addressing his Apostles, who were “Jews by nature,” and in reference to a figure frequently used in the Old Testament, with which they were familiar, under which the Church is represented, declares, “I am the true vine.” He was “the vine which the Lord brought out of Egypt,” which, “when He cast out the heathen, He planted.” He was the “choice vine” that Jehovah planted in his vineyard of which the Prophet speaks (Isaiah v) — the Jewish people were the vineyard — Jesus was the vine. It was reasonable to expect that where this vine was planted, good fruit should be found; but when Jehovah, “the Husbandman,” looked for grapes, behold the vineyard rendered nothing but wild grapes, “he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, and behold a cry.” The doom of the vineyard is in this prophecy foretold, and *in reference to that doom, to the casting off of the JEWISH BRANCH of his Church* (and this only for a sea-

son), our Lord says, “every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away ;” and in allusion to the persecution His New Testament Church, and particularly His Apostles, should experience, and the difficulties they would have to encounter, He graciously forewarns them of the merciful design of the Father in ordaining them, viz: that they should be increasingly fruitful. Judas was at this time cut off from their society ; he had left them as soon as the Lord said, “that thou doest, do quickly,” and he pronounces *of the rest*, that they were “clean, by means of the word which he had spoken unto them.” They believed his word, and through the persuasion of their new mind, they were cleansed from all sin : and it was just because Israel had not given credit to His Word, as declared by Himself and by His Prophets, that they were doomed to be rooted up and cast out, as an unfruitful, unprofitable branch, and given over to the anguish of rejection. The source of his people’s fruitfulness is illustrated, and the manner by which their fruitfulness should be maintained, is described by the fruitfulness of the branch in conse-

quence of its union with the parent stock. It is evident, that the branch owes its verdure and its fruit, not to any thing in itself—for separated from the vine it would wither and die—but to the fruitfulness of the stock upon which it grows; and he applies the figure, “I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth”—not fruit only, but “*much* fruit, for without me ye can do nothing.” From these Scriptures it is evident, that the ability to do any spiritual service is entirely owing to being united with Christ; that where this union exists not, spiritual service cannot be rendered, nor can spiritual blessings be enjoyed; that the union is commenced and maintained by receiving and retaining “the record which God hath given of his Son;” and that whoever possesses the record in demonstration of the Spirit, has life, and shews it; and whoever understands it not, and does not consequently possess it; has no life of God, and is incapable of doing that which manifests its presence in the soul.

Let us now proceed to point out some of

the particulars wherein man's natural helplessness consists ;

And I observe, in the first place, that *he cannot without Christ believe the Gospel.*

No unregenerate man can, by any exercise of his intellectual energies, by any force of argument, by any vigour of his mind, persuade himself that the Gospel is the truth of God. True, he may have an *opinion* upon that, as upon any other subject ; true, he may arrive at a moral certainty respecting the truth of matters of mere history, unconnected with doctrine, contained in the Word of God ; but of the truth of the Gospel message, he must be ignorant, and reject it as untrue, unless he be taught its real meaning, and convinced of its certainty by demonstration of the Spirit of Christ. Does this statement sound in the ears of any as harsh and uncharitable, and do such set themselves with stubborn severity to close their hearts against it ? My dear friends, permit me to beseech your attention ; the subject is worthy of all you can bestow upon it ; if it be not clearly proved from the Word of

God, then, and not till then, may you legitimately disregard it.

The unregenerate man cannot, by any energy of his own, nor by any aid from others, persuade himself that the Gospel, as preached by the Apostles of the Lord is true ; nor can he persuade himself respecting the truth of any common report ; in every case, whether the subject be human or divine, the mind is satisfied by evidence ; and where evidence is ample and convincing, faith cannot be withheld. In this case, the mind is persuaded by evidence of the Spirit, as it is written (1 John, v. 6), “the Spirit beareth witness ;” and the belief of the Church at Corinth is said to have arisen from “demonstration of the Spirit.” A man may indeed, by the examination of its internal and external evidence, be satisfied as to the genuineness, and authenticity, and inspiration of the Scriptures—he may be able to defend the Word of God from the attacks of Socinians and other Infidels ; and from the treacherous, and unhallowed insinuations of the Romanist—but a higher evidence is required for

the illumination and satisfaction of his mind respecting the import and value of the Gospel. Mere *reading* of the Word of God will never effect it—mere *reasoning* upon the Word will never do it—mere *preaching* will never accomplish it—else had the Lord's Ministry been more efficient—else had the Lord's Ambassadors been more successful—else had it never been stated, when recording the result of their preaching upon a certain occasion, that “as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed” (Acts, xiii. 4, 8); nor again had it been written “unto you it is *given* (*εχαρισθη*) on behalf of Christ, not only to *believe* on him, but also to suffer for his sake” (Phil. i. 29).

But with the secret purposes of Jehovah we have not here to do. Who they are whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, and whose are not, is not declared to us. The ministry of the Apostles, who authoritatively declared the Lord's message to sinners, is to be our guide as to what we must deliver, and the wretchedness of our race, supplies us with ample materials to work upon. Independently then of the hidden designs of God—designs

wisely hidden from man—we are to deal with men as rational creatures : independently of the primary source of their apostacy, we are to persuade them as estranged from God ; we are to “set forth Jesus Christ evidently crucified before them” (Gal. iii. 1); we are to bring forward the truth as testified by those “whose eyes saw, and ears heard, and hands handled, of the Word of Life” (1 John, i. 1); but nevertheless, Paul might preach, and often did preach in vain ; Apollos might, and doubtless did water in vain ; God alone gives the increase (1 Cor. iii. 6) : without Christ, neither can Apostles or any other order of Disciples testify to any saving effect, nor can their auditors be profited. Does not experience daily furnish us with a most melancholy, yet convincing and satisfactory comment upon the Scripture statement connected with this subject. Have the wise, and the learned, and the men of intellectual habits been invariably enabled, by the efforts of their genius to persuade their minds respecting *the truth*, that the Son of God, having become man, “by the sacrifice of Himself, hath put away sin ?” (Heb.

ix. 26). No—but we find the wise—such of them as are untaught by the Spirit of God—not only among the several denominations of Infidels, but among the professors of Orthodoxy, rejecting the simple testimony of God—closing their eyes against the glory of the Gospel—discovering the darkness of their understanding, and the blindness of their mind, and manifesting their native enmity against God by unbelief.

It may be asked, whence arises this incapacity to believe? Now, without adverting to the stability and certainty of Jehovah's purposes, which, as respects individuals, is confined to his own eternal mind—without insisting on the Scriptural axiom—“All whom the Father hath given me shall come to me” (John, vi. 37): or the promise—“All thy children shall be taught of the Lord” (Isai. liv. 13); without urging the statement—“my sheep hear my voice” (John, x. 27); without alluding moreover to the alienation of mind derived by inheritance from Adam; we shall find an answer to this enquiry, such as comes under our immediate cognizance, and we can assign from

the word of God a moral reason for this disrelish toward the truth, and this inability to believe it—and this is all that is necessary in reasoning on the subject. Our Lord, indeed, addressing the obstinate Jews, accounts for their unbelief, by referring to the secret of the everlasting covenant—“Ye believe not, *because ye are not of my sheep*” (John, x. 26). And again, “No man *can* come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him” (John, vi. 44). But, upon another occasion, he addresses their experience, and assigns the moral cause of their incredulity, declaring, “ye *will* not come unto me that ye might have life” (John, v. 40). Yes, friends, when stating man’s natural inability, let it be well understood, that it is not because he wants a moral power, but a will, that he discredits the Gospel ; it is just because there is a natural disinclination towards what it states, from its opposition to the prejudices and the passions of the mind, that it is rejected. “Men love darkness rather than light”—why ? “because their deeds are evil” (John, iii. 19). Would the objector to the truth, the rejector of the

Gospel be candid, (and there is a time coming, when candour will form a feature in every man's character) he would admit that there is a shrinking of his soul from the Testimony of God, because it will not suffer him to make the least addition to the work of Christ, in order to his acceptance with God ; because it puts him on a level with the most wretched outcast of society, in the matter of justification ; and leaves the amiable, and the religious, nothing more to boast of for the purpose of salvation, than the most profligate and profane. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. ii. 14).

One will say, “admit this particular — yet a man *can* repent, and thus qualify himself for the impartation of faith”. But the next link in the chain of subjects which I am desirous to bring before you, denies this position, and the Scriptures teach us, that

An unregenerate man cannot, without Christ, repent.

True, such a person may reform; he may abandon that which is disgraceful in the eyes of the world, and injurious to his own character, or property, or health—the profligate, by the mere exercise of his judgment may be satisfied of the detriment which his evil habits entail, and magnanimously determine to forsake them, and be successful. The outward expression of ungodliness may be restrained or altered, but the state of mind as it respects God and his revealed will, is unalterable by any energy of the creature. Now let me remark that Repentance, in the book of God, has reference to *the state of the mind*, and simply means the change which is produced upon it, by the persuasion of the Gospel. If I were to ask the question of many, (might I not say, of most?) who profess the religion of the New Testament, and to record their answer as to the import of repentance, would it not be defined as “a sorrowing for sin”, a “hatred of sin”, and “a resolution to forsake sin”? and were I to be guided by the word of truth, and to pass a judgment upon such a definition, it would be *most solemnly to deny*

that repentance (*μετανοία*) *means any such thing.*

In the Bible, this term is used to mark that *change of mind* which takes place as soon as the things concerning the finished work of Jehovah Jesus, are believed to be true. It is not *prior* to believing the Gospel, nor is it in any way *preparatory* thereto—it is not a state or habit of mind unto which the sinner must attain as a *qualification* for believing the glad tidings; but it is that astonishing revolution in his estimate of God—of sin—of the source of real felicity—of this world—and of the world to come, which arises from an intelligent perception of the truth that *Christ died for the ungodly* (Rom. v. 6.)

Accordingly we find our Lord, in His commission to the Apostles to bear witness to all things written concerning his sufferings and resurrection, commanding that “repentance and remission of sins should be preached *in His name*” (Luke xxiv. 47.). Not repentance, as a doctrine distinct from, and independent of the remission of sins which is preached through Him, but his words teach

us that the very same announcement, in which is unfolded the sovereign love of God for the forgiveness of sins by the obedience unto death of Jesus, shall effect, together with the remission of their guilt, *a change of mind*, that is, Repentance, in those who shall believe it.

To the same purpose Peter declared, in the presence of the unconverted Jews assembled in the Council, that “Him”, even Jesus, “had God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins” (Acts v. 31.). So that in order to repentance there must be a persuasion of the Saviour’s sufficiency, *as a Saviour* : with which persuasion there is inseparably connected the forgiveness of sins.

It may be admitted that this also is beyond the power of the unregenerate; but some one may say, “if a man cannot repent or believe of himself, or before he is acquainted with the preciousness of the Lord’s salvation; yet surely he *can* pray to God for the power to do both”.

This further we deny, and on the other hand affirm, that *an unregenerate man cannot pray*.

No man, unacquainted with the God of the Bible, who has declared himself by his Son Jesus Christ, (John i. 18) can *acceptably* worship. True, he may *recite* prayers which are in themselves most scriptural and expressive—true, he may join the assemblies of God's worshipping people; he may sit in the congregation with his spiritual seed; he may participate in their external ordinances; but he is like the Samaritans, of whom it is testified, “they worshipped they knew not what” (John, iv. 22) : and this is agreeable both to Scripture and reason.

What saith the word of God upon this subject?—we read in the Book of Proverbs (xv. 8.) that “the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is his delight.” In this passage *the sacrifice* in the former clause is synonymous with *the prayer* in the latter; and to those who are acquainted with the phraseology of Scripture, it is obvious that the term *wicked* is but another appellation of the unbelieving; as the term *upright* is equivalent to believer. Here, then, is a passage as plain as it is strong

—as decisive as it is clear—which informs us that the unbeliever is incapable of addressing God in prayer. But if we look to the 26th verse of this same chapter we shall see that the very *thoughts* of such a man are detestable; and if we refer further to the 21st chapter, 4th verse, we find it declared, not of his *religious*, but even of his *civil* acts, that they are displeasing,—“the *ploughing* of the wicked is *sin*.” If then, the unbeliever, even in those matters that relate to this life—to the necessary care of his body, is viewed as abominable—his deeds being abomination in the sight of God—how much more when he presumes, unwashed by the blood of Christ, unarrayed in the righteousness of Christ, uncalled by the Spirit of Christ—to present himself as a worshipper before Him who has announced that “they who worship God, must worship him in spirit and *in truth*” (John, iv. 24).

The Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, in the 10th chapter, 14th verse, argues to the same purpose. “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” The unconverted man calls indeed upon *a god* in

whom he believes; but so long as he is ignorant of the *true* God, who is known to those only to whom the Son will reveal him, (Matt. xi. 27) he cannot call upon *Him*.

Further, in the 11th chapter of Hebrews, verse 6, the Apostle says, “without faith, it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is”—not, must believe that there is a God—this all men know, for however some may have the hardihood in words, to deny the existence of a Supreme Being, yet is there no such thing as a real atheist in the world, except so far, as a man is unacquainted with God manifest in the flesh. The meaning of the Apostle is obviously this—he that cometh unto Jehovah, must believe that Jehovah exists, according as He has revealed himself; and that is, as “the just God, and the Saviour,” “just, and justifying him which believeth in Jesus.” (Isai, xlv. 21; Rom. iii, 26.) This view of the real character of God is only made known by the obedience unto death of Jesus.

In the 14th chapter of John, 6th verse, Jesus saith, “I am the way, and the truth,

and the life; *no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*" So long then as the sinner remains a stranger to the Lord Christ—so long as he disbelieves the record given concerning him, as having finished the work which his Father had given him to do—so long is he a stranger to communion with the Highest—so long is he worshipping an unknown God—his sacrifice is the sacrifice of fools, and nothing better than the polluted and abominable rites of heathen idolatry.

It may still be urged, "Cannot a man, by his obedience to the commandments, attract the favourable regard of God, so that those powers which relate to spiritual things, shall be imparted to him?"

To this the scriptural answer is, *Without Christ, no man can obey God.*

What is the obedience of Scripture—the obedience which God requires? Is it not doing the will of God from the heart? And the first of duties commanded to the intelligent creation of God is, to believe on Him whom God hath sent? (John 6. 29. i John. 3. 23.) What is the principle which secures the obedience,

as it is called, of those who discredit the Divine testimony—and what is that obedience? Is not their obedience the merely doing that which society and the law of the land require; or refraining from that which carries along with it disgrace or injury in this life? And is not their principle—expediency, or custom, or education, or natural disposition, separately or together? Can a clean thing be brought out of an unclean? (Job. 14. 4.) Can obedience be rendered by those who are children of disobedience—dead in trespasses and sins? (Ep. 2.1, 2.) Surely not. Can a dead man perform the functions of animal life? As readily can the unquickened sinner do that which is the expression of spiritual life.

But even had the unregenerate man (and every unregenerate man is without Christ) the power of doing the will of God, where is it written that He will give him those special benefits as the reward thereof? Is it here?—“To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. iv. 5). Or

here?—By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works" (Eph. ii. 8.) Or here?—“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy he saved us” (Titus, iii. 5).

My dear friends, do these statements appear to you to be *harsh*, *cold*, and *uncharitable*? It would be easy to speak smooth things—easy do I say?—nay—“what the Lord saith, that we must speak—to go beyond the commandment of the Lord we dare not—to speak either good or evil of our own mind” (Numb. xxiv. 13). Is it harsh to endeavour with all affection, to tear the spell of an ungodly, soul-destroying delusion from the mind?—Is it cold, to testify in simplicity the unadulterated truth of God?—Is it uncharitable, to demonstrate to those who are ready to perish, and incapable of helping themselves, their real condition?—And shall I be esteemed an “enemy, because I tell you the truth” (Gal. iv. 16).

Do these statements sound *strange* in your ears? They ought not. The body of which

you call yourselves members, professes, in the Ninth Article, to believe, that “ every man is very far gone (quam longissimè) from original righteousness, and is, *of his own nature inclined* to evil, so that the flesh lusteth *always* against the spirit.” And in the Tenth, “ The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he *cannot* turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and *calling* (invocationem) *upon God,*” etc. And again, in the Thirteenth, “ Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, *are not pleasant to God*, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, *neither do they make men meet to receive grace*--yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.” These are the solemn and deliberate sentiments of the Church of England ; and give me leave to say, she acknowledges not any as members of her body, who do not firmly believe them. But the Scriptures go further, and deny that any man is a Christian, who is not governed

by a conscientious persuasion that they are true !

This is a dismal picture ; but God hath sent a glorious light from heaven, to dissipate the gloom—he hath announced glad tidings to mankind, thus naturally helpless ; he hath laid help upon one that is mighty and able to save ; — he hath declared his love to sinners, “ even when they were dead in sins” (Eph. ii. 4, 5) ; “ the kindness and divine philanthropy have appeared in God’s giving his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life.” The word of God has proclaimed a Saviour for the helpless—JESUS ! who “ came into the world to save sinners”—who “ hath reconciled his people unto God by his blood ;” and “ hath obtained,” by his obedience unto death in their behalf, “ eternal redemption for them.”—“ He hath magnified the law for them, and made it honorable,” having performed every thing which it required, in the way of doing ; and having endured every thing it denounced in the way of suffering. And now is the word of his salvation to be

promulgated; and all men are to be directed to that testimony, which bears witness of the all-sufficiency of his work — the perfect complacency of Jehovah in his righteousness ; and his appointed witnesses the Apostles declare, as He himself declared, and as his Prophets before declared, to man, fallen, polluted, helpless, dead in trespasses and sins, incapable of spiritual act or affection—**FULL, FREE, EVERLASTING, UNCONDITIONAL** forgiveness of sins !! My friends, whoever is given to believe that their testimony is true, “ *is* passed from death unto life” (John, v. 24); “ from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts, xxvi. 18); such “ shall never perish,” saith the Lord, “ neither shall any pluck them out of my hand” (John, x. 28).

What a brilliant prospect opens here! Before the Spirit of truth—“ Lo ! the winter is past—the rain is over and gone—the flowers appear on the earth—the time of singing is come—the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines, with the tender grape, give a good smell” (Solomon’s Song, ii. 11, 12, 13). A new creation springs forth under the hand

of God; and they who in their unregeneracy, were neither able to *believe, repent, worship,* or *please* Him, being persuaded, by demonstration of the Spirit, that the Gospel is the truth of God, experience a power to which they were strangers before; and their subsequent history is the developement of faith and of the new mind, in the way of prayer and of obedience.

These are the spiritual privileges of the Lord's redeemed — this honour have all his saints — these things can they do.

II. *They can believe*, for “unto them is given in the behalf of Christ, to believe upon his name” (Phil. i. 29.) — *They can repent*; for in the view of Christ crucified for the sins of the ungodly, their minds are necessarily changed, and Jesus stands forth to their view in a *new light*—the character of God is revealed in a *new light* — sin is exhibited in a *new light* — their own character is manifested in a *new light*—a *new light* is shed upon the things of time—and the eternal world is disclosed in its blessedness and glory, in a light altogether *new*. “Behold all things are become *new*”

— by the energy of the Eternal Spirit, they are made *new* creatures, with *new* minds, and hearts, and spirits — with *new* hopes and desires — *new* pleasures and occupations — a *new* relationship is formed between God and the soul ; access unto the throne of grace having been opened by a *new* and living way (2 Cor. v. 17; Rom. 12. 2; Ezek. xxxvi, 26; Col. i. 23, 27; 1 Pet. i. 8; Rom. xv. 13. Heb. ix. 14; 1 John iii. 1; Heb. x. 19, 20).

They can pray. It is written concerning those who believe the Gospel, that unto them is given the privilege to become the sons of God (John i. 12); “and because they are sons, God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, whereby they cry Abba Father ; the Spirit also bearing witness with their spirits that they are the sons of God” (Gal. iv. 6). Who but the children of the Highest can understand, much less appreciate the unspeakable privilege of “coming boldly unto the throne of grace, to find mercy, and grace to help in time of need” (Heb. iv. 16). Who but they who have enjoyed it, can describe or estimate the blessedness of having the ear of

the Omniscient and Almighty, ever open to their prayers, and who that has ever been permitted to enter into his presence, and has tasted that he is gracious, but feels the truth expressed in these lines : —

“Pray'r was appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give

And with full conviction of soul acknowledges the rule laid down in those which follow,

Long as they live should Christians pray,
For only while they pray, they live.”

As his life is a life of faith, so is it of prayer — in public and in private, it is his ruling habit — in the Church, in the social circle of his brethren in Christ — in the family, and in the secrecy of his solitude—yea, and in the world, he who has received the new mind in believing the Gospel, prays always. As it is the habit of the soul, rather than the expression of words, times or circumstances do not prevent its exercise. He *can* pray — blessed, blessed liberty! O for more of this spirit! by

which the child of God is familiarized with things unseen—by which the arm of Jehovah is made bare for his defence—and by which, safety in his conflict with sin is secured.

They can walk in the way of obedience.

“The love of Christ constrains them to live not unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor. v. 14).” Having been “made willing in the day of His power,” (Psalm. 110, 3) and having been endued with a principle of attachment, they endeavour to ascertain the will of God, and having ascertained it, do it. What does experience testify respecting them? Who are the self-denying, conscientious, simple-minded, active doers of the word, but they who are persuaded of the truth of the Gospel—but they who know, by the Spirit’s teaching, that there is full, perfect, unconditional redemption, in the finished work of Jesus, for the chief of sinners? Who, on the other hand, are the self-willed, the compromising, the careless, and the formal, but those who, being ignorant of Christ, of God, and of them-

selves, despise the glad tidings testified by the Lord's chosen witnesses, and “ go about to establish a righteousness of their own, not submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God ?” (Rom. x. 3.)

There may be some of God's little ones present, who are ready to say, “ I cannot pray—when I bow my knee before God, and would lay open my heart in his presence, I find it impossible to speak, to feel ; a weight is upon my mind; my spirit is overwhelmed ; my heart is cold, stubborn, lifeless—why is this ? ”

If your coldness arise not from bodily causes, or from indulging in that which your conscience condemns, it may be that your expectation of being heard, arises from *your confidence of being a child of God*, and not from the present persuasion of your mind, of the value of the atonement. You approach God in your own person, rather than in the person of your High Priest Jesus; and no wonder that you should not enjoy liberty and access with confidence. In such a case, and it is one in which the Christian is often times

placed, let the mind revolve the record of Jesus' love, and go over his marvellous history, and view his manifold sufferings and humiliation, for the benefit of his church, and it will, for the most part, happen to you, as it has frequently happened to others, that the fire will kindle—your heart will burn within you; it will regain its elasticity; the weight will be shaken off; your mouth will be opened, your tongue will be loosed, and the voice of praise and thanksgiving will ascend to Him, whom then you can, with a depth of feeling unutterable, call your Father.

Again, some precious soul may say—Alas! I cannot enjoy the word, which I am satisfied contains all that I desire to possess, in time and in eternity. When I sit down to the perusal of it, it is a dead letter to me : I read it again and again, and I receive no profit : my soul rises from the study of it, and is in darkness : I look in it for food, and my spirit is unsatisfied. Oh! why, why is this? Perhaps you come to the Scriptures satisfied that you have already obtained such knowledge, as will enable you to understand what you read :

you come *depending upon your attainments*, and not upon Christ as your Prophet. You forget that “he who thinketh he knoweth any thing,” so as to be independent of Divine teaching, “knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.”(1 Cor. 8, 2.) Take Christ with you as your Teacher; sit at his feet; learn of him; look for more of him; read with less reference to self, and with your eye fixed always upon his character and work; and light will be poured in upon your mind; the word will be a lamp to your path, and nourishment to your soul.

Or, perhaps you have contracted that habit, than which nothing is more injurious, or more demonstrative of a depraved state of the spiritual appetite—I mean the practice of spiritualizing all you read, and being dissatisfied unless you can with facility do so. This is a habit to which young Christians are too frequently addicted; and give me leave to say, there is nothing more calculated to blind the mind to the glory and import of what has been revealed. The attention is turned from the testimony of the Spirit; and the word is made to convey a meaning utterly diverse from the mind

of him who hath spoken ; and thus not only those passages which are evidently figurative, and which require a spiritual interpretation, but every precept, every exhortation, every narrative, and every statement is made to speak a language different from its obvious meaning, to the misleading of the reader, and to the marring the beauty and the glory of the word.

My brethren, this ought not so to be. The Spirit of God has conveyed his mind in the best language ; and to understand what his mind is, we must take his words, for the most part, in their plain grammatical sense ; and thus the greater confidence will be begotten in what is revealed ; the fulfilment of prophecy will be looked for with faith and with patience ; divine precepts will be received as the directions of God, for plain, and positive, and present purposes ; the soul will be healthy, by feeding upon wholesome nutriment ; and darkness and doubtfulness will less embarrass it.

There may be some of the family of God, who are inclined to complain that they cannot resist temptations--that notwithstanding

all their watchfulness and care, they find when temptation cometh—as the mountain torrent sweeps impetuously along whatever it encounters in its course—so are they hurried away from what they love, as it were powerless of resistance. Now why is this the case ? My beloved, it is because ye take not Christ for your King—because *you forget his presence and his power*. Were a loyal subject to be solicited, in the presence of the sovereign whom he loves, and in whose power he has confidence, by the monarch of another realm, or by his agents, to prove unfaithful to his king, and to rebel against his government ; would his solicitation, think ye, be successful ? Nay ; the presence of his own sovereign, and the confidence he reposed in him, would cause him to spurn the proposition with disdain, and to kindle up afresh his loyalty and love. So when the god of this world would entice the subjects of the Lord Christ from their allegiance to him whom their souls love, if they were persuaded of his omnipotence—if they remembered with confidence his faithfulness, and his promises, could they be overcome ?

No ; they would be “ more than conquerors, through him who loves them.” (Rom. 8. 37.)

In your daily walk, therefore, remember, my beloved brethren, “ partakers of the heavenly calling ” (Heb. 3. 1.), to keep Christ in the view of your mind, *as your great High Priest*, who not only has offered the sacrifice by which you are accepted ; but “ who ever liveth to make intercession for you ” (Heb. vii. 25.). Consider him *as your Prophet*, whose Spirit he has promised to his Church, “ to guide it into all truth ” (John, xvi. 13.); and *as your King*, under whose banner of love you are made always to triumph ; and you will “ go upon your course rejoicing ; ” you will be “ adorning the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things ; ” you will be “ glorifying your God, who hath purchased you with the precious blood of Christ, in your bodies, and in your spirits, which are his ” (Acts, viii. 37; Titus, ii. 10; 1 Cor. vi. 20.).

To those who are in their natural helplessness, say I—yet not I, but the Lord—though you be poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked, yet believe on the Lord

Jesus Christ, and ye *shall* be saved, even as any who *have* been saved. The Lord Jesus, the Son of the Highest, hath “made peace for sinners, by the blood of his cross” (Eph. ii. 16; Col. i. 20.); he hath for ever “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. ix. 26.); “be died for the ungodly” (Rom. v. 6.); he came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke, xix. 10.). “You have destroyed yourselves, but in him is help found” (Hos. xiii. 9.); “he is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him” (Heb. vii. 25.); and he hath proclaimed to all who are in your condition, to “look unto him, and be saved” (Isai. xlvi. 22.); promising, that “him who cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out” (John, vi. 37.).

In conclusion, I would implore you, with all earnestness, and affection, and anxiety of soul—to examine the record of God’s will, and see whether these things be so; to peruse it with attention and perseverance—and it may be, while you are so occupied—a flood of Divine light shall be poured in upon your mind—the glory and the preciousness of the

Saviour's person, and of his finished work, shall be made manifest—the covenant of redeeming love shall be unfolded, in its fulness of unconditional mercies—out of weakness you shall be made strong—and being made a partaker of the Divine nature, (God giving you, by faith, a change of mind to the acknowledgment of the truth,) you shall have liberty of access to the throne of grace, and shall walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. God grant, for the adorable Immanuel's sake, that the reading of the Sacred Volume may be instrumental to the communicating these blessings to your souls. Amen. Amen.

REGENERATION.

REGENERATION.

"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, Verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

JOHN, iii. 3.

HOWEVER lightly this saying may be esteemed—however carelessly it may be heard—however negligently it may be slurred over in reading—and however the mind may be satisfied to rest in ignorance of its real meaning, and take no pains to discover it, because it is figurative; yet if the speaker be, as he truly is, the Faithful Witness—if this book be the record which God hath given of his Son—this his testimony shall be verified to

every soul of man, in the day when that which binds mortality to earth shall be dissolved; and it shall be illustriously displayed as the truth of God, when Jesus comes to take possession of his everlasting kingdom, and to reign with his regenerated people, for ever and ever.

