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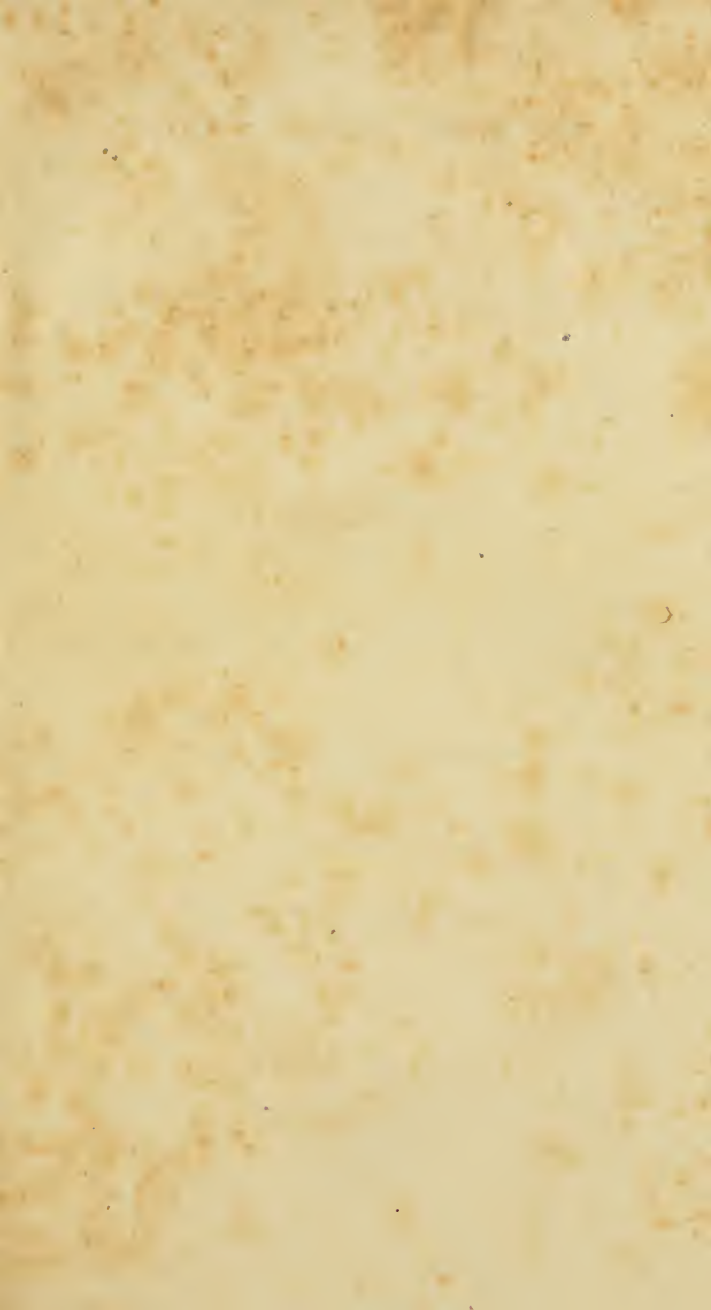
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STANDARD WORKS

ADAPTED

to the use of the

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

✓ GIBSON'S THREE PASTORAL LETTERS.

HORNE'S LETTERS ON INFIDELITY, AND TO ADAM SMITH.

WITH

PREFACES, BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIRS

AND NOTES.

BY W. R. WHITTINGHAM, A. M.

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THREE PASTORAL LETTERS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON;

PARTICULARLY

TO THOSE OF THE TWO GREAT CITIES OF LONDON AND WESTMINSTER.

BY EDMUND GIBSON, D. D.

BISHOP OF LONDON.

PREFACE.

A COLLECTION of treatises expressly designed, and with consummate skill adapted, for popular instruction, needs little to be said by way of introduction. As much as is known to the editor of the history of Bishop Gibson's Pastoral Letters is stated in the Memoir of the writer's life—with the exception of the fact that the first two were answered by TINDAL, in 1730,^a and defended in an anonymous publication of the same year.^b Neither of these productions, nor a third, in which the second letter alone is defended, (whether from the same, or some other attack, is not stated,^c) have been seen by the editor.

The three letters, though published separately, and at intervals of some months, are evidently parts of one design, and may be considered as forming an entire and connected work. There is neither anticipation nor repetition, further than is necessary for the connexion of the parts; the development of the author's plan is gradual and consistent. Yet each division of the entire work has its independent basis, and is sufficient of itself to carry conviction to a reasonable inquirer.

The First Letter contains a luminous view of the evidences of Christianity, condensed into the smallest

^a *Two Addresses to the People of the Diocese of London, in relation to Bishop Gibson's Pastoral Letter.* 8vo. London. 1730.

^b *Two Vindications of Bishop Gibson's Pastoral Letters, in reply to Dr. Tindal.* 8vo. London. 1730.

^c *A Letter to Dr. Chandler, in vindication of Dr. Gibson's Second Pastoral Letter.* By THOMAS JACKSON. 8vo. Cambridge, 1734.

possible compass, and particularly excellent in its statement of the real value of the miracles of CHRIST as evidence, and in its representation of the mutual bearings of the several branches of proof. The admirable directions for the examination of Christianity in a proper spirit, with which this view of its evidence is ushered in, and the concluding suggestions as to the observation of due reverence for things sacred, tend greatly to enhance its value, and proportionably increase its effect.

The Second Letter, calmly, but with irresistible force of argument, sets aside the arrogant pretensions of unbelievers in behalf of human reason, and assigns its proper sphere. As regards the insufficiency of human systems of religion, it gives a brief but complete summary of the historical evidence on the subject. Under the *sixth* head a full and most valuable summary of the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel is drawn up, principally in the very words of Scripture, with remarkable clearness and precision. The concluding observations on the sin of unbelief, and the still greater criminality and folly of attempts to propagate its negative principles, are such as must command the attention, and one would suppose the assent, of every thinking being.

The Third Letter treats of a subject, on which, even at the present day, there is far too much ignorance and vagueness of opinion,—the relative importance, and respective claims to divine authority, of the different parts of the New Testament. It would be difficult to point out a treatise in which so much valuable information on these points is given in as plain a form, and as narrow a compass.

In the course of all three letters, the objections of infidels, both *a priori* against all revelation, and especially against the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST, are freely and fairly given, and most effectually met. The reader

will find that scarce one among the many which modern hostility to the truth of God has tricked up in the paraphernalia of novelty, and brought forward with all the pomp of anticipated victory, is unnoticed or unanswered in Gibsons's writings, now more than a century old.

One peculiarity in the Pastoral Letters perhaps needs a word of explanation. The authority of the celebrated LOCKE is appealed to with a frequency, and a degree of deference, which may seem rather incongruous in a work explicitly advocating the claims of God's word against the pretensions of *all* human wisdom and authority. It is not improbably owing to the use thus made of that great philosopher and (we may add it—as most assuredly he would, *now*—with pride) humble Christian, that he is no longer claimed as a leader by the self-styled advocates of *reason*. But in Bishop Gibson's day, the case was otherwise. TOLAND, inferior to none in hostility to Christianity, *was* an acquaintance, and *claimed* (but falsely) to be a friend and intimate, of LOCKE. COLLINS and TINDAL omitted no opportunity of wresting the authority of his great name to the sanction of their attempts to enthrone human reason on the ruins of revelation. The whole tribe of underlings in the work promptly caught their cue, and nothing was more rife in their productions than the praise of that 'great genius' who had 'developed the way to the disenthralment of the intellect of mankind from the chains of bigotry and superstition.' Such extracts as those abundantly given by Gibson were necessary to disabuse the public, and allowing LOCKE all the reputation which he deserved as the first thorough student of the mental powers and capacities of man, to assert the rightful claim of Christianity to the service of that reputation in its cause. Infidelity has now shifted its ground, and we look back with

wonder, almost amounting to unbelief, upon the attempt to enlist for it the advocacy of LOCKE, or LOCKE's principles. The time will come,—may we not reasonably hope, shortly?—when equal contempt will be awarded those who now attempt to juggle into credit their crude systems of materialism and pantheism, which BACON and NEWTON would have despised and abhorred, under the stolen mask of *Inductive Philosophy*.

It may be not amiss to mention, as evidence of the estimation in which these *Pastoral Letters* have been held, that they are among the publications of the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge—a circumstance of itself enough to rank them among the *standards* of the Church of England; and that notwithstanding the extensive circulation thus given them, the late Bishop RANDOLPH deemed them of sufficient importance to be included in his choice selection of tracts entitled *Enchiridion Theologicum*, designed for the use of students of divinity.

The same reasons which render further preface unnecessary, have prevented the addition of many notes. A few appropriate extracts from works not generally accessible, confirmatory of Bishop Gibson's statements, or illustrative of his reasonings, and a few references to popular books for fuller information, have been given; and little beside. Care has been taken to have the numerous references to Scripture accurate; and a few corrections, in this respect, have been made,

MEMOIR.

BISHOP GIBSON is advantageously known in each of three characters seldom combined in a single individual—the *antiquarian*, the *controversialist*, and the *practical theologian*. To these we might even add, if the distinction did not savor too much of subdivision, a fourth—the *ecclesiastical jurist*. In each of these widely differing branches of study this learned and industrious writer attained not only distinction, but eminence; in each he has left works which, if since surpassed, were in his time the best that had yet appeared.

EDMUND GIBSON was born at Bampton, in the county of Westmoreland, in 1669. From the free school in his native town, he was sent, at the age of seventeen, to Queen's College, Oxford, where he was admitted to a scholarship. There he formed intimacies, and entered on a course of studies, which ended only with his life. The learned DR. HICKES, equally celebrated for his non-juring principles, and for his extensive researches into the ancient languages of northern Europe, Dr. NICOLSON, afterward bishop of Carlisle, author of the *English and Scottish Historical Libraries*, with several others of inferior note and learning, had at that time awakened a considerable degree of interest in the University of Oxford, and more especially in Queen's College, on the subject of the northern languages and antiquities. Young Gibson, among others, entered upon it with ardor, and even when his professional duties had given other studies a claim upon his undivided hours of serious occupation, these still formed his favorite recreation, to which he would recur with avidity and innocent delight. The publication of two humorous productions of Scottish poets in the Latin language, illustrated with remarks in the same language and of the same character,^a was

^a DRUMMONDI *Polemo-Middiana*, et JACOBI V., Regis Scotiæ, *Cantilena Rustica*. Notis, &c. Oxon. 1691, 4to.

the first-fruits of these studies, and his first appearance before the public as an author. The next year, he gave more substantial evidence of his acquirements, in the publication of a Saxon Chronicle, with a Latin translation and notes;^b—a work undertaken at the suggestion of Dr. MILL, the editor of the celebrated edition of the New Testament in Greek. A more varied learning was manifested in another work, published in the close of the same year, at the request of Dr. TENISON, then bishop of Lincoln, and afterward archbishop of Canterbury; in which was given a descriptive catalogue of the valuable collection of manuscripts belonging to that learned prelate, and of those in the Dugdalian Library at Oxford. The connexion thus formed between the young scholar and one of the ablest, as well as the best, of the episcopal bench of that age, was no doubt advantageous to him in every way, and probably a principal assistance in his rise to the high station which he ultimately attained.

New editions of QUINTILIAN, and of two antiquarian tracts by SOMNER, were the public fruits of Gibson's labors in the next two years. In 1694, he commenced A. M., and not long after received holy orders. The publication of an English translation of CAMDEN's *Britannia*, with considerable additions, in folio, in 1695, attests the continuance of his antiquarian studies, although his health was at the time so feeble as to prevent his acceptance of a valuable living, offered by Lord Somers.

An appointment to the charge of the archiepiscopal library at Lambeth, in 1696, by Dr. Tenison, then promoted to that see, was at once the reward of Gibson's former literary services, and an incitement to fresh diligence in similar pursuits. Accordingly, in 1697, he published a Latin catalogue of the Manuscripts in England and Ireland, with a Life of Sir Thomas Bodley, and a History of the Bodleian Library, in the same language, prefixed, in two folio volumes; and in 1698, superintended an edition of the remains of SIR HENRY SPEL-

^b *Chronicon Saxonicum, seu Annales Rerum in Anglia præcipue gestarum a Christo nato ad annum usque MCLIV deducti, &c.* Oxon. 4to. 1692.

MAN, relating to the Laws and Antiquities of England, to which he prefixed a life of the author.

From this period his studies assumed a more professional cast, and his advancement in the Church commenced. He was made morning preacher at Lambeth in 1697; domestic chaplain to archbishop Tenison, and Lecturer at St. Martin's in the Fields, in 1698; and Rector of Stisted, in Essex, in 1700. A dispute having arisen about this time between the Lower House of the Convocation and the archbishop, respecting his claims to a certain extent of jurisdiction and control in its proceedings, Gibson engaged warmly in his patron's defence, and no less than eleven pamphlets, in quarto and octavo, published in the years 1700-1703, were the evidences of his learning and zeal. The controversy, though petty, involved much feeling, and was merely the entering wedge of more serious contentions: it was therefore contested with much warmth, and no small ability, on either side, and afforded ample opportunity for the display of Gibson's antiquarian lore. His diligence and learning were rewarded with the degree of D. D., conferred on him by the archbishop in 1702; with the Rectory of Lambeth, to which he was presented in the following year; and with several minor preferments, following in quick succession.

But Gibson's share in this controversy was even more serviceable to his interests, by turning his attention to the subject of one of his great works, on which his durable reputation is built. The researches into which his examination of the rights and privileges of a convocation led, were undoubtedly of no small service in the compilation of his 'Code of Ecclesiastical Law' which appeared in two folio volumes, in 1713, and has ever since occupied the rank of a standard in the English Church. The high views of spiritual authority which pervade this work called forth numerous animadversions, and have rendered it unpopular with all the advocates of latitudinarian principles; but none have denied its author the praise of consummate diligence and erudition. Its utility is, of course, principally limited to the church establishment of which it imboldens the regulations; but the student will hardly ever consult it for information relative to the general princi-

ples and ancient practice of church polity and government, without satisfaction, and never without admiration of its method and deep research.

While engaged in the composition of this work, Dr. Gibson had been preferred to the archdeaconry of Surry, in 1710; and in the discharge of its duties, distinguished himself by unusual diligence. The death of his patron, in 1715, was so far from putting a stop to his advancement, that it opened the way for him to a bishopric; the see of Lincoln, vacated by Dr. WAKE's translation to the archbishopric, being bestowed on him at the recommendation of the new primate. His consecration took place in the beginning of the following year. In 1721, he was appointed Dean of the Royal Chapel; and in 1723, on the death of Bishop Robinson, translated to the see of London.

This was the summit of Bishop Gibson's elevation. Although for a time his business-talents, diligence, and integrity secured to him the confidence of the ministry, and archbishop WAKE, when the infirmities of age prevented the full discharge of his official duties, committed ecclesiastical affairs almost entirely to his management, so that he was generally regarded as the probable successor to the highest dignity in the Church; yet his standing with government was changed before the death of the archbishop, and his prospect of succession blasted.

The cause of this change was as honorable to Bishop Gibson, as the use which he made of power while in his possession. Almost his first act, upon his succession to the see of London, was a strenuous effort for the suppression of masquerades, then just coming into fashion, and productive of great disorders. He preached and published an eloquent sermon on the occasion, and secured the co-operation of his brother bishops in an address to the throne, with such success that an order in council was passed for the prohibition of that dangerous species of amusement. By this, he incurred the personal enmity of the king, George II, who was much addicted to them.

Still, his talents and activity secured his influence with the ministry, and the appointment of the Whitehall

preachers,^c in the very next month (February, 1724) gave evidence of its extent; but this also he lost by firm adherence to principle, in his opposition to the efforts made for the removal of the political disabilities of the dissenters—efforts which at that time it was the policy of the government to encourage, as a mean of securing the affections of the dissenting interest to the house of Hanover; and by a firm and successful resistance of an attempt to promote to a bishopric one Dr. Rundle, a man suspected of deistical opinions.^d

In the meanwhile, though much engaged in those legislative and judicial occupations which form part of the duties of an English bishop, Dr. Gibson did not neglect the higher obligations attendant on his spiritual office. While yet a parish clergyman, he had proved his interest in the duties of that station, and his qualifications for their discharge, by publishing a tract entitled *The Holy Sacrament Explained*, and another, *On Family Devotion; or a Plain Exhortation to Morning and Evening Prayer in Families*; both issued in 1705, and anonymously. Each of these brief, and exceedingly plain treatises, has gone through numerous editions, among the tracts of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; and it is from the last named that the forms of Family Devotion printed with our Book of Common Prayer were taken.

His promotion to the archdeaconry turned his attention to another branch of clerical duty; and in this also the results of his own reflections and experience were communicated to others by the publication of his *Essay on Visitations, Parochial and General*, printed together with a Visitation Sermon and some other Tracts, in 1717, after his preferment to a bishopric.

^c Twelve fellows of colleges from each of the universities, appointed by their respective universities, to preach in monthly rotation, two in each month, in the King's Chapel at Whitehall. A small yearly stipend is paid to each. The regulation still continues.

^d Bishop Gibson's vote on the bill to relieve the Quakers from tithes, to which AIKIN, in the *General Biography*, attributes his *preterition* in the supply of the vacant see of Canterbury at the death of Wake, did not take place until 1736, a year after that event, and must therefore be set out of the question. The Bishop's steady opposition to the dissenting interest is, of itself, a sufficient explanation of his loss of favor.

Several occasional sermons, and a tract pertaining to his old and favorite line of study, ecclesiastical antiquities, were all that Bishop Gibson published in the interval between the date of his *Essay on Visitations*, and that of the *First Pastoral Letter*. This able production, so strictly accordant with the episcopal office and duties, appeared in 1727. It was printed in a cheap form, and a very large edition was struck off, with the view of rendering its circulation as general and extensive as possible. But the demand exceeded all expectation, and the speedy call for a second and still larger edition furnished the best encouragement to the benevolent author to proceed in his undertaking. It was accordingly followed up, at intervals of a few months each, by the *Second*, and *Third Letters*; now printed with it. The public opinion of these was not less favorable than that expressed for their predecessor, as was testified by an almost unprecedented demand, consuming several large editions in the space of eighteen or twenty months.* They were printed collectively, with the addition of some Directions for the Clergy, Visitation Charges, &c., in 1732.

Bishop Gibson's next work, though equally pertaining to his office, and not less conducive to his fame, was of a very different description. His life had been spent during a period in which the contest between Popery and Protestantism had been waged, perhaps, merely as *a controversy*, more warmly than ever before or since. The talents and learning of the greatest men of the age had been called forth in the reigns of James II., of William, and of Anne, to expose the corruptions and absurdities of the Romish faith, and to resist the efforts of its advocates. That the productions thus called into existence might not perish with the interest of the temporary struggle, but might unite their various excellences in one formidable bulwark of the faith of the Reformation, Bishop Gibson determined on making a collection of the best, arranging them into a systematic

* The *third* edition of the *Second Letter* (from which the present reprint is made) is dated 1730, and the *second* edition of the *Third Letter* (used for the same purpose) bears the date of 1731. Each of the editions is said to have consisted of *ten thousand* copies.

refutation of every prominent error of the Church of Rome, and adding such preliminary and supplementary observations as might seem necessary to fit them for permanent utility. This he accomplished in his *Preservative against Popery*,^f a work in three large and closely printed folio volumes, published in 1738. The mere labor of compiling and preparing for the press such a body of matter was doubtless very great; but that of selection from the vast mass of materials furnished by the controversies of the preceding century must have been even greater. But Gibson brought to the task a well-ripened judgment, and a thorough acquaintance with his subject; and his collection, though necessarily, from its character and subject, dry and uninteresting except to the persevering seeker for truth, and from its bulk, unwieldy and expensive, nevertheless reached a third edition, and acquired and has maintained the rank of a classic work of reference.

Another *Pastoral Letter*, on *Reformation of Life*, published in 1745,^g and several minor tracts on practical subjects, complete the measure of this industrious writer's benefactions to his country and religion. They form the least ostentatious portion of his labors; but they have been widely reprinted, and are extensively circulated to this very day, and probably, with the exception of his *Three Pastoral Letters*, have been more useful than all his more learned and better known productions. It is said that "in the decline of his life, Bishop Gibson received more satisfaction from the repeated calls for these practical pieces, than from the honor conferred on him by his larger works of a disciplinary and controversial nature."^h It was natural that they should: they were 'seed sown for the harvest of the just;' while the others, at best, were but laborious efforts to root out the tares of human error, and repair the thorny hedge around the Saviour's vineyard.

^f *A Preservative against Popery; or a Collection of the Principal Treatises in the Papal Controversy; digested into proper Heads and Titles, with some Prefaces by the Compiler.* London, 1738, 3 vols. folio.

^g This was the *Fifth*. I am ignorant of the subject and date of the *Fourth*.

^h AIKIN'S *General Biography*.

At length, Bishop Gibson's naturally vigorous constitution gave way under the accumulated burthens with which it had been charged. He became sensible of decay and languor, which increased upon him, until in 1748, he ended a life of busy toil at Bath, whither he had gone for the benefit of the waters, at the ripe old age of seventy-nine.

Gibson's writings do not entitle him to the rank of a superior intellect. They contain few, if any traces of originality of invention, profundity of thought, or vividness of imagination. But they every where manifest a clear and sober judgment, great accuracy and integrity, and unsparing exertion to be himself master of his subject, and to convey his own stock of knowledge undiminished to his reader. It does but enhance the deservings of a man who has conferred so many benefits upon posterity, that he was enabled to do it, not by the possession of extraordinary endowments, but by his own assiduous employment of a moderate share of talent. His example may afford just encouragement to the young student anxious to do his part towards the benefit of his race, but diffident of his abilities. Such a one may derive incentives to exertion, and fair hopes of ultimate success, from the life of a man who without fortune, with few friends, and with no uncommon pretensions to distinction on account of mental powers, not only raised himself to the summit of his profession, and established a durable reputation as a writer, but attained the far more enviable character of a benefactor to his fellow-beings—a benefactor of the noblest class, securing the advantages of a reasonable faith and holy profession to thousands and ten thousands who may be ignorant of his dignity and fame, but know him as the earnest and successful advocate of the Gospel of CHRIST JESUS.

THE
BISHOP OF LONDON'S
FIRST PASTORAL LETTER
TO THE
PEOPLE OF HIS DIOCESE;

OCCASIONED BY SOME LATE WRITINGS IN FAVOR OF INFIDELITY.

THE office I bear in the Church of CHRIST, and my particular relation to this diocese, oblige me to study your spiritual good, and to warn you of any danger to which I see you exposed, either in principle or practice. For though you are committed, as to your spiritual affairs, to the more immediate care and direction of parochial ministers, yet not so, as to cease to be a part of the Episcopal care, especially in cases where the concern is general, and the dangers such as may not fall under the observation of every particular pastor. And I am not without hope, that what I shall say to you, will be more generally attended to, and make an impression somewhat stronger, as it comes to you directly from the hands of your Bishop; and, being not spoken, but written, you will have better opportunity to peruse, consider, and apply it, with such care and deliberation as the importance of the matter deserves.

This method, I own, is uncommon, but so is the *occasion* too; and nowhere so great and pressing, as in these two large and populous cities; whether we consider the variety of temptations, or the powerful influence of bad examples; the corrupt principles and practices which first spring up here, or the quick and easy propagation of them from hence into all parts of the kingdom; which makes the checking and suppressing them here as much as possible, to be truly a national concern.

They who live in these great cities, or have had frequent recourse to them, and have any concern for religion, must have observed to their great grief, that profaneness and impiety are grown bold and open; that a new sort of vice of a very horrible nature, and almost unknown before in these parts of the world, was springing up and gaining ground among us, if it had not been checked by the seasonable care of the civil administration; that in some late writings, public stews have been openly vindicated, and *private vices* recommended to the protection of the government, as *public benefits*; ^a and, that great pains have been taken to make men easy in their vices, and to deliver them from the restraints of conscience, by undermining all religion, and promoting atheism and infidelity; and, what adds to the danger, by doing it under specious colors and pretences of several kinds. One, under pretence of opposing the encroachments of popery, thereby to recommend himself to the unwary Protestant reader, has labored at once to set aside all Christian ordinances, and the very being of a Christian ministry and a Christian Church.^b Another, under color of great zeal for the Jewish dispensation, and the literal meaning of Scripture, has been endeavoring to overthrow the foundations of the Christian religion.^c A third, pretending to raise the actions and miracles of our Saviour to a more exalted and spiritual meaning, has labored to take away the reality of them, and by that to destroy one of the principal evidences of Christianity.^d Others have shown a great zeal for *natural* religion in opposition

^a [The author refers to the execrable production of MANDEVILLE—*The Fable of the Bees, or, Private Vices Public Benefits.*]

^b [TOLAND, in his *Christianity not Mysteriorious*, 1702: which was subsequently followed up by several other works more openly attacking all revealed religion, and inculcating atheism or pantheism. *The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted*, a still more specious attack upon Christianity in the garb of Popery, attributed to a club of infidels, appeared about the same period.]

^c [ANTHONY COLLINS, in the *Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion Considered*, 1723—the work which gave occasion to Bishop SHERLOCK's excellent *Discourses on the Use and Intent of Prophecy*. COLLINS attempted to defend himself, and state his scheme more fully, in his *Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered*, 1726.]

^d [THOMAS WOOLSTON, in a work entitled *Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour*, 1727.]

to *revealed*,^e with no other view, as it seems, than to get rid of the restraints of revealed religion, and to make way for unbounded enjoyment of their corrupt appetites and vicious inclinations, no less contrary in reality to the obligations of natural religion, than of revealed. And all or most of these writers, under color of pleading for the liberties of mankind, have run into an unprecedented licentiousness, in treating the serious and important concerns of religion in a ludicrous and reproachful manner.

These are things which no serious Christian—I might add, no serious Deist who has any sense of God upon his mind, and any regard to virtue and morality, or even to common decency and order—can behold and reflect on, without a very sensible concern. Much more ought the ministers of the Gospel to be awake, and to double their care over the souls committed to their charge, when they see so many devices set on foot to corrupt and poison them, both in their principles and morals. Accordingly, on this occasion many excellent books have been published in defence of the Christian religion, against those writings in favor of infidelity. In which books the authors have, with great learning, strength, and perspicuity, maintained the cause of religion, and detected the sophistry of its adversaries;—whose art it has been, in some cases, to lay hold on little circumstances, as if the whole of Christianity depended upon them, and by that to draw the reader's attention from the most plain and substantial arguments for the truth of it; and at other times, by perplexing and misapplying the plainest proofs, to make way for their own interpretations, and for imposing them more easily upon unwary and ignorant readers; and, which is no less unfair and disingenuous, to misrepresent the sense of judicious writers, and to pick weak arguments out of those who are less guarded, in order to expose the whole as ridiculous. To defeat these indirect arts and endeavors, the same learned writers have taken off those false colors, and placed the evidences of Christian-

* [Among these TINDAL, author of *Christianity as old as the Creation*, 1730, and CHUBB, the writer of several minor tracts, were pre-eminent.]

ity upon their true foundation; and, by setting them in their proper and genuine light, and representing them in their united strength, have abundantly shown that no impartial or unprejudiced person who considers them with attention, can doubt of their force and sufficiency to convince any reasonable and well-disposed mind.

But because these writings are too large and too learned to be read and examined by the generality of people, and consist of such a chain of reasoning as persons of common capacity cannot easily follow and comprehend;—who, as they have less leisure as well as ability to enter into particular examinations, are more liable to be imposed upon, and more like to be attacked by the enemies of Christianity: for this reason I have thought it incumbent upon me to draw up for your use some few rules and cautions, which are short and easy, and which, being frequently perused, and duly attended to, may be a means, under the blessing of God, to preserve sincere and unprejudiced Christians from these dangerous infections.

I. BE SURE THAT YOU HAVE A MIND SINCERELY DESIROUS TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD, AND FIRMLY RESOLVED TO COMPLY WITH WHATEVER SHALL APPEAR TO BE HIS WILL.

This is a necessary preparation for the knowledge of divine truths,—to be willing to know, and ready to practise; without which, men not only may be easily deceived by others, but are in effect determined beforehand to deceive themselves. Where there is an unwillingness to part with lusts and pleasures, and worldly interests, there must of course be a desire that the Christian religion should not be true, and a willingness to favor and embrace any argument that is brought against it, and to cherish any doubts and scruples that shall be raised concerning it. From a mind so disposed and so prejudiced in favor of the enemy, Christianity cannot expect a fair hearing, but on the contrary all the disadvantage and opposition that lusts and passions can suggest. And therefore our Saviour lays down this as the true foundation of divine knowledge, “If any man will do God’s will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether

it be of God ;”^f implying that a sincere *desire* to know the truth, with an honest disposition to conform our wills and affections to it when known, is the best preservative against error in religion, and carries with it a well-grounded assurance of the divine aid, to assist persons so disposed in their inquiries after truth. And the words do also carry in them this other assertion,—that whoever is *not* first sincerely disposed to do the will of God, he shall be in great danger of not knowing the doctrine whether it be of God, and of remaining in a state of ignorance and error.

II. AS A FURTHER PROOF OF YOUR SINCERITY, BE CAREFUL AND DILIGENT IN THE USE OF THOSE MEANS WHICH GOD HAS AFFORDED YOU FOR THE RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF HIS WILL: particularly in reading the Scriptures, and making them familiar to you, and comparing one part of them with another ; by which a moderate capacity may make considerable advancement in the knowledge of religion. And you must not fail to pray to God, that in all your searches and inquiries after the truth, he will be pleased to guide and direct you by his HOLY SPIRIT, which he is always ready to vouchsafe to every humble and sincere mind. And if after all your own endeavors, you meet with difficulties of any kind, have recourse to some persons of piety and learning, upon whose knowledge and judgment you believe you may safely rely. Only beware that the difficulties be not owing either to a *willingness* on your part to raise them, or to the indulging yourselves in *over-curious* and *needless* inquiries.

III. AFTER YOU HAVE SECURED THE SINCERITY OF YOUR OWN HEARTS, ATTEND TO THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO ENDEAVOR TO SEDUCE YOU, OR WHOM YOU SEE ENDEAVORING TO SEDUCE OTHERS :—Whether, in the general course of them, they have been sober, and regular, and virtuous ; or, on the contrary, vicious and irregular ? If the latter, do not wonder that they take so much pains to reason themselves into infidelity, without which their minds cannot be easy in the enjoyment of their

^f John vii. 17.

vices; nor that they become advocates for it, and are industrious to gain proselytes, on purpose to keep themselves in countenance, and to make their vices less infamous, by being more fashionable. Take it for granted, that such men are enemies to religion for no other reason but because religion is an enemy to their luxury and lusts. For as it has been already observed under the first head, that a mind virtuously disposed and sincerely desirous to understand the will of God is the best preparation for the knowledge of the truth, so is a vicious mind, and a *willingness* and *inclination* to disbelieve, the natural and necessary parent of error and delusion.

And as some are naturally led by their *lusts*, to oppose the doctrines of Christianity; so others are led by *pride* and *self-conceit*, to raise doubts and disputes concerning any opinions and doctrines which are generally received and established, how evident soever it may be that the doctrines they oppose are agreeable to all the principles of virtue in general, and of Christianity in particular. Such men disdain to think in the *common* way; and valuing themselves upon a more than ordinary share of knowledge and penetration, do always affect novelty and singularity in opinion. Which *opposing* humor was well expressed by one of our modern advocates for infidelity in what he is reported to have said of one of his fellow-laborers, to this effect, 'that if his own opinions were established to-day, he would oppose them to-morrow.' When therefore you observe any person to be eager and forward in raising doubts and scruples about the doctrines of Christianity, who also on *other* occasions appears to take a delight in disputing, and wrangling, and opposing the general sentiments of mankind; wonder not at it, but place it, as you well may, to the account of pride and self-conceit; and the natural effects of these, a spirit of contradiction.

IV. WHEN YOU MEET WITH ANY BOOK UPON THE SUBJECT OF RELIGION, THAT IS WRITTEN IN A LUDICROUS OR UNSERIOUS MANNER; TAKE IT FOR GRANTED THAT IT PROCEEDS FROM A DEPRAVED MIND, AND IS WRITTEN WITH AN IRRELIGIOUS DESIGN.

Such books are calculated, not to inform the understanding, but to corrupt the heart. There is no subject, how grave or sublime soever in itself, but may be turned into jest and ridicule; and by being so turned, may be made to appear mean and despicable. And the promoters of infidelity very well know, that if by this artifice they can take off the reverence that belongs to religion, the minds of the people are easily carried into a disregard of it and an indifference about it; which is of course an inlet to vice; and vice quickly improves an *indifference* about religion, into a *prejudice* against it, and by degrees into a professed *enmity* to it. Be sure, therefore, to avoid this snare; and do not only lay aside, but abhor all such books as turn religion into jest and mirth: for, next to the writing and publishing them, there is not a more certain sign of a depraved and irreligious mind, than the finding any degree of satisfaction and complacency in them.

V. BE NOT PERSUADED TO PART WITH REVELATION, UNDER PRETENCE OF RELYING ON NATURAL REASON AS YOUR ONLY GUIDE. For reason, without the assistance given it by revelation, has in fact appeared to be a very insufficient guide. For which we may appeal to the endless and irreconcilable differences among the ancient philosophers, not only in speculative opinions, but in the great rules of duty, as to what is right or wrong, lawful or unlawful; and even in the chief end or good which man ought to propose to himself in order to his happiness. And it would be very strange, to suppose that the generality of mankind have sufficient leisure and ability to enter into the depths of philosophy, and to compare the opinions of the several philosophers, and to determine, upon the foot of natural reason, which of them is in the right and which in the wrong. And much more extraordinary would it be to expect, that for the sake of such an uncertain and impracticable rule, they should lay aside a plain, clear and uniform scheme of duty, obvious to the meanest capacities, and fully attested to come from God.

But suppose the philosophers had furnished us with a consistent and uniform scheme of moral duties—which they are very far from having done; there are many

other things that revelation has discovered to us, which were either wholly unknown, or known very imperfectly, to the best and wisest among them, and yet are absolutely necessary to give mankind a full knowledge of their duty, and to make them proceed in it with comfort and constancy. Such are,—the way in which an *acceptable worship* may be performed to the DEITY;—the certain method of obtaining *pardon of sin*, and reconciliation to God, and supernatural assistance to enable us to do his will:—and, that most powerful motive to duty and obedience, the *full assurance of rewards and punishments* in another life, according to our behavior in this; without a firm persuasion of which (much firmer than any philosopher ever arrived to) it is morally impossible that mankind, in this corrupt state, should be restrained from excess and violence, and preserved in a regular and orderly course of duty.

But the truth is; *natural religion*, as set up against revelation by our present advocates for infidelity, is very different from that which the wisest of the ancient philosophers discovered by the light of reason;⁵ and this in some very material points. With the one, the government of the appetites was their great foundation of virtue and goodness; but with the other, the great aim seems to be to gratify them; and so, their main objection against Christianity must be, that it requires self-denial, and lays restraints upon the irregular appetites of mankind. The ancient moralists labored by all the arguments they could find, to give themselves what they thought a comfortable hope of the immortality of the soul and a future state; but there is too much cause to believe, that our modern reasoners do

⁵ [The *natural religion* so much vaunted by the enemies of Christianity is, in fact, a borrowed light—owing all that it contains intrinsically valuable to the Gospel. Its views of the Divine nature and attributes, and its system of morality, are derived thence, and then most unfairly set in competition. See more on this point under the 2d head of the *Second Pastoral Letter*; and a full discussion of it, in the admirable treatise entitled *The Knowledge of Divine Things from Revelation*, by J. ELLIS: it is there satisfactorily proved, that even the natural religion of the ancient philosophers, inferior as it was to the idol of modern infidelity, was not independent of revelation, but derived its darkling glimpses of the truth from primitive tradition.]

not wish or desire that these things may be true; on the contrary, the great aim of all their endeavors seems to be, to root the apprehension of them out of the world. The wisest and most learned of the philosophers of old, saw and lamented their own ignorance, and the imperfection of the utmost knowledge that natural reason can attain to, and the great necessity there was of some further light.^h But our modern philosophers are self-sufficient—so far from desiring further light of any kind, that it is one part of their character to disclaim all assistance, even though it be from a divine revelation. The ancients preserved the greatest reverence for things sacred; but their pretended successors in our times, turn every thing that is sacred into jest and ridicule. So that natural religion, as now contended for among us, seems not to be meant for a rule of duty, but only a specious name, to be set up against revelation, and to prove Christianity, not only as to the *doctrinal* but even the *moral* part of it, to be a needless institution. And certainly there cannot be a greater sign of a perverse and depraved mind, than endeavoring to depreciate it;—as it is an institution, that contains in it the religion of nature explained, improved, and raised to greater degrees of purity and perfection;ⁱ regulating the inward thoughts as well as the outward actions;

^h [See under the 3d head of the *Second Pastoral Letter*.]

ⁱ [That is to say, involving in itself, and developing to their full extent and operation, all those principles and precepts, whether relics of early knowledge from revelation or gleanings from the Gospel itself, which have been dignified with the name of 'natural religion.'—The Bishop is arguing with the infidel on his own grounds, and admits for the moment, what ought never to be seriously granted, that the Gospel is merely a republication of a previously existing religious system. Nothing has done more towards the degradation of our holy faith from its true rank as "the righteousness of GOD which is by faith of JESUS CHRIST unto all and upon all them that believe,"—"the grace of GOD bringing salvation"—into a mere lifeless system of abstract speculation, than the incautious admission of such views. All that gives Christianity its value, as the revelation of "the Word made flesh, dwelling among us full of grace and truth," and "giving himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works," is wholly beyond the stretch of so-called *natural religion*, and neither an 'explanation,' 'improvement,' nor 'exaltation,' of that system, but an independent revelation of "the kindness and love of GOD our SAVIOUR," and "the blessed hope" which that love has granted us.]

requiring us to abstain not only from sin, but from all *tendencies* to it; not only from evil, but from all *appearance* of evil; commanding us to love and do good to our *enemies* as well as friends; and enforcing the strict observance both of moral and Christian duties, by motives and obligations stronger by far, than any that natural reason can suggest;—as it lays down a plain and easy rule of life, adapted to the meanest as well as the highest capacities;—as the precepts of it are excellently calculated for the peace and happiness of mankind, by laying the strongest restraints upon their irregular passions, (anger, hatred, and revenge,) and every where inculcating the most amiable lessons of meekness, benevolence, and forgiveness;—as it requires and enforces a strict observance of the duties belonging to the several relations of mankind to one another, on which the peace and order, not only of private families, but of public societies, so greatly depend;—as it furnishes us with the best motives and most substantial arguments for comfort in the time of affliction, and enables us to bear all the evils of this life with patience and contentment;—and finally, as it opens to us a most comfortable view of happiness and immortality in a future state.—How such an institution should become the object of their hatred and dislike, is not to be accounted for, but from somewhat very corrupt and irregular in their hearts; which makes them first averse to the purity it requires, and, for the sake of that, professed enemies to the institution itself.

VI. DO NOT RECKON THE TRUTH OF ANY DISPENSATION OR DOCTRINE TO BE REALLY DOUBTFUL, MERELY BECAUSE SOME MEN AFFECT TO MAKE A DOUBT OF IT.

There are monsters in mind, as well as in body; and it is an old observation, that there was no opinion so absurd, but what some philosopher had held. The truth is, follies and absurdities in opinion are without end, where men give themselves up to skepticism, and at the same time are positive and conceited, and afraid that they shall not sufficiently distinguish themselves, and transmit their names to posterity with advantage, but by broaching odd and singular notions, and by

thinking differently from the generality of mankind ; which leads them of course to oppose whatever is generally received and established. And when the doctrines which they set themselves to overthrow, are such as curb and cross the corrupt and inordinate desires of nature, and their own doctrines come recommended by giving full liberty and indulgence to the irregular appetites of men, and by lessening their apprehensions of a future account, it is not to be wondered that they gain proselytes.

VII. WHEN A REVELATION IS SUFFICIENTLY ATTESTED TO COME FROM GOD, LET IT NOT WEAKEN YOUR FAITH, IF YOU CANNOT CLEARLY SEE THE FITNESS AND EXPEDIENCE OF EVERY PART OF IT.

This would be, to make yourselves as knowing as God, whose wisdom is infinite, and the depth of whose dispensations, with the reasons and ends of them, are not to be fathomed by our short and narrow comprehensions. God has given us sufficient capacity to know him, and to learn our duty, and to judge when a revelation comes from him, which is all the knowledge that is needful to us in our present state. And it is the greatest folly, as well as presumption, in any man, to enter into the counsels of God, and to make himself a judge of the wisdom of his dispensations to such a degree, as to conclude that this or that revelation *cannot* come from God, because *he* cannot see in every respect the *fitness* and *reasonableness* of it:—to say, for instance, that either we had no need of a Redeemer, or that a better method might have been contrived for our redemption ; and, upon the whole, not to give God leave to save us in his own way.^k In these cases, the true inference is, that the revelation is therefore wise, and good, and just, and fit to be received and submitted to by us, because we have sufficient reason to believe that it comes from God. For so far he has made us competent judges, inasmuch as natural reason informs us what are the proper evidences of a divine revelation : but he has not let us into the

^k [The inculcation of this lesson is the design of Bishop BUTLER's *Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion*—a work which it is superfluous to recommend or praise.]

springs of his administration, nor shown us the whole compass of it, nor the connexion of the several parts with one another; nor, by consequence, can we be capable to judge adequately of the fitness of the *means* which he makes use of to attain the *ends*. On the contrary, the attempting to make such a judgment, is to set ourselves in the place of God, and to forget that we are frail men; that is, short-sighted and ignorant creatures, who know very little of divine matters, further than it has pleased God to reveal them to us.

VIII. SUFFER NOT YOURSELVES TO BE DRAWN FROM THE MORE PLAIN AND DIRECT PROOFS OF THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY, TO PROOFS, WHICH, HOWEVER GOOD, ARE LESS OBVIOUS TO COMMON CAPACITIES.

This is an artifice usual with writers who engage in a bad cause; to labor, in the first place, to fix the merits of the cause they oppose, upon some point which either has little relation to it, or at least is not *the main point*; and then to run into such proofs as are most remote and intricate; and both these, on purpose to draw the reader's attention from the true state of the case, and from the proofs which are most plain, strong, and direct.

There are many sorts of proofs, by which the truth of Christianity is supported: as, 1. TYPES; 2. PROPHECIES; 3. THE GENERAL EXPECTATION OF CHRIST'S COMING at that time; 4. the MIRACLES he wrought; 5. his PREDICTIONS of his own death and resurrection, and many other events, which were punctually fulfilled; and 6. the speedy and wonderful PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL, after his death. But all these, though in themselves cogent and conclusive, are not equally plain and clear to every capacity,

1. The TYPES which the Christian writers of all ages have insisted on, as prefiguring a *suffering* Saviour, could not be applied to CHRIST by the Jews who lived *before* his coming, because they expected a *temporal prince* and a *triumphant* Saviour. But they are expressly applied to him, and represented as centring in him, by the inspired writers of the New Testament, and particularly by St. Paul, who received his instruc-

tions immediately from heaven.¹ The paschal lamb, for instance, which was slain every year at the feast of the passover, and was by GOD's special appointment to be "without blemish,"^m and to be slain only at Jerusalem,ⁿ and the "bones of it not to be broken;"^o was most manifestly a type of our Saviour's death; which, besides an agreement in the circumstances already mentioned, was on the very same day, and on the very same part of the day, that the paschal lamb was appointed to be slain; and, by a signal providence, a bone of him was not broken; though it was a known custom to break the bones of those who were crucified, and the bones of the two who were crucified with him were actually broken. Well then might John the Baptist say to the people, "Behold the lamb of God;"^p and St. Paul style him, "CHRIST our passover;"^q and St. Peter speak of him, "as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."^r

2. In like manner, the PROPHECIES of the Old Testament, as foretelling the time, place and other circumstances of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah, with many particulars concerning the nature of his kingdom, and the times of it, are not only applied to him by the inspired writers of the New Testament, and by the succeeding Christians in all ages, but were so applied by the ancient Jewish writers themselves, long before the coming of CHRIST into the world. From whence arose that GENERAL EXPECTATION of his coming at that time, which we find attested by the concurring evidence of Jewish, Christian, and Heathen writers.^s

¹ [Compare what is said on the subject by WEST, *Standard Works*, Vol. I. p. 243, ss.; and in the references there given.]

^m Exodus xii. 5.

ⁿ Deuteronomy xvi. 5, 6.

^o Exodus xii. 46.—Numbers ix. 12.

^p John i. 29.

^q 1 Corinthians v. 7.

^r 1 Pet. i. 19.

^s [A brief but comprehensive recapitulation of the prophecies on which the expectation of the Messiah among the Jews was founded, is given by HORNE, *Introd. to the Scriptures*, Vol. I. Chap. IV. Sect III. Class. 3. Comp. PEARSON *on the Creed*, Art. II. Some very curious statements and speculations on the expectation of a Messiah among the Heathen, may be found in BP. HORSLEY'S *Dissertation* published with his *Posthumous Sermons*.]

That a Messiah was *promised* in the law and the prophets, and that this was universally believed and acknowledged by the Jews, appears by the whole tenor of St. Paul's and St. Peter's discourses to them, as they are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles ; where we see plainly, the only point in dispute between them and the Jews, was, Whether or no that promise was *fulfilled* in our Saviour? For as the apostles constantly reasoned with them from the prophecies and predictions of the Old Testament ; so all their reasonings were to prove, that they were fulfilled in him. We do not find, that any doubt was raised by the Jews whether the passages quoted from those books, had been *rightly applied to a Messiah* by their own teachers, or whether the expectation there was of a great deliverer was well founded in the Scriptures? The only thing which, the Jews themselves being judges, wanted to be proved, was, that those Scriptures were *rightly applied* by the apostles to *JESUS of Nazareth*, whom their rulers had put to death, but who by the power of God was raised again to life ; of which the apostles were eyewitnesses, and the truth of their testimony was confirmed by the miraculous gifts and powers of the HOLY GHOST. This was the great point in their reasonings with the Jews—to prove that *JESUS* was the person promised ; for which they made their appeals to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and did it with great success.

At Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews, St. Paul “went in unto them, *as his manner was*, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them *out of the Scriptures*, opening and alleging, that *CHRIST* must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this *JESUS* whom I preach unto you, is *CHRIST*.”^t At Damascus, he “confounded the Jews which dwelt there, proving that this is the very *CHRIST*.”^u So, in the synagogue at Beræa, he reasoned with them out of the Scriptures ; and it is said in commendation of the Jews there, that “they received the word with all readiness of mind, and *searched the Scriptures* daily, whether these things were so.”^v Of the same kind was his dis-

^t Acts xviii. 1, 2, 3.

^u Acts ix. 22.

^v Acts xvii. 10, 11, 12.

course with the Jews at Antioch; "Of this man's (David's) seed, hath God *according to his promise*, raised unto Israel, a Saviour, JESUS:—Because they knew him not (viz. CHRIST,) nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every Sabbath day, *they have fulfilled* them in condemning him. *The promise* which was made unto the fathers, God *hath fulfilled* the same to us their children, in that he hath raised up JESUS again;"^w—according to what was prophesied by David and Isaiah, which is there set forth at large. Thus also he defends himself before Felix, "This I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written *in the law and the prophets*:"^x and before Festus and Agrippa; "I am judged for the *hope of the promise* made of God unto our fathers. Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day; witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things, than *those which the prophets and Moses did say should come*. King Agrippa, believest thou *the prophets*? I know that thou believest;" to which Agrippa replied, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."^y And when he was at Rome, "he expounded and testified to the Jews" who came to him, "the kingdom of God; persuading them concerning JESUS, *both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening*."^z

The Acts of the Apostles give the like account of St. Peter, who on the day of Pentecost preached to the Jews upon the evidence of the Scriptures, with such success, that "great numbers gladly received his word, and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls."^a And a little after, upon his healing an impotent man in Solomon's porch, and the people's running together to him, we have another declaration of his to the same purpose: "Those things which God *beforehand had showed by the mouth of all his prophets*, that CHRIST should suffer, he *hath so fulfilled*. Whom the heaven must receive, until the time of restitution

^w Acts xiii. 16, 17. 23. 27. 32, 33.

^y Acts xxvi. 6. 22. 27, 28.

^a Acts ii. 1—25.

^x Acts xxiv. 14.

^z Acts xxviii. 23.

of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the LORD your God raise up unto you: Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days."^b—"And many which heard the word, believed: and the number of the men was about six thousand."^c Again, in his speech to Cornelius, and his company;—"Him (JESUS) God raised up—and commanded us to preach to 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."^d

The same appeal to the Scriptures is made by St. Stephen: "This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel, A Prophet shall the LORD your God raise up unto you.—Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the just One, of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers."^e And Philip converts the treasurer of Queen Candace, whom he found reading the 53d chapter of Isaiah, by "beginning at that Scripture, and preaching to him JESUS;" upon which he believed, and was baptized.^f And of Apollos it is said, that "he was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; and that he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that JESUS was the CHRIST."^g

This then was the reasoning of the apostles, and other holy men, in order to the conversion of the Jews: and it is no other than what St. Paul learnt by immediate revelation; for he tells the Corinthians that he "delivered to them, that which he 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."^h And the other apostles were instructed in the same way of reasoning by our Saviour himself, who a little before his passion "took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we

^b Acts iii. 18. 21, 22. 24, 25, 26.

^d Acts x. 43.

^f Acts viii. 30, 38.

^h 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

^c Acts iv. 4.

^e Acts vii. 37. 52.

^g Acts xviii. 24, 25.

go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are *written by the prophets* concerning the Son of man, *shall be accomplished.*"ⁱ But then "they understood none of these things;"^k and therefore, after his resurrection, "he opened their understanding;"^l first, of two of them, whom he met going to Emmaus; "Oh fools, and slow of heart to believe all *that the prophets have spoken!* Ought not CHRIST to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at *Moses, and all the prophets*, he expounded unto them *in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself:*"^m and then of the eleven;—"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that *all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.* Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand *the Scriptures*, and said unto them, *Thus it is written*, and thus it behoved CHRIST to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations."ⁿ

Such frequent appeals to the Scriptures of the Old Testament to prove that JESUS was the Messiah, plainly suppose the *promise* of a Messiah; and the success they had, notwithstanding the prejudices the Jews were under against a *suffering* Messiah, shows the propriety and efficacy of this argument in order to the conviction of that people, to whom the promise was made, and whose earnest desire and expectation of a Deliverer had led them of course to be familiarly acquainted with the prophecies concerning him.

But because the evidence arising from *particular* types and prophecies,^o is now by length of time, and

ⁱ Luke xviii. 31.

^k Luke xviii. 34.

^l Luke xxiv. 45.

^m Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 27.

ⁿ Luke xxiv. 44, 45, 46, 47.

^o [The cautious expressions of this paragraph are worthy of remark. While the author avoids admitting too much as to the difficulty even of "*particular* types and prophecies," (respecting the exact application and fulfilment of which *some* difficulties may undoubtedly arise,) he judiciously leaves wholly out of question the *general* argument from type and prophecy, viz. the evidence afforded by the existence, and mutual relations between the parts, of the collective masses of typical

distance of place, and change of customs, become obscure and difficult to the generality of people, and cannot be thoroughly discussed without a great variety of knowledge concerning the ancient Jewish customs, and the authority of their writings, and the exact calculations of time,—all which require much study, and leave room to ill-minded men to dispute and cavil, and to perplex readers who are unacquainted with the learning and history of former ages,—for these reasons, the promoters of infidelity might well hope to find their account in resting the *whole* evidence of Christianity upon the types and prophecies of the Old Testament; partly to furnish wicked minds with objections, and fill weak minds with doubts; and partly to draw and divert mankind from attending to the more *plain, strong, and direct* evidences of the truth of Christianity.

To avoid this snare, fix your mind steadfastly upon the testimony of *facts* which are undeniable, and upon *consequences* flowing from them, which are plain and obvious to the meanest capacities.

3. As to the FACTS contained in the New Testament; they have the fullest testimony, that any ancient history can have:—they are transmitted to us by persons who were eyewitnesses of them, or at least contemporary with those that were so, of whom they had diligently inquired; persons, to whom no fraud, insincerity, or immorality of any kind, was ever objected; so far from being suspected of design or contrivance, that they were despised both by Jew and Gentile, as simple and ignorant men; not moved by any prospect of riches, honors, or other temporal advantage, but on the contrary exposed to continual persecutions upon the single account of their giving testimony to those facts, in which, notwithstanding, they persevered to the last, and were ready to seal the truth of their testimony with their blood, as we are assured several of them did. Nor can there be the least doubt whether those were the very

events and institutions, and prophecy. Type and prophecy, regarded (as HURD, HORSLEY, and DAVISON, have ably shown that we must regard them) as one grand whole—a *body* of evidence comprising within itself every shade of conviction and variety of form, constitute an argument for the truth of Christianity perfectly irrefragable.]

persons who recorded the facts as conveyed to us : since we find the books by which they have been conveyed expressly ascribed to them, and frequently cited under their names by the writers of the very next age, and of every age since ; and not only received as such by the several Christian Churches, but admitted both by Jews and Heathens in their writings against Christianity. We also find, by the numerous passages which they cite from them, and by the early translations of the books themselves into several languages, that they are the same with those we now have ; and are moreover assured, that the original writings of several of them were preserved for some ages, and frequently appealed to by the Christians in their disputes with heretics. These are the known evidences, to prove that any ancient book, whether sacred or profane, was really written by the person whose name it bears ; and it appears by what has been said, that they may be applied with greater strictness and justice to the New Testament, than to any other ancient writing whatsoever ;^p particularly in the point of so many persons laying down their lives, in testimony of the truth of the doctrines and facts contained in them.

4. As to the *consequences* from those facts, and the application of them in order to satisfy yourselves concerning the truth of Christianity ; begin with the GENERAL EXPECTATION there was of a Messiah, or great Prophet and Deliverer, about the time that our Saviour came. And for the proof of this, you need go no further than the writings of the evangelists. It is said of Simeon, a just and devout man, that he was “ *waiting for the consolation of Israel.*”^a Anna the prophetess “ *spoke of JESUS to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*”^r Upon the appearing of John the Baptist, “ *the people were in expectation, and all men mused in*

^p [This is very fully shown in the able concluding chapter of TAYLOR'S *History of the Transmission of Ancient Books to Modern Times*—a work which should be read by every man desirous of knowing the unassailable stability of the foundation on which he builds his faith—a foundation even MORE SURE than that of any portion of human history or transmitted knowledge.]

^a Luke ii. 25.

^r Luke ii. 38.

their hearts, whether he was the CHRIST or not."^s The message from John to CHRIST was, "Art thou he *that should come*?"^t Art thou that Prophet? Andrew tells his brother, "We have *found the Messiah*, i. e. the CHRIST."^u The people, seeing the miracle of the loaves, say, "This is of a truth, *that Prophet that should come* into the world."^v At another time, it is said by the people, "Of a truth, this is *the Prophet*: this is *the CHRIST*."^w The woman of Samaria said, "*I know that Messiah cometh*, which is called CHRIST."^x The people say, "Do the rulers know indeed that this is *the very CHRIST*?"^y The Jews come about JESUS and ask him, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be *the CHRIST*, tell us plainly."^z Martha saith to JESUS, "I believe that thou art *the CHRIST*, the SON of GOD, *which should come* into the world."^a And the high-priest adjures him to declare, "Whether he was *the CHRIST*, the SON of GOD."^b

These are *facts*, which plainly show that there was among the Jews at that time a general EXPECTATION of a Messiah; and this expectation could arise from nothing but a known and general agreement among them, that *that* was the time which their prophets had fixed for his coming. And even the evasion of the modern Jews, that *two* Messiahs were foretold, one suffering, and the other triumphant, is an argument from the mouth of an adversary, that *a* Messiah which was foretold by their prophets, is already come; inasmuch as they find it impossible to apply many passages which their own writers before the coming of CHRIST expressly applied to the Messiah, to any person but a Messiah in a low and suffering condition.

5. But let your chief regard and attention be to the testimony of MIRACLES; those mighty works which were wrought by CHRIST and his apostles. For this is in its nature a more sure, plain and easy proof; which the meanest capacities are capable of apprehending and

^s Luke iii. 15.

^u John i. 41.

^w John vii. 40, 41.

^y John vii. 26.

^a John xi. 27.

^t Matthew xi. 3.

^v John v. 14.

^x John iv. 25.

^z John x. 24.

^b Matthew xxvi. 63.

entering into ; and which therefore was evidently intended to be the principal means of convincing all mankind of the truth of Christianity. To deny that our Saviour wrought many and great miracles, on all occasions, during the whole course of his ministry, before multitudes of people, in the presence of enemies as well as friends, with a bare word, and with real and permanent effects, is to deny the evidence of sense, and to destroy at once the truth of all history whatsoever ; and in this particular it is to deny that which the bitterest enemies of Christianity of old had not the hardness to deny. To say, (as the Jews did,) that those miracles were wrought by the assistance of evil spirits, is to fall into the absurdities with which our Saviour justly charges them, namely,—that Satan casts out Satan ;—that a person whose life was most holy, and his doctrine divine, pure, and heavenly, was all the while carrying on the work of the devil ;—and that a preacher of righteousness, justice, mercy, charity, truth, meekness, patience, and peace, could be enabled to work miracles by any power, but what was divine.

And therefore we find that CHRIST himself often appeals to his *works*, or the miracles wrought by him, as full and convincing testimonies of his coming from God. For instance, it is said of John the Baptist, that he wrought no miracles ; upon which our Saviour argues thus with the Jews : “ I have greater witness than that of John ; for *the works* which the Father hath given me to finish, the same *works* that I do, *bear witness of me* that the Father hath sent me.”^c At another time, when the Jews came about him and said, “ How long dost thou make us to doubt ? If thou be the CHRIST, tell us plainly ;” his answer was, “ I told you and ye believed not ; *the works* that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me ;”^d and again to the same effect, “ If I do not *the works* of my Father believe me not ; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe *the works* ;”^e and in another place, “ Believe me for the very *works*’ sake.”^f And a little before his ascension, he tells his

^c John v. 36,

^e John x. 37,

^d John x. 24, 25,

^f John xiv. 11.

disciples, "Ye shall receive *power*,^g after that the HOLY GHOST is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the utmost parts of the earth."^h Agreeably to which St. Mark tells us, that "they went forth, and preached every where ; the LORD *working* with them, and confirming the word *with signs* following."ⁱ And it is said in the Acts, that "the LORD *gave testimony* unto the word of his grace, (i. e. the Gospel) and *granted signs and wonders to be done* by their hands :"^k—the miracles they were enabled to work, were the proper and standing evidences of the truth of their doctrine.

Nor does CHRIST only *appeal* to his works, and enable his apostles to do signs and wonders in order to the propagation of the Gospel ; but he grounds the great guilt of the Jews who rejected him, on their having seen his works, and yet not been convinced by them ; "If I had not done among them *the works* which none other man did, they had not had sin."^l And elsewhere he "upbraids the cities wherein *most of his mighty works were done*, because they repented not."^m And the apostle, to the Hebrews, reasons thus : "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him ; God also *bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts* of the HOLY GHOST ?"ⁿ On the other hand, we are told by St. John, that when CHRIST was in Jerusalem, at the passover, many believed in his name, "when they saw *the miracles* which he did."^o And Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, addresses himself thus to CHRIST ; "We know that thou art a teacher come from God ; for no man can do *the miracles* that thou doest, except God

^g [The word "power" (*δυναμις*) here, as in many other passages (compare *Luke* i. 35, xxiv. 49. *Acts*. x. 38. *1 Cor.* ii. 4.) signifies 'miraculous manifestation of the power of God, by the extraordinary influence of the HOLY SPIRIT.']

^h *Acts* i. 8.

^k *Acts* xiv. 3.

^m *Matt.* xi. 20.

^o *John* ii. 23.

ⁱ *Mark* xvi. 20.

^l *John* xv. 2.

ⁿ *Heb.* ii. 3.

be with him.”^p Again, “Many of the people believed on him, and said, when CHRIST cometh will he *do more miracles* than these which this man hath done?”^q And in another place, the multitude who were fed with the loaves, when they had seen *the miracles* which JESUS did, said, “This is of a truth that prophet which should come into the world.”^r And when the chief priests and Pharisees had assembled a council to consider what they should do, their reasoning was this “What do we? for this man doth many *miracles*. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him.”^s Upon which, St. Peter might well say, “Ye men of Israel, hear these words: JESUS of Nazareth, a man *approved of God* among you, *by miracles, and wonders, and signs*, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also *know*.”^t

These appeals which our Saviour makes to his miracles, together with the immediate convictions wrought by them, are joint testimonies of the propriety and efficacy of the argument drawn from thence. And since miracles could be no testimony at all, if they were not *true* and *real*; those appeals and convictions are of themselves sufficient to show the vanity and wildness of a late attempt,^u to prove that our Saviour’s miracles were merely allegorical; in which it is hard to persuade one’s self, that the author, if in his right mind, can be serious and in earnest. But since the notion he has vented is industriously made use of by skeptics and infidels to stagger and perplex unwary and ignorant people, who easily see that if CHRIST wrought no real miracles, Christianity has no real support;—for their sakes, and on no other account, I will proceed to show the absurdity of that notion, without any design to convince the author himself, who either is not in earnest, or not capable of conviction.

What he undertakes to prove, is, that the miracles of our Saviour as we find them in the evangelists—however

^p John iii. 2.

^q John vii. 31.

^r John vi. 14.

^s John xi. 47, 48.

^t Acts ii. 22.

^u [That of WOOLSTON, in the work already specified.]

related by them as *historical truths*, and without the least intimation that they are not to be understood literally—were not *real*, but merely *allegorical*; and that they are to be interpreted, not in the literal, but only in mystical senses;—which strange and enthusiastic scheme he has pursued throughout in a most profane and ludicrous manner. His pretence is, that the fathers considered our Saviour's miracles in the same allegorical way that he does; that is, as *merely* allegorical, and exclusive of the letter—an assertion so notoriously false, that it requires the greatest charity to think that he himself did not know it to be so. Some of the fathers, indeed, in their explications of Scripture to the people, of which their sermons in those days chiefly consisted, being willing to use all means and to omit no opportunities of exciting in them a spirit of piety and devotion, did not confine themselves to the bare letter, but endeavored upon the foundation of the letter to raise spiritual meanings, and to allegorize upon them by way of moral application; and this, not only upon the miracles of our Saviour, but upon almost all the historical facts which are recorded either in the Old or New Testament: and the same was also a received method of instruction among the Jews. But would he have us suppose, that the primitive fathers intended to *deny* the *literal* facts of our Saviour's miracles, or make them *merely* allegorical, when he has not produced any one authority out of the whole body of the fathers of the first three hundred years after CHRIST, except ORIGEN, that can be pretended to countenance his excluding the literal sense? He has indeed heaped together a number of quotations, chiefly out of the fathers and writers of the fourth, fifth, and following centuries: but many of the passages he quotes either expressly affirm, or evidently suppose, the *literal* truth of our Saviour's miracles; and others of them tell us, that we must not *rest* in the letter, but endeavor to find out mystical and spiritual meanings. Now, as such quotations are far from *denying* the truth of our Saviour's miracles according to the letter, they can be no manner of service to his cause; and, therefore, it is hard to say for what end he produced them, unless it was to amuse his English readers with the appearance of a great variety of autho-

rities, which he must needs see were nothing to his purpose.

And as to ORIGEN himself, though he went further into the allegorical way than any other, yet so far was he from not believing and allowing our Saviour's miracles in the literal sense, that in many parts of his book *Against Celsus*, which consists not of popular discourses, but of just and sober reasonings, he directly argues from them in defence of Christianity.—In answer to CELSUS' boastings of the precepts and discipline of the Greeks, he urges, 'that Christianity has a more divine demonstration, which the apostle calls the demonstration of the Spirit and of power; and he explains 'power' to be the miracles of CHRIST; which, says he, we believe to have been wrought, as from many other arguments, so particularly from this, that the footsteps of the same power do still appear.'^v—In several places he takes notice of CELSUS' ascribing the miracles of our Saviour to art magic;^w and having particularly mentioned the restoring of lunatics, casting out devils, and curing diseases, in the name of CHRIST, he adds, that CELSUS, not being able to resist the evidences arising from the wonderful works wrought by him, of which those he named were a few out of many, ascribed them to art magic; and then he shows at large the absurdity of that supposition.^x He takes notice, that both Moses and JESUS did wonderful works, and such as exceeded human power,^y and then expostulates with the Jews for believing the things which Moses wrought, though recorded singly by himself, and rejecting the miracles of CHRIST, upon the testimony of his disciples; while the Christians, as he adds, were the more ready to believe the miracles of CHRIST as recorded by his disciples, on account of the prophecy of Moses concerning him.—He argues for the reality of the descent of the HOLY GHOST upon our Saviour, from the *miracles* which he wrought, and mentions the casting out devils, and the curing diseases, *in his own time*, as one argu-

^v ORIG. *Cont. Cels.* Lib. I. p. 5. ed. Spenc.

^w Id. *ibid.*; Lib. I. p. 7. 30. 34. 53.

^x Lib. I. p. 53.

^y Lib. I. p. 34.

ment of the truth of those miracles.^a—In proof that JESUS was the Son of God, he urges his healing the lame and the blind, according to the prophecy concerning him; and then proceeds to show the reality of what the evangelists relate concerning his raising persons from the dead, and why he raised no more; and adds, that his miracles were intended, *not only* to be *figures*, or *symbols*, but also the means of converting multitudes to the Christian faith; thereby plainly acknowledging the *literal* as well as the allegorical meaning.^a—He proves the truth of CHRIST's miracles, from others *attempting* to work the like; and makes the same difference between their works and CHRIST's, that there was between the miracles of Moses and the magicians, and says, that a Jew who defends the miracles of Moses, is as perverse as the Egyptians if he rejects those of CHRIST.^b—He speaks of the miracles of Moses and CHRIST, as converting whole nations; and observes that CHRIST was to overthrow the customs in which the people had been educated, and to deal with a nation that had been taught to require *signs* and *wonders*, and therefore had at least as great need to show them, in order to gain belief, as Moses, who had not those difficulties to overcome.^c—He says, that whoever should embrace the Christian religion, was required by CHRIST and his disciples to believe his divinity and *miracles*.^d—He speaks of the wonderful works of CHRIST (howsoever disbelieved by CELSUS) as the effects of a divine power.^e And, as to the apostles, he shows how absurd it would have been in them to attempt the introducing and establishing a new doctrine in the world, without the help of miracles.^f

Judge now, whether ORIGEN ought to be produced as one who did not believe the miracles of CHRIST, according to the *literal* sense, and as *full* and *proper* testimonies of the truth of the Christian religion; and let this instance convince you, how unsafe it is to take the opinion of the fathers, or of any writers, from *particular* passages and expressions which may be *picked*

^a Lib. I. p. 34.

^b Lib. II. p. 91, 92.

^d Lib. III. p. 123.

^a Lib. II. p. 87, 88.

^c Lib. II. p. 91, 92.

^e Lib. VII. p. 368.

^f Lib. I. p. 30. 34.

out of them, without attending to the occasions upon which they were written, or comparing them with the other works of the same authors—a liberty, which has been much used of late; and, if allowed, would put it in the power of designing men to make almost any writer speak what opinion they please.

At the same time it must be owned, that ORIGEN, and some others, indulged themselves further in the allegorical way than was consistent with sober reasoning and sound judgment; for which he, in particular, was greatly blamed, both in his own time, and by many of the fathers of the succeeding ages.⁵ But their intentions were certainly pious: and it could not be imagined that there ever would be such a man in the world, who should make it a question whether any father believed the facts *literally* understood, who in his defence of the Christian religion against Jews and Heathens, appealed to the miracles of our Saviour in their *plain* and *literal* sense, as the great evidence of his being sent from God. And as they practised the allegorical method, not only in the point of *miracles*, but in almost all the historical parts of the Old and New Testament, they are as good authorities for entirely destroying the whole historical truth of both, as that of miracles.

Though therefore it were granted, that all the ancient fathers of the Church had unanimously indulged themselves, more or less, in the *allegorical* meanings; it would not at all help this writer, unless he could make it clear, that they also *denied* the *literal* meaning: and to say that any one who urged the miracles of our SAVIOUR as the great vindication of Christianity, could at the same time deny the literal sense of them, is a flat contradiction; since, as I observed before, miracles can be no evidence at all in any other meaning, but the literal. Much less will he find any thing in the fathers to countenance that ludicrous and blasphemous way, in which he has treated CHRIST and his miracles.

The truth is, the supposition of an allegorical and mystical meaning, exclusive of the literal, carries in it so many strange absurdities, that nothing could lead any one into it, but either great weakness of under-

⁵ HUET, *Origeniana*, p. 170.

standing, or great disorder of mind, or very strong prejudices against the Christian religion. For instance;—that when CHRIST appealed to his works, as he often did, to prove his divine mission, he meant only *allegorical* and not real works;—that when the people asked one another, “whether the Messiah, when he came, would do greater works than these?” they did not mean real, but only *imaginary* works;—that when CHRIST bade the disciples of John the Baptist “tell their master what cures they had seen him work,” in order to satisfy him that he was the Messiah as working the same cures which the prophets had foretold the Messiah should work, neither the prophets nor CHRIST meant *real* cures;—that the great number of Jews who were converted upon seeing CHRIST heal the sick, and raise to life those who had been dead, did not see them first to be sick or dead, and then alive or whole again, and so had no real ground for their conversion;—that when the multitudes came to be healed, upon their having seen the miraculous cures that CHRIST had wrought upon others, they had *really* seen nothing, to induce and encourage them to come to him;—that when the leper came back to thank our Saviour, he was not *really* healed, but came to return thanks *for nothing*;—that when the people were amazed to see the miracles he did, they were amazed *at nothing*;—that when the Jews *feared* the success of his miracles, and called a council to prevent it, they were only afraid of *shadows*, and consulted about *nothing*;—that when they persecuted him and sought to slay him, for healing a lame man on the Sabbath day, he had really wrought *no* cure;—that when the people intended to make him a king, on account of his extraordinary works, they had *seen no works*, but what any other man might have done;—that when it was urged by the Jews, that he wrought miracles by the help of Beelzebub, any thing could have driven them to that shift, but that they knew the *facts themselves* to be *real* and *undeniable*;—that when the people were “filled with wonder and amazement” at the cure of the lame man which was wrought by St. Peter, they *did not see him* leaping and walking, who before was laid daily at the gate of the temple to ask alms,—and when the council could say nothing against

it, nor could deny that “a notable miracle had been done,” *no such thing* as a miracle *had been wrought*, but both council and people were deceived;—that when Simon Magus desired to purchase the power of bestowing the HOLY GHOST, he meant to purchase no power but what he had before;—that when the people of Lystra accounted Paul and Barnabas to be gods, they saw nothing in them more than common men;—that when the people out of every nation “were filled with wonder, to hear the apostles speak every one in their own proper language,” there was *really nothing* to be wondered at;—that the conversions made in all nations by the apostles, of great as well as small, learned as well as unlearned, were all made by them without giving *any real testimony* of a divine mission;—that when the writers of the Church asserted the truth of Christianity upon the evidence of the miracles wrought by our Saviour and his apostles, the Jews and Heathens, against whom they wrote, if they could have called in question the reality of those miracles, would not have fixed their foot there, but put themselves to the difficulty of inventing other causes than a divine power to which they might ascribe them:—in a word, that the whole history of the Old and New Testament, which is all equally capable of being run into allegory and mystery by enthusiastical heads, has no meaning at all, but such as every one shall think fit to allegorize it into, by the mere strength of fancy and imagination.

These are some of the shocking absurdities, which attend that wild imagination of miracles wholly *mystical* and *allegorical*, and without a *literal* meaning.—And as to the *blasphemous manner* in which a late writer has taken the liberty to treat our Saviour’s miracles and the Author of them; though I am far from contending, that the grounds of the Christian religion, and the doctrines of it, may not be discussed at all times, in a calm, decent, and serious way (on the contrary, I am very sure, that the more fully they are discussed, the more firmly they will stand,) yet I cannot but think it the duty of the civil magistrate at all times, to take care that religion be not treated either in a *ludicrous*, or a *reproachful* manner, and effectually to discourage such books and writings, as strike equally at the foundation

of *all* religion, and of truth, virtue, seriousness, and good manners; and by consequence at the foundation of civil society.

6. But to return. To the miracles of our Saviour, we may well add, as further testimonies of a divine power, his PREDICTIONS of many events, which were afterwards punctually fulfilled;—that he should suffer at Jerusalem;^h that there he should be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, who would condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged;ⁱ that Judas was the person who would betray him;^k that the other disciples would forsake him;^l that, particularly, Peter would deny him thrice;^m that, as to the manner of his death, it should be crucifixion;ⁿ and that he would rise again the third day.^o To which we may add, his foretelling the manner of St. Peter's death, and that St. John should live to see the destruction of Jerusalem;^p together with the persecutions which should befall the apostles after his death,^q and the mission of the HOLY GHOST to comfort and enlighten them, and to enable them effectually to preach and propagate the Gospel.^r

But most remarkable to this purpose, is his foretelling the *destruction of Jerusalem*, and of the whole Jewish nation, with the several circumstances of it: as, the *time* of its coming; the destroying of the *city*; the demolishing of the *temple*; the judgments upon the *nation* in general; and their final *dispersion*:—all which were distinctly foretold by CHRIST; and are attested by JOSEPHUS (a historian of their own nation who lived at the time) to have punctually come to pass, according to the predictions.

As to the *time*:—our Saviour having enumerated the dismal calamities that were coming upon the Jews, declares, “That *that generation* should not pass, until

^h Luke xiii. 33, 34.—Matt. xiv. 21.

^k Matt. xxvi. 25.

^m Mark xiv. 30.

^o Matt. xvi. 21.

^q Matt. x. 17, 18, 19, 20.

ⁱ Matt. xx. 18, 19.