It is not, my dear friends, the being born in connexion with a church, however scripturally constituted—it is not the being providentially placed under the hearing of the Divine word—it is not the having the truth as it is in Jesus, in simplicity set before your minds—it is not the being able accurately to distinguish the connexion which the several parts of revelation hold with one another—it is not the being satisfied that those doctrines which are as “the wells of salvation,” and minister grace to the faithful, have really place in the Bible, and harmonize divinely together, which singly or collectively constitute a man a subject of Christ’s spiritual kingdom here on earth; or which will eventually confer the privilege of joining “the general assembly and church of the first-born, and the spirits of justified

men made perfect." (Heb. 12. 23.) Our blessed Master forewarned his disciples, that in his kingdom, as far as it is outwardly constituted, there are, and will be to the end, "tares" among the "wheat," or false among true professors—that there will be those who call him "Lord, Lord," who shall not be enrolled among his spiritual subjects; unto whom he will profess, in his day, (however they might have imagined that they ministered to his glory,) that he *never* knew them; and to whom he will pronounce that astounding sentence of eternal banishment, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 21, 23.)

My dear friends, it is greatly to be feared—alas! it is too manifest, that, in this day of loud and confident profession, when the being associated in external fellowship with Christians of known and acknowledged sincerity, is so often mistaken for "fellowship with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ," (1. John, i. 2.) multitudes are thus attached to the churches of the saints, who like Simon Magus,

in external fellowship with the church at Samaria, “ have neither part nor lot in the matter” (Acts, viii. 21.) to whom were we faithfully, and pointedly, and personally to address the emphatic language of the text, they would laugh us to scorn: and perhaps there is nothing which conduces more to deceive men, or serves more (humanly speaking) to keep them blind to the vast importance of this subject, and strangers to the blessings connected with genuine discipleship, than the supposition, unscripturally founded, that they are already born again—already made children of God—and that they are already heirs of the kingdom of heaven; at the same time that they are enemies of God’s glory, ignorant of his character, and dead in trespasses and sins.

Permit me to entreat your patient and serious attention, to what I shall be enabled to state from this passage, in which, with all the authority and decision of Him, in whose hands were the destinies of men, and whose was “the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,” Jesus reiterates the solemn affirmation,

“ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

I shall endeavour to be very plain, and to speak as the oracles of God ; to which, and not to the fallible opinions of man, I desire to bow ; with which, if the words you hear from this place agree—if being placed in the balance of the sanctuary, they be found full weight ; then, upon the credit of that authority, *and of that only*, may they be received ; whereas, if being weighed, they be found wanting—if they savour of the mind of man, and not of God, I trust that Jehovah will vindicate his own truth, and demonstrate the error.

Let us consider,

I. The meaning of the phrase “born again.”

The language is evidently figurative, but yet, not the less intelligible upon that account. It was our Lord’s common habit to address the multitudes in parables—to take occasion from surrounding objects to inculcate the great truths which he came to establish, and by the use of figures with which they were fa-

miliar, to illustrate the nature and the privileges of his kingdom. This mode of instruction, even had it not the sanction of his adopting it, possesses evident advantages. The figures constantly recurring to our observation, serve to convey the mind of him who uses them, when the words in which the instruction had been delivered, have been forgotten, or have lost their original signification ; and thus, external sensible objects, with which we are daily conversant, being applied to the elucidation of purely spiritual subjects, are calculated to be perpetual witnesses to the great truths of Christianity. It serves the purpose of those who would fain make excuse for casting contempt upon the book of God, and for excluding the unlearned from perusing it; and also of those who would excuse their habitual neglect of it, to represent the Bible as hard to be understood, because there is so much of what is figurative in its language. But are those images, which we find in the New Testament, difficult to be apprehended, or are they such as require the education and mind of the scholar correctly to apply? Is

the image of the shepherd in search of his lost sheep, more obscure to the peasant than to the philosopher? Or, is that of the woman sweeping her house, in search of the lost piece of silver, less plain to the comprehension of the cottager, than to the mind of him who inhabits a palace? My dear friends, the meaning of the Scriptures so far as concerns the salvation of the soul, is so clear that “he may run that readeth;” and is attested by the Holy Ghost as “able to make men wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. iii. 15.). Let not the devil or man cheat you of the privilege of rational creatures, to read and examine for yourselves, the revelation which, charged with benefits so vast, and blessings so stupendous, the God of heaven has vouchsafed to fallen man.

But to return—the phrase “born again” is highly expressive of the wonderful change which must take place in every man, whatever be his habits, his disposition, his attainments, his knowledge, or his talents—whether he be high or low, rich or poor, monarch or subject—whether he be amiable or aban-

doned, an ornament or a pest of society, before he can *perceive or know the nature and excellency of Christ's spiritual kingdom, or enter upon the enjoyment of its amazing privileges.* It is equivalent to another statement of the Lord Jesus, (indeed it is the same image in another form,) upon the same subject—“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 3.) And to that where he says, “Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for *of such* is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. xix. 14.) So mighty is the change, that if a body were reduced to its original clay, and another body constructed therefrom, the latter would not be more different from the former, than the man who is “born again” of the Spirit of God, through belief of the Gospel, is a different creature from what he was before. It would be easy, and perhaps not uninteresting, to examine how strikingly this obvious figure illustrates the newness of apprehension, of enjoyment, of occupation, of sustenance, of knowledge, of hope, of fear, etc. which cha-

racterizes the regenerated, who are said to be brought out of darkness into light—to be nourished with the sincere milk of the word—to be renewed in knowledge, etc. I merely suggest these particulars that at your leisure, you may pursue the analogy more at large.

The meaning then of the phrase is evident: a change which must take place in a man's mind and spirit, before he can understand the nature, or be alive to the glory of Christ's spiritual kingdom; and, previously to his enjoying any of the privileges by which its subjects are distinguished. Let us consider.

II. The reasonableness of this declaration.

It ought to satisfy us, that Jesus, whose nature, as well as name, is Truth, hath spoken it; and so it would, if we were not “enemies in our minds by wicked works.” (Col. i. 21.) With blind temerity, man, whose understanding is depraved as well as finite, challenges a reason for the declarations which the infinite Jehovah makes, and gives occasion for increased admiration of the condescension and love of God, when we find him stooping to reason with the creature, and deigning to fur-

nish the grounds upon which the necessity rested for his several messages and dispensations.

The reasonableness of the declaration in the text

1. *Is implied in those passages of scripture, which treat of the condition of fallen man.*

In speaking of him before the fall, the word of God represents man as invested with innocence and happiness; and in the knowledge of Jehovah's character, by Jehovah himself, pronounced to be “very good.”

In speaking of him after, the language of the inspired volume describes man as utterly destitute of the very shadow of innocence—seeking and deriving all his enjoyments from created things—ignorant of the true God—and wholly corrupt. When describing the seat of the affections, (*the heart,*) the scripture says, “*The heart* is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? (Jer, xvii. 9.) And again, “*Out of the heart* proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies : these are the things which desile a

man." (Matt. xv. 19.) Speaking of *the understanding*, its language is, " There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God." (Romans iii. 11.) " Having *the understanding darkened*, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. (Ephesians iv. 18.) In reference to *the mind*, including *the will*, we read in the word of God, " *The carnal* (or unregenerate) *mind is enmity* against God, it is not subject unto the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans viii. 7.) And concerning *the thoughts* of the natural man, the strong and unqualified language of inspiration is, " *Every imagination* of the thoughts of his heart, are *only* evil continually," yea, " even from his youth." (Gen. vi. 5.—viii. 21.) His whole character is thus described by the Apostle Paul, " There is none that seeketh after God, they are all gone out the way, they are together become unprofitable : there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under

their lips : whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness : their feet are swift to shed blood : destruction and misery are in their ways : and the way of peace have they not known : there is no fear of God before their eyes : THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans iii. 10—18, 22, 23.)

Such is man *as he is viewed from heaven*—behold him represented, not in the flattering dress in which his fellow man would array him, but in his own native wretchedness, “poor, miserable, blind, and naked”—view him as an *ignorant, unrighteous, deceitful, and desperately wicked enemy against God*; and say, does he not need to be born again; does he not require a total change of mind? You will say, he does; and at the same time you may be perhaps endeavouring to fix the character upon others, forgetting that the word of God says not *this* man or *that* man, but *every* man; *you*, whose character is high for honesty and integrity, as well as he who is notorious for dishonesty and deceit—you who are kind and gentle, and forgiving, as well as he who

is savage, implacable, unmerciful, you *must be born again*, (*αναθετε* from above)—must be changed in the spirit of your mind, *before you can see the nature, or enter into the privileges* of the kingdom of God.

The reasonableness of the Lord's declaration in the text is further vindicated, and the necessity for this change is further proved

2. By reference to those passages wherein this change is the subject of promise.

When man presented such an unseemly spectacle to the pure eye of God, as his character, drawn by the Spirit exhibits, his regeneration to a character corresponding to the mind of Jehovah, became as necessary a part of the plan of grace, as his forgiveness. Therefore, provision was made for this also in the counsels of heaven. “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe

with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." (Isai. xliv. 3, 4, 5.) Under this image of a parched and unfruitful country, the church at large, in its unregenerate state, as well as apostate Israel, is described, destitute of the benign influence of the Spirit of Christ, unlovely and unprofitable; and the purpose of Jehovah, as touching its recovery to usefulness, and beauty, and honour, is declared in the promise of a supply of those blessings, by the exhibition of which alone its restoration can be ascertained.

Again, under the promise of good to the people of Israel, when carried away captive into the land of the Chaldeans, the regeneration of the Lord's people at large is typified — "I will set mine eyes upon them for good," "and I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they *shall* be my people, and I *will* be their God, for they *shall* return unto me with their whole heart." (Jer. xxiv. 6,7.) And again, (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.) "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and *will* be their God, and they *shall* be my people.

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they *shall* all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; *for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*" Moreover, in the book of the prophet Ezekiel, the regeneration of God's children is contained in the promise of the regeneration of his people Israel; and the restoration to the spiritual blessings of the kingdom of Messiah, of those who are included in the covenant of grace, is contained in the promise of the restoration of the people of the Jews to their own land, renewed like the garden of Eden. " Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my statutes, and do them. Then

shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations.— Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto yon : be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27, 31, 32.)

In these passages, the people of God are promised to be “ made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,” (Col. i, 12.) for which, by nature, they were as unfit as others ; and the nature of that meetness is shewn to consist, in having their sins *gratuitously pardoned*—in receiving, through the belief of this forgiveness, a direction to the several faculties of the soul, suited to the high and glorious ends for which they are “ delivered from the powers of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son” (Col. i. 13.). If mankind, then, be represented as *universally* “ corrupt;” “ alienated from the life of God;” and ignorant of his real character ; with affections *basely* and *exclusively* fixed upon the things of time and sense ; “ worshipping

and serving the creature more than the Creator," (Rom. i. 25.) and "having no fear of God;" (Rom. iii. 18.) and if it be impossible that a creature so constituted, could know the excellence, or enjoy the blessedness, of the kingdom of God, which is "not of this world" (John xviii. 36.)—if it be affirmed, moreover, in the Divine word, that they who are to be avouched as the chosen of Jehovah; as having been loved from everlasting; and who are to "inherit the kingdom prepared for his little flock, from the foundation of the world" (Luke xii. 32.)—If, of them, I say, it be affirmed, that "their sins and iniquities shall be remembered no more"—and that, *upon that foundation*, they shall be built up, meet for the Master's use," (2 Tim. ii. 21.) with affections, directed *towards objects which NEVER interested them before*; with loathing of themselves *for abominations, which they could not have conceived possible to be accounted abominable, before*; with enjoyments, derived *from sources which NEVER ministered pleasure before*; and with hopes of eternal life, from *works, not their own, which NEV-*

VER EXCLUSIVELY *gave them hope before*—is not the necessity of the mighty change mentioned in the text, made manifest, since God is the God of truth; and this change is the subject of his gracious promises?

Once more, the reasonableness of our Lord's declaration is established, and the necessity of this change evinced,

3. *By considering the nature of the kingdom of God, as contrasted with the world in general.*

Were the kingdom of God presented to our view as the New Jerusalem was shewn to the beloved disciple in the Apocalypse, we should discover its sacred designation in characters which could not be mistaken, and to the children of men its distinguishing inscription would be, “**MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.**” Within, upon a throne of grace, we should behold Jesus; and “on his head many crowns.” (Rev. xix. 12.) Before him, and around him, would be seen his people, “made willing” by his Spirit’s energy, “in the day when the Gospel came in power,” “as the word of God, and not of man.” Their occupation, as his people, would

be found to be regulated by the laws of his kingdom, their bodies, souls, and spirits, being set apart for the manifestation of his glory. In other words, Christ's kingdom is a society of those, who "being born again of the Spirit," consider it their highest privilege and chiefest joy, to glorify God in their bodies and in their spirits, which are his : " (1 Cor. vi. 20.) to them "Christ is all in all;" (Col. iii. 11.) they are not, as a body, renowned for their splendor, nor remarkable for their numbers—but low, and mean, and few, in the eyes of men, they pursue the invisible realities of the world to come, "through evil report and good report." (2 Cor. vi. 8.) They possess the high honour of a spiritual intercourse with the Father of spirits, through their great High Priest, who is made unto them, of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) They "have fellowship one with another," (1 John i. 7.) " being knit together in love," (Col. ii. 2.) "in honour preferring one another," (Rom. xii. 10.) seeking not their own, but every one his brother's benefit.)" (1 Cor. x. 24.) "They are not of

the world," as the kingdom to which they belong is not of the world, and therefore the world, hateth them." (John xvii. 14.) They have no goodness of their own—they possess no worthiness of their own—they are, *in themselves* as vile and polluted as other men; but their eyes have been opened—they have beheld Jesus "laying down his life for his sheep; (John x. 11.) that is, they have been given to believe that what the apostles testify is true, when they exhibit in their record, *Jesus crucified for the sins of the ungodly*. They have given credit to the joyous declaration, "that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin;" (1 John. i. 7.) and they are "filled with joy and peace in believing: (Rom. xv. 13.) their minds are changed—*they know*, upon the authority of God, that "there is no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. viii. 1.)—*they "know* that God hath given unto them eternal life, and this life is in his Son" (1 John, v. 11.) *they know* that "they shall never perish," (John, x. 28.) for God, who is their God, hath promised "never to leave nor to forsake

them; " (Heb. xiii. 5.) but hath undertaken to " keep them by his mighty power, through faith unto salvation." (1 Pet. i. 5.) THEY KNOW THIS—and they are encouraged, amid all the sin and wickedness of their evil hearts, to "go upon their way rejoicing." (Acts viii. 39.) They *do* rejoice, not in their sins, not in themselves; but in the cross of Christ, by whieh they evermore obtain victory over sin, and are carried, from time to time, invulnerable, through all the fiery darts of Satan. Such is the kingdom of God, as at present. It is not established by the means which the world uses to establish kingdoms—its laws are not changeable, according to times, and places, and circumstances, as the laws of the kingdoms of this world—its honour and its glories are not visible, like the honours and glories of earthly kingdoms—the hopes and joys of its subjects are indestructible—and the favour of their king is never withdrawn. Glorious kingdom!—Happy subjects!—"Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." (Ps. cxliv. 15.)

Now all this is unintelligible to the world.

Their own security being derived *exclusively* from something *in themselves*, they imagine it the height of *fanaticism* to be secure upon any other foundation; and of *wickedness* added to fanaticism, to be secure while we utterly reject the best works of man. All their hopes, their enjoyments, their pursuits, their desires, are bounded by this world, and terminate in time. If their occupations be not "*sensual* and *devilish*," in their obvious sense, as their wisdom is, (James iii. 15.) yet is *earthliness* inscribed on them all. But why do I dwell on these things? Do you not know, many of you, from experience, whether that experience be derived from observation upon what is passing in the world, or from reflection upon the motives and principles which actuate your own minds, that, what from ignorance of the divine character, and of the blessings of God's kingdom — what from the want of a spiritual discernment, there exists a moral impossibility that you could join in the happiness of the Lord's redeemed, except a change so mighty had been wrought, as is described by being "*born again*." The Being the world calls God, is not the ob-

ject of filial confidence and affection : the record it calls the Gospel, is not glad tidings to the *ungodly*, as lost and ruined : the society it loves to mix with, is not the society of those “who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh:” (Phil. iii. 3.) its “portion is in this life;” (Ps. xvii. 14.) its happiness extends no further than this life—it is “dead in trespasses and sins.” (Ep. ii. 1.)

Thus, then, experience—the consideration of the nature of Christ’s kingdom—the express promises of Scripture—and the Scripture account of the condition of man, manifest *the reasonableness* of the Lord’s declaration, and we reiterate his important words, “ye *must* be born again.” But,

III. How is this change effected—How shall a man be born again?

The agency by which the sinner is “brought from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God,” (Acts xxvi. 18.) is expressly affirmed in those passages of the Word which contain the promise of this blessing, to be *Divine*: and that *no exertion of man’s natural powers*, could in any wise effect it, is most plainly

implied in those passages which describe his condition : and that it is not wrought *in the way of charm*, as the Baptismal Regenerationists dream, is quite manifest from those passages of Scripture which we shall presently examine, wherein the means are distinctly asserted. No power, inferior to that which brought light out of darkness, can bring saving spiritual light to the dark mind of man —no arm, weaker than omnipotence, can destroy the dominion which the God of this world holds over the affections of every inhabitant of this earth—no energy, other than that which called this world into existence, can make a man a subject of the church of Christ, can give him entrance into the kingdom of God. It is God's prerogative *to create*, and speaking of this change, the Apostle to the Corinthians says, “ If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.” (*Καὶ νέος τετελετωμένος* a new *creation*) (2 Cor. v. 17.) Again we read in the same epistle, (chap. iv. 6.) “ God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, (it is he who, *Margin*) hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory

(i. e. the character) of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In writing to the Ephesians, Paul, after stating the exceeding riches of the grace of God, by whom they had been quickened from the death in trespasses and sins, to consist in their having been " saved through faith *gratuitously*," and that *not of themselves*, but the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast :" adds, " For we are his workmanship, *created in Christ Jesus unto good works* (not *by*, or *on account of* good works) which God hath before ordained (before we were *regenerated*—before we were *born*—before the *world was made*) that we should walk in them." (Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10.)

The most fatal delusions prevail upon this subject. Opinions are held respecting the means by which this change is effected, totally repugnant to the mind of the Spirit; and thousands, yea, tens of thousands go down, in consequence, to the grave with a lie in their right hand. Some imagining that the regeneration of the sinner is nothing more than his being delivered from *the stain of Adam's sin*, and that this is effected *in Bap-*

tism, treat with sovereign contempt the most pointed declarations of the Scriptures of God, when presented in their Scriptural import, which bear upon the subject of regeneration subsequent. Oh ! how the father of lies deceives the souls of men ! If men were not in a manner “ given over to a strong delusion,” could they believe so obvious a lie ? (2 Thes. ii. 11.) The washing of water, regeneration ! Preposterous, blasphemous assertion ! Does not the word of that God who is faithful and true, declare, that “ whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world,” and “ who is he that overcometh the world, but he that *believeth* that Jesus is the Son of God.” (1 John v. 4, 5.) Is this word true ? Is it not necessarily a matter of fact, (because affirmed by an *inspired* Apostle,) that every man who is born of God, or regenerated, or from above, or converted, or whose mind is changed (words synonymous in the New Testament') is delivered from the *dominion* of “ the world which lieth in the wicked one;” that every one so born of God, or regenerated, *believeth the gospel* of the Son of God ?

And does this describe all the baptized? Was Simon Magus born of God? yet he *was baptized*. Was the thief upon the cross baptized?—yet he must *have been born of God*, for Jesus assures him, that he shall be with him in Paradise. Does every baptized person among us believe the Gospel of the Son of God? Nay, but of the mass may it not be asked, *who hath believed it?* Is every baptized person victorious over the world, “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life?” (1 John ii. 16.) Does every baptized person “cease to do evil,” and to “yield himself a servant to commit sin?” Then would we not have blasphemies, murders, adulteries, thefts, covetousness, etc. abounding as they do—but, alas! these things exist and abound—yea, among those whom the devil would persuade that they were regenerated while they continue in unbelief.

There is a text in Titus iii. upon which particular stress is laid by the supporters of the doctrine which we are opposing, as though it afforded them all the foundation they require, for establishing that, which is as false

in matter of experience, as it is without countenance in the Bible—"After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, *by the washing of regeneration*, and (even the) renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii. 4, 5.) Here, they say, is a proof that baptism is regeneration. Nay but, my friends, do you not perceive, that regeneration is here *the instrument*, by which the washing is effected, and not *the effect* of the washing. Paul speaks of those, who being regenerated, were *in consequence* washed; but had he been speaking of baptism, in the sense they contend for, he would have said, "by the regeneration *of washing*," making the *cause* to lie in the *washing*, and the *effect* to be *regeneration*.

But the means by which the regeneration of the children of the kingdom is effected, demonstrate the erroneousness of the doctrine which we have been considering.

We find this question fully answered in the reply of Jesus to Nicodemus's inquiry, "How

can these things be?" Now let it be observed, that Nicodemus was no ordinary character : he was connected with "the straitest sect of the Jews' religion, the Pharisees," whose deportment, as members of society, was irreproachable, and whose devotedness as religionists, was most rigidly scrupulous. They were the moral and the learned of their nation, and were held in universal estimation. 'Tis true, our Lord speaks of the Pharisees, *as a body*, whose character was hypocrisy ; but *He speaks as the Searcher of hearts*, and unquestionably, *with reference to the appearance of righteousness, which they affected*, while that righteousness was no righteousness in the sight of God. They *seemed* to be religious, but their religion was that *of form*, destitute of the only principle which constitutes truereligion withGod. But supposing that hypocrisy, in the common meaning, distinguished them *as a body*, there were individuals in that body who were certainly sincere. Paul, before he was born again, was a Pharisee ; and beyond all controversy, hypocrisy, as meaning insincerity, formed no feature in his character : and

evidently Nicodemus, and those whom he affirmed to be like-minded with him, were sincere and without hypocrisy in coming to Jesus. Consider now, I beseech you, the confession of his faith respecting Jesus—"Rabbi, we know that thou art a *Teacher* come from God; for no man can do the miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." (John, iii. 2.) And let me ask, what more do many who profess to be *regenerated*, or *born again*, acknowledge virtually, in the character of Jesus? They call him "*Master*," as the Jewish ruler did—they acknowledge that he was "*a Teacher come from God*," as Nicodemus did—they suppose that the object of his coming was to instruct mankind in their duty, and to shew them how that duty was to be performed, by the example of his own obedience. Tell me, my friends, is not this the chief view that some of your minds embrace of Jesus? Oh! if it be, permit me most solemnly and affectionately to warn any who thus think of the Lord Christ, that such a confession is of no more value, than that of those who said of Him, "*We know that this man is a sinner.*"

(John ix. 24.) It was upon Nicodemus professing, *not his opinion*, but THE PERSUASION OF HIS MIND, which was *knowledge*, that Jesus was a divinely commissioned teacher, that our Lord replied, in the unqualified language of the text, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Recollect, my friends, Jesus saith this to Nicodemus, (who certainly must long before have been “born again,” *if admission into a visible church of God be THE REGENERATION of Scripture*, for he was nationally included in the covenant, which Jehovah made with the people of Israel, and of which circumcision was the seal,) to Nicodemus, “a master in Israel,” *a teacher in the church of God*, as it was at that time outwardly constituted, Jesus addresses this important saying, in which he declares, not only of the ignorant “sinners, of the Gentiles,” but of those who were “Jews by nature” (Gal. ii. 15.)—not only of the impious and infidel Sadducees, who had no hopes beyond this life; but also of the highly moral and rigid Pharisees, who held the traditions of the elders—not only

of those among *them* who *dishonoured* their profession, but of those, likewise, who were *the most exemplary*; that if they—if he, Nicodemus—if any Jew—if any man, were not *born again*, *he could not see the kingdom of God:*” and again, he reiterates this declaration, “*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*” This text also is brought forward to maintain the very puerile opinion, to call it by no harsher name, that baptism is regeneration; but to any one familiar with the language of Scripture, the passage affords no such meaning; our Lord using the well-known *emblem* of the Spirit, accompanied with the *explanation* of the emblem, to express *the agency* by which the change is wrought, and certainly not *the means.* Thus in Isai. xliv. 3. we find *the Spirit*, in connexion with *the emblem* of his operations. Again, in Ezek. xxxvi. And, again, in the seventh of John, “*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scrip-*

ture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. *But this spake he,*" adds the Evangelist, "*of the Spirit* which they that believe on him should receive." (John vii. 37, 39.) The same connexion of *emblem and what it represents*, is found in the passage; which we have lately considered from Tit. iii. 5.

Our Lord proceeds to shew, that *any change* effected by *any other agent*, leaves a man just as he was before—Yea, though a man should be born again, in the way wherein Nicodemus conceived Jesus to speak, he would retain all that constituted the necessity for the regeneration which was the subject of his conversation; "that which is born of the flesh, is flesh"—sinful, under condemnation, subject to the curse; "and that which is born of the Spirit," (here is the agent *without* the emblem) is spirit"—spiritual—free from condemnation, and the curse due to sin; for "where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Having illustrated the mode of the Spirit's operation in regenerating the sinner, by the ignorance of man respecting the blowing of the wind, He proceeds, in reply to the ques-

tion of the Pharisee, to point out *the means* through which the Spirit of God accomplishes this wonderful work. The Scriptures were neither silent nor obscure upon the agency and the means by which it is to be done, and Nicodemus, as a Master in Israel, ought to have known them. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; *that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.* For God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.*”

This is that discovery of Jesus character which is made in the preaching of his Gospel—even as having been given by the Father, from love to his lost and helpless people, to be a sacrifice for their sins—which is connected with salvation, and produces *scriptural, spiritual* Regeneration. For this purpose is the record of that stupendous fact declared in the ears of the sinner, that he “believing it, might have life;” (John, xx. 31.) for this purpose is “Jesus Christ evidently set forth” in the

preaching of his Apostles, “crucified among men,” (Gal. iii. 1.) that those who were obnoxious to divine wrath, might “look unto him and be saved.” (Isai. xlv. 22.) Our Lord plainly points to *his character as Saviour, as that which when known produces the regeneration* necessary for entrance into the kingdom of God—He points to the exhibition of his atoning sacrifice, in the preaching of his witnesses, as *the means* by which that knowledge is to be obtained—and he has taken away all room for glorying in any who do know Him so revealed, since it is by *the teaching of his Spirit.*

What more unlikely means to administer health and cure to the Israelites, than the lifting up a serpent of brass! Might not those who heard the news announced throughout the camp, that he who looked on it should live, have argued—as the natural man would argue—“what connexion is there between my looking on an inanimate representation of a serpent lifted up on a pole, and the removal of my malady, and the restoration of my health! Nonsense! give me a *rational*

remedy and I shall apply it, but as for looking to this serpent, it is too childish, and I will not." And does not sense argue thus respecting Jesus? "What connexion is there between my *believing a report* concerning the design of the awful scene at Calvary, and the deliverance of my soul from the guilt and dominion of sin? Nonsense! it were *rational* to suppose, that if I became qualified by my *obedience* and *virtue*, I should have favour with God, but as to believing that this is true, I will not." If, in the former case, the *infidel Jew* perished because he despised the plan which Jehovah had provided for healing, and *perish he assuredly would*, was not his destruction wilful? And if, in the latter case, the *Baptized infidel* who despises the plan which God has revealed for shewing mercy—if he esteem the preaching of the cross, foolishness—if he turn from the *only* object which can attract to love and to happiness, perish in his unbelief—and, *dying in his unbelief, he undoubtedly will perish* (Mark. xvi. 16.) will not his perdition be upon his own head? The Israelite, however

deeply, or however slightly wounded, was healed by the view of the serpent ; and the sinner, however gross or moral, can only be healed *by believing* in Jesus, and believing, he becomes healed immediately. *Therefore is it that we preach the gospel.* This may, and this does appear to the wise and prudent of this world as absurd ; yet it is the very truth of the living God, and the perfection of wisdom to those who are taught of God to understand it. The means of regeneration, *the only legitimate means*, the only means upon which we can Scripturally expect the blessing of God the Spirit, is the testimony of the Apostles to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, “the record which God hath given of his Son.” This is that “ministry of reconciliation” committed unto them, as the chosen witnesses of Christ, which we preach ; *their* testimony, *not ours* ; to this we press the attention of our hearers, as of persons upon the brink of perdition. We declare glad tidings unto ALL people, in proclaiming the Apostolic record, of the “taking away of sin by the sacrifice of Jesus.” To Him, *and to Him only*, and to *nothing*

else but Him, we direct men to look for salvation, relying upon His gracious promise, as we follow, in this exhibition of Him, his own direction, “If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me.” (John. xii. 32.) To Jesus lifted up at Calvary, are sinners to be directed; as to the serpent lifted up in the wilderness, were the eyes of the perishing Israelites to be turned. Did their looking in that case meet a disappointment, or did they who looked, live? Even so in this, the word has passed the lips of the Son of God, and is recorded in the book of life; “whosoever believeth in Him, (Jesus) shall have eternal life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death into life.” (John, v. 24.) Man may talk of *other means* of regeneration, but the word of God points out this. The sinner may be directed to repent and pray, but the word of God calls his attention, not to those things which he cannot do, but to the gospel. The sinner may be encouraged by blind guides to conclude from his distress and anguish of spirit, that the Spirit of God is working his regeneration; but the word of God teaches

that the office of the Spirit is to “*testify of Christ,*” and gives us no ground for supposing any work is His which proceeds not from, or which is not accompanied by, a belief of the gospel. The Scriptures upon this head are neither few, nor hard to be understood. John, in the first chapter of his gospel, (Verses 12 and 13) says, “To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the Sons of God, *even to them who believe upon his name*, who were born (spiritually) not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” This privilege to be called the Sons of God, did not descend to them from their parents, they were not born believers — they did not receive by inheritance the blessings of eternal life, as they did the lands, and honours, and privileges of their fathers—it was not in consequence of any desires of their own nature upon the subject—nor in consequence of any desires of others, but of God, “who sheweth mercy upon whom He *will* shew mercy, and hath compassion upon whom He *will* have compassion.” (Rom. ix. 15.) To this purpose

we find James writing in his first chapter, (verse 10.) "*Of his own will* begat he us"—how? "with the word of truth." And Peter in his first epistle, "*born* not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, *by the word of God*, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Pet. i 23.) In these passages, the word of the truth of the gospel is the *means* of regeneration, and the believing of that word produces it. No man who disbelieves the gospel is born again, however he may be baptized, or reformed, or instructed; although from the most careless he become most devoted — although from the most licentious, he become most exemplarily moral — although from Jew, Turk, or Socinian, he become a baptized professor of Christ's religion—none of these things constitute the "*being born again*" of Scripture; but whosoever believes the gospel *in its Scriptural meaning*—whoever has *an intelligent persuasion that it is true*, he is "*born again*," "*of God*," and his believing is his perception of the nature, and as he believes he enjoys the privileges, of the kingdom of God.

I have dwelt the longer on this head, because of the fatal ignorance upon the subject, which so extensively abounds among professed Christians ; an ignorance which tends to subvert the very principles of Christianity. Nothing is more common than to hear the sinner who exhibits any anxiety about his soul's interest , directed to pray to God for regeneration, while he actually hates God in the only character wherein He has been pleased to reveal Himself as the hearer of prayer ; that is, as perfectly reconciled by the obedience unto death of Christ, without any work of the creature : and if the unhappy person so directed, has resolution to abstain from the particular species of sin which caused him uneasiness, or if he leave it off from fear, he is instructed to take comfort from this as being a proof of his being regenerated, while his mind is still unchanged, and the simple declaration of *gratuitous* forgiveness by the blood of Christ is discredited, yea, opposed as licentious. I trust that I have been enabled to state the real Scripture method of imparting the capacity for discovering the excellence of Christ's king-

dom, and for enjoying its blessedness, in such language as is easily understood. The passages of Scripture which have been brought forward and examined, most unequivocally attribute *the power* to produce it to the Spirit of Christ, and point out the gospel testimony, as *the means* which the Eternal Spirit employs for the purpose, and affirm that regeneration actually takes place, as soon as that gospel is believed to be true.

There is one important question more, to which I beg to call your attention, and then I shall conclude.

IV. How shall it be ascertained whether a man be born again?

There are two rules for determining this inquiry, laid down in the Scriptures; one for the satisfaction of *the individual*, the other for the satisfaction of *the Church* respecting any individual.

1. “He that believeth, hath the witness in himself.” (1 John, v. 10.) “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son, into your hearts, crying Abba Father.” (Gal. iv. 6.) “The Spirit itself also beareth

witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Romans vii. 16.) The Scriptures never lead us to suppose that a man may be born again, and yet be ignorant that he is so born, but assert the contrary. Can a man born blind, and restored to sight, be ignorant whether he can see? Before his eyes had been opened, he might indeed have imagined that he understood what light and colours meant, from the descriptions which he had heard of them, at the same time his ideas would be as foreign from the true conception of light and colour, as though no such things existed in nature. But when his eyes are opened, and he beholds the light; and the various hues of the objects which meet his vision are discerned, can he be in doubt whether he now can see? He may know nothing of the reflection and refraction of light which produce the splendid appearances that strike upon his astonished view, but he *knows* that he can see what before he could form no conception of, and he rejoices in the light. Even so, the man who is brought out of the darkness of spiritual death, into the marvellous light of spiri-

tual life, can no more doubt of the truth of his present state, than he can entertain scruples about the reality of his natural existence. His eyes had been closed against the glory of God, but now they are opened to behold it, and beholding it *he knows that he does behold it*—his heart had been insensible to the love of Christ, but now it is constrained by that love, and *he is conscious of its energy*—his spirit had been a stranger to the peace and joy which are in believing, but now believing he has joy and peace, and *he cannot deny their presence*—his mind had revolted from the humbling doctrines of the cross, being ignorant of their real import, but now understanding their meaning, *he is persuaded* that they are true, and embraces them, and *he cannot but know that they are the rejoicing of his heart*. Can such a man be deceived? Can this be delusion? I answer, No : God is not the author of deception, and those effects are what He has declared to be produced by his operation. Is this presumption? What—presumption to believe that God is true, and to confess it?—presumption to know Him

gracious, and to acknowledge it?—presumption to trust the promise of the covenant-keeping God, and to rest in his promises? Oh! no: this is faith, simple, unaffected faith. Presumptuous rather are they who dare to doubt the truth of God—who, in opposition to the righteousness which He hath revealed in His Son, go about to establish a righteousness of their own—who, professing to be regenerated, yet disclaim sonship with the glorious Jehovah! If you believe, you know you do, you cannot be in doubt; and if it be the record that God hath given of His Son which you are believing, you must be in possession of peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. You know him as a reconciled Father—you joy in him—his love is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Ghost—you are led by his spirit—you love His well-beloved—you confess his name—you are not ashamed of the hope which is built upon your faith in Jesus. Now, can any man be ignorant whether he believes the gospel, and whether he has peace with God in his conscience, through believing—whether

he really embraces the things revealed, which concern the gratuitous remission of sins? Impossible. He who doubteth on this subject, does not believe. But he that believeth is born of God.

2. Again. Since he who is “born again” becomes a member of the adorable Immanuel’s kingdom, and as in that kingdom the subjects are designed for, and have fellowship one with another, there are certain marks, by which it may be ascertained, to the satisfaction of the church, whether an individual be indeed regenerated, and whether “the kingdom of God be within him.” The Spirit’s witness *to himself*, is not a witness *to the church*, for that testimony is between the individual’s own soul, and that God with whom he has to do. The subjects of the everlasting kingdom of the Son of God, require, for the confirmation of their judgment respecting the regeneration of any man, *an intelligent confession of faith in the Gospel, and are bound to regard such as make that confession, as fellow heirs of everlasting life, if they exhibit a walk consistent with the high*

character of those who are “ translated from the power of Satan, into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.” If, however, in the case of one making a good confession of the truth as it is in Jesus, it be apparent, that he is *habitually* led by the spirit of the world, and not by the Spirit of God; that his acknowledged principles have produced no change in his outward conduct; that he is the same man with a new creed; his profession, although it should be as definite as an Apostle’s, is to the church, of no avail, for “ by the *fruit* is the tree known,” and “ as many as are *led* by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God;” (Rom. viii. 14.) and “ he who hath the hope of eternal life, *purifieth* himself, even as Christ is pure:” (1 John iii. 3.) and “ in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever *doeth not righteousness* is not of God;” (1 John iii. 10.) for the Spirit of God is *holy*; “ and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ”—not only in his witness to the finished work of Immanuel, but also in his sanctifying influence, in turning the heart from lying vanities, “ to serve the living and true

God" (1 Thess. i. 9.)—" he is none of his." (Rom. viii. 9.) This is the test which James mentions in the second chapter of his epistle, as confirmatory of the soundness of a man's profession. " What shall it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works ?" " Can" such a saying he hath " faith save him ? " He does not argue whether faith without works be the simple and only medium of connexion between the blessings of salvation and the enjoyment of them ; but he demonstrates, that wherever the sinner is saved through faith, gratuitously, there is, and always will be, an evidence to the church, more decisive than mere assertion, even the " bodies of God's children being temples of the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. vi. 19.)

Here, then, we have examined the modes by which it may be ascertained whether a man be "born again." The word of God testifies, that he who is so born, "hath the witness in himself," and also, that "whosoever nameth the name of Christ departeth from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.) I shall just make one observation, upon a manner of exercising judg-

ment by this latter rule, which is very common, and very erroneous ; and I make it in the hope, that such as have been misguided by it, may be set right. Many form their judgment of the regeneration of God's children, by *the degree* of their apparent usefulness, and are inclined to determine what ought to be the measure of the work of each, by the measure of the work of some eminently gifted individual ; and so, if any fail to come up to that standard, he is regarded with suspicion, as being either an hypocrite, or a backslider. This is an exemplification of that want of wisdom, which Paul charges upon the Corinthian church, who “comparing themselves among themselves, were not wise.” (2 Cor. x. 12.) Each child of God is made *equally alive* in regeneration, but each is not appointed to the *same work*, nor endued with the *same measure* of spiritual gifts. To one is given, by the Spirit, *activity* of spirit; to another, *retiredness*. To one, by the Spirit, zeal in those things which give *publicity* to his character ; to another, zeal in those things which are *never known* by man. Each has his peculiar station ; he

who is to human observation doing nothing in the kingdom, if he be indeed born again, is doing that without which that kingdom could not be perfected. If he be a member, he occupies his peculiar station, however in man's estimation insignificant it be. *Only let every man take care that he exercise his gift "according as God hath dealt to every man, in his kingdom, the measure of faith."* (Rom. xii. 3.)

And now I would affectionately ask you, are you born again? Has this mighty revolution taken place in your views of God, of Christ, of sin, of time, of eternity, which characterizes the change wrought in the children of God? Has this change been produced in believing the Gospel of the grace of God? Have you the witness of God's Spirit, and are you manifesting whose you are, and whom you serve, by that transformation from worldly idolatries, wrought by the renewing of your mind? My dear friends, you are this moment either serving God, as children of his kingdom, or Satan, as his willing slaves. *There is no middle state:* there are but these two king-

doms, that of God, and that of Satan. Oh ! what a solemn truth ! You are, even now, while you are sitting here, listening to those momentous subjects, either decidedly a child of God, or a bond-slave to the god of this world. How shall you know it ? Do you believe the Gospel ? Are you persuaded that Christ Jesus, the Son of the Highest, the divinely appointed substitute of the fallen church, gave his life a ransom for the ungodly ? (Rom. v. 6.)—that he took away sin, by the sacrifice of himself ? (Heb. ix. 26.)—that he finished the work the Father gave him to do ? (John xvii. 3.) If so, you are born again, and then relying, *solely* and *exclusively*, upon His all-sufficient work, for pardon and peace here, and for glory hereafter—you renounce all your own works, as “filthy rags” (Isai lxiv. 6.)—you confess that “in your flesh dwelleth no good thing ;” (Rom. vii. 18.) and it is with you as it was with Paul, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ ” (Gal. vi. 14.)—you are walking, “not after the flesh, but after the Spirit ;”

(Rom. viii. 1.) and are “followers of God, as dear children.” (Eph. v. 1.) If the simple Gospel, which proclaims full, free, everlasting forgiveness, be not in simplicity received, as the testimony of God — if you are “going about to establish a righteousness of your own,” (Rom. x. 3.) upon which to build a hope of eternal life—if you are still pursuing, as eagerly as ever, and as *exclusively* as ever, the things which the word of God pronounces abominable idolatries, there is not the smallest room for doubt —*it is certain*—you are yet in the number of those, concerning whom the Lord says, that before they can see or enter the kingdom of God, they *must be born again*. Verily, verily, ye *must* be born again. The Gospel, the glorious glad tidings which announce the making an end of sin and the bringing in everlasting righteousness by Jesus the Son of God, has been given to effect it; and whosoever believeth that the Gospel is the truth of God, is born again. May the Eternal Spirit, whose office it is to guide the mind into the perception of all truth, give you a right understanding in

all things, and cause the word to come with power, that such as have hitherto been strangers to the life of God, may by His energy be quickened; that they may be enabled to testify, how “that they were blind, but now they see”—that they were “dead, but are alive again.”

Amen. Amen.

THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS.

THE PREACHING OF THE CROSS.

“The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

1 COR. i. 18.

THAT God is no respecter of persons, the revelation which He has graciously vouchsafed for the purpose of declaring His real character to man, emphatically announces. But this same revelation, with emphasis as deep and solemn, informs us, that there is in the sight of God, a difference and distinction between the several inhabitants of this our world—a difference founded, not on the stations which men

do respectively occupy—not on the amount or deficiency of mental intelligence which they display—not on the degree of usefulness, or the want thereof, which their histories unfold—not on the amiability or perverseness of character which they exhibit, but, on the estimate formed in the view of their minds concerning the character of the Gospel. It seems to be impossible that the sacred volume can be perused with the smallest portion of attentiveness, and this distinction not force itself upon the reader's view—and it is just because it is utterly discarded, or misunderstood, or because it is blamefully overlooked, that the writings and the preaching of many who use an evangelical phraseology, display so much obscurity, and confusion, and error; and it is just because this important distinction is kept prominently in view, (subordinate always to the special tidings of good will from heaven to fallen man, which they publish) that they who have written upon the subject, and they who preach the simple, unadulterated Gospel of the grace of God, are made eminently useful in their generation. Connected with the estimation in

which the Gospel is held, the Scriptures affirm the condition of our race to be; declaring that they who do esteem it to be “*foolishness,*” are ranked among “*them that perish;*” and that they who do regard it as the wisdom, and have experienced it to be “*the power of God,*” are classed among those *who are saved.*

That the preaching of genuine truth meets this reception, is obvious to all who take the trouble to remark the effect invariably produced upon the minds of those, among whom it is either statedly or occasionally ministered; and to the anxious servant of the Lord Christ, who scatters the seed of life with unsparing hand, it occasions deep solicitude, although it does not excite his wonder. You may have observed, upon the same day, in the same congregation, the same sermon exciting feelings of the most contradictory character. You may have known some to have been wound up to the highest pitch of torture, while their minister has been unfolding the gracious plan of sovereign love—to have loathed the precious and wholesome food of the soul—to have manifested

their enmity against God and his word—against Christ and his Gospel—against the preacher and his discourse; and to have proclaimed, unequivocally, the darkness of their carnal minds, by exclaiming, as they withdrew, against the folly and imprudence of declaring, what was uttered under the teaching of the Spirit of Christ; what the man of God dared not, even had he been willing, to hold back. These are not the few, or the most illiterate; on the contrary, they are always the many, and generally the wise in this world's lore, the prudent in their own conceits. You may have remarked, also, that there have been some, and these the very, very few, to whom the same discourse has been the channel of the greatest comfort, who have enjoyed the privilege (and esteemed it such) of listening to the message of redeeming grace—who have been fed by it, as with hidden manna—have been edified, as with divine wisdom—and have felt the truth in their souls, to be spirit, and life, and power; and the children of God, who have observed all this, have doubtless been reminded of that pillar of a cloud, which was light to Is-

rael, while it was darkness to the enemies of Israel and of God. (Exod. xiv. 20.)

That these things are so, is unquestionable; and that those different sentiments respecting the Gospel, and those different effects produced by it, mark the state, in the sight of God, of each severally who entertains them, and upon whom it thus tells, this passage which I have read from the epistle to the church at Corinth, among the numberless portions of the divine word, to the same purpose, satisfactorily establishes.

We are not to imagine, that the spirit which occasions the rejection of the Gospel, is peculiar to the times wherein we live, or to the places wherein it is now ministered. The same spirit prevailed in every age, since the foundation of the world, by whomsoever and wherever the truth has been preached. To pass over the repeated instances which occur of Gospel preaching, and of Gospel rejection, from the time of righteous Abel, to the days of Isaiah the son of Amoz—we find that prophet announcing to his countrymen, the comfortable tidings of “*iniquity pardoned,*”

(Isai. xl. 1, 2.) and yet constrained to take up the lamentation, which has been adopted by all who, since his day, have been occupied in proclaiming divine mercy to the guilty—“Who hath believed our report? (Isai liii. 1.) When Paul, too, in the plenitude of his commission as Christ’s Ambassador, delivered the message of peace, with which he was entrusted—(although God did not leave himself without witness, wherever the word came—yet) the multitude of his auditors, in every place, considered him as an enthusiast, (Acts xxvi. 24.) a troubler of the public peace, (Acts xvii. 20.) “a pestilent fellow,” a “mover of sedition,” a “ringleader of an offensive sect” (Acts xxiv. 5.) “a babbler,” (Acts xvii. 18.) and one who “turned the world upside down.” (Acts xvii. 6.) Notwithstanding, the messengers of God were not moved from their purpose by any of these things; but whatever estimate was formed, either of themselves, or of the truth with which they were charged, they perseveringly testified the same thing, although it was “to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks

foolishness." (1 Cor. i. 23.) And the reason of this is obvious; for they were persuaded, that the Gospel is the *only effectual remedy* for the deplorable condition of such as are perishing—the *only means*, whereby light is introduced into the mind; and that it is itself, in the hand of the Spirit, the demonstrator of its own wisdom, and suitableness, and glory.

Now, as I am persuaded that there are not a few in this our day, in whose estimation the pure Gospel is as much foolishness as it was in the apostolic age, when it had to contend with early prejudices, and long-established customs; and being also firmly persuaded by the word of God, that *it is the only means*, (under the blessing of the Holy Ghost) for the rectifying of false views concerning it, and whereby its real character can be understood and appreciated; I shall endeavour to bring before your minds, according as it has been discovered to my own.—

I. What is implied in the phrase, “*The preaching of the Cross.*”

II. When it may be said to be esteemed *foolishness.*”

III. In what respect it is “*the power of God.*”

I. What is implied in the phrase, “*The preaching of the Cross.*”

A question of considerable moment is very generally agitated, as to the propriety of ministers in the present day, departing from the method pursued by the apostles in their addresses to sinners; and whether we ought not to take for granted, the general belief of Christian *doctrines*, and rather to press upon our hearers the practice of Christian *duties*. The expediency of this change is plainly founded upon a most erroneous and dangerous supposition, viz. that a *profession* of Christianity is Christianity—that mankind are now under very different circumstances from those which distinguished them when the religion of the cross was promulgated by the inspired servants of Christ—and also, that preachers now stand in the same relation to those whom they address, as the apostles did, to their hearers. We admit that a great change has passed over the face of the moral world—that men are differently circumstanced, in regard

to the *professed object* of their worship, and the *mode* by which worship is offered—but we deny that those changes in any wise affect the grand concerns of their souls. The apostles addressed men (abstracting all contingent and accidental circumstances) as those who were at enmity against God—not considering them as being nearer God for being Jews, nor farther off from him as being Gentiles; but as one and all manifesting the “alienation of their minds from him, by their wicked works.” (Col. i. 21.) Men are precisely so disposed at present—*their nature is* in this life, *unchanged and unchangeable*—it is as much enmity against God, in professing Christians, in our day, as it was in heathens, in the days of Paul: and unless this enmity became extinguished in the revolution of times and customs, a departure from the apostolic model in our preaching would not be warranted. But even in such a case, though man’s *nature* had been so *improved* (which it is not—no, not even in the regenerate!) as to have lost its disinclination to the word and will of God—I say, even in such a case, a departure

from the plan pursued by God's chosen witnesses, would be as presumptuous on our parts, as it would be inefficacious. It is not to the preachers of the present day, that the commission has been solemnly given by the Son of God to “preach the gospel to every creature”—but to the Apostles: (Mark xvi. 15.) it is not to a testimony committed unto *us* but to their testimony, we call the attention of men. *They, and they only* are the ambassadors for Christ; and all that we can legitimately do in our addresses, is to point to *their* witness, and call upon men to give it credit upon *their* authority. What their witness is, is abundantly manifest—and indeed we have every reason to be thankful, that their testimony is so intelligible.

In the chapter before us, and in the verse immediately preceding the text, the Apostle states, that “Christ sent him, not to baptize, but to preach *the gospel*,—not with wisdom of words, lest *the cross of Christ* should be made of none effect,”—shewing that the gospel and the preaching of the cross are synonymous.

In the second chapter, where he vindicates

the *manner* and the *matter* of his ministry at Corinth, he affirms concerning the former, that it was not “with excellency of speech, or of wisdom that he declared the testimony of God;” and of the latter, that “he determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” (1 Cor. ii. 1, 2.) And in the third chapter, where he adverts to the foundation upon which that Church had been established, he declares, with all the confidence of “a wise master-builder,” that “other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, and that foundation “is Jesus Christ,” (1 Cor. iii. 10, 11.) And what is meant by preaching *Jesus Christ*, and *him crucified*—and *the gospel*—is fully stated in the 15th chapter of this same epistle : “Moreover brethren, I declare unto you *the gospel* which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the scriptures ;

and that he was buried ; and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures. ”

In perfect agreement with these instances of the peculiarity of his preaching, as delivered to the Church, we find in the Apostolic addresses to unconverted Jews and Gentiles, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, an illustration of the subject before us. When Peter stood before the Jewish council, and replied to the interrogatory of the High-priest, he testified, “*The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree ; Him hath God exalted with His right hand, to be a Prince and a SAVIOUR, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins, and we are his witnesses of these things.*” (Acts v. 30, 32.) When the same Apostle stood before Cornelius, (who had been warned of God to send for him, “to hear all the things that were commanded him,”) and the Gentiles, whom Cornelius had called together to hear the messenger of God, he declared that “*the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, (He is Lord of all ;) that word,*

I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached : how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power ; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil : for God was with him. And *we are witnesses* of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, *whom they slew and hanged on a tree.* Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly ; not to all the people, but unto *witnesses chosen before of God,* even unto us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him give all the Prophets witness, that *through his name,* whosoever believeth in him, shall receive *remission of sins.*" (Acts x. 36 to 43.)

From those few instances selected from addresses to unconverted men, and from a letter to a Christian Church, we perceive that the preaching of the Cross, implies the *Apostolic testimo-*

ny to the fact of the death of Jesus. But give me leave to say that this awful transaction may possess all the vividness of reality in the mind, without one saving accompaniment! Perhaps there is rarely, if ever, one in our congregations, who entertains the shadow of a doubt respecting the *fact*, that Jesus, “who thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” suffered without the gate of Jerusalem, at a place called Calvary. (Heb. xiii. 12.) The belief of the mere abstract fact of the crucifixion, possesses not in it one principle, whereby the mind can be furnished with a knowledge of Jehovah’s character, or of the awful demerit of sin; and of the truth of this assertion, experience supplies a melancholy proof. But always connected with the **FACT** of the death of Christ, we find the Apostles bearing witness to the **DESIGN** which Jehovah had in contemplation by means of it : and the passages to which I lately solicited your attention shew, that, together with the **FACT** of the crucifixion, *the preaching of the Cross implies, primarily and especially, that the death of Christ was a PROPITIATORY SACRIFICE—that by it atonement*

was made for the sins of his people—that by it he hath for ever taken away sin—and that by it a new and living way hath been opened into the eternal kingdom—that the elect have been re-united unto God by it, (Rom. v. 10.)—that he who had the power of death, even the devil, has had his dominion over them destroyed by means of it. And they, who all their lifetime were in fear of death, are by means of it delivered from bondage. (Heb. ii. 14.)

Such, my friends, in a few words, is the preaching of the Cross—the declaring upon the authority of God, that by Jesu's obedience unto death, there is full, perfect, unqualified, unconditional forgiveness of sins, and acceptance in the sight of God, for the very chief of sinners who believeth—and this is what is invariably esteemed “*foolishness*” by those who are ranked among “them that perish.”

We now pass on to consider,

II. When it may be said, that the preaching of the Cross is esteemed “*foolishness*.”

This may be affirmed to be the reception it meets from those *who do not understand it*—and it is not understood,

1. *When it is not viewed as affording the very chief of sinners EVERY thing necessary for the reconcilement of his soul with God.*

In this respect, how much the gospel of the grace of God is mistaken! How widely different are the systems current as the mind of Christ—systems which obtain the general consent of the population of these lands as the record of God—from the glad tidings testified by the Apostles to the *unconverted* in their sermons, and set forth in their epistles to *the churches*, as the warrant of their peace with God! Alas! if one of Christ's accredited witnesses, say Paul, for instance, were to visit any of the cities of Christendom wherein a zeal for the religion of the gospel is professed—were he to visit the most highly favoured city of the most highly favoured kingdom upon earth—were he to visit the metropolis of our own country, exalted by national and spiritual advantages even to heaven, like Capernaum, where there is such high and loud profession—where Religionists are so active and bustling and zealous—where his writings and his labours

are, in words, held in such veneration ; how shocked would he be, at the glaring inconsistency that abounds, in rejecting what his words were intended to convey, while in writing them he is acknowledged to have been inspired by the Spirit of God ? Were he, on the Lord's Day, at the hour when so many churches, so called, are opened for the ostensible purpose of worship and edification, to take a circuit through the various denominations by which the name of Christ is professedly honoured, would he find their worship and their teaching acknowledging and upholding the doctrine of the Cross ?

Were he to enter one of those edifices, designed for the worship of the *Socinian's* God, and for the propagation of Socinian sentiments; would he find the preaching of the Cross there ? No, he would observe their unhallowed hands, tearing from the brow of Jesus, “his Lord and his God,” (John, xx. 28.) the crown of mediatorial glory ; — he would observe them denying him the homage which it is the felicity of the heavenly host to render ; (Rev. v. 6 to end.) — he would see

them in the face of Scripture, of reason, and of common sense, renouncing the atonement as unnecessary and blasphemous ; and “counting the blood of the covenant with which he is sanctified” and wherewith all they who have “obtained like precious faith” are sanctified, “an unholy thing,” and “trampled by them under foot;” (Heb. x. 29.)—he would find an assemblage of confessedly guilty beings, pouring contempt on the holy character of God, and in opposition to the most positive declarations of his word, depending entirely upon their own endeavours for his favour, and for acceptance with him. These have not the gospel, they renounce it as a “cunningly devised fable,” (2 Pet. i. 16.) they do not understand it—“the preaching of the Cross is *to them* foolishness !”

Were he thence to pass into one of those Temples erected for the purpose of worshipping the God of *Romanists*, and for the exhibition of the absurdities of their system ; would he find the preaching of the cross there ? No : his discriminating eye would there discover no affinity to the heaven-born church of Christ,

but his spiritual judgment would detect therein a denial of the *divinity* of the Lord Jesus, even as among the others, by attributing to the Son of God a work imperfect and insufficient—a denial of the all-sufficiency of the *atonement* offered up at Calvary, by the substitution of other atonements in its room—a denial of the all-sufficiency of His *mediation*, by their multiplying mediators—a denial of the merit of His *sacrifice* once offered, by their continual pretended sacrifices. They do not understand the gospel, it is “hidden from their eyes”—the declaration of the pure gospel is an offence to them—they esteem “the preaching of the Cross foolishness.”

Should he come afterwards into some of our *Protestant* places of worship, where there is, in words, such horror of Socinianism, and such antipathy to the Church of Rome, would he discover the preaching of the Cross there? Blessed be God he would in some of them: Oh! that it were sounded forth in all! But in others, and alas! in most, he would hear from the pulpits what decidedly contradicted the word read in the services; he would hear

orations *read*, in which the name of Jesus was mentioned only in the closing sentence; his heart would be frozen with cold and barren essays on moral duties, duties which, while the reader was frigidly delivering, his heart would be witnessing that every man knows he ought to perform. My friends, we do not require to be told what we ought to do, or what avoid; but to possess *a principle* whereby we shall be enabled to “do the will of God from the heart,” and this principle never yet has been, *and never will* be implanted, by mere abstract details of duties. He would hear sermons which the infidel Antichrist might, and would deliver; which a Romanist would preach or listen to without offence; which a heathen priest might have delivered before the altar of “the unknown God,” that he observed erected in the City of Athens. They who preach, and they who are satisfied with such discourses, are wholly ignorant of the gospel; “their understandings are darkened”—the announcement of salvation through the obedience unto death of Jesus, irrespective of their duties, is a mys-

terry to them—the preaching of the Cross is *to them* likewise, foolishness! One common principle actuates all these—it is Pharisaism! The Pharisee cannot understand *how* “God can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly who believe in Jesus,” independently of their own works : (Rom. iii. 26.)—he abandons the sentiment as absurd and licentious—as not only contrary to right reason, but mischievous to society. And who is the Pharisee, but he who is not satisfied to rest all his hopes for salvation exclusively upon the *finished* work of Jesus : — who desires still “to go about to establish his own righteousness, and submits not to the righteousness of God” (Rom. x. 3.)—who grounds his expectation of divine favour upon something in his own character and conduct, which makes a difference between him and others. (Luke xviii 11.) It is not necessary to suppose such a person to be a hypocrite or insincere;—he may be perfectly sincere and conscientious; and he may verily believe, that his church-going, and sacrament-receiving, and prayer-repeating, and alms-giving, and earnestness, and

self-denial, and amiability, etc. will recommend him to the gracious notice of God; and he may perseveringly pursue that object by such means;—but his sincerity can never make of a lie, the truth:—his earnestness and conscientious zeal, can never alter the purpose of Jehovah, whose way of shewing mercy is distinctly specified,—and “ let God be true, though every man on earth be proved a liar!” (Rom. iii. 4.) Such a character is ignorant of the gospel—it is hidden from his understanding—for the plain and obvious import of the gospel, when understood is, that Christ *hath* reconciled sinners unto God *by His works*:—that Christ is “made of God” unto the sinner who believeth, “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Cor. i. 30.) He is angry at the exclusion of his own works from any place in procuring the pardon of his offences—and the apostles (if this be their meaning) are in his eyes false witnesses. Salvation, independent of personal worthiness, is monstrous in his estimation; he deems “ the preaching of the Cross foolishness.”