^l Matt. xxvi. 13.

ⁿ Matt. xx. 19.

^p John xxi. 22.

^r Acts i. 8.—Luke xxi. 12, 14.

all these things were fulfilled ;”^s and he supposes, that some at least of those to whom he spake when he enumerated the signs of their coming, should be then alive ; “ Ye, when *ye shall see* all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors ;”^t and, after his resurrection, he intimates that St. John should live to see those terrible judgments ;^u which in Scripture are expressed by *his coming*, and which were all executed, according to those predictions, in less than forty years from the time they were denounced.

Next, the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the circumstances of it, are thus foretold by our Saviour ; “ Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee, and shall not leave in thee one stone upon another.”^v—“ Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”^w All which was fulfilled, in Titus^x encompassing the city with a new fortification raised by the soldiers in three days, so that none could come out ; upon which there ensued a most dreadful^y famine, the stores^z and granaries having been burnt and consumed before, in the seditious quarrels and fightings among themselves under three several factions endeavoring to devour one another. The city being taken, was levelled^a with the ground, as if it had never been inhabited ; and what by famine, by fire and sword, and by their slaughters of one another, eleven hundred thousand^b Jews were destroyed, besides ninety-seven thousand who were taken prisoners ; the nation at that time being gathered together at Jerusalem, to celebrate the passover.

The particular destruction of *the temple* is thus foretold by our Saviour, “ There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”^c And JOSEPHUS tells us, that Titus ordered the soldiers

^s Matt. xxiv. 34.—Mark xiii. 30.—Luke xxi. 32.

^t Matt. xxiv. 33.

^u John xxi. 22.

^v Luke xix. 43, 44.

^w Matt. xxiv. 21.

^x JOSEPHUS, *Jewish Wars*, l. VI. c. xiii.

^y c. xiv.

^z JOSEPHUS, l. VI. c. i.

^a JOSEPHUS, l. VII. c. xviii.

^b JOSEPHUS, l. VII. c. xvii.

^c Matt. xxiv. 2.

to lay the temple, as well as the city, even with the ground;^d and another of their writers^e mentions the fact of Turnus Rufus' digging the very plot of ground on which it stood, with a plough-share.

The judgments that would fall upon the nation in general, are thus expressed by our Saviour: "These be the days of *vengeance*. There shall be great *distress* in the land, and *wrath* upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword."^f Accordingly they were destroyed,^g to the number of two hundred thousand and upwards, in several sieges, battles, &c. in the towns and countries; besides the grand slaughter at Jerusalem.

The following *captivity* and *dispersion* of those who remained, was also foretold by our Saviour: "They shall be led *away captive* into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled."^h Accordingly JOSEPHUS,ⁱ after he has described the taking of Jerusalem, speaks of them as a people '*dispersed* over the face of the earth;' and particularly tells us,^k that the most graceful of the captives were reserved by Titus to be part of his triumph; that, of the remainder, those above seventeen years of age were sent into Egypt in chains, to be employed in servile offices; and others of them were sent into several provinces for the use of the theatres and public shows; and that all under seventeen years of age were exposed to sale. And ever since, to this day, they have been, and still continue, a people dispersed and scattered among the nations of the earth, without either temple, or city, or government of their own.

These particulars concerning our Saviour's death, and the state and condition of his disciples and of the Jewish nation, consequent upon it, are events which are foretold, and which we find to have punctually come to pass, partly from the accounts of our own Scriptures, and partly from a Jewish historian of undoubted credit and authority.

^d JOSEPHUS, l. VII. c. xviii.

^e MAIMONIDES.

^f Luke xxi. 22, 23, 24.

^g See the calculation in Archbishop USHER's *Chronology*.

^h Luke xxi. 23, 24.

ⁱ JOSEPHUS, l. VII. c. xxi.

^k JOSEPHUS, l. VII. c. xvi.

And that his predictions, when fulfilled, were intended by him to be proofs of his being the Messiah, we may gather from his own declarations. Having told his disciples that Judas should betray him, he presently adds, “Now I tell you *before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He.*”¹ And after the prediction of his death, resurrection, and ascension, he says, “And now I have told you before it come to pass, *that when it is come to pass, ye might believe,*”^m i. e. says Dr. Hammond, ‘that your seeing my prediction fulfilled, may convince you, that all which I have said to you is true, and so make you believe on me.’ To the same purpose, is that which he subjoins to his account of the persecutions that would befall his disciples after his death, “these things I have told you, that when the time shall come, ye may *remember that I told you of them.*”ⁿ

7. From the predictions of our Saviour, and the fulfilling of them, carry your thoughts to the speedy and wonderful PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL; and there also you will see the clearest evidences of a divine power. A few obscure and illiterate men, without art or eloquence, making head against the ancient religions of kingdoms and countries, and all the while professing themselves to be the messengers of one who had been despised, and ill treated, and at last crucified in his own country; and yet, under these disadvantages, prevailing with multitudes every where to be his disciples, and to embrace his religion; and this, notwithstanding the contrariety of its doctrines to the lusts, passions, and prejudices of mankind, and the fierce opposition it met with from the powers of the world, and the terrible persecutions which for some time were almost the certain portion of the professors of it; without any

¹ John xiii. 19.

^m John xiv. 29.

ⁿ John xvi. 4.—[See the very full statement of the predictions of JESUS, with their several fulfilments, in HORNE'S *Introduction*, Vol. I. Append. No. IV, Chap. ii.; and the consideration of the same subject, with reference to its connexion with the general history of Christianity, in SUMNER'S *Evidences of Christianity derived from its Nature and Reception*, Chap. vi.]

encouragement to undergo them, but what was *future* and *out of sight*. In these circumstances, nothing could lead them to attempt the propagation of it with any hope of success, but a promise of divine assistance, and their firm reliance upon it; nothing could have given them such success but a divine power working with them: nor can any thing account for so many persons sealing the doctrine with their blood, in so many different parts of the world, but an absolute assurance of the truth of what they taught, and a future reward for their labor and sufferings.*

They who require greater testimonies of a divine mission and power, than those I have mentioned under this eighth general head, are never to be satisfied. But, on the other hand, when an honest and impartial mind has satisfied itself, upon those evidences, that our Saviour and his apostles had a divine mission, and that they wrought many and great miracles, and foretold events by a power and inspiration evidently divine; it follows that the doctrines, for the propagating of which they were sent, and for the confirmation of which those extraordinary powers and gifts were bestowed, must undoubtedly be true, as coming from God, and attested by him. Particularly, their divine mission and power being first established, their express and repeated declarations that *JESUS was THE MESSIAH*, become to us a full and irresistible proof of the truth of it. And when a question arises, whether or no this or that prophecy in the Old Testament, this or that type in the Jewish law, had a reference to the Messiah who was to come, and were actually fulfilled in *CHRIST*; it is easy to determine with yourselves, whether you ought to listen to persons divinely inspired, who affirm *they had* a reference to *CHRIST*, or to persons who pretend to no such inspiration, and would persuade you that *they had not*.

The evidence arising from ancient types and prophecies, has (as I told you before) been fully considered,

* [Compare *WATSON'S Apology for Christianity* in answer to *GIBSON'S* attempt to account for its propagation by the operation of natural secondary causes; *PALEY'S Evidences*, Part II. Chap. ix.; and *SUMNER'S Evidences*, Chap. x.]

and cleared from the cavils and objections of infidels, by several very learned men; it being the proper province of such, to follow the adversary through all the intricacies of the Jewish learning, and the contemporary histories, customs, and modes of speaking and writing. But as persons who are unacquainted with these things, and incapable of entering minutely into such inquiries, may easily be misled and imposed upon by artful and designing men; so I have shown you under this head, that you need not enter into them, but may receive full and clear satisfaction from evidences much more plain and direct, which lie equally open to all capacities, and are perfectly well calculated for the conviction of all, if there be but an honest and unprejudiced mind. And whoever shall affirm, that these are not a full and sufficient ground of conviction without a critical inquiry into types and prophecies, must affirm at the same time that no part of the Heathen world, who were all equally unacquainted with the Jewish dispensation, could receive and embrace the Christian faith upon a just and reasonable foundation; and by consequence, that all who did receive and embrace it, however wise and learned in other respects (which was the known character of many of them) were, in that particular, fools and idiots:—or rather, he must affirm, that it is *impossible* for God to make *any revelation at all*, that can rationally be believed.

But because practice (as I have observed under three different heads) has so great an influence upon principle, and it is to little purpose to convince the *mind* of the truth of the Christian religion, unless the *will* and *affections* be preserved in a right disposition, and carefully guarded, as well against the many allurements to vice and profaneness which we see in the world, as against the arts and endeavors of wicked men to break down the fences of religion; I will add one general direction, which being duly attended to, will be a constant guard against all such attempts and allurements; and, by preserving your hearts in a Christian disposition, will at the same time prepare them to continue steadfast in the Christian faith.

IX. And the rule is this, **THAT YOU BE CAREFUL TO**

PRESERVE UPON YOUR MINDS A SERIOUS REGARD AND REVERENCE TO THINGS SACRED; that is, to every thing that bears a relation to GOD and his religion, particularly his WORD, his NAME, his DAY, his HOUSE and ORDINANCES, and his MINISTERS. For these are visible memorials of GOD upon earth; and, as they are the standing means of maintaining an intercourse between GOD and man, a serious regard to them is a necessary means of keeping up in the mind an habitual reverence of GOD. On the contrary, there is not a more evident testimony of a corrupt and depraved disposition, than an irreverent treatment of things sacred, a contempt of any thing that carries on it a divine impression, or an obstinate neglect of any of those ordinances which the wisdom of GOD has appointed, to support and preserve his religion in the world. When, therefore, you hear any person depreciating the public duties of religion, and inveighing against ordinances of all kinds, and representing public assemblies, and regular ministers for the administration of those ordinances to be useless, or at least unnecessary; you have great reason to suspect, that their *final* aim is, by bringing these into disuse and contempt, to banish Christianity out of the nation. And by the same rule, whoever is seriously concerned to preserve our religion, and to maintain the honor of it, must take great care to preserve in himself, and propagate in others, a constant and serious regard to every thing that bears a relation to GOD, and to consider it as *sacred* on that account.

Particularly,

1. As to the WORD of GOD.—Whatever we find delivered by the prophets in the Old Testament, or by CHRIST and his apostles in the New, is always to be considered by us as a message from GOD to men; and whoever considers it as such, cannot fail of paying it the highest regard and reverence; much less can he fail of expressing, on all occasions, his abhorrence of making it the subject of wit and jesting, and of raising mirth from unserious allusions to the language or matter of it; which, however usual in loose company and among unthinking people, is a very great degree of impiety and profaneness. As the Scriptures contain

the will of God, they are certainly entitled to your most serious regard ; and the most proper testimony of your regard is, to read them frequently and with attention ;—to have recourse to them as your great rule of duty, and the treasure out of which religious knowledge of every kind is to be mainly drawn. In them, you find a continued mixture of precepts, promises, and threatenings ; first, to show you your duty and to remind you of it, and then to quicken and encourage you in the performance of it. And, together with these, you see the many examples of pious and good men, and the numerous testimonies of God's favor to the righteous, and his judgments upon the wicked. In the same sacred books, you behold the various dispensations of God in the successive ages of the world, and the glorious scenes of providence, opening by degrees, and succeeding one another in a regular order, and at last centring in the Messiah. And, by observing the *several ways* in which God has revealed himself to mankind, you clearly see the excellency of the Christian revelation above all others, in the purity it requires, and the rewards it proposes. In these and the like ways, do the holy Scriptures at once delight and edify all those who attend to them; and are conversant with them, and who regard and reverence them as the sacred oracles of God.

2. In like manner, the NAME of GOD is to be esteemed sacred, in order to preserve upon the mind an habitual honor and reverence to God himself; by not using it otherwise than seriously, and not mixing it with our ordinary conversation, and much less prostituting it to oaths, and curses, and imprecations. Such a profane use of his name insensibly takes off the veneration that is due to his being ; and by making him less and less feared, emboldens men to be more and more wicked ; and is accordingly seldom heard but in loose company and among men of profligate lives. Wherefore, be careful to abstain from a common and irreverent use of that sacred name, and of all such expressions as signify things of a religious nature,—as our *faith*, our *salvation*, or the like ; and not only to abstain from the undue use of them yourselves, but likewise to take all proper occasions to express your dislike and abhor-

rence of it in others, and especially in those who are placed under your more immediate care.

3. **THE LORD'S DAY** is to be esteemed sacred, as being sanctified and set apart, for ceasing from our worldly care and labor, and meditating upon God, and paying that honor and adoration which he requires of us, and which belongs to him, as the Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of mankind. The devout and serious observation of this day, is one of the most effectual means to keep alive religion in the world, both in the outward face of it, and in the hearts and lives of Christians; and nothing is more certain, than that it would quickly be lost and extinguished among the generality of mankind, if it were not kept alive by the appointment of this day, for reviving upon their minds a sense of God and their duty. Wherefore let this be a day not only of rest from labor, but also of meditation upon God and heavenly things; partly in a devout attendance upon the public offices of religion, and partly by allowing a reasonable portion of the day to the private duties of reading the holy Scriptures and other good books, and instructing your children and servants, and examining your own lives, and praying to God for a supply of your own private necessities, spiritual and temporal. I say, a reasonable portion of the day, according to the condition of particular persons and families. For they who on all other days were confined to hard labor, or are otherwise obliged to a close attendance on their worldly affairs, must be allowed in some measure to consider this as a day of ease and relaxation from thought and labor, as well as a day of devotion: provided it be in a way that is innocent and inoffensive, and that the public offices of religion be duly attended, and the duties of a more private nature be not neglected. But there are many others, whose quality and condition have freed them from the necessity of a constant attendance upon worldly business, and to whom all other days are equally days of ease and diversion; and from them it may well be expected, that they abstain from their diversions on this day, and employ it more strictly in the duties of religion; for which indeed they have *greater need* than others, to arm themselves against the manifold temptations to

which they are daily exposed by ease and plenty. And when they have *better opportunity* and *greater need*, than the rest of mankind, to give a strict attendance to the duties of religion on this day; if they do it not, it is much to be feared that they have a greater relish for the delights and business of this world, than for exercises of a spiritual nature.

4. Next to God's day, his HOUSE is to be accounted *sacred*, as it is a place set apart for the performance of religious offices, and for the public administration of religious ordinances, in which all Christians are bound to join. The duty of assembling for the public worship of God, appears to be a necessary part of the Christian religion, as well from the first institution of the Christian Church, as from the general practice of Christians in all ages, and all countries. Our Saviour and his apostles found the Jewish worship every Sabbath day regularly settled in their synagogues, and were so far from condemning those assemblies, that they joined in them. After his ascension, we read, that they who upon the preaching of the Gospel had "received the word, continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in *breaking of bread*, and in *prayers*;" and that they "continued daily with *one accord* in the temple."^p The Christians in particular cities and countries are every where in the New Testament styled 'Churches,' which probably denotes an assembly of persons called together into one body; and we find the apostles ordaining elders in the Churches planted by them,^q which elders are also spoken of as heads of the several Churches, and rulers in them;^r and one part of the office was, to labor in the word and doctrine, to take heed to the flock, and to feed the Church.^s At Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians, "Paul and Barnabas assembled themselves with the Church a whole year, and taught much people:"^t and afterwards, we read of *prophets* and *teachers* in "the Church that was at Antioch."^u In other places of the New Testament we find the first day of the week (the day of our Saviour's

^p Acts ii. 42. 46.

^r Tit. i. 5; Acts xi. 30; xx. 17. 28; xxi. 18.

^t Acts xi. 26.

^q Acts xiv. 23.

^s 1 Tim. v. 17.

^u Acts xiii. 1.

resurrection) spoken of as the ordinary time of the Christian assemblies ;—"upon *the first day of the week*, when the disciples came together *to break bread*, Paul preached unto them."^v And the same apostle gives special direction to the Christians at Corinth, as he had done before to the Churches of Galatia, that "upon the *first day of the week* every one should lay by him in store as God had prospered him, that there might be no *gatherings* when he came."^w In his first epistle directed to the same Church, he lays down many rules for holding their assemblies in an orderly manner :^x he first reproves them for their disorderly celebration of the feast of charity, and the Lord's Supper, and tells them,—that they came together not for the better, but for the worse,—that when they 'came together in the Church,' he heard there were divisions among them,—that their behaving themselves as if they were eating and drinking in their own houses, was 'a despising of the Church of God.' After this, he proceeds to give them a particular account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, with the direction of CHRIST to celebrate it in remembrance of him ; which he elsewhere calls the "communion of the body and blood of CHRIST ;"^y speaking of it as a symbol of Christian union, or the badge of their relation to CHRIST, and to one another ; all which is necessarily supposed to be performed in public assemblies. In the same epistle,^z against speaking in an unknown tongue, he says,^a "how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say, Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" At the twenty-third and twenty-sixth verses, he speaks of 'the Church' being 'come together' into one place, and then gives further directions for their more orderly behavior in their assemblies, because, as he adds at the thirty-third verse, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, *as in all Churches of the saints*"—which, in those days, was the common name of Christians. At the thirty-fourth verse the 'women' are enjoined to 'keep silence in the

^v Acts xx. 7.

^x 1 Cor. xi.

^y Ch. xiv.

^w 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

^y 1 Cor. x. 26, 27.

^a Verse 16.

Churches ;' and he concludes with this general direction, "let all things be done decently and in order." In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Christians are first exhorted to "hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering ;" and then, "*not to forsake the assembling of themselves together,*"^b even in times of persecution. And that they strictly conformed to this apostolical rule, we have the testimony of PLINY, a Heathen writer, who, being governor of a Roman province about the year of CHRIST 104, gave the emperor an account of what he had learned concerning the Christians ; "that they used to meet together *on a certain day* before light, (for fear of the Heathen persecutors,) when they *joined in singing a hymn to CHRIST*, and entered in a *solemn engagement* not to steal, nor rob, nor commit adultery, nor defraud ;" which plainly refers to the celebration of the Eucharist.^c But JUSTIN MARTYR, an ancient father, in his Apology for the Christians,^d about the year of CHRIST 150, gives a more particular account of their public worship : "that on the day called Sunday, all the Christians in city and country *assembled in one place*, where the writings of the apostles and prophets were read. That as soon as the reader had made an end, there followed an *exhortation to the people* ; and after that, prayers and the holy Eucharist ; the person who officiated, praying, and the people saying Amen."—To all which we may add, that from the beginning of Christianity to this time, no instance can be given of any country, in which the Christian religion has been planted, where there has not also been prayer and preaching, and administration of sacraments, in an open and public manner ; though it is known to have been planted by *several* apostles in *several* countries.

And it is to be hoped, that there are none among us at this day, who hold religious assemblies to be useless and unnecessary, except the open or secret enemies of Christianity ; who well know how great a means they are to preserve a sense of God and religion in the world, and to improve men in the graces and virtues of the Chris-

^b Heb. x. 23. 25.
Apol. II.

^c PLIN. Lib. X. *Ep.* 97.

tian life. But if there be any who otherwise bear no ill-will to the Christian religion, and yet are of the number of those who think public prayer, preaching, and other ordinances, to be things indifferent and unnecessary; it is because they consider not the corrupt state of human nature, nor the common condition of human life—how strongly some are inclined to the delights of the world, and to what degree others are swallowed up in the cares of it; how ignorant many are of their duty, and how often it is seen that they who know it, practise it no better than those who know it not; how little disposition men naturally have to acts of devotion, and how unmindful they are apt to be of a future state;—upon the whole, what small hope there is that the generality of mankind would retain just notions of God and religion, if they were not frequently explained to them,—or attend to their duty, if it were not frequently inculcated upon them,—or refrain from inordinate enjoyments, if they were not frequently warned of the danger of them,—or be influenced by future rewards and punishments, if they were not frequently put in mind of them,—or, lastly, that they would duly perform the work of devotion, if they were not called to it, and assisted in it by public offices and ministers appointed for that end, and at the same time excited to seriousness and attention by the solemnity of the work, and the examples of their fellow Christians:—which shows, on one hand, the wisdom of God in providing those outward means to check and cure our inward depravities; and, on the other hand, the folly of those who in their reasonings against instituted rites and ordinances of religion, seem to forget the blindness and corruption of human nature, or rather to suppose that mankind are a race of angels, wholly freed from the power of temptations, and carried by their own nature, with the greatest readiness and cheerfulness, into all the acts of adoration and obedience.

Now, if public *assemblies* be necessary, the appointment of *places* for those assemblies is also necessary: and as the *place* becomes sacred, by the sacred *offices* which are performed in it, so the true way of expressing our regard to the place, is a devout and religious attendance upon the offices; to consider, that we go to the

house of God, not for fashion's sake, but for the ends of devotion and spiritual improvement; and accordingly to fix our attention, and to join seriously and devoutly with the congregation in the several parts of divine service. On the contrary, a wilful neglect of the Christian assemblies, or a careless and irreverent behavior in them, is a contempt and profanation of the house of God, and savors of a mind void of religion.

5. As the house of God is sacred, on account of the religious offices that are performed in it; so are the MINISTERS who perform those offices, and who have received a regular appointment to it, as far as they answer the ends of such appointment. By their hands the holy ordinances of the Christian religion are administered, by their tongues the word of God is explained and enforced, and by their ministry many other blessings and benefits are derived to the people committed to their care. And as to the necessity of a regular mission, without which no person may minister publicly in holy things; this appears, as well from the first institution of a Christian Church and from the constant practice of it in all ages, as from the endless confusions that must unavoidably ensue, if every one might set up himself to be a public teacher, and intrude at pleasure into the ministerial office. Whether therefore we regard the nature and original of their office, or the work they are employed about; they are to be considered as God's ministers, and to be received and respected under that character, unless they forfeit their title to respect, by living unsuitably to their character. In which case, I am very far from recommending them either to your love or esteem, since I know it is impossible for you to pay either; there being no person so truly the object of abhorrence and contempt in the sight of all good men, as a minister of the Gospel, who by his irregular life renders himself unworthy of his function and character. But let me caution you against being drawn into a dislike of the *order* itself, as *unnecessary* and *useless*; for this will of course draw you into a disregard of the ordinances of Christianity, or rather will abolish the ordinances themselves: and accordingly it has been labored by the promoters of infidelity, as one effectual expedient to banish the face

of Christianity from among us. Let me also caution you against censuring the *whole body* of the clergy for the faults of a *very few* in proportion out of so great a number, and against charging that as vice or immorality, which may in reality be no more than indiscretion or imprudence. In general, let me caution you against a delight in censuring the clergy, and a desire to make them appear mean and contemptible in the eyes of their people, by which you bring upon yourselves the great guilt of disabling them to do good in their several stations. And if you find any who are really immoral, and persevere in it, *show your concern for the honor of God and religion, by taking proper methods to bring them under the censures of the Church*, for the reformation of them, and the terror of others.

X. Above all things, BEWARE OF FALLING INTO AN UNCONCERNEDNESS AND INDIFFERENCE, IN THE POINT OF RELIGION.

When a revelation is generally believed to come from God, and has been received and embraced as such by so many successive ages and different nations, and by multitudes of wise and good men in all those ages and nations:—when it lays down rules for our *present* state, which manifestly tend to holiness, and peace, and the improvement and perfection of human nature, and proposes to mankind a *future* state of rewards or punishments, both of them unspeakable and endless, according to their obedience or disobedience to the precepts it lays down:—certainly, such a revelation demands the regard and attention of a rational creature, so far as *soberly to consider it*, and *to inquire carefully* into the grounds of it, as a matter in which he is nearly concerned. Christianity requires no further favor, than a fair and impartial inquiry into the grounds and doctrines of it; and for men who live in a country where it is publicly professed, and where they have all the proper and necessary means of information, not to attend to it at all, or to consider it with such indifference as if they thought themselves unconcerned in it, is the highest degree of stupidity and folly. Let me therefore beseech you, to think of religion as a matter of great importance in itself, and of infinite concern to

every one of you ; and not to suffer yourselves either to be diverted by the business or pleasures of the world from regarding it, or deluded by wicked men into an opinion that it deserves not your regard.

THESE, my brethren, are the rules and directions which I would put into your hands, and recommend to your serious and frequent perusal ; hoping that by the blessing of God they may contribute to your establishment in the Christian faith and doctrine, against all attempts of atheistical and wicked men to seduce and corrupt you. And that, under the influence of God's HOLY SPIRIT, they may become effectual to that great end, is the earnest prayer of

YOUR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND PASTOR,

EDMUND LONDON.

THE
BISHOP OF LONDON'S
SECOND PASTORAL LETTER;

OCCASIONED BY SOME LATE WRITINGS IN WHICH IT IS ASSERTED, THAT 'REASON
IS A SUFFICIENT GUIDE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION, WITHOUT THE
HELP OF REVELATION.'

THE arguments that have been used to support the cause of infidelity, may be reduced to two general heads;—one, That there is not *sufficient evidence* of the truth and authority of the Gospel revelation;—the other, That reason being a sufficient guide in matters of religion, there was no *need* of such a revelation. The tendency of the first is to persuade men to *reject* the Gospel; and the tendency of the second, to satisfy them that they may without danger or inconvenience *lay aside* and *neglect it*: and wherever either of these arguments prevails, the work of infidelity is effectually carried on.

To prevent your being seduced or shaken by any suggestion that the evidences of the truth and authority of the Christian revelation are not *full* and *sufficient*, I endeavored in my First Letter to bring those evidences into as narrow a compass as I could; that, having set them before you in one view, and in their united strength, you might be able to judge for yourselves. And as a chain of evidences so plain and forcible cannot fail to establish every unprejudiced mind in a firm belief that the Gospel revelation was from God: so, when that is once established, no suggestion either against the *need* of such a revelation, or against our *obligation* to receive it, ought to make any impression upon you; because, to suppose that God makes a revelation which is *needless*, is a direct impeachment of his *wisdom*; and to affirm that we are *not bound* to attend to and receive it, when made, is no less an impeachment of his authority.

But since the infidels of our age are endeavoring to lead men into a disregard of all revelation, by magnifying the strength of natural reason, and recommending it as a full and sufficient guide in matters of religion; and from thence infer, that the means of salvation directed by the Gospel, notwithstanding all the evidences of their being God's own appointment, are to be laid aside as superstitions and human inventions, and every man is to have the framing of his own religion;—Since also there is great cause to apprehend, that many may give too favorable entertainment to a scheme which thus flatters the pride of human understanding, and which, by lessening or removing the terrors of the Gospel, shakes off the restraints that are most uneasy to the corruptions of nature:—For these reasons, it highly concerns those who have the care of souls, to guard them against such fatal errors; first, by convincing them of the insufficiency of natural reason to be a guide in religion, and, by consequence, of the need of a divine revelation, and our obligation to attend to it; and then, by setting before them the peculiar excellences and advantages of the Christian revelation, and the great sinfulness of rejecting it.

Of these, and some other points which naturally fall in with them, I will endeavor to give you a full and clear view, under the following heads:

I. THE TRUE AND PROPER USE OF REASON, WITH REGARD TO REVELATION.

II. THE INSUFFICIENCY OF REASON TO BE A GUIDE IN RELIGION.

III. THE GREAT NEED, AND EXPEDIENCE, OF A DIVINE REVELATION FOR THAT END.

IV. THE OBLIGATION WE ARE UNDER TO INQUIRE WHETHER ANY REVELATION HAS BEEN MADE, AND WHAT EVIDENCES THERE ARE OF ITS COMING FROM GOD.

V. THE DUTY OF MANKIND TO RECEIVE FOR THEIR GUIDE, WHATEVER REVELATION COMES FROM GOD; AND TO RECEIVE IT WHOLE AND ENTIRE.

VI. THE PECULIAR EXCELLENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

VII. THE GREAT SINFULNESS AND DANGER OF REJECTING THIS REVELATION.

VOL. V.—6

I. OF THE TRUE AND PROPER USE OF REASON, WITH REGARD TO REVELATION.

Those among us who have labored of late years to set up reason against revelation, would make it pass for an established truth, that if you will embrace revelation, you must of course quit your reason; which, if it were true, would doubtless be a strong prejudice against revelation. But so far is this from being true, that it is universally acknowledged that revelation itself is to stand or fall by the test of reason, or, in other words, according as reason finds the evidences of its coming from God, to be or not to be sufficient and conclusive, and the matter of it to contradict, or not contradict, the natural notions which reason gives us of the being and attributes of God, and of the essential differences between good and evil. And when reason, upon an impartial examination, finds the evidences to be full and sufficient, it pronounces that the revelation ought to be received, and as a necessary consequence thereof, directs us to give up ourselves to the guidance of it. But here reason stops; not as *set aside* by revelation, but as taking revelation for its guide, and not thinking itself at liberty to call in question the wisdom and expedience of any part, after it is satisfied that the whole comes from God; any more than to object against it, as containing some things, the manner, end and design of which, it cannot fully comprehend. These were the wise and pious sentiments of an ingenious writer of our own time; "I gratefully receive and rejoice in the light of revelation, which sets me at rest in many things, the manner whereof my poor reason can by no means make out to me."^a And elsewhere, having laid it down for a general maxim, 'that reason must be our last judge and guide in every thing;' he immediately adds, "I do not mean, that we must consult reason, and examine whether a proposition revealed from God, can be made out by natural principles, and if it cannot, that then we may reject it. But consult it we must, and by it examine whether it be a revelation from God, or no. And if reason finds it to be revealed from God, reason then declares for it, as much as for any other truth, and

^a LOCKE, Vol. I. p. 573.

makes it one of her dictates :”^b—Which is in effect what St. Peter means, when he commands Christians to “be always ready to give *a reason of the hope* that is in them.”^c

Agreeably to this, the bounds of reason and faith are laid out by the same writer as follows : “*Reason*,” says he, “as contradistinguished to *faith*, I take to be the discovery of the certainty or probability of such propositions or truths, which the mind arrives at by deduction made from ideas which it has got by the use of its *natural* faculties, viz. by sensation, or reflection. *Faith*, on the other side, is the assent to any proposition not thus made out by the deductions of reason, but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God in some *extraordinary* way of communication.”^d And again : “*Reason* is *natural revelation*, whereby the eternal Father of light, and fountain of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth, which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties ; *revelation* is *natural reason enlarged* by a new set of discoveries *communicated by God immediately*, which reason vouches the truth of by the testimony and proof it gives, that they come from God.”^e And elsewhere, “Thus far the dominion of faith reaches, and that without any violence or hindrance to reason, which is not injured or disturbed, but *assisted and improved by new discoveries* of truth, coming from the eternal fountain of knowledge.”^f And, “Whatsoever is divine revelation, ought to overrule all our opinions, prejudices, and interests, and hath a right to be received with *full assent*.—Such a submission as this, of our reason to faith, takes not away the landmarks of knowledge : this shakes not the foundation of reason, but leaves us that use of our faculties for which they were given.”^g

So little did this acute writer dream of the new notions which have been since invented to support the cause of infidelity, ‘that God cannot, consistently with the immutability of his nature, make any new revelation [though to mutable creatures] by way of addition

^b LOCKE, Vol. I. p. 334.

^d LOCKE, p. 326.

^f *Ibid.* p. 329.

^c 1 Peter iii. 15.

^e *Ibid.* Vol. I. p. 331,

^g *Ibid.*

to the original law of nature;—that the making any such new revelation would be to deal with his creatures in an arbitrary manner;—that no evidence from miracles or other external testimonies, upon which any new revelation claims to be received as coming from God, are to be at all regarded;—and, that the matter of such a revelation is not to be attended to by any man, further than he sees the fitness and wisdom of it, and can suppose it to be part of the original law of nature:—that is, it is not to be regarded or attended to at all, as a revelation.—But this, by the way.

II. REASON, OF ITSELF, IS AN INSUFFICIENT GUIDE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

But before I proceed directly to the proof of this, I must caution you against several fallacious arguings upon this point, by which you may otherwise be deceived and imposed on.

One is, the arguing from the powers of reason *in a state of innocence*, in which the understanding is supposed to be clear and strong, and the judgment unbiased and free from the influences of inordinate appetites and inclinations;—to the powers and abilities of reason under the present *corrupt state* of human nature; in which we find by experience how often we are deceived, even in things before our eyes, and the common affairs of human life; and more particularly in the case of religion, how apt our judgment would be to follow the bent of our passions and appetites, and to model our duty according to their motions and desires, if God had left this wholly to every one's reason, and not given us a more plain and express revelation of his will, to check and balance that influence which our passions and appetites are found to have over our reason and judgment.

Another fallacious way of arguing is, that as reason is our guide in the affairs of this life, it may also be our guide in religion, and the concerns of the next life. Whereas in one it has the assistance of sense, and experience, and observation, but in the other it is left in great measure to conjecture and speculation. Or if reason were equally capable of making a judgment upon things of a temporal, and things of a spiritual nature;

yet there will always be a very great difference in the degrees of attention which the generality of men allow to things temporal and things spiritual, to things present and things future, to things in view and things out of sight :—so that it is usually seen, that the wiser men are about the things of this world, the less wise they are about the things of the next. And as to the sufficiency of reason to be a guide in religion, it is much the same thing with regard to the generality of the world, whether reason be *incapable* of framing a complete rule of life,—or the generality be *hindered* by pleasures or by attendance on their worldly affairs, from *employing* their reason to frame it, which will always be the case of the greatest part of mankind.

In the next place, therefore, it is very unfair in those who deny the need and expedience of a divine revelation, to argue in favor of reason, as if all mankind were philosophers, and every one had sufficient capacity, leisure, and inclination, to form a scheme of duties for the direction of his own life. For it is not enough to say, that there are learned men in the world *who are able* to form such schemes; since, whatever their own ability may be, they have no right to *command* assent and obedience from others; nor can any one rationally receive and embrace their schemes without following them through the chain of reasonings upon which they are built, and judging whether the reasonings will support the schemes; and, further, (in case those learned men differ,) without judging which of them is in the right, and which in the wrong—a task that the generality of mankind are as unequal to, as they are to the framing the schemes themselves. And the difficulty is still greater when we find the same philosopher differing from himself—now advancing one opinion, and then again leaning to another,—at one time clear and positive, at another time doubtful and wavering upon the very same point; in which case his opinion on either side can amount to no more in the result than to prove him a guide very unfit for the people to follow.

No less unfair is it, to interpret the zeal that is shown for REVEALED RELIGION, as a *disregard of* MORALITY. This is so far from being true, that the advocates of revelation always consider the whole body of the moral

law, as an essential part of the Christian institution ; which is so far from having abolished morality, that it enjoins and enforces the practice of it, upon higher motives, for more noble ends, and to greater degrees of perfection, than any scheme of *mere* morality ever did ; as will be shown more at large in this Letter. But at the same time it is laid down by them as an undoubted truth, ‘ that God has a right to prescribe the terms and conditions upon which he will grant pardon and favor to mankind ;—that he has fully and clearly declared in the Gospel, what those terms and conditions are ;—and that, therefore, it is great presumption and a vain hope to expect pardon and salvation in any other way.’ And to say, in this view, that the precepts of morality, as the product of mere natural reason, are not a sufficient guide to salvation, cannot with any justice be called a disregard of morality.

No more can the *reverence* we pay to the REVELATION OF THE SCRIPTURES as a *divine* direction, be called a *disregard of* PHILOSOPHY as the product of *natural* reason. Persons of leisure, capacity, and attention, in any age, might easily learn from observation and experience, that an immoderate indulgence of the appetites was hurtful to the body and estate, and a like indulgence of the passions equally prejudicial to the inward peace of the mind, and the outward order and regularity of the world ; and while mankind had no other light, the philosophers employed their time worthily, in drawing such rules from reason and experience, as, being duly observed, might make the present life more happy, or rather, what was the great end they aimed at, less miserable. But then, as their notions concerning another life were at best confused and imperfect, and mere reason could not inform them, with any certainty, that this life, with whatever befalls us in it, is a *state of trial and probation* in order to another,—they could not tell how to make the pains, miseries, and misfortunes of this world, turn to our account ; nor, by consequence, could they lay a sure and solid foundation of ease and comfort against all events. The considerations which philosophy suggests, to support us under the pressures and calamities of life, are such as these ; ‘ that they are the common portion of mankind ;—

that it is possible time may alter things for the better ;—that at worst death will put an end to them ;—and, that impatience in the mean time will but increase them.’ The rules of revelation are ; ‘ that whatever befalls us, is by the appointment of a wise and good God ;—that he sees afflictions necessary to wean us from the love of this world, and to turn our desires and affections upon a much better ;—that he has promised either to deliver us from them, or support us under them, and by that has given us ground for a full trust and comfortable hope in him ;—that our patience under the afflicting hand of God, is a fresh endearment of us to him, and will be an addition to our future happiness ;—and that, in point of duration, the sufferings of this life are as nothing, when compared with an eternity of joy and glory.’ These, we say, are a much better foundation of ease and comfort, than any rules that the philosophers either did or could lay down :—but in saying this, we do not *condemn* the rules of philosophy upon that or other points, nor discourage persons of leisure and capacity from entertaining themselves with them, not only as an agreeable diversion, but as a useful exercise of the mind ; some things in them being truly great, and what we justly admire in *Heathens*, as tending to raise the soul above the pleasures and enjoyments of earth. But then we say, that the study of those writings is become useless and unnecessary to the generality of people, since revelation has furnished us with rules and precepts, both moral and divine, which are far more perfect in themselves, far more effectual for their several ends, and established by a far higher authority, than any of the rules and sayings of the philosophers can pretend to ; and at the same time are plain and clear to the meanest capacities.

This points out to us another advantage which the enemies of revelation very unduly take, to advance the strength and power of natural reason in matters of religion : and that is, the taking an estimate of those powers from books upon the subject of morality, that have been written *since the Christian revelation was made* ; many of which are clear and uniform both in the measures of duty, and the motives to the performance of it. But this clearness and uniformity are really

owing to the light of revelation, which has given us a far more exact knowledge than we had before of the nature and attributes of God, from whence many of the duties do immediately flow, and also a far greater certainty of future rewards and punishments, as well as a clearer conviction of the necessity of sobriety, temperance, and other moral virtues, as preparations for our happiness in the next life, by perfecting our natures in order to it. And therefore to judge rightly how far reason is able to be a guide in religion, we must form that judgment upon the writings of such of the ancient philosophers, as appear not to have had any knowledge either of the Jewish or the Christian revelation; and then inquire, 'what progress they were able to make in the knowledge of divine matters, by the strength of mere natural reason?—to what degrees of *certainty* concerning those matters it could and did carry them?—what agreement and uniformity there was among them, in the main and fundamental doctrines and duties of religion?—what was the natural tendency of their several doctrines, in order to the promoting of virtue and goodness?—and, what influence they had in their several ages and countries, in rectifying the principles and reforming the practices of mankind?' For all which purposes, it is but justice to them to suppose, that they had as great strength of reason and judgment, as sincere a desire to find out the truth, and as great diligence in inquiring after it, as any of the enemies of revelation at this day can pretend to. And if it shall appear,—that they were utterly ignorant of many important points in religion, which revelation has discovered to us;—that their knowledge of many others was dark, uncertain and imperfect;—that the differences among them, in points of the greatest weight and moment, were endless and irreconcilable;—that many of them taught doctrines, which directly tend to promote vice and wickedness in the world;—and, that in fact, the influence they had in rectifying the notions and reforming the lives of mankind, was inconsiderable: if, I say, these things appear, they will amount to a full proof, that *natural reason, of itself*, is not a sufficient guide in matters of religion.

1. The ancient philosophers were utterly ignorant of

many important points in religion, which revelation has discovered to us.

They were strangers to the true account of the creation of the world, and the original of mankind, and to God's administration of the world, and intercourse with mankind, in the most early ages. One sect of philosophers^h held, that the world was *eternal*, and another,ⁱ that it was made *by chance*; and they who believed it had a beginning in time, knew not by what steps, nor in what manner it was raised into so much beauty and order; and so, for want of a sure historical knowledge concerning this point, it became a fit subject for the fancy and imagination of the poets.

They were sensible of a *great degree of corruption* and irregularity in the nature of man, but could not tell from what cause it proceeded, nor in what state our first parents came out of the hands of God, nor by what means they lost their original perfection. And the want of knowing these things, leads men of course into endless perplexities, how to reconcile the purity and perfection of God the Creator, to the uncleanness and corruption of man, the being created; and tempts them to suppose, either that the nature of God is not pure, or that the soul of man is not of a divine original.

Much less could the light of nature acquaint them with the method He has ordained and established *for the recovery of lost man*;—to effect a reconciliation between God and man;—to exercise his goodness without the violation of his justice;—and not only to make the pardon of sinners consistent with the wisdom of his government, the honor of his laws, and his hatred of sin, so as to render their salvation *possible*, but to give them the strongest *assurances* of pardon and favor, upon the plain conditions of faith and repentance. These are things that depend wholly upon REVELATION; and without the knowledge of these, mankind must remain in a perplexed and desponding state, as to the pardon of sin, and the favor of God. The comfort they would raise from the *mercy* and *goodness* of God is checked by the consideration of his *justice*, and nothing is able to fix the guilty mind in a state of solid

^h The Peripatetics.

ⁱ The Epicureans.

and well-grounded comfort, but an assurance that the divine justice is satisfied, and an express declaration on the part of God, upon what terms and conditions he will receive the sinner into favor.

Then as to the *public worship* of God; the light of nature might in general suggest to men the reasonableness of joining in worship; but in what manner he would be worshipped, and in what way they might perform a service that would be acceptable to him, was understood to be a point which the wit and penetration of man could not fix and determine. Insomuch, that the founders of states and kingdoms, who undertook to settle civil administrations by the rules of human prudence, found it necessary to ground their schemes of religion upon *pretended* revelations, as the only way to give them a proper sanction, and the people an assurance, that their religious performances would be accepted.

The points of knowledge mentioned under this first head, are evidently such as the philosophers were wholly ignorant of, as not falling within the compass of human reason in its corrupt state; and the importance of them to the comfort and happiness of mankind, shows the vast advantage we receive from revelation,—in removing many doubts and difficulties which would otherwise arise concerning the nature and attributes of God,—in showing us the true state of our own original and condition,—and in acquainting us in the clearest manner, upon what terms, and by what services, we may be sure of his favor and acceptance. To all which we may add, as another point above the reach of human reason,—the comfortable promise He has made us of *supernatural* aid and assistance in our sincere endeavors to perform what he has revealed to be his will, in order to render ourselves acceptable to him.

2. The knowledge which the philosophers had of several important points of religion, was dark, imperfect, and uncertain.

Many of them, and those of the greatest note, laid it down for a general maxim,—that all things were uncertain,—that truth lay buried in a deep abyss,—and,

that the furthest that human wit and understanding could go in search of it, was no more than probability and conjecture:^k and accordingly we find the wisest among them plainly intimating the need there was of a divine revelation, to give mankind a full and certain knowledge of their duty.^l But supposing them to have been able to lay out all the duties and offices of life in the clearest manner; that which disabled them from reforming the world and obliging men to attend to their duty, was the uncertainty they were under about the great and only effectual *motives* to it, the immortality of the soul, and a future account.

CICERO^m enumerating the opinions of philosophers upon this head, not only asserts what every one knows to be true, that the whole sect of Epicureans disbelieved the soul's immortality, but adds, that many of the most learned philosophers were of the same opinion: and he particularly mentions two of great note among them; one, who in his writings had avowedly argued against it; and another who had professedly written three books to confute it. He tells us further, that though the Stoics believed that the soul remained after death *for some time*, yet they did not believe it was immortal. And even SOCRATES and CICERO, who were peculiarly favorable to the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, do yet discover some doubt and uncertainty about it.

SOCRATES, a little before his death, tells his friends,ⁿ 'He had good hope of some sort of being, when this life was at an end;' but after that, he speaks doubtfully, and says, 'Though he should be mistaken, he did at least gain this much, that the expectation of it made him less uneasy while he lived, and his error would die with him;' and he concludes, 'I am going out of the world, and you are to continue in it; which of us has the better part, is a secret to every one but God.'^o

And CICERO, speaking of the several opinions concerning the nature and duration of the soul,^p says, "Which of these is true, God alone knows; and which

^k CICERO *de Nat. Deor.* l. I. *Acad. Qu.* l. I. See MINUC. FEL. p. 112. LACTANT. l. III. c. xx.

^l See under the Third general Head.

ⁿ PLATO in *Phæd.*

^p CIC. *Tusc. Quest.* l. I.

^m *Tusc. Quest.* l. I.

^o In *Apol. Socratis.*

is most probable, a very great question." And he introduces one, complaining 'That while he was reading the arguments for the immortality of the soul, he thought himself convinced; but as soon as he laid aside the book and began to reason with himself, his conviction was gone.' All which gave SENECA just occasion to say,^a "That immortality, however desirable, was rather *promised* than *proved* by those great men." And if the philosophers doubted even of the existence of the soul after death, much less could they pretend to know any thing of the resurrection of the body, and a solemn day of judgment, and the sentence that will be finally pronounced upon good and bad men at that day. So far from this that the great argument by which they prove that death cannot properly speaking be called an evil, is, 'that it either wholly extinguishes our being, or at least leaves us such a being as is not subject to punishment or misery in another state.' And they eased the people of those fears, by exploding the notion of infernal torments prepared for the wicked, as mere dreams and fictions of the poets.^r

This uncertainty about those great and fundamental truths, was attended with fatal effects both in *principle* and *practice*. In principle, it naturally led mankind to call in question the providence, justice, and goodness of God, when they observed the prosperity of the wicked, and the calamities of the righteous, without being sure that either of them should suffer or be rewarded in another state; or else to doubt, whether there really was any essential difference between virtue and vice, and whether it did not depend wholly upon the institution of men. In practice, hope and fear are the two things which chiefly govern mankind and influence them in their actions; and they must of course govern and influence more or less, in proportion to the certainty there is, that the things feared and hoped for are real, and the rewards and punishments assuredly to be expected. And as the corrupt inclinations of human nature will easily overcome any fear, the foundation of which is but doubtful; so those being let loose and freed from

^a SEN. *Ep.* 102.

^r PLUT. *de Aud. Poet.* CIC. *Tusc. Quest.* l. I. SEN. *ad. Marc.* c. 19.

the apprehension of a future account, will of course carry men into all manner of wickedness. Nor is it sufficient to say, that they are under the restraint of human laws; since it is certain, that very great degrees of wickedness may both be harbored in the heart and carried into execution, notwithstanding the utmost that human authority can do to prevent it.

From hence it appears, how great a blessing and benefit it is to mankind, that the Gospel revelation has given us a full assurance of the immortality of the soul, and of rewards and punishments in another life, according to our behavior in this: and not only so, but has very particularly acquainted us, who shall be our judge;—what the manner and solemnity of the judgment;—what is to be the rule of judging;—what the sentence that will be passed both upon good and bad men;—and what will be the state of each in consequence thereof. The certain expectation of these things, enforced by the assurance God has given us, that he takes notice of all our thoughts, words, and actions in this life, in order to that future account, conduces greatly, or rather is of absolute necessity, to secure the general peace and order of the world, as well as to preserve the virtue and innocence of particular persons.

3. The differences among the philosophers in points of the greatest weight and moment, were endless, and irreconcilable.

This is a truth so well known, and so universally acknowledged, that those among us who have the greatest zeal for natural reason as a sufficient guide in religion, will not deny the fact. A lively description of which, we find in an ancient writer of the Church. “Every sect of them overthrows all others, in order to establish itself, and can allow none to be wise, because by that it would acknowledge itself to be foolish; and as *it* overthrows the rest, so is itself overthrown *by* the rest.”^s And elsewhere, “To what end should we fight against those who are destroying one another?”^t Nor can it be said, that these differences were only about matters of less consequence; since it is notorious, that

^s LACTANTI *Instit.* c. 4.
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^t *Ib.* c. 28.

the *most important* points in religion were subjects of the greatest disputes. While some asserted the being of a God, others openly denied it;^u and others again ran into the notion of a multiplicity of gods, celestial, aerial, terrestrial, infernal;^v and as every country had its peculiar gods, so the philosophers made it a general rule, that every one should worship the gods of his own country. While some (as I have shown) were willing to believe that the soul was immortal, and that they should live in a future state, others affirmed it to be mortal, and to die with the body.^w While some affirmed that virtue and vice, as founded in the nature of things, were eternal and unchangeable; it was the doctrine of others, that nothing was good or evil, just or unjust, right or wrong, otherwise than as the laws and customs of particular countries determined.^x While one sect^y affirmed that *virtue* was the sole good, and its own reward; another sect,^z rejecting that notion in the case of virtue in distress, made *the good things of this life* a necessary ingredient of happiness; and a third^a set up *pleasures*, or at least indolence and a freedom from pain, as the final good that men ought to propose to themselves: upon which differences TULLY very justly observes, "That they who do not agree in stating what is the *chief end* or *good*, must of course differ in the *whole system* of precepts for the conduct of life."^b Again, while many of them thought it reasonable to believe, that the general order and government of the world could not be maintained without the superintendence of some superior power; one whole sect^c absolutely denied a providence; others^d acknowledged no more than a general providence^e which did not respect particular beings; others, who owned a

^u CIC. *de Nat. Deor.* l. I.

^v PLATO *de Leg.* l. IV. EPICT. *Ench.* c. 38. CIC. *de Nat. Deor.* l. III. *de Leg.* l. II.

^w DIOG. LAERT. l. II. p. 89. 134. 138; l. IX. p. 581; l. X. p. 671.

^x MAX. TYR. *Diss.* 1; SEN. *Ep.* l. X. p. 97. 302.

^y The Stoics.

^z The Aristotelians, or Peripatetics.

^a The Epicureans.

^b CIC. *Acad. Quest.* l. I. *de Fin.* l. V.

^c The Epicureans.

^d The Aristotelians.

^e PLUT. *de Plautis.* l. II. c. 3; DIOG. LAERT. l. V.; *Philos.* ARRIAN. l. I. c. 12.

particular providence, extended it only to greater^f matters, while the less, in their opinion, were neglected; others again denied the omniscience^g of God, which was little less than the denial of a providence as to the effects it ought to have upon the behavior of mankind. And while some talked of their gods taking vengeance upon the bad and rewarding the good, in order to deter men from wickedness and excite them to goodness; others exploded the notion of the gods being pleased^h or displeased on any account, and by that, entirely removed out of the minds of men the desire of pleasing and the fear of displeasing them, and all thoughts of praying to them, or thanking them, for the benefits they either wanted, or enjoyed. Upon which it is justly observed by an ancient Christian writer,ⁱ that if this principle, of God's being neither pleased nor displeased, were true, there must be an end of all religion; since it leaves no foundation either for honoring or fearing the Deity. And yet it is said^k to have been the universal opinion of philosophers (not only of those who thought that God did not concern himself with human affairs, but of those who believed he did,) that he was neither angry with men, nor would punish them.

These and the other differences among them, which would fill volumes, are not mentioned as any reproach to the philosophers in point of ability and understanding, since it happened no otherwise to them than it always will do to any number of men who, in this corrupt state of things, will depend upon themselves alone in matters of religion. But I mention them to show the weakness and folly of those who, because the philosophers now and then indulged themselves in speculations of a divine nature, would send us to them for a complete and uniform scheme of religion;—who, from their having laid down many useful rules grounded upon the natural connexion of things as they appear in daily experience and observation, in order to the wise conduct of human affairs, and our peace and happiness in

^f CIC. *de Nat. Deor.* l. II. and III.

^g CIC. *de Nat. Deor.* l. I.; *De Div.* l. II.; *De Fato*; MIN. FEL. p. 10.

^h LACT. *de Ira*; ORIG. *Contra Cels.* l. IV.

ⁱ LACT. *de Ira*, c. 6.

^k CIC. *de Office.* l. III.

this life, would infer that they are therefore proper and sufficient guides to our happiness in the next;—and who, in reality, under this pretext, are doing all they can to gratify and encourage the voluptuous part of mankind, by discharging them from all regard to the laws of CHRIST (which have the sanction of divine authority, and against which there can be no objection, but that they are too pure for appetites so much vitiated and depraved,) and leaving them to form a religion for themselves out of this or that philosopher, whose maxims and doctrines they can best relish; the wisest of which, (how sublime soever some of the thoughts may seem,) were no more than the imaginations and conjectures of fallible men.

But be their schemes of religion what they would, these two things are certain;—that no one philosopher had more right than another to impose his scheme upon mankind;—and that, setting aside revelation, no one person at this day has any authority to determine amidst so many different and contradictory opinions, which of the philosophers was in the right, and which in the wrong. Upon this foot, therefore, the greatest part of mankind are left in a state of endless perplexity, without ability to determine for themselves, and without any certain guide on whose determination they may safely rely. And this made one of the best and wisest among them say, “that error was so mixed with truth, and oft-times with such likeness to each other, that there was no way left to determine the judgment;”¹ and “that it would be time enough to blame the skeptic philosophy which doubted of every thing,^m when either the rest of the philosophers were agreed, or some one should be found who could ascertain the truth.”ⁿ Which shows the great advantage of a DIVINE REVELATION, as well to ascertain our duty, as to engage our attention and regard to it; to give all men, great and small, learned and unlearned, a sure rule, and a clear view, of all they are to do, and effectually to engage them in a steady and uniform pursuit of the great end that such a revelation proposes.

¹ CIC. *de Nat. Deor.* l. I.

^m *Ibid.*

ⁿ The Academics.

By attending to the matters wherein the philosophers differed, we see clearly that they were points which concerned the very being of religion and virtue; and that those differences rendered the motives and obligations to both, precarious and uncertain. And this shows how unjust the objection is which infidels raise, upon this head, from the different opinions among Christians, and the several sects and denominations formed upon those differences. As long as men are men, and have different degrees of understanding, and every one a partiality to his own conceptions, it is not to be expected that they should agree in any one entire scheme and every part of it, in the circumstances as well as the substance, in the manner of things as well as in the things themselves. The question, therefore, is not in general about a difference in opinion, which, in our present state, is unavoidable, but about the weight and importance of the things wherein Christians differ and the things wherein they agree. And it will appear that the several denominations of Christians agree both in the substance of religion, and in the necessary enforcements of the practice of it:—that the world and all things in it were created by God, and are under the direction and government of his all-powerful hand, and all-seeing eye;—that there is an essential difference between good and evil, virtue and vice; that there will be a state of future rewards and punishments according to our behavior in this life;—that CHRIST was a teacher sent from God, and that his apostles were divinely inspired;—that all Christians are bound to *declare* and *profess* themselves to be his disciples;—that not only the exercise of the several virtues, but also a belief in CHRIST is necessary in order to their obtaining the pardon of sin, the favor of God, and eternal life;—that the worship of God is to be performed chiefly by the heart, in prayers, praises, and thanksgivings;—and as to all other points, that they are bound to live by the rules which CHRIST and his apostles have left them in the Holy Scriptures.—Here, then, is a fixed, certain, and uniform rule of faith and practice, containing all the most necessary points of religion, established by a divine sanction, embraced as such by all denominations of Christians, and in itself abundantly sufficient to pre-

serve the knowledge and practice of religion in the world. As to points of greater intricacy, and which require uncommon degrees of penetration and knowledge; such indeed have been subjects of dispute among persons of study and learning in the several ages of the Christian Church; but the people are not obliged to enter into them, so long as they do not touch the foundations of Christianity, nor have an influence upon practice. In other points it is sufficient that they believe the doctrines, so far as they find, upon due inquiry and examination according to their several abilities and opportunities, that God has revealed them.

Now this is a state of things very different from that of the Heathen world; in which their teachers differed about the most important points in religion: and while no one could claim an authority from God, nor any right to require an assent to his doctrines, the generality of people had no certain test to try them by, nor, by consequence, any means to deliver themselves out of a maze of endless doubt and uncertainty; which is well expressed by an ancient writer,^o in answer to the question, did the philosophers then teach nothing that was right? "Yes," says he, "many things; but their precepts have *no weight*, because they are human, and want a divine sanction." They are not believed, because "he who hears, thinks himself a man, as well as he who teaches."

4. The philosophers taught doctrines which directly tend to encourage vice and wickedness in the world.

Of this sort were the notions already mentioned, concerning Providence, and the omniscience and omnipresence of God; and their denying that he was either pleased or displeased with mankind, and their resolving the distinctions between good and evil into human authority and appointment. Such also was the doctrine of fate, or men's doing every thing through necessity, and not by choice, which takes away all virtue and vice, and leaves no place for rewards or punishments either here or hereafter: and yet this was the avowed doctrine of one famous sect^p among them. And the prevalency of this doctrine of fate in the Heathen world, together

^o LACTANT. *Instit.* l. II. c. 27.

^p The Stoics.

with the pernicious influence it naturally has upon virtue and religion, was the reason why the ancient fathers of the Christian Church took so much pains in their several writings to confute and expose it.

Nor did they only hold *principles* destructive of virtue, but also maintained *practices* of a very vile and corrupt nature. PLATO^a taught the expedience and lawfulness of exposing^r children in particular cases, and ARISTOTLE^s also of abortion. At Athens, the great seat and nursery of philosophers, it was laid down for a rule that infants which appeared to be maimed should either be killed or exposed; and that the Athenians might lawfully invade^t and enslave any people, who, in their opinion, were fit to be made slaves. Many of the philosophers maintained the lawfulness of self-murder.^u Not only the Epicureans and others, but even PLATO himself allowed fornication, and, which is more shocking, a community of wives;^v and the most famous among them were known not only to approve but practise unnatural lust.^w To which we may add the Cynics, who, laying aside the natural restraints of shame and modesty, committed the acts of lust like brute beasts, openly, and in the sight of the sun; and the Stoics, who held that no words or speech of any kind ought to be avoided or censured as filthy and obscene.^x

These are principles and doctrines by which many of the philosophers, and those of greatest note, let men loose from the obligations of duty, and gave them full liberty to indulge their brutal appetites, and degrade human nature into that of beasts, while they were filling their heads with fine notions and exalted speculations. And as these indulgences, so agreeable to the corruptions of nature, plainly account for that zeal which is shown for reason and philosophy as our best guides in religion: so the great objection against the Gospel re-

^a PLAT. *de Rep.* l. V.

^r Casting out, to perish.

^s ARIST. *Polit.* l. VII. c. 16; *ibid.* l. VII. c. 17.

^t *Ibid.* l. II. c. 14.

^u ARIST. *Polit.* l. VII. c. 16; CIC. *de Finibus*, l. I.; SEN. *Epist.* 12. 28. 58. 70.

^v CIC. *pro Cælio*; PLAT. *Conviv.*—*de Leg.* l. VIII.; ATHEN. l. XIII.

^w ATHEN. l. XIII.; LUCIAN. *de Amore*; PLUTARCH. *de Lib. Educ.* CIC. *Tusc. Quest.* l. IV.

^x CIC. *Epist. ad Fam.* l. IX. Ep. 26.

velation is, that it expressly forbids uncleanness of all kinds, whether in thought or deed, as that which above all other things poisons and corrupts the soul, and makes it utterly unfit for the spiritual joys and delights of the next world ; for which the pure precepts of the Gospel, and the daily practise of them, are designed to prepare us.

5. In fact, the influence which the ancient philosophers had in reforming mankind was inconsiderable.

Idolatry was universally practised throughout the Heathen world, and the worship of the gods consisted of the most filthy, absurd, and abominable rites :—strumpets running up and down the streets naked, with obscene speeches and wanton gestures ;^y—men inflaming themselves with wine, and after that in the dark satisfying their lust promiscuously among a number of women :^z—temples erected to a goddess^a as the patroness of lust, and she ministered unto by lewd women, who prostituted themselves before her, and dedicated their gain to her :—with other instances of obscenity, too gross to be mentioned, and yet avowedly made a part of their religious rites. And it is not to be wondered that uncleanness of almost every kind was freely and openly practised among them, when their worship consisted of it, and their philosophers taught it both by their doctrine and their practice.^b The oblation of *human sacrifices* to their gods was frequently practised ; nor was *their own offspring* spared upon some occasions. —Nothing could be more cruel and barbarous than to take pleasure in seeing men murder and destroy one another, which yet was avowedly practised in their public shows, and persons were *trained up* to that inhuman exercise, and permitted to hire themselves out to the work ; and it is affirmed by one who wrote an entire discourse upon the subject,^c that even war itself did not occasion so great a destruction of men's lives as those shows which they instituted for public diversion. —Nor in private life can we reasonably hope or expect to find among them the great virtues of love, meekness,

^y In the *Floralia*.

^a Venus.

^c LIPSI *Saturnalia*, l. I. c. 12.

^z In the *Bacchanalia*.

^b See under the preceding head.

and forgiveness, when we find SOCRATES declaring it neither unjust nor revengeful to rejoice in the calamities of our enemies ;^d and CICERO expressly approving and professing revenge ;^e and ARISTOTLE speaking of meekness not only as a defect of the mind, and as carrying in it too great a disposition to forgive, but calling the patient enduring of reproach, the spirit of a slave.^f

When our SAVIOUR came into the world, and for some time before, human knowledge of all kinds, and particularly the study of philosophy, was cultivated and improved in the Roman empire, with the greatest application, and by the ablest hands. But how little effect either theirs or the writings of the Greek philosophers had upon the generality of mankind, may be learnt from St. Paul's account of the state of the Heathen world, and the cautions he gives the Christian converts against their wicked and abominable practices. " This I say, therefore, and testify in the LORD, that ye *henceforth* walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanities of their mind ; having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts ; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.^g And again, " Have no fellowship with the unfruitful *works of darkness*, but rather reprove them ; for it is a shame *even to speak* of those things which are *done of them* in secret ;"^h *i. e.* in the celebration of several of their rites and mysteries, which was accompanied with all manner of lewdness. And in his Epistle to the Colossians, " Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry ; for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience ; in the which *ye also walked some time, when ye lived* in them."ⁱ Agreeably to this, St. John tells us, that except the professors of Christianity, " the whole world

^d PLATO, *Phileb.*

• CIC. *de Offic.* l. III. ; *Tusc. Quest.* l. III. ; *Ep. ad Attic.* l. IX.

^f ARIST. *Ethicor.* l. IV. c. 11.

^g Ephes. iv. 17, 18, 19.

^h Ephes. v. 11, 12.

ⁱ Col. iii. 5, 6, 7.

lay in wickedness ;”^k and St. Paul, speaking of the Gentile world in general as living under the law of nature, and having mentioned unnatural lust as common among them, goes on and tells us that they were “filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness ; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.”^l St. Peter also, exhorting the Gentiles who had been converted to Christianity to live as became their new profession, tells them, that “the time past of their life may suffice them to have wrought the *will of the Gentiles*, in which they walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.”^m

And, in truth, between the corruptions of human nature, and the inability of the philosophers to reform them, we are not to wonder that the Heathen world had grown by degrees to such a pitch of wickedness. The philosophers in the several ages were but *few* ;—the *numbers* who repaired to them for instruction, *were small* in comparison, and their instructions confined to their own scholars, who were usually persons only of fortune and distinction ;—the *generality of the people* had no opportunity to be instructed by them, nor if they had, were they able to understand and enter into the many dark and abstruse notions of their instructors ;—the *public rites* of worship, which the people did attend, consisted wholly of the ceremonies performed by their priests, without any moral instructions or lessons of duty ;—though the philosophers had been more clear, few of them had *schemes* of religion and duty, or any more than scattered notions of morality, added to some private and singular tenets to distinguish them from other sects :—though they had given schemes entire and uniform, they had not sufficient *authority* either to command attention, or require obedience ;—or, whatever authority any one had, it was greatly

^k 1 John i. 5.

^m 1 Pet. iv. 3.

^l Rom. i. 26, 27. 29, 30, 31.

diminished by the *endless disputes* among the philosophers themselves;—and though they had been qualified to teach in all other respects, little fruit was to be expected from *teaching*, where it was not accompanied with good *living*. Which last defect is noted by TULLY, in this remarkable passage; “Scarce any of the philosophers,” says he, “are formed in mind and manners, according to the dictates of reason; scarce any, who do not make their institutions rather an ostentation of knowledge, than a rule of life; scarce any, who obey themselves, and are governed by their own precepts.”ⁿ And so ARISTOTLE, long before, represented the scholars of the philosophers, as learning *to wrangle* rather than *to live*; and being no more bettered by the moral lessons of their masters, than sick men would be by the discourses of their physician without taking his prescriptions.”^o To the same purpose, QUINTILIAN speaks of the philosophers of his own time, that “the most notorious vices were screened under that name; and that they did not labor to maintain the character of philosophers by virtue and study, but concealed very vicious lives under an austere look and a different habit from the rest of the world.”^p

But there is yet another way of judging what the state of religion in any country is like to be, where natural reason is their only guide; and that is, from the notions and practices that have been found among people who were unknown to the ancients, by the later discoveries of countries, and by others who have travelled into those countries. A collection of that sort has been lately made, out of books of travels and other authentic accounts, by a faithful and judicious hand;^q and to let you see more clearly and at one view how absurd and abominable they were, I have here reduced them to their several heads, of WORSHIP, DOCTRINE, and PRACTICE.

As to their WORSHIP, it may be truly said in general that idolatry has been found in almost every country that has been discovered, and in many of them rites of

ⁿ CIC. Tusc. *Quest.* l. II. ^o ARIST. *Ethic.* l. II. c. 3. ^p QUIN-
TIL. *Inst.* l. I. Præf. ^q MILLAR, *Propagation of Christianity*, c. 7.

worship very wicked and abominable. In some^r they were performed by women, who, in performing them, laid aside all natural shame and modesty; and in others,^s women prostituted themselves for the maintenance of their idol, and in honor of it. In some places^t the people cut off pieces of their own flesh and threw them to their idol; and in many others^u they were found to offer human sacrifices, and vast numbers of them at a time. The objects of their worship were the sun, moon and stars,^v the four elements,^w the several quarters of the earth,^x apes,^y elephants,^z serpents, vipers, dragons, tigers, herbs, trees,^a birds, fishes, mountains,^b and, in many places, evil spirits.^c And together with their idolatrous worship, sorcery, divination, and magic,^d were found to be common among them.

Among their DOCTRINES, and heads of belief, were found these that follow: two gods, one of heaven, the other of earth;^e two sorts of gods, demons to be feared and conquerors and benefactors to be honored;^f several gods presiding over several quarters of the earth;^g one god above the rest, becoming so by first passing through a multitude of bodies;^h gods subject to various changes, and limited to certain times of government;ⁱ providence concerning itself only about the great affairs of the world;^k the transfiguration of human souls into the bodies of beasts;^l pagods eating and drinking like men;^m the souls of men, after death, needing meat and drink,ⁿ and other accommodations of life.

^r Formosa, and the Philippine Islands.

^s Bisnagar and Nasinga, in the East Indies; Camdu in Tartary.

^t Bisnagar, and Nasinga.

^u Ceylon; Mexico; Peru; Terra Firma; Virginia.

^v Tartary; Philippine Islands; Guinea; Ausico and Jagos and Monomotapa (all in Africa); Zocotara, an island near Africa; Peru; Terra Firma; Canada; Florida; Hispaniola; Virginia.

^w Ceylon. ^x Tonquin, in the East Indies. ^y Goa. ^z Ceylon. ^a Congo and Angola, in Africa. ^b Guinea.

^c Ceylon; Java; Philippine Islands; Æthiopia; Virginia.

^d Tartary; China; Terra Firma; Brazil; Canada; Grenada; Hispaniola; Florida; Virginia; New-England.

^e Tartary. ^f Japan. ^g Formosa. ^h Siam. ⁱ Malabar.

^k Malabar; Ceylon; Japan; Florida.

^l Indians; Tartars; Florida. ^m The Bramins.

ⁿ Tartary; Guinea; Terra Firma; Canada.

Many PRACTICES have been found among them that are abominable; women burning themselves with their husbands when dead;^g the chief servants of a prince killed at his death, to attend him in another world;^h eating men's flesh, and shambles for selling it;ⁱ sucking up the blood of wounded and dying persons;^j feasting upon the bodies of their captives;^k having a number of wives and concubines, and putting away wives at pleasure;^l exposing and killing their children if born under an unhappy planet,^m or born before the mother was of such an age,ⁿ or if the parents found themselves overcharged.^o

These and the like instances of corruption in worship, doctrine, and practice, which have prevailed, and do still prevail, in several parts of the Heathen world, may further show the insufficiency of *natural reason* to be a guide in religion, and into what monstrous opinions and practices whole nations may be led where that is their guide, without any help from *revelation*. Nor will it take off the force of this argument to say that these were owing to an *undue use* of their reason; which is in effect to beg the question: or that the measure of reason they had was low and imperfect; since they appeared to be skilful and dexterous enough in worldly matters, in the arts of annoying their neighbors and defending themselves against incursions, in entering into leagues for their mutual defence, and conducting the ordinary affairs of life according to the manners and customs of their several countries. Nor are the absurdities in religion that have been found among *them* greater than those that have been found among the most polite nations before the publication of the Gospel:^a which are a joint proof that no age or country, be it rude or civil-

^g East Indies; Guinea. ^h Guinea; Terra Firma.

ⁱ Jagos (in Africa); Brazil; Hispaniola.

^j Tartary. ^k Canada.

^l Almost every where in Pagan countries.

^m Ceylon. ⁿ Formosa. ^o China.—More instances of the like kind may be seen in Mr. LOCKE'S *Essay*, l. I. c. 3. s. 9.

^a See before, page 69.

ized, instructed or uninstructed in arts and sciences, infected or uninfected with plenty and luxury, is secured by mere natural reason against falling into the grossest errors and corruptions in religion.

Hitherto you have seen the pernicious errors and wicked practices into which the world has fallen both in ancient and later days, notwithstanding the light of natural reason, and the lessons of philosophers. But as the Christian institution in its *nature* and *tendency* is far better calculated for the reformation of mankind than any teaching or discipline the world had in the days of Heathenism, so in fact *it has had* a far greater effect in the advancement of true religion, and the reformation of the lives and manners of men. Not to insist upon the exalted degrees of purity and perfection to which Christianity raised so many of its first professors,—their contempt of the world,—their wonderful courage and patience under persecution,—their mortifications and self-denials,—their fervent love and charity and devotion; not, I say, to insist upon these, though the true and genuine effects of Christianity, because it may be said they were effects of an *extraordinary* kind, and wrought only upon *particular* persons; let us take a view of it, not as it was embraced by single persons or families, but as it became the received religion of whole countries, and see what effects it had among them.

It is universally true that wherever Christianity prevailed, oracles ceased, idols were destroyed, and the worship of the true God established. And whereas the Heathen worship, as we have seen, consisted of the sacrifices of beasts and men, and was accompanied with many foolish, cruel, and impure rites, Christianity banished all these, and wherever it was received, did establish a worship suitable to the pure and spiritual nature of God—a worship of the heart, consisting of prayers, and praises, and thanksgivings, to HIM who is the author of our being, and under whose daily protection we live, and who bestows upon us all the good things we enjoy. And there is no Christian country wherein this reasonable service is not solemnly performed by ministers, and attended by the people; to which, and to

the instructions and exhortations of Christian preachers, it is to be ascribed that the knowledge of the true God, and the duty we owe him, is preserved to such a degree upon the minds of the generality of the people, and that several vices which were not only practised but publicly allowed in the times of Heathenism, are scarce known, and never named without abhorrence, in Christian countries.^r Nor can it be said, with any color of reason or truth, that the general order, regularity, and sense of duty, which is found in Christian countries at this day, compared with the cruelties, disorders, and excesses of all kinds, that are generally practised in Heathen nations, is not owing to the Christian institution and worship, and to the certainty of future rewards and punishments that CHRIST brought to light; the sense of which is preserved upon the minds of the people by such public teaching.^s And though so great

^r [See the remarks of Bishop SUMNER upon the beneficial influence of the Christian ministry, upon morals and the temporal happiness of mankind, in *Standard Works*, Vol. II. p. 198. ss., and in his *Evidences*, page 293, *Am. ed.*—The following eloquent passage, from a work not generally accessible to the American public, richly deserves insertion here.

“Let us look to the lowliest village church in this happy land; to the humblest pastor, and the simplest flock. Let us remember, as we see them pouring forth from its humble portal, what words have been on all lips, what thoughts in many hearts; what thoughts of majesty and holiness, what love, what reliance, what confidence,—and then, if we are not faithless to the dignity of that soul, which though deteriorated, still retains the stamp of its Maker, let us believe, if we can, that no good has been effected, no passion softened and checked, no desire for the graces of a Christian temper implanted. Let this sight be compared, not with the population that collected, like our barbarous forefathers, or like the savages of modern days, to perform their bloody worship in the sight of the bright sun, or shining stars of heaven; but, with the population, which poured forth from the lofty portals of some splendid temple of the polished Athens, to join in the iniquities of a Bacchanalian procession; or with that, which, at this very time, assembles in the distant realms of Hindostan, sometimes, for deed of cruelty and death, sometimes, for services so revolting, that the Bramin of better mind, hides his face for shame, and sheds the burning tear of anguish, over the infamy of that religion, of which he is the minister;—let but this comparison be made, and then let it be asked, what has Christianity done?”—ROSE’S *Christianity Always Progressive*, p. 96, s., London, 1829.]

^s [“Let us consider what must be the necessary effect of that con-

is the corruption of human nature, that notwithstanding those means of instruction and those restraints from wickedness, many disorders and excesses are practised in Christian countries, it is sufficient to our present purpose that if those means and restraints were removed, the excesses would evidently be far greater and more general than they are;—that the commission of them among Christians is by far less frequent, and is attended with much more caution and shame, than among Heathens;—that, besides those *general* influences of Christianity, such excesses are in some measure balanced by the *extraordinary* degrees of piety, purity, and exactness of life and manners which are observed by multitudes of people in every Christian country;—that the design of the Christian institution was not to *force* men to be good, but only to propose fit motives and proper encouragements and assistances to make them so;—and our Saviour himself supposes that in his kingdom here upon earth there will always be tares growing up with the wheat, (a mixture of good and bad,) till he himself shall make the final separation.¹ Though his kingdom is not *of* this world, it is *in* it; and it is a very unfair inference, that because wickedness is found in Christian countries, therefore Christianity has failed of its end.²

viction which Christianity impresses, that an account must hereafter be rendered before One, who charges the very angels with folly, and in whose sight the heavens are themselves unclean;—before One, whose piercing eye looks into the most secret chambers of the heart, and reads even the guilty thought before it has strengthened into crime. Let us, again, look to the religions of ancient times, and consider what crimes they tolerated, or, at least, marked by no proscription and no infamy—and then, if we are not dead to all salutary conviction of the force of moral influence, let us estimate, what must be the efficacy of a religion, which, teaching us a strict observance of all the social relations of life, elevates the whole frame of morals; which teaches us, not to name the very name of vices once openly practised, and generally tolerated; which forbids the heart to conceive, as well as the lip to utter, or the hand to execute, any evil purpose; which proscribes every guilty passion, and urges on and cheers the human heart, to all that is lovely, and pure, and gentle, and peaceable, and of good report.”—Rose’s *Christianity Always Progressive*, p. 98.]