Again. The preaching of the Cross is not understood, and is esteemed foolishness,

2. *When it is not viewed as affording every thing the sinner needs—GRATUITOUSLY.*

In this respect, likewise, how little is the precious “Gospel of the grace of God” understood, even by some whose discourses are embellished with the precious terms, grace, sovereign, plenteous; who will likewise speak of the freeness, the fulness, and the perfection of the Gospel. How often is it proclaimed, as a blessing designed for the *penitent*, who are represented as *alone* qualified to receive it. Permit me to call your attention, my friends, to the commission which the apostles received from the Lord Jesus; and let me ask you, solemnly, is it right, in the sight of God, to specify a character for those to whom his message of mercy is to be announced, which has not been described by God himself—“ Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every creature!* ” (Mark xvi. 15.) It is an awful darkening of counsel—it is an awful betrayment of the blindness of nature—it is an awful discovery

of spiritual ignorance, when *any qualification whatsoever* is declared necessary to be had, in order to justify *any* of our apostate race, to believe the Gospel. If there be one in this assembly, who has believed a gospel, which he conceives is addressed to *Penitents*, he has believed a false gospel, and not that which brings mercy nigh to *sinners*—to the *ungodly*; (1 Tim. i. 15; Rom. v. 6.) and if any one be trusting in a Christ, which he thinks is revealed in *such* a gospel, he is trusting in a false Christ, and not in that precious Saviour, who died for the “*unjust*, that he might bring them to God.” (1 Pet. iii. 18.) That no man is *saved* without *scriptural* repentance, is affirmed, and is the truth of God; but that repentance is essentially different from what such persons call *penitence*; and that even repentance in its true, scriptural import, neither *qualifies* for the belief of the Gospel, nor renders the possession of Gospel benefits more secure, is equally God’s truth, and will, by every lover of the majesty of Christ, and of the human soul, be strenuously maintained.

A passage in the 55th of Isaiah is often urged as specifying a qualification preliminary to the reception of the glad tidings; but he who reads the passage under the teaching of the Spirit of truth, perceives not any character described, but what is borne by every son and daughter of Adam. “Ho! every one that *thirsteth*,” saith the prophet, in the first verse. It is asserted, that they only are privileged to consider themselves addressed by this language, who are *thirsting* after God—who are earnestly seeking and desiring him. But what saith the prophet?—such persons are thirsting “for that which *satisfieth* not,” as we read in the next verse. If it were a “*thirsting after righteousness*,” the promise is, that “they shall be *filled*;” (Matt. v. 6.) but this thirsting marks the character of those who are desirous of that which can never yield them solid satisfaction. It describes *the whole family of mankind*, as eagerly pursuing that which each calls *happiness*; and the language of the prophet is a glorious, as it is a gracious, announcement of the infinitely free salvation of the Lord Christ, *without*

previous qualification or attainment. So that, however he may be employed—whether seeking enjoyment in those paths which society deems honourable, or in those, upon which society has deservedly affixed a brand of infamy—whether the pursuit be reputable or base—there is in the proclamation, that which will give to every man who believes it, immediate and present satisfaction, without reference to what he *is*, or what he *shall become*. A passage in the 11th of Matthew is similarly misapplied—the “weary and heavy-laden,” in the 28th verse, being supposed to describe those, who having undergone some *deep distress of mind*, and labouring under the *alarming conviction of sin*, are consequently (according to the views of those persons) *privileged* to come to Christ. But the passage speaks nothing about *conviction*—it merely describes the *state* of those for whose deliverance and rest Christ came. It is not a description of those who *feel* themselves “weary and heavy-laden,” more than of those who “being past feeling, have given themselves over to work all uncleanness with greediness.”

(Eph. iv. 19.) It embraces, in its comprehensive import, all the inhabitants of earth; who, however conscious they be of transgression—however alarmed by reason of some recent enormity, whereof they may have been guilty; or however insensible to the evil of their doings, and conscience-seared they be; bear upon their persons a tremendous weight of sin; which, unless removed by the power of the Gospel of Christ, will sink both soul and body into everlasting ruin.

What would the Gospel be, if it were not *free*?—suppose it to provide “wisdom” for the ignorant; “righteousness” for the guilty; “sanctification” for the corrupt; and “redemption” for the lost yet were not these blessings communicated *gratuitously* to the sinner—were not the proclamation addressed to him **AS A SINNER**, independently of his penitence or convictions, it would be no gospel at all. For remember, what is the Gospel? but the glad tidings of iniquity pardoned, and sin covered: the gracious message of reconciliation: the divine proclamation of atonement

made by the death of Christ : of righteousness wrought by the obedience of Christ : the joyous declaration that Christ, who knew no sin, has been made sin for those who were nothing but sin, that they might be made the righteousness of God *in Him!* in a word that Christ is in the most unqualified sense of the term, A SAVIOUR! Were it not *free*, instead of being the glad trumpet of the jubilee, sounding “liberty to the captives, and the opening of prisons to them that are bound,” (Isai lxi. 1.) it would be as ungracious as the clanking of hammers in the ears of the prisoner, by which his chains were rivetted.

This may be all esteemed a delusion, or worse—but it is the truth of God, and will stand for ever and ever.

The preaching of the Cross is esteemed foolishness,

When it is not *believed!*

We cannot believe that which we do not understand; but we may understand that which we do not believe. There is a possibility of all the truths of the Scriptures being

understood, as *propositions*, without the mind being persuaded that they are *truths*. It is possible for a man to sit down to the study of the book of God, as the philosopher would sit down to the study of a favourite science, with the purpose of making himself acquainted with its contents; and he may rise from the examination, satisfied that such and such doctrines are stated in it, without believing that those doctrines are the truth of God. The open infidel appears, in comparison of the merely professing Christian, to be the more consistent person. The former understands the meaning of the apostles' statements, and candidly avows his disbelief: the latter says it is an awful thing to entertain Socinian principles, (and so it is;)—that it is a wicked thing to discredit the word of Christ, and of his apostles, (and so it is;) but when Christ testifies, “He that believeth in me shall not perish, but *hath* everlasting life;” (John iii. 16.) and when the apostle testifies, that salvation is “by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works” (Ep. ii. 8, 9.)—when again, “in due time

Christ died for the *ungodly* ;” (Rom. v. 6.) and again, “Jesus Christ came into the world to save *sinners* ;” (1 Tim. i. 15.) he endeavours to evade the force of these declarations and to neutralize their plain meaning by his false interpretation, and says, nay—to believe is surely not sufficient; nor is faith a peculiar gift of God unattainable by works : Christ, saith he, could not have come to save sinners simply viewed *as such* : nor did he die for persons actually ungodly; but for those who first repent of their sins ; for those who first abandon their ungodliness. To such a person, and to every person who believes not the declaration of the Gospel, in its plain and obvious import, the preaching of the Cross is foolishness.

Further, the preaching of the Cross is so esteemed,

When it is not *influential*.

I would remark, that in speaking of what the Gospel *produces*, I am not stating what the Gospel *is*; and this is the rather to be kept in mind, as we observe, in the statements commonly set forth as the preaching of the

Cross, that which is *invariably produced* by it, exhibited as a part of the precious truth itself. Nothing can be more distinct. One is the *cause*, the other the *effect*. And the great error consists in the vain attempt to confound the super-structure with the foundation—or, as too frequently occurs, to substitute the one for the other. It is commonly urged against the preaching of *gratuitous* salvation, that it leaves men at liberty to live according to their natural propensities : but it is a tremendous calumny—unsustained by experience, unwarranted by the scriptures of God; for which they who advance it will have to answer at the judgment seat of Christ, unless “God peradventure give them a change of mind to the acknowledgment of the truth.” (2 Tim. ii. 25.)—Now what saith the scripture? “we be slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come—whose damnation is just” (Rom. iii. 8.) Is not this enough to make the ears of such calumniators tingle, and their hearts tremble? And what is the Apostolic reply to such ungodly cavilling? “Shall we

continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we who have died to sin live any longer therein?" (Rom. vi. 1, 2.) If the mind be persuaded that the things testified by the apostles are true, both *reason* and *Scripture* concur in asserting, that this persuasion will have an influence, more or less, upon those who give it credit, according to the strength or weakness of faith; and *experience* is in accordance with the word of God, which specifies the nature and extent of this influence.

We read in the fourth chapter of the Acts, that "the multitude of them that believed were of one *heart*, and of one *mind*." Such was the energy of that bond by which they were associated, that they were all as one man—they were animated by the "one spirit," were called with the "one calling," possessed the "one hope," had the "one faith," acknowledged the "one Lord," worshipped the "one God," who was reigning in them all, and whose image was borne by them all; (Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.) and that "God, is LOVE." (1 John iv. 16.) There was no supercilious

and unchristian distance observed towards any member of the body—no shrinking from acknowledging those who were “inheritors of the same glory to be revealed”—no carelessness evinced by those, who were abounding in means by which the temporal or spiritual welfare of their brethren could be promoted, towards such as stood in need of either. No: love reigned in their bosoms; and if one member suffered, the body sympathized—if one member was in distress, the body supplied his wants. Oh! where is this spirit now? Is “Ichabod” to be inscribed upon our churches? My friends, wherever the Gospel is understood and believed, as the record of redeeming love, these effects will be in some degree apparent. “Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common : neither was there any among them that lacked ; for as many as were possessed of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles’ feet, and distribution was made to every man, according as he had need.” (Acts iv. 32, 34,

35.) It is not to be inferred from this passage, that no individual had any possession which he *could* call his own: or that there was such a community of goods, that all the property of each member was taken out of his own power, and that he could not do with it what he would. The reply of Peter to Ananias, and the addresses to the *Rich* in the apostolic epistles, recognise the principle of individual property, and abolish the common notion of an actual community of goods. In a moment of excitement any man might be induced to make such a surrender of his property—and as soon as the excitement subsided he might heartily repent of his deed; but that which is here spoken of is the constant result of an abiding principle—a principle which overcomes man's natural selfishness; which inclines and constrains him to love those who love Christ: and the possession of means by some, of which others are in want, gives occasion for the expression of those holy affections by which faith is manifested and God is glorified. The spirit of this description is, that each who was possessed of houses or lands,

considered himself possessed for the common good; and bound, as he was privileged, to administer to the wants of his poorer brethren: and so powerful was the love which constrained them, that when opportunity offered for its display, they cheerfully and voluntarily parted with what was *valuable*, and *not merely superfluous*, to prevent any member from being destitute.

But further, the gospel exerts an influence over the *lives* and *conversations* of those who believe it—not merely in those particulars which come under public observation—but in those whereof no human eye can take cognizance: not only in the church—but in the world—not only in the closet, but in the domestic circle also. Does the gospel nullify the practice of good works? No—as long as redeeming love possesses its native energy—as long as it is written in the charter of her blessings “which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. ii 10.) so long will the redeemed of the Lord be a “peculiar people, zealous of good works;” (Tit. ii. 14.) so long will they “put off the

old man, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; and put on the new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Eph. iv. 22, 24.) Shew me the man whose confession of faith is marked with Apostolic accuracy, who is nevertheless, yet wholly unhumbled and unsubdued—a slave to his passions—worldly in his spirit and in his habits—indulging an ungovernable temper—impatient—and self-willed—and you will present a man who lies against the Holy Ghost—who is yet "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity"—who as yet "hath neither part nor lot in the matter." (Acts viii. 21, 23.) To all who are destitute of an expression of its sacred influence, such as we have described, "the preaching of the Cross is *foolishness*."

And what is their *condition*? The Scripture saith, "the preaching of the Cross is *to them that PERISH* foolishness." They perish ! The Apostle is not pronouncing the final and irrevocable doom of those, who, having once and again heard the gospel testimony, reject it, without a possibility of their receiving "a

change of mind to the acknowledgment of the truth " at any subsequent period—but taking this passage in connexion with what the Apostle declares, in the second Epistle to this church, (2 Cor, iv. 3) "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost*"—and this again, in connexion with what the Lord says in Luke's Gospel, (Luke xix. 10.) "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which *was lost*"—we can perceive, that it is a description of the *present* condition of those "who do esteem the preaching of the Cross foolishness," and assuredly will be the future and everlasting destiny of all who remain blind to its nature, its import, and its glory. It is in reference to their rejection of the gospel testimony, that Paul, addressing the Jews at Antioch, says, "Behold ye despisers; and wonder, and *perish*." (Acts xiii. 41.) And in reference to the effects produced by the preaching Christ's gospel, he says to the Corinthians, "that to those who *perish*," the Apostles are (that is, their witness is) "a savour of death unto death." (2 Cor. ii. 16.) And accounting for the awful end of those who are delud-

ed by him “whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness,” which end is, that they “*perish*,” he says, “because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.” (2 Thess. ii. 9, 10.) And what intimation doth the word of God afford us respecting the import of this term — hear! “who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” (2 Thess. i. 9.)

My friends, this is a tremendous, yet accurate description of the state wherein all who esteem “the preaching of the Cross foolishness,” are placed—a state in which the Church of God is by nature, and for their recovery from which the Gospel has been given, and the preaching of it among the nations appointed. O! that it may not, at this time, be testified amongst you in vain! May the Spirit of demonstration be vouchsafed, in order to its proving to your souls the wisdom and the power of the living God!—and to your expe-

riencing it to be “the savour of life unto life” eternal!

We are now to consider, and briefly,

III. In what respect the preaching of the Cross is the power of God to those who are saved.”

By effectually removing every obstacle which a broken law, and a corrupt nature present to the sinner’s return unto God.

The consciousness of guilt, to which no man is a stranger; and the experience of corruption with which every man is familiar, raise insuperable barriers between the soul and God. Guilt incurred by transgression, and corruption inherited from the first Adam,—guilt heightened, and corruption strengthened by long acquaintance with sin, stand as a great gulph between earth and heaven: and as the sinner casts his eye athwart it, fearfulness and trembling take possession of his soul. To silence the accusations and to quell the alarms of conscience, Sinai rolls its sullen thunders without effect; the lightnings of divine indignation, in vain flash before the eyes of ~~the children of~~ disobedience—the voice of God, in the law, with awful majesty,

in vain, enjoins conformity to his dread commands : they who heard that voice, and saw those lightnings, and listened to those thunders, could not bear the sound and sought a mediator—for “God is a consuming fire.” (Deut. v. 22. to 29.) To the law, in vain the sinner turns for peace to his conscience — for deliverance from the bondage of corruption —for reconciliation with God. In vain taketh he refuge from the wrath to come in any human device ; every refuge, save the hope set before us in the Gospel, will be found to be “a refuge of lies.” (Isai xxviii. 15, 17.) And every one who resorts to them will be “even as when an hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty : or as when a thirsty man dreameth and behold he drinketh ; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite.” (Isai. xxix. 8.) Instead of finding rest to his spirit and quiet satisfaction to his soul therefrom, they will prove as “the bed which is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and as the covering that is narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” (Isai. xxviii. 20.)

My friends, what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh—God hath done, by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. And the “sword of Jehovah having been drawn against the man who is his fellow,” (Zech. xiii. 7.) the law having been magnified and made honourable by his subjection to it—God may be just while he justifieth the ungodly. The law impleads now without injury; conscience charges without inspiring despair; the accuser of the brethren challenges to no purpose; all are silenced by the word of God, and overcome by the testimony of Jesus. The preaching of the Cross then is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,” (Rom. i. 16.) for it provides such a person with an all-sufficient atonement—it furnishes him with a righteousness commensurate to the last jot and tittle of the law—and sheds abroad in his heart the love of God by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him—and now to any man who is persuaded of the truth of the Gospel message—to whom the Father hath made known his covenant character, which character the preaching

of the Cross alone displays—to him who believeth that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” there is brought nigh every requirement for entering into friendship with God—every thing necessary for the abolition of all guilt, and for effecting purity of conscience: and now he *can* testify, and he *will* testify with joy and thankfulness, that “the preaching of the Cross is the power of God to those who are saved.”

Brethren are these things so? Have you realized divine teaching opening your understandings to know the precious gospel of the Son of God, the good tidings of great joy—and has it filled you with peace and joy in believing? Remember, the world watches for your halting—when your foot slippeth it will magnify itself against you—Remember your own weakness and the almightyess of your Jesus! You can do all things through him who strengtheneth you—“Approve yourselves the Sons of God; shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;” let it be manifest whose you are, and whom you desire to serve. “Let the word of Christ

dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another; in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Shew that the gospel you profess is indeed the power of God to deliver you from this present evil world, and to enable you to walk with God in reverence and godly fear.

Do I address any who esteem the preaching of the Cross foolishness—my fellow-sinners, that which you so despise is the wisdom of God—it is that by which alone you can become acquainted with God—with yourselves—with real happiness—by which alone you can be delivered from the wrath to come. Your present condition is terrific! Is the man who has fallen asleep on the brink of a precipice ready to perish? Is the criminal, upon whom sentence of death has been pronounced, and whose execution is fixed for the morrow, ready to perish?—Is the child inhumanly cast out from parental care, and exposed to the inclemency of the elements, ready to perish? You are equally so—yea, more—Providence might so order the fall of him who is asleep

on the precipice's brink, that he escape with his life—the criminal might, in the interim between the passing of his sentence, and the period appointed for its execution, receive a pardon; and the natural ferocity of the brute animals might be converted, by an overruling God, into kindness of feeling, and supply the place of a parent to the child. If you die as you live, strangers to the Gospel of Christ, you perish. Hearken, then, my friends, to the testimony of the Lord; “Hear and your soul shall live.” This is the command of God, that ye believe upon his Son Jesus Christ—who came into the world to save sinners. “There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby ye must be saved”—“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,” saith his accredited ambassador, and “ye shall be saved.” (Act. xvi. 31.)

JUSTIFICATION.

JUSTIFICATION.

"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

JAMES ii. 24.

It is the recorded and deliberate judgment of one, whose memory ought to be dear to every lover of divine truth, and whose sayings should be held in high estimation by every participator of divine light, that “ if the article of justification be lost, then is all true Christian doctrine lost with it;” and he makes the holding or rejecting of this truth, to be the test of a standing or of a fallen Church. This saying of the indefatigable and indomitable Luther, is true : whose judgment in

this matter, perfectly accords with the oracles of God : and all who have been instructed in the school of Christ, will doubtless agree with this Reformer, that there is nothing, connected with divine truth, so necessary, evermore to be urged upon the consideration of man, as this doctrine, because of the natural repugnance of the mind, to hold it firmly in its legitimate import. The world hates it, and always misrepresents it. The Devil hates it, and labours to overthrow it; and when foiled, too often succeeds in his efforts to corrupt it. To the world's hatred of it on the one part, and to the Devil's corruption of it on the other, are to be ascribed all the systems of false religion which obtain among men. To this are to be attributed the vile calumnies which are either openly heaped upon it, or covertly entertained to its prejudice—the outcry raised against it as being subversive of good conduct, and as necessarily setting men at liberty to do as they list; and to this is ascribable the gross and manifestly ungodly delusion, that men may be accepted of God in virtue of their own actions. No wonder

that the world hates it, for it is not of the world—it was neither discovered by its wisdom, nor invented by its ingenuity—it dis-
countenances, and condemns the world's care-
lessness, and indifference, and forgetfulness of
God, and stamps as abominable in His sight,
what the world highly esteemeth. Bad men
hate it, because of its uncompromising *holy*
tendency—self-righteous men hate it, because
of its *unshackled freeness*—and worldly wise
men hate it, because it brings to nought *their*
wisdom, and marks it as “ foolishness with
God” (Rom. i. 22; 1 Cor. ii. 19.)—they des-
pise it because of its unassuming *simplicity*.
No wonder the Devil should impugn it, for it
dismembers his kingdom—by the preaching of
it, his prisoners are emancipated and light is
poured in upon those, who during the period
of his supremacy were “ sitting in darkness
and the shadow of death.” (Luke i. 79.)
And will he tamely suffer this? No: but as
he has always employed his wiles and craf-
tiness, and the subtleties of a vain philosophy,
and “ science, falsely so called,” (Col. ii. 8;
1 Tim. vi. 20.) with which he infects the

minds of his subjects, he will still, with all his energy use them, to overthrow, or to eradicate or to corrupt the precious doctrine of Justification by *faith only*.

Yet, when we consider the world's hatred of this doctrine, and the opposition it meets on every side, how strangely infatuated and inconsistent, according to human judgment, do men appear herein, when it is the most precious, the most suitable, the most animating that ever yet was presented to the contemplation of fallen man. That they who are shut out from the Scriptures of God should reject it, is no wonder—that a vitiated and deadly system misnamed Christianity should reject it, is no wonder—but that they who profess to enjoy the light of the divine word, and to belong to reformed Churches should deny it, is indeed a wonder; since this truth is the very *essence* of the word of God : it is “ the *jewel* of the reformation”—the point upon which that mighty revolution hinged—in defence of which martyrs bled and burned—and by the revival of the preaching of which, its long doomed desolation is rolling upon the seat of

the beast; and in this our day, his kingdom is convulsed to its very center; the awful “consumption by the spirit of the Lord’s mouth,” which is prophesied to take place before the final destruction of every Antichristian system with the brightness of Jesus, coming. (2 Thess. ii. 8.)

This is to be the subject of our present discourse—and I have selected the passage which I read from the Epistle by James, with the intent to shew the perfect harmony that subsists upon this momentous matter between him and his brethren Apostles; and the rather, because this very text is commonly quoted by the maintainers of Arminian heresy, for the purpose of neutralizing that precious doctrine of Justification by faith only, which one of our own articles expressly, and in the true spirit of the divine word declares, to be most wholesome, and very full of comfort. (Art. xi.)

Let us consider,

- I. The nature of justification.
- II. How a man is justified.
- III. How this statement of James is to be understood, and

IV. The character of the works to which the Apostle alludes.

And do Thou, God of truth! so teach thy servant, that he may speak nothing rashly or unadvisedly with his lips ; that all he may say on this subject may bear to be assayed “ by the law and the testimony ;” and may the Spirit, which thou hast promised to guide thy people “ into all truth ” be present with us now, with energy ; to give repentance to the acknowledgment thereof, that this people may receive the truth in the love of it, to the glory of thy grace!

I beg to call your attention,

I. To the nature of justification.

We find the terms “ just ” and “ justified,” applied in the Scriptures to God, as God—to Christ, as Mediator—and to Man.

When applied to *God*, it is used to signify the undeviating rectitude of the divine proceedings, in all the departments of Jehovah’s government, whether in providence, or grace, or judgment; so that “ in whatsoever He doeth in the armies of heaven, or among the inhabitants of the earth ” *He is just*; and in

the gratuitous remission of the sins of the ungodly who believe, *He is just*; and in the infliction of everlasting punishment upon the unbelieving, *He will be just*—Yea, “God will be justified in his sayings, and be clear when he is judged.” (Rom. iii. 4.)

When applied to *Christ Jesus* as the Surety of sinners, the Mediator between God and man, it signifies the spotless purity of his office-Character, and marks his fulfilment of all his covenant engagements—“his having performed all that the Father had given him to do” (John xvii. 4.)—his having “magnified the law and made it honourable,” (Isai xlii. 21.) by his obedience unto death. In this sense He is pre-eminently called, “the Just One.” (Acts iii. 14. v. 52.) and is declared to be “justified in the spirit,” (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

But when applied to *Man*—it marks not what he is *in himself*, or has *of himself*—for the word of God saith (and the Scripture cannot be broken) that he is “*unjust, unrighteous*,” that “*none doeth good, no not one*,”—that “*all are gone out of the way*”—

that “*all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. iii. 10, 12, 23.)—that word declareth, even of those who are received into the divine favour, that they are so far from being *in themselves just*, that “in them, that is, in their flesh dwelleth no good thing:” (Rom. vii. 18.) yea, so much are even they so, as to extort this memorable confession, from, perhaps, the most illustrious of the saints of God, “*I cannot* do the things that I would,” (Rom. vii. 19.) and this arising not from any physical defect of capacity, but from the law of sin that existed in his flesh; nor from any peculiar rebellion of his own heart against God, for it is the experience of all believers. (Gal. v. 7.) But the term Just, applied to Man, marks what *he becomes by grace* — he who is justified being viewed by the Eternal God as though he had *no stain of sin*—not only so, but as possessing a righteousness of character infinitely surpassing that, which Adam, by transgression lost—yea, infinitely beyond the accumulated righteousness of the angelic intelligences, since it is the righteousness of the Great substituted sacrifice for sinners, the ho-

liness of the perfect, undefiled, God-man representative of his people, *imputed* to him.—The obedience unto death of Jesus, *imputed*, (not *imparted*, as Arminians vainly talk) constitutes the righteousness of him who is accepted of God; and having this, as a possession, and being arrayed in it, as a robe, he is justified. Being invested with the righteousness of God, the sinner to whom this gift is communicated, is esteemed as “complete in Jesus,” (Col. ii. 10.) he is adopted into the family of God—he is drawn by the cords of divine love—he holds communion with the Father of Spirits—is an heir of the world to come—and when his Lord and his God shall appear in His glory, he shall be like him, and he shall be with him, and he shall reign for ever and ever, with Him, who had been the unseen object of his supreme affection. This is briefly the nature of justification. It embraces all the peculiarities of gospel blessings. *It is the accounting the sinner righteous before God, and treating him as such.* This may appear marvellous in your eyes—undoubtedly it does so in the eyes of many—but

it is altogether the Lord's doing, and in this He shall be eternally justified.

But a question of great importance meets us here—

II. How is a man justified? or in other words, Through what means is righteousness communicated?

There are but three ways by which it is conceivable that this can be effected, either

By works only, or

By works and faith together, or

By faith only.

The *first* of these is a ground, upon which the open and avowed infidel, alone, dares to take his stand : the *second*, is that upon which the world, improperly called Christian, most unscripturally rests : and the *third* is that which they alone, who are taught of God, rejoice to know, and upon which they are eternally founded. Now it is not so much to the first, as to the second of these classes of persons that I desire, throughout this discourse, affectionately to address myself. I feel a kind of persuasion, that among those who usually compose our congregations, there is rarely to be found

one, so hardy, as to build upon his own works, unmixed and alone, his hopes of future happiness; and yet, in this Christ-despising age, when talent and erudition unblushingly stand forward, and in the face of the oracles of God, endeavour to tear from the brow of my Lord and my God, the diadem of essential Deity; when faith in his obedience unto death, is excluded from the system of those, who have been driven to invent a new Scripture for its support, it may be, that there is, even now, among us, a poor soul, which has drunk in the deadly poison of the growing heresy, and I would fain arrest his attention to the danger of his present situation. I would solemnly implore his candid consideration of the subjects which shall be brought before him; for undoubtedly, if the Scriptures be true, *the future destiny of him who dies in unbelief, rejecting the atonement, is hopeless and appalling.* (Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 36.)

The system of those who think that they shall be justified by *a mixt process* of working and believing, is *just as erroneous* as the former, and equally *fatal*. To the

careless and ignorant mind it possesses more plausibility; but to him who weighs religious persuasion in the balance of the sanctuary, it manifests the expression of a deceived heart, and is found in opposition to the truth of God. It is an unholy confederacy against the King of Grace; and to the Christian philosopher is as absurd in point of sense, as it is unsound in point of doctrine. It stands a monument of man's folly and infidelity, so long as it is written—"if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace, but if it be of works, then it is no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work." (Romans xi. 6.)

But they who are taught of God, *know assuredly* that justification is BY FAITH ONLY. And I am very anxious to bring forward a detailed evidence of the scriptural soundness of this position ; as the most satisfactory method of counteracting and dissipating error, is to exhibit truth in its genuine simplicity. And indeed, my friends, we have much reason to be thankful to God the Holy Ghost, for the great plainness of speech which the sacred

writers use when treating this subject; and the mistakes so prevalent about a matter so clearly revealed, are but an illustration of that saying of the Spirit of God respecting the ignorance of the natural man. (1 Cor. ii. 14.) I beg most patient and serious attention to the scriptures which I shall now adduce, to shew what the will of God is, respecting *the way by which a sinner becomes justified in His sight.*

In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, where the Apostle is declaring his reason for not being ashamed of the gospel of Christ, he says, “it is the power of God unto salvation”—to whom? “to *every one that believeth;*” “for,” he adds, “therein is the righteousness of God revealed, from faith to faith,” a righteousness of God which is by faith revealed, for belief, or to be believed—and this not a new method, now for the first time published, but agreeably to the ancient plan of Jehovah, “as it is written (by the prophet Habakkuk), the just shall live by faith.” (Rom. i. 16, 17. Hab. 2, 4.)

Again, in the third chapter, where he is

speaking of the manifestation of that righteousness which is independent of personal obedience to the law; (since by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight), he calls it “the righteousness of God which is *by faith* of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them *that believe.*” Here, by setting aside the law, he studiously excludes the works of man, and shews how this justification is consistent with the perfection of God’s character; and that he upholds the glory of His name, while he gratuitously pardons the ungodly who are said to be “justified, *freely* by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, *through faith* in his blood—that he might be just, and the justifier of him which *believeth* in Jesus.” “Where is boasting then?” asks the Apostle. “It is excluded—by what law?” Is it by the law “of works? Nay, but by the law of *faith*. Wherefore, we conclude that *a man is justified BY FAITH without the deeds of the law.*” (Rom. iii. 21, 22, 24, 28.)

And again, in the fourth chapter, in which

this doctrine is illustrated by examples the most striking which the ancient scriptures furnish—Paul declares, that “if Abraham” (on account of whose personal obedience the Jews imagined that he was himself accepted, and by virtue of which, they supposed that their nation was received into covenant favour,) “were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory,” (contrary to the divine ordinance, that none should glory in his presence,) “but not before God;” and he establishes this, not by *reasoning merely* upon this scripture axiom, but by reference to the plain words of the scriptures themselves. “But what saith the scripture?” Yes, what does it say—not what do I say, not what does this authority, or the other maintain—what is the judgment of this man of God, or of that man of God—what is the judgment of this body of professing Christians, or of the other—but what is revealed in the infallible record of God’s will? Let the scripture speak. “Abraham,” as it is written in the book of Genesis, “BELIEVED God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Gen. xv. 6.) He proceeds to argue, and it will be

our wisdom to take heed, “Now to him that worketh,” (for *justification* evidently) “is the reward not reckoned of *grace*, but of *debt*;” for what is the reward of grace? but that which is bestowed *independently of desert, gratuitously, or for nothing in man*; and what is a reward of debt? but that to which a man becomes *justly entitled, by reason of his rendering service that deserves it*: this latter is opposed to all the views which the divine word affords, respecting the infinite perfection of Jehovah, and the degraded state of the creature; and therefore he adds, “But to him that worketh not, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Rom. iv. 4, 5.) Mark well, my friends, these important words, God justifieth the *ungodly*, who work not to deserve it, but who *believe* what he declares upon the subject : Here the subject is farther illustrated by the case of David : “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God *imputeth* righteousness, without works, saying, Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” Could

the method of the Divine procedure in the matter of justification, be more forcibly illustrated? Abraham, dignified by the title of “The friend of God;” (2 Chron. xx. 7.) and David, who was called the “man after God’s own heart,” (1 Sam. xiii. 14.) were both justified, not by their works, but *by faith*: they both looked for acceptance, not on account of their personal righteousness, but on account of righteousness *imputed*—and shall we, having these magnificent examples, seek to be justified in any other way? Shall we, with these recorded testimonies, fly in the face of God, and demand him to alter his plan of mercy? God forbid—Nay, “let God be true” in this respect, “and every man” who opposes it, whoever he be, “a liar!” (Rom. iii. 4.) Even so, Lord Jesus!

In the fifth chapter, the doctrine is thus expressed, “Being justified *by faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:” and he grounds this singular blessing upon the merit of atoning blood, (verse 9,) “Being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath, through him; for the judg-

ment," against mankind at large, " was by one" (*sin*) " unto condemnation—but the *free gift*"—precious words!—" is of *many offences* unto justification"—" for if, by one man's offence, death reigned by one,—much more they which receive abundance of grace (or mercy to pardon the " many offences" mentioned before) and of *the gift* of righteousness, shall reign in life, by one, Jesus Christ."

Further on, in the ninth and tenth chapters, a most important question is answered, and a powerful stumbling-block removed, as connected with this subject; and it comes in, an invincible support against all the vain reasoning of men against the perfectly gratuitous remission of sin, and the unqualified acceptance of the sinner who gives credit to the divine testimony. The case of the rejection of Israel nationally, and the reception of the Gentiles into favour, is urged; and the moral government of God is vindicated in this particular. Why were the Jews rejected? They had many advantages—" chiefly, they possessed the oracles of God : to them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant,

and the giving of the law, and the promises," etc. (Rom. ix. 4, 5.)—they were particularly selected and separated from all other nations—they were blessed with a revelation of Jehovah's character and plan of mercy—they had a standing ministry to instruct them, and occasionally prophets to warn and encourage them—and yet they were rejected. Why was this? Let the Apostle answer—*They made their privileges their ground of hope*—in their own observance of the law of ordinances, they set their righteousness! “They being ignorant of God’s righteousness,”—although it was plainly revealed—“ and going about to establish their own righteousness, submitted not themselves to the righteousness of God”—“ for Christ is the end of the law”—the object to which the law points—“ for righteousness, *to every one that believeth.*” Now Israel “stumbled at this stumbling-stone”—they followed after the righteousness of the law and they attained not unto righteousness—“because they sought it not *by faith*”—or simply crediting these glad tidings—“ but as it were by the works of the law.” (Rom. ix. 30 to

end; and v. 3, 4.) On the other hand, the Gentiles, whose characters as men, were notoriously immoral—whose worship, as religionists, was most awfully gross and abominable—who had no Scriptures to guide them—no divinely-instituted ministry to instruct them—no promises to cheer—no prophets to warn them—they, whose lives were generally abandoned, and whose deities were wood and stone—who took no pains to follow after righteousness and who were ignorant of its nature, attained unto righteousness!—and wherefore? simply because they *believed* the glad tidings of justification, through the blood of Jesus; and *the righteousness which is by faith was imputed to them!*

And that justification is of grace, (or *mere mercy*,) *through faith*, (or simply giving credit to the sacred word,) and not of works; nor of faith and works together; is shewn in the eleventh chapter; where, accounting for the preservation of the children of God, in Elijah's time, and asserting, also, a similar purpose of deliverance from legal bondage and national destruction, as touching them, in his

own days, Paul declares, that “even at this present time, also, there is *a remnant* according to”—what?—their merit above their fellows?—their possessing a certain character graciously renewed in them? No; but “according to *the election of grace*.” And what is his conclusion? Oh! my dear friends, it is “worthy of all acceptance”—“If be *grace*” there be a remnant who are not included in the general rejection—“then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more of grace: otherwise work is no more work.” (Rom. xi. 2-6.) Works and grace cannot reign together in the matter of a sinner’s justification; *they are everlastinglj opposed*—they have no harmony in sense—they have no fellowship in fact; and well it is for you and for me, that these things are written. Oh! but for this gracious declaration, which those Scriptures convey, I, for my own part, must confess, that I would be overwhelmed with despair, and would have nothing before me, “but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” If salvation were not wholly and altogether, from

first to last, of mere mercy, independent of our personal righteousness, and frames, and feelings, and characters, and usefulness, we should all, without exception, launch into everlasting perdition, when the tabernacles of our flesh were dissolved, and our spirits became liberated from their earthly prisons. But “these things are written that we might believe, and believing, might have life through the name of Jesus.” (John. xx. 31.)

In connexion with what Paul states in the ninth of Romans, I would beg further to call your attention to what he writes to the churches of Galatia, in the second chapter of his Epistle to them. “We who are Jews by nature”—that is, a nation in covenant with the God of heaven—“and not sinners of the Gentiles, (who were without God in the world) knowing that a man,” whether Jew or Gentile, “is not justified by the works of the law, but *by the faith of Jesus Christ*, even we” (Jews, with all our privileges and legal duties; yea, Apostles, with our heavenly commission) “have believed in Jesus Christ, that *we* might be justified

by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law :” (whether moral or ceremonial) “for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” And in the second chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, he reminds that church, that the manifold blessings, to the enjoyment of which they had been quickened, were conveyed to them *by grace*, “for by grace are ye saved, *through faith*, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, *not of works*, lest any man should boast.”

And once more, to sum up all the proofs upon this head, I refer to the third chapter of Titus, in which the Apostle reminds his friend, that he might remind “the church over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer,” how that they themselves, even as those that were without, “were also sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived; serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another”—awful characters!—“but,” immediately subjoins the apostle, “after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, *not by works of righteousness* which we have done, but ac-

cording to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and (even the) renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being *justified by his grace*, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life—this is a faithful saying.” (Titus iii. 3-8.)

If I understand these passages aright, and I am persuaded that in the application of them which I have briefly suggested, I have the mind of Christ, I conclude that a “*man is justified by faith—without the deeds of the law;*” and I would just beseech you to remark, that this is not my conclusion, but that of the Apostle Paul, in his own words. (Rom. iii. 28.) Now there must be a sense in which this saying of his is true. But we find James, in the Epistle before us, stating, in terms as explicit as those used by Paul, that “*a man is justified by works, and not by faith only;*” and there must be a sense in which this is true likewise. Now this is what I proposed to consider, in the

III. place.

These statements cannot be different, or the subjects upon which the Apostles are treating must be different; otherwise, there would be war in heaven, the kingdom of Christ would be divided against itself, and therefore could not stand. Men have been guilty of very great absurdity, and have propagated opinions which strike at the root of real godliness, and have poisoned the world with fatally erroneous doctrine, by not attending carefully to the subject upon which James writes; for, supposing that he is treating of justification in the same sense that Paul has treated it in his Epistles, they are forced, in maintaining a system of human working and glory, to put one apostle in array against another—an inspired penman of one portion of the sacred volume, against the inspired penman of another portion; and consequently, the Holy Ghost, under whose inspiration they wrote, against Himself! To be consistent, their system must discard the writings, either of Paul and Peter and John, or of James, as spurious: if the doctrine of James be not *precisely, in every respect*, the same as that taught by the other

apostles, he could not have been moved by the Spirit of Christ to publish it : or if his doctrine (in the sense of Arminians) be the doctrine of God, then Paul and Peter and John were, to say the least, fallible men. It is, however, evident, that if all were taught by the Holy Ghost, the faith they published was the same faith, and the tendencies of that faith, its legitimate tendencies, are the same. But they are *not* treating of justification in the same sense; and a consideration of the context is sufficient to satisfy an inquirer that they are not. Paul treats of the mode by which an ungodly sinner becomes accounted righteous *before God*—is justified; and he distinctly states, as we have seen, that it is *gratuitously through faith* in Christ Jesus—that God justifieth the ungodly *without works, before they be done*, and *independent of them*; and this saying is faithful, and worthy of the acceptance of every man who hears it: it is the very key-stone of Christianity—there is no Christianity without it: it is the rock upon which the weary and heavy-laden find rest—it is the wine and the milk, which

they who have no money buy, “without money and without price.” It ought to be observed, and I beg you will remember, that Paul was not singular in preaching this truth; and yet many are to be found, who do not hesitate to assert, that this great Apostle stands alone in promulgating *unconditional* salvation : it was the theme upon which the prophets loved to dwell—it formed the distinguishing feature of all our Lord’s addresses to the unconverted—it was the chord of the celestial harp, which vibrated to the enraptured touch of all the Lord’s apostles. The soundness of every essay and discourse addressed to sinners, or to saints, is to be tried by this touchstone. Oh! it is a very thunderbolt against all self-righteousness !

James says, however, “ You see, then, *how* that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” I verily am persuaded that James wrote under the self - same inspiration which informed the minds and guided the pens of his brethren : they spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—so did he : and I

receive this saying of his as most true. I am also fully persuaded, that it cannot be interpreted rightly, if it be understood in a different sense, or be brought forward to establish a different doctrine from that so strenuously inculcated by Paul, by the prophets, and by the Lord of prophets and apostles. The student of the divine word is therefore constrained, when he meets this statement, to examine the context with the most jealous scrutiny, to discover how it will accord with the most salutary, and comfortable, and holy doctrine of justification by faith only; and to me it is as plain as demonstration can make it, that so far from contradicting Paul, James holds up his brother's hands, confirming and strengthening this precious truth, which shines throughout the Scriptures of God, “as apples of gold in pictures of silver.” I find him *asserting the doctrine of justification by faith*, and another justification in addition to it—not in the sight of God, but in the sight of man—not a justification *unto* life, but *of* life—not *opposed* to the former, but confirmatory of

it—not going hand in hand with the former, in order to complete it, but resulting from it, in order to evidence its existence.

Concerning that which is before God, man cannot see it; it is a transaction between God and the individual's soul; it is suspended, in a certain sense, upon given credit to *a testimony* of divinely qualified witnesses, to the fact of the Lord Jesus' death and resurrection, for the remission of sins, and justification of his people. The knowledge of this stupendous display of mercy, is what a stranger doth not intermeddle with. "God knoweth them that are his," (2 Tim. ii. 19.) and He graciously signifies to them their "acceptance in the Beloved," "by the demonstration of the Spirit", in and by "the word of the truth of the gospel." This is not a matter which can come under the cognizance of man—it is between the sinner and Jehovah! and he who has this testimony cannot be deceived.

Concerning that, however, of which James here speaks, it is a matter of which man *can* take cognizance, and more, he *must* do so: and I request you to turn with me to the

commencement of this subject, in his second chapter, and give me again a patient hearing, while I endeavour to direct your attention to the grand points of his argument.

James, from the 14th verse, to the end of the second chapter, demonstrates the vanity of a *mere profession* of Christian doctrine, and explains how the *possession* of divine truth is to be distinguished from a heartless, that is, an ignorant acknowledgment thereof. “What doth it profit, my brethren,” saith this man of God, “though a man *SAY* he hath faith, and have not works”—observe, a great deal of the force of this passage rests upon this little word, “*SAY*”—“though a man *say* he hath faith, and have not works; can faith,”—can this faith, this saying he hath faith—this mere profession that he believes the peculiar truths of the sacred word, “save him?” Surely not: you will not find it written in the whole Bible, that the *saying* a man has faith, is accompanied with salvation; but you do find it distinctly and solemnly affirmed, yea, attested on the authority of God, that he who *possesses* the faith of Jesus Christ,

“ is passed from death unto life,” “ is delivered from condemnation,” is saved, and sooner shall “ heaven and earth pass away,” than God shall fail to fulfil his promises of pardon and acceptance to every one who does indeed *hold* the faith in sincerity; for “ God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man, that he should repent.” The inutility of such a profession is illustrated in the following verses, in a way that carries conviction to every mind, and makes a powerful impression upon the feelings of our nature. “ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you *SAY* unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which be needful to the body; what doth it profit?” Here again, I would particularly press upon your attention, the force of the word “ *say*.” If a Christian brother or sister, who professed to believe the gospel you acknowledge—to have the same hopes built upon the same foundation—and to be fellow-pilgrims with you to the heavenly country—if such a one, in a state of poverty and helplessness, were to

make known his distressing situation to you, and you, apparently belonging to the same body, professing to be animated by the same spirit, expecting the same glory in the fulness of time to be revealed, and having it in your power to administer relief, were with all the appearance of pity, and all the language of compassion, to put that poor brother or sister off, with a mere expression of sentiment, with a mere *saying*; “be ye warmed and filled,” what would it profit? Would it warm the naked or feed the hungry; or would it satisfy the poor applicant of the sincerity of your professed regard? Surely not. What would be the persuasion of your mind, respecting the attachment of that professed friend, who, with all the ability necessary to supply your wants, would say to you, in your distress, “my dear friend, I really feel for your situation, and with all my heart wish you to be relieved,” and relieved you not, would you believe him? Surely you would not: there would be no profit in his canting pity—there would be no evidence of his sincerity. “Even so,” adds the Apostle, “faith,” the mere *saying* a man

believes, “ if it have not works, is dead, being alone.” A mere profession will be unaccompanied by the genuine fruits of the vital principle of godliness ; and being so, will be evidenced to be dead, and profitless. Now, James goes on to shew how the reality of a man’s professed belief can be ascertained : “ Yea, a man may say, thou hast faith, and I have works : SHEW me”—here again, remark the stress which must be laid on the word “*shew*”—“ SHEW me thy faith without thy works, and I will *shew* thee my faith by my works.” Here is the test of the professor’s sincerity. Is there any way, one may say, by which you can satisfy me that you do truly believe what you profess—you affirm that you believe the gospel; how shall I know that you are not an impostor? What does your faith produce—what effect has it upon your mind, your spirit, your life, your conversation? are your views of God, of Christ, of sin, as obscure or as confused as ever? Are you as worldly as ever, as ungodly as ever? Your own *mere assertion* can never be an evidence to me of your possessing the faith of God’s

elect, if in conversation with you, you cannot give a scriptural reason of the hope you pretend to have; and if upon sufficient opportunity I find it unattended by the fruits of God's spirit. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is as true of private Christians, as of teachers. Such a faith is nothing better than that of devils : it may be the confession of what is in itself the truth of God ; but like their acknowledgement of the unity of the divine essence, it leaves the man just as he was before.

The Apostle proceeds to give an example in support of this kind of evidence, and he says, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" Now, you may read in the 15th chapter of Genesis, that Abraham was accounted righteous, or justified, *long before the transaction occurred to which James alludes.* You will find this venerable Patriarch called by God from the land of the Chaldees, going forth in obedience to the divine command, "from his country, from his kindred, and from his father's house, not knowing whither he went :" and the Holy Ghost tells

you it was “ by faith ” he did so. (Heb. xi. 8.) You will find him not staggering at the promise of God, when in his old age, and under the most improbable circumstances, Jehovah promised, that “ his seed should be as the stars of heaven,” and upon this occasion it is recorded, “ *he believed in the Lord.* ” And what is the obvious meaning of this ? He was persuaded that it would be even as God had said, and “ *he counted it to him for righteousness.* ” (Gen. xv. 6.) And concerning the offering of Isaac, you will find the Apostle to the Hebrews declaring, that *it was a work of faith* —an expression of that principle—a work, by which, when he was tried, his faith was made manifest, that it was wrought by God. So that this instance which James brings forward, is to shew that Abraham, when he proceeded to offer up his only-begotten, in whom the promises centered, *really possessed* the persuasion he professed of God’s faithfulness ; that he was no impostor ; and by it he stands justified to the world and to the Church throughout all ages , as having the faith which is of the operation of God.

Again, the Apostle introduces Rahab's works in Jericho, in the matter of secreting the spies, as an illustration of his argument. We all know what her character was—that she had no works of morality to recommend her—on the contrary, that her manner of life was grossly flagitious, and in every respect to be condemned; and the very works to which James here refers, what were they, according to the world's estimation, and expressed in the world's language, but vile treason against her Sovereign, and bloody treachery against her fellow-citizens? Yet these works are said to have justified her—Is it before God? Was she, by that act of treason, made precious in the eyes of Jehovah, who hath said, that “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft?” No: but that very act justified or evidenced the reality of her belief in the God of Israel. She had heard of the Lord's doings for the Children of Israel, and she affirmed, that she knew that Jehovah had given them the land: and when the spies came to her house, she recognized Jehovah in his servants, and received them accordingly. Now this act of Rahab, is also testified by the Spirit

of God as being an, *act of faith*: (Heb. xi. 31.) an act which proved that she was *really possessed* of that principle which she professed in the presence of Jehovah's messengers. What shall we say then to these things? but that they stand on record *as examples*, to shew HOW a man is justified to his fellow-men, by works produced by faith, and not by a mere profession of faith, only. I trust that this exposition has commended itself to your judgments: I know that it is in perfect harmony with the whole truth of God—I feel satisfied that it is the obvious and only legitimate meaning of the apostle's argument.

IV. I shall now consider the character of the works to which the Apostle alludes—the works by which a man is justified in the sight of his fellow-men, and ascertained by the church of Christ to be a believer of the Gospel.

The New Testament writers, when speaking of the legitimate effects of believing, describe the faith of God's elect as bringing with it *Peace* with God, ““ being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” (Rom. v. 1.) This is the only source of true scriptural peace;

and all efforts to derive peace with God from any thing else, or by any other way, serve only to plunge the sinner into distresses, doubts, and harassing fears, and to drive him farther off from God. But to him that believeth, who is persuaded in his mind that the things testified by the apostles are true, there is afforded a solid ground for perfect quiet, because it is written, “He is our peace”—“He hath made peace by the blood of his cross”—“He is made of God” unto sinners, “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption”—He “hath for ever taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself”—“He hath reconciled sinners unto God, being made sin for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (Eph. ii, 14. Col. i. 20. 1 Cor. i. 30. Heb. ix. 26. 2 Cor. v. 21.)

Does the child of God want peace under *a consciousness of guilt*?—He remembers, or he should remember, that it is written, Jesus Christ “was manifested to take away the sins” of his people; and believing it, he has peace. Does he look upon his *abiding corruptions*?—He remembers, it is written, “we

are complete in Jesus ; ” and he has peace in believing. Does he contemplate his *trials and afflictions in the world*?—He remembers it is written, “ I have overcome the world ; ” and he is of good cheer in believing. Does his mind dwell upon *the solemn hour of death*—and does nature shrink from the separation of the spirit from its earthly tenement?—He remembers that it is written, “ Christ hath overcome him that had the power of death, even the devil ; ” and that “ death ” is included in that comprehensive grant, by which all things are his ; and he has peace in believing. Or does he think of *judgment*, when the books shall be opened, and when the final sentence shall be pronounced upon the ungodly ?—he entertains no fears, for it is written, “ There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus ; ” and again, “ Every tongue that riseth up in judgment against them they shall condemn, for their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord : ” yea, he knows that prior to the judgment of the unbelieving, he will be acknowledged as one of those, to whom “ it is the Father’s good pleasure to give

the kingdom ;" and that he shall be associated with his Lord, on that solemn day, in pronouncing judgment upon men and angels. (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.) Friends, can a man be *persuaded* of these things, and not have peace? —Impossible.

But, alas ! the Lord's people are not always in possession of a calm and quiet spirit ; but mourn, at times, the absence of peace—and why is this ? They are sometimes so " cast down and disquieted within them," as to think that " God hath forgotten to be gracious, and that he hath for ever shut up his tender mercies." I speak this to your shame. Know you not that the peace of God is perfect, irrevocable, everlasting—the reward, the stipulated reward of the obedience unto death of Jesus, and of that only : and do you question the veracity of Jehovah, and the value of Immanuel's work, because you are faint-hearted, and find that you carry about you a body of sin ? Away, my brethren, with this unbelief. But shall I tell you what probably conduces to deprive you of comfort; what probably has banished the heavenly dove from

your breast? And here I desire distinctly to be understood, as addressing myself exclusively to those, who by grace are made partakers of the hope of the Gospel—who have been born again of the Spirit, in believing the record which God hath given of his Son—for they only can understand or profit by what I now say. Beloved brethren, you have forgotten that you have been “purged from your old sins” (2 Pet. i. 9.)—you have “let slip the things which you have heard;” (Heb. ii. 1.) and what has been the consequence? Search and see whether the unhappiness and want of comfort you lament betimes, arise not from negligence and unwatchfulness, occasioned by this forgetfulness, this looking off from Jesus. Has the sacred word, your blessed charter of hope, been perused *as carefully* as you might have read it?—Has your soul sought communion with your Father—your own, peculiar, purchased, privilege—as *perseveringly* as you might have sought it? Or has your separation from the world, which is your dignity, and to which you have been called, been as *entire* and *uncompromising* as it ought to be?

If the word be neglected, or but formally consulted—if prayer be not the *habit* of your spirit— if worldly society be mixed with— if worldly occupations be pursued, when there existed no providential reason for entering into such society, or being engaged in such occupations; no wonder that your peace be interrupted, and your spiritual constitution sickly. But how should I counsel you—how should I reason with my own soul, under similar circumstances? Should I entreat you to abandon those habits, and to take peace from the abandonment? No, no; but I would direct you at once to Him, who is set forth *to the church*, as the “ Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;” and I would remind you, and my own soul, of what the beloved disciple says, concerning your blessedness—“The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanseth *us* from all sin.” Your peace of conscience was originally derived from him by believing this record—not by reading, or prayer, nor by possessing a believer’s character: your peace of mind, or the continued enjoyment of that other peace, can only be

maintained by looking unto Jesus : and while you so watch, there will be peace like a river flowing over your soul : your mind receiving constant renewing, you will be delivered from conformity to the world—you will be transformed : the Bible and the throne of grace will resume their wonted station in your affections —you will go upon your course rejoicing. “As ye have, therefore, received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith.” (Col, ii. 6, 7.)

Again I read in the word of God, that the faith of God’s elect, “*purifieth the heart;*” (Acts xv. 9.) and according as it exhibits this effect, it is justified as being of God. The purity of God’s children is a purity of principle—that of others is conventional. The purity of the former is real and inward—that of the latter is imitative, and merely outward. The believer walks as seeing Him who is invisible ; and the habitual consciousness of the Lord’s presence produces habitual mortification of his inward corruptions. As he is a “partaker of the divine nature,” by grace; he

“ escapes the corruption which is in the world,” occasioned by a will at variance with that of God. (2 Pet. i. 4.) Oh! my friends, if the professedly Christian world were to examine itself by this rule ; or if it be assayed according to it, how little evidence will it afford of possessing this heart-purifying principle ! But let us not mistake respecting the purity of the disciples of Jesus. Let it not be imagined, that there exists *nothing* of an opposite character in the children of God. The Scripture saith of those who have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and with one another, that “if they say they have no sin, they deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them.” (1 John i. 3, 8.) They are, *in themselves*, that is, *in their nature*, as opposed to godliness as ever : their flesh is enmity against God, and will be so as long as it exists ; it will never cease to be wicked and damnable ; (Article 9,) and the unceasing warfare between the flesh and the spirit, is perpetual demonstration of the presence and malignity of sin. But Faith in the child of God, is a dead weight upon his corruptions, and will

not suffer them to have the ascendancy. It is entirely owing to the gracious exercise of this principle, that he who believeth is not as other men are, slaves to their appetites, governed by selfishness. He cannot *serve* sin because he is the Lord's *freedman*: he is “bought with a price,” and it is his aim to “glorify God in his *body* and in his *spirit*, which are His.” (1 Cor. vi. 20.)

The faith of God's elect “*worketh by love* ;” (Gal. v. 6.) and as it has expression in this way also, it is evidenced to be possessed.

You will find, in the Bible, that the love of God, which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, is directed in its developement toward *the real character of God*, as it is displayed by the Incarnate Word. The believer loves Jehovah, the God of truth, of justice, and of holiness, as well as the God of mercy. He beholds Him upholding the majesty of His name, and asserting the dignity of His divine attributes, neither neutralizing, nor dispensing with any one of them, for the purpose of magnifying another.— He loves

Him as “the just God and the Saviour,” for by faith he understands that He is just, while He justifieth the ungodly. (Rom. iv. 5.)

Again—This love is directed toward *the truth*, or the revelation of his plan of mercy graciously vouchsafed by Jehovah to fallen man. Every doctrine connected with this subject is precious to the believer—he adores the love which purposed to save the guilty, before the foundation of the world—which in time, calls and separates the children of God from the common mass, and brings them into the high and glorious liberty of the sons of the Highest: his soul hangs upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus ; and all the subtlety of human argumentation, and all the ridicule and calumny of the unbelieving, can never shake his confidence in “ the Rock of his salvation.” Men may cavil and propose questions which he may not be able, at the moment, satisfactorily to answer or repel; but he loves—oh! how he loves every portion of the gracious plan, by which he is made “a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God.” (Eph. ii. 19.)