¹ Matt. xiii. 24.

² [“Of the most difficult conquests of Christianity, a large portion is

III. A DIVINE REVELATION WAS NOT ONLY EXPEDIENT, BUT HIGHLY NEEDFUL, TO BE A SURE GUIDE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

This follows from the particulars which have been treated of under the last head, in relation to the ancient philosophers. For it is agreed on all hands, that the most successful efforts of mere natural reason towards the discovery of divine truths and the duties to be performed by us, with our obligations to perform them, were made by the philosophers. And, if they, after all their searches, could never tell in what manner God was to be worshipped, nor by what means sinners might be reconciled to him, and recover his favor;—if they could never come to a *certain* knowledge concerning

overlooked by the human eye. While the evil done in its name, is seen by all, and dwelt upon in triumph by the adversary;—its pure and holy conquests are often effected in stillness and silence; in the abode of poverty—in the obscurity of humble and retired life. Who is there that has seen a true Christian, in his life and death? Who that has seen the calm that sheds itself over that soul, where grace has triumphed over passion, where envy, and hatred, and pride are sounds unknown? Who that has seen the bright and holy glow of devotion diffused over the countenance? Who, that has heard the fervid accents of a Christian's prayer? Who, that knows the joys of a Christian's communion with his Maker, the devout aspirations of a soul which is the temple of the HOLY SPIRIT, adorned and sanctified by his best and richest gifts and graces? Who, that has seen the Christian struggling with the storms of life,—though cast down not destroyed; though perplexed, not in despair; submitting with humble resignation, to the correction of his heavenly Father; and gathering the peaceful fruits of righteousness, from the seed which was sown in tribulation and tears? And yet more, who, that hath seen that sight, on which angels look with joy; that hallowed bed, where a Christian renders up his soul, as to a faithful Creator; where with no vain display, no idle rapture, the dying saint, knowing of a truth, that He is faithful who promised, relies, in the last awful scene of life, with humble confidence on that hand which has borne him up through all the storms and struggles of his earthly pilgrimage, and which will now cheer and comfort him, in his passage through the dark valley of the shadow of death? This is, not what Christianity *can* do, but what it *does*, day by day; not what it does, for the learned and enlightened Christian only, but what it does to shed light and joy over the humble abode of the lowly and ignorant. I appeal to the conscience of many a minister of God's word, to bear me witness, how often he has stood beside the dying bed of feeble old age, or of youth in all the withered blossom of its beauty; stood, not to teach, but to learn; not to offer comfort, or to supply confidence,—but to gather strength, and hope, and courage, against his own hour of need, and his own great and awful change. This all, is the praise of the Gospel: this all, is the triumph, the glory, of the religion of CHRIST.

the immortality of the soul and future rewards and punishments, which are the principal motives to the performance of our duty, and the only motives that can make it regarded by the generality of mankind;—if the differences among the philosophers concerning points of the greatest importance in religion, were so many, and so eagerly pursued by the several sects, that instead of informing mankind in their duty, they perplexed and distracted them, and at last left them under greater uncertainties than they were before; while no one had more authority than another to prescribe a fixed scheme of duty;—if many of the philosophers mixed precepts of vice with their precepts of virtue;

Of the countless thousands, who have so lived and so died, what would have been the fate, in life and in death, had the Gospel never visited the world, had the Sun of righteousness never arisen, with healing on his wings? What but this, at best,—that the Christian graces of humility, of meekness, of patience, should not have come to support, to purify, to elevate, and to bless them, in life,—and that in death, the unspeakable pang of parting here, should have been hushed by no hope of meeting hereafter?—that, even if, at that awful hour, no dismay of the judge and the judgment crushed the sinner's heart to the dust, yet, that, to the anxious question, the passionate longing, the restless search and aspiration after some assurance of a future being, after a continuance or renovation of a feeble and expiring spark of life,—no voice should answer, and no hope should cheer?

If these things be so, it would be almost an insult, alike to Christianity and to man, to inquire into facts; to ask, if a religion, possessing such moral influence, and such powerful motives to forbid and to command,—has produced any effects. It would be to ask, whether man be susceptible of elevated thoughts, of cheering hopes, of ennobling joy, and of salutary fear. The prophet's vision, indeed, the fervid desires of a good man, and the sanguine anticipations of an imaginative one, may doubtless shadow forth a picture of beauty and excellence, which cannot be realized in the Christian world. But can we live in it—with a knowledge of what the boasted reason and strength of ancient wisdom and morals could effect; of the recklessness of the holy claims of man on his brother man; and of the awful pollution pervading the whole tone of ancient society, and casting her accursed chains even around the poet and the sage,—and then, can we look at the effects of that systematic charity which owes its existence to Christianity; at the purity and sanctity of domestic enjoyments; at the legible characters in which the sublime truths inculcated by the Gospel are impressed on every institution of public life, and on the intercourse of man with man,—can we look at these things, and not blush to question for a moment the salutary and blessed operations of the Gospel?"—ROSE'S *Christianity Always Progressive*, p. 92. 98.

SUMNER'S *Evidences*, chap. xii, may be consulted for a just representation of this subject, with profit.]

—and if, in fact, under their direction and discipline, the Heathen world and the generality of mankind in their several ages, remained in a state of gross idolatry, uncleanness, impiety, and immorality of all kinds:—it follows, that either mankind must remain irrecoverably in a state of ignorance and corruption, or that there must be some **DIVINE REVELATION** to help them out of it.

And, in truth, it is very absurd to suppose, that either philosophy, or any thing but a divine revelation, could do it. The philosophers plainly saw a great degree of darkness and degeneracy in the mind of man; their sense of which is well expressed by **TULLY**: “If,” says he, “nature had so framed us, as to give us a full and perfect view of her, and an ability to follow her as our guide, then mankind would have needed no other teacher. But now, the light she has given us is no more than little sparks, which we quickly extinguish by corrupt lives and perverse opinions; so that the true light of nature is nowhere to be found.” And then he goes on, and says, “There are in our minds the *seeds* of virtue, by which nature would conduct us to happiness, if they were allowed to grow up. But now, no sooner are we born, but we fall into a wretched depravity and corruption of manners and opinions.”¹ But though the philosophers clearly saw this corruption and depravity, how could they find a cure for it, when they knew not the cause of it? The recovery of mankind depended wholly upon the will and pleasure of God, and the method of it was not to be known but by revelation from him. The means whereby it was to be wrought, was a supernatural assistance; which being his own free gift, could not be made known and ensured by any other hand. And therefore we find two of the greatest philosophers, **SOCRATES** and **PLATO**, despairing of the recovery of mankind out of a state of error and corruption, without some *extraordinary* assistance from God. **SOCRATES**, speaking to the Athenians of himself, tells them, “That when he is gone, they will fall into an irrecoverable state, unless God shall take care of them, and send them another in-

¹ *Cic. Tusc. Quest.* l. III. Præf.

structer."^u And PLATO, speaking of the wrong methods of education among the Athenians, says, "That in such a state of things, whatever is kept right and as it ought to be, must be effected by a *divine* interposition."^v And elsewhere,^w he introduces one of the scholars of Socrates, complaining how difficult it is to discover the truth by human reason, but yet acknowledging it to be every one's duty to employ it, and to rely upon it, 'unless one could find some more sure and safe pilot, such as a *divine* direction would be.'

But we will suppose—what is far from being so—that one or other of the philosophers had in their several writings discovered *the whole* of religion; this would not by any means have rendered a DIVINE REVELATION needless: because whatever human reason pretends to discover, must be judged by human reason whether it be true or false, and it was not likely the *generality* of people should be able to make such a judgment, since there was scarce any one point in which the philosophers themselves did not oppose and contradict one another, while no one pretended to have any higher guide than his own reason, nor by consequence any right to advance and establish his own notions in opposition to all the rest. So that, in this case, it is manifest there would still have been wanting a superior authority to give a *sanction* to some one scheme; which could only be given, either immediately by God, or by some person who gave evident testimonies of his coming from God: and none of the philosophers pretending to this, mankind were left to be tossed about by contrary waves, without either pilot, or star, or compass, to bring them to their harbor.^x Some of the philosophers had, indeed, an implicit submission paid to their dictates, but

^u PLATO, *Apol. Socratis*.

^v *De Republ.* l. VI.

^w PLATO in *Phædon*.

^x [This is precisely the point insisted on by St. Paul when distinguishing the Gospel from the philosophical systems of the Heathen; 1 Cor. ii. 7—17. The one, he argues, is derived immediately from God,—is "the mind of CHRIST," spoken in "words which the HOLY GHOST teacheth," and therefore is in no respect subject to the decisions of human reason, (v. 15,) but is of itself definitive authority; the others have no pretensions to acquaintance with the divine character and counsels, (v. 11, 14,) and are open to the scrutiny of human judgment and rest for authority on its decision.]

that was only from their own scholars, who thought themselves bound to maintain the doctrines of their sect, as such, though without any pretence of divine authority in the founder. But the case was otherwise with our SAVIOUR: He is said by the evangelists to teach "with authority," and to teach "with power;"[†] and he had a right so to do, because he proved by his miracles that he had a commission from God, and by that he was fully empowered to declare the will of God, and to deliver to mankind a fixed, certain, and indispensable rule of duty.

IV. MANKIND ARE OBLIGED TO INQUIRE, WHETHER ANY REVELATION HAS BEEN MADE, AND WHAT EVIDENCES THERE ARE OF ITS COMING FROM GOD.

If they believe they are the creatures of God, they must think themselves bound to pay adoration to him as their Creator, and cannot but be concerned to know in what manner he will be worshipped, and what is the duty and homage that he requires at their hands;—if they believe that they are *dependent* creatures, and need the favor and protection of God, they cannot but desire to know in what way they may most please him, and what are the surest means of obtaining his favor;—if they believe that God governs the world, and that they live under his providence, they cannot but desire the best light that is to be had, from his own declarations and the examples of former times, into the rules of his providence, and the ordinary methods of his dealings with mankind;—if they believe a state of future rewards and punishments according to their behavior in this life, they cannot but desire to know, with the utmost certainty and assurance, what the behavior is which will secure the one, and avoid the other: and of all these things there can be no knowledge or assurance, equal to that which God himself gives. So that while men, out of a zeal for what they call natural religion, are *unconcerned* whether God has made any revelation of his will or not, they violate the laws of nature in a double respect;—first, by resisting that *natural impression* which has always carried men to *inquire* after the

[†] Matthew vii. 29; Luke iv. 32.

declarations of GOD's will ; and then, by an obstinate unconcernedness for their own safety and welfare, contrary to the great and fundamental law of nature, self-preservation.*

No one who believes there is a GOD, and that he is a being of infinite power, wisdom, and knowledge, can doubt whether he *can* make a revelation of his will to mankind, which may be fully attested to come from him, by miracles, and predictions of future events, and the like undeniable testimonies of a divine mission. To affirm this, would not only be in effect to deny a GOD, but to contradict the universal belief that we find in all ages and nations, of divine communications with men ; which shows at least the general sense of mankind, as to the possibility of the thing. And certainly, considering the false and very corrupt notions the world was fallen into concerning GOD and his worship, and the other duties we owe him, notwithstanding the examples of some good men in the successive ages, who retained upon their minds a sense of religion, and their endeavors to convince mankind of the natural connexion there is between virtue and happiness, vice and misery ; in such circumstances, it was very agreeable to the natural notions we have of the divine goodness and wisdom, to suppose that he would make a further revelation to mankind, which might give them a clearer knowledge, and a stronger sense of duty ;—unless we will suppose that he had utterly abandoned them.

They who think it had been most agreeable to the divine wisdom and goodness, to have given mankind

* [Against this dangerous error Bishop BUTLER has directed the admirable reasoning in the first chapter of the second part of his *Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion*. He takes ground somewhat different from that occupied by GIBSON, viz. the general principles, that "if GOD has given a revelation to mankind, and commanded those things which are commanded in Christianity ; it is evident at first sight, that it cannot in any wise be an indifferent matter whether we obey or disobey those commands : unless we are certainly assured that we know *all* the reasons for them, and that all those reasons are now ceased, with regard to mankind in general, or to ourselves in particular." And that "it is absolutely impossible we can be assured of this ; for our ignorance of these reasons proves nothing in the case ; since the whole analogy of nature shows, what is indeed in itself evident, that there may be infinite reasons for things, with which we are not acquainted."]

one certain rule from the beginning, which should have been a sufficient guide to all future generations, and that the need of a *new* revelation implies a want of knowledge and foresight in God; seem to forget, that man was created a *free agent*, and as such *must* have it in his power to fall into a state of degeneracy and corruption. And when the generality of mankind were actually fallen into that state, the acquainting them by a special revelation how they might be delivered out of it—how their natures might be rectified, and themselves restored to the favor of God—could not surely be any derogation to the characters of wisdom and goodness. As well may we charge a physician with want of skill, for not treating the sound and the sick by one and the same rule; and, while he is finding out remedies and prescribing regulations to restore a constitution well nigh ruined by debauchery and excess, accuse him for *suffering* the patient, who was in a state of liberty and freedom, to run into those pernicious courses. As well may a prince who proclaims conditions of pardon and favor to his rebellious subjects, be charged with want of goodness, because he did not chain them up from their cradles, and lay them under an utter inability to rebel.

I cannot forbear in this place, to take notice of the extreme vanity and presumption of those, who think themselves at liberty to disregard the Gospel revelation, till God shall think fit to satisfy them for what reason he did not make it sooner, and why not to all mankind at once;—as if he were accountable to us for his proceedings and dispensations, and we at liberty to refuse the benefits or deliverances he sends, because they come not at the time or in the manner that we judge most proper! Such persons may as well ask, why he made us men and not angels? why he did not bring us into the world with the perfect use of our reason? why he did not give to all men the same capacity and leisure to know and learn their duty? Why he has appointed different degrees of happiness in the next life?—If indeed it appeared, that God would judge men for the transgression of any duty which they did not and could not know to be their duty, and that he would make them accountable for not being influenced by motives

which he had never acquainted them with ; it would be difficult to reconcile such a proceeding to the divine justice. But since the contrary to this is true, and it is certain God will not punish men for invincible ignorance ; surely he is at liberty to dispense *extraordinary favors* at what times, and in what measures, to what nations and to what persons, he thinks fit ! and there can be no doubt, but such persons and nations are bound to receive them with all the gratitude and thankfulness that is due from creatures to their Creator. Are we then to quarrel with God, that he raises us to greater degrees of perfection, in order to advance us to greater degress of happiness and glory ? Can there be a more flagrant instance of perverseness, than to refuse his favors, for the very reason which ought to increase our thankfulness for them, namely, that he vouchsafes them *to us*, and not *to others* ? As to the Heathens, though the light of reason is but dim, yet they who have no better light to walk by, and who honestly make use of that, as the only guide God has given them, cannot fail to be mercifully dealt with by infinite justice and goodness. This is the foundation of St. Paul's reasoning upon the state of the Gentile world,^a ' That God did *not* then *leave himself without witness* : the regular returns of the seasons of the year, and the former and latter rain coming at their set times and blessing them with plentiful harvests, were visible evidences of his providence and goodness. And though, notwithstanding these evidences, they fell into idolatry, yet because those were *times of ignorance*, in which they had no other guide but the light of nature, God *winked at them*, or bore with them, and did not let loose his vengeance, utterly to destroy them.' " But now," (upon the publication of the Gospel) as St. Paul goes on " He commandeth all men every where to repent ; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." And they who have received this express command from God, and do not regard it, or, in other words, they who enjoy the

^a Acts xiv. 16, 17, compared with xvii. 30, 31.

clear light of the Gospel, and perversely reject it ; instead of being entitled to mercy, have their guilt greatly aggravated, by shutting their eyes against the light he has given ;—by defeating the measures he has ordained for their salvation ;—by rejecting a dispensation on no other account, but because it is too pure and perfect ;—and by refusing the happiness that God offers, for no other reason, but because they will not come up to the terms and conditions upon which he offers it.

No less unreasonable are they, who plead that if a revelation is to be regarded, it ought to be made to every person, or at least to every age. For a rule of duty is one and the same, to all persons and in all ages ; and when a standing test is once given to distinguish truth from error, it is equally a test at all times, and in all places ; supposing it to be conveyed to them with sufficient evidence of its coming from God. That this is the case of the Gospel revelation, I have shown you at large in my first letter ; and after God has given such evidence as is abundantly sufficient to satisfy an ingenuous and unprejudiced mind, it is very unreasonable to suppose that he is obliged to make every age and every country a scene of new miracles, only to satisfy the disingenuity and obstinacy of those, who have already received sufficient evidence, and yet will not be convinced. This is the foundation of what our Saviour says in the parable of the rich man, “ If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”^b The spirit of infidelity is proof against all argument and conviction ; and the Jews are a lasting testimony, how little it avails to be eye-witnesses to miracles, when men have once resolved to be infidels.^c

Since then a revelation from God is not only possible, but also probable, and very agreeable to the divine wisdom and goodness ; and we live in a country which

^b Luke xvi. 31.

^c To the remarks of Bishop GIBSON we may add, in the first place—that the arrangement required by the objectors to Christianity would, in effect, destroy the evidence of revelation, by making miracles *no* miracles, but standing rules of Providence, or as we call them, Laws of Nature ; and prophecy as much an order of nature, and as consonant to universal experience, as history ; since both would be exhibited to every individual

avowedly acknowledges and embraces the Gospel revelation; and it is certain, in fact, that the same has been acknowledged and embraced by many other countries for above sixteen hundred years, and still continues to be so, as the great foundation of men's happiness both temporal, and eternal; to say in this case, that they are not obliged, according to their several abilities and opportunities, to inquire whether such a revelation has been really made, and what grounds there are to believe that it came from God, is to say, that they are at liberty to renounce all the rules of reason and prudence, as well as all concern for the safety and welfare of body and soul.

V. IT IS THE DUTY OF MANKIND TO RECEIVE FOR THEIR GUIDE WHATEVER REVELATION COMES FROM GOD; AND ALSO TO RECEIVE IT WHOLE AND ENTIRE.

What the evidences are of the Gospel revelation's coming from God, I have shown at large in my former letter; and I am so far from desiring men to rest implicitly upon the belief of any age or country, that the design of the last head is to convince them of the obligation they are under, to make a *strict inquiry* into those evidences, and to see whether they be such as are fit for a reasonable and impartial mind to acquiesce in. And if upon examination, the evidences of the fact appear to be full and strong, and nothing be found in the matter revealed, that is a *manifest contradiction* in itself, or *evidently inconsistent* either with the divine perfections, or with our natural notions of good and evil; then I must add, that WE ARE BOUND to receive it as a rule of faith and practice, notwithstanding any colorable suggestions to the contrary; because we are satisfied that it comes from God, who has a right to give us a rule, and who can give no rule but what is

of the human race:—and, secondly, that even on the supposition of a revelation being made to every man, it would, if not given in a mode different from that already employed, be as inefficient as the present plan; the case of the Jews, cited by GIBSON, being sufficient proof of this: and on the other hand, if so given as to enforce conviction, it would destroy the free agency of man, and so be utterly at variance with the whole analogy of the natural and moral government of GOD.]

true, and just, and good. So argues an accurate reasoner, upon this head: "Since God, in giving us the light of reason, has not thereby tied up his own hands from affording us, when he thinks fit, the light of revelation, in any of those matters wherein our natural faculties are able to give a probable determination; revelation, where God has been pleased to give it, must carry it against the probable conjectures of reason. Because the mind not being certain of the truth of that it does not evidently know, but only yielding to the probability that appears in it, is bound to give up its assent to such a testimony, which, it is satisfied, comes from one who cannot err, and will not deceive."^d For the same reason, we are not at liberty to admit *some part* of a divine revelation and reject the rest; we may not, for instance, receive the improvements it makes in the moral law, and stopping there, reject or disregard the methods it provides for the redemption of mankind, nor the ordinances and institutions it lays down for the peace and edification of the Church and every particular member of it, nor, in general, any thing that it requires either to be believed or practised: because, if the whole appear to come from God, every part has equally the stamp of divine authority; and he who rejects any part, may for the same reason reject the whole.

And while I am showing you the obligation you are under to receive the Gospel revelation, it will be necessary that I caution you against *skepticism*, or an unreasonable difficulty in believing and suspending the assent of the mind after it has received the proper grounds of conviction. Such skeptics are all they, who will not be content with those sorts of proofs which things are capable of; for instance, will not believe things which were done before their own time, because they did not see or hear them, or because they are not proved to them by mathematical demonstration, of which all historical facts whatsoever are in their nature equally incapable. Such also are they, who are so partial in giving their assent, as to believe the histories of Julius and Augustus Cæsar without the least scruple, but are full of doubts about the history of JESUS CHRIST, though

^d LOCKE, Vol. I. p. 328.

supported by evidences far more clear and numerous. To these may well be applied what was said by an excellent writer, in relation to this skeptical humor: "Those who will pretend such kind of grounds for their disbelief of any thing, will never be able to persuade others, that the true cause why they do not give their assent, is not because they have *no reason* for it, but because they have *no mind* to it."^e We are naturally very uneasy under a state of suspense about any thing we like and care in earnest to pursue; and men's willingness to continue in suspense as to the truth of Gospel revelation, is a certain sign that it is a business they do not like, nor care for. And although this is not downright infidelity, yet it makes men indifferent about religion, and inactive in their Christian course, and takes off the force and influence of future rewards and punishments, almost as much as infidelity itself.

VI. SUCH, AND SO MANY, ARE THE EXCELLENCES OF THE GOSPEL REVELATION, THAT EVERY WISE AND GOOD MAN MUST WISH IT TO BE TRUE; WHETHER WE CONSIDER THE ENDS IT PROPOSES, OR THE MEANS FOR ATTAINING THOSE ENDS.

The great ends it proposes, are,—the perfection of human nature, and the happiness of mankind;—to remove us from the state of brutes, and advance us to the perfection of angels;—and, upon the whole, to lay a sure foundation for our peace and happiness, both temporal and eternal.

The means it uses for attaining those great ends, are of several sorts. For instance: fierceness and cruelty, and an unrestrained enjoyment of sensual pleasures, being the distinguishing characters of the brutal nature, the Gospel revelation abounds with prohibitions of anger, malice, hatred, revenge, and the like brutal qualities; and also lays the strongest restraints upon sensual pleasures and delights, and strictly forbids the enjoyment of them beyond the bounds it has set. And this, not only in the outward acts, but also in the inward thoughts, imaginations, and desires;^f which corrupt the

^e Dr. WILKINS, *Natural Religion*, p. 26.

^f See the First Letter, p. 23.

soul, and keep it in a *disposition* to acts of cruelty and uncleanness, and in a readiness to proceed to the exercise of them, whenever provocations or enticements come in the way.

And these prohibitions, duly attended to in the inward desires as well as outward acts, at the same time that they set us above the condition of brutes, do also lay a foundation for the peace and happiness of our lives; which experience, as well as the universal consent of the wisest men in all ages, proves to be interrupted and destroyed by nothing so much, as the indulging unruly lusts and passions. And whereas, next to these, the happiness of this life is greatly impaired by sickness, want, oppression, and many other temporal calamities; Christianity provides for our comfort under all these—not upon the principles of the ancient philosophers, ‘because they are common to mankind, and we cannot avoid them, and death will put an end to them;’² but by assuring us, that they come from the hand of a wise and good God, who can and will either deliver us from them or support us under them, and that they are designed by him to wean us from the delights of this world, and to prepare us for the enjoyment of a much better. Of the like tendency are the many precepts of the Gospel, which command us not to set our hearts upon the things of this world, but to pursue them with moderation and indifference, and a constant resignation to the will of God; as these do not only prevent all the vexation that otherwise attends the loss of them and our disappointments about them, but also disengage the heart from them, and give it greater liberty, as well as a readier disposition to attend and pursue the affairs of the next life.

For though it is certain that the precepts of Christianity greatly tend to our comfort and happiness in this life, it is as certain that they are chiefly designed to prepare us for the happiness of another. The rules of the philosophers were many of them wisely calculated for the good of human society and the members of it in *this world*; but had by no means such a direct tendency and relation to the spiritual enjoyments of *the next*, as appears to be the general aim and tenor of the rules

² See before, p. 23.

of the Gospel. And as the precepts of Christianity are preparations for a happiness of a very different nature from that which any worldly enjoyments afford, and have higher views and nobler ends than can be answered or attained by those of mere morality ; in these respects it was necessary that the Gospel precepts should be built upon higher principles than those of morality ; and that they should be of a more pure, refined, and exalted nature, and enforced by higher and more noble motives.

Accordingly, Christianity first gives us a true knowledge of the *nature of God* : that it is not impure, as the greatest part of the Heathens believed, nor yet severe and terrible, according to the general tenor of the Jewish dispensation, as given to a 'stiffnecked and obstinate people ;' but that he is a Being of a pure spiritual nature, and is kind to us, and loves to do us good, and has given the highest proof of it in sending his own SON to die for us and redeem us from eternal death, to the end He might engage our love and obedience to Him, and we by that means procure eternal happiness to ourselves. And by this knowledge of his nature, we are led to see that He must not be worshipped according to the impure rites of the Heathen services, nor yet by the sacrifices of beasts, which were only types of our redemption by CHRIST ; but with a steady attention of the soul, and a pure heart, and sincere intentions and resolutions of obedience ; which our Saviour briefly expresses by '*worshipping God in spirit and in truth,*'^a and which has a natural tendency to fit us for the divine exercises of praise and contemplation in the next life, and, in the mean while, is a means of preserving a constant communication between God and us, during our continuance in this world.

To the same *spiritual* ends, tend all the duties of life which are either peculiar to the Christian institution, or at least are carried by it to greater degrees of purity and perfection. Such are ;—with regard to ourselves, holiness of heart ; a sober use of the enjoyments of life, with mortifications and self-denials as we find occasion ;

^a John iv. 23.

an indifference about the things of this world, compared with our care about the things of the next; the 'seeking those things which are above, where CHRIST sitteth at the right hand of God;' the 'having our conversation in heaven;' the 'laying up our treasure in heaven;' and the keeping a strict watch over our thoughts as well as actions;—with regard to our neighbor, the forgiveness of injuries; the loving of enemies; the doing all the good we can to men for God's sake; the 'blessing them that curse us;' the 'praying for them that despitefully use us and persecute us;' and the 'overcoming evil with good.' The precepts which relate to ourselves, prepare us for heaven, as it is a place of pure spiritual enjoyments; and those which relate to our neighbor, prepare us for it, as it is a place where love, and peace, and unity reign, to the greatest degree, and in the highest perfection. And whereas not only the Heathen but also the Jewish worship consisted chiefly in outward rites and ordinances; there are no more than two of that sort in our Saviour's institution, and those very plain and significant—Baptism, by which we are admitted into the society of Christians, and all the advantages of it—and the Lord's Supper, by which we declare our continuance in that society; thankfully commemorating the great work of our redemption by CHRIST, and applying to ourselves the comforts and benefits of it; and at the same time, resolving to live as becomes his disciples, and receiving spiritual strength to support us in that resolution.

But because, by reason of the corruption of our hearts, we are not naturally disposed to spiritual exercises, and the greatest part of mankind have their thoughts employed about the business or the pleasures of this world, and are daily exposed to temptations of one kind or another; all which indispose them for devotion, and make them ignorant or unmindful of their duty, and very apt to fall into the transgression of it; as a fit remedy for these evils, the Gospel institution has appointed a *public worship*,^b which every Christian is bound to attend, and a peculiar order of men to explain to the people their duty, and remind them of it, and to

^b See the First Letter, p. 52.

press and enforce the several obligations they are under to perform it.

And since the passions and appetites of men lead them strongly to sensual gratifications and delights, and the self-denials which the Gospel requires are so disagreeable to weak and corrupt nature, that it is in vain to hope that mankind will be kept to their duty in either of these respects by mere reasoning and exhortation; the Gospel revelation has provided a balance to our natural weakness and corruption, by giving us the *strongest assurances of rewards and punishments* in another world—the one to deter us from gratifying our unruly passions and inordinate appetites, and the other to carry us with cheerfulness and resolution through all the self-denials which the Gospel requires.

And as the love of God is the highest principle of duty and obedience to him, so the Gospel gives us the strongest and most forcible *motive to love* him; namely, the sending his own Son into the world to die for us, and by his death to reconcile us to himself, and make us eternally happy.

And as in all cases example has a very powerful influence in order to practice, we have in our Saviour's life the most *perfect pattern of goodness*, that ever the world beheld; of meekness and humility, of patience and contentment, of loving to do good to men, and of an entire obedience and submission to the will of God.

Since also the Christian institution, which so freely and openly condemns the wickedness of the world, exposes the sincere professors of it to reproach and persecution; CHRIST has armed and fortified them against these, not only by general declarations of his acceptance of the services of those who 'confess him before men,'^c and are 'reproached and persecuted for his sake;'^d but also by *special promises*, that he will particularly "confess them before God and his angels," and that "great shall be their reward in heaven;" which his apostles express, by 'reigning with him,'^e and by 'receiving from his hands a crown of life.'^f

And because the sense of our natural corruption and

^c Matt. x. 32.

^e 2 Tim. ii. 12.

^d Matt. v. 11, 12.

^f James i. 12.

infirmity might well discourage us from attempting to live up to the pure and spiritual precepts of the Gospel, and to bring our hearts to a thorough liking of them, and an habitual obedience to them; therefore the same Gospel ensures a *supernatural assistance* to all those who shall desire and pray for it, to support them against temptations, and preserve in them a constant desire and endeavor to conform their lives to the laws of CHRIST. "If ye," says our Saviour, "being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him:"[§] by which Spirit, our natures are *renewed*,^h and our hearts *sanctified*;ⁱ and by the same Spirit we are "strengthened with might in the inner man."^k

And, finally, because men, through a consciousness of their manifold offences against God, would be in perpetual dread of the divine justice, and, in a sense of their great failings and infirmities, would think themselves unworthy to approach a Being of infinite purity, and despair of recovering his favor when they have offended him by the transgression of their duty; therefore, to comfort sincere Christians, and encourage them to persevere in their duty, the SON of GOD who took our nature upon him, hath *satisfied the divine justice by dying for us*, and is appointed *the intercessor between God and man*, and *the mediator of a new covenant*; by which, all who sincerely desire and endeavor to perform their duty, are not only assured of supernatural assistance to enable them to discharge it, but also upon a sincere repentance, and faith in him, are *entitled* to pardon and forgiveness if they transgress it, and assured that upon those terms they shall be restored to the favor of God, and the comfortable hope of eternal life, notwithstanding such transgressions.

This is the account which the New Testament gives, of the redemption wrought for us by CHRIST:—that his death was a satisfaction made to the divine justice for the sins of mankind;—that through faith in him, we are assured of the forgiveness of our sins upon our repentance and amendment;—that being forgiven, we are

[§] Luke xi. 13.

ⁱ Rom. vi. 13.

^h Rom xii. 2.

^k Ephes. iii. 16.

justified in the sight of God ;—that being justified in his sight, we are reconciled to him ;—that he who reconciles us to God, sanctifies our hearts by the holy Spirit, to enable us to perform the will of God, and thereby to continue in his favor ;—that for the same end, he mediates and intercedes for us with God, while we continue in this present life ;—and, that through him we have the promise of life eternal. This is a scene full of comfort to all those who comply with the terms of the Gospel ; and, that good Christians may be assured that this is the true account, and that by consequence the hope and comfort they build upon the redemption wrought for them by CHRIST, and their trust in him, are well founded ; I will give them in one view, and in the words of Scripture, what is plainly delivered there, upon each of the forementioned heads.

I. CHRIST, by his death, made SATISFACTION TO THE DIVINE JUSTICE for the sins of mankind. This the Scripture sets forth by the expressions, of *dying for us*,—of *bearing our sins*,—of *taking away our sins*,—of being a *propitiation for our sins*,—of *purchasing and redeeming or ransoming us with the price of his blood*.

By DYING FOR US:—"He laid down his life for us."^l—"He died for our sins."^m—"He gave himself for us."ⁿ—"He was delivered for our offences."^o—"He tasted death for every man."^r—Agreeably to the prophecy concerning him, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."^q

By BEARING OUR SINS:—"He was once offered to bear the sins of many."^r—"He bare our sins in his own body on the tree."^s—Agreeably to the prophecies concerning him, "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows—the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."^t

By TAKING AWAY OUR SINS:—"He was manifested to take away our sins."^u—"He put away sin by the

^l 1 John iii. 16.

ⁿ Titus ii. 14.

^p Heb. ii. 9.

^r Heb. ix. 26.

^t Isa. liii. 4. 6.

^m 1 Cor. xv. 3.

^o Rom. iv. 25.

^q Isa. liii. 5.

^s 1 Pet ii. 24.

^u 1 John iii. 5.

sacrifice of himself.”—“He hath *washed* us from our sins in his own blood.”^v—“The blood of JESUS CHRIST *cleanseth* us from all sin.”^w

By being a PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS:—“Him God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in his blood.”^x—“God sent his Son to be the *propitiation* for our sins.”—“He is the *propitiation* for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”^y

By PURCHASING, AND REDEEMING OR RANSOMING US, WITH THE PRICE OF HIS BLOOD:—“He *purchased* the Church of God with his own blood.”^z—“He came to give his life a *ransom* for many.”^a—“He gave himself a *ransom* for all.”^b—“We are *bought* with a price.”^c—“In him we have *redemption* through his blood.”^d—“He hath *redeemed* us to God by his blood.”^e—“We are *redeemed* with the precious blood of CHRIST.”^f

2. The divine justice being satisfied, we are assured of the FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS through CHRIST upon a sincere repentance. His fore-runner, John the Baptist, preached “the baptism of repentance for the *remission of sins*.”^g—CHRIST tells us, “His blood was shed for many *for the remission of sins*.”^h—After the resurrection, the apostles are directed by him, to “preach repentance and *remission of sins* in his name, among all nations.”ⁱ—Accordingly, their preaching was this; “Him God hath exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and *forgiveness of sins*.”^k—“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of JESUS CHRIST, for the *remission of sins*.”^l—“Through this man is preached unto you the *forgiveness of sins*.”^m—“To him give all the prophets witness, that *through his name*, whosoever *believeth in him* shall receive *remission of sins*.”ⁿ

^v Heb. ix. 26. Rev. i. 5.

^x Rom. iii. 25. 1 John iv. 10.

^z Acts xx. 28.

^b 1 Tim. ii. 6.

^d Eph. i. 7. Col. iii. 4.

^f 1 Pet. i. 18.

^h Matt. xxvi. 28.

^k Acts v. 31.

^m Acts xiii. 38.

^w 1 John i. 17.

^y 1 John ii. 2.

^a Matt. xx. 28.

^c 1 Cor. vi. 20.

^e Rev. v. 9.

^g Luke iii. 3.

ⁱ Luke xxiv. 47.

^l Acts ii. 38.

ⁿ Acts x. 43.

—“God was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto himself, *not imputing their trespasses* unto them.”^o—
 “In him we have redemption through his blood, even the *forgiveness of sins*.”^p—And we are commanded to
 “forgive one another, even as God, *for CHRIST's sake, hath forgiven us*.”^q

3. Our sins being forgiven, we are JUSTIFIED by CHRIST in the sight of God.—“By him all that believe are *justified*.”^r—“We are *justified* in the name of the LORD JESUS.”^s—“We are *justified* freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in JESUS CHRIST.”^t—
 “Being *justified* by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”^u—“God hath made him to be *sin for us*, who knew no sin, that we might be made the *righteousness* of God in him.”^v—“Even the *righteousness* of God, which is by faith of JESUS CHRIST unto all and upon all them that believe.”^w

4. Being justified by CHRIST, we are RECONCILED TO GOD.—“Being justified by faith, we *have peace with God*, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.”^x—“We are *reconciled to God* by the death of his Son.”^y—“Us, who were enemies, hath CHRIST *reconciled* in the body of his flesh, through death.”^z—He hath “*made peace* through the blood of his cross, by him *to reconcile* all things unto himself.”^a—“God hath *reconciled us to himself* by JESUS CHRIST;”^b—“who suffered for sin, that he might *bring us unto God*.”^c—And “We are *accepted* in the Beloved.”^d

5. Having reconciled us to God, he SANCTIFIES OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, to enable us to perform our duty, and thereby to continue in GOD's favor.—“We are chosen to salvation, through *sanctification of the*

^o 2 Cor. v. 19.

^q Ephes. iv. 32.

^s 1 Cor. vi. 11.

^u Rom. v. 9.

^w Rom. iii. 22.

^y Rom. v. 10.

^a Col. i. 20.

^c 1 Pet. iii. 18.

^p Ephes. i. 7.

^r Acts xiii. 39.

^t Rom. iii. 24.

^v 2 Cor. v. 21.

^x Rom. v. 2.

^z Col. i. 21.

^b 2 Cor. v. 18.

^d Ephes. i. 6.

SPIRIT"^d—and “through *sanctification of the SPIRIT*, unto obedience.”^e—“We are *sanctified* through the offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST.”^f—“GOD hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto *holiness*,—who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.”^g—“The Spirit of God *dwelleth in us*,”^h and “our body is *the temple of the HOLY GHOST*,”ⁱ—and “we are *an habitation of GOD* through the SPIRIT.”^k—“We are *renewed by the HOLY GHOST*”^l—and “*quickened by the Spirit*”^m—and “*strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man*.”ⁿ—And it is “*through the Spirit* that we mortify the deeds of the body”^o—by which deeds, we “grieve” and “quench the Spirit.”^p

6. He who assists us by his Spirit upon earth, to enable us to do the will of God, and thereby to continue in his favor, is our constant MEDIATOR, INTERCESSOR, and ADVOCATE with GOD in heaven, to present our prayers for the supply of our wants, and to obtain a compassionate regard to our failings and infirmities. “He is the *mediator* of the new covenant.”^q—“There is one *mediator* between GOD and man, even the man CHRIST JESUS.”^r—“He makes *intercession* for us at the right hand of GOD.”^s—“He *appears in the presence of GOD* for us.”^t—“No man cometh unto the Father but *by him*.”^u—“He is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto GOD *by him*, seeing he ever liveth to make *intercession* for them.”^v—“If any man sin, we have an *advocate* with the Father, JESUS CHRIST the righteous.”^w—“He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may find grace and mercy to help in time of need”^x—and “let us draw near with

^d 2 Thes. ii. 13.

^f Heb. x. 10.

^h Rom. viii. 9.

^k Ephes. ii. 22.

^m John vi. 63.

^o Rom. viii. 13.

^p Eph. iv. 30; 1 Thes. v. 19; Luke xi. 13.

^q Heb. xii. 24.

^s Rom. viii. 34.

^u John xiv. 6.

^w 1 John ii. 1, 2.

^e 1 Pet. i. 2.

^g 1 Thes. iv. 7, 8.

ⁱ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

^l Acts ii. 38; Tit. iii. 5.

ⁿ Ephes. iii. 16.

^r 1 Tim. ii. 5.

^t Heb. ix. 24.

^v Heb. vii. 25.

^x Heb. iv. 14.

a true heart, and full assurance of faith."y—"In him we have boldness, and access with confidence."z

7. As it is he who enables us to do the will of God and to preserve his favor in this life, so it is through him that we are made PARTAKERS OF LIFE ETERNAL. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world"^a—"to seek and to save that which was lost"^b—"that we might live through him"^c—"that the world through him might be saved,"^d—"that believing, we might have life through his name,"^e—"that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."^f—Through him we are "saved from wrath."^g—"He hath delivered us from the wrath to come."^h—"Eternal life is the gift of God, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD."ⁱ—"God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son,"^k—who is "the Captain of our salvation"^l—the "Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him."^m—"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved."ⁿ

What has been said under this sixth general head, is a short view of the Christian institution, both in the ends it proposes, and the means for attaining those ends; and it appears in this view, that the method which the Gospel lays down for our salvation, is, throughout, a consistent and uniform scheme, worthy of God, and contrived with the greatest wisdom and goodness for the comfort and happiness of man. It appears also, how unable human reason was to direct us either to the ends, or the means, and that however the due use and application of our reason may answer the purposes of this life, it is by no means sufficient to guide us in our way to the next.

But if, after God has made so full and clear a revela-

y Heb. x. 22.

a 1 John iv. 14.

c 1 John iv. 9.

e John iii. 17.

g 1 Thes. i. 10.

i Rom. vi. 23.

l Heb. ii. 10.

n Acts iv. 12.

z Eph. iii. 12.

b Luke xix. 10.

d John xx. 31.

f John iii. 16.

h Rom v. 9.

k 1 John v. 11.

m Heb. v. 9.

tion in what way and upon what terms he will save us, men will resolve to be their own guides, and refuse to be saved in the way that he has appointed; this is at their own peril. If some will believe that trusting in CHRIST is their whole duty, and so excuse themselves from the observation of the moral law, and others will affirm that the observation of the moral law is sufficient, and so will forego the benefit of CHRIST's redemption; if some will contend that CHRIST has done all, and others that he has done nothing: to both these it is sufficient to say, that they are very vain and presumptuous in setting up the opinion and imagination of weak and fallible men, against the infallible testimony of persons sent and inspired by God. The Gospel account is as full and express as words can make it, on one hand, that faith in CHRIST is the foundation of a Christian's title to heaven, and on the other hand, that repentance and good works are necessary conditions of obtaining it.

It may not be improper, before I shut up this head, to observe that several of our most eminent divines* after the restoration, set themselves, both by preaching and writing, to enlarge upon the importance of moral duties, and to recommend them, with great earnestness, to the regard of the people; to such a degree, as to stand charged by others with too great a disregard of the doctrines and duties peculiar to Christianity. Whereas, the case in reality was this. During the times of confusion, many of the preachers had not only forborne to inculcate the duties of morality, but had labored to depreciate them; to persuade the people that faith was all, and works *nothing*. And therefore the clergy, after the restoration, in order to take off those unhappy impressions, found themselves obliged to inculcate with more than ordinary diligence, the necessity of moral duties in the Christian life, and to labor to restore them to their proper share in the Christian scheme.^p But those of them, who with the honest

* DR. WILKINS, BARROW, TILLOTSON, JOHN SCOTT.

^p [The apology which Bishop GIBSON makes for the great men in question, is undoubtedly just, and perhaps sufficient. There is abundant evidence in their works, that whatever prominence they may have given to moral duty in their statements of Gospel truth, was given because they thought the times and the natural constitution of man

view I have mentioned, labored the most zealously in that way, were at the same time as zealous to explain to the people the great work of our redemption by JESUS CHRIST, as the means of salvation which God has appointed:—the corruption and misery into which mankind was sunk by the fall of our first parents;^a—the necessity of a mediator, to recover them, and restore them to the favor of God;^r—the incarnation of the Son of God for that end;^s—the goodness of God in appointing his own Son to be the mediator between him and us;—the comfort of having a mediator of our own nature;^u—the expiation made for sin by the suffering of CHRIST;^v—the wisdom of God in making CHRIST a sacrifice for sin;^w—the inestimable value of his sufferings, for the redemption of all mankind;^x—our justification by faith in him,^y—and sanctification by the HOLY SPIRIT,^z and his intercession for us at GOD'S right hand.^a In general; what can be more express than the doctrine laid down by Archbishop TILLOTSON,^b con-

required it; not because they were disposed to rob the great doctrine of redemption through the atoning blood of CHRIST alone, of any of its due pre-eminence in the scheme of salvation.

Yet they cannot be altogether acquitted of error. In their anxiety to reunite Christian *holiness* with Christian *profession*, they did not proceed upon the proper plan for the accomplishment of that object—the plan invariably adopted by the inspired apostles—that of *building it on Christian faith*. They strenuously insisted on the Christian graces and virtues as parts of man's duty to his Maker, rather than as fruits of faith in a crucified Redeemer; and enforced them by considerations deduced from the grand distinctions between good and evil, and from the hope of reward and the fear of punishment, more than by those of *gratitude* to a merciful God, reconciled to us in CHRIST—of *love* to the Saviour who gave himself for us—and of *obligation* to the Redeemer who has 'bought us with a price.']

^a TILLOTSON, Vol. III. 303. 320. 321. 589; BARROW, Vol. I. 464, Vol. II. 222, Vol. III. 228.

^r TILLOTSON, Vol. II. 129; SCOTT, Vol. I. 201, Vol. III. 6.

^s TILLOTSON, Vol. I. 437. 460, Vol. II. 261; BARROW, Vol. II. 235.

^t TILLOTSON, Vol. I. 445; SCOTT, Vol. III. 24. 42.

^u TILLOTSON, Vol. I. p. 471.

^v TILLOTSON, Vol. I. 477, Vol. II. 361; SCOTT, Vol. III. 187.

^w TILLOTSON, Vol. I. 473, Vol. II. 637; BARROW, Vol. I. 464, Vol. II. 339; SCOTT, Vol. III. 167.

^x BARROW, Vol. II. 313, Vol. III. 454.

^y TILLOTSON, Vol. III. 480; BARROW, Vol. II. 71.

^z TILLOTSON, Vol. III. 300. 320. 488. 489; SCOTT, Vol. III. 83. 151.

^a SCOTT, Vol. III. 183.

^b SCOTT, Vol. II. p. 488.

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cerning our redemption by CHRIST, “That men are to place all their hope and confidence of salvation in JESUS CHRIST the Son of GOD; that is, to believe that through the alone merit of his death and sufferings, GOD is reconciled to us; and that, only upon the account of the satisfaction which he hath made to divine justice, we are restored to the favor of GOD, and our sins are pardoned to us, and we have a title to eternal life. Not but that there are conditions on our part to make us capable of these benefits, faith, and repentance, and sincere obedience, and holiness of life, without which we shall never be made partakers of them; but that the satisfaction of CHRIST is the only meritorious cause of those blessings.”

And together with the several heads of our redemption by CHRIST, thus explained and enlarged upon by those who had most distinguished themselves in pressing the duties of morality; the people were further instructed by the same persons, that baptism is an institution into a new covenant with GOD;^c and the Lord’s Supper, a renewal of that covenant; and they were admonished by them, of the great duties of assembling in the public worship of GOD,^d and frequently receiving the Holy Sacrament,^e and hearing and reading the Holy Scriptures, as their only sure and complete rule both of faith and practice.^f Concerning all which, one of those writers,^g after having described in a lively manner the excellences of moral duties, goes on thus: “The positive parts of religion are our duty as well as these, and GOD by his sovereign authority exacts them at our hands; and unless, when JESUS CHRIST hath been sufficiently proposed to us, we do sincerely believe in him—unless we strike covenant with him by baptism, and frequently renew that covenant in the Lord’s Supper—unless we diligently attend on the public assemblies of his worship—there is no pretence of morality will bear us out, when we appear before his dread tribunal.” To which I must add, that another of those

^c SCOTT, Vol. II. 296, Vol. III. 283.

^d TILLOTSON, Vol. I. 519. 537; SCOTT, Vol. II. 115.

^e TILLOTSON, Vol. I. 248; SCOTT, Vol. II. 294.

^f TILLOTSON, Vol. I. 308, Vol. II. 243.

^g SCOTT, Vol. II. 68.

divines, who wrote an excellent *Treatise of Natural Religion*, (*i. e.* of principles and duties merely moral, and such as are discoverable by the strength of reason exerted and improved to the highest degree that our natural faculties are capable of,) concludes with the fullest declaration of the *insufficiency* of them to instruct us in our duty, or to enable us to perform it, or to conduct us to happiness, without those clear lights and supernatural assistances which the Gospel dispensation conveys to us. His words are these:^r “Notwithstanding all that can be said of natural religion, it cannot be denied, but that in this dark and degenerate state into which mankind is sunk, there is great want of a clearer light to discover our duty to us with greater certainty, and to put it beyond all doubt and dispute what is the good and acceptable will of God; and of a more powerful encouragement to the practice of our duty, by the promise of a supernatural assistance, and by the assurance of a great and eternal reward. And all these defects are fully supplied by that clear and perfect revelation, which God hath made to the world by our blessed Saviour.” And elsewhere he says, “It is not the mere performance of such *moral* duties as are of natural obligation, unless they be done in *obedience to CHRIST* as our LORD and lawgiver, and in *reliance upon him* for his pardon and acceptance as our priest and Saviour, that can make us acceptable to CHRIST, or entitle us to the name of Christians.”^s And speaking of the salvation of those Heathens who lived according to the light of nature,^t that “when God hath not thought fit to tell us, how he will be pleased to deal with such persons, it is not fit for us to tell him how he *ought* to deal with them,” he adds; “Only, of this we are sufficiently assured, that in all ages and places of the world, *all* that are saved, are saved by the *mercy* of God, and by the *merits* of JESUS CHRIST, who is the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; the Scripture having expressly told us, *That there is no salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*”^u

^r DR. WILKINS, II. c. 9.

^s WILKINS' *Sermon*, p. 51.

^t *Natural Religion*, p. 397.

^u So, also BARROW, Vol. III. p. 449. 464.

I have already observed, that the duties of morality were carried by our Saviour to much higher degrees of purity and perfection, than had been practised before either by Jew or Gentile; agreeably to the pure and spiritual nature of that happiness which he revealed to mankind, and the necessity of fitting the soul for the full enjoyment of it in the next life, by habituating ourselves to it, during our abode in this. And for the same end, we find throughout the New Testament the practice of moral duties enforced, and the breach of them discouraged, not so much from considerations *relating to this world*, or any *temporal* benefit accruing from thence to ourselves or others, as from the *sanctions of duty*, which the civil relations among men have received from God;—from the *manner of God's dealings* with men;—from the *example of CHRIST*, our Lord and Master;—from the *regard we owe to our holy profession*;—from the *relation we bear to heaven* while we live here upon earth;—from the different *spiritual sources of moral and immoral actions*;—and, from the *influence* which our regard or disregard to the duties of morality, will have *upon our future state*.

1. FROM THE SANCTIONS OF DUTY WHICH THE CIVIL RELATIONS AMONG MEN HAVE RECEIVED FROM GOD.

Magistrates must be obeyed, not only *for wrath* but *for conscience sake*, because they are *the ordinance of God*;† and they must also conduct themselves towards the people, “as the *ministers of God* to them for good.”‡ Husband and wife must inviolably adhere to each other,§ because they are joined together and made one *by God*, who “at the beginning made them male and female,”¶ and by whom “whoremongers and adulterers will be judged.”‡ Servants are commanded to be obedient to their masters “in singleness of heart, *fearing God*,”‡a “with good will doing service *as to the LORD*, and not unto men,”‡b and masters, to be just and merciful to their servants, as “knowing that they also have *a master in heaven*.”‡c And in general,

† Rom. xiii. 2. 5.

‡ Matt. xix. 4. 6.

‡ Heb. xiii. 4.

‡ Col. iii. 22.

‡ Rom. xiii. 4.

‡ Matt. xix. 4.

‡ Ephes. vi. 6, 7.

• Ephes. vi. 9.

"whatsoever we do," the Gospel enjoins us to "do it heartily, *as to the LORD*, and not unto men;"^c and that "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all *to the glory of God*."^d

2. FROM THE MANNER OF GOD'S DEALINGS WITH MEN.

We must be kind to enemies as well as friends, because "God maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."^e We must "forgive one another, because God for CHRIST's sake hath forgiven us."^f And upon God's having 'manifested his love to us in sending his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him,'^g is grounded the inference which St. John makes, "beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;"^h and the loving one another is the most constant and forcible motive of good offices to one another.

3. FROM THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST, OUR LORD AND MASTER.

"*Learn of me*," says he, "for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest to your souls."ⁱ And says the apostle, "walk in love, *as CHRIST also* loved us, and gave himself for us."^k "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification; for *even CHRIST* pleased not himself."^l "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves: look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others; let this mind be in you, which was *also in CHRIST JESUS*."^m "*As he that hath called you*, is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."ⁿ

4. FROM THE REGARD WE OWE OUR HOLY PROFESSION.

Immoralities of all kinds are forbidden to Christians, because they ought to "walk *worthy of the vocation* wherewith they are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love;

^c Col. iii. 23.

^e Matt. v. 44.

^g 1 John iv. 9.

ⁱ Matt. xi. 29.

^l Rom. xv. 2, 3.

ⁿ 1 Pet. i. 15.

^d Cor. x. 31.

^f Ephes. iv. 32.

^h 1 John iv. 11.

^k Ephes. v. 2.

^m Phil. ii. 3, 4, 5.

endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."ⁿ They must "walk *worthy of God*, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory."^o They must "walk as children of light."^p Their "conversation must be *as becomes the Gospel of CHRIST*."^q They must "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;"^r and take care that 'the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed, or evil spoken of, among the Gentiles, through them.'^s We are to "walk honestly (or decently) as in the day (the day-light of the Gospel,) not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying;" and we must "put on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."^t

5. FROM THE RELATION WE BEAR TO HEAVEN, WHILE WE LIVE HERE UPON EARTH.

"Our conversation (or citizenship) is in heaven;"^u and because we are only "strangers and pilgrims upon earth," we must "abstain from fleshy lusts (the inordinate enjoyments of this world) which war against the soul;"^v and we are also put in mind that we are only "sojourners" here, and have "no continuing city, but seek one to come,"^w that we may not set up our rest in this world, nor be too solicitous about the things of it, but may have our heavenly country always in our eye, and make it our greatest concern to arrive safely there.

6. FROM THE DIFFERENT SPIRITUAL SOURCES OF MORAL AND IMMORAL ACTIONS.

"Love, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, and temperance," are recommended to our practice, as "fruits of the Spirit,"^x and as "the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits."^y But "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like," are represented by the Gospel as "works of the flesh,"^z and the

ⁿ Ephes. iv. 1, 2, 3.

^p Ephes. v. 8.

^r Tit. ii. 10.

^t Rom. xiii. 13, 14.

^v 1 Pet. ii. 11.

^x Gal. v. 22, 23.

^z Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

^o 1 Thes. ii. 12.

^q Phil. i. 27.

^s 1 Tim. vi. 1; Tit. ii. 5.

^u Phil. iii. 20.

^w Heb. xi. 16.

^y James iii. 17.

fruits of that wisdom which descended not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish"^z—as proceeding from the corruptions of nature without the guidance of God's holy Spirit, and from the suggestions of the devil, of whom the Gospel every where warns us as an implacable enemy to mankind, who "walketh about seeking whom he may devour,"^a and whose "wiles"^b and "snares"^c we must not hope to escape, but by watchfulness and prayer.

7. FROM THE INFLUENCE WHICH OUR REGARD OR DISREGARD TO THE DUTIES OF MORALITY WILL HAVE UPON OUR FUTURE STATE.

St. Paul concludes a large catalogue of sins, fornication, uncleanness, wrath, envy, &c., with this just but terrible sentence, "of which, I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."^d On the contrary, the Gospel recommends the practice of *humility*, by ensuring to it "the kingdom of heaven;"^e *meekness*, because it is "in the sight of God of great price;"^f *mercifulness*, as the means of "obtaining mercy;"^g *temperance*, as necessary to the running our Christian course with success;^h *purity* of heart, as a necessary preparation to the "seeing God;"ⁱ *charity*,^k as it is the "laying up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may attain eternal life;"^l *patience* and *perseverance in well-doing*, because "our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are *not seen*, because the things which are seen, are temporal, but the things which are *not seen*, are *eternal*."^m

This is the true Gospel morality; which makes all the relations among men, and the duties belonging to them, to centre in God, and connects the offices of this life

^z James iii. 15.

^b Ephes. vi. 11. 18.

^d Gal. v. 21.

^e 1 Pet. iii. 4.

^f 1 Cor. ix. 25.

^k [In the restricted (and indeed improper) sense of *alms-giving*.]

^l 1 Tim. vi. 18, 19.

^a 1 Pet. v. 8.

^c 2 Tim. ii. 26.

^e Matt. v. 3.

^g Matt. v. 7.

ⁱ Matt. v. 8.

^m 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

with the happiness of the next; and it is no other in effect, than that which St. Paul more briefly lays down in the following words: "the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should *live soberly, righteously, and godly*, in this present world; *looking for that blessed hope* and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour JESUS CHRIST; who gave himself for us, that he might *redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself* a peculiar people, *zealous of good works.*"^a

I am aware, that in the view of Christianity I have given under this sixth general head, many things are laid down, which some late writers, who yet disown the name of infidels, have with much confidence pronounced to be *superstition*. And that the same charge might not be repeated, I judged it necessary to show thus particularly from the plain and express words of Scripture, that this is *no other superstition than what was taught by CHRIST and his apostles*. It is indeed to be greatly lamented, that in a Christian country there should be any need to prove, that the work of our redemption by the death of CHRIST, with the benefits thereby obtained for us, is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. But when we see so much pains taken to represent these things as corruptions in religion, we who have the care of souls, can think no pains too much to explain and inculcate those great and necessary truths, by showing from the whole tenor of the New Testament, that they are the means which God himself hath appointed for the salvation of mankind.

The excellence of the Christian institution, joined to the evidences of its divine authority as set forth in my former Letter, naturally leads,

VII. TO THE GREAT SINFULNESS AND DANGER OF REJECTING IT, OR, IN OTHER WORDS, TO THE GREAT GUILT AND PERVERSENESS OF INFIDELITY.

For though it is not in any man's power to believe what he pleases, because as things appear at this or that

^a Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

time to his understanding, so his belief must be, and we can neither be charged with guilt, nor be liable to punishment, for what we cannot help; yet in searching after truth, there are two things which are in our power,—the *use* of our faculties;—and, the *due* and *impartial* use of them:—and if we fail of finding out the truth, or fall into error, by *not using* our faculties at all, or by using them *unduly*, we are certainly accountable to God who gave them, and who, as our sovereign Lord, has a right to require a due use and to punish the abuse of them. In speculative matters, which no way concern our duty or happiness, men may be as ignorant as they please without danger of guilt: but to be an infidel in religion through sloth and carelessness, for want of examining at all, or through a slight and superficial examination, makes men highly guilty in the sight of God; both as it is a neglect of using and applying the faculties he has given us, and as it is manifestly contrary to all the rules of right reason, not to use them in a matter which so nearly concerns our safety and interest;° especially when the evidences of Christianity lie so open to the general apprehension of mankind, and may so easily be entered into and understood.

No less guilty are they in the sight of God, who in examining the grounds of religion, suffer their minds to be influenced by vicious inclinations, or by pride and an affectation of singularity, or by any immoral and indirect motive whatsoever. It is every day's experience and observation, how greatly the judgments of men are influenced in temporal matters by their own private convenience, and interest, and other considerations, which do not at all belong to the matter they are to judge of; and this may be much more suspected in the judgment they make of the truth of Christianity, considering how contrary its precepts are to the inordinate desires and inclinations of nature. We cannot enter into the hearts of men, to see upon what motives they act, and under what influences they reason; but when we consider the strength and clearness of the evidences of Christianity, with the advantages and excellences of the Gospel institution, and the strict restraints it lays upon

° *First Letter*, p. 33, &c.

excess and uncleanness of all kinds, we cannot but see that it requires the greatest degree of charity, to ascribe their infidelity to any thing but the love of vice, or the love of contradiction. This is what the apostle calls "an evil heart of unbelief:"^p and where that is the case, infidelity is a sin of the highest nature; as it corrupts the reason and understanding which God has given, and subjects it to base and unworthy influences;—as it degrades human nature, and carries in it an indifference whether we be immortal or die like beasts, or rather a desire that we may die like them;—as it is an affront to God, in rejecting his messengers, who come with clear and evident testimonies of their being sent by him;—as it makes him a liar, and is a manifest contempt of his goodness in sending a revelation, and defeats his gracious designs and measures for the salvation of mankind. Well, therefore, might our Saviour denounce damnation against all those who did not receive him and his doctrine: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, (i. e. disbelieveth) *shall be damned.*"^q "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."^r "He that believeth not, *is condemned* already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God; and this is the *condemnation*, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."^s "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin."^t And agreeable to these are the declarations of his apostles. St. John reckons the "unbelieving" among those "who shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."^u St. Paul tells us, that "God will take vengeance on them that know him not, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord JESUS CHRIST;"^v and the author to the Hebrews, "how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him: God also

^p Heb. iii. 12.

^r John viii. 24.

^t John xv. 22.

^v 2 Thes. i. 8.

^q Mark xvi. 16.

^s John iii. 18, 19.

^u Rev. xxi. 8.

bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the HOLY GHOST.”^w And, “he that despised Moses’ law, died without mercy—of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?”^x Agreeably to what John the Baptist had declared to the Jews, “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”^y

I mention these things to show the infidels of our age, that to believe or not believe is far from being a *matter of indifference*, as they would make it; and to convince those who are in danger of being seduced by them, how nearly they are concerned, before they give up themselves to such guides, to give the evidences of Christianity a thorough and impartial examination.—For which end, I recommend to them the three following tests of sincerity.—1. That they find their hearts sincerely disposed to embrace any doctrine, and follow any rule of life, that shall appear to come from God.—2. That they inwardly wish to find a religion well founded, which provides a remedy for the corruptions of our nature, and ensures to good men a state of happiness and immortality after this life.—3. That they find in themselves no lust, or other vice or passion, which inclines them to wish that such a religion may not be well founded. Let but men, before they enter upon

^w Heb. ii. 3, 4. ^x Heb. x. 3, 28, 29.

^y John iii. 6. [Several eminent interpreters agree with Bishop GIBSON in attributing this passage to John the Baptist. Indeed, at first sight, its position in the gospel seems to assign it to the Baptist as a part of his testimony to the Jews.—Yet the strong resemblance of the whole passage (from verse 31 to the end of the chapter) to the style of St. John the evangelist, and the great explicitness of its declarations concerning CHRIST, which appears inconsistent with the partial knowledge of Him possessed by the Baptist, render it more probable that this is a part of a series of remarks appended by the apostle to the Baptist’s testimony, as suggested by it, and explanatory of its rather obscure intimations. Besides, there appears to be in verse 31 a reference to our Saviour’s conversation with Nicodemus (verse 13); in verse 32 another (to verse 11); and in verse 36 a third (to verses 16. 18): which would be very improbable, were the passage a part of John the Baptist’s declaration.]

their examination, put the heart under these guards, and I am firmly persuaded there is not the least danger that infidelity will ever take hold of it.

But how great soever the guilt of *infidelity* may be, that of a *zeal to promote* it is still greater; as carrying in it not only all the aggravations that attend the disbelief of a revelation from God, but also great injustice and uncharitableness towards men. He who endeavors to bring others to a belief of Christianity, approves himself to be a lover of mankind, in showing them the way to an eternity of happiness, and abridging them only of such enjoyments as would be evidently injurious to their bodies and estates, and by making their minds easy and quiet, in a comfortable assurance that *at all events* they are safe. But the infidel, while he indulges men in enjoyments which the Gospel forbids, cannot assure them that there *are not* rewards and punishments in another world, which will be bestowed and inflicted by the rules which the Gospel lays down. And as in all cases, to endeavor to persuade men out of the belief of things which for ought we know *may* be true, is unfair; so to do this in matters which nearly concern their welfare and interest, is *unjust*. Nor is it only unjust, but also very *uncharitable*, to endeavor to deprive men of a belief, upon which the comfort and happiness of their lives depends; unless such belief were attended with some great calamity or misery in other respects.

And further, it is both unjust and uncharitable to society and government, to endeavor to root out of the minds of men those powerful restrains from wickedness and violence, that Christianity has laid them under; the influences of which are a great security to peace and order, and have their effects in innumerable cases that human laws cannot reach. Add to this, that the highest security that men can give to one another, is an oath; which in Christian countries is taken upon the holy gospels. And as the obligation of the oath so taken is understood to arise from a belief of the truth of those gospels, and of the threatenings and judgments denounced by them, one cannot well conceive how it should take hold of the conscience of an infidel. So that the promoters of infidelity, who so evidently weaken

if not destroy the bonds of society and government, may well be looked upon as public enemies to mankind.

'Tis true, indeed, in exchange for the comforts and advantages they take away from private persons and public societies, they promise a quiet and uninterrupted enjoyment of pleasures which the Christian religion forbids ; but in this too they are unjust, in that they promise what they know they are not able to perform. The utmost progress they can ordinarily hope for in promoting infidelity, is to persuade men that the Gospel revelation, which contains such terrible threatenings against lust and uncleanness of all kinds, is *not certainly true* ; but while they pretend not to prove that it is *CERTAINLY not true*, they cannot free a course of voluptuousness from great mixtures of doubts and fears ; and these are perpetually revived and heightened, by seeing such numbers of wise and good men embrace the Christian faith, and act upon it ; giving in their lives a daily testimony of their firm belief of the truth of it. For though this is not a direct proof that the Gospel is true, it is a great presumption that there is a strength in the evidences of the truth of it, which their lusts and passions will not let them see ; and, at the same time, it is a daily warning to them, that the contempt of it is too great a hazard for a wise man to run ; a warning, that the most hardened infidel, in his thoughtless hours, and in the time of sickness, danger, or distress, is not able to resist.

THE evidences of the Christian religion are comprised under two general heads, EXTERNAL and INTERNAL.

The *external* evidences are those which prove it to be of divine authority, as, the fulfilling of ancient prophecies in CHRIST ;—the general expectation of the Messiah at that time ;—the miracles wrought by CHRIST and his apostles ;—his foretelling many things which punctually came to pass ;—and, the wonderful propagation of the Gospel after his death.

The *internal* evidences are, the need there was of a revelation from God to instruct and reform mankind ;^a—

^a [This should rather be termed a *a priori* evidence. Its only effect is to create a probability that the other evidences of the Gospel should be true—to clear the way for their production.]

the fitness of the Gospel revelation for that end;—the excellence of the doctrines contained in it;—and, the visible tendency of the whole to the improvement and perfection of human nature and the happiness of mankind, in this world and the next.

In this and my former letter, I have laid before you the evidences of both sorts, to guard you against the attacks of infidels, and to keep you steadfast in the Christian faith; and I beseech you seriously to peruse what I have written for your use, and to weigh the several parts of it with attention and impartiality, as matters of the utmost consequence to you, and more especially necessary to be attended to in these days, when the cause of infidelity is so openly espoused, and the advocates for it are so industrious to gain proselytes. And that God will be pleased to give a blessing to these endeavors for your spiritual good, and dispose your hearts to attend to the means of your salvation, and assist you in your inquiries after the true way of it, is, and shall be, the hearty prayer of

YOUR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND PASTOR,

EDMUND LONDON.

THE
BISHOP OF LONDON'S
THIRD PASTORAL LETTER;

OCCASIONED BY THE SUGGESTIONS OF INFIDELS AGAINST THE WRITINGS OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT, CONSIDERED AS A DIVINE RULE
OF FAITH AND MANNERS.

In my two former letters, I have laid before you the evidences of the Christian religion, as drawn from the accounts which the evangelists give us of our Saviour CHRIST,^a viz. the *general expectation of the Messiah* at that time, arising from the prophecies concerning him; the many and great *miracles* which he wrought, in confirmation of his doctrine and mission; his *predictions* of several very remarkable events, which were afterwards punctually fulfilled; and, the wonderful *propagation of the Gospel* after his death against all the powers of the world, and the lusts, passions, and prejudices of mankind. To these I have added^b the evidences of the great *need* there was of such a revelation from God; considering the gross ignorance and corruption of manners into which the world was sunk, and the inability of the philosophers to enlighten and reform it. And this led me to lay before you^c the *excellency* of the Christian institution for the effecting what the philosophers could not effect;—the great advantage of a divine authority, to ascertain the duties and doctrines it lays down;—the purity of its precepts, so much higher and more perfect, than those which mere morality prescribed;—the natural tendency of them to fit and prepare the soul for the spiritual exercises of the next life;—the strict restraints which the Gospel lays upon irregular enjoyments of all kinds, not only in the outward acts, but in the inward imaginations and desires;—the

^a *First Pastoral Letter.*

^b *Second Pastoral Letter*, p. 69.

^c *Second Pastoral Letter*, p. 100, ss.

full assurance it gives of future rewards and punishments to excite us to obedience, and the supernatural assistance it promises, to enable us to obey ;—the peace and satisfaction it affords the mind, by discovering a plain and certain method of obtaining the pardon of sin, and thereby securing the love and favor of God ;—the solid foundation it lays for ease and comfort under all the calamities of life, and more especially for patience, resignation, and constancy under sufferings and persecutions for righteousness' sake ;—the means it provides for preserving an habitual sense of God and religion upon the minds of men, by the appointment of a ministry, and ordinances, and public assemblies, for that end ;—and, upon the whole, the perfection and happiness to which it advances human nature, both in this life, and in the next, far beyond any thing that the mere natural powers of body and mind could have discovered and attained to.

And as a consequence of the clear and undoubted evidences of our Saviour's mission and authority, and of the excellency of the Gospel institution ; I have further shown^d the indispensable *obligation* we are under to attend to it and embrace it ; together with the folly, perverseness, and sinfulness of not embracing it, and much more of despising and rejecting it.

Since therefore both the evidences and the excellency of the Christian institution, and of the whole work of our redemption by JESUS CHRIST, are so fully and clearly laid down in the writings of the New Testament, from whence I drew my accounts of them ;^e infidelity can have no possible refuge, but in a downright disbelief of the truth and authority of those writings :—either as forged from the beginning, or conveyed to us with great corruptions ; or as containing facts related by persons who had no credit, and doctrines delivered by those who had no authority. This is the refuge to which it was easily foreseen the infidels of our age must have their final recourse, to justify their rejecting the doctrine of our redemption by CHRIST, and their

^d *Second Pastoral Letter*, p. 119.

^e *Second Pastoral Letter*, p. 105, ss.

avowed disregard of the writings of the New Testament further than as they contain such moral precepts as natural reason might suggest, and such as may in their opinion be learnt as well, if not better, from Heathen writers. As it is impossible to maintain that scheme, on supposition that those writings are true and genuine, and that the doctrines contained in them subsist upon a divine authority; the patrons of it must of necessity be driven to deny one or other of those assertions, if not both. The consequence on each side is clear and undoubted: if the writings of the New Testament be not authentic (*i. e.* either the writings not genuine, or the authority not divine,) the infidel scheme is well founded; but, on the other hand, if they be authentic in both those respects, Christianity stands unshaken and immoveable, and all pretences either that it is not well founded, or that it is no more than mere morality, must fall to the ground.

This is a point which I touched upon in my first Pastoral Letter.^f But since that time, the patrons of infidelity have told us openly and without reserve, how little they consider the Scriptures as a rule to men, either of belief or practice. They plead for the reading them with such freedom, as to 'assent or dissent, just as they judge it agrees or disagrees with the light of nature and the reason of things';^g and commend those as the only wise men, who 'believe not the doctrines, because contained in Scripture, but the Scripture on account of the doctrines';^h who 'admit not any of its doctrines without an examination' by that rule;ⁱ who 'admit such things for divine Scripture, as [they being judges] tend to the honor of God and the good of men, and nothing else';^k and, who 'do not admit any thing to be writ by divine inspiration, though it occurs ever so often in Scripture, till they are certain it will bear the test'^l they lay down. They insist further, how easily mankind may be 'imposed on' in the point of revelation; and how little certainty there is or can be, that 'any revelation has been conveyed entire to distant times and places;' and they rest much upon the great

^f Page, 32.

^g *Christianity as old as the Creation*, p. 201.

^h *Ibid.* p. 371.

ⁱ *Ibid.* p. 192.

^k *Ibid.* p. 328.

^l *Ibid.* p. 185.

number of 'various readings in the copies of the New Testament,' as rendering it uncertain to us what the true text was;^m and allege, that 'no court of judicature admits of a copy, though taken from the original, without oath made by a disinterested person, of his having compared it with the original;' from whence they conclude, how 'unreasonable it is absolutely to depend, in things of the greatest moment, on voluminous writings, which have been so often transcribed by men who never saw the original.'ⁿ

These, and others of the like tendency, are the principles which the infidels of our age are openly and avowedly advancing; that by destroying the credit of the holy Scriptures, they may make way for their own scheme of natural religion. And there are also others among us, who though they do not dispute our receiving the four gospels as a rule of faith and practice, will not agree that the other books of the New Testament have a right to be considered as part of that rule; but, on the contrary, have taken great pains to represent some of those books as of doubtful credit.

Since therefore those sacred writings, as having all of them the stamp of divine authority, are the great charter of Christians, upon the validity of which their faith and their hope are built; to the end that those whom the providence of God has placed under my care, may be armed at all points against the attempts of infidelity and every approach to it, I have judged it expedient to enter into that matter more fully and distinctly, in order to give you a clear view of the evidences both of the truth and of the authority of those writings. And this I consider as in some sort a duty incumbent on me. For having shown you in my second letter the *insufficiency of reason* in this corrupt state to be your guide in matters of religion, it may well be expected, that I also show you *what is a sufficient guide*, and where the directions are to be found, which will acquaint you with the certain way to salvation, and upon which you may securely depend, as being the guide which God himself has given you. And this

^m *Christianity as old as the Creation*, p. 284. 324.

ⁿ *Ibid.* p. 324.

will be effectually done, by making good the following positions:

I. The four Gospels contain a *faithful* and *true* account of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of JESUS CHRIST.

II. The *whole scheme* of Christianity or the Gospel dispensation, was not *fully opened* to the world by CHRIST himself immediately, in the course of his ministry; but many things were left by him to be delivered or explained by his apostles, whom he particularly instructed and commissioned for that end.