Farther—This love is manifested by his regard for *the word of God*.—Ah! friends, this is a touchstone whereby to try the soundness of our profession. There is a great deal of attachment to the Scriptures, as far as words go, in the world (but, oh! what practical hatred of it! How few, in this so called Christian land—How few even in that distinguished by the title of “the land of Bibles,” make the sacred oracles the book of their *study*, of their *counsel*, of their *comfort*! Alas! if the amount of real religion may be estimated by the real value placed upon the Scriptures; and if that value may be discovered by the habitual seeking from the sacred page, what is profitable for time and for eternity—if we may judge of the reality of religion, from the treatment of that word, wherefrom alone, *true religion* can be had—then how small is the sum of it!—What a little flock—what a very small remnant shall we find amidst the mighty bustle, and the almost boundless profession amongst Protestants, of veneration for the Scriptures!—How rarely are they the daily study of the mind!—How few instinctively

turn to them for instruction and for guidance! My friends, it is difficult to restrain our indignation — and yet, my soul, surely it ought rather to move thy pity, and draw forth thy prayer—when we see men trying to pour contempt upon the word of God, and covering their dislike to it by such a shallow excuse as its obscurity, or their want of time to read it —oh! it is grievous to find men, who possess every human facility for becoming acquainted with the things revealed, and nevertheless suffer week after week to elapse without ever bringing their mind sin contact with God's own word, endeavouring to deceive themselves, and to blind the eyes of others, by such puerile excuses as these — “Really I am so taken up with public business, or my own—I am so occupied in attending to the important concerns of my family, that with every disposition to read the Bible, I find myself unable to spare time to do so.” This is only a delusion of the devil, or the expression of a mind at enmity against God. What, friends! and is it so—that your lawful temporal, avocations are such as to render it impossible for you to read the Scrip-

tures? Oh! do not those very Scriptures expose the falsehood of this assertion?—Do they not give to the children of God an evidence, that it is not from want of time to read it, but of love for its contents, that the multitude habitually neglect the word of God?—What! shall we admit this as a reasonable excuse, when we find one who bore upon his shoulders the anxieties of a kingdom's government—who had the conduct of a kingdom's forces—who had the care of providing for the building of an edifice, which took many years to erect—expressing his regard for the revelation which he possessed, in such ardent language as this—“ Oh! how I love thy law; it is my meditation all the day! How sweet are thy words to my taste!—yea, sweeter than honey and the honeycomb to my mouth! Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee. By it is thy servant warned, and in keeping of it there is great reward!” (Psalm cxix. 19.) If David, a monarch, a warrior, and having in hand to prepare materials for the temple of the Lord, could yet find time to meditate upon the

things of God, as revealed in his word—how say ye, that you cannot find time for this purpose? Nay but is not the cause of this, your want of love to the word; and that, because you do not consider yourselves interested in its contents? My friends, the faith which is evidence to the things contained therein, causes the record itself to be more desired than gold, more sweet than honey or the honey-comb. And yet the very persons who thus would excuse their want of regard for the Scriptures, and who attribute their habitual neglect of the solemn subjects they contain, to want of time—find time enough for the theatre, the ball-room, the gambling-table, those sinks of pollution!—they find time enough for revelling and banqueting—for lounging about the streets—for visiting and amusements, and for ornamenting their poor sinful persons. Oh! friends, *the faith of God's elect produces none of these things, but the contrary;* and they who have time for such occupations, and yet profess that they find it impossible to peruse the word of God, prove that the faith which worketh by love is not in them. That

word is to the believer the subject of his deepest study—the source of his truest comfort—the scene of his purest enjoyment: it gives him wisdom, and consolation, and recreation, and all happiness. It is his own! He is interested in its blessings—it has proved the seed of life to his soul; and he daily grows by the nourishment it imparteth. Blessed—blessed book! Pardon, acceptance, peace—all the blessings of the everlasting covenant, have been derived unto his soul from it. God has therein been exhibited in his true character—a reconciled Father in Christ Jesus—and well—well does he love it.

Again—this love is directed toward *the people of God*. “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,” saith the Lord, “if ye have love one to another.” (John xiii. 35.) How beautifully was this blessed effect of faith exemplified among the little church of the first-born, after the Lord’s departure, when they used to assemble in the upper room; (Acts i. 13.) and it is recorded of them, that “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul,” (Acts iv.

32.) Oh! where is this oneness of heart and soul now evidenced? Alas! the body of Christ is divided! and even among those who otherwise have many of the marks of genuine discipleship, there is a lamentable falling off in this. But, my brethren, this ought not to be. The faith by which we become united to Christ, ought to unite his people who are his body, one to another. And it is, indeed, a truly gracious sign of a man's possessing this faith, when it bursts through those barriers which difference of denomination has placed around particular bodies, and there is a hailing as a brother, and wearing upon the heart as a brother, every one who "loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity"—every one who acknowledges him in his scriptural character, and is conformed to his image, whatever be the Christian society to which the individual may belong. Oh! there is a time approaching—and hasten it blessed Lord for thy glory's sake!—when all who are in Christ shall be ONE—when the distinctions by which they are at present separated, shall be annihilated and the "Redeemed of the Lord" shall be the univer-

sal designation of the Church which he hath purchased with his own blood. In the mean time, we must “exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, and provoke one another unto love, and good works;” (Heb. iii. 13; and 10, 24.) that “as holy and beloved, the elect of God, we put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering forbearing one another, and forgiving one another—and above all these things that we put on LOVE, which is the bond of perfectness. (Col. iii. 12 to 14.)

The faith of God’s elect “*overcometh the world.*” “Who is he that overcometh the world,” saith the Apostle John, “but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” (1 John v. 4, 5.) This affords another test, whereby to ascertain the reality of a man’s profession.

And, dear friends, permit me in the spirit of love to enquire, is it to overcome the world to be the slave of its habits, of its maxims, and of its opinions? What saith the scripture?

“The world lieth in wickedness” (or in the wicked one!) (1 John v. 19.) and “whosoever will be the friend of the world, is an enemy of God” (Jas. iv. 4.) “for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” (1 John ii. 15, 16.)

Is it to overcome the world, to have one's affections set upon its vain and frivolous occupations, and amusements; its revellings, and banquetings, and abominable idolatries?

Is it to overcome the world, to have a passionate attachment to the theatre, the ball-room, the card-table, and the gaming-house?

Is it to overcome the world, to pant after its glory, and its honours, and its emoluments; to rise up early, and late take rest, in order to acquire the transitory enjoyment of its wealth, and of its reputation; and to evince no carefulness, no anxiety after the honour which cometh from God, and perisheth not?

Is it to overcome the world, to be ashamed

of its ridicule and discountenance, because of Christ—and to dread the stigma of being called a Saint of God?

No, my friends, this is not to overcome, but to be overcome by, the world. Faith separates the child of God from those habits, and carries him above the puny and impotent rage of the ungodly. It arms him with strength to “contend for the glorious truth delivered to the saints,” and makes him not ashamed of his hope. While it gives him energy in his calling, whatever *lawful* calling he may have, (and an *unlawful* one it will cause him to abandon) it will render him superior to the ungodly principles upon which the business of unconverted men is conducted; and a scrupulous love of truth, of integrity, and faithfulness will more or less distinguish him. Such are the works, which the sacred volume instructs us, are produced by this precious principle; and all who “have obtained the like precious faith,” will bring forth those fruits, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred. They who are justified before God by faith, or by simply crediting the Gos-

pel, have *peace with God*, receive a principle of purity, whereby they are freed from the dominion of sin, and manifest it in their lives and conversations; they love *God's character*, the doctrines of grace, the word of God, and the people of God, and overcome the world. Now, if a judgment be passed upon the busy, active, bustling, professing, Christian world, by this rule, alas! how little reason shall we have for glorying in the number of nominal Christians! You see, then, HOW it is that a man is justified by works, or approved to possess the faith of the elect of God. But, my dear friends, those effects of believing have no share in justifying the sinner in the sight of God. Whilst we were speaking of these things we were not declaring the gospel, but what the gospel always produces when believed. The gospel itself is nothing more than the announcement of pardon, and acceptance to the ungodly, through the obedience unto death of the Son of God. In the proclamation of it it is to be unalloyed with its effects. What it makes him who is given to believe it, has

nothing to say to his acceptance with God. The sinner is not accepted *because* of the character which he has obtained, or shall obtain; but *because* Christ died for sinners; and he knows that there is forgiveness with God, *by no other means than by believing what God has revealed.* The declaration of pardon is free as the air we breathe, and is addressed to men, *as sinners justly condemned, and ready to perish.* It tells how God may be just, at the same time that he is the justifier of the ungodly, and considers every man who hears it as bearing this character. The most amiable man on earth, with all his kindness of feeling, and usefulness in his generation, will pass into everlasting ruin, unless he have a good hope, through faith in it. 'The most wretched man on earth, notwithstanding all his iniquities, shall go to the realms of bliss, if God but open his mind to understand and believe it. Should there be, then, among those who hear me this day, one soul more sunken in pollution than another, or one more remarkable for what the world esteems, than his fellows, *to both alike,*

without any difference or exception, without taking into account what either is, or has been, the Apostolic testimony, is “ By Jesus Christ all who believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts xiii. 39.) “ It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” (1 Tim. i. 15.) “ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts xvi. 31.)

REDEMPTION.

REDEMPTION.

“Jesus Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

TITUS ii. 14.

God—according to the “everlasting covenant which is ordered in all things, and sure,” purposing to “make known the riches of his glory on those whom, in sovereign compassion, he had afore-prepared thereunto”; and with a view to manifest his love to man, thereby exhibiting “his wisdom unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places”—gave unto his Son a people out of the fallen family of

Adam, in whose nature and in whose behalf, the Eternal Word should sustain the righteousness of the divine character and harmonize the divine attributes, and whose advancement to glory he should render consistent with the fullest expression of the divine perfections: and this his eternal purpose in regard to man, whom he viewed as guilty of revolt against his unquestionable authority, and unwilling as incapable of returning to his allegiance—whom he regarded as justly obnoxious to his righteous indignation, and unable to avert or to appease it—this “his eternal purpose,” I say, “which he purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began” to form from our race “a peculiar people” “who would shew forth his praise,” is a demonstration of, at once, unparalleled love, such as cannot be fully illustrated by any thing with which we are conversant; and of that uncontrollable sovereignty, the possession of which is essential to his nature as God. “God is love,” saith the Apostle John; and again, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world,

that we might live through him." And again "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 8, 9, 10.) In providing thus for the reconciliation of any of the rebellious, God acted from no necessity of law : there was nothing in the nature or the character of the offenders, which could have claimed this divine philanthropy ; there was nothing in the nature or the character of God himself which laid an obligation upon him to determine it. His purposing to save sinners proceeded purely from the counsel of his own will; and the plan by which his righteousness should be displayed was laid by infinite wisdom and executed by infinite power. "God doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ?" (Dan. iv. 35.) This his sovereignty, when exercised in displaying mercy to man is thus set forth in the sacred volume, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy ; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion ; so then it is

not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Rom. ix. 15, 16. Exod. xxiii. 19.) To this he is not influenced by the utmost excellency of man on the one hand, nor diverted from it by the utmost delinquency of man on the other. The supremacy of God is as generally acknowledged as his being : but many who allow his rightful dominion over the works of his hands; who never think of questioning his benevolence or impugning his justice in the distribution, however unequal, of temporal blessings; yet limit his sovereignty in the disposal of that which is as much his own, even his saving mercy ; and with temerity challenge his justice and arraign his love, in selecting from among the children of men, who are all equally guilty, some to be heirs of glory, and leaving others to reap the fruits of their disobedience. Did Jehovah, indeed, overlook the claims of his justice and the inviolability of his truth in the salvation of sinners—did he not provide for the heirs of promise something more than mere pardon—did he not explain the end which he had in view in adopting into his fa-

mily the children of wrath—there might be some apparent ground for the objections, which the ignorance and ungodliness of our nature allege against his electing love : but all ground for reasonable opposition is removed, when we learn, that as God endows his children with *peculiar* blessings, so his purpose is that they shall be, on earth, a *peculiar* people—that as he provides for the forgiveness of their *evil* works, so he insures their zeal in those works that are *good*—that as his *justice* and his *truth* are engaged to punish their guilt, so by his way of blotting out their sins, “*mercy* and *truth* are met together, *righteousness* and *peace* have kissed each other.” (Ps. lxxxv. 10.)

Now, the method which divine wisdom has devised for shewing God to be “just and yet the justifier of the ungodly”—for declaring him to be the “Just God and the Saviour”—for effectually exhibiting his sovereignty and his love, is the REDEMPTION which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;” (Rom. iii. 24, 25.) of which redemption, the words of the text state the benefits, both as they re-

pect that which Christ has redeemed his people *from*, and as they relate to that which he has redeemed them *to*.

Let us consider the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus as to

- I. The Nature,
- II. The Extent,
- III. The Indefeasibility and
- IV. The Design of it.

In examining this subject our minds must not lose sight of the fact, that it is viewed by many in a light very different from that in which, I conceive, the scriptures of God present it; that in their estimation, the nature, extent, indefeasibility, and design of Redemption are in various respects different from those which this discourse will assign — and my earnest entreaty to all who hear the statements I shall make is, that upon this and every other question connected with our spiritual interests they will be guided, not by the names or authority of men, but by the unerring word of God!

I. The term “redeem” involves the notion of *bondage* on the part of the person to be

redeemed ; the payment of a *ransom* for his deliverance ; and the consequent *immunity* of him for whose freedom the ransom has been paid. If this definition be correct, Redemption cannot be perfectly understood when any one of these particulars is excluded from our notion of it ; nor can the term be properly applied to those who have never been “rid out of their bondage.” The New Testament use of “redeem” and “redemption” cannot be better explained than by reference to the use made of them in the Old ; and the correctness of the definition already given, will be seen by attending to the application of these terms in the latter.

The deliverance of Israel out of Egypt will serve to illustrate this subject. In the sixth chapter of the book of Exodus it is written, the Lord said unto Moses, “ I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep *in bondage* ; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and *I will rid you out of their*

bondage; and I will *redeem* you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments." (Ex. vi. 5, 6.) Again, in the thanksgiving song on the occasion of the Lord's overthrowing the hosts of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, the deliverance there afforded to the children of Israel is called redemption; "thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast *redeemed*." (Exod. xv. 13.) And again, in the book of Deuteronomy when Moses urges upon the people a separation from all the inhabitants of the land whither they were going to possess it, by motives drawn from their peculiar relationship to Jehovah; lest they should think more highly of themselves than they ought to think; and lest they should forget the condition in which they had been; or the arm which had delivered them; he says, "the Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and *re-*

deemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." (Deut. vii. 7, 8.) In these passages Redemption is plainly *the deliverance of those who had been in bondage.*

The law which regulated redemptions under the old Testament dispensation illustrates this subject still more particularly. "If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to *redeem* it, then shall he *redeem* that which his brother sold." "And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him *wax poor*, and *sell himself* unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family: after that he is sold, he may be *redeemed* again, *one of his brethren may redeem him*: either his uncle or his uncle's son may *redeem* him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may *redeem* him. And he shall reckon with him that bought him, from the year that he was sold to him, unto the year of jubilee: and the *price* of his sale shall be according

unto the number of years—if there be yet many years behind, according unto them he shall give again *the price of his Redemption* out of the money that he was bought for." (Lev. xxv. 25, 47 to 51.) In these scriptures all the particulars that have been specified as necessarily included in the idea of Redemption, viz. *bondage, ransom, freedom,* are found; and they have been adduced for the purpose of leaving no room for objection to the use of the term in this sense, in reference to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Having fixed the precise, scriptural meaning of the term, let us proceed to examine the doctrine conveyed in it. It is thus stated in the Apostolic epistles. In the epistle to the Romans, Paul, having proved that Jews and Gentiles are both under sin, and consequently condemned by the law; and having affirmed that "by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God;" announces the divine expedient for shewing mercy to the guilty, "without the law," namely "*through the Redemption* (*απολύτρωσιν*) *which is in Christ*"

Jesus." (Rom. iii. 19-21, 24.) In the first Epistle to the church at Corinth, he declares that " Jesus Christ is made unto them of God, wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and *Redemption.*" (1 Cor. i. 30.) To the Galatian churches he writes, " For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written (Deut. xxvii. 26) Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them —Christ *hath redeemed* (*εἰςγοναστεύει*) us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 10, 13.) To the church at Ephesus, having traced their spiritual blessings to their source, even God's " election of them, in Christ, before the foundation of the world;" and having stated that their " predestination to the adoption of children was according to the good pleasure of his own will;" and that they were " accepted in the beloved;" the Apostle writes, " in whom (namely, in Christ,) we have *redemption in his blood;* the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. i. 4 to 7.) The same is repeated in the Epistle to the Colossians,

chapter 1, verse 14. The writer to the Hebrew Christians, (whom he calls “Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,” Heb. iii. 1.) in the ninth chapter, where he treats of the spiritual import of the ceremonial ordinances; contrasting the honour of Messiah’s priesthood with that of the high priest under the law; and the efficacy of his offering, with the offerings prescribed by Moses; says, “by his (Christ’s) own blood he entered in once into the Holy place having obtained *eternal redemption* (*λυτρωσιν*) for us.” (Heb. ix. 12.) Peter reminds those whom he calls “elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, that they were not *redeemed* (*ελυτρωθητο*) with corruptible things as silver and gold,—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and spot.” (1 Pet. i. 2, 18, 19.) In the book of the Apocalypse, the symbolical representatives of the church are described as singing a new song (when the Lamb takes the sealed book out of the right hand of him who sat on the throne) saying “Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain,

and hast *redeemed* (*εγγένας*) us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation." (Rev. x. 9.) Again in the 14th chapter, the hundred and forty-four thousand, whom the beloved disciple heard singing the new song which no man but they could learn, are said to have been *redeemed* (*εγγένασμοι*) (see 1 Cor. xi. 20, where the same word is used evidently with reference to Redemption) from the earth, "these," John repeats, "were *redeemed* FROM AMONG MEN, the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb." (Rev ix. 1 to 4)

From these passages, the nature of the redemption of the soul at once appears—we have already had occasion to refer to the 25th chapter of Leviticus in order to illustrate and confirm the meaning which has been assigned to the term—and you have doubtless taken notice of the special rule laid down for conferring the right to become the redeemer: and I would in this place remark, that those ordinances were not instituted and prescribed, solely with reference to the temporal concerns of the Israelites, nor for their instruction

only; for Paul applies the law which forbade the muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn, to prove the obligation under which the churches lay to provide for the maintenance of their ministers; saying. “Doth God take care for oxen? or saith he (Moses) it altogether for our sakes. For our sakes no doubt this is written.” (1 Cor. ix. 9.) In the same way may we apply the passage to which I have alluded in Leviticus, as designed to point out the peculiar relationship he should bear to the redeemed, who is their Redeemer and their ransom.

Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of souls “led captive by Satan at his will”, is presented to the contemplation of our minds as akin to his redeemed; bearing their nature, and calling them brethren. “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born *under the law* to *redeem* them that were *under the law*, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) “God was manifest *in the flesh*. (1 Tim. iii. 16.) “Both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified are all

of one : for which cause he is not ashamed to call them *brethren*, saying, I will declare thy name unto my *brethren*; in the midst of the *church* will I sing praises unto thee. And again, behold, I, and the *children* which God has given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of *flesh* and *blood*, he also himself likewise took part of *the same*; that through death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and *deliver* them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his *brethren*, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of his people." (Heb. ii. 11 to 17.)

Thus, according to the typical institution of Moses, which related to Redemption among the children of Israel, Jesus Christ is under the same law, bearing the same nature, and belonging to the same family as they whose cause he has in mercy undertaken. Passing

by the angels that sinned, he stoops to be made of a nature lower than theirs — not contemplating humanity as it is borne by the family of Adam indiscriminately, but taking hold of it as borne by believing Abraham, He, the head of Abraham's seed,—(and “ they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham;” “ ye are all the children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus; and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise”—Gal. iii. 7. 26, 29.) He—by right of nature, of family, and of law, to whom alone the privilege and the power to deliver belonged, became, of his own accord, the Redeemer of his people from the deadly bondage of Satan and of sin.

We learn further from these passages, that *the price* at which the sinners' freedom is procured is the Redeemer's own blood, or, according to the text, his giving himself for them. Deliverance is effected not by Christ's *accepting* at the captive's hands, his own endeavours, his self-mortification, his almsdeeds or his prayers; but by *giving*—not another or others; not the world, or angels; but **HIMSELF!**—not

to honor, or ease, or comfort; but to shame, and sorrow, and death—and this, not for the just, or for friends; but for the unjust, and for enemies! Precious, precious truth! “God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. v. 8.) The principle upon which the law was framed was that “without shedding of blood is no remission.” (Heb. ix. 22.) and the glad tidings which God has commanded to be proclaimed to sinners, announce Redemption “through the blood of Christ.”

We are bound up to the acknowledgment that in these and similar passages, the plain and obvious truth conveyed is, that Redemption is deliverance “from all iniquity;” not a partial but a total, full, complete deliverance—not from offences venial according to the world’s notion, but from iniquities as they are viewed by God; not from few, but from all; not from inherited corruption, but from actual, wilful transgression; not making men free, so as to be able eventually to deliver themselves, but absolutely, effectually, and for ever delivering:

that this deliverance has been obtained by the obedience unto death of Jesus ; that in this work he acted not as a private person for himself, but as a public representative for others ; that his blood was shed, not by compulsion, but voluntarily ; not to confirm his doctrine, but to atone for sin ; that his sufferings, his blood-shedding, and his death, were the propitiation, the ransom, the atonement. It must be moreover admitted that this Redemption-work of the Lord Jesus was *indispensable*. Not, as though God was obliged to save *any* of the children of men. He might have consigned to endless woe the whole human race, and his justice and his goodness would have been unimpeachable, since “ all have sinned and come short of the glory of God ; ” and “ the wages of sin is death.” (Rom. iii. 23 ; vi. 23.) Man however in the vanity of his mind imagines that God is bound by his nature to save sinners,—yea and to save *all* sinners ; and considers it derogatory to the dignity of the divine character to suppose, that a being of infinite benevolence would permit any man to be born into this world

without providing for his happiness in that which is to come. If we considered the benignity of the divine character, apart, we might readily conceive how it would incline God to forgiveness; but as he can never be inclined to mercy, without, at the same time, being moved to assert the claims of justice, and to sustain the integrity of truth; and as mercy and justice and truth cannot, independent of revelation, by any possible procedure be infinitely exercised, so that the demands of either shall not be suspended; we may most scripturally assert, that the divine character which is constituted of various attributes, that in their exercise are completely inseparable, does not oblige God to pardon those who have violated his authority. He might punish, and he declares that he *will* punish the ungodly who believe not, "with everlasting destruction from his presence;" (2 Thess. 1. 9.) that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Ps. ix. 17.) And in executing the threatened judgment, "every mouth shall be stopped," and every face among his enemies shall be covered

with shame and confusion. But having determined, of his own sovereign will and pleasure, to save—though it had been but one, it became God—in order to express his abhorrence of sin, and at the same time his love toward the sinner—in order to shew that while he is infinitely and immutably good, he is also infinitely and immutably holy, just, and true—in pardoning the sinner to provide for the dignity of his law, and for the interests of holiness.

Having ascertained the nature of Redemption, we are now to hear what the scriptures teach us, with respect to

II. *Its extent.* If we view Redemption with reference to the *ransom*, we must regard it as *infinite in value*. The intellect of man is too limited in its powers, to form any thing like an adequate conception of the intrinsic excellence of the Redeemer's offering. Mark the language of the text—"Jesus Christ gave *himself* for us!" Who can comprehend—or what language can express how much is contained in this word **HIMSELF!** Whom the Father loves with infinite and

everlasting affection. Whom angels worship, and worshipping are blest! “Who is the brightness of Jehovah’s glory, and the express image of his person”— the effulgence of the divine majesty—the revelation of the divine perfections! (Heb. i. 2.) God, when he would assure the heirs of promise, because he can swear by no greater, swears by Himself! and when he would *give* unto them, because he could give no greater, “gave Himself!” (Text) Well may they then to whom this grace is given, take up the Apostle’s words and say “Thanks be unto God, for his unspeakable gift!” (2 Cor. ix 15.)

To make the sufferings of the Lord Jesus a subject of arithmetical calculation is a process from which the feelings of those to whom Christ is precious must instinctively revolt. His nature as God stamped upon his sufferings as man an infinitude of worth; and any attempt to define the amount of that worth is as vain and fruitless, as is the endeavour to conceive the manner of eternal existence, which is a deep that the intellectual energies of man are unable to fathom. Were it the purpose

of Jehovah *to apply* to every individual of the human family, or to the inhabitants of ten thousand worlds, the merit of Christ's work, *it would be sufficient to ransom all*. And did he design to ransom only one, we dare not say that salvation could be extended even to this solitary object of divine compassion, without that work which the sacred word declares maketh manifest the righteousness of God; and exhibits him as just while he justifieth the ungodly who believe in Jesus.

But considering Redemption in its *application*, with reference to the persons whom the Lord had in view in "enduring the cross and despising the shame," although they form "a great multitude which no man can number, out of every nation and kindred and people and tongue," (Rev. vii. 9.) yet if our notion of Redemption, (as deliverance from bondage in consequence of a ransom paid and accepted,) be correct, we are compelled to believe, that they only have been redeemed to whom the Spirit of Christ makes manifest the truth, that their iniquities have been forgiven and their sins covered, in the blood of Jesus. Whether

Christ had respect, in his sufferings, to mankind universally, or to those only whom the Father had given him in the covenant of grace, is a subject upon which difference of opinion has existed in all ages. Some, espousing the universal, some the particular side of the question. If they who advocate the former notion mean thereby—as however incorrectly they express themselves, many certainly do—that there is a sufficiency in the atonement, for the salvation of ALL—we are fully agreed; but if they believe that Christ's death was a ransom for all, in the same sense that it was a ransom for the elect, then we differ as widely in our conception of the matter, as light differs from darkness. Had Christ made atonement for all, he must have *represented* all; he must have *borne the iniquities* of all; he must have *made reconciliation* for all; he must have *obtained the pardon* of all; and *eternal Redemption* for all! From the very nature of substitution and sacrifice it would be but *justice* to him that he should obtain the stipulated reward of his obedience unto death; and if he died that *all* might be saved,

and his death have been accepted in lieu of theirs, then it would follow from what the scriptures reveal of the divine character, that *all* shall infallibly *be* saved. “For this is the Father’s will which hath sent him, that of all which he *hath given* the Son, he should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” Such is the covenant, between the Father and Son—so that in performing the conditions of that covenant, the Son did not act upon an uncertainty, but with perfect assurance that as he fulfilled his part of the engagement, so would the Father be faithful to his. The *public* proclamation of the covenant is couched in other language—language which takes away all ground of excuse from every one who hears it—“This is the will of him that sent me, that *every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him,* may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John vi. 39, 40.)

To suspend the efficacy of redemption upon man’s availing himself of it, is only to affirm what the Scriptures deny, viz. that salvation does not depend upon the work of

Christ, but upon the efforts of man. And to say that he died for the salvation of *all*, but that they only can avail themselves of it, who are included in the election, is only to assert, in other words, that redemption is particular. In the former case, Christ might have died in vain, and most assuredly would have died in vain; for if it require divine illumination to discover the truth, and divine power to remove man's natural enmity against God; and if the will and the ability to work out salvation *by* man (in the sense of Universalists) be through God's working *in* man, then, unless they be prepared to sustain the position that salvation is attainable without God's help, it would inevitably result that the travail of Christ's soul would be in vain, for no one individual of the human family would avail himself of it. In the other case, if Christ have redeemed the whole race of man, then, the particular application of the benefit to the elect, is unjust to the Redeemer, who according to this opinion, has paid an equal ransom for the others.

I argue therefore that Redemption is particular,

1. From the nature of the thing—the opposite doctrine involving a manifest absurdity—redemption including as much the *deliverance* of the captive, as his previous bondage. If therefore redemption be universal there must be universal deliverance—which it is to be apprehended the warmest friends of illimitable redemption are not prepared to defend.

2. From the design of the Redeemer (which I shall presently examine in detail) as touching the objects of his solicitude whom he has undertaken to bring to glory, having justified, reconciled, and sanctified them. Now we see not that the whole human family has been created anew; delivered from guilt; renewed in the spirit of their minds; from enemies made friends; from captives of Satan made freemen of Christ—nor indeed is it pretended. Has Christ then failed in the object of his work? or has he commanded his Apostles to testify what to their sorrow the far greater number will find to be untrue? namely, that

he has redeemed them, and yet they are not free—that he has saved them, and yet they are not saved—that he has procured their pardon, and yet they are condemned—that he has borne their punishment, and yet they endure it themselves! Far be such blasphemy from our thoughts. No! the scriptures declare that “he gave his life a *ransom for many*; (Matt. xx. 28.) that the Captain of our salvation brings *many sons unto glory*.” (Heb. ii. 10. The πάντος in the preceding verse is plainly defined by the πολλας υιους in this—as also, in 1 Tim. ii. the “all men” in the fifth verse, and the “all” in the sixth, are explained by the two first verses to be men of *all conditions* and in *all circumstances*.) The scriptures further inform us that “by his knowledge” that is, by the knowledge of him, “he shall *justify many* for he shall bear their iniquities”—and that “he *bare the sins of many*.” (Isai. liii. 11, 12.) “Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who should believe on him;” (John vi. 64.) he knew “that the pleasure of his Father, concerning them, should prosper in his hands;” (Isai. liii. 10.) he knew that

as “he bare their sins,” so those sins would not be imputed unto them; that as “he suffered the chastisement of their peace,” so “by his stripes they would be healed.” (Isai. liii. 11, 5.) He knew that there was no peradventure or frustrateable contingency in all this, but that the Father would draw unto him *all* whom he had given him;” (John vi. 37.) that “all his children should be taught of God, and that great should be their peace.” Again I say therefore that the design of Christ in redemption has not respect to mankind at large, of whom it were preposterous to allege that they are reconciled, saved, and sanctified; and consequently, his intention to redeem did not embrace them indiscriminately, but only such as are in the election of grace.