III. The apostles, in virtue of their commission from CHRIST, being not only to testify and deliver to the world the things which they had seen and had been taught by him, but *further* to open and explain the Gospel dispensation; were *under the guidance and assistance of the HOLY GHOST*, which they received, according to his promise, before they entered upon their ministry.

IV. What the things are, relating to the Gospel dispensation, which the apostles were to open and explain, pursuant to the commission and instruction received from CHRIST and under the guidance and assistance of the HOLY GHOST; must, in conjunction with the gospels, be learned *from their preaching and writings*, as delivered to us in their acts and epistles.

V. The books of the New Testament, in which the doctrines delivered by CHRIST and his apostles are contained, *have been faithfully transmitted* to the Christians of succeeding ages.

VI. The doctrines of the apostles, contained in their epistles and in the Acts, together with what is taught by our Saviour in the gospels, were designed to be *a standing rule of faith and manners* to Christians in all ages, and were from the beginning considered and received as such, by the Churches of CHRIST.

I. The four gospels contain a *faithful* and *true* account of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of JESUS CHRIST.

When we would be satisfied concerning the truth of any history, the two things we chiefly inquire after are, the knowledge the writer had of his subject, and

the character he bore in point of integrity: the first, to convince us that he could not be imposed upon himself; and the second, that he had no inclination or design to impose upon others. Now, that there was such a person as JESUS of Nazareth, who lived at the time the gospels speak of, and who made choice of several persons to be his disciples, are facts, which the greatest enemies of Christianity have never denied;ⁿ and if they had denied them, they would have been effectually confuted by writers of undoubted credit, who lived at the time, and in the age which immediately followed.^o Of these disciples in general, it is affirmed, and has never been denied or questioned, that they left their several callings and occupations, to the end they might be wholly at liberty to attend JESUS, and receive his instructions:—"He ordained twelve, that they should be with him:"^p who, with others, accompanied him "all the time that he went in and out among them; beginning from the baptism of John, unto the same day that he was taken up from them:"^q and having been "with him from the beginning," they were qualified to "bear witness"^r of the things that were done and spoken by him. And what we find particularly declared by one, might be truly said by all of them, wherever they preached, "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and

ⁿ [This is no longer true. The idle dreams of VOLNEY and DRUMMOND, who would explain away the *historical facts* of the life of JESUS and the transactions of his apostles into an astronomical allegory of the sun and the twelve ecliptic signs (!), entitle them at least to the praise of *originality* in their efforts to subvert the everlasting Gospel; although, as might easily have been predicted, very far from giving them equal claims to that of *success*. The preposterous speculations of the Frenchman are still sedulously circulated by the enemies of Christianity, who little reck with what tools they do their work: but his disciple has honorably retracted the crude production of his youth, and ranked himself among the defenders of the authenticity of sacred history.—Beside these *learned skeptics*, PAINE, CARLISLE, and others among the rabble of infidelity, with true infidel logic and consistency, have *both denied and asserted* the reality of the existence of JESUS, as occasion served; and when they chose the former alternative, without deigning to attempt a rationale of the phenomenon of the existence of Christianity!]

^o [See *Standard Works*, Vol. I. p. 41. 44.]

^p Mark iii. 14.

^q Acts i. 21.

^r John xv. 27.

our hands have handled; declare we unto you.”^s The things they recorded as said and done by CHRIST, they heard from his own mouth, and saw with their own eyes, and did not deliver them upon the report of others. Nor did they only see him, so as to have a *transient* view of him; but they ‘looked upon him,’ and had long-continued views of him, and conversed familiarly with him. And, that their eyes might not be deceived, either with regard to his person or miracles, they not only touched, but ‘handled:’ their own hands distributed the loaves; and after his resurrection, they were all directed, not only to “behold his hands and his feet,” to satisfy them that it was he himself, but also to “handle” him, that they might be thoroughly convinced that he had “flesh and bones,” and so could not be a spirit, as they at first suspected. And one of them, who was more distrustful than the rest, was commanded even to “thrust his hand into” the wound “in his side.”^a

The same persons who were thus prepared, by all *ordinary* and *natural* qualifications, to give an account of the life and actions of CHRIST, received also a *supernatural* assistance for the work, by his sending the HOLY GHOST, for this among other ends, that he might “bring all things to their remembrance, whatever he had said unto them.”^v And two of these, so enabled by all helps natural and supernatural, wrote two of the gospels, namely MATTHEW and JOHN. As to MARK and LUKE, the other two evangelists—it is affirmed by some of the ancients, that they were two of the seventy disciples, whom our LORD “sent before his face to every city and place whither he himself would come;”^w to whom he gave power to “heal the sick,” and to “cast out devils;” and said unto them, as he had done to the twelve apostles, “He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me.”^x But however that be; after our Saviour’s ascension we find them expressly mentioned as fellow-laborers with St. Paul, to whom the whole Gospel had been immediately revealed from heaven, and one of them with St.

^s 1 John i. 1.

^a John xx. 27.

^w Luke x. 1.

^t Luke xxiv. 39.

^v John xiv. 26.

^x Luke x. 9. 17. 16.

Peter, whom CHRIST chose to be with him in the whole course of his ministry. St. Paul speaks of MARK, as his fellow-laborer in the Gospel, whom we accordingly find with him when he wrote his Epistle to the Colossians and that to Philemon;^x and when he commands Timothy to come to him, he directs him to ‘take Mark and bring him with him, as one profitable to him in the ministry.’^y St. Peter mentions him in his first Epistle, as then with him, and also calls him “his son;”^z a name which we find applied in the New Testament to those whom the apostles had instructed in the faith and converted, and to those who labored with them in instructing and converting others: for in this sense, St. Paul says of Timothy, “as a son with the father, he hath served me in the Gospel;”^a and of Titus, “mine own son after the common faith.”^b LUKE also is called by St. Paul his “fellow laborer;”^c whom we find accompanying him in his travels, and particularly to have been with him when he wrote his Epistles to the Colossians, to Timothy, and to Philemon.^d

Accordingly, the accounts which the ancients give of those two gospels and the writers of them, are as follows. IRENÆUS says, ‘that Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, committed those things to writing which had been related to him by Peter, and that Luke, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel which Paul preached.’^e And elsewhere, he says of St. Luke, “that he was an inseparable companion of St. Paul, and his fellow laborer in the Gospel.”^f TERTULLIAN says, ‘that the gospel which Mark published, is affirmed to be Peter’s, whose interpreter he was (as writing in Greek what he had heard St. Peter deliver to the Jews in their own language) and that which was drawn up by Luke, is ascribed to Paul.’^g EUSEBIUS relates, upon the authority of more ancient writers, ‘that the Christians at Rome prevailed with Mark to set down in writing the doctrine which Peter had

^x Col. iv. 10, 11. Philem. 24.

^y 2 Tim. iv. 11.

^z 1 Pet. v. 13.

^a Phil. ii. 22.

^b Tit. i. 4.

^c Philem. 24.

^d Acts x. 10. Col. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 11. Philem. 24.

^e IREN. Lib. III. c. i.

^f IREN. Lib. III. c. xiv.

^g TERTULL. *Contra Marcion*. Lib. IV. c. v.

preached ; and that afterwards Peter confirmed it, and authorized it to be publicly read in their assemblies."^h And elsewhere, from ORIGEN, 'The second gospel is that of Mark, who set it down as it was delivered to him by Peter ; and the third, that of Luke, which is commended by St. Paul.'ⁱ To these we must add what the same EUSEBIUS says, as handed down by tradition to his time, 'that St. John approved the three other gospels, and gave his testimony in favor of them.'^k And, 'that copies of these holy gospels were with great zeal conveyed to remote countries, by those who succeeded the apostles in the propagation of the Christian faith :'^l and they were read in the public assemblies and received as the foundation of that faith ;^m without the least mark of distinction in point of authority.

Thus stands the evidence of the truth of the Gospel history, with regard to the exact knowledge the writers had of their subject ; which shows that they were *not imposed upon* themselves. And if it shall also appear that they were *persons of integrity*, and had *no inclination or design to impose upon others*, the evidence is as complete, as can well be given of any ancient facts whatsoever. With this view, let us consider the character and condition of the persons,—and the time and manner of their writing ; with other circumstances, from whence we may judge whether or no they are attended with any marks or suspicions of fraud or design.

So far were the *persons* from being artful or designing men, that they were reproached by the enemies of Christianity, as rude and mean, simple and illiterate ; and so far were they from having any worldly views of profit, or pleasure, or honor, after they set out on the work of propagating the Gospel ; that persecution, affliction, and reproach, were almost the constant attendants of the propagators of it.ⁿ As to the *time*, they wrote and published their gospels while the matters were fresh in memory, and while many persons

^h EUSEB. Lib. III. c. xv.

ⁱ *Ibid.* Lib. VI. c. xxv.

^k *Ibid.* Lib. III. c. xxiv.

^l *Ibid.* c. xxxvii.

^m JUST. MAR. *Apol.* II. IREN. Lib. III. c. xi, xii.

ⁿ [See *Standard Works*, Vol. I. p. 283, s.]

were living who wanted not inclination to detect them, if they could have been convicted of falsehood. And as to their *manner of writing*,^o it is plain, open, and undisguised; free from all appearance of art or contrivance, and carries in it this signal testimony of truth and impartiality, that they freely confess and record the failings and weaknesses of themselves and their brethren, *viz.* the frequent rebukes they received from their master for their ignorance and slowness of understanding; their views of temporal power and grandeur, during their attendance upon him; and at last, their shameful denial and desertion of him. If we consider the *facts* contained in the Gospel history, and the tendency of them, they are such as overthrow the religion both of the Jews and Gentiles, and therefore could not escape the severest scrutiny.^p And if we consider the *numbers* who afterwards undertook to attest and publish those facts, it is incredible that if they were not true, no one of them should be prevailed with, either by hope or fear, to discover the imposture; and next to impossible to suppose, that all of them should submit to the severest trials, and many of them to death itself, rather than deny them.

These are the evidences that the evangelists *could not be deceived themselves*, and that they *had no intention or desire to deceive others*. And we accordingly find all the four gospels under the names of the several evangelists distinctly spoken of by the most early writers of the Church, as the known and undoubted records of our Saviour's life and actions, and as such, received by all Christian Churches, and read in their public assemblies. CLEMENT, the disciple of St. Paul, cites many passages out of them; and in one place, after having quoted the prophecy of Isaiah, he adds, "and another *Scripture* saith," and then quotes the gospel of St. Matthew.^q In another place, he cites the gospel of St. Luke, with these words immediately prefixed, "The LORD saith in the gospel." POLYCARP, a disciple of

^o [See *Standard Works*, Vol. I. p. 285, s.]

^p [See SUMNER'S *Evidences*, Chap. II.—*Standard Works*, Vol I., p. 320, ss.]

^q CLEM. *Ep. ad Cor. Ep.* II. Sect. 2. 8.

St. John, mentions these four gospels distinctly and by name, with particular circumstances relating to each.^r JUSTIN MARTYR, speaking of the institution of the Lord's Supper, says, "The apostles in *their records*, which are called gospels, declared that it was commanded by CHRIST to be so performed ;"^s and a little after adds, 'that those records were publicly read in the Christian assemblies on the Lord's day :'^t and in his other works he uses the same style of "the records of the apostles," and cites several passages out of them, as the standing records of the Church.^u TATIAN, the disciple of JUSTIN, reduced the *four gospels* into *one*, which in after ages was usually called the *harmony of the four gospels*.^v IRENÆUS gives this account of all the four, which hath already been taken notice of in part ;^w "Matthew," says he, "delivered his gospel to the Hebrews, while Peter and Paul preached at Rome ; after whose departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, conveyed to us in writing the things which Peter had preached ; and Luke, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel which Paul preached. Afterwards, John, the disciple of our LORD, who also leaned on his breast at supper, published his gospel while he stayed at Ephesus in Asia." The same IRENÆUS, speaking of the authority of the gospels, says, 'that the very heretics gave their testimony to them, while each labored to support his opinion from them ;' and as to the number, 'that they were neither more nor less than four, and that they who made them either more or fewer, were vain, ignorant, and presumptuous.'^x CLEMENT, speaking of a passage cited out of the Egyptian gospel, says, "It is not to be found in the four gospels which have been delivered down to us."^y And ORIGEN, mentioning the writers of the four gospels by name, and in their order, says, 'that those alone (and no other gospels) had been universally received in the Church.'^z

^r GRABE, *Not. in Irenæum*. p. 205.

^s JUSTIN. *Apol.* II.

^t JUSTIN *Dial. cum Tryph.* p. 327, 328, 329. 331, 332, 333, 334.]

^u EUSEB. *Ecc. Hist.* Lib. IV. c. xxix. 'Monotessaron.'

^v IREN. *Adv. Hær.* Lib. III. c. 1.

^w Page 133.

^x IREN. Lib. III. c. xi.

^y CLEM. ALEX. *Strom.* Lib. III.

^z ORIGEN. *Com. in Matt.* p. 203.

The faithful transmission of the gospels to future ages, is a point that will fall properly under the fifth general head; and therefore I will shut up this first head, after I have shown in a few words, that several of the facts related in the gospels, receive confirmation from the testimony of other historians, both Jewish and Pagan, who lived at or near the time. I have observed before, that it has never been denied by the writers of either sort, that there was such a person as **JESUS**, who lived in Judea, and suffered death upon the cross, at the time mentioned in the gospels. The name which the Jews have given him^a with reference to his crucifixion (however reproachfully intended) is an acknowledgment of the truth of the fact; for which, and for other particulars relating to him, the Christians appealed to the accounts transmitted to Rome;^b according to the known usage of the governors making returns thither of the transactions in their respective provinces. "All these things concerning **CHRIST**," says Tertullian, "were reported by Pilate^c to Tiberius Cæsar." The same is attested by **TACITUS**, a Roman historian of undoubted credit; who, speaking of the Christians, says, "They take the name from **CHRIST**, who was put to death in the time of the emperor Tiberius, by Pontius Pilate."^d Nor did **JULIAN**^e himself, the bitterest enemy that Christianity ever had, deny that there was such a person, or affirm that there was no foundation for the truth of the Gospel history: on the contrary, he owns the gospels to have been written by the persons whose names they bear,^f and only blames them for magnifying the works of their master beyond measure;—the truth and reality of which works, **CELSUS** also does in effect acknowledge, when he ascribes them to art magic^g—defences, which neither of these would have had recourse to, if they could have proved that the books themselves were spurious; nor would they have omitted to take the advantage even of a *suspicion* of their being spurious, but that they knew there was no foundation for it.

^a The person hanged.

^c 'Acta Pilatii.'

^e [The Apostate.]

^g *First Pastoral Letter*, p. 39.

^b **TERTULL.** *Apol.*

^d **TACIT.** *Annal.* Lib. XV. c. xlii.

^f **CYRIL.** Lib. VI. & X.

There are many other facts which the evangelists relate, that are also attested both by Heathen and Jewish writers. The Gospels frequently mention the warnings which CHRIST gave his disciples and followers, that they must reckon upon a state of great trials and sufferings for the sake of his religion; and TACITUS,^h SÜETONIUS,ⁱ and PLINY,^k are witnesses, how very terrible those persecutions were.^l The evangelists mention the destruction of Jerusalem, as foretold by our Saviour; and the account given of that destruction by JOSEPHUS, the Jewish historian,^m which exactly corresponds with what they relate from the mouth of CHRIST, is a testimony to the truth of that relation. As the same JOSEPHUS has also confirmed the truth of the Gospel history in general, by the accounts he gives of the Roman governors,ⁿ and the Jewish economy at that time;^o being agreeable both as to persons and things, with the accounts which the evangelists give us of them.

II. *The whole scheme of Christianity, or the Gospel dispensation, was not fully opened to the world by CHRIST himself immediately, in the course of his ministry; but many things were left by him to be delivered or explained by his apostles, whom he particularly instructed, and commissioned for that end.*

The office of John the Baptist was only to give notice that the kingdom of heaven, or of God, *i. e.* of the Messiah, was *at hand*, and to summon men to repentance as a necessary qualification to be admitted members of that kingdom, and to “escape the wrath to come.” “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”^p The like commission was given by CHRIST to the twelve apostles, when he first sent them forth; “As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand;”^q and to the seventy disciples, when he sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come; “Say unto them,

^h TACIT. *Ann. Nero.*

ⁱ SÜETON. *Vit Neronis.*

^k PLIN. *Ep. Lib. X. Ep. xcvii.*

^l [Compare PALEY'S *Evidences*, Part I. chap. ii.]

^m *First Pastoral Letter*, p. 44.

ⁿ Pilate, Felix, Festus, &c.

^o Sanhedrim, &c.

^p Matt. iii. 2.

^q Matt. x. 7.

the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.”^r In like manner, JESUS himself “went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom,”^s or the good news of the coming of the Messiah. But he was so far from openly proclaiming or owning himself to be the Messiah, that he industriously concealed it, lest the Jews, who expected a temporal deliverer from the Roman yoke, should break out into rebellion, and make him obnoxious to the Roman power before the completion of his ministry. When Peter, in the name of the disciples, had declared to him their full conviction that he was “CHRIST, the Son of the living God;”^t the charge he immediately gave them, was, that they should “*tell no man*, that he was JESUS the CHRIST.”^u When the unclean spirits fell down before him, and cried, saying, “Thou art the SON OF GOD,” (a known appellation of the Messiah among the Jews) it immediately follows, that “JESUS strictly charged them, that they should *not make him known*.”^v After his transfiguration upon the mount, and a voice from heaven declaring him to be *the* SON OF GOD; JESUS charges the three disciples who were with him, that “they should *tell* the vision to *no man*, until the Son of man was risen again from the dead.”^w Nor did he ever make a *public* profession and acknowledgment that he was the Messiah, till he was arraigned, first before the council of the Jews, and then before Pontius Pilate,^x *i. e.* after he had finished his ministry upon earth, and there was no danger either that the people would raise a sedition upon his account, or that he should be arraigned and put to death before the appointed time. But with regard to the people, the great aim and design of his ministry was, first to convince them by his miracles that he was a *prophet* sent from God; which being joined to the general expectation of the Messiah at that time, might lead them to *suppose* that he was the person; and then, to *prepare* them for the reception of the Gospel, by taking off the

^r Luke x. 9.^s Matt. ix. 35.^t Matt. xvi. 16. 20.^u Mark iii. 11, 12.^v Luke iv. 41.^w Matt. xvii. 9.^x Mark xiv. 62. Luke xxii. 70. John xviii. 37.

carnal and corrupt glosses which the Scribes and Pharisees had put upon the moral law, and by laying open the pride, covetousness, and hypocrisy of those teachers: and this, in order to convince the people, how unfit they were to be guides in religion; and by that means to set them at liberty from the influence and authority of persons, whose interest it was, and whose endeavor it would be, to give all the opposition they could to the Gospel, that they might preserve and maintain their power. But what he said to the people concerning the kingdom of heaven or the Gospel state, and the nature and future progress of it, was for the most part delivered in parables; which he explained to his disciples when they were alone, to let them by degrees into some understanding of the nature and design of that spiritual kingdom which he intended to establish;⁷ reserving the complete and perfect discovery thereof, till he had finished the great work of our redemption by his resurrection from the dead, and had fully prepared them for the publication of the Gospel, by sending the HOLY GHOST to instruct and strengthen them. For we find in the course of our Saviour's ministry, that notwithstanding the lights he occasionally gave them, their knowledge of these things was very imperfect. He often complains of the slowness of their understanding, in that they did not apprehend the design of his parables,⁸ nor arrive at a firm and steadfast faith in him, by the frequent opportunities they had of hearing his doctrine and seeing his miracles.⁹ When he first "began to show them, that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day;"^b Peter, who before had made so full a confession of his belief that he was the Messiah, "began to rebuke" him for these sayings—"Be it far from thee, LORD; this shall not be unto thee." Upon which our LORD told him, that 'he savored not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.'^c And on a like occasion St.

⁷ Matt. xiii. 34. Mark iv. 11. Mark iv. 34.

⁸ Matt. xv. 16. Mark vii. 18.

^a Matt. xvi. 8. 11. Mark viii. 14. 17. 21.

^b Matt. xvi. 21.

^c Matt. xvi. 22, 23.

Luke says, that “they understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”^d When the Samaritans would not receive him in his way to Jerusalem, two other of his disciples, James and John, who, together with Peter, were most conversant with him, desired leave to “command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them,” as Elias had done in a like case; and they received this rebuke from him, “Ye *know not what manner* of spirit ye are of, (*i. e.* how different the spirit of the Gospel is from that of the Law,) for the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.”^e In the whole course of his ministry, they evidently reckoned upon his setting up a *temporal kingdom*, and had strifes among themselves which of them should be the greatest;^f and even after his resurrection, the question they ask him upon that head, is, “Whether he will at this time restore the kingdom to Israel.”^g All which, together with the acts of forsaking and denying him, the difficulty they showed in believing his resurrection, and that slowness of heart with which he upbraided them for not applying the prophecies concerning him even after he had suffered and was risen from the dead;^h are undeniable testimonies, how imperfect notions they had as yet of the nature and economy of the Gospel state, and how great need there was of those further instructions which he gave them during the “forty days,” in which he “was seen of them” after his resurrection, and spake “of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;”ⁱ and this, evidently, in order to qualify them for the due discharge of the commission they received from him immediately before his ascension into heaven, “Go ye, and teach all nations.”^k —“Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*”^l

^d Luke xviii. 34.^e Luke ix. 54, 55, 56.^f Matt. xviii. 1. xx. 20. 24. Luke xxii. 24.^g Acts i. 6.^h Luke xxiv. 25.ⁱ Acts i. 3.^k Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.^l Mark. xvi. 15. [On the subject of this head see *Standard Works*, Vol. II. p. 22 s. and the references in note w; to which may be added HORNE’S *Introduction*, Vol. IV. Part II. Ch. iii. Sect. 2.—DR. WHATELY’S

III. *The apostles, in virtue of their commission from CHRIST, being not only to testify and deliver to the world the things which they had seen and been taught by him, but further to open and explain the Gospel dispensation; were under the guidance and assistance of the HOLY GHOST, which they received according to his promise, before they entered upon their ministry.*

The frequent assurances they had from our Saviour that they should receive the HOLY GHOST, are distinctly recorded in the four evangelists; the truth and authority of whose writings is fully shown under the first head. But because the proof of their having this, and several other promises of our Saviour, punctually fulfilled to them, do all depend upon testimonies fetched from the *Acts of the Apostles*; it will be proper in this place to establish the credit of that history, in the same manner that the credit of the four evangelists has been already established. And that the writer of it was St. Luke the evangelist, appears evident by comparing the introduction to his gospel with that of the Acts. The gospel begins thus: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word: it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus."^a With express reference to this, the Acts of the Apostles begin thus: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up,"^o &c. After this, by a visible connexion of the history, he proceeds to relate what the apostles did, immediately after our Saviour's ascension; so that no doubt has ever been made, but that the same person was the writer of both. That he was well qualified to write his gospel, has been already shown under the first head; and the evidences there laid down, conclude yet more strongly for the authority of the Acts of the Apostles;

valuable *Essays*, referred to in *Standard Works*, Vol. II. are now accessible to the American public; having been republished at the Protestant Episcopal Press.]

^a Luke i. 4.

^o Acts i. 1.

of many of which acts, we are sure, he himself was an eye and ear witness.^p Citations out of this book are found in CLEMENT, the companion of St. Paul,^q and in POLYCARP, the disciple of St. John.^r IRENÆUS, in the second century, writing against the heretical doctrine of two principles (one good, the other evil) argues throughout one whole chapter^s from passages taken at large out of the book of Acts, to show the contrariety of that heresy to the doctrine of the apostles. EUSEBIUS gives an account of the same book as follows: "Luke, a native of Antioch, and a physician by profession, who had lived long and intimately with Paul, and was much conversant with the other apostles, left two books, *written by divine inspiration*; one of them, his gospel—the other entitled, *The Acts of the Apostles*; which he did not write from the relations of others, but as facts that he saw with his own eyes."^t And elsewhere, among the books which were universally received, he reckons the *Acts of the Apostles* next to the four evangelists.^u

Having established the credit and authority of those writings which testify the promise of the HOLY GHOST, and the mission thereof according to that promise; I will now proceed to show from the evangelists, upon what occasions and for what ends the promise was made. Our Saviour tells his disciples, a little before his death, "I have yet *many things* to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now;" and then he immediately adds, "Howbeit, when he the SPIRIT of truth is come, he will guide you into *all truth*:"^w agreeably to what he had told them a little before; "These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you: but the *Comforter*, which is the HOLY GHOST, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall *teach you all things*, and *bring all things to your remembrance*,

^p Acts xvi, &c.

^q CLEM. *Ep. ad Corinth* S. xviii.

^r POLYCARP *ad Philip.* Sec. I.

^s IREN. Lib. III. c. xii.

^t EUSEB. *Hist. Eccles.* Lib. III. c. iv.

^u EUSEB. *Hist. Eccles.* Lib. III. c. xxv.

^w John xvi. 12, 13.

whatsoever I have said unto you.”^x Again, “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the SPIRIT of truth :^y and, “when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the SPIRIT of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.”^z When he tells them, they must be brought into the synagogues, and unto magistrates and powers, he bids them “take no thought how or what thing they shall answer, or what they shall say ;” and then adds, “for the HOLY GHOST shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say :”^a and, “I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.”^b When he sees them in trouble, and finds that sorrow hath filled their hearts at the thoughts of his leaving them, he comforts them thus : “I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”^c When he had given them their commission to preach the Gospel unto all nations, he immediately adds, “And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you ; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high :”^d and, “Ye shall receive power, after that the HOLY GHOST is come upon you ; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”^e This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when “They were all with one accord in one place, and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the house where they were sitting : and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them : and they were all filled with the HOLY GHOST, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”^f And there being at that time “devout men out of every nation” who were come

^x John xiv. 26, 27.

^z John xv. 26.

^b Luke xxi. 15.

^d Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4.

^f Acts ii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

^y John xiv. 16, 17.

^a Luke xii. 11, 12.

^c John xvi. 6, 7.

^e Acts i. 8.

to Jerusalem to worship, "every man heard them speak in his own language," wherein he was born. And while the people stand amazed at this, St. Peter tells them, that 'JESUS, whom they had crucified, being raised from the dead, and by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the HOLY GHOST, had shed forth that which they now saw and heard.'^g

It appears by these accounts, that the *full* and *final* opening of the Gospel dispensation, was to be the work of the HOLY GHOST, directing the apostles, and strengthening them in their ministry, and enabling them by his gifts, to convey the knowledge of it to all nations, and to confirm it with undoubted testimonies of a divine commission and authority. Whatever they had heard from CHRIST, or seen him do, the HOLY GHOST brought fresh again "to their remembrance;" the truths which they could not bear in their more imperfect state, the HOLY GHOST instructed them in, and made them fully apprehend; and by "leading them into all truth," he effectually secured them against all error. They were to preach the Gospel to all nations, and He taught them the languages of all. In the course of their ministry, they were to meet with great trouble, difficulty, and persecution; and He inspired and supported them with suitable supplies of wisdom, courage, and comfort. Thus encouraged, strengthened, and assisted, by the HOLY GHOST, the apostles "went forth and preached every where; the LORD working with them, and confirming the word with signs following;"^h or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "God bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the HOLY GHOST."ⁱ This is affirmed on many occasions; first, of *all* the apostles in general, while they continued together at Jerusalem, that "many wonders and signs were done by them;"^j that "with great power they gave witness to the resurrection of the LORD JESUS,"^k—that "by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people,"^l—that "there came a multitude out

^g Acts ii. 32, 33.^h Mark xvi. 20.ⁱ Heb. ii. 4.^j Acts ii. 43.^k Acts iv. 33.^l Acts v. 12.

of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits; and they were healed every one:"^m and then, as wrought by *particular* apostles;ⁿ—by Peter, in the extraordinary act of power exercised upon Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the HOLY GHOST;^o—by Peter and John,^p who upon the occasion of curing a man that was lame from his mother's womb, declared by what power they and the other apostles effected their miraculous cures; "In the name of JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth rise up and walk;"^q and "Be it known unto you, and to all the people of Israel, that *by the name of* JESUS CHRIST of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him doth this man stand here before you whole:"^r—and St. Peter, (upon his curing Æneas of the palsy,) "Æneas, JESUS CHRIST maketh thee whole."^s

Nor had the apostles only the gifts of the HOLY GHOST, and of tongues and miracles, bestowed upon *them*, but these powers were also by their ministry conferred upon *others*. Our Saviour intimated, that, "believers" should receive gifts of an extraordinary nature; for St. John, repeating what he had said concerning "rivers of water that should flow out" of him,^t adds, "this spake he of the SPIRIT, which *they that believe* on him should receive; for the HOLY GHOST was not yet given, because JESUS was not yet glorified:"^u and so our Saviour himself, "Verily, verily I say unto you, *he that believeth* on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these; because I go unto my Father."^v And it is certain in fact, that by prayer, and laying on of hands, the gifts of the HOLY GHOST were bestowed by the apostles upon many of the believers. After Peter and John had related to the brethren at Jerusalem the threatenings of the high priests and council of the Jews, it follows, "And now, LORD, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thy hand *to heal*, and that *signs and wonders* may be done by the name of thy holy child

^m Acts v. 16. ⁿ Acts viii. 6. 7. 13.—ix. 32. 35. 39. 40. ^o Acts v. 3. 10. ^p Acts iii. ^q Acts iii. 6. ^r Acts iv. 10. ^s Acts ix. 31. ^t John vii. 38. ^u John vii. 39. ^v John xiv. 12.

JESUS. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled, and they were *all filled with the HOLY GHOST.*"^w Again, "When the apostles which were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the word of God (by the preaching of Philip the evangelist) they sent unto them Peter and John, who when they were come down, prayed for them that *they might receive the HOLY GHOST*; then laid they their hands on them, and *they received the HOLY GHOST.*"^x While Peter was speaking to Cornelius and his company, "the HOLY GHOST *fell on all them* which heard the word, and they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God."^y To these we may add the instances of Stephen and Philip, two of the seven deacons; of the first of whom it is said, that "he did great *wonders and miracles* among the people;"^z and of the second, that "Simon Magus himself wondered when he heard unclean spirits crying with loud voices, and saw those who were possessed with them cured, and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, healed."^a

There is one thing further observable, concerning the miracles wrought by the apostles and others, in testimony of their divine mission; and that is, the numerous conversions to the Christian faith which were made by them. Upon hearing the apostles speak all sorts of tongues on the day of Pentecost, "there were added to them above three thousand souls."^b Upon the cure of the lame man by Peter and John, and the occasion they took from thence to recommend and enforce the doctrine of the Gospel, "many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand."^c Upon the many signs and wonders which were wrought by the apostles among the people, "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."^d Upon Philip's preaching the Gospel at Samaria, "the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which he spake; hearing and seeing the miracles which he did:"^e and even Simon, he who had bewitched them with his

^w Acts iv. 29, 30, 31. ^x Acts viii. 14, 15, 17. ^y Acts x. 44, 46.

^z Acts vi. 8. ^a Acts viii. 13, 7. ^b Acts ii. 41. ^c Acts iv. 4.

^d Acts v. 12, 14. ^e Acts viii. 6.

sorceries, and to whom they had all given heed from the highest to the lowest as the great power of God, was baptized, and “continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.”^f

Thus far of the apostles and disciples of our LORD; of the commission they had from him to preach the Gospel, and their qualifications for the effectual discharge of that commission, by the instructions they received from his own mouth, by the further lights which the HOLY GHOST gave them, and by the gift of tongues, and the power of miracles, to enable them to propagate and establish the truths they preached.

But as ST. PAUL also was a glorious instrument in carrying on that great work, and both his *commission* and *instructions* were conveyed in a method different from the rest, it will be necessary to give a particular account of both, in order to lay a sure foundation for the authority of the several epistles written by him.—The account of his miraculous conversion is delivered by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles;^g and by himself, in the same book, in his two defences before Ly-sias and Festus, first at Jerusalem,^h and then at Cæ-sarea.ⁱ And his immediate mission from CHRIST is thus expressed, “I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to *make thee a minister and a witness* both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which *I will appear* unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.”^j And so Ananias, to whom he was directed by the heavenly vision, relates what CHRIST had revealed to him concerning Paul; “he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the children of Israel :”^k and, “the LORD, even JESUS that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and

^f Acts viii. 9, 10, 13. ^g Acts ix. 3. ^h Acts xxii. 3. ⁱ Acts xxvi. 12.
^j Acts xxvi. 16, 17, 18. ^k Acts xxii. 21. ^l Acts ix 15.

be filled with the HOLY GHOST.”¹ And again, “the GOD of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth : for thou *shalt be his witness* unto all men, of what thou hast seen and heard.”^m And whereas the other apostles style themselves, in the beginning of their epistles, the servants and the apostles of CHRIST, St. Paul’s style concerning himself is, “*called to be an apostle,*”ⁿ “*separated unto the Gospel of GOD,*”^o “an apostle of JESUS CHRIST *by the will of GOD ;*”^p and, “an apostle *not of man, neither by man, but by JESUS CHRIST and GOD the Father.*”^q And as to his doctrine, he tells the Corinthians, on occasion of his speaking of the institution of the last supper, “I have received of the LORD that which I also delivered unto you ;”^r and speaking of the death and resurrection of CHRIST, “I delivered unto you that which I also received ;”^s and of his doctrine in general, “the Gospel which was preached of me, was not of man ; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of JESUS CHRIST.”^t

To this account of his mission and doctrine, we must add, that both were justified and confirmed by many and great miracles. It is said of Paul and Barnabas when at Iconium, “long time therefore abode they, speaking boldly in the LORD, which *gave testimony* to the word of his grace, and granted *signs and wonders* to be done by their hands ;”^u and at Ephesus, “GOD wrought *special miracles* by the hands of Paul ; so that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them and the evil spirits went out of them.”^v In Cyprus, an act of extraordinary power was exercised on Elymas the sorcerer, whom Paul, moved by the HOLY GHOST, *struck with blindness* for endeavoring to turn away the deputy from the faith.^w At Lystra, he commanded the lame man to ‘stand upright on his feet, and *he leaped and walked.*’^x At Philippi, where was “a damsel possessed with a spirit of divination,” Paul

¹ Acts ix. 17. ^m Acts xxii. 14, 15. ⁿ Rom i. 1. 1 Cor. i. 1.
^o Rom. i. 1. ^p 2 Cor. i. 1. Eph. i. 1. Colos. i. 1. 2 Tim. i. 1. ^q Gal. i. 1.
^r 1 Cor. xi. 23. ^s 1 Cor. xv. 3. ^t Gal. i. 11, 12. ^u Acts xiv. 3.
^v Acts xix. 11, 12. ^w Acts xiii. 9. 11. ^x Acts xiv. 8-10.

“said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of **JESUS CHRIST** to come out of her, and he *came out* the same hour.”^y In Melita, the father of the chief man of the island “lay sick of a fever and a bloody flux; to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, *and healed him* :” and, “when this was done, others also who had diseases in the island, came and *were healed*.”^z And for the success of his ministry, thus supported and enforced by the testimony of miracles, we may appeal, not only to the particular conversions mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles as the effects of them,^a but to the number of churches which were founded by him; many of them in some of the most populous cities and countries.

One thing more I must observe; that as the rest of the apostles had the power of conferring the gifts of the **HOLY GHOST** upon others, so Paul had the same power: for it is said of the converts to Christianity whom he found at Ephesus, that “when he had laid his hands upon them, the **HOLY GHOST** came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.”^b

IV. *What the things are relating to the Gospel dispensation, which the apostles were to open and explain, pursuant to the commission and instruction received from CHRIST, and under the guidance and assistance of the HOLY GHOST; must, in conjunction with the Gospels, be learned from their preaching and writings, as delivered to us in their acts and epistles.*

Some of the doctrines which they were charged by **CHRIST** to deliver to the world, are recorded in the four gospels, as being part of the instructions they received from himself; but as it is very certain that *all* the instructions which he delivered to his disciples are not recorded in the gospels, so is it no less certain, that *many* of the things which he did deliver to them during the course of his ministry, were delivered in an obscure manner, and not understood by them at the time; particularly, those relating to the nature of his kingdom, his death, and his resurrection. His ordinary way of

^y Acts xvi. 18. ^z Acts xxviii. 8, 9. ^a Acts xiii. 12. xiv. 1, 4.
xvi. 33. ^b Acts xix. 6.

teaching the people, was by parables:—"All these things spake Jesus to the multitude *in parables*, and *without a parable spake he not unto them*;"^e—"with many such *parables* spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it; but *without a parable spake he not unto them*."^d 'Tis added, indeed, that "when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples;"^e but they so little understood them, that, as I observed before,^f he often upbraids them with their slowness of apprehension and want of faith:—and, of those expositions, but few are recorded. A little before his death, he tells them, "I have yet *many things* to say unto you, but ye *cannot bear them now*;"^g and then he immediately adds, "Howbeit when the SPIRIT of truth is come, *he will guide you into all truth*;" where he evidently leaves the "*many things*" he had to say, which they 'could not then bear,' to be revealed to them by the HOLY GHOST, who was also to bring to their remembrance all that he himself had delivered to them. After his resurrection, he "was seen of" the apostles "forty days," "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;"^h but what the things were that he delivered to them in those forty days, is nowhere recorded. Nor indeed could the great work of the redemption of mankind, which mainly depended upon his *dying and rising again*, be set forth and explained, till *after* his resurrection; when, upon occasion of their doubts concerning the reality of it, he showed them out of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, that he was to suffer and rise again, and "opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures."ⁱ I will only add as to St. Paul, that the same doctrines which were conveyed to the other apostles, first by the teaching of CHRIST, and then by the light and direction of the HOLY GHOST, were fully made known to him by immediate revelation.^k

The apostles being thus instructed in the whole will of CHRIST, were properly his messengers, to convey and deliver it to the world:—"As my Father hath sent

^e Matt. xiii. 34. ^d Mark iv. 33, 34. ^e Mark iv. 34. ^f Page 140.
^g John xv. 12, 13. ^h Acts i. 3. ⁱ Luke xxiv. 27, 44, 45. ^k See before, p. 148.

me, so send I you,"¹—"Go ye unto all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature,"^m—"teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."ⁿ—And from whom are we to learn the will of CHRIST, but from his own messengers, whom he fully instructed in it, and intrusted with the delivering it to the world? They were the "ambassadors of CHRIST to pray us in his stead to be reconciled to God;"^o and from whom therefore, but from them, are we to learn the terms of that reconciliation, and the grounds of that great favor and mercy extended by God to mankind? They were in a particular manner appointed to be 'witnesses of his resurrection;'^p and from what other hands, but these that were intrusted with publishing the doctrine of the resurrection, can we learn the importance of it, and the benefits accruing to mankind by it? Those ambassadors and messengers were endowed with the power of working miracles; and for what end should this be, but to prove the divinity of their commission, and to recommend their doctrines to our attention and belief? In general, the apostles were appointed by CHRIST to be "the light of the world;"^q and how was that light to be conveyed to future generations, otherwise than by their preachings and writings?^r

Supposing then that the writings of the apostles, and the accounts we have of their preaching are true and genuine, *i. e.* that they were really written by the persons whose names they bear; no doubt can remain, but that the things relating to the Gospel dispensation (which were to be opened and explained by them, pursuant to the instructions received from CHRIST, and under the direction of the HOLY GHOST) are to be learnt from their acts and epistles, in conjunction with the four gospels. The authority of the GOSPELS and the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES I have already established, and shall now proceed to show, that the EPISTLES also were the genuine writings of the apostles.

¹ John xx. 21. ^m Mark xvi. 15. ⁿ Matt. xxviii. 20. ^o 2 Cor. v. 20.
^p Acts i. 22. v. 32. x. 41. ^q Matt. v. 14. ^r [See the pertinent and lucid observations of WEST upon this subject; *Standard Works*, Vol. I. p. 266. ss.]

Eusebius reckoning up the books of the New Testament which were *universally* received, after mention made of the four gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, adds, "Next to these we are to reckon the epistles of Paul;"^s every one of which (except that to the Hebrews) expressly bears his name; and they are frequently cited and referred to by the most early writers of the Church, as has been abundantly shown by many learned men, and may easily be seen by looking into the writings of CLEMENT, IGNATIUS, and POLYCARP, in the first century, and after them into those of IRENÆUS and TERTULLIAN in the second. The same thing is there affirmed by EUSEBIUS of the first epistle of St. Peter, and the first of St. John; namely, that they had been received universally. And as to the doubts that have been raised concerning other epistles; it must be premised in general, that no advantage can accrue from thence to the adversaries of the Christian religion, till they point out the particular doctrines relating to faith or manners, which are contained in those, that are not also contained either expressly, or by fair and clear deduction, in the other books of the New Testament which the Church of CHRIST has universally received. Much less can they reap any advantage from those doubts, if it shall be made appear that in every instance they are ill founded.

As to the *Epistle to the Hebrews*; the main doubt concerning it has arisen from its not being *expressly* under the name of St. Paul, as all his other epistles are: but this receives a very plain and natural solution. St. Paul was properly the apostle of the *Gentiles*, as appears from many passages both in the book of Acts, and in his own epistles. The direction he received from CHRIST was this, "make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me;" and, "depart, for I will send thee far hence to the *Gentiles*."^t In his epistles he speaks of himself as "the apostle of the *Gentiles*,"^u as "the minister of JESUS CHRIST to the *Gentiles*,"^v and as "the prisoner of JESUS CHRIST for the *Gentiles*;"^w

^s EUSEB. *Ecc. Hist.* Lib. III. c. xxv. ^t Acts xxii. 18. 21. ^u Rom. xi. 13. ^v Rom. xv. 16. ^w Ephes. iii. 1.

as he, "to whom it pleased God to reveal his Son, that he might preach him *among the Heathen*;"^a he, "to whom this grace (or commission) was given, that he should preach *among the Gentiles*;"^y he, who was "appointed a teacher of the *Gentiles*;"^z he, whom "the LORD strengthened, that by him the preaching might be fully known, and that all the *Gentiles might hear*."² All which are briefly comprehended in the declaration he made to the Galatians; "The Gospel of the *uncircumcision was committed unto me*, as the Gospel of the *circumcision was unto Peter*; for he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty *in me towards the Gentiles*."^b 'Tis true, the apostolical commission was *general*, "to preach the Gospel,"—and there are many instances of St. Paul's endeavoring to convert those of the Jewish nation, and of his going into their synagogues, and reasoning with them. This he did at Salamis,^c at Antioch in Pisidia,^d at Iconium,^e at Thessalonica,^f at Berea,^g at Corinth,^h and at Ephesus.ⁱ At Thessalonica, particularly, it is said that "Paul, *as his manner was*, went in unto them. and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures."^k At Ephesus, "he went *into the synagogue*, and spake boldly *for the space of three months*, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God:"^l And he tells the Elders of that Church, that he had testified "both *to the Jews*, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our LORD JESUS CHRIST."^m And at Antioch, where the Jews contradicted and blasphemed, he tells them, "It was necessary that the word of God should *first* have been spoken *to them*; but seeing *they put it from them*, and judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, he *turned to the Gentiles*."ⁿ And to how great a height the prejudices of the Jews against him had risen by degrees, we may gather from the furious assault that was made upon him at Jerusalem, and their crying out, "Men of Israel, help; this is the man that teacheth

^a Gal. i. 11.^y Ephes. iii. 8.^z 2 Tim. i. 11.² 2 Tim. iv. 17.^b Gal. ii. 7, 8.^c Acts xiii. 5.^d Acts xiii. 14.^e Acts xiv. 1.^f Acts xvii. 1.^g Acts xvii. 10.^h Acts xviii. 4.ⁱ Acts xviii. 19.^k Acts xvii. i.^l Acts xix. 8.^m Acts xx. 21.ⁿ Acts xiii. 46.

all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place;"^o while his affection to the whole Jewish nation, and his concern for them was such, as to make him even "wish that himself were accursed from CHRIST, for *his brethren, his kinsmen* according to the flesh."^p

It appears, from the foregoing accounts, how natural it was for St. Paul to *write* as well as preach to the Jews; and how natural also, in writing to them, to avoid the *authoritative* style that he used when he wrote to those Churches which had been converted by him, or which were *more peculiarly* within his commission, and to choose to write to them only as *his brethren and kinsmen*, that is, in his own language, as he and they were equally Hebrews, and Israelites, and the seed of Abraham.^q

But, notwithstanding the omission of his name, and of his apostolical character, there are many cogent arguments to satisfy us that St. Paul was the author of this epistle, against the contrary suspicions of some learned men. The general scope of it is to prove that the rites prescribed by the ceremonial law were only types and figures of CHRIST; and that he being now come, they were of no further use, but were to cease and give way to a dispensation of a much higher and more excellent nature. And what was the accusation brought against St. Paul by the Jews? Why, that he taught "all the Jews which were among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs;" and that he taught "all men every where against the people, and the law, and the temple."^r The writer of this epistle uses the style of "our brother Timothy;"^s and this is the style which we find frequently used by St. Paul in his other epistles. "Paul, an apostle of JESUS CHRIST, and Timothy our brother," is the introduction to three of them:^t and writing to the Thessalonians, he says, I have "sent Timotheus our brother;"^u nor do we find this style used by any other of the apostles. The same is observable of another expression towards the conclusion of this

^o Acts xxi. 28. ^p Rom. ix. 3. ^q 2 Cor. xi. 12. ^r Acts xxi. 21. 28.
^s Heb. xiii. 23. ^t 2 Cor. i. 1. Coloss. i. 1. Philem. 1. ^u 1 Thess. i. 2.

epistle, "Pray for us;"^v being what we also find in his epistles both to the Colossians and Thessalonians;^w with others of the same import in those to the Romans and Ephesians, where he beseeches them to "strive together in their prayers to God for him,"^x and to "pray always with all prayer and supplication—for him;" nor is this used by any other apostle. This epistle, towards the conclusion, has a solemn prayer to the "God of peace," for a blessing upon the Christians to whom he is writing;^y and we find the like towards the conclusion of his epistle to the Romans, "The God of peace be with you all;"^z and to the Corinthians, "The God of love and peace shall be with you;"^a to the Philippians, "The God of peace shall be with you;"^b and to the Thessalonians, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly;"^c and, "The LORD of peace himself give you peace always;"^d and the like expression is not only thus frequent in St. Paul's epistles, but is not to be met with in any other. The same is to be said of the term '*Mediator*;'^e for though the *thing* be spoken of in other parts of the New Testament, the term is not found any where but in the writings of St. Paul.^f In this epistle, he speaks of his imprisonment, under the name of "bonds;"^g and he mentions the same at least ten times in his other epistles,^h and all of them written from Italy, as this to the Hebrews was: neither do we find that expression used by any other apostle. In this epistle, he pleads the integrity of his heart and conscience; "We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly;"ⁱ and the same plea is often made by him on other occasions. Thus his declaration before the council was, "Men and brethren, I have lived *in all good conscience* before God until this day;"^k and before Felix, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a *conscience void of offence* towards God and

^v Heb. xiii. 18. ^w Col. iv. 3. 2 Thess. iii. 1. ^x Rom. xv. 30. Ephes. vi. 18, 19. ^y Heb. xiii. 20. ^a Rom. xv. 33. xvi. 20. ^{* 2 Cor. xiii. 11. ^b Phil. iv. 9. ^c 1 Thess. v. 23. ^d 2 Thess. iii. 16. ^e Heb. viii. 6. ix. 15. xii. 24. ^f [Gal. iii. 19, 20. 1 Tim. ii. 5.] ^g Heb. x. 34. ^h [Eph. vi. 20; Phil. i. 7. 13, 14. 16; Col. iv. 3. 18; 2 Tim. ii. 9; Philem. 10. 13.—Compare also, in the speeches of the same apostle, Acts xx. 23; xxvi. 29.] ⁱ Heb. xiii. 18. ^k Acts xxiii. 1.}

towards men ;”¹ and in his epistle to the Romans, “ I say the truth in CHRIST, I lie not ; my *conscience also bearing me witness* ;”^m to the Corinthians, speaking of himself, “ Our rejoicing is this, the *testimony of our conscience* ;”ⁿ and to Timothy, “ Whom I serve with *pure conscience*.”^o This epistle concludes with a *salutation to and from* the brethren ; which is found at the end of almost every epistle of St. Paul :—and the Christians are here called *saints* ; which is a style very frequently used by that apostle, and *almost peculiar* to him.

To this epistle St. Peter may well be understood to refer as written by St. Paul, where he is exhorting the Jewish Christians under persecution, to wait with patience for the “ day of God,” and to take care to “ be found of him without spot and blameless,” that it might be “ salvation” to them ; and this, in answer to the scoffers of those days, who upbraided them with the expectation of it, as vain and groundless, and, by way of derision, asked, “ Where is the promise of his coming ?” And then St. Peter adds, “ Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, *hath written unto you* ;” which most probably relates to this epistle, as the *only one* that he wrote to the Jewish Christians, and as containing in it several exhortations to the same purpose with that which St. Peter is there giving.^p For, not to insist upon his exhortation to the Hebrews to be “ followers of them who through *faith and patience* inherited the promises,” enforced by the example of Abraham, who “ after he had patiently endured, obtained the promise ;”^q nor upon that other exhortation, “ Let us *hold fast the profession of our faith* without wavering, for *he is faithful that promised* ;”^r not, I say, to rest upon these, it will be hard to find in the whole New Testament any passage to which St. Peter might so probably refer, as this which follows : “ Cast not away your *confidence*, which hath great *recompense of reward* : for ye have need of *patience*, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might *receive the promise* : for yet a little while, and *he that*

¹ Acts xxiv. 16.^m Rom. ix. 1.ⁿ 2 Cor. i. 12.^o 2 Tim. i. 3.^p 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.^q Heb. vi. 12, 15.^r Heb. x. 23.

shall come, will come, and will not tarry : now the just shall live *by faith* ; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who *draw back unto perdition*, but of them that *believe to the saving of the soul*.”^s As to the passage in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, which speaks of the “goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering” of God, as “leading to repentance;”^t St. Peter cannot be supposed to refer to it, for two plain reasons. In that passage, St. Paul addresses himself to the *unbelieving* Jews ; whereas St. Peter is writing to the *believing* Jews, and to them only. St. Paul’s is a *reproof* for *abusing* the goodness and long-suffering of God to a security in sinning, contrary to the effect it ought to have upon wicked men ; but St. Peter’s is an *exhortation to sincere Christians* to wait with patience, in an assurance that it will bring salvation in the end.

Under the present head of internal testimony, notice must be taken of a passage in this epistle, which may seem at first sight to imply that St. Paul was not the writer of it. Speaking of the salvation of sinners through the Gospel, he says, “which at the first began to be spoken by the LORD, and was *confirmed unto us by them that heard him* ;”^u whereas St. Paul had the Gospel revealed to him immediately from heaven. But to this there are two plain answers. One, that St. Paul, between his conversion and the time when this epistle was written, had seen and conversed with several of the apostles. “After three years,” says he, “I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days ;”^v and he tells us, that at the same time he saw James, the brother of our LORD.^w—“Then fourteen years after, I went up to Jerusalem,—and communicated to them that Gospel which I preached unto the Gentiles ;”^x and there he saw Peter, James, and John,^y and after that he saw Peter, at Antioch.^z So that St. Paul *might truly* say, that the doctrine of the Gospel was ‘confirmed’ to him by them that heard CHRIST ; and he *had occasion* to say it, lest it should be objected to him by the Jewish Christians that his doctrine was

^s Heb. x. 35—39. ^t Rom. ii. 4. ^u Heb. ii. 3. ^v Gal. i. 18.
^w Gal. i. 19. ^x Gal. ii. 1, 2. ^y Gal. ii. 9. ^z Gal. ii. 11.

different from that of the other apostles ; against whom it was a proper defence, that it was no other doctrine than that which had been ‘confirmed’ by their own apostles, ‘who heard CHRIST,’ and had at first preached the Gospel to them. The other answer is, that it is not uncommon with St. Paul to include himself in the number of those to whom he writes, though not concerned equally with them, or not at all : “Let us not commit fornication.” “Let us not tempt CHRIST.”^a “We ourselves (speaking of the Gentile state) were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”^b

Besides the internal proofs that St. Paul was the writer of this epistle, there are proofs external, and those both numerous and express. Not to mention in this place the citations of the most early fathers out of this epistle, as being only proofs of the *authority*, and not of the *author*, and made by writers who rarely mention the name of the apostle whose words they cite ;—in the second century, CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS mentions it under the name of *St. Paul*, where, speaking of the Greek philosophy as styled by that apostle ‘elements or introductions to the truth,’ and expressly mentioning him by name, he adds, “and therefore, writing to the Hebrews, he saith, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the elements (or first principles) of the oracles of God.”^c And elsewhere, having cited a passage of St. Paul’s Epistle to Titus concerning the behavior of the elder women in quietness and sobriety, ‘that the word of God be not blasphemed,’ he immediately adds, “but rather, says *the same apostle*, follow peace with all men,” &c., repeating four verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews.^d So also ORIGEN, in the third century, having quoted these words out of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Corinthians, ‘I have fed you with milk, and not with meat,’ adds this ; “The *same person* saith, Ye are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat,”^e and then he goes on to repeat two other entire

^a 1 Cor. x. 8, 9. ^b Tit. iii. 3. ^c CLEM. ALEX. *Strom.* Lib. VI. § 8. Col. ii. 8. Heb. v. 12. ^d Heb. xii. 13, 14, 15. xiii. 4. CLEM. ALEX. *Strom.* Lib. IV. § 20. ^e ORIG. *Cont. Cels.* Lib. III. p. 143. 1 Cor. iii. 2.

verses out of this Epistle to the Hebrews.”^c And elsewhere, having cited passages out of the other epistles of St. Paul, he adds parallel passages out of the Epistle to the Hebrews, with this or the like connexion, ‘*the same apostle saith.*’^e In his homilies upon this epistle he accounts for the difference between it and St. Paul’s other epistles in point of style, by supposing that the *matter* was his, but that it was composed and methodized by some other hand. And therefore he ‘commends those Churches which received it *as St. Paul’s,*’ ‘because,’ as he adds, ‘*the ancients did not ascribe it to him rashly.*’^h And that which follows, of some of the ancients ascribing it to St. Clement, and some to St. Luke, evidently refers to the supposed *penman*, and not to the *author*—to the language only, and not at all to the matter.

In the next century, the *Council of Laodicea* enumerating the known and received books of the New Testament, place in their course “the fourteen epistles of St. Paul; to the Romans one, to the Corinthians two, &c., and to the *Hebrews* one:”ⁱ—to which I will add the testimonies of two writers, one of the Greek and the other of the Latin Church—I mean EUSEBIUS and JEROME; who had made more nice and strict inquiries than any other about the books of the Old and New Testament, and the writers of them. EUSEBIUS, speaking of the received books of the New Testament, delivered his own judgment, that “the fourteen epistles of St. Paul (which includes that of the Hebrews) are known and clear.”^k Afterwards, speaking of CLEMENT’S *Epistle to the Corinthians*, “in which,” says he, “are inserted several passages out of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and sometimes in the very words,” he adds, “from whence it is most evident, that this cannot be a modern writing,” (St. Clement having been a disciple and companion of St. Paul;) and then he goes on, “wherefore it seems with good reason to be added to his other epistles. For St. Paul having *written to the Hebrews* in their own language, the translation of it (into the Greek tongue)

^c Heb. v. 12, 13, 14.

^e ORIG. *Philocal.* p. 10. 17. *Adv. Cels.*

Lib. VII. p. 351, and in other places.—Heb. x. 32. 35.

^h EUSEB.

Ecc. Hist. Lib. VI. c. xxv.

ⁱ *Concil. Laodicen.* Can. 60.

^k EU-

SEB. *Ecc. Hist.* Lib. III. c. iii.

is ascribed by some to St. Luke, and by others to CLEMENT."¹ Which testimonies warrant what we find in THEODORET, in the preface to his commentary upon this epistle—"EUSEBIUS confessed, that this was the epistle of the most divine Paul, and affirmed, that all the ancients were of that opinion;"^m and PHOTIUS, a collector in the ninth century, at the same time that he cites an obscure writerⁿ who had said that HIPPOLYTUS and IRENÆUS did not believe this epistle to be St. Paul's, immediately adds, "but CLEMENT, and EUSEBIUS, and the main body of the divine fathers, reckon this among his other epistles."^o And the same PHOTIUS mentions that opinion of HIPPOLYTUS, as one, among others, of his crude and indigested assertions.^p

'Tis true, EUSEBIUS takes notice,^q that some did not receive the Epistle to the Hebrews, because they said it was not received by the Roman Church; which he particularly affirms of CAIUS, and adds, in a more qualified sense, that "*some of the Romans did not suppose it to be his.*"^r But it must be remembered, that CAIUS advanced this opinion in a dispute with one,^s who affirmed that Christians falling from the faith,^t ought not to be admitted to penance; and who without doubt^u alleged against CAIUS that passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the HOLY GHOST, and have tasted the good word of God, and the power of the world to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance." And as this became a common controversy in the Latin Church, which maintained the opinion of CAIUS for restoring lapsed Christians, against the Montanists first, and then against the Novatians; it was natural, in the heat of dispute, to endeavor to weaken the force of that text, by raising a doubt whether St. Paul, whose name was not set to this epistle as it is to the rest, was the author of it. But, that the doubts concerning the au-

¹ EUSEB. *E. H.* Lib. VI. c. xx. Lib. III. c. xxxviii. ^m THEODORET, *Pref. in Ep.* ⁿ GOBARUS. ^o PHOTII *Bibliotheca*, Cod. ccxxxii. ^p PHOTII *Bibliotheca*, c. cxxi. ^q EUSEB. *E. H.* Lib. III. c. iii. ^r EUSEB. *E. H.* Lib. VI. c. xx. ^s PROCLUS. ^t Lapsi, [The lapsed, or apostate.] ^u TERTULL. *de Pudic*, c. xx.—Heb. vi, 4, 5, 6.

thority of it were not the same in the Latin Church from the beginning, may be fairly presumed from this epistle's being inserted among the others, in the ancient Latin version of the New Testament, which was made for the use of that Church.

St. JEROME, who occasionally takes notice that, though it was received as St. Paul's by some of the Latin Church, yet many doubted of it, expressly condemns them for it, and confronts that doubt with the authority of "the Greek Church and all the Eastern Churches, who unanimously received it;" and who undoubtedly had a better opportunity than the Latin Church, to inquire into the authority of it: which determination, as of a point in question before him, makes it plain, that his mentioning it with tokens of doubt in some other places where he only quotes it occasionally, was not the result of his own judgment, but a deference he paid to the opinion of the Latin Church. And as he expressly declared his own satisfaction, upon the authority of the ancients, "that it was rightly ascribed to St. Paul," so has the whole Latin Church shown themselves to be convinced of their error, by having for so many ages received and inserted it among his other epistles.^w

That which gave the main ground of dispute concerning the writer of this epistle, was the want of St. Paul's name at the beginning, which has been already accounted for; and this led the critical inquirers into words and phrases, to insist upon the argument from the style and manner of writing in this epistle, as different from that of St. Paul in his other epistles. The manner of writing, say they, is more lofty, and the style raised to a greater height, than in his other epistles. But if it be, the subject also is more lofty and exalted,—the dignity of CHRIST above the angels;—the glory of CHRIST at the right hand of God;—the heavenly tabernacle;—the everlasting priesthood;—CHRIST's mediating and interceding for us in the presence of God;—and, in general, all those high and heavenly things of which the legal performances under the Mosaical law were only types

^v HIERON. *Ep. ad Dardan.*—*ad Evagr.* ^w MILL. *Proleg. in N. T.* p. 26.

and figures, together with the wonders wrought by the patriarchs, martyrs, and other famous men, in virtue of their faith. As therefore the difference in style is of little force in any case, since it is very common for the same writer to vary his style, according to the subject, the occasion, the degrees of earnestness, &c., so here it is of no force at all, when set up in opposition to the testimony of the best and most approved writers among the ancients;^{*} and when it is further considered, that the attempts to ascribe the epistle to others (Luke, Clement, Apollos) are founded only upon some remote conjectures, and not countenanced by ancient testimonies, otherwise than as they are considered under the character of *writers* and *reporters* of St. Paul's doctrine. To which I must add, that those early differences in opinion were not so much about the *authority* of the book, as about the *author*; they who had their doubts whether St. Paul was the writer, readily acknowledging that the epistle came from *a person divinely inspired*. This was the case with all those of old, who believed it to be written in Hebrew by St. Paul, and translated into Greek by some one of the apostolical persons just now mentioned (which, whether true or not, was a prevailing opinion among the ancients;) and also with those others, who supposed it to be drawn up by some apostolical person, agreeing to the sense and meaning of St. Paul; and with TERTULLIAN, who ascribed it to Barnabas, an apostle, and companion of St. Paul.[†] And the same has been the case with more modern writers; as appears by the declarations of two divines, (both of them remarkable for a latitude of thought in religious matters) even while they are giving their reasons, why they do not think it to have been written by St. Paul. "It does not *seem*," says one,[‡] "to have been written by St. Paul, but neither can it be *clearly denied* to be his; for it is probable it was written by one of St. Paul's companions, with his privity, and agreeably to his doctrine:" to which he adds, "I acknowledge the divine authority of this epistle." And, says another,[§]

^{*} See before, p. 159. [†] TERTULL. *de Pudic.* c. XX. Acts xiii. 2. 4. [‡] LIMEORCH. *Pref. in Comm. in Hebr.* [§] LE CLERC. *Hist. Eccl.* Ann. 69.

“Whoever reads it with attention, will see every where *the apostolical doctrine* concerning the controversies between the Christians and Jews, or Judaizing Christians of those days;” from whence he infers, “That it must be written before the destruction of the temple, because after that, and the extinction of the Levitical worship, and the destruction of a great part of the Jewish nation, there could scarce be any occasion for entering into those controversies; nor is there in it the least footstep of any opinions, disputes, or matters, later than the apostolic age.” And again, “Neither the matter nor the manner of explaining, nor the language, breathe any thing but what is apostolical, and of divine inspiration; in which I and all others who have written concerning this epistle do agree, however we may differ about the author.”^b

Besides this Epistle to the Hebrews, there were some others that the whole Christian Church did not receive so soon as those already mentioned concerning which there was never any doubt. These are, *the Epistle of St. James, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the Second and Third of St. John*, and that of *St. Jude*. Concerning these, it shall be particularly shown, that each of them was received *early*; and there is this plain reason, why they were not received by all Christians *so early* as the rest,—that they were written either to particular persons, as the second and third of St. John; or to the Jewish converts dispersed in several countries, as the second of St. Peter and St. James; or to the Christians in general, as the Epistle of St. Jude. And since the satisfaction to be given to particular Churches that they were genuine, depended upon the view of the original letters, and of the evidence of those who carried and those who received them; it is manifest at first sight, that this satisfaction might be had much more readily,

^b [Few questions relative to the canon of Scripture have created so much discussion as that concerning the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. A tolerably full, though ill-digested, view of the different reasonings on the subject, is given by HORNE, *Introduction*, Vol. IV. Part II. chap. iii. sect. 16.—All the modern objections to the claims of St. Paul, with the multifarious conflicting hypotheses of German critics, are considered, and satisfactorily refuted by Professor STUART, of Andover, in the introduction to his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*.]

when it was known to what particular Churches this or that epistle was directed, and where the originals remained, and both the messenger and they who received it from his hands might be spoke with; than it could be had where the epistles were directed to Christians in general as dispersed throughout the empire, and while it remained uncertain, in what particular city or country either the originals, or the evidences of their being so, were to be met with. The not receiving these so early and universally as the rest, is an argument of the care taken by particular Churches to be *thoroughly* satisfied, that what they admitted was really written by persons divinely inspired; and the receiving them so universally as they afterwards did, is as good an argument that they had received due satisfaction concerning them. Nor can any possible reason be assigned, why the whole Christian Church, *Eastern and Western*, should for so many ages have put these epistles upon the same foot of authority with the others which had been universally received, but that all ground of doubting was by degrees removed, and every Church had received full satisfaction that they were written by the inspired persons whose names they bore, or to whom they were ascribed. We find this to be the case in the fourth century, when these were received in the *Greek Church* as of divine authority, by the Council of Laodicea; and forty years after, the same was solemnly declared to be the sense of the *Latin Church* in the Decretal Epistle of Innocent I., which was also confirmed eighteen years after by a public decree of the Council of Carthage.

But long before these solemn and general recognitions of their authority, they had been received as genuine and authentic by many Churches as well as writers. So EUSEBIUS says of them all, "That however they were reckoned among the *doubtful* books, they were *acknowledged by many*."^c

But to descend to particulars. The same EUSEBIUS says of the *Epistle of St. James*, that it was publicly read in *very many Churches*, together with the others.^d And two peculiar reasons may be assigned why it was

^c EUSEB. *E. H. Lib.* III. c. xxv. ^d EUSEB. *E. H. Lib.* II. c. xxiii.

thought spurious by some, and doubtful by others, and not sooner received by all; one, that though it is expressly under the name of *James*, yet there being more persons of that name spoken of in the New Testament, a dispute arose to which of them it ought to be ascribed:^e and the other, that what he says of the necessity of works in order to justify men in the sight of God, *seemed* to contradict what St. Paul had delivered concerning justification by faith alone; and St. Paul's epistles being universally received, they who believed or suspected that contrariety in doctrine, must reject the other of course, or at least suspend their opinion about it. But as these doubts vanished in particular Churches, and it appeared that St. Paul and St. James were so far from contradicting each other, that one meant the no necessity of observing the *ceremonial* law, and the other the necessity of observing the *moral* law—the one, that works of what kind soever, without faith, are ineffectual to salvation, and the other, that faith *without* works cannot save; no scruple was made of putting it upon the same foot with the other epistles in point of authority. EUSEBIUS says, that not many of the ancients mentioned it;^f and their silence is already accounted for: but JEROME tells us, that it obtained authority by degrees;^g and we find it currently cited, like other Scriptures, by the fathers of the fourth century,^h and particularly by JEROME himself,ⁱ as written by *James the apostle*, and the *brother of our Lord*—so that in the words of a learned commentator, “They that doubted of it before, did in the fourth century embrace the opinion of those that received it; and from thence no Church nor ecclesiastical writer ever doubted of it; but on the contrary, all the catalogues of the books of Scripture, whether published by general or provincial councils, &c., number it among the canonical Scriptures.”^j

The *Second Epistle of St. Peter*, has been already observed to be one of those which EUSEBIUS mentions as questioned, but which also were acknowledged by

* EUSEB. *Hist. Ecc. Lib. II. c. xxiii.*

^f Ibid.

^g HIERON. *de*

Jacobo. [in *Cat. Script. Eccles.*]

^h MILLII N. T. *Proleg.* p. 24.

ⁱ HIERON. *Ep. ad Paulin. Contra Jovinien.* xxiv.

^j ESTHIUS, as

quoted by WHITBY, *Preface to the Epis. of St. James.*

many as genuine.^k And this shows, that when it is said by him that the ancient fathers acknowledged but one epistle of St. Peter, *i. e.* the first, it must be meant, *universally and without exception*—with reference to the second, which was not so acknowledged. St. JEROME grounds this doubt concerning the second epistle, upon the difference from the first *in point of style*.^l But this is true, in strictness, of the second chapter only, which is as different in style from the first and third chapters, as it is from the first epistle;^m being, as to the matter of it, manifestly taken from some Jewish book,ⁿ which gave an account of the scoffers before the flood who derided Noah's prediction of it, and applied by St. Peter to the false teachers who were crept in among the Christians, and derided their expectation of deliverance from the persecutions they were under, grounded upon what our Saviour and his apostles had told them concerning the judgments that were to come upon the Jewish persecutors. As to the style of that second chapter, it is throughout lofty and pompous; and in that respect different from the style of the other two. But is this a suggestion fit to be opposed to the many testimonies of its being St. Peter's? *viz.* its bearing the name of Simon Peter, by which he is so frequently spoken of in the gospels;—the express men-

^k EUSEB. *Ecc. Hist.* Lib. II. c. xxv. L. III. c. iii. L. VI. c. xxv.

^l HIERON. *de Petro* [in *Cat. Script. Eccl.*]

^m [Yet Bp. TOMLINE declares, that he "observes no other difference than that which arises from the difference of the subjects. The subject of the second chapter may surely lead us to suppose that the pen of the apostle was guided by a higher degree of inspiration than when writing in a didactic manner; it is written with the animation and energy of the prophetic style; but there does not appear to me to be any thing, either in phrase or sentiment, inconsistent with the acknowledged writings of St. Peter." *Introduction to the Study of the Bible*, p. 333. *Dublin*, 12mo.—Certainly the difference is not greater than is discoverable between the historic and prophetic parts of the books of Isaiah and Moses, nor even than that between the argumentative and preceptive parts of some of St. Paul's epistles.]

ⁿ [Such was the opinion of Bishop SHERLOCK, maintained at length, and with much plausible reasoning, in the *Dissertation on the Authority of the Second Epistle of St. Peter* appended to his *Discourses on Prophecy*. It has since met with very general adoption, although Bishop TOMLINE speaks of it as a "conjecture entirely unsupported by ancient authority, and in itself very highly improbable."—*Ubi supra*.]

tion it makes of a former epistle he had witten to them,^o and the visible connexion between the two epistles (the *second* being written to arm the Christians against the uneasiness they were under, upon the delay of that deliverance which the *first* had promised;) the mention he makes of his approaching dissolution, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our LORD JESUS CHRIST hath showed me;"^p which probably relates to what our Saviour intimated to St. Peter of the time of his giving testimony to the Gospel by his death, that it should be before the destruction of Jerusalem;^q and the express mention of what he heard and saw at the transfiguration on the mount,^r where none of the disciples were with CHRIST, except Peter, James, and John.^s To all which it must be added, that there is a fair presumption of its being written by an *apostolical* person, from his using the style of "our beloved brother Paul;"^t and we do not find it was ever ascribed to any other of that character. So far from this, that St. JEROME, where he takes notice of the difference in style as the foundation of the doubts concerning it,^u solves the difficulty—not by denying this epistle to be St. Peter's, which could not be denied for the reasons above mentioned—but by supposing that in the two epistles they were two different hands who expressed his sentiments in Greek. Whether this was so, or not, it shows that in St. Jerome's opinion, the arguments for its being St. Peter's could not be got over; and in this opinion, the writers of that and the following ages, both in the Eastern and Western Church concur, with great unanimity.^v

The objection, and the only objection, against receiving the *Epistle of St. Jude* at first, was his citing the prophecy of Enoch;^w but it is really hard to find where the force of the argument lies, that because an apostle cites out of another book, (though we suppose it apocryphal) a passage very good in itself, and very apposite to his purpose, therefore he could not be the

^o 2 Pet. iii. 1.

^p 2 Pet. i. 14.

^q John xxi. 22.

^r 2 Pet.

i. 16, 17, 18.

^s Matt. xvii. 1.

^t 2 Pet. iii. 2. 15.

^u HIERON.

de Petro [in *Cat. Script. Eccles.*]

^v MILLII *Prolegomena*, p. 25.

^w HIERON. *Cat. Script. in Jud.*—Jude 14, 15.

author of the writing into which the citation is grafted, though such writing bears his name, and is confirmed to be his by ancient authority, as in this case it is by the joint testimonies of TERTULLIAN,^x CLEMENT of Alexandria,^y and ORIGEN,^z who expressly cite it as St. Jude's; wherein also there is a great unanimity among the writers of the succeeding ages, both Greek and Latin.^a

The *Second* and *Third Epistles of St. John* are so far from being liable to the objection of a difference in style from the *First*, which was universally received as his, that the manner of writing is remarkably the same in all the three; and of the thirteen verses which make the whole *Second Epistle*, several^b are manifestly the same *in sense*, and some *word for word*. None of the three are under the name of John, and in that respect the two last are of equal authority with the first; but the second and third are written under the style of "Elder," which peculiarly suits the age as well as character of St. John, who was above ninety years old when they were written, and had the direction and government of all the Asiatic Churches. Considering how very short these two epistles are, and that several things contained in them are also to be found in the *First Epistle*, it is not to be expected that many citations out of them should be met with in the writers of the Church, either ancient or modern. But it so falls out, that IRENÆUS in the second century cites three verses, word for word, out of the second epistle, under the name of "*John the Disciple of our LORD*;"^c and that no doubt may remain whether he might not mean *John the Presbyter*, whom we find mentioned in EUSEBIUS as one of CHRIST's disciples,^d or any other John but John the Apostle and Evangelist; he cites two other passages to the very same purpose, one taken out of the *First Epistle*, and the other out of the *gospel of St. John*, and all the three as taken out

^x TERTULL. *de Ornat. Mul.* Lib. I. ^y CLEM. ALEX. *Pædag.* Lib. III. c. viii. ^z ORIGEN, *Comm. in Matth.* Tom. XI. p. 223.

^a MILLII *Prolegomena*, p. 25. ^b [Dr. Lardner says eight.] ^c 2 John 7, 8. II. IRENÆUS, Lib. II. c. xiii. sec. 2. Lib. III. c. xviii. ^d EUSEB. *Hist. Ecc.* Lib. III. c. xxxix.

of the writings of one and the same person. CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, citing a passage out of the First Epistle, calls it his *larger* epistle;^d which supposes one, at least, that was not so large. DIONYSIUS ALEXANDRINUS, contending for an opinion he had entertained, that St. John was not the writer of the Apocalypse,^e makes it one argument, that the name is set to the Apocalypse, whereas no name is set to the Second or Third Epistle, which he says were then usually^f ascribed to him. And ORIGEN, where he tells us that *all* did not receive these two epistles, implies that *the greatest part* did.^g The occasion of writing them is supposed with great probability^h to have been the report made of the liberality of the 'Elect Lady' and of Gaius, by certain persons whom St. John had recommended to the Churches of Asia for the furtherance of the Gospel; and these acknowledgments of the liberality of each, must come from one and the same hand, namely, that upon whose recommendation it was bestowed.