3. From the peculiar and distinctive appellations of the redeemed. The terms by which they are designated shew the extent of redemption as to the persons. They are called “*Elect*”—which signifies persons chosen from among others—Thus “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s *Elect*? It

is God that justifieth! Who is he that condemneth (them)? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, etc!" — "He hath *chosen* us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world." "Knowing, brethren beloved, your *election* of God." "God hath from the beginning *chosen* you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." "According to the faith of God's *Elect*." "*Elect*, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." (Rom. viii. 33; Ep. i. 43; 1 Thess. i. 4; 2 Thess. ii. 13; Tit. i. 1; 1 Pet. i. 2.) "Saints"—which signifies persons separated from common uses unto God. — Thus the address of the Epistle to the Romans is "To all that be in Rome beloved of God, called to be *Saints*." "Chosen in Christ—that we should be *holy*." "You who were sometime alienated—yet now hath he reconciled—to present you *holy*." (Rom i. 7; Ep. i. 4 (greek); Col. i. 22.) "Not of the world"—Given out of the world—Chosen out of the world—(John xv. 19; xvii. 6.) "The Church which he hath purchased with his own blood"—(Acts xx. 28.) Christ's

“Sheep” for whom the Good Shepherd giveth his life—(John x. 11.) “Little Flock”—(Luke xii. 32.) “Brethren” (Col. i. 2.)—etc. etc. All these titles specify a condition and a blessedness to which some have been translated from an opposite condition and its curse, according to the eternal purpose of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

4. From the consideration that some sin unpardonably—and that the scriptures speak of “the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men,” of whom it were blasphemy to the Lord Christ to suppose, that they had, notwithstanding, been redeemed unto God by his blood. (Matt. xii. 31, 32; xi. 21-24; 2 Pet. iii. 7.)

To the view of the subject thus presented, some one may object the several passages in the New Testament, wherein the terms “the world” and “the whole world” occur with reference to the atoning work of the Lord Jesus; as, for instance, in John i. 29; iii. 17; vi. 51. 1 John ii. 2.—and it may be asked, how can these passages be reconciled

with the view of redemption we have been considering?

In order to answer this question, let us examine whether these terms necessarily imply every individual born into the world; or whether they be not used by the sacred writers in a less extensive sense.

In Romans xi. 12. the “world” is employed to mark the distinction between the rest of men and the Jewish people.

In Luke ii. 1. and in Rom. i. 8., “the whole world” means the Roman Empire.

In John xiv. 17, 19, 22; xv. 18; xvi. 20; xvii. 6, 9, 16, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 32; Jas iv. 1. John iii. 1. they who believe not in Christ are distinguished from his disciples, by these terms.

Finding these words thus limited in their application, the apparent difficulty of satisfactorily explaining the passages upon which objections to the doctrine of special redemption are founded, is, at once, removed. Keeping in mind the fact, that the Baptist’s auditory, when he cried “Behold the Lamb of God,” etc. was composed of Jews, who,

hitherto had, exclusively, a divine revelation to instruct them as to the mode by which sin is taken away; and who were bigotted in the opinion that *they* were the sole objects of Jehovah's care—and remembering also, that the design of John's ministry was to prepare the way for the introduction of a dispensation by which “the Gentiles should be made fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ by the gospel;” by which “the middle wall of partition which heretofore had separated Jew and Gentile, should be broken down; and of the two one new body should be made, the enmity which previously subsisted between them being to be slain by the cross;” (Eph. iii. 4. to 9; and ii. 14, 16.) his language is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of this discourse; declaring that a sacrifice was provided by God not for the removal of *Israel's* sin only, but of the *Gentile's* also; that a lamb was to be slain, of which the benefit was not to be confined to worshippers according to the Mosaic ritual, but of which the nations were to partake; that an atonement was to be made, of

such extensive efficacy, that in every kingdom and nation, and people, and tongue, they who should come unto God through it would be accepted. It also declared, that as it was thus infinitely more efficacious than the sacrifices through which sin was typically borne away, at stated times, from the Jewish people, and from them only; so it would not need to be repeated as those sacrifices; inasmuch as sinners, of whatsoever nation, or class, or condition they might be, had only to look unto him, by faith, to be saved. The Gentiles had their propitiatory sacrifices as well as the Jews; they had a consciousness of guilt as well as the transgressors of the law of Moses; they had their fear of divine wrath, and were sensible of its torment, as well as their more enlightened fellow-sinners of the family of Jacob; and the announcement of a divinely appointed means for the removal of guilt was just as precious to those among them who believed it, as to the believers among God's ancient people. The time was now come when the Lord's salvation should be proclaimed unto the end of the earth instead of being cir-

cumscribed by the narrow limits of the Holy Land, in order that from among the Gentiles, he might form to himself a people who should shew forth his praise.

The other texts in which these terms occur are to be similarly explained. And that the “whole world” in 1 John ii. 2, (which is to be interpreted by the same rule), cannot mean every son and daughter of Adam is still farther evident, for that Jesus Christ is declared to be the Advocate of those for whose sins he is the propitiation. As the Advocate of his redeemed he makes continual intercession for them; but he does not make intercession for the “whole world;” for which, as distinguished from those whom the Father had given him he said, “he does not pray.” (John xvii. 6.) Therefore he is not the propitiation for the sins of the whole world as comprehending all the children of men. Besides, can the idea be entertained, that Christ bought, redeemed, offered himself, died, rose again, ascended into heaven, and entered upon his intercessory office, for those who are so solemnly excluded from his parting prayer? Or can we suppose

him to exclude from his petitions any for whom he laid down his life? Impossible! In the close of this epistle, John says, “We know that we are of God, and the *whole world* lieth in the wicked one” (*εν τοι παντων παρων*) : in which passage “the whole world” means only those who are not in Christ.

Much dependance is placed, by those who consider Redemption to have respect unto persons who shall finally be lost, upon the first verse of 2 Peter ii, in which the Apostle is supposed to speak of some, who should “deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves quick destruction.” Let us see whether this verse affords their system any support. It is first to be noticed that the greek word translated “Lord,” is one which is never applied to the Redeemer in the New Testament; *πατητης* being a title of the Father, and not a covenant title of Jesus Christ, who is invariably styled *κυριος* for Lord, and *διδασκαλος* for Master: (See John xiii. 13, 14.) and in the parallel passage in Jude 4, God the Father is distinguished by this word *πατητης*, from Jesus Christ, there styled *κυριος*. It is next to

be observed that there is a remarkable distinction between the words translated “them” and “themselves,” the former being *αὐτοὺς*, referring to the persons, in order to deceive whom, the heresies would be introduced, the latter *αὐτοῖς* relating to the introducers of these heresies. The meaning of the verse is simply this—That, as in the Old Testament Church, there were false prophets, whose pernicious doctrines went even to the denial of the Lord who bought the Jewish people, thus bringing upon themselves quick destruction, as in the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—so in the New Testament Church, there should be false teachers, who would privily bring in damnable heresies—heresies which should proceed to such lengths as even to deny the Lord who bought the Church : of which false teachers, “their judgment lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” Of the Jewish people we read in Deut xxxii. 5, 6. “They have corrupted themselves ; their spot is not the spot of his children ; they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and

unwise? Is not he thy father that hath *bought thee*, hath he not made thee and established thee?" Of the Church at large, whether of Jews, or Gentiles, or of both, the Apostle Paul says "ye are *bought* with a price;" (1 Cor. vi. 20.) and, "feed the Church of God, which he hath *purchased* with his own blood." (Acts xx. 28.) This passage, therefore, gives not the most distant intimation that any whom the Lord bought should ever be suffered to perish.

And now let me ask, how the glory of God, or the interests of man can be promoted by the supposition that they who perish have been redeemed equally as they who are saved. Does it tend to his glory to suppose that though God designed as much the benefit of those who die in their sins, as of those who shall be delivered from them; that though there was as much good-will towards them, in the mind of Christ, as to the others; that though his purpose was to save them, in like manner as his believing people; yet his purpose has been conceived in shortsightedness, and frustrated, as far as the greatest portion of the human race is concerned—his good will has only tended

their deeper guilt and greater condemnation! —God's benevolent designs have in most cases been inefficient!—and the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ have been, in regard to them, in vain!!! And does it contribute to man's interest to believe that, though the whole world has been redeemed, yet there is a possibility of the whole world being held in everlasting bondage! that though Christ wished to save all, and paid a price for all, and received a grant of all, to bring them to glory, he could only accomplish the salvation of, comparatively, very few! What confidence could be begotten towards Christ, by the persuasion that he is the propitiation, not for the sins of those only, whose sins are in consequence taken away, but also for the sins of those whose sins are retained, and whose punishment is certain? How would the child of God be delivered from his evil consciousness through renewed faith in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, by the reflection, that, notwithstanding the value of that sacrifice, some for whom it had been offered; whose

atonement had been made; whose Redemption had been *obtained!* (Heb. ix. 12.) might be finally in a worse condition than they would have been had Christ never died at all? But let God be true, He hath said, who was God manifest in the flesh. “I lay down my life for my sheep”: “And they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are One.” (John x. 15, 28 to 30.) This leads to the consideration of,

III. The indefeasibility of Redemption—in other words, that the deliverance of the soul is secured for the redeemed, against all possibility of failure or of loss. This follows as a consequence of the former positions. The security of the people of God depends not upon themselves, but upon the Father’s grant of them to his Son in the everlasting covenant; upon the infinite, and everlasting efficacy of the atonement made by Christ for them; and

upon the almighty ness of Jehovah which is pledged to keep them, through faith, unto salvation. It appears blasphemy to say that any of those whom Christ designed to save, shall ever be lost—it is blasphemy to assert that his redeemed shall not be drawn to Christ; shall not be taught of God; shall not have spiritual life given them; shall not be made willing; shall not be created anew, and purified to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works; all which is promised respecting the Lord's redeemed. They are saved, *in the Lord*, with an *everlasting* salvation—they are loved with an *everlasting* love—they are redeemed with an *eternal* Redemption. (Isai. xlvi. 17. Jer. xxxi. 3. Heb. ix. 12.) The language of the inspired volume concerning them is, “ If his (Christ’s) children forsake my law and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving - kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer

my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." (Ps. lxxxix. 30 to 34.)

God deals with the redeemed, as a wise and affectionate father with his dear children. He carries on their education in love. When they transgress, they are "chastened for their profit;" (Heb. xii. 10.) when there is a "need be", they are tried; (1 Pet. i. 6.) "a messenger of Satan — a thorn in the flesh—is given to buffet them, lest they be exalted above measure;" (2 Cor. xii. 17.) but in all their temptations — in all their infirmities — in all their afflictions "his grace is sufficient"; his purpose respecting them is immutable; "the crown of righteousness is laid up for them;" "he is able to keep", and he will keep, "that which is committed unto him, (even their souls) against his day"; they shall be "more than conquerors through him who loves them"! (2 Tim. iv. 8; i. 1. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 19. Rom viii. 37.)

If they *sin*, they have an Advocate with the Father, and their Advocate is *righteous* for their sakes; (and if they say that they

have no sin, they deceive themselves, at whatever stage of their course they be, and the truth is not in them) they need no new propitiation, for their righteous Advocate is also their atoning sacrifice; and by virtue of it, “God is faithful and just to forgive them their sins; and to cleanse them from all unrighteousness.” (1 John ii. 2, 3; i, 8. 9.) “Give thanks then unto the Lord”, ye his children, “for he is good; and his mercy endureth for ever.” “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy”! “For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption”! “He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever; Holy and reverend is his name!” (Ps. cvii. 1, 2; cxxx. 7; cxi. 9.)

We have thus seen the nature, extent, and indefeasibility of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; and now we have to consider,

IV. The design of it—or the end which the Lord Jesus had in view when he gave himself a ransom for his people. Were our contemplation of the work of Christ to termi-

nate in the subjects already examined, our minds would have embraced but a partial, inadequate, and very defective notion of it. We should indeed have learned what was *truth*, but we should not have learned the *whole* truth. We should have gained information upon subjects of unspeakable importance to understand, but there would be subjects of everlasting interest remaining yet to be apprehended. God has not stopped here; but together with his message of reconciliation, he has revealed his purpose in redemption: and the text not only states the *means* by which deliverance is effected, but it specifies also the *end* for which Christ has given himself, namely, to purify his redeemed, having delivered them from all iniquity, to be unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Mark well their *state*, “a peculiar people,” and their *character*, “zealous of good works.” These mutually involve and illustrate each other—for the character of the redeemed cannot be formed or expressed, without their being previously put into this state of relationship

to Christ; and the relationship cannot exist, without this exhibition of character.

The terms employed by the Apostle to describe the privileges of the persons whom Christ has redeemed, send us again to the Old Testament Scriptures in order to obtain therefrom an accurate knowledge of their blessed condition. We there find the phrase “*peculiar people*” frequently used in reference to the children of Israel. Thus “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a *peculiar treasure* unto me, above all people; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” — “The Lord thy God hath *chosen* thee to be a *special people* unto himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth.” — “The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a *peculiar people* unto himself above all the nations that are upon the earth.” (Ex. xix. 5, 6; Deut. vii. 6; xiv. 2.)

Now in what respect were the Israelites a peculiar people?

They were *chosen* of God — not for their number, their wealth, or their righteousness; for they are repeatedly reminded, that they were “the fewest of all people;” (Deut: vii. 7.) “that God gave them power to get wealth” (Deut. viii. 18.) and that they were “a stiffnecked and rebellious people.” (Deut. ix. 6, 7.) There was nothing in them more than in the other nations of the earth, on account of which, they were made the chosen people of the Lord; but in selecting them to be his peculiar treasure Jehovah acted according to the counsel of his own will.

They were especial objects of Jehovah's care; which was manifested towards them in a manner in which it was not shewn to others — who, however they participated in the ordinary blessings of his providence—however they received “rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness;” (Acts xiv. 17.) yet were strangers to his extraordinary regard; and of Israel *alone* do we find it recorded—“The Lord's portion is his people;

Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land and in the waste howling wilderness—he led him about—he instructed him—he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead him.” (Deut. xxxii. 9 to 12.)

They had Jehovah for their God, in a sense in which he was not a God to any other people in the world—who though they were not left without witness of “his eternal power and Godhead,” (Rom. i. 20.) and though “in him they lived and moved and had their being;” (Acts xvii. 28.) yet were left ignorant of his character and lived without God in the world; and of Israel *alone* he saith, “I am the Lord *thy* God”—“the Lord God of your Fathers.” — “I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to *you* a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord (Ex. vi. 7.)

They had laws to direct them, which other nations possessed not—who though they had a conscience which served as a law unto them (See Rom ii. 14.)—yet had they no

revealed standard to direct them; and of Israel *only* was it said “What nation is there so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day.” (Deut. iv. 8.) “Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire as thou hast heard, and live? — Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee.” — “And the Lord commanded them to do all his statutes, to fear the Lord their God, for their good always, that he might preserve them alive.” (Deut. iv. 33, 36; vi. 24.)

They had promises to encourage them, in which the other nations of the earth were uninterested—promises, for the fulfilment of which the fidelity of God is to be trusted, since it is recorded by Joshua, concerning those which related to the possession of Canaan, and the settlement of the children of Israel there, “Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth; and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord God spake concerning you; all are come to

pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." (Jos. xxiii. 14.)

In all this Israel was a type of the church of Christ—for what that privileged people *was* among the nations of the earth, such *is* the church in the world.

It was *chosen* from among men, not for its number, its power, or its righteousness; for it is "a little flock"—helpless in itself—"poor, miserable, wretched, blind, and naked;"—"children of wrath even as others"—"but God who is rich in mercy, for his great love where-with he loved it, even when it was dead in sins, quickened" and still quickens "it, together with Christ;" and makes it "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people, to shew forth the praises of him who calls it out of darkness into his marvellous light" (Luke xii. 32; Rev. iii. 17; Ep. ii 3 to 5; 1 Pet. ii. 9.)—and He reminds it—"that by grace it is saved through faith, and that, not of itself; it is the gift of God: not of works." (Ep. ii. 8, 9.)

The Redeemed of the Lord are a peculiar people, inasmuch as *they are especial objects of Immanuel's care*,—Jesus stands in a rela-

tion to the children of his kingdom, which he bears not to any others. He is their Saviour from sin, both in its guilt and condemnation, and also in its dominion.—He is their Advocate at the right hand of the Majesty on high—They are exhorted to “ cast all their care on him for he careth for them.” (1 Pet. v. 7.) — Are they ignorant, he takes charge of their education—Are they corrupt, he provides for their purification—Are they tempted, he is at hand to deliver them—Are they weak, he gives them strength—Have they fallen, he is present to lift them up—O! Brethren! what a blessed privilege is yours! While the rest of mankind have been suffered to go on in a way that is not good, which leadeth to death, your Redeemer has in love put you upon the way of life! while they are suffered to “ trust in an arm of flesh”—to “lean upon a broken reed;” your Lord has shewn himself to be your strength! while they are incessantly occupied in making provision for their temporal interests, unmindful of the higher interests of eternity, you know, O child of God! that “Vanity” is inscribed upon every thing here

below ; and that however apparently adverse, “ all things work together for good to them who love God, who are the called according to his purpose” ! (Rom. viii. 28.) Jehovah-Jireh (the Lord will provide) is a covenant title of your God ; and he who is “ Head over all things to the church”, has commanded you by his apostles, to be “ careful for nothing ! ” Ah ! what care is this, which your Good Shepherd, who never slumbereth or sleepeth, has for you : to keep you while you are in the world from the evil — to keep you abiding in himself — to keep you on the narrow, straight way — to “ keep you from the hour of temptation which is coming on the world ” — “ to keep you by his mighty power, through faith, unto salvation ! ”

The redeemed of the Lord *have God for their God*, in a sense in which he is not a God to any others who, however by the expression of devotional feelings they give evidence that man is formed to be susceptible of religious impressions, yet “ worship they know not what ”. God, as a covenant, sin-hating, yet sin-pardoning God — a God, who is Just while

he dispensest mercy, and Merciful while he exerciseth justice — a God, who, in all the attributes of deity is by counsel and by oath pledged to the salvation of those for whom Christ gave himself a ransom — a God, who, while he gives the most awful demonstration of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, is yet arrayed in all the attractive loveliness of abounding mercy—God, in a word, as he is made known by Jesus Christ, in whom he reconciled sinners of all descriptions unto himself, is not the God of the world. It neither worships such a Being, nor knows him. Of the world it is said, that “by wisdom it knew not God”—that it liked not to retain him in its knowledge,” even in those first principles respecting “his power and godhead”, which the things that are made do teach (Cor. i. 21. Rom. i. 20.) But the redeemed of the Lord, to whom the Son hath revealed him, can say “This God is *our God*, for ever and ever;” for He hath said concerning them “I will be to them a *God*, and they shall be to me a people”.

O to be able to say, *My Lord!* and *My*

God!—to be able with intelligence to confess him; with confidence to trust him! to see a Father's hand in every dispensation, a Father's care in every providence! O believer, do you know *God*? Behold he speaks to you when difficulties surround, and dangers beset your paths—when trials and persecutions arise because of the word—when your heart trembles, and your weak hands hang down, and your feeble knees totter—then he saith “Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am *thy God*: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Again he saith, Fear not; I the Lord *thy God* will hold thy right hand”—and again “Fear not; I will help thee saith the Lord and *thy Redeemer*, the Holy One of Israel”—and yet again “Fear not; for I have redeemed thee! When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee!” (Isai. xli. 10. 13, 14; xlivi. 1, 2.)

Is God your God? Then glorify him as God. He has manifested himself in Christ to you, in a way in which he does not manifest himself to others. He has drawn you to Christ — has pardoned you in Christ — has regenerated you in Christ — adopted you into his royal family in Christ — blessed you in Christ, “yea, and you *shall* be blessed, and none can reverse it!” Are these *peculiar* privileges? Are these the *covenant* gifts which distinguish his purchased possession from others; and have they indeed been conferred upon you? Then be distinct and separate—“walk worthy of the vocation with which you are called”—“be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Believer! — God in Christ is *your* God! Then uphold the glory of your Immanuel — doubt not his faithfulness — question not his love. “In all your ways acknowledge him”— in all your wants, your failings, your infirmities, “make your requests known unto him by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving; and the peace of God shall be with you.” His

throne of mercy is set for you — The faithful High priest is gone into heaven for you — his gracious ear is open for you — his omnipotent arm is bared for you! *Your God* tells you not to be straitened toward him for his love is not straitened towards you. *Your God* is “the same yesterday, to day, and for ever,” (Heb. xiii. 8.) and he tells you that he “will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon him.” (Isai xxvi. 3.)

O what blessedness is this! God, who made heaven and earth — whom once you knew not — loved not — served not; God, without whom you lived, regardless alike of his favour or his frown; God, against whom you daringly rebelled, and impiously blasphemed — this God, so great in power — so glorious in holiness — so dreadful in wrath; so despised, insulted, neglected — has called you by his grace — drawn you with the cords of love — delivered you from the bondage of corruption — raised you to the dignity of his people — instated you in the privileges of his family — and crowned you with loving-kindness and tender mercies. This God, O ye re-

deemed of the Lord, is *your* God for ever and ever; he will be your guide even unto death!" (Ps. xlviii. 14.)

The redeemed of the Lord, have *laws to regulate their lives and conversations*, which are not enjoined upon any others. Examine those recorded in the fifth, sixth, and seventh of Matthew — and say, are not they who obey them "a peculiar people" — and are they not "zealous of good works"? — Examine the 13th. of 1st. Corinthians, and say, are not they who walk after that rule "a peculiar people" — and are they not "zealous of good works"? — Examine the closing chapters in the Apostolic Epistles, and say, will not they who maintain a conversation such as is therein enjoined, be "a peculiar people" in the world, and can their real for good works be questioned?

They have promises, in which none but they are interested — Promises of present peace, and future glory : promises of wisdom to the ignorant — of strength to the weak — of succour to the tempted — of deliverance to the assaulted by Satan — of triumph to those

who resist him ! Promises “of the life that now is and of that which is to come” (1 Tim. iv. 8.) — promises of “every thing pertaining to life and godliness” (2. Pet. iii. 3.) — promises of gracious, affectionate, and intimate communion — of oneness with Christ — of seeing him — of being like him — of reigning with him throughout eternal ages ! (John xvi. 26, 27. xiv. 20. 1 John iii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 12. Rev. xxii. 5.)

Such are the blessed privileges of the Lord’s Redeemed — such honour have all his Saints — Well, then, to them may be applied the language of the venerable Moses, when he had reviewed the Lords past mercies to Israel, and his prophetic soul realized their mercies yet to come, — “Happy art thou, O Israel : who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency”. (Deut xxxiii. 29.)

And now in this view of Redemption is there any thing which can obstruct the proclamation of his love in all its blessed broadness ? Is there any thing which should make us diffident of announcing “to every creature”

the glad tidings, that “there is forgiveness with God that he may be feared”? Is there any thing that contradicts the predestinating purpose of God, in announcing, “Whosoever cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out” — that “Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners” — that “he who knew no sin became sin” for those who were wholly sinful, that such “might be made the righteousness of God in him?” Nothing! His command is, that these tidings of great joy shall be preached to every creature. (Mark xv. 15.) This message is his *only* ordinance for separating the wheat from the chaff — the good seed from the bad — the precious from the vile. It is the Spirit’s “sword”— that weapon of ethereal temper by which he subdues the rebellion of the natural heart and brings it into subjection to God — it is the “great trumpet” which gathers his elect from the four winds of heaven—it is the “light” which makes manifest the children of God and the children of this world — it is the “voice” of the Good Shepherd which calls his sheep un-

to the fold — it is the “discerner” between those who are Christ’s and those who are not — it is the “testimony” of the Spirit — it is the “way of truth” — the “law of liberty”, the “power of God” unto salvation to every one that believeth. Who is excluded? — from the proclamation — none, but they who exclude themselves! From the blessing — none, but they who “judge themselves unworthy of eternal life” — who wilfully “reject the counsel of God against themselves”. (Acts. xiii. 46. Luke vii. 30.) God’s purpose to save the redeemed only, although that purpose be unchangeably fixed, can not be our guide in the declaration of the Gospel. Who are not the redeemed we cannot tell — but that they are just as others, children of disobedience and of wrath, until the word of life, in the hand of the Spirit, quicken them, is amply testified in the sacred record; and to such *indiscriminately* do “the servants of the Most High God declare the way of salvation” in order that “they who are ordained unto eternal life, may believe,” (Acts. xiii. 48.) “and

believing have life by the Name" of Jesus (John xx. 31.); who "gave himself for them, that he might redeem them from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works".

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

2. COR. iii. 17.

In this sublime chapter the Apostle institutes a comparison between the Mosaic and the Christian œconomy; and by various arguments establishes the superiority of the latter over the former. The law, which impressed upon the Sinai covenant its peculiar character, was “written and engraven in stones;” the gospel, which characterized the New covenant, was “written in the fleshly tables of the heart.” (Verse 3.) The law could be regarded in no higher light than as a “killing letter,” inas-

much as it threatened and punished with death the transgressors of it; the gospel on the contrary, stands forth as a “quickening spirit,” proclaiming to the guilty that “iniquity is pardoned and that sin is covered.” (verse 6.) The law ministered “condemnation,” the gospel ministers “righteousness;” (verse 9.) the law “death;” the gospel “life.” (verses 7, 8.) The law is described in the epistle to the Hebrews as “making nothing perfect;” but the gospel, by “the bringing in of a better hope,” as “perfecting for ever” those who believe it. (Heb. vii. 19; x. 14.) The law, under which the Aaronic priesthood existed, was “imposed until the time of reformation,” and then was to cease for ever; (Heb. ix. 10; vii. 12, 18.) the gospel, under which the Melchisedec priesthood was introduced, is designed to endure throughout all ages. (Heb. vii. 15, 16, 17.) The law was only “the shadow of good things to come,” affording but a transitory and obscure representation of them; the gospel is “the very image of those things,” expressing their perfect form and exact resemblance. (Heb. x. 1.) The law pro-

vided for the worshippers under it, no better atonement than “the blood of bulls and of goats” which though “offered year by year continually,” could only purify the outer man, but was wholly inefficient to take away sins; (Heb. x. 1 to 4; and ix. 13.) the gospel by the atoning blood of Christ “once offered,” “purifies the conscience,” and insures “eternal redemption.” (Heb. ix. 28, 14.) The law possessed a glory indeed, as having been ministered by angels, and promulgated under circumstances of most imposing solemnity and grandeur; which glory was absorbed in “the excelling glory” of the gospel ministered by the Son of God — even as the splendour of the morning star is swallowed up in the effulgence of the risen sun. (2 Cor iii. 9, 10, 11.) The law placed “a yoke of bondage upon the necks of its disciples, which they were notable to bear;” (Acts xv. 10.) the gospel brings its disciples under the “easy yoke of Christ,” whose service is perfect freedom. (Matt. xi. 29.)

My friends and brethren, we have never borne the ceremonial yoke—we live under a

dispensation of light, such as Israel, in the most brilliant of her eras, never enjoyed ; a dispensation, in which we all may clearly behold the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ, unlike the children of Israel under the law who could not look stedfastly to the end of it, nor bear that glory reflected upon the face of Moses—we live in a period of the world's history in which a love of liberty has been inspired, and flowing through the arteries of nations, is throbbing in almost every heart, and beating in every pulse to effect its universal establishment—we dwell in that particular spot in which the spirit has been evoked, that has gone forth to tell men that they should be free ; and in the cannon's roar and in the clang of arms is making his mighty voice to be heard and heeded—we are subjects of a kingdom which is proverbially distinguished as “The Land of Freedom”—we enjoy the blessings of civil and religious liberty, so that every man's house is his castle, every man's conscience is his temple : but with all these manifold advantages—arising from the peculiar character of the times in which we live; the place

in which we dwell ; the kingdom with whose interests we are identified ; and the privileges with which Providence has personally endowed us; the important question which concerns us, and which it behoves us to have resolved, is, do we possess Liberty of soul ?