Although the *Book of Revelations* is of a different nature from the epistles, as relating more to the state of the Christian Church in future times, than to the doctrines at first delivered to it; yet because it is part of the New Testament, and one of the books about which doubts have been raised, whether or no they were written by the persons whose names they bear, I will here lay down the many cogent reasons there are for concluding it to have been written by St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, and not by any other. In the first verse, it is called, "The Revelation of JESUS CHRIST to his servant John;" and in the ninth verse, it is said, "I John was in the isle that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of JESUS CHRIST." Now EUSEBIUS, speaking of the persecution of the Christians by the emperor Domitian, mentions *St. John the Apostle and Evangelist*, as then banished to the isle of Patmos.ⁱ The same is mentioned by TERTULLIAN;^k and CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS^l speaks of his return from

^d CLEM. ALEX. *Stromat.* Lib. II. c. XXV. ^l About the year 260.

^h MILLII *Prolegomena*, p. 18.

^k TERTULL. *de Præscript.* c. XXXvi.

^e EUSEB. *Hist. Ecc.* Lib. VII.

^g EUSEB. *Hist. Ecc.* Lib. VI. c.

ⁱ EUSEB. Lib. III. c. xviii.

^j EUSEB. Lib. III. c. xxiii.

thence to Ephesus after the death of Domitian; and there is no pretence that any other John was banished to that island. JUSTIN MARTYR, in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, expressly ascribes it to "John, one of the apostles of CHRIST."^m IRENÆUS mentions it as "the Revelation of John the Disciple of our LORD;"ⁿ and that he meant St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, appears from what he tells us concerning the time when this revelation was made to him, viz. 'about the *latter end of the reign of Domitian*,'^o which was the time when he was in the island of Patmos; and yet more clearly, by telling us it was 'the disciple who leaned upon JESUS' bosom at supper.'^p TERTULLIAN also cites it expressly under the name of *John the Apostle*;^q and ORIGEN, where he speaks of the banishment of John the brother of James into that island, speaks also of the revelation there made to him, and cites the book under his name." Likewise, the style given by the ancients to the writer of this book, and affixed to the title of it, I mean, "The Divine,"^r is usually supposed to refer to the first verse of St. John's gospel, in which he asserts the divinity of CHRIST.^s

In these authorities there are several circumstances which give a *peculiar force* to them in the present point. In general, what they say is delivered without the least mark of doubt or hesitation. And as to the particular writers, IRENÆUS was the disciple of Polycarp, and Polycarp of St. John; and he tells us he had a passage in this book explained to him by those who had *seen John face to face*.^u JUSTIN MARTYR was converted to the Christian faith within thirty-eight years after the writing of the Apocalypse; and within fifty-four years from that time he wrote his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*. Those several fathers who give testimony to the authority of the Apocalypse, as written by John the Apostle and Evangelist, did not all dwell in Asia, but in several other parts of the world, whose sense they may be presumed to speak, as well as their own—IRENÆUS

^m JUST. MART. *Dial. cum Tryph.* ⁿ IREN. Lib. IV. c. xxxvii. l. Ibid. Lib. V. c. xxvi. ^o Ibid. Lib. V. c. xxx. ^p Ibid. Lib. IV. c. xxxvii.

^q TERTULL. *contra Marc.* Lib. III. c. xiv. ^r ORIGEN, *Comm. in Matth.* p. 417. ^s Θεόλογος. ^t Θεός ὁ λόγος. ^u IREN. Lib. V. c. xxx.

at Lyons in Gaul; CLEMENS and ORIGEN in Egypt; and TERTULLIAN in Africa. And it is a poor evasion of the authority of those ancient writers, to allege that some of them had their peculiar notions about *other* points; as if a singularity of opinion in this or that doctrine could render them incompetent witnesses to a matter of fact, which they had so good an opportunity to know!

Their authority is further strengthened by this, that there is no ground or color for the two conjectures of the Apocalypse being written by John the Presbyter,^v or by Cerinthus.^w There is no pretence to say that the first was banished into the isle of Patmos; and as to the second, his principles, that CHRIST was a mere man, and, that he was not to rise from the dead till the general resurrection, are directly contrary to the doctrine of the Apocalypse;^x and moreover, *his* millenary state was not the life of *saints*, as the Apocalypse represents it, but the life of *libertines*.

That there were so few copies taken of this book, in comparison with the other books of the New Testament, was owing to the subject matter of it, which was very obscure, and related not so much to the past or present, as to the future state of the Christian Church, in which the generality of Christians were not directly concerned.^y For this reason, it was not joined at first to the evangelical or epistolary canon, but was considered as a writing by itself, and of a different nature from the rest; neither was it directed to be read publicly in the Church, because of its obscurity, and the little relation it had to the Gospel state in those days. And this, together with the time^z when it was written, accounts for the silence of the most early fathers concerning it, and for its being omitted in some of the catalogues of the books of Holy Scripture, particularly that of the Council of Laodicea, the design of which Council was to enumerate such books as were to be *read publicly* in the Church, as appears by the express words of the canon upon that head.

^v EUSEB. *Hist. Ecc.* Lib. III. c. xxviii.

^w Ibid. Lib. VII. c. xxv.

^x Rev. i. 5. 7. 8. 11; xxi. 6; xxii. 13.

^y ORIG. *Comm. in Matth.*

p. 220.

^z Not before the year 96.

The *difference in style* from St. John's other writings, and the *mention of his name* here and not in the others, are also fairly accounted for by the difference of subject; this being of the prophetic kind, and the prophets usually prefixing their names to the accounts of the visions and revelations they had received from God; as we find in the instances of Isaiah,^a Jeremiah,^b Ezekiel,^c Daniel,^d and others. But notwithstanding the difference in style, we may observe, in several instances, a *coincidence in expression* between this and his other writings; and this generally, in such expressions as are not to be met with in the whole New Testament, except in the gospel and epistles of St. John. In the *Revelations*, it is said of CHRIST that his name is called "The Word of God;"^e and in the *gospel* of St. John, he is styled "The Word,"^f and in his *First Epistle*, "The Word of Life."^g In the *Revelations*, he is called "The Lamb,"^h and in the *gospel* of St. John, "The Lamb of God."ⁱ In the *Revelations*, the name of CHRIST is, "He that is true,"—"He that is faithful and true;"^k in the *First Epistle* of St. John, "He that is true;"^l and in the *gospel*, "full of Truth," and "The Truth."^m In the *Revelations*, 'manna' is applied to spiritual food;ⁿ and so it is applied in the *gospel* of St. John.^o In the *Revelations*, it is said from the prophet Zechariah, "Every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him;"^p and in the *gospel* of St. John, "They shall look on him whom they pierced."^q In the *Revelations*, CHRIST saith, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come to him, and sup with him, and he with me:"^r in the *gospel* of St. John, "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."^s

Thus stands the authority of this book, upon the foot of ancient testimonies. But when the doctrine of the millenary state began to be advanced under the notion of a state in which sensual delights were to be enjoyed

^a Isa. i. 1. ^b Jerem. i. 1. ^c Ezek. i. 3. ^d Dan. vii. 2. ^e Rev. xix. 13.
^f Joh. i. 1. ^g 1 Joh. i. 1. ^h Rev. v. 6. 12. ⁱ Joh. i. 24. 36.
^k Rev. iii. 7; xix. 11. ^l 1 Joh. v. 20. ^m Joh. i. 14; xiv. 6.
ⁿ Rev. ii. 17. ^o Joh. vi. 32. ^p Rev. i. 7. ^q Joh. xix. 37.
^r Rev. iii. 20. ^s Joh. xiv. 23.

in the greatest perfection, and the authority of the Revelations was alleged, though very unjustly, in support of that carnal doctrine;^s the zeal of some writers against this doctrine, which was indeed exceeding wicked and corrupt, led them to raise scruples about the authority of the book itself;^t which, though it speaks of CHRIST's reigning a thousand years with the saints,^u gives not the least ground to suppose that it will be a state of sensual delights. On the contrary, it supposes the members of that kingdom to be martyrs and other holy men who had preserved themselves from the corruptions of the world. But after this controversy was over, the scruples vanished,^v and the Christian Church received it among the other inspired writings, upon those ancient testimonies that it was the work of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist; though not being so proper as the rest to be read publicly in the Church, it might in that respect be considered sometimes in a different light from them.

This is not the only instance, in which a particular controversy has led men in the heat of dispute, to call in question the authority of particular books of Scripture, which they thought unfavorable to the doctrine they had espoused: there are instances of this kind, both ancient and modern. The Manichees, who held a monstrous opinion that the God of the Old Testament was not the God of the New, rejected St. Matthew's gospel, on account of the references he makes to the Old Testament, which show both to be the dispensations of one and the same God, and both to centre in the Messiah. The Ebionites, who in some sort received the faith, but yet were zealous for the Mosaical law, admitted no gospel but that of St. Matthew, as written particularly for the use of the Hebrews. The Alogi, (or deniers of the *Logos*,) finding it impossible to reconcile their doctrine to the gospel of St. John, and yet not venturing to except against the authority of an apostle, had no way left, but to deny that he was the writer. The Latin Church, as I have already observed,^w finding themselves pressed by some passages in the Epistle to

^s EUSEB. *Hist. Ecc.* Lib. III. c. xxviii. ^t Ibid. Lib. VII. c. xxv.
^u MILLII *Prolegomena*, p. 19. ^v Rev. xx. 4, 5. ^w MILLII *Prolegomena*, p. 19. * Page 162.

the Hebrews in favor of the Novatian doctrine against the receiving of lapsed penitents, showed too great an inclination, for some time, to cherish doubts concerning the author of that epistle. And in later days, it is well known that the Antinomians, and others who have carried the doctrine of justification by faith alone to too great a height, have also endeavored to invalidate the Epistle of St. James, which makes works also a necessary condition of our being justified in the sight of God.*

But however serviceable it may have been thought to the advocates of this or that peculiar tenet, to raise doubts about the authority of this or that epistle, as particularly relating to the dispute then in hand; yet those doubts can be of no service to the cause of infidelity, as long as the truth of the Christian religion, and the general doctrines of it, are supported by others, whose writings have been *universally* received both as genuine, and as of divine authority.†

It appears by what has been said upon this head, that the books of the New Testament were written by the persons whose names they bear, or to whom they have been ascribed, and that those writings are divinely inspired;—that the greatest part of those books have been unanimously received by all Christian Churches from the beginning;—that the reason why *some* were not received so soon as others, was, the necessity of particular Churches having satisfaction as to their being written by some apostle, or inspired person, and the difficulty of obtaining such satisfaction in some cases more than in others, by reason of distance of place, or other circumstances;—that the doubts which have arisen

* [We may add, that the combatants of Antinomian error have, on the other hand, in their dread of the countenance of that gross perversion of Gospel truth wrested from the Epistles of St. Paul, even “gone the length of proposing that no part of the Scriptures should be printed for circulation among the mass of the people, except the four gospels: on the ground that *they* contain all things needful, and that the things hard to be understood in St. Paul’s writings would serve only to perplex and mislead them.” *WHATELY’S Essays on the Difficulties of St. Paul*, p. 69; in the second of which admirable treatises this foolish alarm is thoroughly exposed.]

† See before, p. 153.

concerning some particular books, have generally been the doubts, not of *Churches*, but of *persons*, and have been grounded either upon the want of express mention of the writer's name, or there having been two persons of the same name—both which uncertainties are adjusted, and the doubts arising from them fully cleared, by testimonies ancient and uncontested;—that the differences of style are either imaginary, or such as the differences in the subjects and occasions fairly account for, and are by no means of weight enough to be opposed to the positive testimony of ancient and authentic writers;—that those, and the like arguments, weak and inconclusive in their nature, have been generally laid hold on, on purpose to favor some opinions which particular persons had espoused, and which had no better arguments to support them;—and, that these having yielded to the force of truth for many hundred years, and the writings of the New Testament having been so long received by the whole Christian Church as of apostolical authority, nothing more is needful to establish them as such, but to show, that,

V. *The books of the New Testament, in which the doctrines delivered by CHRIST and his apostles are contained, have been faithfully transmitted to the Christians of succeeding ages.*²

And, in general, it rests upon those who call in question the fidelity of the transmission in this case, to show that any other book whatsoever has such and *so many* plain and strong testimonies of a faithful transmission, as the New Testament; lest while their zeal against Christianity drives them into groundless cavils and doubts about the authority of those books, they involve themselves in the absurdity of rejecting *all ancient writings whatsoever*, as not only altered from the originals, but altered to such a degree as not to represent to us the genuine meaning and design of their authors. It is well known, how early the Christian religion was carried into almost all parts of the Roman Empire, into regions and countries very numerous and

² [The subject of this head is fully and ably treated in TAYLOR'S *History of the Transmission of Ancient Books*, London, 1827, 8vo.]

very distant from one another; and as Christianity spread, copies of the New Testament spread with it, and not only remained in the hands of numbers of private Christians, but were publicly received and read in their religious assemblies. So that if one person had attempted to alter and corrupt his copy, it would quickly have been discovered by the rest; or if a whole country had attempted it, the copies throughout all other countries would have been so many testimonies of the fraud.

If, therefore, we could suppose the ancient Christians ever so much *inclined* to alter and corrupt, none of them could have attempted it with the least probability of success. And what rendered it yet more impracticable, was, the appeal that might be made, upon any suspicion of forgery, to the authentic writings, remaining and kept with the greatest care in the archives of several Churches that had been planted by the apostles; to which TERTULLIAN^a expressly refers in his reasonings against the heretics of those times, as then in being, and to be freely consulted.

But what should *tempt* or *incline* the first Christians to corrupt books that contained those truths on which they grounded all their hopes, and for which they were ready to sacrifice their lives? books, which they kept with so much care, and held sacred to such a degree, that if any Christian happened to be persuaded by threatenings and cruelties to deliver them up to the Heathen persecutors, they were put under the severest penance by the Church; and we know some chose to die rather than deliver them.

Many passages, also, cited out of those books, are found in the most early writers of the Church, which appear to be the same that we now have in our printed copies. Controversies arose in the Church as early as the second century; and as both sides appealed to those writings, so if either had changed and corrupted them, the cheat must have been discovered, and the authors of the corruption exposed by their adversaries; they

^a TERTULL. *de Præscript. adv. Hæreticos*. [This passage of TERTULLIAN is examined, and the interpretation given by Bishop GIBSON supported at some length by FABER in an appendix to his *Difficulties of Romanism*.]

who were concerned in those controversies being many of them persons who wanted neither learning nor penetration.^b The same writings were early translated out of the Greek into other languages, (Syriac, Latin, &c.) between which and the original Greek there is the greatest agreement in sense and matter.

Add to all this, that many ancient written copies of those early translations, and also of the original Greek, have been preserved to our own times, and procured by learned men out of the several countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa, where Christianity was planted in the most early ages; and such copies have been found, upon the exactest collation, to agree with those that are now used in the Christian Church, with much less variation than is allowed, in all other writings, to be fairly placed to the mistakes and oversights of transcribers.

For as to the objection from the great number of *various readings* which have been found upon comparing those copies, it is of no manner of weight. It is indeed

^b ["This is a circumstance of the utmost significance, and, if not peculiar to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, yet belonging to them in a degree which places their uncorrupted preservation on a basis incomparably more extended and substantial than that of any other ancient writings. The Latin authors were barely dispersed over the Roman world, and never in the keeping of separated nations, or hostile parties. The Greek classics were indeed, to some extent, in the hands of the western nations, as well as of the Greeks, during the middle ages. And, if any weight can be attached to the fact, some of these works were also in the keeping of the Arabians: but they were never the subject of mutual appeal by rival communities.

"The reproach of the Christian Church, its divisions, has been, in part at least, redeemed by the security thereby afforded for the uncorrupted transmission of its records. Almost the earliest Christian apologists avail themselves of this argument in proof of the integrity of the sacred text. AUGUSTINE especially urged it against those who endeavored to impeach its authority: there never was a time when an attempt on any extensive scale, even if otherwise practicable, to alter the text would not have raised an outcry in some quarter.

"From the earliest times the common rule of faith was held up for the purposes of defence or aggression by the Church and by some dissentient party. Afterwards the partition of the Christian community into two hostile bodies, of which Rome and Constantinople were the heads, afforded security against a general consent to effect alterations in the text. And in still later ages a few uncorrupted communities existing within the bounds of the Romish Church, became the guardians of the sacred volumes."—TAYLOR *on the Transmission of Ancient Books*, p. 210. s.]

fairly presumed, that the providence of God would preserve inspired writings, which were intended for the perpetual instruction of the Church, pure and uncorrupt, *as to the doctrines* contained in them; but it is not pretended that the transcribers of those writings were secured by any extraordinary interposition of Providence, from every the least error *in copying* them. It was necessary that the books themselves should be written under the immediate direction of the HOLY SPIRIT, because the things to be delivered in them were above the reach of natural reason; and nothing less than divine inspiration could make them a perpetual rule to the Church. But the faithful transmission of them to future ages might be sufficiently proved, upon the same foot, and in the same manner, as the faithful transmission of any other ancient writings.^c So that it rests upon those who urge this argument against the books of the New Testament, to show that those various readings do at all affect the doctrines of Christianity, or that such variety in any one place renders any one doctrine doubtful, that is not fully and clearly delivered in other parts of the New Testament. On the contrary, I believe it may be safely affirmed, that every single copy would exhibit a true and just account of Christianity; where there is an honest disposition to learn, and (in order to that) to correct the errors of transcribers, by comparing places of the same import and tendency with one another; making the usual allowances for ordinary slips of the pen.^d

If the number of various readings in the New Testament, as they have been published from time to time by learned men, should be granted to be greater than in other ancient writings, *as they are not*, there are two things that would plainly account for it;—the first, that the copies which were taken of this book before the use of printing, infinitely exceeded in number the copies of any other ancient book whatsoever; and the more the copies are, the more numerous of course will the vari-

^c [Of this fact, the work of TAYLOR, already quoted, furnishes the most conclusive, and indeed superabundant proof.]

^d [See the extract from BENTLEY, in the *Standard Works*, Vol. I. p. 280, s.]

ous readings be;^e—the second, that no ancient writings whatsoever have been examined with the same care, and the copies collated with the like exactness, and the various readings set down even to a difference as to syllables, letters, and order of words, as has been done in those of the New Testament; which greatly increases the number of readings, of how little importance soever most of them may be.^f But at the same time, it is very

• [“If there had been but one manuscript of the Greek Testament, at the restoration of learning about two centuries ago, then we had had no *various readings* at all. And would the text be in a better condition then, than now we have 30,000? So far from that, that in the best single copy extant we should have had hundreds of faults, and some omissions irreparable. Besides that, the suspicions of fraud and foul play would have been immensely increased.

“It is good, therefore, you will allow, to have more anchors than one: and another manuscript to join with the first, would give more authority as well as security. Now choose that second where you will, there shall be a thousand variations from the first; and yet half or more of the faults still remain in them both.

“A third, therefore, and so a fourth, and still on, are desirable; that by a joint and mutual help all the faults may be mended; some copy preserving the true reading in one place, and some in another. And yet, the more copies you call to assistance, the more do the various readings multiply upon you; every copy having its peculiar slips, though in a principal passage or two it do singular service. And this is fact, not only in the New Testament, but in all ancient books whatever.”—BENTLEY'S *Remarks on the Discourse on Free Thinking*, pp. 64, 65.]

• [“TERENCE is now in one of the best conditions of any of the classic writers: the oldest and best copy of him is now in the Vatican Library, which comes nearest to the poet's own hand; but even that has hundreds of errors, most of which may be mended out of other exemplars, that are otherwise more recent, and of inferior value. I myself have collated several; and affirm, that I have seen 20,000 various lections of that little author, not near so big as the whole *New Testament*; and am morally sure, that if half the number of manuscripts were collated for TERENCE, with that niceness and minuteness, which has been used in twice as many for the *New Testament*, the number of the *variations* would amount to above 50,000.

“The editors of profane authors do not use to trouble their readers, or risk their own reputation, by a useless list of every small slip committed by a lazy or ignorant scribe. What is thought commendable in an edition of Scripture, and has the name of fairness and fidelity, would in them be deemed impertinence and trifling. Hence the reader not versed in ancient manuscripts, is deceived into an opinion that there were no more variations in the copies than what the editor has communicated. Whereas, if the like scrupulousness was observed in registering the smallest changes in profane authors, as is allowed, nay

certain that the number of copies greatly strengthens the authority of the books, both by the agreement of such vast numbers, fetched from all parts of the world, (just allowance being made to the accidental slips or mistakes of transcribers, which cause no material alteration either

required, in sacred; the now formidable number of 30,000 [now 100,000] would appear a very trifle."

"And yet in these, and all other books, the text is not made more precarious on that account, but more certain and authentic. So that, if I may advise you, when you hear more of this scarecrow of 30,000, be neither astonished at the sum, nor in any pain for the text. The *New Testament* has suffered *less injury by the hand of time than any profane author*; there being not one ancient book besides it in the world, that, with all the help of various lections, (be they 50,000 if you will) does not stand in further want of emendation by true critique; nor is there one good edition of any, that has not inserted into the text (though every reader knows it not) what no manuscript vouches.

"Make your 30,000 as many more, if numbers of copies can ever reach that sum; all the better to a serious and knowing reader, who is thereby more richly furnished to select what he sees genuine. But even put them into the hands of a knave or fool, and yet, with the most sinister and absurd choice, he shall not extinguish the light of any one chapter, nor so disguise Christianity, but that every feature of it will still be the same.

"And this has already prevented the last shift and objection; that sacred books at least, books imposed upon the world as sacred laws and revelations, should have been exempted from the injuries of time, and secured from the least change. For what need of that perpetual miracle, if with all the present changes, the whole Scripture is perfect and sufficient, to all the great ends and purposes of its first writing? what a scheme would these men make? what worthy rules would they prescribe to Providence?—That in millions of copies transcribed in so many ages and nations, all the notaries and writers, who made it their trade and livelihood, should be infallible and impeccable? That their pens should spontaneously write true, or be supernaturally guided, though the scribes were nodding or dreaming? Would not this exceed all the miracles of both the Old and New Testament? And, pray, to what great use or design? To give satisfaction to a few obstinate and untractable wretches; to those who are not convinced by *Moses and the Prophets*, but want *one from the dead* to come and convert them. Such men mistake the methods of Providence, and the very fundamentals of religion; which draws its votaries by the *cords of a man*, by rational, ingenuous, and moral motives; not by conviction mathematical; not by new evidence miraculous, to silence every doubt and whim, that impiety and folly can suggest. And yet all this would have no effect upon such spirits and dispositions: if they now believe not *CHRIST* and his *apostles*, *neither would they believe*, if their own schemes were complied with."—BENTLEY'S *Remarks on the Discourse on Free Thinking*, pp. 65, 66. 71. 76.]

in sense or doctrine,) and by the light arising from the concurrence of many copies (such especially as are ancient) in one and the same reading, by which we are enabled to determine the true reading upon a sure foundation. On the other hand, when the copies are few, the errors of transcribers in many cases are not to be set right upon any other foundation than mere conjecture. This is the general sense of learned men, as being evidently founded upon reason and experience; and it appears to be so, from the great endeavors that are used by all such as undertake to give correct editions of ancient authors, to procure as many written copies as they can; and it also appears to be true in fact, that where the copies were few, editions have been very faulty and imperfect; where many, very correct and accurate; and in both cases more faulty or more correct, in proportion to the number of copies, such especially as are of greatest antiquity; in which respect, as well as in the numbers both of copies and translations, the New Testament has vastly the advantage of all other ancient writings whatsoever.

VI. *The doctrines of the apostles, contained in their Epistles and in the Acts, together with what is taught by our Saviour in the gospels, were designed to be a standing rule of faith and manners to Christians in all ages, and were from the beginning considered and received as such by the Churches of CHRIST.*

That those writings were designed to be a standing and perpetual rule of faith and manners, appears from what has already been proved; that is, from the instruction, commission, and inspiration, which the apostles received from CHRIST, together with the power of working miracles, in proof of their commission from him: and all this, in order to their declaring and opening to mankind the whole Gospel dispensation, and every part of it, and their perpetuating the knowledge of it throughout all generations to the end of the world. These were full and sufficient declarations of the will of CHRIST, that the whole dispensation of his Gospel should be opened by them, and be received by the world as *coming from him*, who had thus instructed and enlightened them, and effectually secured them against

error and mistake, and commissioned them to act in his name, and ratified that commission by miracles, that no doubt might remain but that they were sent by him on purpose to make a full and clear discovery of that dispensation to the world. And the necessary consequence of this is,—in the first place, that whatever they delivered concerning the doctrines and duties belonging to that dispensation, was to be received by all Christians as properly *coming from CHRIST*;—and then, that no other persons having been inspired and commissioned to publish the will of CHRIST, but the apostles only, what they published was *the whole* of what he intended to be published. The contrary suppositions plainly carry in them some one or more of these absurdities,—that CHRIST granted a commission, without full instructions, for the discharge of it,—that persons who acted under the guidance of the HOLY GHOST did not discharge it faithfully,—and that all the while he was confirming their doctrine by miracles, he left them liable to error. The inference from all which would be, that he came down from heaven to establish a new religion, and empowered special messengers to publish it to the world, but yet left mankind to the end of the world under an uncertainty what his religion was.

The apostles, to give their writings the authority which justly belonged to them, generally declare themselves in the beginning of their epistles to be the ‘*apostles and servants of JESUS CHRIST,*’ that is, persons *sent by him*, and specially *employed in his service*; and in other parts of the epistles, to the same effect, the “ambassadors,” the “stewards,” and the “ministers” of CHRIST—all which expressions imply, that they were the persons he had appointed to convey his will to mankind, and to dispense to them the great truths of the Gospel, which till then were unknown to the world. “Let a man so account of us as of the *ministers of CHRIST and stewards of the mysteries of God.*”^g—“By whom we have received *grace and apostleship*, for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name.”^h And the same apostle, speaking particularly

^g 1 Cor. iv. 1. ^h Rom. i. 5.

of the redemption wrought for us by CHRIST, and our reconciliation to God by his death, adds, "and hath *given to us the ministry* of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their former trespasses unto them, and hath *committed unto us* the word of reconciliation: now then *we are ambassadors* for CHRIST, as though God *did beseech you by us.*"ⁱ And elsewhere, upon the same subject: "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man CHRIST JESUS, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time: whereunto *I am ordained a preacher and an apostle, a teacher* of the Gentiles in faith and verity."^k And again: "the *minister of* JESUS CHRIST to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God;"^l and, "*I am made a minister of* CHRIST according to the dispensation of God which is *given to me*, to fulfil (i. e. fully to preach) the word of God."^m

Next, as to THE DOCTRINES delivered, they are spoken of as *the commandments of God and of CHRIST*:—"The things that I write unto you are the *commandments of the LORD*;"ⁿ and the Gospel preached was "the Gospel of CHRIST,"^o and the Gospel of God;"^p "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which, says St. Paul, "*was committed to my trust.*"^q And the same St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says, "When ye received the *word of God*, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (*as it is in truth*) the word of God."^r But when, upon a particular occasion, he delivered only his own private sentiments, he expressly tells the Corinthians, "I have no *commandment from the LORD*, yet I give my judgment."^s

Next, as the GUIDANCE and DIRECTION under which their doctrine was delivered, it has been already observed,^t that after the apostles had received their commission to declare and publish the Gospel to all nations, they also received the gift of the HOLY GHOST, who

ⁱ 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20.^k 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6, 7.^l Rom. xv. 16.^m Col. i. 25.ⁿ 1 Cor. xiv. 37.^o 2 Cor. ii. 12.^p 1 Thes. iii. 2.^q Rom. xv. 16.^r 2 Cor. xi. 7.^s 1 Thes. ii. 2, 8, 9.^t 1 Tim. i. 11.^u 1 Thes. ii. 13.^v 1 Cor. vii. 25, 40.^w Page 143.

should "*teach them all things*, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever CHRIST had said unto them,"^u and being "the Spirit of truth," should "*guide them into all truth.*"^v And so it is affirmed by St. Peter of them all, that they "*preached the Gospel with (or by) the HOLY GHOST sent down from heaven;*"^w and it is said of the particular doctrine of the Gentiles being fellow-heirs with the Jews, that it was "*revealed to the holy apostles and prophets (in general) by the Spirit.*"^x It has also been before observed, particularly of St. Paul,^y that he received his doctrine by immediate revelation; and though he was not of the number of those upon whom the HOLY GHOST descended at the feast of Pentecost, he declares in many places of his epistles that he acted under the guidance of the same Spirit:— "We speak the wisdom of GOD in a mystery—the things which GOD *hath revealed to us by his SPIRIT.*"^z "We have the mind of CHRIST."^a—"He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but GOD, who hath also *given unto us his HOLY SPIRIT.*"^b—We have received, not the Spirit of the world, but *the Spirit which is of GOD, that we may know the things that are freely given us of GOD*; which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but *which the HOLY GHOST teacheth.*"^c He tells the Corinthians, that he will give them a "*proof of CHRIST speaking in him;*"^d and describing the order in which the dead are to rise again (viz. those who are dead, and those who shall be found alive at the general resurrection) he declares, "*this we say unto you by the word of the LORD.*"^e And St. Peter affirms, that what St. Paul had written to the Christians, was "*according to the wisdom given unto him;*"^f and in the same place he sets St. Paul's epistles upon the same foot with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which the Jewish converts, to whom St. Peter was writing, did most firmly believe to be inspired.

If it be said that these are the testimonies of persons *concerning themselves*, it is again to be remembered,

^u John xiv. 26. ^v John xvi. 13. ^w 1 Pet. i. 12. ^x Ephes. iii. 5. ^y Page 148. ^z 1 Cor. ii. 7. 9, 10. ^a 1 Cor. ii. 16.
^b 1 Thes. iv. 8. ^c 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13. ^d 2 Cor. xiii. 3. ^e 1 Thess. iv. 15. ^f 2 Pet. iii. 15.

that the writers of the epistles are the same persons whom the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles testify to have been specially commissioned by CHRIST, and to have received from him the gift of the HOLY GHOST, and to have wrought many and great miracles in his name; and all this on purpose to qualify them for publishing his Gospel to the world, and to put it out of all doubt that they were ministers and ambassadors sent by him, and that therefore *entire credit* might be given to whatever they delivered in his name, and their doctrine be received by all Christians as a true and full account of the Gospel dispensation, or, in other words, as a divine rule of faith and manners.

Accordingly, the Christians of the most early ages, declared and asserted in the clearest manner, that the writings of the apostles were divinely inspired, and that, as such, they became of course a rule to all Christians. CLEMENT, a fellow laborer of St. Paul, writes thus to the Corinthians: "The apostles delivered the Gospel to us from our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and JESUS CHRIST from God. Wherefore CHRIST was sent by God, and the apostles by CHRIST. Having therefore received their instructions, and being confirmed in the faith by the word of God and the fulness of the HOLY GHOST; they went forth preaching that the kingdom of God was at hand." And he bids them 'consider the epistle of the blessed apostle Paul, which was assuredly sent to them by the assistance of the SPIRIT.'^g POLYCARP, the disciple of St. John, says to the Philippians concerning St. Paul, "being present, he taught you the word of truth with all exactness and soundness; and being absent, wrote an epistle to you, which if you look into, you may be built up in the faith that was delivered to you."^h THEOPHILUS of Antioch, in the second century, calls the evangelists 'the bearers of the SPIRIT.' and says of the prophets and apostles, that they 'spoke by one and the same SPIRIT.'ⁱ IRENÆUS, in the same century, says, that 'the Scriptures were dictated by the Word of God and his SPIRIT';^k and, that 'one and the same SPIRIT preached in the prophets, and published in

^g CLEM. ROM. *Ep. ad Corinth.* cap. 42. 47. ^h POLYCARP. *Ep. ad Philip.* cap. 3. ⁱ THEOPH. *ad Autolyc.* Lib. III. ^k IREN. Lib. II. c. xlvii.

the apostles.’¹ And he has one whole chapter,^m to show that the other apostles as well as Paul, had their knowledge *by revelation from God*. He particularly blames those as impious, who presumed to say, that the apostles preached, before they had a perfect knowledge of what they were to preach: for, says he, “after our LORD was risen from the dead, and they were endued by the HOLY GHOST with power from on high, they were filled with all truths, and had perfect knowledge, and then went forth into the ends of the world, publishing the good things which God hath provided for us, and preaching peace from Heaven unto men.”ⁿ JUSTIN MARTYR, in the same century, speaks of the Scriptures as writings “full of the HOLY GHOST.”^o In the next century, CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS says, “The apostles might well be called prophets, one and the same HOLY SPIRIT working in both;”^p and speaking of the prophets and apostles jointly, he says “they had the mind of the prophetic and instructing SPIRIT secretly revealed to them;”^q and he calls the apostles, in particular, “disciples of the SPIRIT.” ORIGEN mentions the gospels, as acknowledged to be of *divine authority* by all Churches; and speaking of the inspiration of the prophets, says, that “the same God inspired the evangelists and apostles;” and he mentions those sacred books, as “not of men, but from the inspiration of the HOLY GHOST, by the will of the Father, through JESUS CHRIST;” and says, “There is nothing in the prophets, or the law, or the gospels, or the apostles (by which last is meant the epistles) that is not from the fulness of God;” and, that “there is an entire harmony and agreement between the Old Testament and the New, between the law and the prophets, between the evangelical and apostolical writings, and between the apostolical writings with relation to one another:” and both he and others frequently style those writings ‘the oracles of God,’ and ‘the voice of God.’^r

¹ IREN. Lib. III. c. xxv. ^m IREN. Lib. III. c. xiii. ⁿ IREN. Lib. III. c. i. ^o JUST. MART. *Dial. cum Trypho*. ^p CLEM. ALEX. *Strom.* Lib. V. ^q CLEM. ALEX. *Strom.* Lib. V. ^r ORIG. in *Johan.* p. 4, 5. *Philocal.* p. 7. 11. 21. 30.—[For other full testimony to the same effect, see PALEY'S *Evidences*, Part I. Prop. I. chap. ix. sect. 2.]

What has been already said, and repeated, concerning the commission which the apostles received from CHRIST for publishing his Gospel to the world, and his enduing them for that end with the Holy Spirit, and with the power of working miracles, abundantly shows that whatever they delivered concerning the nature of that institution, and the doctrines and duties properly belonging to it, was intended by CHRIST and his apostles to be a *fixed and perpetual rule* to the Christian Church. And as they intended it, so the first Christians understood and received it. The gospels were read in their assemblies, as part of their public worship; the exhortations of the ministers delivered in the same assemblies were founded upon the portions which had been read out of those gospels;—they began early to write commentaries upon the books of the New Testament, as upon a sacred text;—and controversies were finally determined by what should appear upon examination to be the true meaning and tenor of those books. Upon this foundation it is, that IRENÆUS attests the truth of his own doctrine against one of the heretics of that time. “Let him,” says he, “examine what I have written, and he will find it *consonant to the doctrine of the apostles*, and exactly agreeable to what they taught.”^s The same ancient writer speaks of what the apostles taught, as ‘the rule of truth;’ and calls the gospels ‘the pillar and foundation of the Church;’ and says of the apostles, that ‘the Church throughout the world *grounding themselves upon their doctrine*, persevered in the self-same sentiments concerning God and his Son:”—and “We have not known the methods of our salvation from any others, than those by whom the Gospel came to us, which the apostles preached, and afterwards, by the will of GOD, delivered down to us in writing, to be *the foundation and pillar of our faith*.”^u He charges the heretics with perverting both the evangelical and apostolical writings to such senses as might favor their own doctrines, and with affirming the things which neither the prophets preached, nor CHRIST taught, nor the apostles delivered; and that,

^r JUST. MART. *Apol.* II.
III. c. xi. xii.

^s IREN. Lib. III. c. xii.

^t IREN. Lib.

^u IREN. Lib. III. c. i.

while they went beyond the Scriptures, they destroyed *the bounds of truth*.^v And so TERTULLIAN; "Take away from heretics their pagan doctrines, and let them refer their questions to the decision of the Scriptures, and they will not be able to stand."^w And elsewhere he censures those as weak, who think they can discourse of matters of faith otherwise than from the books containing that faith.^x To the same purpose, CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS says, "Let us not content ourselves with the testimonies of men, but let us confirm that which comes in question by the *word of God*, which is to be credited beyond all demonstrations, or rather is itself the only demonstration."^y

Whether therefore we consider what the commission was which the apostles received from CHRIST, or what the gifts and powers by which they were enabled to discharge it; what they declared concerning their authority and the doctrine they delivered; or what the first Christians believed and declared concerning them: in all and every of these views, we see the clearest evidence that the matters and doctrines contained in the New Testament, as coming from persons who were commissioned and inspired by CHRIST to publish his religion to the world, were designed to be *a fixed and perpetual rule* to Christians in all future ages. And they were in fact received under that character by the first Christians; and after the increase of the Gospel, by particular Churches, gradually, as these Churches came to a certain knowledge of the several books being written by persons divinely inspired; and in process of time by the whole Christian Church, upon a full and general conviction that they were the writings of such persons, and that there was no just or reasonable ground of doubt, either about the books or the writers of them. And as I observed before, the slowness and caution of particular Churches in giving assent, is one good argument that they were faithful and impartial witnesses.—So unjust have been the suggestions of some, who yet bore no ill will to Christianity, that all the books of the

^v "Membra Veritatis."—*Adv. Hær. Lib. I. c. vii. xv.* ^w TERTULL. *de Resurrect. c. iii.* ^x TERTULL. *de Præscrip. c. xv.*
^y CLEM. ALEX. *Strom. L. VII.*

New Testament became authentic *at once*, by a solemn act of the Church, and that it was the *authority of the Church* that made them a *rule or canon* to all Christians! On the contrary, *particular books* were received by *particular Churches*, sooner or later, according to the time of writing, and according to the different opportunities they had of coming to the knowledge of them, by reason of the different distance of cities and countries from one another, and the different degrees of correspondence among them. The rule which determined them to admit the particular books, was *the assurance they had, that they were written by persons divinely inspired*; and upon this (when it became clear to them upon due inquiry and examination,) they grounded the authority of each book. From henceforth, writers cited the books in confirmation of the doctrines and duties of Christianity, and the people considered them as a divine rule of faith and manners; both which we see as early as we have any of their writings. And when, by degrees, *every particular Church* was satisfied that *all the books* were written by persons divinely inspired, they publicly *declared* their satisfaction, in councils occasionally assembled to regulate the general affairs of the Church. The books were not *therefore* authentic, because those declarations were made, but the declarations were therefore made, because the books *were authentic*; the Church being considered only as *a witness* that they were written by the persons whose names they bear, and to whom they are ascribed, and from whose inspiration they derive their authority.

I am well aware, that in later ages there have arisen men who would confine the Christian rule or canon to the writings of the evangelists, and the Christian faith to the single article of believing *JESUS to be the Messiah*; this seeming to have been sufficient *at first* to gain admittance into the Christian Church, and the truth of that proposition being abundantly attested by the four gospels. But it was not rightly considered by those men, how extensive that article was, and how many more it included in it; the assent to it being, in effect, an acknowledgment that *JESUS* was the *SON OF GOD*, and the baptism received in virtue of that assent, an embracing of the doctrine of *FATHER, SON, and*

HOLY GHOST; and both the assent and the baptism, a general profession of taking CHRIST for their Master; and that profession a general engagement to conform to all the doctrines and rules which he should deliver, either by himself or by persons whom he should commission, to make further declarations of his will. So that the admission into the Church by baptism, upon the belief of that single article, was properly the *admitting persons into the school of Christianity*, to be further '*instructed*' and '*built up*' in the faith of CHRIST; and to consider such admission in any other light, is just as if one should argue that a child is a complete man, because he has all the parts of a man, and will, by due nourishment and instruction, grow up gradually to the stature and knowledge of a perfect man. This is the light in which the apostles of our LORD considered it. St. Peter, writing to the Christians dispersed in several parts of the world, directs them "*as new born babes* (as those who were yet tender and young in the Christian faith) to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they *may grow thereby*."^a And St. Paul tells the Christians at Corinth, to whom he '*spake as unto babes in CHRIST*,' "*I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it*."^a And when he reproves the Hebrews for their slow progress in the knowledge of the Christian faith, he tells them, "*When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat; for every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use* (in the margin, it is *habit* or *perfection*) *have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*."^b From whence he immediately infers, "*Therefore, leaving the principles* (or first rudiments) *of the doctrine of CHRIST, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God; of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of*

^a 1 Pet. ii. 2.^a 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2.^b Heb. v. 12, 13, 14.

hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."^c

A late ingenious writer^d who has traced out the several steps taken by CHRIST and his apostles in the first promulgation of the Gospel, had a true notion of this, and calls the proposition, 'that JESUS is the Messiah,' the *first entrance and initiation* into the Christian faith; and adds, that "*in the progress of the Gospel, the apostles explained the heads of the Christian faith more fully and openly, to the end that at length by their preaching and ministry the whole will and counsel of GOD might be manifested; that is, all things which ought to be believed and done to obtain eternal life.*" And, speaking of the inspiration of the apostles,^e he says, 'the HOLY GHOST was given them, not only to bring to their remembrance whatever they had heard from CHRIST, but also, to *add* all such things as were necessary to *fill up and complete* the Christian doctrine.' He says further, that in the Acts of the Apostles we have the first lineaments of a rising Church, and as it were the ground-work of the Christian faith;^f and afterwards, where he describes the gradual opening of the Gospel,^g he takes notice, that the apostles, "to whom was committed *the expounding* of that new revelation," delivered some doctrines sooner, and some later; and compares the growth of the Christian dispensation to that of a flower, which opens itself gradually; and adds, that some of the mysteries belonging to

^c Heb. vi. 1, 2.

^d Dr. BURNET, late master of the Charter-House, in his book *De Fide & Officiis*, p. 117.—[Dr. THOMAS BURNET is perhaps better known as the author of the ingenious *Theory of the Earth*, first published in elegant Latin in 1680, and afterwards translated by the author into English: one of the earliest and most famous among the multitude of systems of cosmogony. Dr. Burnet was a pupil of TILLOTSON. During the reign of James II. he distinguished himself by opposition to the arbitrary proceedings of that monarch. The treatise cited by Bishop GIBSON was not published until after the author's death, which took place in 1715, at the advanced age of 80. The work, although in many respects valuable, is by no means unexceptionable in point of doctrine. Another by the same writer, and published about the same time, *De Statu Mortuorum et Resurgentium*, is even more objectionable.]

* Page 120.

† Page 121.

‡ Page 138.

it, were more seasonably delivered ‘after the first seeds had taken root.’^h

An ingenious person, who at his first transition from inquiries merely rational to those of revelation, set himself to reduce the fundamental doctrines of Christianity to the narrowest compass he possibly could, seems not to have considered enough this *gradual opening* of the Gospel dispensation, when he made that one article, ‘that JESUS is the Messiah,’ the belief of which was no more than the *first entrance* into the Christian faith, to be *the whole* of it—if he meant it in any other sense than as it carried in it a general acknowledgment, that they who made that profession did thereby receive CHRIST for their master, and were ready to embrace whatever doctrines or precepts should come from him, with a sincere disposition to be instructed in them. And, in truth, that he meant it in this extent, and designed no more than a *speculative* inquiry about the nature of fundamentals, seems plain from what he adds, that “as for *the rest* of divine truths, there is nothing more required of a Christian, but that he receive all the parts of divine revelation with a docility and disposition prepared to embrace and assent to *all truths coming from God*; and submit his mind to whatsoever shall appear to him to bear that character.”ⁱ This was all that could be required of the first converts to Christianity, to whom the Gospel dispensation was not yet opened; but it follows not from thence, that no more was necessary to be believed by Christians, after that dispensation was fully opened: on the contrary, it follows, that an actual belief of the doctrines of the Gospel, after a full declaration made of them, was as necessary to make men Christians, as a readiness and disposition to receive them was before; and the way by which both approved themselves to be true and sincere Christians, was an honest disposition to embrace all the light that was afforded them, whether by CHRIST himself, or by those whom he inspired and commissioned for the opening and publishing his Gospel to the world. And therefore the same author, speaking of the apostles, and

^h BURNET *de Fide et Officiis*, page 139.
ⁱ *ableness of Christianity*, page 300.

their writings,^k says, "these holy writers, inspired from above, writ nothing but truth, and in most places very weighty truths to us now, for the expounding, clearing, and confirming of the Christian doctrine." And in his later years, when he had more maturely considered the frame and tenor of the Gospel dispensation, he calls the writings of the New Testament, without distinction, 'Holy Scripture,' 'Holy Writings,' the 'Sacred Text,' 'Writings dictated by the SPIRIT of GOD ;'^l and says of the writings of the apostles, that "the doctrines contained in them tend wholly to the setting up the kingdom of JESUS CHRIST in this world."^m Particularly of St. Paul and his epistles, upon several of which he wrote a very useful and elaborate commentary during his retirement in his last years, he says, that as to this apostle, "he had the whole doctrine of the Gospel from God by immediate revelation ; that for his information in the Christian knowledge, and the mysteries and depths of the dispensation of GOD by JESUS CHRIST, God himself had condescended to be his instructor and teacher ; and that he had received the light of the Gospel from the Fountain and Father of light Himself ;"ⁿ and as to his epistles, that "they were dictated by the spirit of GOD."^o In his preface to the commentary upon the Epistle to the Romans, after having enumerated some of the particulars in which that epistle opens the Gospel dispensation to mankind, he adds, "these are but some of the more general and more comprehensive heads of the Christian doctrine to be found in this epistle. The design of a synopsis will not permit me to descend more minutely to particulars ; but this let me say, that he that would have an enlarged view of true Christianity, would do well to study this epistle." To induce men to the study of the New Testament in general, he says, "the only way to be preserved from error, is to betake ourselves in earnest to the study of the way to salvation, in those holy writings wherein God has revealed it from heaven, and proposed it to the world ; seeking our religion where we are sure it is in truth to be found."^p And, in a letter written the

^k Page 297.

^l *Preface to his Commentary.*

^m *Ibid.* page 22.

ⁿ *Ibid.* page 16.

^o *Ibid.* page 17.

^p *Ibid.* page 24.

year before his death, to one who had asked him this question, What is the shortest way to attain to a true knowledge of the Christian religion in the full and just extent of it? his answer is, "Study the Holy Scripture, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter."^a And of St. Paul's epistles, which he was more particularly led to speak of in the preface to his 'Commentary,' he says, that the studying and understanding them aright, will make those who do it to "rejoice in the light they receive from those *most useful parts* of divine revelation."

This writer also furnishes us with an answer to the objection usually made by infidels and skeptics, that if the epistles were written upon particular occasions only, they would not have been written at all if those occasions had not happened, and that therefore the Christian faith was completely delivered before, in the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.—"The providence of God,"^r says he, "hath so ordered it, that St. Paul has writ a great number of epistles (and the same is true of those that were written by other apostles) which though upon different occasions, and to several purposes, yet are all confined within the business of his apostleship, and so contain nothing but points of Christian instruction; amongst which, he seldom fails to drop in and often to enlarge upon the great and distinguishing doctrines of our holy religion." If the writing of the epistles was *ordered by the providence of God*, the same providence certainly intended that they should be *a rule and direction* to the Christian Church; and if the providence of God had not so ordered it, that the epistles should be written, the same providence would have found out some other way to open and explain the Christian revelation in the manner they have done. The question therefore is not, what the state of things would have been if the epistles *had not been written* (which no mortal can tell,) but the only question is, how the matter stands, *now they are written*, and whether we are at liberty to consider them other-

^a *Posthumous Works*, page 344. ^r *Preface to Comment.* page 21.

wise than as openings and explanations of the Christian doctrine, when they come from persons divinely inspired, and commissioned by CHRIST to publish his Gospel to the world; in virtue of which (as the other writer before mentioned has truly said) they were enabled and empowered "to *add* all such things as were necessary to *fill up* and *complete* the Christian doctrine."^s

Whatever therefore we find in the writings of the apostles that concerns the doctrine and economy of the Christian dispensation, whether it be *further explanations* of what is more generally delivered in the gospels and Acts of the Apostles, or *additions* to them; it is what we are empowered by CHRIST and enabled by the HOLY GHOST to deliver to the world, and so became a rule of faith and practice to Christians to the end of the world. Such are these that follow:—the misery brought upon mankind by the fall of Adam, and the deliverance out of that misery as wrought for us by CHRIST:—the insufficiency of the Mosaical law for obtaining salvation:—the typical nature of the ceremonial law as prefiguring CHRIST, the end of that law and our great sacrifice, high priest and lawgiver:—the outward performances of the ceremonial law, represented as emblems of inward purity:—the excellency of the sacrifice, ministry, and laws of CHRIST, beyond those of the Mosaical dispensation:—the efficacy of the death of CHRIST and of the whole Gospel dispensation, for obtaining pardon of sin, reconciliation to God, and eternal life:—the union of the divine and human nature in CHRIST:—the necessity of his *incarnation*, to be first a teacher and example, and after that to be capable of dying; of his *death*, to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself; of his *resurrection*, to prove his conquest over death, and to be an earnest of our rising from the dead; and of his *ascension*, to be vested with all power in heaven and earth, and to be our mediator, advocate and intercessor at the right hand of his Father:—the universality and sufficiency of the grace promised in the Gospel, decreed by God from the foundation of the world, and revealed in due time in the Gospel, for the salvation of all true believers:—the right of Gen-

^s BURNET *de Fide*, &c. p. 120.

tiles as well as Jews, to be partakers of the mercies and benefits of the Gospel covenant, in CHRIST :—the justice of God in rejecting the unbelieving Jews and calling the Gentiles ;—the necessity of faith in him, in order to our justification in the sight of God, and the impossibility of obtaining salvation in any other way than through the atonement made by him :—the efficacy of faith, and the necessity of good works, as the genuine fruits of a true and lively faith :—the sanctification of our nature by the SPIRIT of GOD :—the ordinary operations and influences of the HOLY SPIRIT ; and the obligation to love, peace, meekness, gentleness, and mutual forbearance, as the fruits of the SPIRIT :—the power and vigilance of our enemy the devil and his wicked spirits ; and the great sinfulness of envy, detraction, malice, hatred, and revenge, as properly the works of the devil :—the duty of doing all things to the glory of God, by employing our several gifts and talents for that end :—the duty of repentance from dead works ; of dying to sin and living to God ; and of putting on the new man, and living, not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit :—the duties of mortification and self denial, in order to the subduing our inordinate lusts and appetites :—the absolute necessity of holiness, and the utter inconsistency of uncleanness of all kinds with the purity of the Gospel :—the duty of preserving the bond of marriage sacred and inviolable :—the nature of the Church of CHRIST upon earth, and the communion of Christians with him as their head, and with one another as joint members of his body :—the true import, due administration, and proper efficacy of the ordinances instituted by him :—the government of his Church, and the appointment of pastors and teachers therein, to minister in holy things, and to explain to the people the doctrines of Christianity, and enforce the duties of it :—the public worship and discipline appointed in his Church, the first to be attended, and the second to be submitted to by all Christians :—the necessity of union among the members of CHRIST'S Church, and the great mischief of divisions :—the duty of praying for the wants of one another both spiritual and temporal :—the due regulation of religious zeal, and the danger of a misguided zeal :—the duty of preaching and taking up the cross of

CHRIST; and the mischiefs of corrupting the Christian faith by philosophy and the wisdom of this world:—the extreme danger of infidelity and apostacy from the faith:—the distinguishing reward of those who suffer patiently for the truth of the Gospel, and persevere unto the end:—the relation which good Christians bear to the saints in heaven, while they continue upon earth:—the great happiness that is there laid up for all the faithful servants of CHRIST:—the order of the general resurrection; and the changes that will be then made in the bodies of good men.

These and the like heads of doctrine and instruction which are to be found in the epistles, being added to the light which we receive from the gospels and Acts of the Apostles, give us a complete view of the Christian dispensation and every branch of it; the one being the foundation, and the other the superstructure, and both necessary to build us up in the *true faith and doctrine of CHRIST*. And whether these be all equally necessary to be explicitly known and believed, or all equally fundamental, is a useless and idle inquiry. Whoever reads the writings of the apostles, and is persuaded that the doctrines they delivered were received from CHRIST, or written by the direction and assistance of his HOLY SPIRIT, cannot but think himself obliged to believe and do whatever he finds delivered in these writings, and to consider them as a divine rule of faith and practice.

As to the duties merely moral, and such as belong to our several stations and circumstances in this world, no infidel has ever been so hardy as to deny that the epistles contain a variety of admirable precepts and directions for our conduct and behavior in the several relations of life, (for magistrates and people, wives and husbands, parents and children, masters and servants,) and also in the several conditions and circumstances of life, riches and poverty, health and sickness, prosperity and adversity. Nor need I repeat here what I have shown at large elsewhere.¹ That these and the like duties, as laid down and enjoined in those sacred writings, are not only carried to higher degrees of perfection than they

¹ *Second Pastoral Letter*, p. 115.

ever were in the schools of morality, but also have far greater weight here, as having the stamp and sanction of divine authority, and as they are enforced by considerations relating to our eternal happiness in the next life, and by motives immediately resulting from our relation to CHRIST, and from the general doctrines and principles of the Christian faith.

It is true, that the *immediate occasion* of several of the epistles, was the correcting errors and irregularities in particular Churches and countries. Such were the corrupting Christianity with mixtures of Judaism and philosophy;—apostacy from the faith they had received;—contentions and divisions among themselves;—neglect of the public assemblies and misbehavior in them;—the despising of government;—the dishonoring of marriage;—the allowing fornication, &c.—And God knows our own times are a sad instance of the necessity of such cautions in *all* ages, and the no less necessity of attending to the duties which are directly opposite to those vices and irregularities, and which the apostles take occasion from thence to lay down and enforce. And even their decisions of cases concerning meats and drinks, and the observation of the ceremonial law, and other like doubts which were peculiar to the Jewish converts in the first occasion of them; these rules also are, and always will be, our surest guides in all points relating to Christian liberty, and the use of things indifferent, when the grounds of those decisions, and the directions consequent upon them, are duly attended to, and applied to cases of the like nature by the rules of piety and prudence: or, as a learned writer^a expresses it, “*by analogy and parity of reason*, those may be extended very profitably to the general behoof and advantage of other Churches of God, and particular Christians of all ages;” especially, in one point which is of universal concern in life, I mean, the duty of abstaining from many things which are in themselves innocent, if we foresee that they will give offence to weak Christians, or be the occasion of leading others into sin.

The sum, then, of the *sixth head* is this; that the apostles were intrusted by CHRIST with the making a

^a Dr. HAMMOND.

full and entire publication of his Gospel, and inspired by the HOLY GHOST, to enable them to discharge that trust:—that the books of the New Testament were all written or approved* by them:—that Christians in all ages have thought themselves obliged to consider and understand the nature of the Gospel dispensation, as they found it explained by persons thus authorized and inspired;—and that, as soon as the several books of the New Testament appeared upon clear and evident proof to be written by the persons whose names they bore, all Christian Churches received them as inspired writings, and as a divine rule of faith and manners.

The inference from all this, which every one who is a Christian in earnest ought to make to himself is: to consider it as *his indispensable duty to peruse and attend to those sacred books*, as explaining to him the terms of salvation according to the Gospel covenant, and acquainting him with the conditions required on his part in order to obtain it.

And because the books of the OLD TESTAMENT are also the *oracles of God*, delivered from time to time to the Jewish nation, and are declared by the New Testament to be written by divine inspiration, and do contain in them many excellent lessons of duty, and a great variety of mercies and judgments sent upon men and nations, according to their obedience or disobedience to the commands of God, and also the accounts of God's communications with mankind and his dealings with them from the creation of the world; together with a treasure of devotions and meditations of all kinds and for all conditions, especially in the book of Psalms:—let me therefore further entreat you carefully to peruse those sacred writings, frequently and seriously meditating upon the various providences and dispensations of God to men, and learning from thence to praise and adore his power, wisdom, justice, and goodness; and to be careful above all things to recommend yourselves to his favor and protection, by a strict and uniform obedience to his laws. What St. Paul says of Timothy, is a high commendation of him: “From a child thou

* The gospels of Mark and Luke. See page 132.

hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in CHRIST JESUS ;” and then he adds, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”^y And as God has “caused all Holy Scriptures,” both of the Old and New Testament, “to be written for our learning,” as the Liturgy of our Church expresses it;^z be you always careful, that (in the words of the same Liturgy) you do “in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of his holy word, you may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which he hath given us in our Saviour JESUS CHRIST.”

TO CONCLUDE :

IN this and my two former letters, I have given you a view of the Christian religion, and the evidences of the truth of it, in as short a compass, and in the plainest manner I was able; with an eye throughout to the present attempts of infidels against our common faith, and with a sincere desire to preserve you from the infection, and to establish you in that faith. I have shown you, that the revealed will of God is your ONLY SURE GUIDE in the way to salvation; that a FULL REVELATION of his will, concerning the method and terms of your salvation, is contained in the writings of the New Testament;—that those writings are GENUINE and AUTHENTIC, and have been FAITHFULLY TRANSMITTED to us;—and that, if you neglect the means of salvation which God has appointed, and seek for it in any other way, you will not only FAIL OF IT IN THE END, but likewise render yourselves INEXCUSABLE in his sight.

I beseech you therefore to weigh and consider what I have written for your use, with such seriousness, attention, and impartiality, as the importance of these things most manifestly requires and deserves; and to take great care

^y 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17.
Compare 1 Cor. x. 11.

^z Collect for second Sunday in Advent.

that your inquiries after truth be wholly free from the influences of profit or pleasure, pride or passion, and from all views and considerations whatsoever, except a sincere desire and intention to *know* and *do* the will of God, in order to secure your eternal salvation.

And that, in the pursuit of this great work, your own endeavors may be ever accompanied with the Divine direction and assistance, is the hearty and earnest prayer of

YOUR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND PASTOR,

EDMUND LONDON.

LETTERS ON INFIDELITY.

BY GEORGE HORNE, D. D.

[LATE BISHOP OF NORWICH.]

AUTHOR OF A LETTER TO DOCTOR ADAM SMITH.

THE doctrine of Epicurus is ever ruinous to Society: It had its rise when Greece was declining, and perhaps hastened its dissolution, as also that of Rome; it is now propagated in France and England, and seems likely to produce the same effect in both.—GRAY, *Memoir*, p. 202.

PREFACE.

THE tracts which follow were in the first instance published separately, anonymously, and, as the contents will show, in an order now inverted. The more general interest and importance of the larger work; and the fitness of the other to leave the reader both in a proper frame of mind, and possessed of clear notions of the contrast between the infidel and his principles on the one hand, and the religion against which he set himself, on the other; were the reasons for this transposition.

The *Letter to Dr. Smith* was first published from the Clarendon Press, without the author's name, in 1777.^a It attracted much notice, and very effectually answered its end, by awakening the public attention to the true character of HUME and his then increasing school. Several editions succeeded each other with rapidity; and HORNE, to whom the pamphlet was almost immediately ascribed, received the thanks and applauses of all true friends of religion.

It was not to be expected that such a severe attack

^a HUME died the 25th of August, 1776. His autobiography, entitled *My Own Life*, bears date April 18th of the same year. The *Letter from Adam Smith, LL. D., to William Strahan, Esq.*, which called forth the animadversions of HORNE, was published as a supplement to HUME's *Life*. It is dated Nov. 9, 1776.

would be received in silence by Dr. SMITH. *An Apology for the Life and Death of Mr. Hume* appeared, but how soon, or in what form, I am ignorant. It was confidently attributed to Dr. SMITH by the periodicals of the day, although generally allowed to be a weak performance, and unworthy of its reputed author.^b

This pamphlet was one of the occasions for the appearance of the *Letters on Infidelity*. Other causes, however, operated more immediately to the same effect. The publication of HUME's pestilent *Essays on Suicide and the Immortality of the Soul*, as "ascribed to him," in 1783,^c and the private, but diligent circulation, about the same time, of the obscure and scurrilous production answered in the eighth and following Letters, aroused the just indignation of Dr. Horne, and by affording a fair object for the exercise of his satiric talent, tempted him once more to inflict deserved chastisement upon the enemies of Christianity. Accordingly, in 1784, he at once replied to Dr. SMITH's *Apology*, assumed the new ground of attack on HUME afforded by the posthumous publication of his *Essays on Suicide*,^d and gave

^b It does not appear among Dr. SMITH's collected works: but as this is also the case with the *Letter to Wm. Strahan, Esq.*, the circumstance affords no evidence against the correctness of the supposition that he was the author.

^c Thirty years before, these *Essays* had been prepared by their author for publication in a volume which then appeared. But after they had been actually printed, and a few copies privately circulated, Miller, the publisher, was induced by a threat of prosecution to cancel them, though much against the author's will. The few copies in existence were consequently scarce and dear, until the edition of 1783, in 12mo., made the work generally accessible. To this edition, it is true, the editor pretended to affix "remarks intended as an antidote;" but more probably designed as an evasion of the danger of prosecution.

^d If this *posthumous* publication had been against the author's will, or even without his consent, he could hardly have been held justly

to the *Doubts of the Infidels* the answer which they merited, in his *Letters on Infidelity by the author of 'A Letter to Dr. Adam Smith,'* printed, like the 'Letter,' at the Clarendon Press, Oxford.

It must be acknowledged that there are some features in both these tracts which tend to unfit them for republication, and lessen their claims to be considered as 'standard works.' There is an air of *personality* about them which seems to militate against general utility. The obscure production which occupies so much of the *Letters on Infidelity* has long since met with its deserved oblivion. The allusions which give some of HORNE'S sarcasms their poignancy have lost the interest which they derived from the affairs of the day, and almost cease to be intelligible.

Yet there are overbalancing considerations to justify their selection. The *Letter to Adam Smith* cannot be needless so long as the fact which occasioned it meets with extensive circulation, and insinuates its falsehoods in the public ear. This is the case as yet, and likely so to be; for HUME'S *History of England* has not been superseded, and to every edition of that work his '*Own Life,*' and DR. SMITH'S supplementary *Letter,* are prefixed.

The *Doubts of the Infidels*, against which so large a portion of the wit and reasoning in the other *Letters* is directed, are, it is true, forgotten. But the arguments which HORNE selects from that work for animadversion are the very same—often in the very same language—which are at this day in the mouth of every victim of the seductions of the infidel school. They are invari-

liable for its contents. But the circumstances stated in the preceding note, on the authority of the *Monthly Review*, (Vol. LXX. p. 828,) show that HORNE'S procedure was entirely fair.

ably given in the shortest form; the ridicule thrown on them attaches to the so-called reasoning, not to the vehicle; the answers are as available now, as when first given; if the references to pages were omitted, the reader would scarcely have grounds to surmise that the quotations were not taken from the daily fanfaronade of the modern tribe of *doubters*.

On the other hand, the plain, matter-of-fact style of these Letters,—the simplicity and honest openness of their reasoning—the brevity and intelligibility of all the answers given to objections and difficulties started, and the very *commonness* of those objections and difficulties—and, more especially, the lively warmth and rich vein of humor which pervade the whole, abundantly compensate for the slight attendant disadvantages. The work was pronounced by a contemporary critic “well calculated to suit the turn of the age;” and the recommendation still holds good. It will command attention where serious expostulation and sound argument would meet with utter neglect; and it will furnish the Christian with weapons for his warfare against unbelief, better adapted to the light chit-chat character of the learning and controversy of the day, than even the armor of proof laid up in the storehouses of LESLIE, and LARDNER, and BUTLER.

The letters on the subject of *suicide*, it may be thought, are hardly defensible, even on these grounds:—Why give so much prominence to silly ravings, too contemptible to deserve notice?—In the first place, it may be answered, they are worthy of preservation as a specimen of *the fruits of infidelity*. It is well that, as such, they should be dragged forth to the glare of open day—and if exposed, they must be treated with their due contumely.—Secondly; bad as they are, these arguments for *suicide* are the best producible: and

while instances of the crime continue to occur, and the heartless skepticism, which, more than any thing else, contributes to its perpetuation, still finds proselytes,—there is propriety in exhibiting, again and again, its utter destitution of excuse.

As vehicles of truth, it is on their *reasoning* that these tracts must depend for their efficiency; and in that respect they will not be found wanting. Few treatises of equal brevity comprise more, and more cogent arguments against the cold, heartless system which would degrade man to the level of the perishing brute;—few exhibit with equal clearness the contrast between the consequences of that system and the effects of the blessed Gospel of everlasting life. The *ridicule* with which HORNE has given such new zest to his defence of revelation, will be useful as a support of the truth thus displayed—a weapon against the error already pointed out. It was thus that he intended it should be regarded—“not as a *test* of truth,” but as a legitimate means of recommending its reception, and warding off the assaults of falsehood.—There are, doubtless, many assailable points of infidelity against which HORNE has wielded neither his light shafts of raillery nor his more solid array of reasoning; there may be many objections which he has neither brought forward, nor attempted to obviate: his design was not to exhaust the subject, but, as it were, by a predatory incursion on the enemy’s territory, to show the weakness of his defences. It would have been a hopeless, and in all likelihood an equally useless task, to examine in a similar manner all that perverted ingenuity has raked together to do despite to the truth of God. The following remarks of W. JONES, of Nayland, with reference to this subject, are worthy of all attention.

“If Christians are bound to answer so long as infidels

will object, who never wish to be satisfied, and are probably incapable of being so, their lot would be rather hard, and much of their time unprofitably spent. The gentlemen of the long robe attend the court, not to answer the scruples which felons may entertain about the principles of justice, but to administer the law; otherwise their work would never be done:—and it is the business of the clergy to preach the Gospel to the people; it was the part of God, who gave the word, to prove it to the world by prophecies and miracles. The prophecies are as strong as ever; some of them more so than formerly: and miracles are not to be repeated for proof; after the world hath once been persuaded, all is then left to testimony and education. Before Moses gave the law, he showed signs and wonders; but when the law was once received, parents were to tell their children, and confirm the truth by the memorials that were left of it. It therefore lies upon our adversaries to show, how it came to pass, on any of *their* principles, that men like themselves, as much disposed to make objections, should receive the Scripture as the word of God in the several nations of the world, and receive it at the peril of their lives: a fact which they cannot deny. Let them also try to account for it, on their own principles, how the Jews have been strolling about the world for seventeen hundred years, as witnesses to the Scripture, and to the sentence therein passed upon themselves. Till they can do these things, it is nothing but an evasion to cavil about words and passages—a certain mark of prejudice and perverseness. They know they cannot deny the whole; but as they must appear to be doing something, they flatter their pride by keeping up a skirmish, and perplex weak people, by raising difficulties about the parts. This was the expedient on which MR. VOLTAIRE bestowed

so much labor. It does not appear to me that he really thought the facts of Christianity to be false; but that his vanity and perverseness tempted him to ridicule the Bible, without denying to his mind that God was the author of it: in fact, that he was a *Theomachist*, who hated the truth, knowing it to be such, and braved the authority of heaven itself: or, in the words of HERBERT, that he was a man

“Who makes flat war with God, and doth defy
With his poor clod of earth, the spacious sky.”

If a religion to which the nature of man is so hostile, did actually make its way without force, and against the utmost cruelty and discouragement from the world; *that fact* was a miracle, including within itself a thousand other miracles.”^e

^e JONES' *Life of Horne*, p. 131, ss. ed. Lond. 1799.

MEMOIR.

“DR. HORNE was no circumnavigator: he neither sailed with Drake, Anson, nor Cook: but he was a man whose mind surveyed the intellectual world, and brought home from thence many excellent observations for the benefit of his native country. He was no military commander; he took no cities; he conquered no countries; but he spent his life in subduing his passions, and in teaching us how to do the same. He fought no battles by land or by sea; but he opposed the enemies of God and his truth, and obtained some victories which are worthy to be recorded. He was no prime minister to any earthly potentate; but he was a minister to the King of heaven and earth: an office at least as useful to mankind, and in the administration of which no minister to an earthly king ever exceeded him in zeal and fidelity. He made no splendid discoveries in natural history; but he did what was better: he applied universal nature to the improvement of the mind, and the illustrations of heavenly doctrines. I call these *events*: not such as make a great noise and signify little; but such as are little celebrated and of great signification.” Thus his honest and warm-hearted biographer consoled himself when reminded of the paucity of event in the life which he had undertaken to narrate. There was reason both for the complaint and for the consolation. Few celebrated men have passed a life of such smooth and even tenor—so wholly destitute of diversifying changes and occurrences, as that of Bishop Horne; and yet, by making his biography the history of his studies and opinions, JONES^a has rendered it in-

* [The Rev. WILLIAM JONES, generally called (from his last residence, and to distinguish him from his illustrious namesake Sir WILLIAM JONES,) JONES of Nayland,—was born in 1726, being a few years the senior of the man whose history and character he has perpetuated. He studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, and on the completion of his course, was admitted to deacons' orders in 1749.—In 1751 he took priests'

teresting and instructive in a degree to which few narratives, however replete with incident and varying

orders and removed to a curacy at Fencdon, in his native county. Here with the assistance of Horne, he composed his first work, an *Answer to CLAYTON'S Essay on Spirit*. From that time he devoted himself assiduously to the maintenance and propagation of the Hutchinsonian system, and to the defence of the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England against its enemies of every name. He was a Churchman of the school of HICKES and LESLIE, with less learning perhaps, but more knowledge of men and things, and no less shrewdness and ability. His *Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity*, maintaining that article of faith by a collection and comparison of texts of Scripture, has never been either answered or superseded. It appeared in 1754, and was enlarged by a *Letter to the Common People, in answer to some popular arguments against the Trinity*, in 1767. His first philosophical work was published in 1762, by the title of *An Essay on the First Principles of Natural Philosophy*, 4to. It led to the establishment of a subscription by persons favorable to the Hutchinsonian views, for the purpose of enabling him to prosecute a course of experiments on an extensive scale, for the elucidation and establishment of the principles developed in that view.

In 1764, he was presented to the vicarage of Bethersden, in Kent, by Archbishop Secker. There he added to his income, by the tuition of a few pupils in his family. In 1765, the same liberal patron presented him to the preferable living of Pluckley, also in Kent. His removal, however, did not break off either his philosophical pursuits, or his engagements as a teacher, both of which he contrived to carry on in addition to the most exemplary discharge of his parochial duties. His *Reasonable Caution against Errors in Doctrine*, in 1769; *Remarks on the "Confessional,"* in 1770; *Zoologia Ethica*, in 1772; *Dissertations on Life and Death*, in 1772; *Disquisitions on select subjects of Scripture*, in 1773; and *Reflections on the Growth of Heathenism*, in 1776, all attest his unwearied diligence, and his watchfulness to resist the inroads of error, while resident at Pluckley.

In 1776 he removed from Pluckley, to the perpetual curacy of Nayland, in Suffolk, which he ever after made his residence. He was about this time chosen fellow of the Royal Society. In 1781, the results of his philosophical pursuits appeared in his *Physiological Disquisitions; or Discourses concerning the Natural Philosophy of the Elements*, in 4to. His celebrated *Essays on the Figurative Language of Scripture*, published in 1788, was his next production, and is that by which, next to his *Doctrine of the Trinity*, he is best known. Several smaller tracts, including his popular *Essay on the Church*, and his *Churchman's Catechism*, were issued about this period, for the benefit of his parishioners. Two volumes of *Sermons* succeeded, in 1790. The political commotions of that period involved his active and benevolent mind in fresh efforts to do good. The establishment of the *British Critic*, and the publication of that invaluable collection of tracts, *The Scholar Armed*, were among the number.

The infirmities of age now coming fast upon him, obliged him to discontinue the reception of pupils, and to supply the diminution of income thus produced, he was presented by another Archbishop of Can-

scenery, can pretend.^b It will be easy to comprise the facts of Bishop Horne's history, extracted from that *Life*, within the narrow compass that can be allotted to this Memoir; but the spirit of that useful work cannot be so easily preserved. He who would see the scholar without affectation of learning—the Christian rendered cheerful and companionable by his lively faith, humble without grovelling or meanness, and zealous without bigotry—the minister of CHRIST fully sensible of the responsibility of his high calling, and unremittingly employed in its duties—the friend true to his affection, and carrying his friendship beyond the bounds of time and temporal relation—the man of wit and eloquence devoting those rare talents with singleness of heart to his Maker's service:—this character, which truly belonged to Horne, he will find displayed to view in JONES' work, and must go there for it—for it is only by entering at length, as he has done, into the studies and professional pursuits of a quiet but useful life, that it can be portrayed in its true colours.

GEORGE HORNE was born on the 1st of November, in the year 1730, at Otham in Kent, of which his father, the Rev. Samuel Horne, was rector. From this parent he probably inherited that amiability of disposition for which he was afterwards so eminently distinguished. "He was of so mild and quiet a temper," says JONES, speaking of the father, "that he studiously avoided giving trouble on any occasion;" and proceeds to re-

terbury to the sinecure rectory of Hollingbourn in Kent, in 1798. His *Discourse on the Use and Intention of some remarkable Passages of the Scriptures*, published in the following year, closed the long list of his contributions to theological and physical learning. The death of his wife, soon after, plunged him in deep affliction, and was followed by an attack of partial paralysis, under which he gradually sunk until February 6, 1800, when his honest and useful life was closed by a peaceful death, without sigh or groan, in the 74th year of his age.]

^b [*Memoirs of the Life, Studies, and Writings of the Right Reverend George Horne, D. D., late Lord Bishop of Norwich; with a Prefatory Epistle to William Stevens, Esq.; Dr. Horne's own Collection of his Thoughts on a variety of great and interesting subjects; and a Letter to the Hon. L [ord] K [enyon] on the Use of the Hebrew Language.* By WILLIAM JONES, M. A. F. R. S. one of his Lordship's Chaplains. London, 1795.—A second edition appeared in 1799, with the addition of *A New Preface, on certain interesting points in Theology and Philosophy.*]

late a singular instance—that when his son George was an infant, he used to wake him with playing upon a flute, for the purpose of preventing the unpleasant sensation of sudden waking. “What impression this early custom of his father might make upon his temper,” the biographer remarks, with much naïveté, “we cannot say: but certainly, he was remarkable, as he grew up, for a tender feeling of music, especially that of the church.”