The answer to this momentous enquiry leads to the proposing another in which it is involved, Have we the Spirit of the Lord ? But, ignorant of the fact that the Spirit of Christ *may* be had, and more, *must* be had in order to return a correct and satisfactory answer—“for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his”—the far greatest portion of mankind constructs its reply upon what the human mind conceives is calculated to give man happiness. Thence, instead of the plain, and unequivocal resolution of this question, implied in the text, namely, that Liberty of soul is possessed where the Spirit of the Lord is, and *there only*, we have as many different accounts of the matter, as there are different dispositions among men, and different objects from which they expect happiness to be derived.

Thus, one man esteems *wordly honours and political influence* to be the one thing needful ; and conceives that were this attained his soul would be emancipated from the bondage of inquietude ; and that he would be at perfect liberty. But look at that man who has at length arrived at the dizzy eminence of political power—whose master-mind directs the movements of the body politic—who has in his hands the temporal destinies of millions —whose brow is encircled with the ensigns of rank—and in the sunshine of whose favour the most illustrious are ambitious to live : and ask him, whether the station he possesses has answered his expectation in communicating liberty of soul ? And if he be candid, he will confess that—what from the cares of office, and the responsibility of power—what from the calumny of some, and the jealousy of others —what from the evil construction put by his rivals upon the best intentions—what from the fickleness of the people's favour, with whom he may be to day the idol of a blind reverence, and tomorrow the victim of infuriated hate—what with the total absorption of his energies

both mental and corporeal in the affairs connected with the present hour; he tastes so little the comfort of *true* freedom, that the meanest of his vassals who lives upon his bounty enjoys more real liberty than he.

Another, who at heart despises the vanity of that man's mind who seeks liberty of soul in the paths of ambition, supposes it to be had only in the *possession of this world's wealth*; and in order to acquire it “rises up early and late takes rest” — his magazines are filled with the richest produce of other and far distant lands — his vessels, freighted with the wealth of nations are borne upon the bosom of the vasty deep — his heart throbs with the proud consciousness of possessing that which gives energy to commerce and life to industry. He is hailed on the exchange — saluted at the bank — reverenced in the streets — greeted in the market-place — idolized among his friends — and feared among his enemies. But ask him whether he have liberty of soul — and if he be candid he too will confess, that though his credit be unlimited — his resources inexhaustible — his influence unbounded

— his person worshipped — and his opposition dreaded : though he be clothed in purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day — though his external security be unmolested — and his outward peace unbroken — though his body repose upon a bed of down — and all seem fair within — yet there is not a breeze that agitates the billows, but rocks his soul upon a bed of cares.

A third pities the folly of the man who expects liberty from power, and the insanity of the man who looks for it in the idolatry of gold, and proclaims the he alone is truly free, whose soul disdaining to be fettered by the rules of moralists and by the maxims of sages, *follows the instincts of his nature*, and gives loose reins to his sensual appetites. Is this man free? No : the Pleasurist, of all men, is the veriest slave alive! The most arbitrary despot who ever swayed a scepter never exercised such tyranny over an enslaved people as do his unbridled lusts over him! He is under the influence of a principle more capricious than the winds — more insatiable than “the horse leech’s daughters which cry give,

give" (Prov. xxx. 15.) and never have enough! Though he have cast off all restraints to the gratification of his desires — though he smile contemptuously upon men of soberer minds and purer habits — though he be the foremost to deny the liberty of others and confidently to assert his own; yet his restless spirit — his sunken eye — his haggard countenance — his emaciated frame — his ever changing, never satisfied appetency, proclaim aloud the bondage of his soul, and we need not ask *him* whether *he* be free!

Thus in a thousand other cases, the insufficiency of created things to give liberty of soul may be satisfactorily demonstrated. But let one speak for all. Look at that man whose enterprising spirit made trial of every thing under the sun, to ascertain where happiness might be found — one who stood upon the highest pinnacle of rank — who was powerful — wise — wealthy; who gave up his heart to know by personal experience, what was good in all things most esteemed among men — and what was the result of the experiment? As he applied to each it answered that it was

not in it — and as he proved it and passed on, he affixed to each its eternal character, “Vanity and vexation of spirit”. (Eccles. ii.)

But where is this liberty to be found? The text answers — “Where the Spirit of the Lord is” — who opens the understanding to know the things which are freely given of God — who demonstrates the truth of the gospel of his Son — who newly-creates, and sanctifies the inner man — “*There, is*” true “Liberty”! Degrade him who has this Spirit from the station he held in society — deprive him of wealth — plunge him into poverty — dry up the avenues of pleasure — incarcereate him in a dungeon — extinguish his lamp of life — still yon leave him free. The liberty *he* possesses before God is indestructible, and independent of all contingencies! This is its peculiar character. The liberty of nations on the contrary is precarious. The error of a minister, or the wicked policy of a government may stricke at the root of a people’s freedom, even whilst they are promised increased advantages — in like manner the liberty of an individual is wholly dependent

upon the circumstances with which he is connected. Not so “the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free”—Nay, rather, in circumstances the most adverse, in situations the most unfavourable, its independent character shines forth with additional splendour. Thus the three Hebrews who were cast *bound* into the midst of the king of Babylon’s burning fiery furnace, because they were bold to maintain their holy liberty, were preserved unhurt either in their bodies or their spirits, and the only power retained by the flames was to consume the enemies who were the instruments of the king’s unrighteous decree, and the bonds wherewith the Lord’s free servants had been bound. Thus too, Paul and Silas, when they were bold in the Lord to declare his word, and to bear testimony to their Master, being cast into the public prison at Philippi, and their feet made fast in the stocks, were upheld by his “free Spirit.” The word of their God could not be bound — their enfranchised spirits could not be enchained—but their holy liberty of soul was expressed in praises to their

Lord, who had “counted them worthy to suffer shame for his name”. (Acts v. 41.)

It is divinely communicated — “If the *Son* shall *make* you free, then shall ye be free indeed”. It is imparted by means of the truth — “ye shall know the truth and *the truth shall make* you free.” (John viii. 32, 36.) It is a holy liberty — “As free, yet not using your liberty for a cloak of maliceousness.” (1 Pet. ii. 16.)

But the nature of Christian Liberty will be more distinctly apprehended, by considering what are those things from which it sets men free. And,

i. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there, is liberty from *Condemnation* — in which condition every man is placed, in consequence of transgression; and in which state he must remain, in consequence of his natural blindness of mind, and obliquity of will; unless, and until it please the Spirit who worketh according to his own purpose, (1 Cor. xii. 11.) to sanctify the latter, by imparting light unto the former. It is an humbling statement

from which human pride instinctively revolts, that, notwithstanding our “fair shew in the flesh” — our upright, honourable, and benevolent character—notwithstanding our abhorrence of vice, and our approbation of what is called virtue—notwithstanding our receiving the acknowledgments of those who take cognizance of what is praiseworthy, and our consciousness of promoting the general well-being of society — notwithstanding our being considered as eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame—so that “when the ear hears us, then it blesses us, and when the eye sees us, it gives witness unto us”— notwithstanding our “delivering the poor that cry, and the fatherless and him that had none to help him”—so that “the blessing of him that was ready to perish come upon us, and the widow’s heart be made to sing for joy” (Job. xxix. ii. to 13.) — I say, notwithstanding all this, to be told that they whose characters are thus hallowed among men, are under condemnation, *even as others*; that such are in bondage, even *as others*; that such are as

incapable of delivering themselves, *as others* — and that all this excellency of character may exist, where the Spirit of the Lord is not — and that where the Spirit of the Lord is, and there *only*, is liberty from condemnation — is too painful and degrading to be received, and requires the putting forth of divine power to overcome our aversion to it.

And how is it that man is in this condition? — For certainly God made man upright — stamped his own image upon his character — viewed him with perfect satisfaction, and pronounced that he was very good. True — but it is written that instead of walking with God and hearkening unto his voice, he listened to the voice of the tempter, and departed from the source of purity. Our first father sinned, and all his posterity have followed his pernicious ways — one and all have ever since worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator — and if in the history of mankind any exceptions appear, as brilliant phenomena amidst the darkness of the universal apostacy — they have arisen from the

outgoings of divine philanthropy, turning them from the error of their ways, and upholding them in the way of truth.

The aversion which our minds discover to the scripture account of our natural condition arises, partly from ignorance of scripture on the subject — and partly from the imperfect notion we have formed of sin. The scripture account of man's condition is simply this — “The judgment is by one (sin — that is, the transgression of Adam) unto *condemnation*”. “Therefore by the offence of one (man) judgment came upon all men unto *condemnation*.” (Rom. v. 16, 18.) “And this is the *condemnation*, that light is come into the world, and men *loved* darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”. (John iii. 19.) These passages contain two momentous truths, namely, that there is a love of spiritual darkness and a dislike of spiritual light in the heart of man; and that this unholy disposition arises from the corruption of our nature inherited from the original transgressor — so that man, as viewed from the throne of God, presents the woeful spectacle of one

unvarying mass of ungodliness—“the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart being only evil continually.” (Gen. vi. 3.)

And the awful nature of sin is manifested in the terrific consequences which followed Adam’s transgression. “Sin is the transgression of the law”—by which law sin is discovered, for we could not know what sin is but by the law. (Rom. iii. 20; vii. 7.)—and the establishing the law gave occasion to sin to abound and shew forth its exceeding sinfulness (Rom. v. 20; vii. 13.)—It is sin which has separated between man and God : Sin—not as consisting of a series of rebellious acts—but as expressing, in *even one* act, the existence of a principle which is opposed to God. Concerning sin, the Apostle says—“Cursed is every one who continueth not in *all* things that are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. iii. 10.)—and “If any man keep the whole law and yet offend in *one* point, he is guilty of all.” (Jas. ii. 10.) Thus we see that to be subject to the condemning sentence of the law, which is, “The *Soul* that sinneth it shall die” (Ez. xviii. 4.)—it is not necessary

that we be guilty of gross, or desperate, or unblushing viciousness—that we offend against the laws of civilized society — that we sin against light, against knowledge, against mercies, against warnings, against conscience—that we grow old, and be confirmed in habits of sin — but if we *sin* — though it be but in one instance — though it have but arisen in the mind — have but been entertained by the will — though it never break forth into act — we are subject to that sentence which has been passed upon the whole human family, “since all have sinned,” and “there is no difference.” (Romans. iii. 22, 23.)

And how is deliverance effected? By the all-sufficiency of the Great Substituted Sacrifice for the sins of the guilty — who “was made under the law, that he might redeem them who were under the law” — who to “deliver them from curse, became himself a curse” — as it is written “Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (Gal. iii. 13.)

The Lord looked from heaven—he saw that there was no man who could “deliver his own soul,” or that of his “brother, or give to God

a ransom for him”—“Therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him, his own righteousness it sustained him.” Divine wrath was poured into the cup of the Lord’s indignation—and Jesus drank it to the very dregs. Would you realize the horrors of that sentence from which the Son of God has delivereded his people—then come with me to Calvary, and let us stand at the foot of the cross. Behold that man of sorrows!—him, who is in the midst of the three who are there crucified—him, whose “visage is marred more than any man’s, and his form more than the sons of men”—him, who is bruised and sore smitten and acquainted with griefs. Mark, how he is insulted and mocked and wounded! Hear the agony of his soul expressed in that deeply touching cry—“My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” and say, if one who was “holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners”—in whom was no sin—was thus made to suffer the agony of the damned, as bearing the sins of his redeemed, how shall they who have gone astray from the moment they were born—whose trespasses have arisen

even to heaven as a huge mountain; expect to escape the righteous indignation of God ? What Jesus suffered in soul when he thus cried unto his Father, they who shall be finally condemned must suffer for ever. His soul was then in hell, enduring the torments of the lost — bearing the punishment they shall for ever bear — for this is the punishment — “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” (2 Th. i. 9.) He had a promise, as man’s sin-bearer and sin-sentence-endurer that his soul would not be left in this state of destruction — this destitution of his Father’s countenance : but there is no promise upon which the children of men can build a hope, that their sentence of perpetual anguish shall ever be reversed.

With this suffering of the Just in the room of the unjust, God has given witness that he is well pleased, by raising Jesus from the dead. And now he has commanded it to be proclaimed among the fallen children of Adam, that “God was in Christ reconciling sinners unto himself;” that “for his righteousness sake he is well pleased” and; “whosoever believeth in him is justi-

fied from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses."

This testimony is borne by the Spirit—and he who receives it possesses the Spirit — and “there is therefore *no condemnation* to him who is in Christ Jesus, who walks not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” The flesh, or nature, could never have discovered this truth, as our Lord informed his Apostles, (when Peter in their name confessed that he was the Christ the Son of the living God) saying, “Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven,”—his subsequent walk is therefore not after the dictates of unredeemed nature, but under the guidance of the Spirit of life which in Christ Jesus has made him *free* from the law, by which is the knowledge of sin, and from the sentence of the law, which is death. (Rom. viii. 1, 2.)

This liberty is enjoyed by faith—the Spirit witnessing to the truth of God in the proclamation of the Gospel in which the righteousness of God is revealed in order to be believed—Friends do you believe this simple truth?

that Christ hath taken away sin — hath made atonement for guilt — hath wrought and “brought in an everlasting righteousness”— that he finished all that the Father had given him to do ! that he has made peace by the blood of his cross — and that thus God may be Just, while justifying the ungodly ? Unbelief is a damning sin. All other sins make it impossible for the law to save—but this makes salvation impossible even by the glorious Gospel.—Salvation is suspended upon believing, not as a condition to be fulfilled in order thereto, but as the means for connecting the soul therewith—not as work considered worthy of reward, but as the channel through which alone divine communications can be conveyed. Unbelief is not the rejecting the history of Jesus —for many, who are unbelievers in the scriptural sense of the term, have never doubted, much less denied the truth of that history. Of unbelief in this sense the Devils are not guilty. But it is rejecting the fact, that Jesus Christ has accomplished the putting away of sin, and the bringing in of an all-sufficient righteous-

ness for ungodly sinners by his obedience unto death — it is the mixing any thing with Christ in coming to God—it is the entertaining the notion that God requires any thing, save the work of Christ exclusively, in order to be gracious to the sinner — it is the looking in ourselves for any qualifying circumstance, any recommendatory process, in consequence of which we may be satisfied that God will extend mercy to us. In a word it is the not trusting in God's simple promise — not being persuaded that he is faithful to his word, when he declares himself as well pleased in his beloved Son, and that whoever believeth in him shall be saved ! that Jesus has been sent to proclaim liberty to the *captives*, and the opening of the prison to them that are *bound!* Unbelief closes the gates of heaven — locks the ear of God — hardens the heart — kills the soul! Faith on the contrary unbars heaven's gates — unlocks the ear of God — subdues the hard heart — quickens the soul and keeps it for eternal glory; for Christ is the object of faith, with which it identifies the believer;

and Christ hath prevailed to obtain for those who come to him, every blessing connected with Liberty from condemnation.

2. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there, is liberty from *serving God in a legal Spirit*—and this is wrought by the Spirit's testimony to “Christ as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (Romans x. 4.) “As having perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Is the child of God brought out of the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God? he serves God not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit—he is delivered from Satanic bondage in order to be God’s servant
—Is he by the law made dead to the law? it is that he may live unto God! And mark the character and extent of his service. He served formerly as a slave—now as a Son; formerly in order to obtain life as the reward —now because he hath life. Then his motives were superstitious fear and self righteous pride —now the love of Christ constrains him and he would not if he could be free from his ser-

vice. Then he was always anxious to know whether he had done enough, esteeming some of the commandments grievous — now, his anxiety is to know, “Lord! what wilt thou have me to do”—“accounting all the Lord’s precepts in all things to be right” (Psalm. cxix. 128,). Then his confidence of divine approbation was derived from his unsanctified endeavours—now his most holy service affords him no more confidence than his sins. Then his heart did not go along with his efforts—now his efforts cannot keep pace with his desires, he “cannot do the things that he would.” Then he strove to serve an “unknown God” with an unwilling mind—now being made willing in the day of his power, and being delivered from dead works, he seeks to serve the living and true God. Then his solicitude was concerning “what he should do to be saved”—his inquiry “what good thing shall do that I may inherit eternal life”—now being delivered from condemnation by the power of the Spirit, and knowing that salvation has been achieved by Jesus—his cry is, Lord, I am thine — “I am thy

servant—hold thou me up and I shall be safe, and I will have respect unto thy statutes continually." (Psalm. cxix. 117.)

3. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there, is liberty from the *supremacy of sin*. This also is effected by the light which the truth as it is in Jesus demonstrated by the Spirit, throws upon the real nature of sin. The cross on which the enmity has been slain, and peace procured for transgressors, preaches not only sin atoned for; the handwriting of the commandment cancelled; every thing contrary to, and against us in our return to God, taken out of the way; but in shewing the tremendous penalty due to its demerit inflicted on our spotless surety, to whom his people's sins were imputed, teaches that sin of its own nature, is not venial or easily atoned for, but of such abhorrent character in the eyes of a Holy God, as to cause him to cast off the world from his favour on account of it, and "to draw forth his sword against the man who is his fellow," who became the bearer of it, by imputation, as the representative of his redeemed. Sin is a moral pestilence. It is the disease of the soul:

and as soon can we conceive it possible for a man labouring under a malignant disorder to be in health, in the possession of an infallible remedy; as a man to be happy in deliverance from condemnation, if he be left under the malignant power of his corruptions. Could a man be in the possession of the forgiveness of the Gospel, without the spiritual health of the Gospel, his state would be any thing rather than desirable. But the Gospel never leaves men in the state in which it finds them. It finds them in prison, and it sets them *free*—it finds them ignorant, and gives them *knowledge*—it finds them labouring under a deadly disease, and it gives them spiritual *health*: not to such a degree indeed in this life, as that the old malady shall never again break out—but so, as that it shall never prevail as heretofore. Effect does not more necessarily follow cause, than misery sin. It is a very part of the constitution of a sinful nature—it is the ordinance of God for the benefit of man, that they shall be inseparable! You may as well endeavour to separate the sensation of pain from the burning of your

hand, as unhappiness from the commission of sin. However the careless sinner may succeed to lull his conscience to sleep, or the hardened transgressor may dull and deaden it; however he may cry “peace” to himself, and by the innumerable objects which the world presents, may be diverted from the present and permanent perception of it; however unconscious he may be of the connexion —yet is the sinner a torment to himself, and so long as sin is unsubdued, he is unquestionably miserable. It is not possible that man could be advantaged by forgiveness, or that God could be glorified, if he were left under the dominion of sin ; therefore there is a gracious provision, that where the Spirit gives liberty from condemnation, there he also gives freedom from the yoke of sin. “Sin shall not have dominion over you” saith Paul to the Christians at Rome. He does not say that sin shall not *exist* to harrass and to try you ; nay rather, from his own experience of its presence in his own body, and the conflict he carried on against it, he directs the saved of the Lord, to treat it as an enemy—to hold no

parley with, to be under no allegiance to it. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies." "Yield not your members servants of unrighteousness unto sin." The self-same truth which shews the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the cancelling of all its consequences, proves a divine remedy against its deadly nature; and a preservative against its subsequent attacks. The Gospel which speaks peace to the conscience, "teaches" those to whom the Spirit brings it, "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." (Tit. ii. 13.)

My fellow sinner, are you giving evidence in whose service you are engaged by the voluntary captivity of your powers of mind and body to sin? Ah! you are serving a Master whose wages are death — you are yoked to a tyrant who only gratifies you for the moment, that he may exult in your torment through ages of ages. *You are not happy and you know it.* Behold God's remedy! It is in His testimony to Jesus Christ as having taken sin away. Your sins and your iniquities have separated between

God and your souls—Behold God himself in love making up the breach, and reconciling sinners to himself. The remedy is unfailing. “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved.” “His name has been called Jesus, for he saves his people *from* their sins.” Child of God! you are sore tried with sin that dwelleth in you—“you cannot do the things that you would”—you “find a law in your members warring against the law of your mind” your corrupt nature is constantly urging you to turn aside from the way in which you have been called to walk—you cry out in the language of Paul “Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death.” Take up his encouraging words as well as those which you have already used, and remembering the all-sufficiency of your Jesus, his Advocacy, and his unchangeable faithfulness; imitate his Apostle and cry—“Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Remember “if you say that you have no sin, you have not the truth in you”—but finding its presence, and

conscious of its malignity, “mortify it by the Spirit,” and you shall be free.

4. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there, is liberty from *the love of this world*. And this he effects “by the renewing of the mind:” whereby the deceitful medium through which the world had been previously viewed, is removed; and the wickedness of its ways, and the hollowness of its principles are discovered. Like the mountains, which in the distance, appear to the traveller to be arrayed in purple and gold, but as he draws nigh, present to his view nothing but morass and rock—so the world to the unbeliever is invested with every thing that is delightful to the eye, and gratifying to the taste ; but to him who beholds it in the light of the Spirit, its native deformity is perceptible, and the hideous impress of him through whose subtlety it has been subjected to the curse, and in to whose unholy service it has been enlisted, is discovered in its true character. The Spirit of “faith which is the evidence of things not seen,” having shed abroad the love of God in the heart of him whose eyes He has

opened to see the wondrous things contained in His testimony to Jesus, closes his affections against the exclusive engagement of them by the things which are in the world, and so sanctifies them in their exercise upon those things which God allows, that their combined influence is weakness itself when compared with the constraining energy of the love of Christ. Believer, you know that this is not your rest — here you are but a stranger — a pilgrim — your home is in heaven, where your treasure is ; and your Lord has said “*where* your treasure is, *there* will your heart be also.” (Matt. vi. 21.) What you read of the world in the oracles of God—and what your acquaintance with it has taught you, enable you to comprehend the wisdom of the injunction which demands your being “not conformed” unto it—which calls you to be ”separate;” and to appreciate the rich mercy of the warning, that its “friendship is enmity with God, and that if any man will be a friend of the world, he must be an enemy of God.” (Jas. iv. 4.) As also to receive with reverence the exhortation — “Love not

the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15.) For by the contrast of truth, the Spirit has disclosed to you the deceitfulness of its offers, the disappointment which attends its favours, and the misery which overtakes its votaries. Believer you have overcome the world "for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." (1 John v. 4, 5.) By the Spirit's witness to the finished work of Jesus, the hold which it has over the flesh is weakened, so that you are not governed by its maxims, or led by its customs. By faith, your distinctiveness of character is maintained, and you escape the "woe" which our Lord has solemnly forewarned you, shall be the lot of those who call themselves his people, "when all men shall speak well of them." By faith, you know that "in the world you shall have tribulation" — but you are invited to be of good cheer for your Immanuel has overcome the world. By faith you are kept from the evil that is in it—your holy garments unpolluted—yourself unspotted.

5. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there, is liberty from the *fear of man*. O ! what man is there among us, so unacquainted with the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of his own heart, as to boast, that in this respect he is invulnerable ? Which of us has not found to his hurt, that “ the fear of man bringeth a snare ? ” Who has not had cause, in bitterness of soul, to deplore the sad failures, and the lamentable inconsistencies of which he has been guilty, by reason of the “ fear of mens’ faces ? ” Ah ! let us not be highminded but fear God — while we set our faces like flints against unholy deference to our fellow worms in things connected without hope ! “ Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall ! ” Who can read the affecting record of Peter’s fall, and not be led, with deep self abasement and distrust, to pray that he may be preserved from fear of man. And, brethren, God the Eternal Spirit is able by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which introduces holy, perfect love into the heart, to cast out this slavish fear. Wherefore “ tremble at the Lord’s word, ” and “ be not afraid of the revilings ” of ungodly men.

“ Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and let Him be your fear.” It is no easy matter to maintain a Christian decision of character—or to be bold to speak the truth of God without fear, when the entreaties of unenlightened, but affectionate and well meaning friends are used to induce the child of God to abate something of the strictness of walk which his principles prescribe—or to accommodate something of the peculiarity of the doctrines he has derived from the Scriptures of God, to the prejudices of unbelievers. But my brethren, let us bear in mind the memorable instance of holy fearlessness which the history of John the Baptist affords us : to whom, the advocates of expediency might have suggested the advantage he would gain for his cause by abstaining from the peculiar topic which would offend his patron. But to such carnal reasoners he might have replied, “ Get behind me Satan—for ye savour not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” (Matt. xvi. 23.) The holy man dared not compromise : whether Herod be displeased or not, the truth must be told—having the *fear of God* before

his eyes, he boldly reproved the Tetrarch, saying, “It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother’s wife.” (Matt. xiv. 4.)

7. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there, is Liberty from the *fear of death*. Nature shrinks from the painful struggle, which bursts the tenement of clay to let the enfranchised soul go free; but the life-giving Spirit of Christ, testifies to the believer, at such an hour, that “Christ hath overcome him that had the power of death, even the devil, that he might deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage”—(Heb. ii. 14, 15.) that he hath taken away *sin* which invests death with all his terrors; and “the *law*,” which is “the strength of sin.” What is it that makes death terrific—but the consciousness of guilt in our own character, and of holiness in the character of God; but where the Spirit bears witness to Jesus, the conscience is freed from guilt and purified—for all guilt has been borne for his people by the Surety of sinners—all its penalty has been endured— and the soul which “knows that God has

given it eternal life and that this life is in his Son," must rest tranquil and at liberty. (1 John v. 11.) What is death to the *unbeliever*? A dark and dismal valley, without one ray of light to enliven the gloom, or to guide him who passeth through it — without one friendly arm to support — one hope to cheer — one promise to comfort him. And what is its termination? — "Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power!" What is death to the Spirit-taught *believer*? A shadowy valley through which the soul is guided by the Day Star from on high — "The everlasting arms are beneath him" — the hope of eternal life which maketh not ashamed cheers him — and the exceeding great and precious promises of his covenant-Keeper comfort him. And what is the end thereof? "The fulness of joy at God's right hand, and pleasures for evermore."

And now, my friends, what know you personally, vitally, experimentally, of this glorious — this holy — this rational — this comprehensive — this enduring Liberty? Vain

is it to exult in temporal freedom, if ye be strangers to the power of this. Vain is the boast, We be free born! — we were never in bondage to any man!” — for “ if the Son of God shall make you free, then,” *and then only*, “shall ye be free indeed!” Do ye know what it is to have the Spirit of the Lord — to be free from condemnation, from legal bondage, from the supremacy of sin, from the love of the world, from the fear of man, from the fear of death? Or are these things strange to you; and do you display your ignorance of, and indifference to them, by a life of ungodliness — intemperance — impurity — vanity — and frivolity? The truth which is delivered in the text is of the deepest moment to you. If you die without the Spirit of the Lord, by which the children of God are liberated, and sealed unto the day of redemption, you are lost for ever! — everlasting chains of darkness are forged for all such — and the prison of hell is opened for such — and the companionship of devils, is determined for such!! But oh! my fellowsinners — behold the unsearchable riches of divine love, which proclaims the way

of liberty — the opening of the everlasting doors of unfailing mercy. Behold Him who “led captivity captive,” whose triumphant entry into the everlasting mansions is thus celebrated in strains of seraphic extacy — “ Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty — The Lord mighty in battle.” (Ps. xxiv. 7, 8.) Thou art the King of glory O Christ! Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father! Jesus has “received gifts for men, yea even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them.” (Ps. lxviii. 18.) He has redeemed sinners by his blood — he has made atonement for their transgressions — he has made peace by his cross — he has slain the enmity—suffered the just for the unjust — brought in everlasting righteousness!! God the Spirit has borne testimony to Jesus as the Saviour of the lost. And the Father has annexed his promise to the testimony, and the son has added his, and the Spirit himself confirms his own, that whosoever believeth it, is eternally free. “The

perfect law of Liberty" which is the gospel, brings liberty nigh to every one who hears it — and this gospel, when believed, is "the law of the Spirit of life, making us free from the law of sin and death?" (Rom. viii. 2.) The trumpet of the Jubilee is sounded — Liberty is proclaimed — the acceptable year of the Lord is preached. And now whosoever heareth, let him know that God is glorious in holiness, inflexible in justice, unchangeable in truth, ineffable in love, while he gives pardon to the guilty, and liberty to him who believeth in Jesus. Though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, he is able to "take the prey from the mighty and to deliver the law captive;" (Isai. xlix. 24.) "he is able to save to the uttermost, every one that cometh unto God by him." Freely as his daily mercies of the air, and light, does He *announce* deliverance — and faithfully, as freely, will he *give* deliverance to every one "who cometh unto God by him." But more — He has not left us in doubt whether he shall succeed in delivering or not — for he saith — "*All* that the Father giveth me *shall* come to me."

(John vi. 37.) And again “ Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty *shall be taken away*, and the prey of the terrible *shall be delivered*: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and *I will save thy children*” (Isai xlix. 25.)

AMEN, and AMEN !

FINIS.

May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be always acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer. Amen!





Wetts Lemons