Nothing more is recorded of his earliest years, except that he made good progress in his studies under the tuition of his father, until the age of thirteen, when he was placed in a grammar school at Maidstone, near his native village. There he continued two years, when upon the vacancy of a Maidstone scholarship^c in University College, Oxford, he applied for it, succeeded, and, young as he was, went directly to college, at the recommendation of his master. He was admitted on the 15th of March, 1746.

At college, among many others whom his amiable manners and a community of pursuits attached to him, young Horne became intimate with Mr. Jinkinson, afterwards the Earl of Liverpool, and Mr. Moore, the predecessor of Archbishop Sutton in the see of Canterbury, a connexion which, unquestionably, was in some measure subservient to his advancement in after life.

His character was such as fully to justify the predilection of his friends. It stood equally high with all who knew him; of this the manner of his election to a fellowship furnished an agreeable evidence. Shortly after he had taken his Bachelor's degree, (Oct. 27th, 1749,) a Kentish fellowship^d in Magdalen College became vacant; and there was no person in the college qualified to fill it. The senior fellow of University College, hearing of the circumstance, without consulting Mr. Horne, took immediate measures to secure *his* election to the vacancy, and was successful. This measure, in itself such a pleasing testimony of esteem, both in him who gave the recommendation, and in

^c A scholarship founded upon condition of its being always filled from the school of Maidstone.

^d One which, by the founder's prescription, was to be filled with a native of the county of Kent.

those who acted upon it, had an important influence on the remainder of his life. Of the society in which, by this election, he became a member, he was subsequently chosen head. His Mastership introduced him to the office of Vice-Chancellor of the University. In this station he became acquainted with the Chancellor, Lord Guilford, (afterward Lord North;) and of this acquaintance the Deanery of Canterbury and Bishopric of Norwich were unquestionably the results. Thus was silent and unobtrusive merit the instrument, in the hand of Providence, of procuring its own reward, in the bestowal of honorable and responsible employment.

But Horne's college friendships had an influence on his studies and principles even more important than that on his professional career. While yet an undergraduate, they engaged him in a course of reading, and led him to imbibe opinions, that were to him as a polar star through life. Jones, his most intimate friend, had been drawn by his fondness for music into an acquaintance with some gentlemen of another college, who combined that noble recreation with studies of a severer cast. They were followers of HUTCHINSON,^e and warm advocates of his peculiar opinions.^f Jones

^e [JOHN HUTCHINSON, a respectable layman, steward to an English nobleman, has become famous rather through the merits of his followers than by his own. The praise of unfeigned piety, ardent zeal for what he deemed the truth, and great ingenuity in its investigation and support, must be unhesitatingly awarded him. His learning, though by no means inconsiderable, was eccentric and ill-digested, and crudely scattered through a strange farrago of philosophical, philological, theological, and controversial writings, collected in a uniform edition of no less than *twelve* octavo volumes, in 1748. HUTCHINSON was born at Spennythorn, in Yorkshire, in 1674, and died in 1737.—BATE (Julius), SPEARMAN, PARKHURST, the Lord President FORBES, Bishop HORNE, JONES of Nayland, Bishop HORSLEY, and the Rev. T. T. BIDDULPH, are the best known among the advocates of HUTCHINSON's opinions, which, however, neither of the four last named adopted in all respects.]

^f [These opinions occupy too prominent a place in the life and writings of Horne to be passed over without an attempt at their description. Some of them are common to all sincere recipients of the 'faith once delivered to the saints' by CHRIST and his apostles. Of others, the rank assigned them is the chief peculiarity. Others belong exclusively to Hutchinson and his followers.]

A deep reverence for the authority of the Scriptures, and entire submission to their teaching—a disposition to seek for God, to see traces of his goodness, and wisdom, and power, in every thing—an ardent devotion to the study and interpretation of his revealed will—a firm

became a thorough convert to their views, and held frequent conferences on the subject with his friend. At first, he found Horne reluctant to bestow any attention on the novel, and at that time not only unfashionable but obnoxious system. Gradually, however, he won upon him, and before their first college year was completed, succeeded in imparting a share of the in-

belief in the doctrine of the TRIUNE GODHEAD—an entire reliance on the atoning sacrifice and mediatorial intercession of CHRIST JESUS, as the alone procuring cause of our salvation—an humble acknowledgment of human depravity and helplessness, and the absolute need of the renewing and sanctifying influences of the HOLY SPIRIT :—these are traits of the Hutchinsonian system which must belong to the Christian character, wherever it exists in its integrity, but which it is the glory of the Hutchinsonians to have manifested with a distinctness and boldness both uncommon and unpopular in their age of cold and lifeless theology.

The derivation of *all* religious knowledge from divine revelation, and consequent utter worthlessness of all speculations on pretended natural religion—the uselessness and dangerous tendency of heathen learning, in the extent to which professed philologers often carry its pretensions—the entire correspondence of the Old and New Testaments in doctrine and precept—the revelation of divine things by means of types and symbols, principally in the sacred history and laws, but to a very great extent in the natural creation, which is thus applicable as a *sensible evidence* to the truth of Scripture—the inseparable connexion of CHRIST'S promises with his Church—the value and necessity of the ordinances which GOD has thought proper to associate with his Word, as means of grace and pledges of salvation :—these are points on which the Hutchinsonians, though they hold them in common with many, if not the majority of devout Christians, lay peculiar stress ; never suffering them to be wholly out of view, and regarding them as essential to the integrity of a system of Christian belief and practice.

A physico-theological interpretation of Scripture, is the one great distinctive feature of the system, into which all its minor peculiarities may be resolved. The Hutchinsonians receive the naked text of the Hebrew Scriptures, associated with the New Testament and interpreted by that completer revelation, as the sole basis of all knowledge of things spiritual and material. They indignantly reject the vowel-points, and Masoretic notes, as Jewish corruptions, and regard the whole body of Rabbinical lexicography and comment with entire abhorrence. They consider the Hebrew language as the primeval tongue, framed by the Creator himself, and perfect in its structure. In consequence of this, they attach great importance to the divine names and the terms employed to designate the relations and dealings of GOD with man, in the Old Testament ; and from etymological interpretations of these, draw many arguments and inferences in support of the distinctive features of the Gospel.—They derive from the Scriptures, and especially the Mosaic account of the creation and the deluge, a system of natural philosophy variant in many respects from that of Newton : particularly.

terest which he himself experienced. A Mr. Watson,^g an amiable and gentlemanly scholar, resident in the same college, completed the work, and fixed in the young academician an unalterable attachment to the study of Hebrew, the peculiarities of the Hutchinsonian philosophy, and those pure, uncompromising, and

in denying the possibility of a vacuum, the inertness of matter, and the doctrines of gravitation, and of attraction and repulsion; and in ascribing all the phenomena of the universe to a triune material agent—*fire*, existing at the central solar orb—*light*, which is fire in efflux—and *spirit*, or ether, which is the same on its return to the central orb. On this last particular they lay much stress, as an illustration of the doctrine of the Trinity.—Lastly, they consider the cherubim, of which mention is made in the Mosaic books and in Ezekiel, as identical with the ‘beasts’ (a miserable translation of *ζωα animals, living things*,) in the Revelations, and symbolical of the mysterious union of the three Divine Persons with the human nature of CHRIST.

That none of these opinions are untenable as philosophical tenets, and that others are little less objectionable in a historical and critical point of view, will scarcely be questioned. But it must be admitted that, with some rubbish, this system contains much sterling bullion. It rather errs in carrying principles, founded on truth, to injudicious excess, than in broaching any thing untrue or hurtful. Its tendency, if experience, the surest criterion at least of practical effect, may be allowed to decide, is good—to promote the love of GOD and man, and to extend the reign of that wisdom which ‘is pure and peaceable.’ Its maintainers have been Churchmen of the highest grade and the truest piety—a piety which none have ever dared to call in question. They have ever been among the most fearless opponents of wickedness in high places and all the delusions of Satan, combating sin, and infidelity, and error, in every shape, with determined boldness and unwearied assiduity. To borrow the words of CONYBEARE, in his *Bampton Lectures*—“they earnestly recommended and diligently practised the study of the sacred language, the comparison of Scripture with Scripture, the investigation of the typical character of the elder covenant, and of the perfect and universal spirituality of the new; they never lost sight of the soundness of Christian doctrine, or the necessity of grounding evangelical precepts upon evangelical principles. It cannot be remembered, indeed, without gratitude, that their views of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations were the views of men of no common intellects or attainments; that to this source, under one yet higher, we owe the Christian spirit which attracts, and delights, and edifies, in the pure and affectionate ministrations of HORNE, which instructs and convinces in the energetic and invaluable labors of HORSLEY.”

^g Of this gentleman, JONES speaks in the highest terms, (*Life of Horne*, p. 25-30, 2d ed.) and attributes the first suggestions of HORNE’s admirable *Commentary on the Psalms*, to a sermon on the nineteenth Psalm, preached by Mr. Watson before the University soon after the commencement of his acquaintance with the then young collegian, on whom it produced an extraordinary impression.

eminently scriptural religious principles which have given lasting value to his character.

The consequence was, a fresh ardor of devotion to his studies, partly that he might investigate the claims of the new principles he had embraced, and partly with a view to set them in a stronger light, and add new force to their pretensions. His stay at college during the vacation for the better prosecution of these favorite pursuits, and a series of letters to his father, filling thirty closely written quarto pages, in which he detailed their progress, attest his earnestness.

With the warmth of a new convert, the young Hutchinsonian made his first appearance as an author, in his twentieth year, by an anonymous attack upon the Newtonian philosophy.^b HUTCHINSON had conceived an opinion that NEWTON, CLARKE, and others, were leagued against Christianity with TOLAND and their other deistical contemporaries, and that the Newtonian system was to be the great engine for the subversion of the Gospel and the establishment of Pantheism on its ruins. To this Horne hastily assented, and in the ardor of his zeal, attempted to expose the fancied conspiracy, in a sarcastic parallel between the Heathen doctrine as exhibited in CICERO's *Somnium Scipionis*, and the philosophy of NEWTON. Even JONES does not attempt to defend this juvenile production, but censures its "faulty flights and wanderings," and "impropriety of style and manner."

Two years passed in the assiduous prosecution of the studies thus begun and publicly espoused, before Horne again appeared as a writer. Continual and impartial discussion of the principles which he had adopted, not only with their most distinguished supporters, but also with several of their ablest opponents, had strengthened and settled Horne's convictions of their truth, and at the same time qualified him to base their defence more solidly and surely than in his first eager effort. Ac-

^b *The Theology and Philosophy in Cicero's Somnium Scipionis explained; or a brief Attempt to demonstrate that the Newtonian System is perfectly agreeable to the Notions of the wisest Ancients; and that mathematical Principles are the only sure ones.* 8vo. London, 1751.

cordingly, his second production,ⁱ devoted to the same object as the first, was of a very different character. JONES has in no respect exceeded the bounds of strict justice, when he describes it as "a mild and serious pamphlet," which "certainly is, what it calls itself, *fair, candid, and impartial*; and" in which "the merits of the cause are very judiciously stated between the two parties."

In the mean while, he had taken his Master's degree in 1752, and had been occupied in diligent preparation for holy orders, to which he was admitted by the Bishop of Oxford, on Trinity Sunday, 1753. Few assume the sacred office with better qualifications for its apt discharge, or better dispositions for a faithful performance of its duties, than he possessed. In church principles, a professed disciple of LESLIE, HICKES, and LAW,^k stored with the theology of JEREMY TAYLOR and of JACKSON,^l with piety kindled, under the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, at the torch of LAW^m and ANDREWS,ⁿ he presented himself in simplicity and godly

ⁱ *A fair, candid, and impartial State of the Case between Sir Isaac Newton and Mr. Hutchinson; in which is shown, how far a System of Physics is capable of Mathematical Demonstration; how far Sir Isaac's, as such a System, has that Demonstration; and consequently what regard Mr. Hutchinson's Claim may deserve to have paid it.* 8vo. Oxford, 1753.

^k *Life*, &c. p. 69, ss. "The works of the Rev. CHARLES LESLIE, in two volumes folio, may be considered as a library in themselves to any young student—and no such person, who takes a fancy to what he there finds, can ever fall into Socinianism, fanaticism, Popery, or any other of those more modern corruptions.—Every treatise comprehended in that collection is incomparable in its way," says JONES, giving an account of their discovery by Horne.

^l *Life*, &c. p. 76.

^m *Ib.* p. 74. HORNE was far from accompanying that eminent practical writer to the extremes of asceticism and mystic absurdity to which he suffered himself to be seduced. Not only did he carefully draw the line between the devotion of LAW and his blameworthy reveries, but to assist others in making the distinction drew up an essay, entitled *Cautions to the Readers of Mr. Law*, which was published by JONES in the Appendix to his *Life*.

ⁿ *Life*, p. 82. Horne first met with Bishop ANDREWS' *Manual of Private Devotions* in the College Library, and having perused it with much delight himself, assiduously recommended it to his friends. He subsequently published a handsome edition of Dean STANHOPE's translation of the work, with a commendatory preface. He also drew up a short account of the life and character of Bishop ANDREWS, published

sincerity, as one willing to spend and be spent in his Master's service. His prayer was, as he worded it in correspondence with a friend—"May he, who ordered Peter three times to feed his lambs, give me grace, knowledge, and skill, to watch and attend to the flock which he purchased upon the cross, and to give rest to those who are under the burden of sin or sorrow! It hath pleased God to call me to the ministry in very troublesome times indeed; when a lion and a bear have broken into the fold, and are making havoc among the sheep. With a firm, though humble confidence do I purpose to go forth; not in my own strength, but in the strength of the LORD God; and may he prosper the work of my hands."

From the very commencement of his ministry, he rendered himself distinguished as a preacher, and by his evident sincerity and earnestness, recommended by an unaffected flowing style, and graceful elocution, acquired a popularity not only among those who favored his peculiar opinions, but among persons of every sentiment and class, which lasted during life. His fertile mind supplied him abundantly with apt illustration and beautiful imagery, while his good sense prevented the abuse of stores so easily misapplied, and preserved a characteristic plainness and simplicity even in his most ornamented discourses. But the Christian humility and zeal which breathed in every line, was, and yet is, their greatest charm. He wrote as one constrained by the love of CHRIST, living not to himself, but to Him who died for all! He had imbibed the spirit of the Gospel of salvation, and transmitted it, unalloyed, to those whom it fell to his lot to teach.

The first three years of his ministerial course appear to have been spent in the quiet seclusion of college-life, occupied in studies appropriate to his profession,^o and

in the second volume of the *Scholar Armed*. So great was his admiration of that learned and holy man, that he is reported to have said 'he wished no higher place in heaven than to sit at Bishop Andrews' feet.' The attraction was that of kindred character.

^o The fruit of these appeared in a severe, but just, reproof of the strange vagaries in theology compiled by SHUCKFORD in the supplement to his *Connexions*.—*Spicilegium Shuckfordianum*; &c. 12mo. London, 1754.

in the regular routine of university preaching.^p That his character as a minister of the Gospel was not sunk in that of a mere student, is evident from the choice of Dumas, an unhappy criminal then under sentence of death at Oxford, who of his own accord requested the attendance of Horne, and received his conscientious attention even at the sacrifice of his health, which was considerably affected for a length of time by the trying scenes of that most distressing branch of ministerial duty.

In 1756 he was called once more before the public in vindication of his Hutchinsonian principles—or rather, in this instance, of the great doctrines of the Gospel which he had preached, in the University or elsewhere, with faithfulness and zeal. An anonymous attack, in which he was specified by name,^q gave occasion to his *Apology*,^r a production which, apart from the actual merits of the controversy, did him great credit as a scholar, a Christian, and a clergyman. He had been treated with insolence, but replied with Christian forbearance and undisturbed good humor. His peculiar opinions he defended with readiness—his friends thought, with triumphant success; and he showed satisfactorily that they had been merely a cover for the real object of attack—the truth and spirit of Christianity, which he as successfully maintained with argument that to this day retains its interest and value.

Notwithstanding many attempts to throw odium upon his character, as a propounder of some strange doctrine, and a disturber of the public harmony, Horne's reputation for all that is estimable in a scholar and a divine

^p Three occasional sermons, two preached before the University, and one in his own college, were published in the years 1755 and 1756.

^q *A Word to the Hutchinsonians; or Remarks on three extraordinary Sermons, lately preached before the University of Oxford, by the Rev. Dr. Patten, the Rev. Mr. Wetherel, and the Rev. Mr. Horne*: 8vo. This pamphlet was attributed to Dr. KENNICOTT, the celebrated collator of the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament.

^r *An Apology for certain gentlemen in the University of Oxford, aspersed in a late anonymous Pamphlet; with a short postscript concerning another pamphlet lately published by the Rev. Mr. Heathcote*: 8vo. Oxford, 1758. RALPH HEATHCOTE, a disciple of the Warburtonian school, had published a pamphlet of considerable bulk, a professed attack on the Hutchinsonians. It received a special answer from Dr. Patten, against whom it had been more particularly directed.

grew daily. In 1758 he was chosen Junior Proctor of the University—an office of trust and honor, and when, after an exemplary discharge of its duties, in the course of which he contracted a dangerous illness, his term of office had expired, he received a public compliment of the most gratifying nature. He was yet ill, and unable to resign at the University meeting in person. The officer whose place it was to state the fact, (Dr. Thurlow, afterward Bishop of Durham,) did so as follows; “As for the late Proctor, I shall speak of him but in few words, for the truth of which I can appeal to all that are here present. If ever virtue itself was visible and dwelt upon earth, it was in the person who this day lays down his office:” and so well did the public opinion accord with this high eulogy, that it was received with universal clapping! At this time (April 27th, 1759,) he took the degree of Bachelor in Divinity.

The next year found him engaged in a controversy which at that time produced more noise, but possessed less abiding interest, than its predecessor. Dr. KENNICOTT had issued proposals for a new and very complete collation of all the extant manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures, and to show the necessity of the measure, had published two bulky volumes by the title of *Dissertations on the State of the Hebrew Text*. Horne and several of his friends had been displeased with the spirit of these works, and were suspicious of the design itself, which they were intended to support. They feared an ultimate intention to introduce a new Socinianized version of the Scriptures, and an injurious effect of the whole proceeding upon the standing of the sacred text; while they thought that Dr. Kennicott's writings indicated a *wish* to find the text corrupt, and that his labors tended to produce an undue regard for literal criticism to the neglect of the true study of the Scriptures as the source of spiritual knowledge. In some, at least, of their suspicions, they were wrong; and time has proved that their fears were groundless: nevertheless, we cannot but honor the manly zeal and boldness with which Horne stepped forth to oppose, (in a spirited tract,^s) what he deemed a measure threatening

* A View of Mr. Kennicott's Method of correcting the Hebrew

evil to the Word and Church of God. Still less can we withhold the award of admiration from the Christian spirit with which, when his efforts had proved fruitless, he not only acquiesced in quietness, but actually contracted a friendship with the man whom he had opposed, lived in the interchange of every kind office with him, and left an hereditary intimacy to his family.

Collegiate offices and controversy did not wholly engross the time of Horne, during this interval. His *Considerations on the Life and Death of John the Baptist*, one of the most engaging devotional works in our language, were delivered before the University in the form of lectures, on the annual returns of St. John the Baptist's Day, from 1755 to 1762; though first published in 1772. His *Commentary on the Psalms*, also, the work by which he will be known, and for which his memory will be loved and honored, as long as pure devotion and the most exalted spiritual attainments can command attention, was commenced in 1758. "The work" he then wrote to his friend and biographer "delights me greatly, and seems, so far as I can judge of my own turn and talents, to suit me the best of any I can think of. May he who hath 'the keys of David' prosper it in my hand; granting me the knowledge and utterance necessary to make it serviceable to the Church!" It was in hand nearly twenty years. On it he concentrated all his studies, and bestowed the most assiduous pains, as well to exclude whatever might be unnecessary or hurtful, as to perfect his design. Of his scheme of interpretation there have been, and will be, different opinions: of the practical tendency and value of the book there can be but one—that it is among the best companions for the Christian in the closet or the parlor, a manual for his devotions and guide for meditation. The first edition, in two volumes in quarto, was published in 1776, and five other editions attested its popularity before the conclusion of the century.

Text, with three Queries formed thereupon, and humbly submitted to the Christian World. Svo. Oxford.

Dr. KENNICOTT succeeded in procuring a liberal subscription for the effectuation of his design. His splendid edition of the Hebrew Text, with a very large (though still incomplete) collection of various readings, appeared in two folio volumes, 1776, 1780.

Several single sermons, and a pamphlet on the subject of a 'projected reformation of the Church of England,' by our author, had appeared in the interval between the year 1760 and 1776. He had also, in the same interval, been admitted to the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1764; elected President of his college, in 1768, on the death of Dr. Jenner; married to the daughter of Philip Burton, Esq. in the same year; and advanced to a royal chaplaincy, in 1771.

In 1776, he was chosen to the Vice-chancellorship of the University; a dignity which he retained until his preferment to the Deanery of Canterbury, in 1781. In the next year, his *Letter to Dr. Adam Smith*, though published anonymously, procured him new celebrity, and proved his talents in attack to be fully equal to those which he had already displayed so often in defence. This was succeeded by a collection of sermons, in two volumes, published in 1779, and by several occasional sermons, appearing at intervals from 1780 to 1784.

The *Letters on Infidelity* then came out, anonymously, but with no studied concealment of the author, in 1784. Horne was at that time residing alternately at Oxford and Canterbury, beloved and respected by large circles of acquaintances in both places, and preaching frequently; at Oxford, in his old station, the University pulpit, whence a very large proportion of his published discourses were delivered; and at Canterbury, in the Cathedral Church. A sermon on the 'Antiquity, Use, and Excellence of Church Music' preached in the latter place, on occasion of the opening of a new organ, in 1784; and another recommending Sunday Schools, preached in one of the parish churches of Canterbury, in 1785; deserve especial notice, as illustrations of the author's turn of mind: the latter, also, as entitling him to a place among the earliest advocates of the noblest institution of the eighteenth century, and that at a time when the dignified and influential, and in too many instances even the pious and benevolent, were either ashamed or afraid to avow themselves defenders of the novel scheme.

A Visitation Sermon preached before the Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1786, on the Duty of Contending for

the Faith; and a discourse, occasioned by the controversies of the times, on the Trinity in Unity, which was printed together with it; were the next publications of Dr. Horne, and are among the most useful of his works, having been almost immediately adopted as tracts for circulation by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and widely distributed both by it, and by similar societies in our own country.

Not content with thus standing forth as a defender of the faith, Horne, at that time, seriously meditated a direct attack upon the heresiarch PRIESTLEY, whose versatile talents, indefatigable industry, and consummate impudence, had made him conspicuous as the Goliath of perverted Christianity. Of this he gave notice in an advertisement appended to the Visitation Sermon, and actually entered into a joint examination of the subject, in connexion with his old friend and fellow student, JONES.^u The design was prosecuted with gradually declining vigor, for several years, and then, in consequence of increasing business and infirmities, wholly dropped.^w

This was his last literary undertaking of any importance. A single occasional sermon, and a pamphlet on that fertile theme, *The Case of the Dissenters*, with reference to the Corporation and the Test Acts, were all that followed, with the exception of a 'Charge intended to have been delivered at his Primary Episcopal Visitation,' and a third volume of *Select Discourses*, with the publication of which he was amused and so-laced under the infirmities that brought him to his grave.

The last public affair in which he was engaged was a work of Christian charity and zeal for the interests of CHRIST's Church. The Episcopal Church in Scotland,

^u Horne's earliest theological studies had been bestowed in assisting JONES in the composition of his excellent *Answer to the Essay on Spirit*. In allusion to this, he wrote in 1786: "You see the task I have undertaken. It is undertaken in confidence of your friendly aid: and I should be happy, as we began together with CLAYTON, if we might end together with PRIESTLEY."

^w It was not, however, entirely without fruit. The *Letter to the Rev. Dr. Priestley by an Undergraduate*, which appeared anonymously in 1786, a jeu d' esprit very similar to the *Letter to Adam Smith*, was the production of the same fertile pen. It reached a second edition the very year of its publication.

in consequence of having long refused the transfer of allegiance involved in the revolution of 1688, lay under civil disabilities and restraints, amounting, in effect, to grievous persecution. The cause of their misfortunes had gradually worn away, and was at length utterly extinguished, by the death of the last branch of the house of Stuart, in 1788. That the removal of the penalty might follow the cessation of the cause, as was just, they made immediate application to Parliament, for full and free toleration of their rites and worship, and for that purpose, three of their bishops visited England in 1789. Strange as it may seem, a parliament bound to protect an Episcopal Church by law established in *England*, could not be prevailed on even to tolerate the very same Church in the sister kingdom! The Scottish bishops met with unexpected, and, for the time, insurmountable difficulties. In the midst of these, they received from Horne, while yet only Dean of Canterbury, every kind attention and material service which it was in his power to render—not from mere favor; still less from ostentatious willingness to patronise; but from conscientious desire to procure for a pious and oppressed people their just rights.*

* "He had considered, that there is such a thing as a pure and primitive constitution of the Church of CHRIST; when viewed apart from those outward appendages of worldly power, and worldly protection, which are sometimes mistaken, as if they were as essential to the being of the Church, as they are useful to its sustentation. The history of the Christian Church, in its early ages, is a proof of the contrary; when it underwent various hardships and sufferings from the fluctuating policy of earthly kingdoms. And the same happened to the Episcopal Church of Scotland, at the Revolution in 1688; when Episcopacy was abolished by the State, and the Presbyterian form of church government established. By this establishment the bishops were deprived of their jurisdiction, and of all right to the temporalities of their sees. But in this forlorn state they still continued to exist, and to exercise the spiritual functions of their episcopal character: by means of which, a regular succession of bishops, and episcopally-ordained clergymen, has been kept up in Scotland, under all the disadvantages arising from a suspicion of their being disaffected to the Crown, and attached to the interest of an exiled family.

"The penal laws had reduced the Scotch Episcopal Church to a condition so depressed and obscure, that it could scarcely be known to exist, but by such persons as were previously acquainted with its history. Among these, none entered more willingly and warmly than the then good Dean of Canterbury. As soon as he heard of the arrival of the Scotch Bishops at London, he was anxious to let them know how

In 1790, Horne's promotion to the bishopric of Norwich gave him additional influence and opportunity of usefulness—though at a time when his rapidly failing health precluded the expectation of his living long to enjoy them, or doing much in the short remainder of his life. He took his seat in the house of Lords in the spring of the ensuing year, and renewed his efforts in behalf of the Scottish Church. But the more appropriate duties of his office, the visitation of his diocese and instruction of his clergy in an episcopal charge, he was unable to perform. The charge was written and printed, but never delivered; the visitation was begun, but never finished. He died, during a visit to Bath for the benefit of the waters, of a paralytic stroke, January 17th, 1792. His death was as his life; the placid resignation to his Maker and Redeemer of a soul accustomed to communion with Him was made with as perfect cheerfulness, and as little perturbation, as attend the most ordinary transaction of life: 'he knew in whom he had believed,' and after having partaken of the memorials of his dying love, breathed out his soul with the expression "Now I am blessed indeed!"

heartily he approved of the object of their journey, and kindly offered every assistance in his power to bring the matter to a happy conclusion. He paid them every mark of attention both at London and Oxford; and, when they set out on their return to Scotland, without having attained their object, he expressed, in very affectionate terms, his concern at their disappointment, and told them at parting, not to be discouraged; for, said he, 'your cause is good, and your request so reasonable, that it cannot long be denied.'

"In February, 1791, after having taken his seat in the House of Lords as Bishop of Norwich, he wrote a friendly letter to Bishop Skinner of Aberdeen, assuring him and the other members of the Committee for managing the business of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, that any help in his power should be at their service: and speaking of their applying anew to both Houses of Parliament, he said, 'It grieved him to think they had so much heavy work to do over again; but business of that sort required patience and perseverance.'

"It was said, about this time, that the Lord Chancellor, Thurlow, withheld his consent to the Scotch Episcopal Bill, till he should be satisfied by some of the English prelates, that there really were bishops in Scotland. When Bishop Horne was waited upon with this view, by the Committee of the Scotch Church, and one of them observed, that his lordship could assure the Chancellor they were *good bishops*, he answered, with his usual affability and good humor, 'Yes, sir, much better bishops than I am.'"—JONES' *Life of Horne*, p. 148-153.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

LET no reader take offence, though the subjects debated in the following pages be of a serious nature, if the ideas and images employed should sometimes border upon the ludicrous. The contest between Elijah and the votaries of Baal, was a very serious one; and heaven itself interposed in its decision. Yet strong and pointed is the *irony* of the prophet—"Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked!"^a Impiety provokes a frown; absurdity occasions a smile; and many who glory in the imputation of the former, cannot but feel when they are convicted of the latter. Some opinions and arguments become visible on being stated. A portrait is sufficient; a caricature needless, perhaps impossible. Where such is not the case, nothing, it is hoped, has met with this treatment, unless proved to deserve it. Ridicule is not the test of truth, because truth must always be the test of ridicule; and he who laughs in the wrong place, exposes no character, except his own. But, as the learned and ingenious Dr. OGILVIE has well observed, "He who can fairly turn the laugh, when it has been raised against him, will be pardoned readily, provided he has laughed in good humor."^b

^a 1 Kings xviii. 27. ^b *Inquiry into the causes of the Infidelity and Skepticism of the Times*, p. 445.

LETTERS ON INFIDELITY.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

To W. S., Esq.

DEAR SIR,—You express your surprise, that after the favorable manner in which the *Letter* of DR. SMITH was received by the public, and the service which, as you are pleased to say, was effected by it, nothing further should have been attempted; especially as an *Apology for the Life of David Hume, Esq.*, made its appearance soon afterwards, and some posthumous tracts of that philosopher have been since published, to complete the good work he had so much at heart; not to mention other productions on the side of infidelity. A few strictures on the nature and tendency, the principles and reasonings, of such performances, thrown out from time to time, in a concise and lively way, you observe, are better calculated to suit the taste and turn of the present age, than long and elaborate dissertation; and you see no reason why a method practised by VOLTAIRE (and so much commended by D'ALEMBERT) *against* religion, should not be adopted by those who write *for* it. In compliance with these hints, and that you may not think me desirous of leading an idle life, when there is so much work to be done, I have formed a resolution to look over my papers, and address what I may happen to find among them to yourself, in a series of letters; a species of composition much in vogue, and which has these two advantages to recommend it, that it admits of matter however miscellaneous, and may be continued or broken off at pleasure.

LETTER I.

I BEGIN, dear sir, with a few observations on the *Apology for the Life and Writings of David Hume, Esq.*, drawn up soon after that work came out, but reserved in expectation of Mr. Hume's posthumous tracts.

With difficulty I am able to persuade my friends, that this author and myself have not written in concert; for his *Apology* and my *Letter* fit each other like two tallies.^a In his dedication, he expresses his apprehension, "that the CHRISTIAN clamor would be raised afresh." A clamor is accordingly raised by "ONE of the people called CHRISTIANS." Elsewhere he intimates his expectations that Mr. HUME's 'affectionate Dr. Smith' would come in for his share. A letter is accordingly written to that very doctor.

You see, dear sir, how I have done my best to fulfil his predictions. Let us now inquire whether he may not have returned the favor, and been equally kind to me.

In my *Advertisement* I ventured to suppose, that, by a late publication, the admirers of Mr. Hume imagined religion to have received its *coup de grace*, and that the astonished public was utterly at a loss to conceive 'what they who believed in God could possibly have to say for themselves.' To convert my supposition into matter of fact, he opens his *Apology* with a kind of funeral oration, most solemnly pronounced over Christianity as a breathless corpse, about to be interred for ever in the grave of Mr. Hume.

'David Hume is dead! Never were the pillars of orthodoxy so desperately shaken, as they are now by that event!' And at p. 9, he speaks of 'the particular circumstances of this event' as 'increasing the aggregate of our consternation!'

Here the distempered imagination of the Apologist sees Mr. Hume, like another Samson, bowing himself

^a The *Apology* was written before the publication of the *Letter*, though sent into the world after it.

with all his might between the *pillars*, and slaying more at his *death* than all that he slew in his *life*. He sees the believing world aghast, the Church tottering from its foundations, and Christians *assembling in an upper chamber, with the doors shut, for fear of the philosophers*. What may be the state of religion upon earth, before the end shall come, we cannot tell. We have reason to think it will be very bad. But let us hope, notwithstanding all which has happened in Scotland, that the Gospel will last our time.

Thus again: I scrupled not to assert, that the end proposed in giving an account of Mr. Hume's life and death, was to recommend his skeptical and atheistical notions. Dr. Smith indeed was wary and modest. He gave us a detail of circumstances, and then only added, that, 'as to his philosophy, men would entertain various opinions; but, to be sure, all must allow his conduct was unexceptionable,' &c. But the Apologist has blurted it all out at once.—David Hume's life was *right*, and therefore his system *cannot be wrong*. My friend Dr. Smith will take him to task for this, as sure as he is alive.

And now for another piece of complaisance on *my* side. He 'wishes, only out of curiosity, to know the unaffected state of our feelings,' (p. 9,) on perusing the account given by Dr. Smith.—As if I had been privy to his thoughts, the wish was no sooner formed than gratified by my letter, which communicated to him and to the public the *state of our feelings*, and in a manner, I do assure him, perfectly *unaffected*. But it is a difficult matter to please him; for now *he hath seen me, he doth not like me*.

At the close of his *Address*, he tells me, that, 'after accurately examining my letter, and carefully reconsidering the whole subject of the preceding Apology in consequence of it, he sees no occasion to alter a single sentence.' Let us therefore take a view of the Apology, which is pronounced to be unaffected by it.

'It is less the design of these papers to defend Hume's principles, than to show, upon the best authority, that he *was in earnest in what he wrote*; and that, through every part of his life, even to the very moment of his

death, *he made precept and practice go hand in hand together.*'—(p. 11.)

But surely, if the principles are not to be *defended*; if they are as they have been represented, skeptical and atheistical, does the man who propagated them during his life, and took the requisite measures that they should be propagated after his death—does such a man deserve commendation, because he was *in earnest*? An apology of this kind may be offered in behalf of every felon executed at Tyburn, provided only, that by 'dying hard,' *he make precept and practice go hand in hand together.* And the Apologist very judiciously observes as much.

'Many will, indeed, think that this, however perspicuously proved, will be doing him no real honor; since, in proportion to the clearness of the evidence upon this matter, it will only show his impiety and obstinate infidelity the plainer; thereby, in the end, incurring upon him a more general disgrace.'—(p. 11.)

Truly he has hit the mark. This is the very objection, which caused a friend of mine, on reading his book, to say, he should think it a less misfortune to have the disgrace of *hanging incurred on him*, than to have such an apologist. And yet, in the case before us, he had a reason for making this Apology, namely, that there was no other to be made. The only question is, whether it might not have been better if he had said nothing, and suffered things to take their chance? However it is now too late. The objection is fairly stated, and we all stand *arrectis auribus*,^b in expectation of the answer.—Lo, it comes—'I am of a different opinion. The terms infidelity, impiety, and atheism, should not be lavishly trusted from the lip.' Such a sentence (by the way) should not have been *lavishly trusted from the pen.* 'We should not presume

"To deal damnation round the land,
On each we deem our foe."'

Sir, your very humble servant—I most heartily wish you a good night,—Here was the *jugulum causæ*, the precise point to be argued, over which I hoped to have had the honor of his good company for the evening,

^b [With open ears.]

when in the twinkling of an eye, he slips through my hands, like an eel, and is out of sight in the mud.

We are not about to *deal damnation* on any man. But are there not such things as infidelity, impiety, and atheism? And are not the writings of Mr. Hume justly chargeable with them? These are the questions.

The Apologist knows, as well as I do, that Mr. Hume's essays contain arguments downright Epicurean, against the being of a God. Some of them are mentioned in the *Summary*, at the end of the Letter to Dr. Smith, and no notice is taken of the matter. In the *Natural History of Religion*, DR. HURD thought our philosopher was approaching towards the borders of theism. But I never could find that he penetrated far into the country. These same arguments stand to this hour unretracted; the essays which contain them are published and republished with the rest; whether at the hour of death, he thought there was a God or thought there was none, we have not a single hint given us; and concerning his posthumous papers, the Apologist^c informs us, in his dedication, 'there is every reason to believe they turn upon similar researches with such as have been already printed; or, as it is most likely, they may carry his philosophy still nearer to THAT POINT, which he might not think it DISCREET to *push too vigorously*, in his lifetime.' New discoveries in irreligion, then, it seems, still remain to be made. They who have duly considered the *vigor* displayed by Mr. Hume in his lifetime, are rather at a loss to conceive, what THAT POINT may be, to which, by posthumous efforts, his *philosophy* is to be *carried*. It must lie somewhere

"Beyond the realms of chaos and old night!"

Discretion is, undoubtedly, as Sir John Falstaff says, *the better part of valor*; but really in these days of freedom, there is scarce a possibility of its ever being called for. Something, however, is to come, which the Apologist supposes will occasion more CHRISTIAN *clamor*. When we are so severely *pushed*, he imagines we shall *cry out*. Certainly, it cannot be thought we are *lavish* of the

^c These have since been published.—[The *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (certainly not the least objectionable among HUME's writings) is the work in question.]

terms infidelity, impiety, and atheism, when we apply them to such proceedings as these. What other terms can we apply, or would he himself wish us to apply? And he gravely apologizes for their author, by telling us, he was *consistent*, he was in *earnest*, he *died* as he *lived*, and left blasphemies to be published after his death, which he dared not to publish while he was yet alive!—Whom shall we most admire, the philosopher or his Apologist!

LETTER II.

OUR Apologist observes, dear sir, ‘Whatever might be the force of Mr. Hume’s *faith*, no one, it is conjectured, will charge him with having neglected *good works*. I do not pretend (adds he) to say how far those *are*, or are *not* sufficient.’—(p. 11.)

Indeed I believe there will be no absolute necessity, upon this occasion, of going deep in the controversy, concerning *faith and works*. The character in which Mr. Hume principally appeared, and on which he chiefly valued himself, was that of an *author*. He passed his life in *writing*; the effects of his writing are visible in his worthy apologist, and many others; they are likely to go down to posterity. An unwearied endeavor to propagate the principles contained in those writings, is what we can never consent to dignify with the appellation of a *good work*. To worship, to love, and to serve God one’s self, is the first of good works; to teach and incite others to do the same, is the second. To renounce every thing of this kind, one’s self, is the first of evil works; and the second is like unto it, to tempt and seduce others, that they may fall after the same example of unbelief. This is the employment of that person whom the Apologist mentions, as having joined with the *dancing-master*, and the *perfumer*, in compounding a system of manners, recommended by the late Earl of Chesterfield.^d He might possibly divert himself in that way, at his leisure hours; but when he set to business

^d ‘A system which seems to be pillaged from the dancing master, the perfumer, and THE DEVIL.’—(p. 112.)

in good earnest, the issue was, AN INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

The Apologist is fond of citing two lines, which have often been cited by others, with a similar view—

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,"
"His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

The Christian's faith, at its first appearance, endured the trial of ten persecutions, and triumphed over the wit, wisdom, and power of the whole Roman empire. Offered openly to the inspection and examination of the world, it has now stood its ground above seventeen hundred years. The Apologist hardly expects it should at length fall before a couplet of Mr. Pope. Poets, he knows, are not upon oath; and

"One for sense, and one for rhyme,"

is often a fair composition. The verses rhyme well; but as to sense, that is another question. Their author somewhere tells us, that in reading religious controversy, he still found himself to agree with the last author he perused. One cannot therefore well take him for a guide in these matters. The bright son of the morning fell from his exalted station in the heavens; and he, who penned "*Messiah*,"^e was afterwards unfortunately duped by the sophistry of BOLINGBROKE. 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.'

As to the verses in hand, I know not that they were designed to extend by any means so far as, by the present application, the Apologist means to extend them. If they were, the proposition contained in them will be this, that provided a man discharge the relative and social offices, it matters not what deity he acknowledges and worships, or whether he acknowledge and worship any.

I am sorry I should be obliged to go back to a thing so vulgar and antiquated as my "*Catechism*." But so it happens. I cannot forget, that when a boy, *I learned two things—my duty towards God, and my duty towards my neighbor.* And, from that day to this, it never entered my head, that the performance of the *latter* would atone for the neglect of the *former*. Surely one might as well say, the performance of the *former* would atone for the breach of the *latter*. But the Apologist will

• [POPE'S celebrated Eclogue, so entitled.]

never allow one; and we cannot submit to allow the other. What! Shall we make a conscience of discharging our duty to men like ourselves, and none of discharging that to our MAKER, our REDEEMER, our God? Is it reckoned praiseworthy, generous, noble, great and good; to love and celebrate an earthly parent or benefactor; and can it be deemed a point of indifference whether we believe or deny, whether we bless or blaspheme our heavenly and eternal Father and Friend, who gives us life, and breath, and all things, in this world, and invites us to a far more happy and glorious state of existence in another? May we adore JEHOVAH, or Baal; the Creator of the universe, or a monkey, or matter, or chance, or nothing, as the whim takes us, and be blameless? Tell it not to the believers; publish it not among the Christians!

The matter of fact is—that *life* cannot be *in the right*, which is spent in *doing wrong*. And if to question all the doctrines of religion, even to the providence and existence of a God, and to put morality on no other foot than that of UTILITY—if to do this be not *wrong*, then farewell all distinction between right and wrong for evermore. To maintain and diffuse the truth of God, is to *do his will*; to deny, corrupt, or hinder it, is to *work iniquity*; and a life so employed is a *wicked life*—perhaps the *most* wicked that can be imagined. For what comparison is there between one who commits a crime of which he may repent, or, at worst, it may die with him, and one who, though he do not himself commit it, teaches and encourages all the world to commit it, by removing out of the way the strongest sanctions and obligations to the contrary, in writings which may carry on the blessed work from generation to generation? Let not these errors be called errors of *speculation* only. Action flows from speculation. No man ventures upon sin, till he has, for the time at least, adopted some false principle. And ‘when men begin to look about for arguments, in vindication of impiety and immorality, such speculations as those of Mr. Hume become interesting, and can hardly fail of a powerful and numerous patronage. The corrupt judge; the prostituted courtier; the statesman, who enriches himself by the plunder and blood of his country; the pettifog-

ger, who fattens on the spoils of the fatherless and widow; the oppressor who, to pamper his own beastly appetite, abandons the deserving peasant to beggary and despair; the hypocrite, the debauchee, the gamester, the blasphemer—all prick up their ears, when they are told that a celebrated author has written essays containing such doctrines, and leading to such consequences? Weighed against a conduct like this, the moralities of social life (a system of which, by the way, according to Mr. Hume, every man is left to compound for himself) are dust upon the balance; they are like the salutation of Joab when he smote Amasa to the heart: ‘And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand, *to kiss him*. But Amasa took no heed of the sword that was in Joab’s hand; so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground.’^f In short, if faith in God be not the effect of superstition and imposture, which no man has yet proved it to be, we are bound to regard it as our most valuable possession, and to esteem those who rob the world of it as the worst of thieves, however towards each other they may practice what the Apologist styles the *duties*, the *decencies*, and the *charities*.—(p. 13.)

‘Perhaps it is one of the very worst circumstances against Christianity, that very few of its professors were either so moral, so humane, or could so philosophically govern their passions, as the skeptical David Hume.’—(p. 12.)

And yet, we do not every day hear of a *Christian* running round a counter with his drawn sword after a *Reviewer*, or quitting a room on the entrance of his antagonist.^g It appears, from a variety of instances, that Mr. Hume, when his literary character was concerned, could by no means ‘govern his passion so philosophically’ as his Apologist wishes to have it believed. But it is not my desire to depreciate any thing that might be really commendable in him. Thus much only I will venture to assert, that whatever it was, the merit of it is not due to his philosophical principles. These afford no motives to restrain men who have once em-

^f 2 Sam. xx. 9. ^g [Incidents in the life of the *philosophical* Hume.]

braced them, from any vices to which their constitutions may happen to incline. It is too much for the same person to excel in every branch. It is enough if he point the way. All evil beings are not *immoral*. Lord Chesterfield's friend himself, mentioned above,ⁱ offends not in the articles of eating, wine, or women : he is differently employed. He is employed in *tempting others to offend*.

The Apologist tells us "Mr. Hume's most abstract researches were in favor of a behavior perfectly irreproachable.—Whoever is acquainted with Mr. Hume's writings will bear witness that he was a lover of decency, order, and decorum. It would be the drudgery of a day to detect a single light sentence in Hume." (pp. 106. 110.)

I shall transcribe two or three sentences which lie pretty near together, in a *Dialogue* subjoined to his *Enquiry into the Principles of Morals*.

"There is almost as great difficulty, I acknowledge, to justify French, as *Greek gallantry* ; except only that the former is much more natural and agreeable than the latter. But our neighbors, it seems, have resolved to sacrifice some of the *domestic* to the *sociable* pleasures ; and to prefer *ease, freedom*, and an open commerce, to a strict fidelity and constancy. *These ends are both good*, and are sometimes difficult to reconcile ; nor need we be surprised, if the customs of nations incline too much, sometimes to the one side, and sometimes to the other."^k "It is needle ssto dissemble : the consequence of a very free commerce between the sexes, and of their living much together, will often terminate in intrigues and gallantry. We must sacrifice somewhat of the *useful*, if we be very anxious to obtain all the *agreeable* qualities ; and cannot pretend to reach alike *every kind of advantage*. Instances of license, daily multiplying, will weaken the scandal with the one sex, and teach the other, by degrees, to adopt the famous maxim of LA FONTAINE with regard to female infidelity, *that if one knows it, it is but a small matter ; if one knows it not, it is nothing*."^l Verily, as Lord Foppington

ⁱ [SATAN, *scilicet*.] ^k *Essays* Vol. II. p. 397. *edit*. 1772. ^l *Essays*, Vol. II. p. 402.

says to his brother, in the stage play—A NICE MARALITY, TAM, STAP MY VITALS !

When we consider these sentences as proceeding from the pen of ‘the first philosopher of the age,’ in his palmary and capital work, designed to settle the principles of morality on their only proper foundation, ‘it would be the drudgery of a MONTH’ to find any thing in the system of Chesterfield and his three associates, ‘the dancing master, the perfumer, and the devil,’ better calculated to multiply new *connexions*, and dissolve old ones ; any thing that so much deserves the profoundest acknowledgments from—the gentlemen of DOCTORS COMMONS.

LETTER III.

IT may still, perhaps, be asked, dear sir, how it should happen, that when Mr. Hume’s principles were so bad, his practices should be no worse ? Let me offer the solution given of such a phenomenon in the intellectual world, by a very ingenious and sagacious writer, who had not only studied mankind in general, but, as it would seem, had bestowed some pains upon the very case now before us.

‘This fact hath been regarded as unaccountable : that sober men, of morals apparently unblameable, should madly unhinge the great principles of religion and society, without any visible motive or advantage. But by looking a little further into human nature, we shall easily resolve this seeming paradox. These writers are generally men of speculation and industry ; and therefore, though they give themselves up to the dictates of their ruling passion, yet that ruling passion commonly leads to the tract of abstemious manners. That desire of distinction and superiority, so natural to men, breaks out into a thousand various and fantastic shapes ; and in each of these, according as it is directed, becomes a virtue or a vice. In times of luxury and dissipation, therefore, when every tenet of irreligion is greedily embraced, what road to present applause can lie so open and secure, as that of disgracing religious belief ?

especially if the writer help forward the vices of the times, by relaxing *morals*, as well as destroying *principle*. Such a writer can have little else to do, but to new-model the paradoxes of ancient skepticism, in order to figure it in the world, and be regarded by the smatterers in literature, and adepts in folly, as a prodigy in parts and learning. Thus his vanity becomes deeply criminal, and is execrated by the wise and good; because it is gratified at the expense of his country's welfare. But the consolation which degenerate manners receive from his fatal tenets, is repaid by eager praise; and vice impatiently drinks in and applauds his hoarse and boding voice, while, like a raven, he sits croaking universal death, despair, and annihilation to the human kind.'

But taking the account of Mr. Hume's manners as his friends have given it, to say 'that few of the professors of Christianity ever equalled him in morality, humanity, and the government of their passions,' is certainly going a great deal too far. Thousands in the first ages of the Gospel, gave all their goods to feed the poor; renounced, in deed as well as word, the world and the flesh, and joyfully met death in its most horrid forms, for the love of their Redeemer. On the same principle, unnumbered multitudes, in every succeeding age, have manfully sustained the heaviest calamities of human life, and with faith unfeigned, and hope that maketh not ashamed, yielded up their souls into the hands of their Creator. Scenes of this kind are daily and hourly passing in the chambers of the sick and dying, as they whose office it is to visit those chambers, well know. To others they must remain unknown, for want of biographers to record them. Every Christian who lives in piety and charity, does not favor the public with—**HIS OWN LIFE.**" Every Christian, who expires in peace and hope, has not the happiness of a DR. SMITH to pen the story of his death.

" Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

" [Alluding to HUME's curious piece of self-commendation, mentioned in note p. 119.]

“Far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn’d to stray ;
Along the cool sequester’d vale of life,
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.”

“Christianity,” says a learned writer, “has, in every age, produced good effects on thousands and ten thousands, whose lives are not recorded in history ; which is, for the most part, a register of the vices, the follies, and the quarrels of those who made a figure and a noise in the world ; insomuch that *SOCRATES*,^o at the close of his work, observes, that if men were honest and peaceable, historians would be undone for want of materials.”^p

But, whether the professors of a religion be many or few ; whether they be influenced by the spirit of it, or not ; whether they be sincere, or hypocrites ; whether they be detected or undetected ; the religion is still the same : it does not change with the changing tempers, dispositions, and interests of mankind, in different times and places ; nor is it to be charged with the guilt of practices, against which it protests in every page. No demonstration in *EUCLID* can be clearer than this.

To account for the opposition often so visible between the lives and the opinions of Christians, one must enumerate all the various methods by which, in matters of moral and spiritual concern, men are wont to impose upon themselves. Appetite and passion, sloth and interest, will work wonders in this way—wonders, of which he has no idea, who has not been accustomed, with this view, to contemplate the conduct of those around him, and impartially to scrutinize his own. The religion of many a person professing Christianity, is, by these means, laid by, like a best coat, for Sunday’s and holidays. Not a single thought occurs of the necessity there is for its being brought into the daily and hourly concerns of common life. It is a speculative belief, deposited in the understanding, to which its owner recurs, when he has nothing else to do ; he finds it where he left it, and is fully satisfied with its being there, instead of bearing it about him, in his heart and

^o [The ecclesiastical historian.]

^p [JORTIN, *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*, I. 438, ed. 1808.]

affections, as an active principle, ready for use, to operate at all seasons, and on all occasions. He will even spend his days in discoursing and disputing upon the sublimest doctrines, and most holy precepts of religion, his own life still continuing unreformed. Nay, what is yet more strange, he will preach seriously, earnestly, affectionately, and repeatedly, against a failing, to which he himself is notoriously subject, and every one who hears him knows him to be so. It follows not, necessarily, that he is designedly playing the hypocrite, and acting a part. He has some method of concealing himself from himself, or of excusing himself to himself. He does not see that he is the person against whom all his own arguments are pointed. He does not *think* of it. He stands in need of a friend—or an enemy—to tell him, ‘Thou art the man.’—This may seem to be a species of madness; but this is human nature.

Let me conclude with a story.

A friend of mine was much afflicted with a dangerous disorder, part hereditary, and part the fruit of his own industry. He sent for one of the best physicians in the kingdom, who having discoursed, greatly to his satisfaction, on the excellency of medicine in general, and of a medicine proper for that disorder in particular, wrote his prescription, and took his leave. My friend, who was a scholar, had a learned gentleman with him at the time; and the doctor was hardly out of the door, before a very warm controversy began between them, concerning the *style* of the prescription, whether it were *classical*, or not. This and the virtues of the medicine were now the constant subjects of my friend’s conversation, and he inveighed with great zeal and indignation against the folly of those, who would languish under disease, when there was such a remedy to be had. The distemper, meanwhile, increased upon himself, and began to seize upon the vitals. The doctor was again sent for; and knowing his patient to be a remarkably *absent* man, ‘Pray, sir, said he, give me leave to ask you one question—have you *taken* the medicine?’ A summons to the bar of judgment could hardly have astonished my friend more than this question. He awoke as one out of a dream, and very honestly owned,—He had been so occupied in talking and writing about it, and recom-

mending it to others, that he had really quite forgotten that part of the prescription. He did indeed recollect to have once tasted of the draught, but finding it rather bitter, a flavor always disagreeable to him, he had set it by again, trusting, it seems, for his cure, to the virtues which might escape the cork, as it stood upon the mantel-piece.—You see how easy it is for him who possesses the medicine to be like him who possesses it not; the medicine itself continuing all the while perfectly irreproachable.

And now, if you please, dear sir, we will take our leave of the *Apology*; for I have no design to meddle with the farrago of *extraneous* matter which it contains, respecting *gallantry, flattery, dedications, &c., &c., &c.*; and as to the crude and angry remarks at the end of it, on the letter to Dr. Smith—*valeant quantum valere possunt!*^a I will trust any man with them, if, during the perusal, he will only hold in his hand the pamphlet to which they relate. The *Apology* is, indeed, both for matter and manner, sentiment and language, so mean and wretched a performance, that one cannot sufficiently wonder how any person, accustomed to write, could permit such a piece to come abroad, with all its imperfections on its head. I have selected those parts which afforded room for enlarging on topics useful to be discussed, and have now done with it for ever.

LETTER IV.

I AM truly concerned, dear sir, to hear that your old constitutional complaint, a depression of spirits, has of late been more than usually troublesome, and wish I may succeed in the medicine I am going to administer, if not for the removal, at least for a temporary alleviation of it. The famous Dr. Radcliffe was once called in to a person almost suffocated by an imposthumated swelling in the throat. The case required immediate relief; and the doctor sent his servant into the kitchen,

^a [Let them pass for what they are worth.]

to order and bring up a large hasty pudding. Upon its arrival, falling into a violent passion, because it was not made to his mind, he flung a handful of it in the fellow's face, who returned the compliment, and an engagement ensued between them, till the ammunition was all spent. The sick man, who had been raised in his bed to see the battle, was forced into a violent fit of laughter; the imposthume broke, and the patient recovered.

In the present case, the philosophy contained in Mr. Hume's posthumous work, styled *Dialogues on Natural Religion*, shall be our hasty pudding; and I will introduce a couple of gentlemen of my acquaintance, to toss a little of it backwards and forwards for your entertainment.—May the effect prove equally salutary!

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THOMAS AND TIMOTHY, ON PHILOSOPHICAL SKEPTICISM.

Timothy. Whither away so fast, man? Where art thou going this morning?

Tom. I am going to be made a Christian.

Tim. The very best thing I should have dreamed of. But, pray, who is to make you one?

Tom. David Hume.

Tim. David Hume? Why, I thought he was an atheist.

Tom. The world was never more mistaken about any one man, than about David Hume. He was deemed a sworn foe to Christianity, whereas his whole life was spent in its service. His works compose altogether a complete *Preparatio Evangelica*.^r They lead men gently, and gradually, as it were, to the Gospel.

Tim. As how, Tom? Be pleased to take me along with you.

Tom. Why, look you; here is chapter and verse for you. *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, p. 263. 'To be a *philosophical skeptic*, is, in a man of letters, the first and most essential step towards being a *sound believing Christian*.'

Tim. When David was at Paris, I have heard the wits there should say he was a very worthy gentleman,

^r [Introduction to the Gospel.]

but had his religious prejudices, like other people. As folks are quick scented in that country, perhaps they smelled a rat. Indeed, in a *Supplement to the Life of Mr. Hume*, we are told that a brother of his used to say of him, 'My brother Davie is a good enough sort of a man, but *rather narrow minded*.'—Well, I cannot tell what to say to it: there are abundance of pretty fancies stirring. I suppose there may be different ways of becoming a Christian. A *man of letters* enters, belike, at the back door, and so goes round the house to come at it; a compass we plain folk do not think it necessary to take. One thing is certain, that if skepticism be the road to Christianity, Mr. Hume is a very proper person to keep the turnpike gate upon it. But what progress must one make, if one had a mind to try the experiment, in this same *philosophical skepticism*, before one could become a good *sound believing Christian*? Must one doubt of every thing?

Tom. Of every thing, in this world, and that which is to come, as I do myself at this present speaking. It is the most agreeable process in life; a charming, delightful suspense of judgment. I doubt whether there be any such thing as matter; I doubt likewise whether there be any such thing as spirit; that is, I doubt whether there be creature or Creator; and whether I myself am any thing more than a bundle of perceptions, without either body or soul. We modern philosophers, you must know, consider matter and spirit as so much lumber which should be cleared out of the way. There would then be a noble field open for speculation; and we might all set out afresh. I doubt whether the world (supposing, for a moment, that there is one) did not exist from eternity, or whether it did not make itself; whether it be not a huge animal, somewhat like an ostrich, which lays now and then an egg, to be hatched into a young world; or whether it be not an overgrown vegetable run to seed. 'As a tree sheds its seed into the neighboring fields, and produces other trees; so the great vegetable of the world, or this planetary system, produces, perhaps, within itself certain seeds, which, being scattered into the surrounding chaos, vegetate into new worlds. A comet, for instance, is the seed of a world; and after it has been fully ripened, by passing

from sun to sun, and star to star, it is at last tossed into the unformed elements which every where surround this universe, and immediately sprouts up into a new system.'"

Tim. Vastly ingenious ! and really, upon the whole, not improbable !—But, pry'thee Tom, if you are not in too great a hurry to be made a Christian, do stop for half an hour, and instruct me a little further in this *New Week's Preparation* of Mr. Hume : for the specimen you have given me is so exquisite, that it makes my mouth water for more. What is the plan of the famous *DIALOGUES concerning Natural Religion* ?

Tom. You shall have it in few words.—Once upon a time, then, there was a promising young man, whose name was Pamphilus. He was brought up by a philosopher called Cleanthes. Philo, a brother philosopher, came to spend a few days with Cleanthes. The *Dialogues* are supposed to contain the substance of a conversation which passed between these personages, by way, among other things, of preparing young Pamphilus in a proper manner for the reception of the Gospel, by first making him a thorough skeptic. Pamphilus, who, as a hearer only, was to learn and be wise, relates this conversation in a letter to his friend Hermippus. There is a third speaker in the *Dialogues*, styled Demea, one of your old fashioned orthodox gentry, who both firmly believes the existence of a DEITY, and is rather disposed to speak well than ill of his Maker. But the two philosophers so astonish and discompose him, draw him into so many ambuscades, and raise so thick a metaphysical dust around him, that at the close of the eleventh Dialogue, the old gentleman is glad to take a French leave, and vanishes so very suddenly, that, whether he went out at the door, or up the chimney, nobody knows to this hour. It would do your heart good to see the fun they make of him.

Tim. Before you go any further, let me just ask you one question. Pray, do you act upon this principle of philosophical skepticism in common life ?

Tom. Oh, by no means. If we did, we should walk into a horsepond, or run our heads against a wall, and

• HUME's *Dialogues*, p. 132.

the boys would laugh at us. 'No, no, to whatever length any one may push his speculative principles of skepticism, he must act, and live, and converse, like other men; and for this conduct he is not obliged to give any other reason, than the absolute necessity he lies under of so doing.'¹

Tim. I think it would be hard upon him if he were obliged to give any other reason; for *absolute necessity* is an exceeding good one. But what, then, is it you are all about, spending your pains in constructing a system which you are necessitated to contradict and protest against, every time you go down a ladder or get over a style? Surely you ought to be set in a corner, with fools' caps upon your heads, like the misses at a boarding school! In the name of common sense, what can you mean?

Tom. It is an amusement—'If a person carries his speculations further than this necessity constrains him, and philosophizes either on natural or moral subjects, he is allured by a certain pleasure and satisfaction which he feels in employing himself after that manner.'²

Tim. Suppose he were to play at push-pin, or span-farthing, would it not be more to the purpose? And then he would not disturb his neighbors. But that man's heart must be as wrong as his head, who can 'find a certain pleasure and satisfaction' in endeavoring to persuade his fellow rationalists, that they are without God in the world. However, if *amusement* be the word, let us believers have some too. If philosophers will amuse themselves with talking nonsense, they must give us leave to amuse ourselves by laughing at it. On our side of the question it is possible to be *merry and wise*, as well as to do some little service to the world by showing it what stuff these dreams are made of. Come Tom, you shall represent the genius of Philosophical Skepticism. And now let us have some of those strong reasons which induce you to deny the existence of a DEITY.

Tom. Bless us! you shock me! I do not mean to deny the being, but only to philosophize a little concerning the nature of God.³

¹ *Dialogues*, p. 24. ² *Ibid.* ³ *Ibid.* p. 42.

Tim. Well, then, be it so! Philosophize away!

Tom. Our reason, *Tim*, is very weak—very weak indeed—we are poor, finite, frail, blind creatures. Our knowledge of the things around us is extremely limited and imperfect—we ought to humble ourselves⁷—

Tim. There is always mischief in the wind, when a philosopher *falleth down and humbleth himself*. But what is your inference from all these lowly considerations?

Tom. That it is presumption in such worms of the dust to argue about the nature and attributes of God.

Tim. But you will allow poor reason to exercise herself in her own province, and when she is furnished with premises to draw a conclusion?

Tom. Ay, ay; there is no harm in that.

Tim. When we see a house calculated to answer various purposes of beauty and convenience, and having in it all the marks of wisdom and design, we know it could not build itself. The senseless materials could never have prepared and arranged themselves in such order. The timber could not dance, cut and squared, out of the forest, nor the marble meet it, hewn and polished, from the quarry. The house, therefore, must have had a builder. We apply the same argument, *a fortiori*, to the case of the world, and its Maker, God: and TULLY, if I remember right, makes no scruple to assert, that he who denies his assent to it, does not deserve the name of a *man*. This is the argument called *a posteriori*, and lies open to the common sense of all mankind. Now, then, let us try the sincerity of that declaration of yours, that ‘the question is not concerning the being, but the nature of God!’ For if you controvert this argument, you certainly mean to shake our belief in the *existence* of a DEITY. You must of course attempt to show, that the world might have been as it is, without one; and if that be the case, you will next defy us to prove that there is one.

Tom. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.*⁸ I must stick to the truth, let what will come of it; I am not bound to answer for consequences. I must own I look upon the argument to be inconclusive.

⁷ *Dialogues*, p. 42. ⁸ [Let justice be done, if the heavens should fall.]

Tim. All very well ; but why could you not say so at first ? What occasion to be mealy-mouthed, in an age like this ? Now matters are in a train, and we can proceed regularly. What is your objection to the argument ? Wherein does it fail ?

Tom. It will fail, d' ye see, if there be not an exact similarity in the cases. You will not say, that there is an exact similarity between the universe and a house, or between God and man.^a

Tim. Why really Tom, I never imagined the world had a door and a chimney, like a house ; or that God had hands and feet like a man. Nor is it at all necessary that it should be so for the strength and validity of the argument, which is plainly and simply this :—If stones and trees had not thought and design to form themselves into a house, there must have been some one who had thought and design, to do it for them ; and so, as I said before, *a fortiori*, with respect to the universe, where the thought and design appear infinitely superior to those required in building a house, we have no occasion to suppose a resemblance of the universe, or of God to man in every particular.

Tom. But why select so minute, so weak, so bounded a principle, as the reason and design of animals is ' found to be upon this planet ? What peculiar privilege has this little agitation of the brain which we call *thought*, that we must thus make it the model of the whole universe ? Our partiality in our own favor does indeed present it upon all occasions ; but sound philosophy ought carefully to guard against so natural an allusion.'^b

Tim. It is not ' our partiality in our own favor that presents it to us upon all occasions,' but the necessity of the case. There is no other way of speaking upon the subject, so as to be understood. Knowledge in God and man, however different in degree, or attained in a different manner, is the same in kind, and produces the same effects, so far as relates to our present purpose. The knowledge of God is intuitive and perfect ; that of man is by deduction, and is therefore imperfect, either when his premises are false, or when passion and prejudice enter into his conclusion. But wisdom, which con-

^a *Dialogues*, p. 50, 51, 58.

^b Page 60.

sists in fixing upon proper ends, and fitly proportioning means to those ends, is wisdom, in whatsoever object, mode, or degree, it may exist; and there is therefore no *illusion*, in saying, "Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God." • You speak of *thought*, *reason*, or *design*, as 'a little agitation of the brain;' as if you imagined, that "*Paradise Lost*," or "*The Advancement of Learning*,"^c might at any time be produced, by simmering a man's brains over the fire! Certainly an author cannot compose without brains, heart, liver, and lungs; but I am of opinion something more than all four must have gone to the composition of even the *Dialogue concerning Natural Religion*. 'Minute, weak, and bounded, as this principle of reason and design is found to be in the inhabitants of this planet,' it can form and frustrate mighty schemes; it can raise and subvert empires; it can invent and bring to perfection a variety of arts and sciences; and in the hand of some very worthy gentleman of my acquaintance, it can set itself up against God, and revile the works of the ALMIGHTY through three hundred and sixty-four pages together.

Tom. I cannot but still think, there is something of *partiality* and self-love in the business. 'Suppose there were a planet wholly inhabited by spiders (which is very possible;) they would probably assert, with the Bramins, that the world arose from an infinite spider, who spun this whole complicated mass from his bowels, and annihilates afterwards the whole, or any part of it, by absorbing it again, and resolving it again into his own essence. This inference would there appear as natural and irrefragable as that which in our planet ascribes the origin of all things to design and intelligence. To us indeed it appears ridiculous, because a spider is a little contemptible animal, whose operations we are never likely to take for a model of the whole universe.'^d

Tim. Possibly not; but I should take that 'little contemptible animal' for an exact model of a skeptical philosopher—

"It spins a flimsy web, its slender store :
And labors till it clouds itself all o'er."

^c [BACON's masterpiece.]

^d *Dialogues*, p. 142.

And were there a planet wholly inhabited by these same philosophers, I doubt not of their spinning a cosmogony worthy an academy of spiders.—And so, Tom, the *voluntary humility* which discovered itself at your setting out, ends at last in degrading man to a spider; and reason is either exalted to the stars, or depressed to the earth, as best serves the course of infidelity. In this particular, however, you are at least as bad as ‘the parsons.’^e But let us proceed. What have you more to say against the argument of *the house*?

Tom. I say, that arguments concerning facts are founded on *experience*. I have seen one house planned and erected by an architect, and therefore I conclude the same with regard to others. But ‘will any man tell me, with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art like the human, because we have experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite that we had experience of the origin of worlds.’^f

Tim. Truly I know not how that well can be; for worlds are not made every day. I have heard of the production of none since our own, and man could not see that made, because he himself was made after; and he could not exist before he was made. The contrary supposition was indeed once ventured on, by the master of a Dutch puppet show—whether he were a metaphysician, I never heard. In the beginning of his ingenious drama, Mr. Punch posting over the stage in a very large pair of jack-boots, and being asked, whither he was going at so early an hour, replies, *I am going to be created*. His evidence, if you can procure it, is very much at the service of skepticism, and may go near to determine the matter.—In the mean time, I shall presume my argument to be still good, that if a house must be built by thought and design, a world cannot have been built without; though I have seen the one, and never was so fortunate as to see the other. Let me add further, that if in the general contrivance and construction of the world there be evident demonstration of consummate wisdom, that demonstration cannot be set aside

^e See *Dialogues*, p. 37.

^f Page 66.

by seeming or real inconvenience in some parts, which, for good reasons, were either originally designed, or may have been since introduced, for the trial or punishment of its inhabitants, or for other purposes unknown to us.—This is the plain conclusion formed by common sense, and surely ten times more rational than to talk of *eggs*, and *seeds*, and *spiders*, necessity of *seeing* the world made, in order to know that it had a maker !

LETTER V.

I SHALL not pursue any further, at present, the wild ramblings of the spirit of superstition in the *Dialogues on Natural Religion*. If your disorder should return hereafter, dear sir, we may take another handful or two of the hasty pudding. Let us advert, in the mean time, to something more mischievous than the *Dialogues*, because more intelligible to the generality of readers : —I mean an *Essay on Suicide*, in which that practice is vindicated, and recommended to his majesty's liege subjects, not only as lawful and innocent, but as containing and comprehending, in many cases, almost the whole duty of man.

This *Essay* opens with a panegyric on *philosophy*, as the only remedy for *superstition*. But may not the remedy prove worse than the disease ? A young gentleman, some years ago, suffered himself to be seduced to popery. His friends sent him to the sage of Ferney^a for a cure ; and a most effectual one indeed was wrought. He came home a confirmed infidel ; and has employed himself ever since in writing against Christianity. Popery may be bad, but irreligion is not better.

Mr. Hume laments that 'men endowed with the strongest capacity for business and affairs, crouch all their lives under slavery to the grossest superstition.'—(p. 1.) Superstition surely is not the failing of the present age, in Great Britain. We have reason to wish that there was a little more of it than there is ;

^a [VOLTAIRE.]

since by 'the grossest superstition' philosophers often mean nothing more nor less than the Christian religion.

'The fair sex feel many of their joys blasted by this importunate intruder.'—(p. 2.) And lo! Mr. Hume, in his panoply of 'sound philosophy,' sallies forth as their champion, to slay the giant, and deliver the captive damsels. But of what kind are the female 'joys' here alluded to? Innocent ones are heightened by religion; and those that are otherwise ought to be 'blasted.' Mr. Hume, we have been told, delighted much in the company of women that were modest; though the system of morals with which he favored the world, was by no means calculated to make or to keep them such. If they were edified by his conversation, I am heartily glad of it. 'I do rejoice; yea, and will rejoice.'

'Superstition being founded on false opinion, must immediately vanish, when true philosophy has inspired juster sentiments of superior powers.'—(p. 2.) But where is this same 'inspiring true philosophy' to be found? In the writings of the ancient Heathens? Assuredly not. They were not agreed whether there were many gods, one God, or no god. In the writings of Mr. Hume? Alas, his famous *Dialogues on Natural Religion* show, that by studying their works, he had brought himself, and wished to bring his readers, into the very same uncertainty. 'Just sentiments of superior powers' can be 'inspired' only by those powers. From the apostacy of the nations to the coming of CHRIST, philosophy labored at the task in vain; and if she has succeeded in any respect better since, it is because she has borrowed light from revelation, and not been honest enough to own it. Christianity is founded, not upon 'false opinions,' but facts, the truth of which all Mr. Hume's philosophy has never been able to disprove.

To the direful effects of superstition enumerated by CICERO, Mr. Hume adds one still more direful; that a man under its dominion, 'though death alone can put a full period to his misery, dares not fly to this refuge, but still prolongs a miserable existence, from a vain fear lest he offend his Maker, by using the power with which that beneficent Being has endowed him. The presents of God and nature are ravished from us by this cruel enemy; and, notwithstanding that one step would re-

move us from the regions of pain and sorrow, her menaces still chain him down to a hated being, which she herself chiefly contributes to render miserable.'—(p. 3.) The superstition intended by Cicero, is *pagan* superstition. But what is that 'superstition' which in these times is understood to prohibit suicide? Evidently it is the Christian religion. It is this, therefore, which by Mr. Hume is called 'the modern European superstition.'^h This is the 'virulent poison,'ⁱ the 'cruel enemy,'^k the 'inhuman tyrant,'^l that 'chiefly contributes to render life miserable;' and the DEITY is complimented by him as a 'beneficent Being,' because he has 'endowed a man with power' to cut his throat, or blow out his brains, in order to escape. The same beneficent Being has endowed a man with 'power' (if that be all that is wanted) to cut the throat, or blow out the brains, of his neighbor, should he judge that neighbor to be the cause of his misery. Upon the principles advanced by Mr. Hume, it is no easy matter to give a good and sufficient reason why he should not do so. For if he has a right to kill himself when any great evil befalls him, or when he is under the apprehension of it, why may he not have an equal right to kill another, who, as he apprehends, has brought evil upon him, or who, as he fears, will do it?—So, again, if he may kill himself because he seems no longer of any use to society, why not, out of charity, kill another whom he finds, or fancies to be, in the same predicament? If such be Mr. Hume's philosophy, the LORD preserve us from it, and bless us with a little common sense, and common honesty!

Mr. Hume undertakes to prove that suicide is no breach of our *duty to God*: and now let us attend to him. 'In order to govern the material world, the Almighty Creator has established general and immutable laws, by which all bodies are maintained in their proper sphere and function.'—(p. 5.) Without doubt he has established an agency of second causes, which we call the course of nature, operating, under his own superintendency, regularly and uniformly, unless when, for special reasons, he sees fit to alter or suspend it, as on many occasions he has done. Very well; now to pro-

^h Page 15.ⁱ Page 2.^k Page 4.^l Page 5.

ceed :—‘To govern the animal world, he has endowed all living creatures with bodily and mental powers ; with senses, passions, appetites, memory, and judgment, by which they are impelled or regulated in that course of life to which they are destined.’

Here we must stop a little. And first, we will dismiss the other ‘animals’ from their attendance, because the question proceeds solely upon man. This done, we ask, whether there be really no difference between the two cases ; whether man be not endowed with a will to choose and refuse ; and whether he be not accountable for his actions ? If not—if he be necessarily ‘impelled and regulated in his course,’ as a planet is in that marked out for it, by ‘general and immutable laws,’ there is at once an end of the morality of human actions, and neither suicide nor any thing else can be a crime. You will judge by what follows, how far it is Mr. Hume’s intention to inculcate this idea.

‘All events, in one sense, may be pronounced the action of the Almighty ; they all proceed from those powers with which he has endowed his creatures.’—(p. 7.) The murder of Abel ‘proceeded from those powers with which God had endowed his creature’ Cain ; since, if Cain had not possessed such powers, he could not have exerted them. But what is the ‘one sense’ in which ‘that event may be pronounced the action of the Almighty ?’ The power is from God ; but let man be answerable for the use and the abuse of it.

‘When the passions play, when the judgment dictates, when the limbs obey ; this is all the operation of God.’—(p. 7.) The same fallacy. That the passions can play, the judgment can dictate, and the limbs can obey, is of God ; but that these several faculties operate by righteousness unto life, and not by sin unto death, man, assisted by divine grace, is competent to provide ; and it is at his peril that he do provide. Otherwise God is made the author of all the evil in the world.

‘Men are intrusted to their own judgment and discretion, and may employ every faculty with which they are endowed, to provide for their ease, happiness, or preservation.’—(p. 8.) In subordination to the laws of God, and the duties he has enjoined, not *per fas atque*

nefas.^m There are cases in which we ought to give up our own ease, happiness, and even preservation, for the benefit of others—our friends, our country, our religion; and we shall in nowise lose our reward.

We are now coming to the point. ‘What is the meaning then of this principle, that a man who puts an end to his own life to avoid pain and misery, has incurred the indignation of his Creator by encroaching on the office of Divine Providence, and disturbing the order of the universe?’—(p. 9.) Mr. Hume has been careful to insinuate repeatedly in the course of his argument, ‘that the providence of the Deity appears not *immediately* in any operation, but governs every thing by the general and immutable laws above mentioned;^a that there is no event exempted from them, or peculiarly reserved for his own *immediate* action and operation;^o and that if general laws be ever broken by particular volitions of the Deity, ’tis after a manner which entirely escapes human observation.’^p—But God may act *mediately*, though not *immediately*; he may *direct*, though he does not *control*. The agency of second causes proceeds not by chance, or by a blind impulse; it was created by God’s power, framed by God’s wisdom, and is guided by his providence. We have better authority for affirming, than Mr. Hume can have for denying, that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our heavenly Father. If he regards the life of a bird, he cannot be indifferent to that of a man. The inference is made by the same authority—‘how much *more*, O ye of little faith’—quite contrary to another favorite position of Mr. Hume, that in the sight of God ‘every event is alike important,^q and that the life of a man is of no more importance to the universe, than that of an oyster.’^r

If God be not inattentive to inferior animals, it must be because he had some view in giving them existence. And shall we suppose that man, the noblest of his creatures, the lord of this lower world, was formed without any view or design at all? No, surely; he is sent upon earth, for a certain time, to perform a certain part, to act,

^m [For right or for wrong.]

^a Page 7.

^o Page 8.

^p Page 8.

^q Page 8.

^r Page 11.

or to suffer as God for wise and just reasons shall be pleased to ordain, till the part shall be finished, and he shall be released and dismissed by the same hand. The LORD of nature gives, and takes away. It is the glory of a man to resign himself to the divine dispensation, and to wait his discharge with faith and patience. There is something more rational and manly and comfortable in all this, than in the notion of our being subjected only to the 'general laws of matter and motion,' and whenever we happen to be out of humor with the world and ourselves, flying at once for relief to the sword or to the pistol.

But in this case, says Mr. Hume, 'it would be equally criminal to act for the preservation of life, as for its destruction.'—(p. 11.) By no means. God has implanted in every creature an instinct for the preservation of life, and great pains must be taken to overcome that instinct, before we can bring ourselves to effect its destruction.

The reason assigned is, that in one case as well as the other, 'we disturb the course of nature, and infringe the general laws of matter and motion.'—My dear philosopher, let us obey *the law of God*, and leave 'laws of matter and motion' to themselves. I am afraid it is impossible you should have imposed upon your own understanding, when you risked this argument.

'A hair, a fly, an insect, is able to destroy this mighty being, whose life is of such importance.'—(p. 12.) Undoubtedly. Now for the inference,—'Is it an absurdity to suppose that *human prudence* may lawfully dispose of what depends on such insignificant causes.'—But is life of less importance while it continues, because by insignificant causes it may be taken away? Or because it may be so taken away, are we therefore authorized to extinguish it by our own act and deed? The consideration of its frailty can only render it more precious, inciting us to make the best use of it while we have it, and to take all possible care lest we lose it.

P. 12. 'It would be no crime in me to divert the Nile or Danube from its course.'—None at all. Some opposition might arise from the inhabitants of certain countries perhaps, when they were likely to lose their rivers. But I wish you had been so employed, instead of writing

essays in defence of suicide.—‘Where then is the crime of turning a few ounces of blood from their natural channel?’—(p. 12.) The public prints informed us some time ago of a man who killed his wife and children, as well as himself, to prevent them from being unhappy. And where was the crime? It was only in ‘turning so many ounces of blood from their natural channel.’—This, it seems is the *philosophical* idea of murder; somewhat similar to the notion once entertained of perjury by an Irish witness—‘Who would not *smack the calveskin,*’ said he, ‘for a friend?’

But more curiosities await us. We are now to be informed that resignation and gratitude are with the suicide; and that it belongs to the poor foolish Christian only to murmur and be thankless. ‘Do you imagine that I repine at Providence, or curse my creation, because I go out of life, and put a period to a being, which, were it to continue, would render me miserable?’—(p. 12.) I do really imagine, from all that I have observed and heard, that this is the disposition of mind in which many of those leave the world, who become their own executioners. Suicide is the refuge most frequently resorted to by pride, lust, and ambition, when disappointed in their schemes, or reduced to beggary by their own folly and extravagance. Sour, gloomy, and desperate, they put themselves upon the forlorn hope of atheism and annihilation, dash from the world, and plunge into eternity, at a venture. Melancholy, if it proceed from the above mentioned causes, partakes of their criminality. If it be constitutional, it is a disease, and must be judged of accordingly. As to the supposed instances of suicide, to escape from pain and sickness, they very seldom happen. In that school of affliction men learn patience, and with patience many other good lessons. But from whatever cause such a resolution may proceed, he who throws back his life, the gift of God, in the face of the donor, and in effect says he will have no more of it, most certainly ‘repines at Providence,’ and cannot be far from ‘cursing his creation.’ How would the despised Christian virtues of humility, repentance, faith, and charity, in every trial, set all right, and reconcile us to our sufferings and our duty! But let us hear Mr. Hume. ‘Far be such sentiments

from me—I thank Providence, both for the good which I have already enjoyed, and for the power with which I am endowed, of escaping the ill that threatens me.’—(p. 12.) A very fine piece of still life, for one about to commit such an act of violence upon himself! A most amiable and gracious portrait of self-murder, after the manner of the Stoics! Suppose, instead of thanking Providence for a ‘power’ which you are going to employ in a manner never intended by your Maker; when you are upon your knees you should entreat for grace to bear your misfortunes like a man, and improve them to the purpose for which they were sent—would not this conduct display more piety and resignation than cutting your throat to escape them? Mr. Hume is of a different opinion. ‘To you it belongs to repine at Providence, who foolishly imagine that you have no such power, and who must still prolong a hated life, though loaded with pain and sickness, with shame and poverty.’—(p. 13.) Pardon me, sir: the accents of a Christian in such circumstances, are very different indeed. ‘Thou hast sent me sickness, and I have borne it with patience, without murmuring; great losses, and I have blessed thy holy name; calamities and afflictions, and I have received them with thanksgiving.’

‘Do you not teach, that when any ill befalls me, though by the malice of mine enemies, I ought to be resigned to Providence; and that the actions of men are the operations of the Almighty, as much as the actions of inanimate beings?’—(p. 13.) Certainly they are all under his direction: and now again for the inference. ‘When I fall upon my own sword, THEREFORE, I receive my death equally from the hands of the DEITY, as if it had proceeded from a lion, a precipice, or a fever.’ That is, because I must be resigned to God’s providence, when, in the course of his dispensations, my life is taken from me, *therefore* I may kill myself! This is an “*argal*” that would have disgraced the grave digger in Hamlet! In the one instance we employ our utmost exertions to preserve life; in the other we ourselves destroy it.

But it is said, ‘If my life be not my own, it were criminal in me to put it in danger, as well as to dispose of it.’—(p. 13.) When it pleases God to call for life,

in the way of duty, it must willingly be sacrificed. But suicide never lies in the way of duty. And no two cases can be more essentially different than that of the *hero*, who dies in the cause of his country, his king, or his God, and that of the *wretch* who, through pride, impatience, and cowardice, lays violent hands upon himself. Attempt not for the credit of philosophy, to confound the two characters; for heaven and hell are not farther asunder.

‘There is no being—which by ever so particular an action can encroach upon the plan of the Creator’s providence, or disorder the universe. Its operations are his works equally with that chain of events which it invades, and whichever principle prevails, we may for that very reason conclude it to be most favored by him.’—(p. 14.) Rare news for pick-pockets, profligates and cut-throats!—A lady has paid a visit to a neighbor, and in the evening is returning to her home, which in the natural ‘chain of events,’ she could reach in peace and quietness. But a man, ‘exercising the powers with which his Creator has invested him,’ ravishes, robs, and murders her. This is the ‘irregular action, which invades the chain.’ Be of good courage, my boy! ‘Its operations are equally the works of God with the chain of events invaded by it, and whichever principle prevails, we may, for that very reason, conclude it to be the most favored by him.’—‘God sees no sin in his *elect*,’ says the fanatic: but according to the new philosophy, God sees no sin, (for if this mode of reasoning be just, there neither is or can be sin) in *any* man.

‘When the horror of pain prevails over the love of life; when a voluntary action anticipates the effects of blind causes, it is only in consequence of those powers and principles which he (the supreme Creator) has implanted in his creatures.’—(p. 14.) Does not the argument prove too much? May not the same be said of numberless desires which arise in the heart of man, as at present circumstanced, and which, according to all the rules of true philosophy, as well as true religion, ought to be controlled and overruled by a superior principle? Will not the same plea be as valid in the case of him who finds himself strongly excited to revenge,

to intemperance, to lust, &c. &c. &c. as of him who is tempted to destroy himself? All, it may be said, happens 'in consequence of those powers and principles implanted in us.' The truth is, that human actions must be directed, because they will be judged, by other measures than our pains or our pleasures. On one side is my propensity; on the other, the law of God. Can it be a matter of indifference, which of the two prevails? According to those arguments, as ROUSSEAU has justly observed, 'there can be no crimes which may not be justified by the temptation to perpetrate them; and as soon as the impetuosity of passion shall prevail over the horror of guilt, a disposition to do evil shall be considered as a right to do it.'^a

'Divine providence is still inviolate, and placed far beyond the reach of human injuries.'—(p. 15.) Certainly. When Judas betrayed his Master, it was foreseen that he would do so, and all things were ordered accordingly: 'Providence was still inviolate'—but Judas was not therefore guiltless.

It is affirmed that 'to divert rivers from their course, to inoculate for the small pox, to put a period to our own life, to build houses, to cultivate the ground, or sail upon the ocean, are actions equally innocent, or equally criminal.' Why? Because 'in all of them we employ our powers of mind and body, to produce some innovation in the course of nature; and in none of them do we any more.'—(p. 15.) 1. As to the actions of 'diverting rivers, building houses, cultivating the ground, and sailing upon the ocean,' there is no occasion to discuss their legality.—2. The intention of inoculation is to *preserve* life, that of suicide can be only to *destroy* it; so that there is a material difference between them.—3. No one ever rested the morality of human actions, merely on the circumstance here stated of 'producing some innovation in the course of nature'! Otherwise one might argue, after the manner of Mr. Hume, 'Jack kills a *hog*, and Dick kills a *man*. They must be equally innocent, or equally criminal. Jack employs his powers to produce some innovation in the course of nature; and Dick does no more. Each turns a few ounces of

^a *Floisa*, Letter cxv.

blood out of their natural channel; and the blood of a hog makes as good puddings as that of a man.'

'But you are placed by Providence, like a sentinel, in a particular station; and when you desert it without being recalled, you are equally guilty of rebellion against your almighty sovereign, and have incurred his displeasure.' (p. 15.)—This is an argument urged against suicide by Heathen as well as Christian writers. How does Mr. Hume overthrow it?—'I ask why do you conclude that Providence has placed me in this station? For my part, I find that I owe my birth to a long chain of causes, of which many depended on the voluntary actions of men.—(p. 16.) Here we should answer, but that Mr. Hume, like the mother of Sisera, *returns answer to himself*:—'But Providence guided all these causes, and nothing happens in the universe, without its consent and co-operation.'—(p. 16.)

Now comes Mr. Hume's reply:—'If so, then neither does my death, however voluntary, happen without its consent.' If by *consent* Mr. Hume means *permission*, all the evil ever perpetrated on earth has been perpetrated by God's permission; for otherwise it could not have been perpetrated at all. But if he means *approbation*, we must deny the proposition. Many things are *permitted*, which are not *approved* of. Of his approbation or disapprobation we have other rules by which to judge.—'And whenever pain or sorrow so far overcome my patience, as to make me tired of life, I may conclude that I am recalled from my station in the clearest and most direct terms.'—(p. 16.) Then every man may put an end to his own life when he thinks proper. The 'patience' of some people is soon 'overcome;' and perhaps there are few Englishmen, who have not found themselves 'tired of life,' in one part or other of the month of November; but happily prevented from hanging themselves by a sense of higher obligation, they have returned to business, and done excellent service to their country, in the month of January. The station of a sentinel is not, nor is it supposed to be, a station of ease, but of duty. A good soldier endures hardship; and a good Christian must do the same. Affliction is 'a call, in the most clear and express terms,' not to sullenness and suicide, but to the exercise

of patience, resignation, and fortitude. "For even hereunto are we called," and our commander himself has set us the example. Let us follow him with alacrity and cheerfulness, and we shall one day sit down with him "at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens." This is a philosophy that has some comfort in it, and is worth cultivating.

'Tis Providence surely that has placed me at this present in this chamber: but may I not leave it when I think proper, without being liable to the imputation of having deserted my post or station?—(p. 16.) Is there no difference, then, between your walking out of life, and your walking out of one room into another?—'When I shall be dead, the principles of which I am composed will still perform their part in the universe, and will be equally useful in the grand fabric, as when they composed this individual creature.'—(p. 16.) They may be so. Your clay, like that of Alexander, "may stop a bung hole."—'The difference to the whole will be no greater than betwixt my being in a chamber and the open air. The one change is of more importance to me than the other; but not more so to the universe.'—This is the old argument, that 'the life of man is of no greater importance to the universe than that of an oyster.' As far as this argument goes, then, there would be no harm done, if the whole species were to take arms, and, like Bayes' troops in *The Rehearsal*, "all kill one another." But we know that the life of man is no insignificant matter in the eye of God: and Mr. Hume himself seems to think it of *some* importance to the person concerned.

LETTER VI.

WE are next to inquire, whether suicide be any breach of duty towards our *neighbor*.

'How does it appear that the ALMIGHTY is displeased with those actions which disturb society? By the principles which he has implanted in human nature; and which inspire us with a sentiment of remorse if we ourselves have been guilty of such actions, and with that of blame and disapprobation, if we ever observe

them in others. Let us now examine whether suicide be of this kind of actions.'—(p. 17.)

Before we enter upon the examination here proposed, it is obvious to remark, that there is no instinct, or 'principle implanted' in human nature, which seems to be more universal and more forcible than that of an aversion to suicide. For a man to destroy himself, is directly against the voice and the very prime inclination of nature. Every thing desires to preserve itself. "No man hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it." And therefore nations in general, as taught by the immediate voice of nature, by the very first accents which she utters to all, have abhorred men's laying violent hands upon themselves: and to show their abhorrence, have decreed to pursue self-murderers, after their death, with the highest marks of ignominy.* The argument from 'implanted principle,' therefore, militates very powerfully against suicide.

But however, the truth is, that in this, as in many other cases, these implanted principles, by due labor and pains, may be overruled and suppressed. On which account, it becomes necessary for us to have some other criterion of moral rectitude evident to all, and to be eluded by none; lest obduracy should be deemed a proof of innocence, and because a man feels no remorse he should apprehend no guilt. For us Christians, this matter is settled by a law, which we esteem to be wise, and just, and good, and most friendly to the interests of society. By the leave of the new philosophers, we will take it with us; and I am apt to think, it will appear to great advantage, on this part of our subject. Holding this light in our hands, then, let us enter the dark labyrinth of Mr. Hume's sophistry, and it will bring us safely out again.

'A man who retires from life does no harm to society.'—(p. 18.) 'There are two ways of imposing upon mankind through the abuse of words; when a good thing is disgraced by a bad name, or a bad thing dignified with a good one. Mr. Hume in this Essay affords us a striking instance of the latter mode of deception.

* See BISHOP TAYLOR'S *Ductor Dubitantium*, Book II. Chap. ii. Rule 3.

The *self-murderer* is sometimes said by him to ‘dispose of life,’ as a pedlar would sell two pennyworth of inkle ; at others, to ‘retire from life,’ as a gentleman, when he has a mind to leave company, makes his bow, steps gracefully out of the room, and shuts the door.—It may be urged, perhaps, that as we understand Mr. Hume’s meaning, it is needless to dispute any further about his language.—Be it so. Proceed we then to consider the *sentiment*.

‘A man who retires from life does no harm to society.’

ARISTOTLE thought otherwise, and, as it should seem, better, upon this point. It was his opinion, that they who destroy themselves (without the command of God or the public) are injurious to the commonwealth ; from whose service they withdraw themselves if they be innocent, and whose justice they evade, if they be guilty. But surely the suicide ‘does harm to society,’ by setting a detestable example, which, if generally followed in times of calamity and distress, would desolate a country, instead of defending it. Suicide originates in despair, of all evils, political or moral, the greatest, as cutting off every resource of help and deliverance. Wisely, therefore, as well as bravely, did the Romans return public thanks to their general who had been vanquished in a dreadful battle by the enemy, because he had nevertheless NOT DESPAIRED of the commonwealth. In the instance before us, example is particularly contagious. Once, as history relates, it became a fashion among the young women of a certain city in Greece to make away with themselves ; nor could the magistrates put an end to the horrid practice, till having ordered the dead bodies of the culprits to be dragged naked through the streets, they overcame this most unnatural love of death by the dread of shame. In our own country, and it is said, of late, upon the continent, partly by the examples of profligates, and partly by the writings of philosophers, the same fashion is more and more diffusing itself among all ranks of people, and the state is continually losing members, who might otherwise have lived long to serve it, and then have died in the faith and fear of God. It is not true, therefore, that the sui-

‘ See BISHOP TAYLOR, *ubi supra*.

cide. 'does no harm to society.' He does irremediable harm, and may continue to do so, to the years of many generations.

'He only ceases to do good; which if it is an injury, is of the lowest kind.'—(p. 18.) To cease to do good is not so criminal as to do harm; but it is criminal notwithstanding. We were sent into the world to do good; and we should do it to the end. The portion of the "unprofitable servant" is not to be envied.

'But when I withdraw myself altogether from society, can I be bound any longer?'—(p. 18.) It is not possible to 'withdraw yourself altogether from society.' There will always be some about you, whom you may improve by your conversation and example, and who may improve others by the relation of them.—'I am not obliged to do a small good to society, at the expense of a great harm to myself.'—(p. 18.) Be not afraid, where no fear is. The 'harm' is not 'great' of bearing your afflictions as God requires you to bear them, who sends the trial, and will send the strength; and in a stage of our existence where so large a part of our duty lies in suffering, the 'good' is not 'small,' of showing your companions in tribulation (and such more or less are all mankind) what it is to suffer and die like a Christian, in piety and patience, cheerfulness and resignation.

'If upon account of age and infirmities, I may lawfully resign any office, and employ my time altogether in fencing against those calamities, and alleviating, as much as possible, the miseries of my future life; why may I not cut short these miseries at once by an action which is no more prejudicial to society?'—(p. 19.) Suicide is in reality far more 'prejudicial to society,' as we have already shown, because it exhibits a bad example of impatience and despair, which may be copied by any man, who, in the hour of gloom and melancholy (he being always judge of his own case) shall fancy himself in circumstances which will justify the action. How many have still continued to the last in various ways to do service to their families and to the public, during the intervals of pain and sickness! And when they could no longer teach their friends how to live and act, have taught them, (as before mentioned, but it cannot be

mentioned too often,) that other equally necessary and important lesson—to suffer and to die.

Mr. Hume is resolved to *die hard*.—‘But suppose that it is no longer in my power to promote the interest of society.’ I repeat it once more, that while you have breath, it *will* be in your power to do so.—‘Suppose that I am a burden to it.’ If the society be Christian, it will readily, charitably, and kindly, support the burden. ‘Suppose that my life hinders some person from being much more useful to society.’ As it is your duty to bear your afflictions, it is that of others to assist, and minister to you in your necessities; and they cannot be ‘more useful to society’ than while so employed. ‘In such cases my resignation of life must not only be innocent, but laudable.’

Neither ‘laudable’ nor ‘innocent,’ believe me, if by ‘resignation of life’ you mean *suicide*, for the reasons, many and good, above assigned.

‘Most people who lie under any temptation to abandon existence, are in some such situation: those who have health or power, or authority, have commonly better reason to be in humor with the world.’—(p. 19.) Yet this is by no means always so. There are seasons when the world, with all its pleasures, and all its glories, will fail him who has nothing else to depend upon. Accordingly we have had instances, where, for want of the religious principle, ‘health, power, and authority,’ have proved insufficient to keep their possessors ‘in humor;’ and through the prevalence of pride, avarice, intemperance, caprice, and spleen, men have despatched themselves—some, because they had taken a wrong step, and were blamed for it; some, because they had eaten too much, and therefore life was insupportable; some to defraud their creditors; some, because they were tired of buckling and unbuckling their shoes; and some to save charges. Poor unhappy MAN! How art thou tost upon the ocean of life, when once driven from the helm, which should direct thy course through time to eternity.

Mr. Hume states the following case.—‘A man is engaged in a conspiracy for the public interest; is seized upon suspicion; is threatened with the rack; and knows from his own weakness that the secret will be extorted

from him: could such a one consult the public interest better than by putting a quick period to a miserable life?"—(p. 20.) 1. To avoid so untoward a situation, before a man 'engages in a conspiracy,' let him be very well assured that it is *indeed* 'for the public interest,' that he is in the way of his duty; and that the law of his God will bear him out in the undertaking.—2. This point being secured, and the action of suicide supposed to be (as we apprehend) *malum in se*,^u then the resolution of the question is clear; we are not to 'do evil that good may come;' it were better the conspiracy should be discovered than that the man should commit a sin, for the reason assigned elsewhere by Mr. Hume himself, that 'the damnation of one man is an infinitely greater evil than the subversion of a thousand millions of kingdoms.'^v Let the man therefore continue in his integrity, and trust God for the event.—3. He who is invited to take a part in a dangerous and desperate enterprise, should consider consequences possible and probable, and weigh well his own strength, beforehand; and if he suspects himself likely to fail in the day of trial, let him by no means engage. A case of this kind may doubtless be imagined, which will seem extremely hard; and mankind will be disposed not only to excuse, but even to honor him who thus falls by his own hand, to save his companions, and his country. The behavior of some Christian virgins in the early ages, who chose rather to inflict death upon themselves, than suffer the violation of their purity by their ruffian persecutors, has obtained in its favor the suffrages of the Fathers, as a case exempted from the general rule; and we cannot readily blame those, who to preserve their honor, despised their life. They committed one sin, to escape another which they deemed greater; (though as their will would not have been concerned, they were perhaps mistaken;) and destroyed the temple to avoid its profanation. But these extraordinary instances, whatever may be thought of them, cannot prove that to be lawful which is in itself unlawful.^w

As to the other case stated by Mr. Hume in the same

^u [Evil in itself.] ^v *Essay on the Immortality of the Soul*. p. 33.

^w See BISHOP TAYLOR, *ubi supra*.

page, that of 'a malefactor justly condemned to a shameful death,' there can be no difficulty. It is the duty of him who has transgressed the laws of his country, to make the satisfaction they require. The virtues called forth upon the sad occasion, of repentance and faith in the divine mercy, consequent thereupon, are of the highest benefit to himself in his most important concerns; while his example at his death undoes, as far as in him lies, the evil perpetrated in his life; and by warning others not to offend, is of eminent service to the community. I am astonished that Mr. Hume should ask, 'can any reason be imagined why he may not anticipate his punishment?' and assert, that 'he invades the business of providence no more than the magistrate did who ordered his execution;' and, that 'his voluntary death is equally advantageous to society.'—It is an unparalleled outrage at once upon common sense, the laws, and the religion of his country.

We may now, I believe, venture to conclude, notwithstanding all that Mr. Hume has said to the contrary, that suicide is a breach of our duty to our neighbor.

LETTER VII.

LET us consider, in the last place, whether suicide be not a breach of that duty we owe to *ourselves*. On this head Mr. Hume is short, and therefore we need not be long.

The argument lies in a narrow compass. Man is subject to misery, and suicide is the way to escape it. 'That suicide may often be consistent with interest, and with our duty to ourselves, no one can question, who allows that age, sickness, or misfortune, may render life a burden, and make it worse even than annihilation.'—(p. 20.) That they 'make it worse than annihilation,' is not the general opinion, because, however afflicted, few seem disposed to choose annihilation (if they thought they could obtain it) in preference. That the calamities of human life are many and great, there is neither room or occasion to dispute. They have employed the pens of poets, orators, and historians, from age to age. They

are frequently, without doubt, 'a burthen.' But the burthen has often been borne; and what has been done may be done again. It is laid upon us by our sins, and is no more than we deserve; therefore it ought to be borne patiently. It will last but a little while; therefore it should be borne cheerfully. Through the mercies of a Saviour, it will terminate in everlasting felicity; and therefore it should be borne joyfully. This is the ground upon which we stand. These are the principles by which we abide. Admit them; they solve every difficulty, and disperse every cloud. Through the valley of the shadow of death they open a fair and lovely prospect, extending far and wide beyond it. At their presence sorrow brightens into joy, light arises in darkness, and the mass of human wretchedness melts away before it, like the morning mist upon the mountains.—If the philosophers possess any principles that are better founded, let them be communicative; if not, let them embrace these with us, and not be faithless, but believing. Whoever they may be of them that read this, 'almost,' I think, they are, at the moment, 'persuaded to be Christians.' Would to God that every one who reads it, might become not only almost, but altogether such!

If, on the other hand, unhappily seduced by the subtlety and sophistry of Mr. Hume, men determine to adopt what he calls his philosophy, that is, to doubt concerning the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and a future state of rewards and punishments; whether there be any providence, concerning itself with human affairs; and whether the world be governed by a good or an evil Being, or by any Being at all—then may they, with Mr. Hume, esteem suicide 'to be no crime, but the only way in which we can be useful to society, by setting an example which, if imitated, would preserve to every one his chance for happiness in life, and would effectually free him from all danger of misery.'

But according to a common saying, we are to look for the business of a letter in the *Postscript*. Subjoined to the Essay is a *Note*, in which Mr. Hume asserts, and endeavors to prove, 'that suicide is as lawful under the Christian dispensation, as it was to the Heathens.'

If this be the case, we must beg his pardon for having supposed that Christianity was glanced at above, as the *superstition* which kept men in bondage, and prevented them from taking this short method to escape the evils of life. The Gospel, it seems, allows of suicide. It must be the gospel, not according to St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, or St. John, but *according to Mr. Hume*. I know of no single text that will prove the point, though I once heard of a gentleman who did effectually prove it by two texts judiciously laid together—"Judas departed, and went out, and hanged himself"—"Go, and do thou likewise."

But though there be no text that enjoins it, (as, considering the importance of the subject, might have been expected,) Mr. Hume is clear, 'there is not a single text which prohibits it.'—'That great and infallible rule of faith and practice,' continues he very gravely, 'which must control all philosophy and human reasoning, has left us in this particular to our natural liberty.'

The 'liberty' of destroying himself cannot be thought very 'natural,' by any one believing in a God who placed him here, and placed him here with some view or design. Much less can a Christian, while he continues in his senses, imagine himself left at this liberty by the Gospel; since above all things, it enjoins and exhorts him, after the example of his Saviour, to suffer in patience, that he may reap in glory. Every precept of this sort is a virtual prohibition of suicide, which argues the last degree of impatience.

'Resignation to Providence is indeed recommended in Scripture; but that implies only submission to ills that are unavoidable, not to such as may be remedied by prudence or courage.'—'Prudence and courage' are both excellent things; they are two of the cardinal virtues. But that suicide is a display of them, is a proposition hitherto unknown to Reason, Law, and Gospel. There could be no occasion to preach patience under sufferings, if it were so, because then no man could be under a necessity of suffering. He might avoid it at a moment's warning, by the knife or the halter. There could be no such things as 'unavoidable ills;' and the Gospel precepts would be about as absurd as Mr. Hume's note,

‘*Thou shalt not kill*, is evidently meant to exclude only the killing of others, over whose life we have no authority. Magistrates punish criminals capitally, notwithstanding the letter of the law.’ Magistrates have authority over the lives of others; but have we authority over our own, to put an end to them when we please? Surely not; and therefore suicide is justly accounted and treated by our laws as one species of murder, forbidden by the commandment.

‘But were this commandment ever so express against suicide, it would now have no authority; for all the law of Moses is abolished, except so far as it is established by the law of nature. And we have already endeavored to prove, that suicide is not prohibited by that law.’ This is modest—‘We have *endeavored* to prove.’ But the endeavor, it is humbly apprehended, has been in vain, and ever will be so, while there shall be piety enough left on earth to acknowledge God as the LORD of life and death; for so long men will judge it their duty to adore his power, and wait his pleasure. A trifling alteration in our religious services might perhaps answer Mr. Hume’s purpose, without the *abolition* of any part. Let that little article NOT be expunged from the *Commandments*, and inserted in the *Creed*.

“In all cases Christians and Heathens are upon the same footing.”—They very soon will be so, when Mr. Hume’s philosophy shall once become the established religion.—‘Cato and Brutus, Arria and Portia acted heroically; those who now imitate their example ought to receive the same praises from posterity.’—Christianity inculcates a far nobler heroism. It teaches us, when we are engaged in a good cause, to die for it like men, but not by our own hands; to “endure the cross, despising the shame.” Cato had not patience to do the one, and Brutus was too proud to do the other. That fortitude is not complete, which cannot do both. But surely, Cato might have lived, though Cæsar conquered; and Brutus have left the world with a quiet conscience, though he had foreborne to stab the dictator, or himself. Of the Roman ladies, *nil nisi bonum*. But there have been martyrs of that sex among us Christians, who could

[We will say nothing but good.]

have shown to them likewise “a more excellent way.” There cannot be a finer or more just representation of this matter than that given by MRS. CHAPONE, in the story of *Fidelia*, first published in “*The Adventurer*,” No. 77, &c., and afterwards reprinted in a little volume, entitled, *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse*. Every female, who, on account of her crimes, her miseries, or both, may be tempted to put a period to her life, should read that story. She may read it again and again, with increasing pleasure and improvement. Nor let me omit this opportunity of recommending to general perusal, a charming ode, published among the poems of MR. WARTON, styled “*The Suicide*,” in which the best poetry is applied to the best of purposes.

‘The power of committing suicide is regarded by PLINY as an advantage which men possess even above the Deity himself.’—Shame upon Pliny for uttering such a sentiment! But more shame upon Mr. Hume for retailing it in a Christian country! The thought is equally blasphemous and absurd. Blasphemous, in exalting man above the DEITY, on so wretched an account; absurd, because as God is liable to no calamities, he cannot need the means to escape them.

LETTER VIII.

SINCE the appearance of the unbelieving fraternity among us, in these latter days, they have been celebrated for many extraordinary qualities: but their characteristic virtue, I think, has been *modesty*. A remarkable instance of this virtue has manifested itself in their conduct respecting the publication of a certain edifying pamphlet, entitled *Doubts of the Infidels: or Queries relative to Scriptural Inconsistencies and Contradictions—Submitted to the consideration of the Bench of Bishops. By a weak Christian*. It stole abroad in so humble and reserved a manner, without the name of printer, or vender, that it was a long time before I knew there was such a pamphlet in being. Informed, however, by a friend, that there certainly was such a thing, and that he had actually seen it, I made application to several book-

sellers of note in town; but they declared, they knew nothing of the matter. As I am one of those who love to learn what is stirring, I was not to be easily put by; and therefore rested not till I had made myself master of a copy. Happy in my prize, with my hand in my pocket, I betook myself immediately home, and having provided the implement necessary for the purpose, began to open the leaves.

In the process of this operation, the first words that caught my eye were the following, in page 5 of the epistle dedicatory to my lords the bishops—‘Inner chambers of the holy inquisition—whips, cords, pullies, screws, wheels, iron crows, and red hot pincers.’—Having no predilection for good things of this particular kind, I resumed my work, determined not to peep any more, till I came to the top of page 20, where my attention was again arrested forcibly by the expressions—‘Ripping women with child, dashing infants to pieces against the rocks, and broiling men to death with slow fires.’

I now laid down the pamphlet, and considered with myself, what had happened lately among us, to occasion this lamentable yelping. Sometimes I thought the archbishop of York, in the course of his last visitation, must have wedged some northern hierarch under the screw, and with one turn of the machine, to the great diversion of the company, cracked all the bones in his skin, like the claws of a lobster. At other times I concluded (though no mention had been made of it in the *Morning Chronicle*) that his grace of Canterbury had invited the bishops to dine with him upon a roasted infidel, whipped to death by his chaplains. That one of these events had taken place, there seemed to be little doubt, though it was impossible to say which.

I finished, however, my task of leaf-opening, and began to read regularly; when I found that a deed had been done still more atrocious and petrifying than either of the above; for that, by an act of parliament, procured by these same bloody-minded prelates of ours, the infidels are now obliged, on a Sunday evening, to blaspheme
IN PRIVATE!^a

^a [The allusion is to an act passed at the instigation of Bishop PORTEUS, in 1781. The following account of its occasion and character is

'This is a *falling off*, to which my memory furnishes me with nothing similar, unless it be the story of a man much given to the use of *the long bow*, who asserted one morning, to his family, that he had just seen *forty* couple of dogs running through the yard. It being denied that so many were kept in the country, 'Nay,' cried he,

extracted from a statement drawn up by the Bishop himself, and preserved in his *Life* by Mr. HODGSON.

"The beginning of the winter of 1780 was distinguished by the rise of a new species of profaneness and dissipation. A set of needy and profligate adventurers, finding every day, and almost every hour of the week, occupied by some amusement or other, bethought themselves of trying what might be done on a Sunday. It was a novel and a bold attempt; but not the less likely to succeed in this country, and in these times. They therefore opened, and publicly advertised, two different sorts of entertainments for the Sunday evening. One of these was at Carlisle House, and was called a Promenade. The other was a meeting at public rooms hired for the purpose, and assumed the name of *Christian Societies, Religious Societies, Theological Societies, Theological Academies, &c.*"

"The business, or, as it should rather be called, the *amusement*, proposed at the Sunday Debating Societies, was to discuss passages of Scripture, which were selected and given out for that purpose; when every one present, ladies as well as gentlemen, were to propose their doubts, receive explanations, and display their eloquence, on the text proposed. It was to be, in short, a school for metaphysics, ethics, pulpit oratory, church history, and canon law. It is easy to conceive what infinite mischief such debates as these must do to the younger part of the community, who, being unemployed on this day, would flock to any assembly of this sort; would look upon every doubt and difficulty started there as an unanswerable argument against religion, and would go home absolute skeptics, if not confirmed unbelievers. Thus, as the Promenade tended to destroy every moral sentiment, the Theological Assemblies were calculated to extinguish every religious principle; and both together threatened the worst consequences to public morals."

In the course of the history of the passage of the bill, the Bishop gives the following, among other arguments urged by him in its favor in the House of Lords:—

"It has been said, indeed, that this bill is a restraint upon religious liberty. It is no such thing. It restrains no one from professing that mode of religion, and joining in that form of public worship, which his conscience best approves. It restrains no one from speaking, conversing, or writing, upon religious subjects. It imposes no other restraint than this, which is surely no very great hardship, that *no one shall either pay, or be paid for, talking blasphemy or profaneness in a public room on the Lord's day*. It takes away, in short, no other liberty but the liberty of burlesquing Scripture, and making religion a public amusement and a public trade, which I was inclined to think their lordships would not consider essential marks of religious freedom." *HODGSON'S Life of Porteus*, pp. 55. 57. 63, Am. edit.]

‘I am sure there were *twenty*!’ The audience still continuing skeptical, ‘Why, then,’ said he, with perfect gravity, ‘it was *our little brown cur*!’

For such ‘cruel, barbarous, and inhuman’ usage, these gentlemen are determined, it seems, to have their revenge upon the Church, and really think themselves able, at this time of day, to write revelation out of the world, in a twelve-penny pamphlet.—Take this whole business together, and it is enough to make the weeping philosopher laugh.

In the thirty sections of their pamphlet, they have produced a list of *difficulties* to be met with in reading the Old and New Testament. Had I been aware of their design, I could have enriched the collection with many more, at least as good, if not a little better. But they have compiled, I dare say, what they deemed the best, and, in their own opinion, presented us with the essence of infidelity in a thumb-phial, the very fumes of which, on drawing the cork, are to strike the bench of bishops dead at once.

Let not the unlearned Christian be alarmed, “as though some strange thing had happened to him,” and modern philosophy had discovered arguments to demolish religion, never heard of before. The old ornaments of deism have been “broken off” upon this occasion, “and cast into the fire, and there came out this calf.” These same difficulties have been again and again urged and discussed in public; again and again weighed and considered by learned and sensible men, of the laity as well as the clergy, who have by no means been induced by them to renounce their faith.

Indeed, why should they? For is any man surprised that difficulties should occur in the books of Scripture, those more particularly of the Old Testament? Let him reflect upon the variety of matter on which they treat; the distance of the times to which they refer; the wide difference of ancient manners and customs, from those of the age in which we live; the very imperfect knowledge we have of these, as well as of the language in which they are described; the conciseness of the narratives, sufficient for the purpose intended, but not for gratifying a restless curiosity; above all, the errors and defects of translations.

Many and painful are the researches sometimes necessary to be made, for settling points of that kind. Pertness and ignorance may ask a question in three lines, which it will cost learning and ingenuity thirty pages to answer. When this is done, the same question shall be triumphantly asked again the next year, as if nothing had ever been written upon the subject. And as people in general, for one reason or another, like short objections better than long answers, in this mode of disputation (if it can be styled such) the odds must ever be against us; and we must be content with those of our friends who have honesty and erudition, candor and patience, to study both sides of the question.—Be it so.

In the mean time, if we are called upon seriously for satisfaction upon any point, it is our duty to give the best in our power. But our adversaries will permit us to observe, that the way they are pleased to take (the way, I mean, of *doubts* and *difficulties*) is the longest way about; and I much fear they will never find it the shortest way home. For if they really have determined with themselves, not to become Christians, till every difficulty that may be started concerning the revealed dispensations of God, or any part of them, be fully cleared up, I will fairly tell them, that I apprehend they must die *deists*. I will likewise further tell them, that if they should resolve not to believe in the existence of God, till every question can be solved, relative to the works of creation and the course of his providence, I verily believe they must die *atheists*. At least, I will not undertake their conversion in either case. For in the first place, whether the solution be satisfactory to themselves, none but themselves can be the judges; and their prejudices will not suffer them to judge fairly. In the second place, if they produce a hundred objections, and we can solve ninety-nine of them, that which remains unsolved will be deemed a plea sufficient to justify their continuing in incredulity. In the third place, it is impossible in the nature of things, that we should be equal to the solution of every difficulty, unless we were well acquainted with many points of which it has pleased God to keep us in ignorance, till the last day shall open and unfold them. Nay, in some instances it is impossible,

unless we could see and know, as God himself sees and knows.

But it is an axiom in science, that difficulties are of no weight against demonstrations. The existence of God once proved, we are not in reason to set that proof aside, because we cannot at present account for all his proceedings. The divine legation of Moses, and that of JESUS CHRIST, stand upon their proper evidence, which cannot be superseded and nullified by any pretended or real difficulties occurring in the Jewish and Christian dispensations. If we can solve the difficulties, so much the better; but if we cannot, the evidence is exactly where it was. Upon that evidence is our faith founded, and not upon the ability of any man or set of men, to explain particular portions of Scripture, and to answer the objections which may be made to them. Otherwise, our faith, instead of resting on the power of God, would rest on the weakness of man, and might be subverted every day. Now the evidence that may be produced for the divine missions of Moses and of JESUS CHRIST, is such as never was produced in favor of any others laying claim to divine missions, since the world began; and it is such as no person can reject, without being obliged to believe a series of absurdities and impossibilities, that, in any other case, would choke the faith of the greatest bigot in Christendom:^b which is bringing the matter as near to demonstration as a matter of this kind is capable of being brought, or as any reasonable being would desire it to be brought.

Thus much premised, to prevent mistakes, I shall proceed in the next letter to the consideration of the first section, the subject of which is miracles.

LETTER IX.

THE substance of this section, thrown into an argumentative form stands thus—‘miracles are not wrought now; therefore they never were wrought at all.’

^b [The entire truth of this assertion is abundantly proved by FABER, in his *Difficulties of Infidelity*.]

One would wonder how the premises and the conclusion could be brought together. No man could in earnest assert the necessity of miracles being repeated, for the confirmation of a revelation, to every new generation, and to each individual of which it is composed. Certainly not. If they were once wrought, and duly entered on *record*, the record is *evidence* ever after. This reasoning holds good respecting them, as well as other facts; and to reason otherwise, would be to introduce universal confusion.

It is said 'They are things in their own nature far removed from common belief.'

They are things which do not happen every day, to be sure. It were absurd, from the very nature of them, to expect that they should. But what reason can there be for concluding, from thence, that none ever were wrought? Why should it be thought a thing more incredible, that the ruler of the world should interpose, upon proper occasions, to control the operations of nature, than that he should direct them, in ordinary? It is not *impossible* that a teacher should be sent from God. It may be *necessary* that one should be sent. If one be sent, he must bring *credentials*, to show that he is so sent; and what can these credentials be but *miracles*, or acts of almighty power, such as God only can perform?—In the case of Jesus, common sense spake by the mouth of the Jewish ruler, and all the sophistry in the world cannot invalidate or perplex the argument—"Master, thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do the miracles which thou doest, except God were with him."^c

'They (miracles) require something more than the usual testimony of history for their support.'

Why so? If they *may* be wrought, and good reasons are assigned for their *having been* wrought upon any particular occasion, 'the usual testimony of history' is sufficient to evince that they *were* wrought. But the truth is, that they *have* 'something more than the usual testimony of history;'—they have *much* more; for no facts in the world were ever attested by such an accumulated weight of evidence, as we can produce on

^c John iii. 2.

behalf of the miracles recorded of MOSES and CHRIST ; insomuch that the mind of any person tolerably well informed concerning them, till steeled against conviction by the prejudices of infidelity, revolts at the very idea of their being accounted forgeries.

‘ When LIVY speaks of shields sweating blood, of its raining hot stones, and the like, we justly reject and disbelieve the improbable assertions.’—(p. 3.) Doubtless. But what comparison can be properly instituted between these hear-say stories concerning pagan prodigies, and a series of miracles, like those openly and publicly wrought, for years together, in the face of the world, by MOSES and by CHRIST ?^d The historical facts related by LIVY may be true,^e whatever becomes of his prodigies ; but, in the other case, the miracles are interwoven with, and indeed constitute, the body of the history. No separation can possibly be made ; the whole must be received, or the whole rejected.

‘ Neither is any credit given to the wonderful account of curing diseases by the touch, said to be possessed by Mr. Greatrix, though we find it in the *Philosophical Transactions*.’

Mr. Greatrix’s general method of curing diseases was not, as I remember, simply and instantaneously by the touch, but by the operation of *stroking* the part affected, and that being long continued, or frequently repeated. Sometimes, it is said, this stroking succeeded, and sometimes it failed. If (as we are informed in a note) BOYLE, WILKINS, CUDWORTH, and other great men, attested the fact, that there were persons who found themselves relieved by this new device, undoubtedly there were such persons. But whether this relief were temporary ; whether it were owing in any, or what degree, to the working of the imagination, or to the real physical change effected by the application of a warm hand, or any particu-

^d [See *Standard Works*, Vol. I. p. 25-38.]

^e [The late researches of NIEBUHR and others who have trodden in his steps, have shown that little more credit is to be given to the *history* of LIVY (at least in its earlier portions) than to the *prodigies* which are so plentifully interspersed. On the contrary, researches of the same description (I allude particularly to those of Sir W. DRUMMOND, in his *Origines*, and of the MM. CHAMPOLLION in Egypt) are daily furnishing new evidence in confirmation of the Scriptures.]

lar temperament in the constitution of the stroker—these are points, which the reader may find discussed in Mr. BOYLE's letter to Henry Stubbe, written upon the occasion; in which he reproves Stubbe, as he well might, for supposing there was any thing necessarily miraculous in the affair. Mr. Valentine Greatrix, by all accounts, was an honest, harmless, melancholy country gentleman, of the kingdom of Ireland, who after having gained great reputation by *stroking* in England, returned to spend his latter days quietly and peaceably in his native country, and was heard of no more. He had no new doctrine to promulgate, pretended to no divine mission, and, I dare say, never thought of his cures being employed to discredit those of his Saviour. The wonders reported to have been wrought formerly by APOLLONIUS TYANÆUS,^f and more lately at the tomb of ABBE PARIS, have been applied to the same purpose.^g But their day is over, and now all depends upon poor Mr. Valentine Greatrix.

'The miracles of the Old Testament were all performed in those ages, of which we have no creditable history.'—(p. 3.) Pardon me—there cannot be a more creditable history than that of Moses; since it is impossible that he could have written or the Israelites received his history, had it not been true. Would he, think you, have called them together, and told them to their faces, they had all heard and seen such and such wonders, when every man, woman, and child, in the company knew they had never heard or seen any thing of the kind? What? not one honest soul to cry out *priestcraft*, and *imposture*! Let these gentlemen try their hands in this way. Let one of them assemble the good people of London and Westminster, and tell them, that on a certain day and hour, he divided the Thames, and led them on dry ground over to Southwark; appealing to them for the truth of what he says. I should like to see the event of such an appeal. There are many such appeals recorded by Moses to his nation; and the book, in which these appeals are so recorded, contains the municipal law by which that nation has

^f [See *Standard Works*, Vol. I. p. 51. 82—86.]

^g [See *Paley's Evidences*, Prop. II.]

been governed, from the days of Moses to the dissolution of their polity. This is a fact without a parallel upon earth; and let any man produce an hypothesis to account for it, consistently with the idea of Moses being a deceiver, which will abide the test of common sense for five minutes. If the deists can *reason* us out of our faith, let them do so: but we are not weak enough, as yet, to be *sneered*, or *scoffed* out of it.

‘What reply can be made to those who affirm, that miracles have always been confined to the early and fabulous ages?’—(p. 3.) The reply is easy—that miracles were performed, by CHRIST and his apostles, in the age of all others esteemed the most polite and learned; and that the adversaries of Christianity, in those days, never thought of denying the facts. It was a piece of assurance reserved for these latter times.—‘That all nations have had them; but that they disappeared in proportion as men became enlightened, and capable of discovering imposture.’ Many nations have had them, true or false; the false disappeared, when discovered to be so; but the true will abide for ever. The Jewish rulers had their senses about them, as much as other people; and those senses sharpened to the utmost, by envy and malice. Yet were they obliged to confess—“This man doth many miracles.”^h It may be added, that had there been no genuine miracles, there would have been no counterfeits.

Upon the whole—in this section, on so leading an article, the infidels have made no considerable progress. Rather, they can hardly be said, in the nautical phrase, to have *got under way*.

LETTER X.

OUR infidels seem inclined to deny that Moses was the author of the books that go under his name. To this purpose, they observe (and the observation is certainly a judicious one) that he could not have written

^h John xi. 47.

the account of his own death, which occurs in the last chapter of Deuteronomy. There are likewise, as we all very well know, a few other passages, here and there, allowed both by Jews and Christians, to have been inserted since his time. But these will never prevent us from looking upon him as the author of the Pentateuch, any more than a few interpolated passages in the works of JOSEPHUS prevent us from ascribing those works to that author. The Pentateuch and the institutions it prescribes have been in being ever since the days of Moses: how, when, and by whom, could they have been forged?

But they themselves do not build much on this part of their performance; for they say, p. 4, 'Supposing these and all other objections of the like nature removed,'—which they therefore suppose *may* be removed—'the Scripture is frequently contradictory with regard to facts.'—Perhaps not. At least we must have some proof; and so, in their own words, *vide infra*.—'And represents the all-wise Creator as angry, 'arbitrary, and' in short, 'as a demon.' That it represents him as 'angry' and 'repenting,' is true; it likewise 'represents him' as 'coming down,' and 'going up'—all in condescension to our capacities, and 'after the manner of men,' as every child knows among us. Nor can we speak of the DEITY in any other manner, if we would speak intelligibly to the generality of mankind.ⁱ

That the Scripture should represent God as 'unjust, arbitrary, and a demon,' is very bad indeed. Let us hope better things than these of the Scriptures, however. When the several charges are brought forward, we must endeavor to answer them; and notwithstanding the jokes of these gentlemen about the *pillory*, one or other of us, I am afraid, will be found to deserve it.

'Did God create light before the sun?'—(p. 5.) Most assuredly. Why not? When the orb of the sun was formed on the fourth day, it became the appointed receptacle of light, from whence that glorious fluid was to be dispensed, for the benefit of the system.^k Before

ⁱ See a remarkable acknowledgment of this point by Collins, in LELAND'S *View of Deistical Writers*, Letter xxix. Vol. II. p. 125.

^k [The advanced discoveries of modern physiologists relative to the nature and agency of 'caloric,' its existence in a state denominated

the formation of the solar orb, light was supported in action by some other means, as seemed good to the Creator. The earth might be made to revolve by the same agency, and then another question is answered, 'How could time be divided into days, before the creation of the sun, since a day is the time between sunrise and sunrise?'

'How could God divide the light from darkness, since darkness is nothing but the mere privation of light?'—(p. 5.) The light was divided from the darkness, as it is now, by the interposition of the earth. This is plain, because it follows, 'God called the light Day and the darkness he called Night.' *Day* was the state of the hemisphere, on which light irradiated; and *Night* was the state of the opposite hemisphere, on which rested the shadow projected by the body of the earth. I see no absurdity in all this. But the assertion that 'darkness is nothing but the mere privation of light,' may be controverted. When Moses says, that 'darkness was upon the face of the deep,' he did not mean that nothing was there. Of the darkness in Egypt it is said, that it 'might be *felt*.' And if the fire at the solar orb could be suddenly extinguished, the whole body of the celestial fluid would in all probability instantly become a torpid congealed mass, and bind the creation in chains of adamant. At the beginning 'light was formed out of darkness;' and therefore the truth seems to be this. In Scripture language, light is the celestial fluid, in a certain condition, and a certain degree of motion; and darkness is the same fluid in a different condition, and without that degree of motion, or when such motion is interrupted by the interposition of an opaque body. A room, for example, is full of light: close the shutters, and that light instantly disappears. But what is become of it? It is not annihilated. No: the substance, which occasioned the sensation of light to the eye, is still present, as before, but occasions that sensation no longer.¹

latent, and its connexion with *light*, render this objection not only nugatory, but perfectly ridiculous. It proceeds, moreover, upon the assumption of an interpretation of the Mosaic history of the creation which is far from being either necessary, or universally received.]

¹ [The reader may perceive in this paragraph, and occasionally in

‘How could the firmament be created, since there is no firmament, and the false notion of its existence is no more than an imagination of the ancient Grecians?’ —(p. 5.) Never again let critics, while they live, undertake to censure the writings of an author, before they understand something of the language in which he wrote. The *Greek* version of the LXX. has indeed given us the word *σπερμα*, which has produced in our translation the corresponding word *firmament*. But these terms by no means furnish us with the true idea of the original word, which is derived from a verb signifying, to *spread abroad, expand, enlarge, make thin, &c.* The proper rendering then is, *the expansion*. But *expansion* of what? Doubtless, of the celestial fluid before mentioned, of light, air, ether, or whatever you please to call it. In Scripture it is styled the *heavens*. —“Who stretcheth forth the heavens like a curtain.”^m “That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.”ⁿ How far this *expansion* of the heavens extends, is another question. That portion of it diffused around the world is well known by the name of *the atmosphere*; and its force may at any time be felt by the hand, when laid on the aperture of an exhausted receiver. Sir ISAAC NEWTON appears to have thought that it might reach to the orb of Saturn, and beyond, even through all the celestial spaces. It seems to go out from one part of the system, and circulate to another, and nothing is hidden from its influence; to be in every place, and to possess powers which nothing is able to withstand. The Royal Society, by its late worthy president, earnestly requested DR. PRIESTLEY to make inquiry after this same wonderful substance, so that, by and by, it is likely, we may hear more of it;^o and gentlemen may

some that follow, traces of the scheme of philosophy called the *Hutchinsonian*. It will be observed, however, that they are introduced, not as the basis of argument, but in illustration. Let them pass for what they are worth.]

^m Ps. civ. 2. ⁿ Isa. xl. 22.

^o Many curious particulars concerning that, and other subjects connected with it, have already been communicated to the world by the Reverend and learned Mr. JONES [WM. JONES, of Nayland] in his very

by degrees be induced to entertain a more favorable opinion of the Jewish legislator ; as it is said of a great man, some years ago, that having, in the decline of life, accidentally dipped into a Bible, he declared, "He found Moses to be a clever fellow ; and if he had met him a little sooner, he did not know but he might have read him through."

'How shall we explain the business of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and of a tree of life?'—(p. 6.) As my lords the bishops have kindly taken so much pains to bring the infidels into a good way of spending their Sunday evenings at home, I think it would not be amiss, if they were now and then, at such times, to read a sermon. Let me therefore recommend to them four discourses, by the present Dean of Canterbury, on the creation of man, the garden of Eden, the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge.^o It may appear, perhaps, that the Mosaic history is not necessarily so pregnant with absurdities, as they are apt to suppose ; but that a rational account may be given of man's primeval state, as there described, and of that trial to which he was subjected by his Maker.

In another part of the pamphlet, (p. 39,) it is objected to us, 'that Adam was threatened with death *on the day* of his transgression, but lived at least eight hundred years afterwards.' The execution of the sentence, then, was respited in consideration of his repentance, agreeably to the proceedings of God with his descendants, both individuals and communities, in numberless instances upon record. Transgression rendered him mortal, and his life was henceforward a gradual progress, through labor, pain, and sorrow, towards death.

valuable work entitled *Physiological Disquisitions, or Discourses on the Natural Philosophy of the Elements*.—[BP. HORNE'S anticipations have been more than realized. DR. PRIESTLEY'S investigations opened the way to the extraordinary accessions since made to our knowledge of the airs, (or gases, as they are now termed,)—accessions which, at the least, may serve to silence the cavils of skeptics, by proving how much we have yet to learn even concerning the constitution of the globe that we inhabit.]

^o [Four of Bp. HORNE'S own Sermons.]

LETTER XI.

‘Is the account of the fall of man, in the book of Genesis, physical or allegorical?’—(p. 3.) I apprehend it to be an historical narrative of what really passed in the garden of Eden. With regard to the parties concerned, there is no dispute concerning three of them, the Creator, the man, and the woman. But there appears a fourth, whose nature is not so easy to ascertain. He is called the SERPENT; but is throughout represented as an intelligent being, and treated as such. He proves himself also to be the TEMPTER. Can we doubt for a moment, who this being is? The SERPENT,^p the OLD SERPENT,^q the DRAGON,^r are the appellations bestowed in the New Testament, upon the great adversary of mankind, the TEMPTER,^s the DECEIVER,^t the ACCUSER,^u the MURDERER.^v One question remains—whether, upon the occasion before us, he assumed the form of the natural serpent, or be only described under the name, and by imagery and expressions borrowed from the corresponding nature and qualities of that creature, and applied to him by analogy? Either way, it is beyond all controversy with us who believe the Scriptures, that HE is the principal agent in the whole affair: HE is all along intended and addressed; on HIM was the weight and force of the tremendous sentence to light; between HIS seed and that of the woman was the enmity to subsist; and HIS head was finally to be crushed by the victorious Messiah. However Christians may have differed in their interpretation of particular words and phrases, this is the substance of what always has been, and always must be maintained among them, upon the subject. If all be confined to the natural serpent, or beast of the field, the account must then be, as Dr. MIDDLETON^w contends, an *apologue*, or *fable*, with

^p Rev. xii. 9. 14, 15.^q Rev. xx. 2.^r Rev. xiii. 2. xx. 2.^s Matt. iv. 3. 1 Thess. iv. 5.^t Rev. xii. 9. John viii. 44.^u Rev.xii. 10. ^v John viii. 44.^w [CONYERS MIDDLETON, D. D., Librarian of the University of Cambridge, who died in 1750:—a man who, while he bore the clerical character, and professed the Christian faith, employed his talents and

a moral couched under it. But the writers of the New Testament ever refer to it as a true history, and invariably declare SATAN to have been the SERPENT, who “through his subtlety deceived Eve.” The account of man’s redemption is no *apologue*, but true history, built upon and presupposing the truth and reality of his temptation and fall, effected by the wiles of his enemy; who for that reason, was to be crushed, together with his works, by the power of the Redeemer. As to the change wrought in the natural serpent after the fall (a subject on which the infidels divert themselves more than they divert any body else) no man can deny that a change might take place; and no man can precisely ascertain the nature of such change, unless he knew the form in which that species of creatures was originally made. Nor does the sentence (so far as it may relate to the natural serpent) imply, that he should *choose* dust for his food, or that it should be his *only* food. They who grovel in dust, must sometimes come in for a mouthful. The expression intimates to us the very lowest degree of prostration, humiliation, and the most abject wretchedness, similar to that other of the prophet, ‘His enemies shall *lick the dust*.’—Let gentlemen take care, that they are not of the number. The history of man’s fall is no fable, and will hereafter be found no jest.*

‘A tree of life, which God was obliged to guard by Cherubim and a flaming sword, lest man should eat of the fruit, and become immortal.’—(p. 6.) The passage here alluded to has long been a subject of ridicule among unbelievers. It may perhaps cease to be so, when the following particulars are duly weighed and considered. 1. There is no reason in the world for supposing the Cherubim here mentioned to have been different from those described at large, as exhibited in vision to Ezekiel, figures of which were placed in the tabernacle and tem-

learning (both considerable) in the cause of infidelity, and by his writings did more perhaps to injure the cause of Christianity than the most notorious infidel of the age. See an anecdote of him in *Standard Works*, Vol. I. p. 9.]

* [See the full discussion of the subject of this paragraph in the extract from SHERLOCK’s *Discourses on Prophecy*, in *Standard Works*, Vol. I. p. 227. ss.]

ple. Moses says, 'God placed *Cherubim*.' The people for whom he wrote were perfectly well acquainted with the nature, form, and design of them. The prophet, upon beholding them in vision, declares, "I knew that they were *the Cherubim*."² 2. The words rendered in our translation, "A flaming sword turning every way," may, and it is apprehended, ought to be rendered, "A devouring fire, turning or rolling upon itself;" as the Cherubim, which Ezekiel saw, are said to have stood in the midst of a fire, 'catching or infolding itself.' The expressions are equivalent, and correspond exactly. 3. This body of *fire*, generally attended by, and subsisting in a *cloud*, is styled "the glory of the LORD;" and always accompanied the appearance of the Cherubim. 4. The most ancient expositions left in the world, which are the two Jewish Targums, paraphrase the verse thus: "And he thrust out the man, and caused the glory of his presence to dwell of old, at the east end of the garden of Eden, above the two Cherubim." 5. If such be the real import of the passage, and it relate only to the manifestation of the Divine presence, by its well-known symbol, above or between the Cherubim, may we not fairly and reasonably conclude, that the design of such manifestation, at the east end of the garden of Eden, was the same as it was confessedly afterwards, in the tabernacle and temple: *viz.* to reveal the will of God for the conduct of his people; to accept the sacrifices offered to him; and favorably to regard the prefigurative atonement made by "the sprinkling of blood, without which there was (after the fall) no remission?" And all this was done to "KEEP," or PRESERVE, "the way to the Tree of Life," immortality being now the object of a new covenant, with other conditions. There were good reasons why our first parent should not be suffered, in the state to which he had reduced himself, to "put forth his hand, and take, and eat." The dispensation of Eden was at an end. Old sacraments were abolished and new ones were to be instituted. In the spirit of repentance and faith, the delinquents were to wait, 'till one happier man should regain the blissful seat,' and open "the kingdom of heaven to all be-

² Ezek. x. 20.

lievers ;” himself the true TREE OF LIFE IN THE PARADISE OF GOD.

To the learned and candid of all denominations these remarks are submitted. If there be any thing in them, the text in question, which has been so long the butt of infidels, and the stumbling block of believers, not only becomes cleared of its difficulties, but throws a light and a glory over the whole patriarchal dispensation.

LETTER XII.

‘The account of the flood is very embarrassing.’—(p. 7.) Possibly it may. There was a great deal done in a little time; and neither these gentlemen nor myself were present to see how it was done.

‘From whence came the water?’—(ib.) From the place to which it returned, and in which it has remained, (God be praised!) ever since. The globe of the earth, as the Scriptures inform us, is a shell, or hollow sphere, enclosing within it a body of waters, styled ‘the great deep,’ or abyss. The earth, at the creation, was covered on all sides with water, which, at the command of God, retired to this abyss beneath, from whence, at the same command, it came forth in the days of Noah; and having performed its task, was again dismissed, as before. “The fountains of the great deep,” by the divine power, were “broken up;” gravity, for a time, was suspended, or overcome; the waters were violently thrown upwards into the atmosphere, and descended in torrents and cataracts of rain. If we measure the circumference of the earth, and gauge its contents, we shall find water enough, I dare say, to answer every purpose mentioned in the book of Genesis.^a The shells, and other marine bodies, deposited in the bowels and on the tops of the highest mountains, all the world over, afford sufficient evidence that the waters have been there. If any one can give

^a “Some are puzzled to find water enough to form a universal deluge: to assist their endeavors it may be remarked, that was it all precipitated which is dissolved in the air, it might probably be sufficient to cover the surface of the whole earth to the depth of above thirty feet.” WATSON’S *Chemical Essays*, Vol. III. p. 87.

a better account than Moses has done, when and how they came there, e'en let us have it.^b A learned and respectable person expresses his surprise, that the shell-fish should *transport themselves* from the bed of the ocean, where they were much better accommodated, to so uncomfortable a situation as the summit of a barren mountain. Alas, worthy sir, it was no *party of pleasure*! Whenever they took the journey, depend upon it, it was—"upon compulsion, Hal!" 'Neither can we easily persuade infidels, that *the windows of heaven were opened*, while they know it has no windows.'—(p. 8.) They can know nothing of the matter, till they know the meaning of the phrase, and its usage in the Scriptures, where the heavens are said to be *opened* when it rains, and *shut* when rain is withholden, and the like. What is more common than such modes of expression are in all languages? Suppose, to describe an uncommon fall of rain, I should say, 'the *sluices* of heaven were opened,' would it not be the height of absurdity to reply, that 'the sluices of heaven cannot be opened, because it has no sluices?' Every body knows the expression to be metaphorical. But the truth is, that the original word^c does not signify *windows*, according to the modern idea, but rather *clefts, fissures, passages*: these were *opened*—the clouds were *rent*, as we say. The waters rising from beneath met the rains descending from above, and, uniting their forces, they deluged the world.

'It (the flood) ceased not by annihilation of the waters, but they were evaporated by a wind.'—(p. 7.) There was no occasion for annihilating the waters. They returned to the place from whence they came. And as to the *wind*, which God caused to pass over the earth, it was not intended to merely *evaporate*, but, like that which moved upon the chaos at the creation, to separate the waters from the earth, and carry them down to their former habitation. We have no adequate idea, perhaps, of this element, the air, and of what

^b [The insurmountable difficulty which the mass of evidence in proof of a *universal deluge* throws in the way of infidels, is clearly exhibited by FABER, *Difficulties of Infidelity*, Sect. iii.]

^c אֲרִבּוֹת.

mighty things it can effect, when employed in full force by its Creator.

‘It seems strange, that so vast an assemblage of animals could be enclosed in an *ark* or *chest*.’—(p. 8.) But why *chest*? The Hebrew word is used only for this ark of Noah, and that in which the child Moses was committed to the Nile; both hollow vessels, constructed to float upon the waters. But there was something pleasant in the notion of the whole animal world being shut up in a *chest*; and the temptation was not to be resisted. ‘Which had but one window (which window was kept shut for more than five months) without being stifled for want of air.’

‘All this,’ the infidels say, ‘seems strange.’—It does so; but it is not more *strange* than *true*. That air would be necessary to support the life of the creatures enclosed in the ark, was as well known to Him who enjoined it to be built, as it can be to them. Our conclusion therefore is, that either a proper supply of it was conveyed in some manner from without, or else the air within, by means natural or preternatural, was preserved in a state fit for respiration. There might be various contrivances in and about the ark, which are not mentioned in so concise a history. The general facts, of which it concerns us to be informed, are these two; that the world was destroyed by a flood; and that one family, with a number of animals sufficient to replenish the earth, was preserved in a vessel constructed for that purpose.

It is asked further, ‘how the small family in the ark could give due attendance to the wants of so many creatures; and how the carnivorous animals were supplied with food proper for them?’—Many more questions of a like kind might easily be asked, if one were to set one’s wits to work upon the subject. But it should be considered, that the author who relates this transaction, relates it to have been carried on under the immediate direction and inspection of God. By Divine power the creatures were brought to Noah, and the fierce dispositions of the wild kind overruled and mollified, that they might live quietly and peaceably with one another, and with those of the tame sort, for the time appointed. Otherwise, instead of asking how they were taken care of and fed in the ark, it should

first have been asked, how they came into it, or staid a single moment in it, before the flood began?—When “the wolf thus dwelt with the lamb, the lion might *eat hay* like the ox.”—We should not recur to miracles upon every occasion; but if the event under consideration took place at all, it must from the very nature of it, have been miraculous, and out of the common course, as it is said to have been. Some means of preserving the *fish* might therefore be provided by their MAKER, notwithstanding the dilemma to which the learned and respectable writer above mentioned hath reduced us. ‘The water at the deluge (says he) was neither fresh nor salt: now the sea fish could not have lived in the former, nor the river fish in the latter.’—Close and clever!

It is argued in the 8th section, that according to the laws of *reflection* and *refraction* established in the system of nature, the phenomenon of the *rainbow* must have been produced, as it is now in certain circumstances, from the beginning of the world; and therefore could not have been first set in the cloud, as a token of God’s covenant with man, after the flood.

But do the words necessarily imply, that the rainbow had never appeared before? Rather, perhaps the contrary. The following paraphrase of the passage is submitted, as a just and natural one. ‘When, in the common course of things, I bring a cloud over the earth, under certain circumstances, I do set my bow in it. That bow shall be from henceforth a token of the covenant I now make with you to drown the earth no more by a flood. Look upon it and remember this covenant. As certainly as the bow is formed, by the operation of physical causes, in the cloud, and as long as it continues to be thus formed, so certainly, and so long shall my covenant endure; standing fast for evermore, as this faithful witness in heaven.’ Jacob, we are told,^d ‘took a stone, and set it up for a pillar, and said, This pillar be witness.’ God in like manner, (if we may so express it) ‘took the rainbow, and said, This bow be witness.’ Neither the stone nor the rainbow were new created for the purpose. When the Jews behold the rainbow, they bless God, who remembers his covenant,

^d Genesis xxxi. 45. 52.

and is faithful to his promise. And the tradition of this its designation to proclaim comfort to mankind was strong among the Heathen; for according to the mythology of the Greeks, the *rainbow* was the daughter of *Wonder*, ‘a sign to mortal men,’^e and regarded upon its appearance, as the messenger from the celestial deities. Can we any where find a more striking instance of the sublime, than in the following short description of it? “Look upon the rainbow, and praise him who made it: very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof: it compasseth the heavens about with a glorious circle; and the hands of the Most High have bended it!”

LETTER XIII.

‘WHAT answer shall we give to those who are inclined to deny, that an all powerful and just God could make use of the most unjustifiable means to attain his great purpose of aggrandizing the posterity of Abraham?’—(p. 10.) The answer, without doubt, must be, either that the means in question (all circumstances duly known and considered) were not unjustifiable; or, that they were used by man, and only *permitted* by God. For men often make use of means to attain their own purposes, by which they unwittingly become the instruments of carrying into execution the counsels of God; yet they are not hereby justified in the use of such means. All the actions of holy men of old are not blameless, because related in *Scripture*, or because related of *them*; though there may often have been circumstances, imperfectly known at this distance of time, which rendered them less blameable than they now appear to be; and therefore they are not to be judged of, without great caution and circumspection. These, perhaps, are in no instances more necessary, for that reason, to be observed, than in reviewing those parts of sacred story, which relate to the *birthright* and *blessing* of the ancient patriarchs.

^e Τερας μεροπων ανθρωπων.—HOMER.

‘Could this benevolent and just being approve of the ungenerous advantage which Jacob took over his faint and hungry brother?’—That the crime of Esau, in being so ready to part with his birthright, was of a more atrocious nature than at first sight it may seem to have been, is evident from the remark subjoined in the narrative; ‘thus Esau *despised* his birthright;’ as also his being stigmatized by St. Paul with an epithet denoting *profaneness* and *impiety*,[†] qualities which were therefore manifested in the act of lightly and wantonly parting with the birthright, and those high and heavenly privileges annexed to it. I say *lightly* and *wantonly*; because, though he returned faint and hungry from the field, there could be no danger of his *starving* in his father’s house. He parted with it, as men often do now, for the sake of gratifying a liquorish appetite towards that which was his brother’s, ‘for one morsel of meat,’ one particular dish, which he vehemently affected. There was no reason why a privilege thus rejected should be again conferred. Like the Jews, in an instance somewhat similar, he ‘judged himself unworthy.’ He cast it from him, and it became another’s.—With regard to the part borne by Jacob, in buying what Esau was so ready to sell, there seems no necessity for pronouncing him faultless. The fact is related, like many others, without approbation or censure; and the designs of God were accomplished by the free agency of man. To his own master he standeth or falleth, respecting this and every other action of his life.

‘Could this omnipotent and upright Spirit adopt no method of distinguishing his favorite Jacob, but that of fraud and lies, by which he deprived the same unsuspecting brother of his father’s blessing?’—(*ib.*) The following considerations may assist in directing us to form a right judgment of this matter.—1. The proposition of deceiving Isaac originated not with Jacob, but with Rebekah. Jacob remonstrated against it, as likely to bring a curse upon him rather than a blessing; nor would consent to perform his part till she engaged to take all the blame on herself—‘On me be the curse, my son: only obey my voice.’—2. From this speech, and from the earnest-

[†] Βεβηλος. Heb. xii. 16.

ness and solicitude discovered by Rebekah, it may not unfairly be presumed, that she had some special reason for what she did ; that Isaac was about to take a wrong step in a concern of great moment, which ought to be prevented, and could be prevented by no other means.—3. The rectitude of Rebekah's judgment seems evidently to have been recognised and allowed by Isaac, at the conclusion of the matter. For though he had blessed Jacob, intending to bless Esau, yet, as if recollecting himself, he confirmed and ratified that blessing in the strongest terms ; 'yea, and he shall be blessed.' Still further—at sending him away, he again repeated the benediction in the most solemn and affecting manner ; 'God give thee the blessing of Abraham !' It is hard to assign any other reason, why, if so disposed, upon discovering the fraud, he might not have reversed the proceeding. Nay, by the kind meeting of the brothers afterwards, one should be inclined to think that Esau himself acquiesced at length in the propriety of what had been done.—4. If such were the case, Isaac was only deceived into what was right, and what himself acknowledged to be so in the conclusion. The deception was like those often practised by physicians for the benefit of their patients, and casuists must decide upon it in the same manner. The offence of Jacob is certainly alleviated, if not entirely taken off, by the circumstance of Rebekah pledging herself to bear the blame ; as the conduct of Rebekah seems justified by that of Isaac ratifying and confirming to Jacob the blessing originally intended for Esau. Upon the whole, if there were an offence, it was one that might be forgiven ; and if God, notwithstanding, continued to bless Jacob, he did forgive it, and had reasons for so doing.^g

'In short, how shall we justify God for the continual distinction he is said to have bestowed on a people, who from their own annals appear to have been unparalleled for cruelty, ingratitude, inurbanity, &c.'—(*ib.*) The article of *cruelty*, for proof of which we are referred, in a note, to the acts of Joshua, may be deferred till we come professedly to consider those acts. Their

^g [This concluding remark is an abundantly sufficient answer to the cavil :—more satisfactory, perhaps, than the reasoning which precedes.]

ingratitude towards God their Saviour was indeed flagrant; but might perhaps be matched elsewhere. As to the charge of *inurbanity*, it was brought against them by VOLTAIRE, who spake of them as a “wretched nation, ever ignorant and vulgar, and strangers to the arts.” The following reply was made to him. When the infidels shall have duly considered it, we shall hope to be favored with their sentiments upon it.

“Does it become you, a writer of the 18th century, to charge the ancient Hebrews with ignorance? A people who, while your barbarous ancestors, whilst even the Greeks and Latins, wandering in the woods, could scarcely procure for themselves clothing and a settled subsistence, already possessed all arts of necessity, and some of mere pleasure; who not only knew how to feed and rear cattle, till the earth, work up wood, stone, and metals, weave cloths, dye wool, embroider stuffs, polish and engrave on precious stones; but who, even then, adding to manual arts those of taste and refinement, surveyed land, appointed their festivals according to the motions of the heavenly bodies, and ennobled their solemnities by the pomp of ceremonies, by the sound of instruments, music, and dancing; who even then committed to writing the history of the origin of the world, that of their own creation and their ancestors: who had poets and writers, skilled in all the sciences then known; great and brave commanders; a pure worship; just laws; a wise form of government; in short, the only one of all ancient nations, that has left us authentic monuments of genius and literature. Can this nation be justly charged with *ignorance* and *inurbanity*?”^h

LETTER XIV.

‘UNBELIEVERS affirm, that a just God could not punish Pharaoh for a hardness of heart, of which he

^h [Letters of certain Jews to M. Voltaire, p. 381, ed. Philad., 1795. This work, replete with sound sense and keen satire, well deserves to be consulted by any one who has been perplexed by the flippant cavils of infidels against the Old Testament history.]

himself (God) was evidently the cause.'—(p. 14.) When we meet with an assertion apparently contrary to all the truth and equity in the world, it is but common justice to any writer, human or divine, to suppose that we mistake his meaning, and that the expression employed to convey it is capable of an interpretation different from that which may at first present itself. We cannot for a moment imagine that God secretly influences a man's will, or suggests any wicked, stubborn resolution to his mind, and then punishes him for it. We are therefore to consider by what other means, not incompatible with his nature and attributes, he may be said, in a certain sense, and without impropriety, to harden a man's heart.

There are many ways by which we may conceive this effect to be wrought, without running into the absurdity and impiety above mentioned. The heart may be hardened by those very respites, miracles, and mercies, intended to soften it; for if they do not soften it, they will harden it.—God is sometimes said to do that which he permits to be done by others, in the way of judgment and punishment; as when his people rejected his own righteous laws, he is said to have 'given them' the idolatrous ones of their Heathen neighbors, 'statutes that were not good.'—The heart may be hardened by his withdrawing that grace it has long resisted; men may be given up to a reprobate mind; as they *would* not see when they possessed the faculty of sight, the use of that faculty may be taken from them, and they may be abandoned to blindness. But all this is judicial, and supposes previous voluntary wickedness, which it is designed to punish. The case of Pharaoh is exactly that of the Jews. God is said to have "blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts." But how? As it is here represented? Would he do this to his own people? Was HE the cause of their rejecting their Messiah? Or does he—can he intend to say that he was so? Let us hear no more of this, for the sake of common sense and common honesty, if such things are yet left among us.

But it is asserted, that when the objection is urged by unbelievers, 'we (Christians) usually answer, that the potter has power over his clay, to fashion it as he lists;' to which the infidels, in the gayety of their hearts, triumphantly reply, that, 'if the clay in the hands of the

potter were capable of happiness and misery, according to the fashion impressed on it, the potter must be malevolent and cruel, who can give the preference to inflicting pain instead of happiness.' The similitude of the *potter* is employed by St. Paul; but it does not stand exactly in his writings as it does in the pamphlet before us. By him it is adduced in proof of one single point only, that when men are become sinners, and obstinate sinners, God has a right of dealing with them according to his pleasure, and as may best answer the purposes of his dispensations, respecting others as well as themselves. The comparison is first used by God himself, (Jer. xviii.) and applied to the power by him exercised of destroying or preserving an offending *people*, as they should either continue in sin, or repent and amend. It is applied precisely in the same manner by St. Paul, (Rom. ix. 9,) to show, (as appears by the verses immediately following,) that God might without injustice deal with the Jews, as he had before dealt with and hardened Pharaoh; and for the same reason; because they had refused to hearken to his voice, as Pharaoh had done. He might reserve them for a more signal destruction, which would display his glory, and forward the conversion of the nations; while at the same time he showed the riches of his mercy to such, whether Jews or Gentiles, as embraced the Gospel; whom he owned as the spiritual seed of Abraham, and his peculiar people. Whoever will condescend with candor and attention to peruse Dr. WHITBY's annotations on *Rom.* ix. 9, cannot, I think, have the shadow of a doubt left on his mind, respecting either the drift of St. Paul's reasoning, or the truth of it.^b

'We know it is our duty to believe that Aaron's miracle was performed by the power of God; but we are at a loss to discover by what power the magicians performed theirs.'—(p. 12.) It is a pleasure to me to find these gentlemen solicitous about the performance of *duty*; and therefore let me address to them a word of consolation and encouragement.—Be not swallowed up by over much uneasiness, as touching this matter. Rest

^b [For a more clear explanation of this much misunderstood passage, see *Standard Works*, Vol. II. p. 33—39.]

satisfied that whatever may be determined concerning the wonders wrought by the magicians—whether they are supposed to have been wrought in reality, or in appearance only; by legerdemain or the power of evil spirits, through the permission of God, willing to make his power known in this grand contest—either way, the argument drawn from miracles, in support of revelation, will remain in its full strength. The superiority of the God of Israel was manifested, and the contest yielded by the adversaries, who could not protect themselves or their friends from the maladies and plagues inflicted by Omnipotence. Whatever the magicians did, or however they did it, it appeared evidently they might as well have done nothing. Mankind can never be ensnared by pretences of this sort, when they see such pretences controlled and overruled by a superior power. You are men of too much sense, I am sure, to be found on the side of Jannes or Jambres, or to take a *retainer* from Simon Magus.

‘Where did the magicians find water to practise their art upon, since Aaron had already turned it all into blood?’—(p. 13.) Not *all*, gentlemen, by your leave. The Egyptians, not being able to drink of the water of the river, “digged round about it (as you are told,ⁱ) for water to drink.” And depend upon it they found some, or it had been very bad with them indeed. But the truth is, that nothing is more common among writers, both sacred and profane, than the use of the word “*all*,” not in an *absolute* but a *relative* or *comparative* sense, as implying *many, some of all sorts, &c.* By adverting to this simple and obvious consideration, you might have spared yourselves the trouble of laboring in vain through three or four pages, to be witty on the subject of Pharaoh’s cattle being killed more than once, and such like pleasant conceits. These are poor *piddling* doings; but we shall have some *slashing* by and by, to make amends.

‘Some weak believers are in doubt, whether so mean, so ungenerous, and so dishonest an act, as borrowing the jewels of the Egyptians, without any intention of returning them, did not rather originate in that disposition

ⁱ Exod. vii. 24.

which characterizes the Jews to this day, than in the command of the just God, who certainly could need no such tricks to accomplish his intentions.'—(p. 15.) Much reason have we to wish that some among the unbelievers would take the pains to acquire a moderate stock of Hebrew, that so he 'might have to give,' upon such occasions as these, 'to him that needeth.' For that the Israelites, in the proper sense of the English word, *borrowed* these jewels, or gave the Egyptians reason to expect a *return* of them, does by no means appear from the original, to which a man, when he is disposed to play the *critic* upon an author, should always have recourse, if he be solicitous to deserve the character of an honest man and a scholar. The general signification of the word^k is to *ask*, to *require*, to *demand*. In the three texts^l relative to this transaction, the LXX,^m and in the two former, the Vulgate,ⁿ render it by a term of similar import. It is said, "the Israelites *spoiled* the Egyptians:" they took these jewels, vessels, &c.; and the Egyptians gave them, as the *spoil* of a conquered enemy, glad to escape with life, and to dismiss a much injured people; they took these spoils, as wages due, and withholden, for immense labor undergone; as a recompense for long and cruel oppression; some of them, probably, as *insignia* of the vanquished Egyptian deities, to be afterwards employed in the service of the true God, whom Egypt as well as Israel, ought to have acknowledged and adored: who, as the great Lord and Proprietor of all things in heaven and earth, taketh from one and giveth to another, according to his good pleasure, founded evermore in wisdom, truth, and righteousness; who at the beginning foretold^o that the Egyptians should be spoiled, and when the time came directed his people to spoil them. "God gave them favor:" the act was his, and the Israelites were instruments only in his hands. If men are pleased to concern themselves at all with the history, they must take the whole as it stands, neither blaming those on whom no blame can properly fall, nor accusing their Maker of iniquity, who can be guilty of none, but at a future day, to the confusion of

^k לָשׁוּב. ^l Exod. iii. 22. xi. 2. xii. 35.

^m Αἰτῶ.

ⁿ Postulo.

^o Exod. iii. 22.

all his blasphemers, will be fully 'justified in his saying, and clear when he is judged.'

One cannot but bless one's self to see how ready these writers are, at every turn, to give sentence against the people of God, in favor of their enemies; as if they emulated the same set of worthies in the fifth century, called *Cainites*; who, having reprobated the Saviour of the world, his prophets and apostles, are said to have adopted into the catalogue of their saints, and paid especial honors to the memories of Cain, Korah, Dathan, Esau, the Sodomites, and Judas Iscariot.

As to their intimation, at page 17, that because Egypt was a country intersected by canals, there never were any *horses* or *chariots* in it, they ought for this to take their part in the next general flogging, at Westminster School. During the operation, perhaps, the captain of the school will be enjoined by the master to read aloud the following short passage from *ROLLINS' Ancient History*.

'Foot, horse, and chariot-races were performed in Egypt with wonderful agility; and the world could not show better horsemen than the Egyptians.'^p

In the next letter we shall proceed to the consideration of a topic entirely *new*—BALAAM'S ASS.

LETTER XV.

THE first difficulty here is, 'why God should be angry with Balaam, for going, when he had given him leave to go?'

To be sure, all circumstances continuing the same, it would be strange,—it would be passing strange. But if circumstances varied, the Divine conduct might vary too. "Go," says God, but—observe—"the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do."^a Balaam seems to have set out with a resolution to obey; for like a man, and like an honest man, he had boldly and nobly said, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the

^p Vol. I. p. 48. ^a Numb. xxii. 20.

LORD my GOD to do less or more.”^r However, it is possible, that upon the road, either by the persuasive arguments of the princes of Moab who accompanied him, or by the wicked suggestions of his own deceitful heart, an alteration had taken place in his mind, and interest had gained the ascendancy over duty. I say, this is *possible*; considering his character it is *probable*: but a passage in the history itself seems to make it *certain*. “I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is *perverse* before me.”^s But what *way*? Not merely his journey, for he had leave to take it, conditionally. *Way* must necessarily be understood in its moral acceptation. Something was wrong in the *course* of his thoughts, his imagination; in his design and intention, now changed from what they were at setting out. “The foolishness (or wickedness) of man **PERVERTETH** his WAY.”^t Therefore God was angry, not, as it is in our translation, “because he went;”^u but “as he was going—while he was on the road.”^x Upon Balaam’s humbling himself, and offering to return, leave of proceeding is again granted, but with a significant repetition of the original proviso—“Only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak.”^y “Go on; but remember, to me your heart is open, your desires are known. If you betray your trust, the drawn sword of the angel waits to punish your duplicity as it ought to be punished.”—This appears to be a fair and reasonable solution of the first difficulty.

As to the second, it is observed, p. 17, that ‘the ass exhibited a specimen of penetration and prudence, of which the asses of modern times seem to be divested.’—This observation brings to my mind one made upon the subject some years ago by that father of the faithless, DR. TINDAL. “What a number of ideas must Balaam’s ass have (says he) to be able to reason with her master, when she saw and knew an angel?”—Will these gentlemen do me the favor to accept DR. WATERLAND’S answer?—“Now, as to the number of ideas which the ass must have; I believe she had as many as asses commonly have: and he may please to count them at his leisure for his own

^r Numb. xxii. 18. ^s Ver. 32. ^t Prov. xix. 3. ^u Numb. xxii.
^x כי הולך. ^y Ver. 35.

amusement.”^z If they have ever an anatomist among them, I dare say he could very easily demonstrate, from the configuration of its organs, the impossibility of the creature’s ever speaking at all. And his demonstration would just be as much to the purpose as TINDAL’S question. The plain truth is this—If it pleased GOD to take this particular method of “rebuking the prophet’s madness,”^a the severest philosophy cannot question his power to produce sounds articulate and significant, either *with* the organs of any animal, or *without* them. A voice proceeding from a dumb creature was made upon this occasion, to teach a lesson similar to that deduced, upon another, from the example of the same creature—“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but (man) doth not know, (a prophet) doth not consider.”^b If it be objected, that the occasion was not worthy; that it was not *dignus vindice nodus*; we shall certainly take the liberty to think that GOD ALMIGHTY was a much better judge of that matter than the infidels can possibly be, even were they ten times wiser than they are. The whole transaction, in which Balaam bore so conspicuous a part, is of very great moment, and the history which relates it, full of deep instruction, as well as abounding in the beautiful and sublime.^c

A predecessor of these gentlemen, Mr. CHUBB, I remember, called the Supreme Being to a very severe account for his conduct respecting the Canaanites; and they seem disposed to do the same, in a bitter, sarcastical, canting section, (p. 19, &c.) the drift of which is to compare the Israelites in Canaan to the Spaniards in Mexico, and represent the former as the more detestable people of the two. The objection will perhaps be obviated, and its futility evinced, by proposing the few following queries.

1. Has not the ALMIGHTY a sovereign right over the lives and fortunes of his creatures?

2. May not the iniquity of nations become such, as to justify him in destroying these nations?

^z *Scripture Vindicated*, I. 42. ^a 2 Peter ii. 16. ^b See Isa. i. 3.

^c ‘Nihil habet Poesis Hebræa in ullo genere limatius aut exquisitius.’
LOWTH *de Sacra Poesi Heb.* Prael. XX, ad fin.

3. Is he not free to choose the instruments by which he will effect such destruction?

4. Is there more injustice or cruelty in his effecting it by the *sword*, than by famine, pestilence, whirlwind, deluge, or earthquake?

5. When these latter means are employed, do not women, and children, and cattle, perish with the men?

6. Does not God take away thousands of children every day, and perhaps half the species, under the age of ten years?

7. Does not the circumstance of a divine commission entirely alter the state of the case, and distinguish the Israelites from the Spaniards, as much as a warrant from the magistrate distinguishes the executioner from the murderer?

8. May not men be assured of God's having given them such a commission?

9. Were not the Israelites thus assured; and is there not at this day incontestible evidence upon record, that they were so?

This is a fair and regular distribution of the subject into its several parts. Whenever the infidels shall find themselves in a humor to discuss all, or any of them, we must consider what they may offer further upon this topic.

In p. 18, they cite the following passage from Judges i. 19. "The LORD was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain: but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." They subjoin—"It is difficult to conceive how the LORD of heaven and earth, who had so often changed the order, and suspended the established laws of nature, in favor of his people, could not succeed against the inhabitants of a valley, because they had chariots of iron!"

At the end of this sentence is placed a single note of admiration. There ought to have been at least half a dozen; for never was any thing more truly wonderful! The 'difficulty of conceiving it' is very great indeed! so great, that one should have thought, for very pity's sake, our adversaries would have looked about them a little, to see whether they understood the text, and whether there were no possible way of bringing us off,

As they have not been kind enough to do it for us, we must e'en try what we can do for ourselves.

We apprehend, then, in the first place, that when it is said, "HE drove out the inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley;" the antecedent is *Judah*, not JEHOVAH; because JEHOVAH had often displayed much more eminent instances of his power; and he that effected the greater, could certainly have effected the less. In the second place, though it pleased God to give success to Judah in one instance, it does not necessarily follow, that therefore he should give it in all. So that there is no more absurdity in the passage, than there would be in the following speech, if such had been addressed to the Sovereign by one of his commanders returned from America—"By the blessing of God upon your Majesty's arms, we overcame General Greene in the field; but we could not attack General Washington, because he was too strongly intrenched in his camp." There is no reason, therefore, for supposing that 'the Jews considered the God of Israel, their protector, as a local divinity; who was in some instances more, and in others less powerful, than the gods of their enemies.'^d

Nor is it altogether 'THUS' that 'David in many places compares the LORD with other gods:' since he compares him *with* them, only to set him *above* them; as sufficiently appears by the passage quoted—"The LORD is a great God, and a great king above *all gods*."^e In the Heathen world there were "gods many, and lords many." An Israelite acknowledged one only God, the maker of heaven and earth, and of all the supposed deities therein. "All the gods of the Heathen," so styled by them, "are but idols; but it is the LORD that made the heavens."

Such, as an Israelite, must have been the sentiments of Jephthah, as well as David; and therefore the citation from his address to the king of the Ammonites will avail nothing to the purpose for which it is adduced.—"Wilt thou not possess that, which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out from before us, them will we pos-

^d Page 19.^e *Ib.*

sess.”^f It cannot seriously be thought, that Jephthah, a judge of Israel, intended to acknowledge the real divinity of the Ammonitish idol, Chemosh. No: the argument is evidently of the kind which logicians style *argumentum ad hominem*, an argument formed upon the principles of the adversaries, and therefore conclusive to them.—‘You deem yourselves entitled to any possession acquired, as you imagine, by the assistance of him whom you call your god, and cannot reasonably expect us to yield that, which we know the LORD our God has awarded to us.’ Jephthah, in a negociation with the Ammonites, had no occasion to discuss the subject of their idolatry, or tell them what he thought of Chemosh; but states the matter according to their own ideas, supposing them, for a moment, to be true, though he believed them to be false, as is done every day.

VOLTAIRE has amused himself much with this text, and between one and another of his manifold publications, kept it up, like a shuttle-cock. He struggles hard for it—but in vain. “The words of Scripture,” says he, “are not, *Thou thinkest thou hast a right to possess, &c.*, but expressly, *Thou hast a right to possess, &c.*, for that is the true interpretation of the Hebrew words, *otho thirasch*.”^g Aye, my little man, so it is, according to the *Vulgate*,—“*Tibi jure debentur*.” But any modern school-boy would have informed thee better, and told thee, that the words, in very deed, denote neither more nor less than, “Thou wilt possess it.”—Are we to give up our Bible, and pin our faith upon the sleeve of such a man as this?

After Balaam’s Ass, the Canaanites, and Chemosh, one naturally expects—and lo, she is at hand—THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

It was not unusual among us here in England some years ago, for an old woman, if she had the misfortune to live at the corner of a common, to be suspected of witchcraft, and tossed into a horse pond, to see whether she would sink or swim. To put an end to such ridiculous barbarities, as well as some others of a more serious and solemn nature, the legislature of Great

^f Judges xi. 24.

^g אָתָּו תִּירַשׁ *Treatise on Toleration*, Chap. xii.

Britain very wisely ordained, by an Act of 9 G. II. ch. 5. that no person should in future be vexed, or prosecuted, under that notion; and that whoever pretended to any thing of the kind, should, on conviction, be adjudged to the pillory. These gentlemen have their fears, upon this occasion, for the authority of the Bible. I cannot say, for my part, that I feel any such apprehensions. 'The witch of Endor, and the Jewish Law, both prove by divine argument (whatever that may be) the existence of such professors, though like miracles, they have now ceased to appear.'—(p. 25.) But the nonexistence of miracles at present is no proof that they never existed; for they most certainly once did exist, if evidence be evidence. The argument therefore is full in their own teeth; and there might be witches, as well as possessed persons, formerly, though there may be none now. The Bible may be true, and (blessed be God) the parliament not *infidel*. They 'deplore the infidelity of *that* parliament.' Bold words these, indeed!—I would not have said such things of *any* parliament, for the world.—They are apprehensive of persecution—Let them take more care, another time!

It appears by the Jewish Law, that there were then men and women, who in the language of our translation, are styled "diviners, observers of times, enchanters, witches, charmers, consultants with familiar spirits, wizards, and necromancers."^a These practices, are said to be "the abominations of the *heathen*;"ⁱ and we know they were continued, lower down, among the Greeks and Romans, whose philosophers were sometimes puzzled how to determine concerning them. With the idolatry of their neighbors, the Israelites, frequently adopted these its appendages. That there was in them *much* of juggling and imposture, may be true; but that *all* was so, is more than many wise and learned men have thought proper, upon a due consideration of the matter, to assert; because, that there are no evil spirits, or that mankind never had any communication with them, are negatives not easily proved.

Respecting the transaction at Endor, the case, in few words, stands thus. Convinced by proper evidence of

^a Deut. xviii. 10.

ⁱ Verse 9. 12.

the authority of the book in which it is related, we of course believe (having as we judge, good reason to believe) that the several incidents happened, as they are said to have happened. By what power or agency they were brought about, or how the business was conducted, is another question, which we must endeavor to solve, if we can do it; if not, it must remain as it is, being confessedly to us, at this distance, of an obscure and difficult nature.

That God should permit evil spirits, employed by a wretched woman, to summon, at pleasure, his departed servants from the other world, is not to be imagined. It remains therefore, either that the whole affair of Samuel's appearance was a contrivance; or that, by the interposition of God, there was a real appearance, which the enchantress did not expect, nor could have effected. The surprise and alarm occasioned in her, seem to point us this way, and there are two instances recorded in Scripture of a proceeding somewhat similar. When king Balak had recourse to sorceries and divinations, hoping to procure some relief, or fair promises at least from them, God himself interposed, and so overruled Balaam and all his divinations, that Balak could obtain no favorable answer from them, but quite the reverse.^k In like manner King Ahaziah had sent to consult Baalzebub, the demon of Ekron, to know whether he should recover of the sickness he then lay under, hoping, no doubt, to obtain a favorable answer there, as probably he might have done; God himself took care to anticipate the answer by Elijah the prophet, who assured the messengers, meeting them by the way, that their master Ahaziah should not recover, but should surely die.^l Thus, probably, was it in the case of Saul: when he hoped for a kind answer from Samuel, and it is likely would have had a very favorable one from some *pretended* Samuel, God was pleased to disappoint both the sorceress and him, by sending the *true* Samuel, with a true and faithful message, quite contrary to what the woman and Saul had expected: which so confounded and disordered him, that he instantly fell into a swoon, and could no longer bear up

^k Numb. xxiii. ^l 2 Kings i.

against the bitter agonies of his mind. The sense of the Jewish Church, about three hundred years before CHRIST, is given by the author of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, when, speaking of Samuel, he says thus—"After his death he prophesied, and showed the king his end, and lifted up his voice from the earth in prophecy, to blot out the wickedness of the people."^m This author plainly enough supposed, that it was Samuel himself who appeared in person, and prophesied to King Saul.

LETTER XVI.

WE now come to some observations on the character and conduct of David. And here, the extracts are more scanty, than one should have expected, from Messrs. Bayle, Morgan, and Co., or rather from the last retailer of this sort of ware, the *Historian of the Man after God's own Heart*.ⁿ

David is scoffed at for his cruelty towards the Ammonites, shown by "putting them under saws, and under harrows of iron,"^o &c.—(p. 21.) Whatever the words in the original may signify, it seems but reasonable to conclude, that if David inflicted on these people punishments extraordinarily severe, there must have been some extraordinary cause. We read in the book of Judges, that the men of Judah, "pursued after Adonibezek, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes." Had nothing more been related, this would have appeared a strange instance of wanton barbarity. But what says the suffering prince himself?—"Threescore and ten kings having their thumbs and great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table; as I have done, so God hath requited me."^p The cruelties practised by the Ammonites upon others might be returned, by the just judgment of heaven, upon themselves. There is no

^m Eccus. xlvi. 20.

ⁿ [One of the blasphemous publications which gave occasion to Bishop HORNE's *Letters*, bore the title *The History of the Man after God's own Heart*. There have been men foolish and wicked enough to reprint and circulate this trash in America but a few months since.]

^o 2 Sam. xii. 29. ^p Judges i. 6, 7.

ground for supposing that David treated them worse than they would have treated the Hebrews, or than prisoners of war were treated in those times; and Dr. CHANDLER, it is apprehended, has given very good reasons why the passage should be rendered in the manner following—"He brought forth the inhabitants, and put them to the saw, and to iron mines, and iron axes, and transported them to the brick kiln," or rather "to the brick frame, and hod, to make and carry bricks;" that is, he reduced them to slavery, and put them to the most servile employments. See CHANDLER's *Life of David*, Vol. II. p. 227, a book which should be carefully perused by those who are disposed to favor us with any fresh disquisitions on the subject of it. But we must proceed to David's sentence on the Amalekite.

The two accounts of the manner of Saul's death, one given in the course of the history, at the close of the first book of Samuel, the other by the Amalekite, at the beginning of the second, are so different, that 'one of them' the infidels say, 'must be false.'—(p. 26.) Very well; suppose it so to be, and what then? Why then, they put the following resolution of the difficulty into the mouth of their Tom Fool of a *Christian*, as they call him. 'To this *we* can only answer, *as it becomes the faithful* in all such cases of seeming difficulty; namely, that they were both written by the pen of inspiration, consequently must both be true, however contradictory or absurd they may seem to human reason.'—Well said, Tom!—But let me ask these gentlemen, what mortal, beside themselves, Tom's elder brethren, ever imagined the Amalekite to have been *inspired*, when he told his story to David?—An idle, pickthank fellow, who stripped Saul of his diadem and bracelets, and ran away with them full speed to David, to let him know that all was safe, his old enemy was fallen, and *he* had put him out of his pain! David saw through the character of this man, and from his forward officiousness in the affair, probably concluded, he had taken some undue advantage of Saul in his wounded state, and slain him, on purpose that he might find favor with his successor in the kingdom, by bringing him all this good news. "As the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity (says he upon

another occasion) when one told me, saying, Behold Saul is dead, (*thinking to have brought good tidings,*) I took hold of him and slew him, in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings."⁹—But whether David suspected it, or not, as the narrative of Saul's death given in the course of the history is true, the story told by the Amalekite is certainly false in some particulars, which are inconsistent with that narrative. Nay, it is not probable, if indeed it be possible, that the main circumstance of all should have been true.—Saul desires his armor bearer to kill him, who refuses; he falls upon his sword; and the servant, seeing his master dead, does the same. Now where is the interval, or opening, for the scene between Saul and the Amalekite to take place? Or would the armor bearer, who refused to kill Saul, stand by and suffer an *Amalekite* to kill him?—But though David judged this man unworthy to become *his* friend, he may make a very good figure in the unbeliever's catalogue of *saints*, and I would recommend him to occupy a niche in that temple.—Let us, however, for a moment, suppose, that David had judged otherwise; that he had rewarded him handsomely, and promoted him to honor. What would have been said, *then*? Why, that poor Saul had escaped the sword of the Philistines, but, 'this ruffian,' (such is the courtly appellation bestowed upon David)^r had employed an assassin to despatch him, during the hurry and confusion of the retreat! Oh, it had been a delicious morsel, exactly seasoned to the palate of infidelity!

The infidels are much disconcerted, it seems, about *the book of Jasher*: (p. 27:) it was extant previous to the writing the book of Joshua, and was not finished till after the accession of David to the throne of Israel; so that, as they apprehend, either the author of *Jasher* must have lived upwards of four hundred years, or the book of Joshua was not written till after the time of David.—Here again a little Hebrew would have done us no harm. It does not appear that *Jasher* was the name of an individual, or that the book so styled was all written in the same age, by the same man. The trans-

⁹ 2 Sam. iv. 9, 10. ^r Page 25.

actions of the times were regularly entered in a public register, by a person denominated the *Recorder*, or *Historiographer*, a stated officer to the Jewish kings.⁵ And “*the book of Jasher* was the *standard, authentic* book, in which they were entered by authority, and from which extracts were made, as occasion required.”

Some difficulties are started (p. 29) relative to the history of David numbering the people. In our translation we read, 2 Sam. xxiv. that “*the Lord* moved David to number Israel;” and 1 Chron. xxi. that “*Satan* moved him to do it.”—Nothing is more common with the sacred writers, than to represent God as doing that which, in the course of his providence, and for the purposes of either mercy or judgment, he permits to be done by the instrumentality of second causes, animate or inanimate, corporeal or spiritual. In the case of Ahab, 1 Kings xxii., he is represented after the manner of men, and in condescension to our capacities, as a king keeping his court, with spirits of all kinds in waiting before him, prepared to execute his will upon earth. One of these spirits is commissioned to influence the false prophets, and they persuade Ahab, who will not listen to the true prophet of God. Taking the matter, therefore, as it stands in our English translation, the import of both passages laid together, according to a fair explanation, would evidently be, that for good and sufficient reasons, known to himself, God permitted Satan to tempt, and David to yield to the temptation, in this instance. But if we consult the original, we shall find there is no necessity to suppose that David was excited either by God, or by Satan. The word *Satan*, though often denoting that person who is emphatically styled *THE Adversary*, signifies only, in gene-

* מוֹכִיר. See Samuel viii. 16. 1 Kings iv. 8. 2 Kings xviii. 18. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 8.

⁵ LE CLERC seems to have imagined that this record was kept in verse—“*Crediderim Librum Recti fuisse collectionem hymnorum aut carminum de rebus gestis Hebræorum, forte non uno tempore factum.*” CLER. in Jos. x. 13.—We read indeed of “*psalms and proverbs, which the men of Judah copied out.*” [Several other hypotheses concerning the Book of Jasher have been given to the public; any of them as satisfactory as could be expected in the scarcity of information on the subject, and abundantly sufficient to silence the cavils of the infidels. On the whole, the opinion of LE CLERC appears to be the most probable.]

ral, *An Adversary*; and therefore the passage, 1 Chron. xxi., may very properly be rendered, '*An adversary stood up against Israel, and excited David.*' This adversary might be some counsellor, adviser, &c. The other passage, 2 Sam. xxiv., may as properly be translated, '*The anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel; and one excited David,*' or *David was excited by some one*, (the person mentioned in Chronicles) saying, Go, number Israel.'

Of the different kinds of punishment offered to David for his choice, upon this occasion, one is a famine for *seven* years, according to 2 Sam. xxiv.; but for *three* years only, according to 1 Chron. xxi. It has been observed by some learned men, that the year in which this happened was the *fourth* year since a famine had commenced, on another occasion, mentioned 2 Sam. xxi. 1. This circumstance considered, the question, as it is worded in one place,—“*Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land?*” is tantamount to saying, “*Wilt thou choose three additional years of famine,*” &c., which removes the apparent contradiction. It may be urged, that ‘The prophet delivered the message no more than once, and therefore must have said either *seven* or *three*: he could not have said *both*.’ True; but the sacred, like other historians, often relate the same conversation in different terms; that is, they give the sense and substance of what passed, varying the phraseology. Instances frequently occur in both testaments. If no other satisfactory solution of the difficulty could be assigned, candor and common sense surely would suppose that the word *seven*, in 2 Samuel xxiv., was originally *three*, especially as *three* is the word in the Greek version of the LXX.^a

But, ‘If David only sinned, why should the punishment fall upon the *people*?’ Such is the union between king and people, like that between the head and body, that this happens continually in the natural order of things; and therefore, why not judicially? What greater misfortune can befall a king or a father, than the loss of his subject, or his children? It is possible, however, that such might not be altogether the case, in the pre-

^a Τα τρια ητη.

sent instance; though David, like a true patriot king and most affectionate father, intercedes for his people, and desires to receive in his own person and family, the stroke that was ready to descend on them. "I have sinned, and done wickedly: these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be upon me, and upon my father's house." Notwithstanding all this, I say, it should seem that the people were by no means without fault. For the history opens thus: "The anger of the LORD was kindled *against Israel*, and"—as a consequence of it—"David was excited to number Israel."

But of what nature, then, after all, was this act of numbering the people, and why should it have been followed by a plague? I am persuaded that we are much in the dark upon this point. If any light can be thrown upon it, that light must proceed from a passage in the book of Exodus, (ch. xxx. 12,) where God says to Moses, "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them, that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them." To number the people, then, was not, as it should seem, merely to count them out of curiosity, or vain glory. It was a religious rite, it was a muster, a review, or visitation, an inquisition into their conduct, into the religious and moral state in which they at that time stood before God. For upon such inquisition something came out, or appeared against them, which required an offering, by way of atonement or ransom for their souls. "They shall give a ransom, that there be *no plague amongst them when thou numberest them*:"—a very observable expression; for when David numbered them, this was the very thing that happened; *there was a plague among them*, in consequence of their *being numbered*. They might be in such a state, that God would not accept them or their offerings. It is not improbable that they should be in such a state, if we consider what corruptions must needs creep in under Saul's wicked reign, and David's long wars, during most of which time the country had been overrun by the Philistines, &c., who would propagate their idolatry with its flagitious concomitants. In short,

Israel had provoked God; for otherwise his anger would not have been kindled against them, as we are informed that it was: their offences called for punishment, and on numbering the people, an opportunity was taken for inflicting it. Joab appears to have been aware of the consequence, as a known case. "Why (says he) will my lord the king be a cause of punishment"—trespass or forfeiture^x—"to Israel?" As if he knew, that upon a visitation, they must be punished who should be found guilty; and was unwilling that the number of the king's subjects should be lessened. But David might think it necessary, and his zeal prevailed. Otherwise, it is extraordinary that such a man as Joab should see what David either could not or would not see. This account of the transaction was offered to the public, many years ago, by a learned writer, well skilled in biblical knowledge and criticism. That it is entirely free from objection, or will solve all difficulties, is more, perhaps, than can be affirmed. But it is curious, and certainly deserves attention.

On the whole, to adopt the words of Dr. CHANDLER, "If they who object, credit the history of the Old Testament in this part of it, and think it is true, that one of these three plagues was offered to David, as the punishment of his offence; that he chose the pestilence; that it came accordingly, and was removed upon his intercession; they are as much concerned to account for the difficulties of the affair, as I or any other person can be. If they do not believe this part of the history, as the sacred writers represent it, let them give us the account of it, as it stands in their own imagination; and tell us, whether there was any plague at all, how, and why it came, and how it went and disappeared of a sudden."

LETTER XVIII.

A FEW more *doubts* remain, touching the *prophecies*, and some passages in the *New Testament*.

'The great evangelical prophet could foretell the

^x לאשמה. 1 Chron. xxi. 3.

downfall of Babylon by Cyrus, but would not tell the name of the Messiah.'—(p. 39.) Who enabled him to foretell the downfall of Babylon by Cyrus? 'He might take the advantage of writing that prophecy after the events took place,' say the infidels, (p. 40.) But how so? Isaiah spake of Cyrus at least *a hundred years* before his birth. Had a *history* of Cyrus been among the books of Scripture, under the name of Isaiah, they would have placed the author, for longevity, in the same class with their friend *Jasher*. 'Isaiah could not tell the name of Messiah.' He could have told it, had it been communicated to him, as that of Cyrus was. He has described Messiah in a manner not to be mistaken. There might be very good reasons why the name was not declared beforehand. And as God did not see proper to do it, there certainly were such reasons. But, 'if CHRIST were intended by the name of *Immanuel*, the prophet was mistaken, for he was never called by that name.' The first commentator one opens will inform one, that in Scripture language *to be called*, is the same as *to be*. Thus, of Messiah it is said, (Isa. ix. 6,) "His name shall be called *Wonderful, Counsellor, &c.*, though he was never called by any of the names there enumerated: of the same person, (Jer. xxiii. 6,) "This is his name whereby he shall be called, *The LORD our Righteousness*;"—of Jerusalem, (Isa. i. 26,) "Thou shalt be called, *The City of Righteousness*." No man should presume to criticise a book, if he will not be at the pains to study the phraseology peculiar to it.

'If the prophecies are evident and clear, how happened it that the whole Jewish nation, together with the angel Gabriel, should mistake, and suppose the kingdom of Messiah to be temporal?'—(p. 40.) The angel Gabriel was certainly under no mistake upon this point, because of CHRIST he says expressly, (Luke i. 33,) "He shall reign for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." And as to *the case of the Jews*, it is treated of at large in a discourse under that title, by the author before-mentioned at page 282, to which these gentlemen are referred.

'Could not these inspired writers, who prophesied concerning things of no consequence, as the thirty pieces of silver, and the casting lots for CHRIST's gar-

ments, have predicted with equal certainty the more 'important circumstance of his death and resurrection?'—(p. 40.) The death and resurrection of CHRIST are predicted in the strongest terms, *Ps.* xxii. cx. *Isa.* liii. And what can add more weight to this kind of evidence, than the prediction of particulars so minute and circumstantial as those of the thirty pieces, and the division of the garments by lot? One would think, at the contemplation of them, all infidelity would stop its mouth, instead of opening it.

'In short, they beg to be shown a single prophecy, concerning which divines are agreed.'—(p. 41.) What TULLY said of philosophers may be true perhaps of divines, considering the multitude of them that have lived from the days of the apostles to the present time; namely, that there never was an opinion, however absurd, which has not been maintained by some one or other. And therefore, to reject the evidence of prophecy, till all divines shall agree exactly about it, argues a conduct as wise in the infidels, as if they should decline sitting down to a good dinner, till all the clocks in London and Westminster struck four together.

'They desire to know why the revelation of St. John should be more obscure and enigmatical than any which was written during the typical and shadowy dispensation of Moses?'—(p. 41.) Much valuable instruction in the doctrines and duties of religion, may be gathered from the revelation, in the most clear and perspicuous manner: witness the *Moral Reflections* on that book, by PERE QUESNELLE.² Of the predictions in the

² [PASQUIER QUESNEL, a Priest of the Oratory at Paris, is hardly more celebrated for his devotional writings, which have commanded the admiration of pious men in every communion of Christians, than for the persecutions which his peculiar religious opinions brought upon him, from the rulers of his own Church. In 1681, he was banished from Paris to Orleans, whence, in 1685, he was obliged to retreat to Flanders. Even there, he was not allowed to remain in quiet, but was thrown into prison by the Archbishop of Brussels, in 1703: he escaped in the same year, and fled to Holland, where he died, in 1719, aged 86. He was condemned for contumacy, in 1704. His *Moral Reflections on the New Testament* (the very work which has perpetuated his fame as a writer of the deepest piety and spiritual mindedness) received the general condemnation of Pope Clement XI. in 1708; and in 1713, the famous Constitution, called (from the first word) *Unigenitus*, denounced one hundred and one propositions contained in it, as false and

former part of it, many have been explained to general satisfaction, and others may be so explained hereafter; as by the studies and labors of different persons, the symbolical language of Scripture becomes better understood, and the events predicted are brought forward in their order. If sufficient reasons may be assigned why prophecy should be in some degree obscure for a time, they will hold, with regard to those of the New, as well as those of the Old Testament.^a Let gentlemen bestow due attention on the evidences of Christianity so often set before them. When they shall thereby be happily induced to believe, it will be time enough to argue with them on such points as the obscurity of St. John's revelation, and the doctrine of the Trinity, which is scoffed at in a very unbecoming manner, in page 32.

Thus much for *prophecy*. We proceed to some objections against particular passages in the *New Testament*.

Of these, the first respects the difference between the genealogy of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, as given by St. Matthew, and that given by St. Luke. On this subject, let it be observed,—

1. That genealogies in general, and those of the Jews in particular, with their method of deriving them, and the confusion arising from the circumstance of the same person being called by different names, or different persons by the same name, are in their nature, and must be to us, at this distance of time, matters of very complicated consideration, and it is no wonder they should be attended with difficulties and perplexities.

2. The evangelists, in an affair of so much importance, and so open then to detection, had there been any thing wrong to be detected, would most assuredly be careful to give CHRIST's pedigree as it was found in the authentic tables, which, according to the custom of the nation, were preserved in the family, as is evident from

heretical, condemning both the work itself, and every thing written in its defence!]

^a [Since the time of Bishop HORNE, the sensible and judicious work of Dean WOODHOUSE, on the Apocalypse, has done much towards lessening the load of obloquy which commentators on the revelation had brought upon themselves and the book they pretended to interpret, by their fantastic and inconsistent expositions.]

JOSEPHUS, who says, "I give you this succession of our family, as I find it written in the public tables."

3. As it was well known the Messiah must descend from David, the genealogical tables of that family would be kept with more than ordinary diligence and precision.

4. Whatever cavils the modern Jews and others make now against the genealogies recorded by the evangelists, the Jews their cotemporaries never offered to find fault with, or to invalidate the accounts given in the Gospels. As they wanted neither opportunity, materials, skill, nor malice, to have done it, and it would have afforded them so great an advantage against the Christians, this circumstance alone, as Dr. SOUTH well remarks, were we not now able to clear the point, ought with every sober and judicious person to have the force of a moral demonstration.

Thus much premised, let us hear the objection. 'Matthew reckons twenty-seven generations from David to CHRIST; Luke reckons forty-two; and the names totally disagree. Matthew traces the descent from Solomon, and Luke from Nathan, both sons of David. According to our feeble notions, twenty-seven cannot be equal to forty-two; neither can Nathan be imagined to be Solomon.'—(p. 33.) But were the objectors never informed, that, in the opinion of those who have most considered this question, and were best qualified to answer it, St. Luke deduces the genealogy of our Saviour, not, as St. Matthew does, on the side of Mary, who by Jews and Christians is agreed to have been the daughter of *Heli*. If, therefore, Jacob, according to St. Matthew, were Joseph's father *by nature*, Heli, who is said by St. Luke to have been his father, could only have been his *father-in-law*, by his marriage with Mary the daughter of Heli, whose genealogy is there given by St. Luke; to show that every way CHRIST "sprang from Judah," as was EVIDENT (by the testimony of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews) to all of that age; and that he was "of the seed of David;" his real mother, no less than his supposed father, being "of the house and lineage of David." Disputes may be raised and maintained to the end of the world, on many other difficulties which occur in the two genealogies. "But those

who are acquainted with the customs of the Jews know there are many genealogies which *seem* repugnant, and yet *are not* so. And that may happen various ways, as may easily be proved from books which the Jews and we jointly acknowledge. There are several methods of reconciling these difficulties, though it be often hard to say which is the best, at the distance of so many ages, all records, and even memory, of these things being utterly lost.”^b

I would gently admonish the infidels, if they touch upon this subject again, to behave with better manners than they have done in their 34th page.

The excellent PASCAL has observed, as many others have done before and after him, that the evangelists, by differing in some things from each other, have afforded us a proof of their not having written in concert, and that such difference is so far an argument in their favor. The observation is sensible and just. Not so the inference drawn by the objectors, (p. 35,) that therefore, ‘contradiction in evidence is a mark of truth.’ For Mr. PASCAL did not allow, or suppose, any more than we do, that the evangelists, when rightly understood and explained, really contradicted each other. His words, as cited by themselves, are, “*Les foiblesses les plus APPARENTES sont de forces,*” &c. This is a piece of coin from the mint of *Ferney*,^c and bears strongly impressed upon it the image and superscription of the coiner.

‘When CHRIST was baptized by John, the heavens were opened, and a voice was heard, declaring his divine origin: such a prodigy must have awakened the attention of all Judea; yet we find the historians perfectly silent.’—(p. 35.) What historians? A pagan historian would not concern himself with the report of a Jewish prodigy; nor could a Jewish historian have related a circumstance favorable to Christianity, unless he had himself become a Christian. But would any writer of common sense have hazarded the relation of

^b Dr. TRAPP *on the Gospels*, p. 82, second edit. See likewise Dr. SOUTH’S seventh sermon, in his third volume, and MACKNIGHT’S *Harmony*.

^c [The residence of VOLTAIRE.]

such a fact, as having happened in the presence of a multitude of witnesses, if it never had so happened?

‘It is strange that the horrid massacre of the children by the command of Herod, should be totally unnoticed by JOSEPHUS.’—(p. 35.) It was too nearly related to the birth of the wonderful child which occasioned it, and concerning which JOSEPHUS thought that questions might be asked. For otherwise, is it not equally *strange*, that he should be *totally silent* concerning the life and death of CHRIST, and the appearance of a new religion which had extended itself to Rome, and attracted the notice of the historians there? Yet, if the celebrated passage^d be an interpolation (as these gentlemen deem it to be) of such events has JOSEPHUS said nothing, though falling within a period the transactions of which are by him minutely and exactly related. But though JOSEPHUS was silent, and had good reasons for being so, it evidently appears from the often cited passage of MACROBIUS, that Herod’s slaughter of the infants in Judea was a thing well known in his time, and was not contested by Heathens.^e We may add, as in the case above, that St. Matthew must have been out of his senses to have told such a story as this, had it been otherwise than true; nor is there any thing in the character of Herod that renders it improbable—quite the contrary.

As to the sneers upon *interpolations* and *pious frauds*, in p. 36, I am sorry occasion has ever been given for them. We want no such aids. *Magna est veritas, et prævalebit*. I only wish that our adversaries, in their representations of the Scriptures and Christianity, were never guilty of *frauds* which are not quite so *pious*.

The purport in a few words, of all the parade and flourish, p. 37, is this. ‘Our LORD and St. Paul foretold the end of the world, as an event that should happen in their time. It did not so happen; therefore

^a [*Jewish Antiquities*, Book xviii. Ch. iii. § 3. See a defence of the genuineness of this passage in HORNE’s *Introduction to the Scriptures*, Vol. II. Part I. ch. vii. No. 3.]

^e “Inter pueros, quos in Syria Herodes Rex Judæorum intra binatum jussit occidi.”—MACROB. *Saturnal.* Lib. II. cap. 4. See at large on this subject, LARDNER’s *Credibility*, Part I. B. II. ch. ii., and FINDLAY *against Voltaire*, p. 541.

they were under a mistake and delusion.’—Our LORD, *Luke*, xxi., in that figurative and majestic style well understood by those who understand the language of Scripture, describes the destruction of the Jewish polity and system. The terms may, and do apply to the end of the world, for this obvious reason, that the two events are in many instances parallel and analogous. His own declaration shows plainly of which he was primarily and immediately speaking—“This generation shall not pass away, till all these things are fulfilled;” and the figures are those usually employed, in like case, by the prophets of old. The charge against St. Paul is founded solely on his use of the *first person*, in 1 Thess. iv. 16. “We, who are alive and remain, shall be caught up to meet the LORD in the air.” But how common is it for us, when speaking of a society, an army, a nation, to which we belong, to say, *we* went, or came, or did such a thing, or *shall* do so and so; though we ourselves neither had nor shall have any *personal* concern in the matter; though the event happened before we were born, or is to happen after our decease? Thus, in the Old Testament, Ps. lxvi. 6. “They went through the water—there did *we* rejoice:”—Hosea xi. 4. “Jacob found God in Bethel; there he spake with *us*.” By the terms “*we* who are alive,” the apostle means no doubt, *those of us Christians* who shall then be alive. In another place, 1 Cor. iv. 4. he says, “We know that he who *raised up* the Lord JESUS, shall raise up *us* also.” He could not believe contradictory propositions, that he should *die*, and that he should *not* die. But, what is decisive upon the point—in the second Epistle to the same Thessalonians, written only a few months after the first, he most earnestly admonishes them not to be *deceived*, as if by any thing that had fallen from him, either in speech or writing, they were to imagine “the day of God was at hand;” since the grand apostacy and other events, which required much intervening time for their accomplishment, were first to take place in the world. See 2 Thess. i. 2. Nay he reminds them, verse 4, that he had told them as much, while he was yet “with them;” that is, before either epistle was written.

‘How came it to pass that CHRIST should curse a fig

tree for being without fruit in March ; or be ignorant that it was not the season for figs ?"—(p. 41.)

1. It is certain in fact, that one sort of figs was ripe at that time of the year, namely, at the passover.

2. By the *season of figs* may be meant the season of *gathering* figs, as in Matt. xxi. 34. "When the time, or season, of the fruit drew near," that is plainly, the time for *gathering* the fruit, "the lord of the vineyard sent his servants to receive the fruit." If therefore one sort of figs was ripe about that time of the year, and yet the time for *gathering* them was not fully come, CHRIST might with reason expect to find fruit on the tree. In construing this passage thus interpreted, as Mr. MACKNIGHT observes, the latter clause must be joined with the words *he came if haply he might find any thing thereon*, and the intermediate words thrown into a parenthesis, thus—*He came if haply he might find any thing thereon (and when he came to it he found nothing but leaves) for the time of figs—*—*gathering figs—was not yet.* That this is the true construction (adds Mr. MACKNIGHT) is plain, because the evangelist is not giving the reason why there were no figs on the tree, but the reason why Jesus expected to find some on it. He tells us the season for gathering figs was not yet come, to show that none had been taken off the tree ; and consequently, that having its whole produce upon it, there was nothing improper in CHRIST's expecting fruit on it then. Whereas, if we shall think the reason why he did not find any figs was, that the time of them was not come, we must acknowledge, that the tree was cursed very improperly for having none. This interpretation makes a *trajection* necessary ; but there is one of the same kind in Mark xvi. 3, 4. where the clause, *for it was very great*, namely the stone at the door of the sepulchre, does not relate to what immediately precedes it, and must be considered parenthetically, but to the remote member—*They said amongst themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? (and when they looked, they saw the stone rolled away)—for it was very great.*

I cannot help here observing, once more, that when in any writer we meet with absurdities so glaring and

palpable as this and others imputed to the evangelists, it is but doing him common justice, whoever he be, to take it for granted that, by some means or other, we misapprehend his meaning; and mere candor should induce us, instead of cavilling and squabbling, gladly to accept of any fair and equitable interpretation of his words, that may serve to clear them of such supposed absurdity, and to set him right in our opinion.

Our Saviour is scoffed at, for having affirmed, ‘that wheat does not produce fruit except it *die*.’—(p. 41.) A grain of corn, when laid in the earth, swells, putrifies, suffers a dissolution of its parts, shoots its fibres, and disappears. This is a *death* and *resurrection* sufficient to answer all the purposes for which the illustration is adduced by our LORD and St. Paul.

‘John the Baptist being asked if he were Elias, answered I am not; but JESUS affirms the contrary.’—(p. 42.) He was Elias *in spirit and in power*; but he was not the personal Elias, or Elijah, whom the people erroneously expected, and the priests meant when they asked him, ‘Art thou Elias?’

‘Out of forty gospels we receive four as canonical.—Why do we receive them, and not the rest?’—(p. 42.) For the best reasons in the world, assigned at large by Dr. LARDNER in his *Credibility*,^f &c., a work which these gentlemen should answer, or for ever hold their peace upon this subject. The true gospels are shown by proper evidence to have been written at the time when they are said to have been written, and by the persons whose names they bear. It matters not how many others were written, if upon their appearance, after due examination, they were found to be spurious, and rejected as such.

The primitive Christians are complained of (p. 43.) for ‘preventing the arguments against their religion from being exposed to view.’—I hope there is no ground for any such complaint now.^g There is no argument

^f See the review of his work in the 12th volume. [The 9th chapter of Part I. of PALEY’S *Evidences* is a brief, but luminous statement of the substance of LARDNER’S argument.]

^g [Bp. HORNE, it may be presumed, refrained from giving this objection a more direct answer, on account of its absurdity. It is well known, that for more than three centuries it was not at the option of ‘the primi-

yet devised against Christianity, we may presume, which has not been proposed in public; and there is none, we may affirm, which has not received its answer.

The few remaining pages of this pamphlet are spent in enumerating some particulars in the history of our LORD's passion and resurrection, which are differently related by the four evangelists. But how many times have these objections been considered, and replied to? Have the infidels the modesty or the conscience to expect, that we are to draw up a new harmony of the gospels, as often as one of them shall think proper to ask a few old questions over again? If any Christian find himself perplexed by difficulties of this sort, let him carefully peruse the gospels as they lie in MACKNIGHT's *Harmony and Commentary*, and weigh well the solutions of such difficulties with which that book will furnish him.^h

These gentlemen tell us in plain terms that 'the event of CHRIST's resurrection bears every mark of a forgery;'—(p. 46.) and speak of the apostles as men 'engaged in the attempt of forming a sect or party;' that is, as men who had projected a plan (and thought themselves able to execute it) of persuading the world that

tive Christians,' whether or not the arguments against their religion should be exposed to view. It was much, if they could obtain a hearing for their own apologies.]

^h [Perhaps the end would be even better answered, by a reference to Archbishop NEWCOME's excellent *Harmony and Observations*. Even to this, objections may be made, and it is probable, some that will hardly admit of answer; but it may be most confidently asserted, that they are neither more in number, nor greater in kind, than may be drawn from the comparison of any four narratives of a single series of events by profane historians; nor do they, in any case, affect matters essential to Christian faith or practice.—WEST's admirable work on the Resurrection, though it is devoted to the consideration of only *one* of the great events of our Saviour's life, will be found abundantly sufficient, if carefully perused, to remove every difficulty arising from apparent discrepancies in the gospel narratives. It shows how completely such difficulties vanish under patient and sagacious investigation, and how perfectly futile objections must be, which have their foundation in the mere external aspect of the history. Had *every* point in the harmony of the Gospels undergone examination as thorough and as able as that which WEST has given to the history of the resurrection, the cavils of infidelity would have been (not *silenced*, for that is hopeless, but) proved utterly worthless and absurd.]

their Master was risen from the dead, when he was not risen, and of propagating over the earth a new religion, upon the strength of that persuasion. We can know no more of the apostles than the gospel history with great simplicity and evident sincerity informs us. Let any man duly consider their characters and qualifications as there described; let him then stand forth, lay his hand upon his heart, and say, that he can possibly bring himself, for a single moment, to believe, they could ever have entertained the thought of projecting and executing such a plan. I should be glad to see that man. I would subscribe handsomely towards erecting a statue to his memory. For take him either as a fool, or as a knave, he is at the top of his profession.

But if no such plan by such persons were or could be concerted, then the evidence of the apostles and disciples (to five hundred of whom CHRIST appeared at once, and among whom he walked in and out for forty days together) is as good and valid for the fact of his resurrection, as for any other fact concerning his life or his death. Nor is it true, that ‘God chose to deprive all mankind of the proper evidence of the resurrection, because the Jews of that age were sinners.’ Whatever evidence it had pleased God to vouchsafe to ‘the Jews of that age,’ ‘all mankind’ besides could have received it only *upon testimony*; and they now enjoy, upon testimony, more and better evidence for the resurrection of CHRIST, than ever was produced for any one transaction that has happened, from Adam to the present hour. The descent of the SPIRIT on the day of Pentecost; the propagation of the Gospel by instruments otherwise totally inadequate to the work; the conversion of so many thousand Jews; the destruction of Jerusalem; and the establishment of the Christian Church, in opposition to the efforts of the whole Roman empire—all these considerations, added to the original positive evidence for the fact, and the futility and absurdity, of the arguments then and since employed to invalidate it, form such a moral demonstration in its favor—the only demonstration we can have, in cases of this kind—that there must be something very wrong indeed in the head or the heart of him, who, at this

time of day, sets himself to deny and blaspheme it. With joy and pleasure I desire to risk upon the truth of it every thing that is dear to me, in this life and that which is to come.

It is asked (p. 47) whether God expects that we should 'show our faith and reliance on him by making a sacrifice of our reason, and believing, not by an act of the understanding, but of the *will* ?'

How necessary, in many cases, the concurrence of the *will* is towards the production of faith, daily experience may convince us. We see men rejecting the strongest evidence, when opposed by interest, prejudice, and passion; and accepting the slightest, which falls in with them. The best arguments in the world avail nothing on one side, when pride, pleasure, and profit are engaged on the other. Hope of what is deemed good, and fear of what is deemed evil, will find means to elude the force of all the syllogisms which the most skilful disciple of Aristotle can frame. "This man," said the ruler of the Jews, "doeth many miracles."—Acknowledge and receive him, therefore, as a man sent from God.—'No: we will apprehend and crucify him,'—For what reason?—Because "if we let him alone, all men will believe in him; and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation."—But he has raised Lazarus from the dead.—'Why then, we will put Lazarus to death again.'—What can be done with such people as these? Or what effect would the appearance of CHRIST among them after his resurrection have produced, but that of provoking fresh blasphemies, and fresh insults?

And thus you see, dear sir, we are come round to the point from whence we set out. Assent to proper evidence is an act of the highest reason. Such evidence for revelation, once established, is not to be set aside, or invalidated, by any difficulties, supposed or real, which may occur in the matter of that revelation. Malice and ignorance will always find room for objections, and *they* will never believe, who have no mind to believe. The infidels, therefore, have not ground for the surmise, that we want to 'deprive them of God's best gift.' We wish only to teach them the right use of it.

Reason is not ‘the first and only revelation from God;’ for it is, properly speaking, no revelation at all. Man, at his creation, was not left so much as a single day to reason. It is the *eye*, not the *light*. It can with certainty know nothing concerning the things of another world, but by information from thence. To this truth the writings of the best and wisest among the Heathen philosophers bear a testimony irrefragable and insurmountable. It is the faculty which enables us upon proper evidence to receive, and after due study to understand such information. And blessed is he, who, at the return of his LORD to judgment, shall be found to have so employed it.

The production which has thus passed under our consideration, from the low and illiberal manner in which it is penned, has been by many accounted to be beneath notice. But nothing is beneath notice which is calculated to deceive and seduce the ignorant and the unwary, among whom, though even now scarce known in the shops, this pamphlet has been privately spread, and recommended as a *chef d’œuvre*; and though the execution be coarse and mean, the objections, in substance, are such, as continually occur in writings of a much higher class, which make a part of the furniture of every circulating library through Great Britain, from whence they pass into the hands of our idle young people of fashion, while under the discipline of the friseur, in the metropolis, or at the watering places. The answers published by NOTTE, BERGIER, and others, to the books of VOLTAIRE, ROUSSEAU, HELVETIUS, BOULAINVILLIERS, &c., &c., have been much called for, and done eminent service, upon the continent: and it is humbly hoped, the foregoing strictures may not be without their use here in England.

A LETTER
TO
ADAM SMITH, LL. D.
ON
THE LIFE, DEATH, AND PHILOSOPHY,
OF HIS FRIEND,
DAVID HUME, ESQ.

BY GEORGE HORNE, D. D.
LATE BISHOP OF NORWICH.

Ibant obscuri, sola sub nocte, per umbram,
Perque domos Ditis vacuas, et inania regna.—*Virg.*

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A LETTER, &c.

SIR,—You have been lately employed in embalming a philosopher; his *body*, I believe I must say; for concerning the other part of him, neither you nor he seem to have entertained an idea, sleeping or waking. Else it surely might have claimed a little of your care and attention; and one would think, the belief of the soul's existence and immortality could do no harm, if it did no good, in a *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.^a But every gentleman understands his own business best.

Will you do an unknown correspondent the honor, sir, to accept a few remarks in a free and easy way, upon the curious *Letter to Mr. Strahan*, in which this ever remarkable operation of *embalming* is performed? Our philosopher's account of *his own life* will likewise be considered as we go along.

Trust me, good Doctor, I am no bigot, enthusiast, or enemy to human learning,—*Et ego in Arcadia*.^b—I have made many a hearty meal, in private, upon CICERO and VIRGIL, as well as Mr. HUME.^c Few persons (though perhaps as Mr. HUME says, upon a like occasion, “I ought not to judge upon that subject”) have a quicker relish for the productions of genius, and the beauties of composition. It is therefore as little in my intention, as it is in my power, to prejudice the literary character of your friend.

From some of his writings I have received great pleasure, and have ever esteemed his *History of England* to have been a noble effort of “matter and motion.”^d But when a man takes it into his head to do mischief, you must be sensible, sir, the public has always reason to lament his being a “clever fellow.”

^a [The celebrated production of that name, published by Dr. SMITH.]

^b [I, too, was bred in Arcadia.] ^c *Life*, p. 5.

^d [The constituent principles of man, and therefore of Mr. Hume, upon his own theory.]

I hope it will not be deemed vanity in me likewise to say, that I have in my composition a large share of that, which our inimitable SHAKESPEARE styles "the milk of human kindness." I never knew what envy or hatred was; and am ready, at all times, to praise, wherever I can do it in honor and conscience. DAVID,^c I doubt not, was, as you affirm, a social, agreeable person, of a convivial turn, told a good story, and played well at "his favorite game of whist."^r I know not that *John the painter*^s did the same. But there is no absurdity in the supposition. If he did not, he might have done it.—Doctor, be not offended—I mean no harm, I would only infer thus much, that I could not, on that account, bring myself absolutely to approve his odd fancy of firing all the dock yards in the kingdom.

Concerning the *philosophical opinions* of Mr. HUME, you observe,^h that "men will no doubt, judge variously." They are certainly at liberty so to do, because the author himself did the same. Sometimes, to be sure, he esteemed them ingenious, deep, subtle, elegant, and calculated to diffuse his literary fame to the ends of the world. But at other times, he judged very differently; very much so indeed: "I dine," says he, "I play a game at backgammon, I converse and am merry with my friends; and when after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to those speculations, they appear so *cold*, so *strained*, and so *ridiculous*, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any further."ⁱ Now, sir, if you only will give me leave to judge, *before* dinner, of Mr. HUME's philosophy, as he judged of it *after* dinner, we shall have no further dispute upon that subject. I could indeed wish it were possible to have a scheme of thought which would bear contemplating, at any time of the day; because, otherwise, a person must be at the expense of maintaining a brace of these meta-

^c [HUME.] ^r *Life*, &c. p. 43.

^s [A lunatic, who about the time when this Letter was published, had wrought himself into celebrity by the mad scheme mentioned in the text.] ^h *Life*, &c. p. 58.

ⁱ *Treatise on Human Nature*, Vol. I. p. 467. In the postscript to this letter a view will be exhibited of the HUMAN system, taken exactly as it appeared to its author at six o'clock in the evening.

physical hobby-horses, one to mount in the morning, and the other in the afternoon.

After all, sir, friend as I am to freedom of opinion, (and no one living can be more so,) I am rather sorry, methinks, that men should judge so *variously* of Mr. HUME's philosophical speculations. For since the design of them is to banish out of the world every idea of truth and comfort, salvation and immortality, a future state, and the providence, and even the existence of God, it seems a pity, that we cannot be all of a mind about them, though we might have formerly liked to hear the author crack a joke over a bottle in his life time. And I could have been well pleased to have been informed, by you, sir, that before his death, he had ceased to number among his happy effusions tracts of this kind and tendency.

For—let me come a little closer to you, Dr., if you please, upon this subject—don't be under any apprehensions—my name does not begin with a B^e—Are *you* sure, and can you make *us* sure, that there really exist no such things as a God, and a future state of rewards and punishments? If so, all is well. Let us, *then*, in our last hours, read LUCIAN,^h play at *whist*, and droll upon *Charon* and his boat;ⁱ let us die as foolish and insensible, as much like our brother philosophers, the calves of the field and the asses of the desert, as we can for the life of us. But—if such things BE—as they most certainly ARE—is it right in you, sir, to hold up to our view, as “perfectly wise and virtuous,”^k the *character* and *conduct* of one who seems to have been possessed with an incurable antipathy to all that is called RELIGION; and who strained every nerve to explode, suppress, and extirpate the spirit of it among men, that its very name, if he could effect it, might no more be had in remembrance? Are we, do you imagine, to be

^e [A humorous allusion to Dr. BEATTIE'S *Essay on Truth*, a refutation of HUME'S principles, which had greatly annoyed the *philosopher* and his followers.]

^h [The celebrated Greek burlesque writer, who employed all the powers of keen and varied wit in ridiculing the Heathen mythology, while he was, nevertheless, a Heathen by profession.]

ⁱ *Life*, p. 47, et. seq., [where it is stated that such were the occupation of Hume's last hours.]

^k *Ibid.*, p. 50.

reconciled to a character of this sort, and fall in love with it, because its owner was "good company," and knew how to manage his *cards*? Low as the age has fallen, I will venture to hope it has grace enough yet left to resent such usage as this.

You endeavor to entertain us with some *pleasant conceits* that were supposed by Mr. HUME to pass between himself and old *Charon*. The philosopher tells the old gentleman that "he had been endeavoring to open the eyes of the public;" that he was "correcting his works for a new edition," from which great things were to be expected; in short, "if he could live a few years longer, (and that was the only reason why he should wish to do so,) he might have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of *superstition*."¹

We all know, sir, what the word "superstition" denotes in Mr. HUME's vocabulary, and against what religion his shafts are levelled, under that name. But, Dr. SMITH, do you believe, or would you have us to believe, that it is *Charon* who calls us out of the world at the appointed time? Doth not HE call us out of it who sent us into it? Let me, then, present you with a paraphrase of the Wish, as addressed to HIM to whom it should, and to whom alone, with any sense and propriety, it can be addressed. Thus it runs:

"LORD, I have only one reason why I would wish to live. Suffer me so to do, I most humbly beseech thee, yet a little while, till mine eyes shall behold the success of my undertaking to overthrow, by my metaphysics, the faith which thy SON descended from heaven to plant, and to root out the knowledge and love of thee from the earth."

Here are no rhetorical figures, no hyperboles or exaggerations. The matter is even so. I appeal, in the face of the world, sir, to yourself, and to every man who can read, and understand the writings of Mr. HUME, whether this be not, in plain, honest English, the drift of his *philosophy*, as it is called, for the propagation of which alone he wished to live; and concerning which you are pleased to say coolly, "men will judge vari-

¹ *Life*, p. 50.

ously, every one approving or condemning these opinions, according as they happen to coincide or disagree with his own."^m Our thoughts are very naturally carried back, upon this occasion, to the author of the *first philosophy*, who likewise engaged to *open the eyes of the public*. He did so; but the only discovery they found themselves able to make, was—that they were **NAKED**.

You talk much, sir, of our philosopher's *gentleness of manners, good nature, compassion, generosity, charity*. Alas, sir! whither were they all fled, when he so often sat down calmly and deliberately to obliterate from the hearts of the human species every trace of the knowledge of God and his dispensations; all faith in his kind providence and fatherly protection; all hope of enjoying his grace and favor, here or hereafter; all love of him, and of their brethren, for His sake; all the patience under tribulation, all the comforts in time of sorrow, derived from these fruitful sources? Did a good man think himself able, by the force of metaphysic incantation, in a moment to blot the sun out of heaven, and dry up every fountain upon earth,—would he attempt to do it? TULLY had but a faint glimpse of the country to which we are all travelling; yet so pleasing was any the most imperfect and shadowy prospect into futurity, that TULLY declared no man should ravish it from him.ⁿ And surely TULLY was a philosopher as well as HUME! Oh, had he seen the light which shone upon HUME, he would not have closed his eyes against it! Had the same cup been offered to him, he would not have dashed it untasted from him!

“Perhaps our modern skeptics are ignorant, that without the belief of a God, and the hope of immortality, the miseries of human life would often be insupportable. But can I suppose them in a state of total and invincible stupidity, utter strangers to the human heart and to human affairs? Sure they would not thank me for such a supposition! Yet this I must suppose, or I must be-

^m *Ibid.*, p. 59.

ⁿ “Quod si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam, libenter erro; nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo.”—[If I err in believing the souls of men to be immortal, I err willingly; nor will I be robbed of this pleasing error while I live.]—*De Senectute*, ad fin.

lieve them to be the most perfidious and the most profligate of men. Caressed by those who call themselves the great, engrossed by the formalities of life, intoxicated with vanity, pampered with adulation, dissipated in the tumult of business, or amidst the vicissitudes of folly, they perhaps have little need and little relish for the consolations of religion. But let them know that, in the solitary scenes of life, there is many an honest and tender heart pining with incurable anguish, pierced with the sharpest sting of disappointment, bereft of friends, chilled with poverty, racked with disease, scourged by the oppressor, whom nothing but trust in Providence, and the hope of a future retribution, could preserve from the agonies of despair. And do they with sacrilegious hands attempt to violate this last refuge of the miserable, and to rob them of the only comfort that had survived the ravages of misfortune, malice, and tyranny? Did it ever happen, that the influence of their execrable tenets disturbed the tranquillity of virtuous retirement, deepened the gloom of human distress, or aggravated the horrors of the grave? Is it possible that this may have happened in many instances? Is it probable that this hath happened in one single instance? Ye traitors to human kind! ye murderers of the human soul! how can ye answer for it to your own hearts? Surely, every spark of your generosity is extinguished for ever, if this consideration do not awaken in you the keenest remorse, and make you wish in bitterness of soul—But I remonstrate in vain. All this must have often occurred to you, and as often been rejected as utterly frivolous. Could I enforce the present topic by an appeal to your vanity, I might possibly make some impression. But to plead with you on the principles of BENEVOLENCE OR GENEROSITY, is to address you in a language ye do not, or will not, understand; and as to the shame of being convicted of absurdity, ignorance, or want of candor, ye have long ago proved yourselves superior to the sense of it. But let not the lovers of truth be discouraged. Atheism cannot be of long continuance, nor is there much danger of its becoming universal. The influence of some conspicuous characters hath brought it too much into fashion, which, in a thoughtless and profligate age, it is no difficult matter to

accomplish. But when men have retrieved the powers of serious reflection, they will find it a frightful phantom; and the mind will return gladly and eagerly to its old endearments. One thing we certainly know—the fashion of skeptical and metaphysical systems passeth away. Those unnatural productions, the vile effusions of a hard and stupid heart, that mistakes its own restlessness for the activity of genius, and its own captiousness for sagacity of understanding, may, like other monsters, please awhile by their singularity; but the charm is soon over; and the succeeding age will be astonished to hear that their forefathers were deluded, or amused, with such fooleries.”

You, sir, have read the preceding paragraph^o before; but this letter may come into the hands of many who have not. It is the alarum bell to the admirers of Mr. HUME; and should be rung in their ears till succeeded by the last trumpet.

And now, sir, will you give me leave to ask you a few questions? Why all this hurry and bustle; this eagerness to gratify the pretended “impatience of the public,”^p and satisfy it that our philosopher lived and died perfectly composed and easy? Was there, then, any suspicion in *Scotland*, that he might not, at times, be quite so composed and easy as he should have been? Was there any particular book^q written against him, that shook his system to pieces about his ears, and reduced

^o [It is extracted from the *Essay on Truth*, Part III. chap. iii. (p. 343 s. eighth ed., Edinb., 1807.)]

JAMES BEATTIE, the author of this work, was Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in Marischal College, Aberdeen, from the year 1760, until his death, in 1799. He is well known as the author of several works on moral and mental philosophy, and of a deservedly popular summary of the evidences of Christianity; but still better, as the writer of *The Minstrel*, one of the most pleasing and universally popular poems in the English language.

The *Essay on Truth* first appeared in May, 1770. It met with a very rapid sale, and drew forth expressions of the warmest approbation from almost every individual of note whose approbation was to be desired, at the same time that its manly warmth and fearlessness of reprehension excited bitter indignation in HUME and his admirers.]

^p *Preface to Life*, &c.

^q [In this and the following sentence, HORNE again alludes to the irritation felt and expressed by HUME, on the publication of Dr. BEATTIE'S *Essay*.]

it to a heap of ruins, the success and eclat of which might be supposed to have hurt his mind, and to have affected his health? Was there any *author*, whose name his friends never dared to mention before him, and warned all strangers that were introduced to him against doing it, because he never failed, when by any accident it was done, to fly out into a transport of passion and swearing? Was it deemed necessary or expedient, on this account, that he should represent himself, and that you should represent him, to have been perfectly secure of the growth and increase of his philosophic reputation, as if no book had been written, which had impaired it; it having been judged much easier to dissemble the fall of *Dagon*, than to *set him upon his stumps again*? I am a *South Briton*, and consequently not acquainted with what passes so far in the opposite quarter. You, sir, can inform us how these things are; and likewise, when the great work of *benevolence* and *charity*, *wisdom* and *virtue*, shall be crowned by the publication of a treatise designed to prove the SOUL'S MORTALITY, and another to justify and recommend SELF-MURDER;* for which, without doubt, the present and future age will bless the name of the *gentle* and *amiable* author!

Upon the whole, Doctor, your meaning is good; but I think you will not succeed this time. You would persuade us, by the example of DAVID HUME, Esq., that atheism is the only cordial for low spirits, and the proper antidote against the fear of death. But surely he who can reflect, with complacency, on a friend thus misemploying his talents in his life, and then amusing

* "I was a man of mild disposition, of command of temper, little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions: even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper." *Life*, p. 32. Yet, even by what is said of the Reverends and Right Reverends—Bishop WARBURTON, Bishop HURD, "the *Zealots*," (that is the *Christians*) and of the resolution once taken to "change his name and to settle in France," because his writings did not meet with sufficient encouragement—by these circumstances, I say, there seems to have been something of the *irritable* in his constitution. But these are trifles. My quarry lies not this way at present. The atrocious wickedness of diffusing atheism through the land, is a subject which concerns every body.

* [HUME'S *Essays on Suicide and the Immortality of the Soul*, published in 1783, six years after the first appearance of the Letter.]

himself with "LUCIAN," "whist," and "Charon," at his death, may smile over Babylon in ruins; esteem the earthquake which destroyed Lisbon, an agreeable occurrence; and congratulate the hardened Pharaoh on his overthrow in the Red Sea. Drollery in such cases, is neither more or less than—

Moody madness, laughing wild
Amidst severest wo.

Would we know the baneful and pestilential influences of false philosophy on the human heart? We need only contemplate them in this most deplorable instance of Mr. HUME:

These sayings, sir, may appear harsh; but they are salutary. And if departed spirits have any knowledge of what is passing upon earth, that person will be most regarded by your friend as rendering him the truest services, who, by energy of expression, and warmth of exhortation, shall most contribute to prevent his writings from producing those effects upon mankind, which he no longer wishes they should produce. Let no man deceive himself, or be deceived by others. It is the voice of ETERNAL TRUTH, which crieth aloud, and saith to you, sir, and to me, and to all the world—*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*¹

By way of contrast to the behavior of Mr. HUME, at the close of a life passed "without God in the world," permit me, sir, to lay before yourself, and the public, the last sentiments of the truly learned, judicious, and admirable HOOKER, who had spent *his* days in the service of his Maker and Redeemer.

After this manner, therefore, spake the author of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, immediately before he expired:

"I have lived to see that this world is made up of perturbations; and I have been long preparing to leave it, and gathering comfort for the dreadful hour of making my account with God, which I now apprehend to be near. And though I have, by his grace, loved him in my youth, and feared him in mine age, and labored to have a conscience void of offence towards him, and to—

¹ John iii. 36.

wards all men ; yet if thou, LORD, shouldest be extreme to mark what is done amiss, who can abide it ? And therefore where I have failed, LORD, show mercy to me ! for I plead not my righteousness, but the forgiveness of my unrighteousness, through His merits who died to purchase pardon for penitent sinners. And since I owe thee a death, LORD, let it not be terrible ! and then take thine own time ; I submit to it. Let not mine, O LORD, but thy will be done !—God hath heard my daily petitions ; for I am at peace with all men, and He is at peace with me. From such blessed assurance I feel that inward joy which this world can neither give, nor take from me. My conscience beareth me this witness ; and this witness makes the thoughts of death joyful. I could wish to live, to do the Church more service ; but cannot hope it ; for my days are past, as a shadow that returns not.”

His worthy biographer adds : “ More he would have spoken, but his spirits failed him ; and, after a short conflict between nature and death, a quiet sigh put a period to his last breath, and so he fell asleep.—And now he seems to rest like Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom. Let me here draw his curtain, till, with the most glorious company of the patriarchs and apostles, and the most noble army of martyrs and confessors, this most learned, most humble, and most holy man shall also awake to receive an eternal tranquillity, and with it a greater degree of glory, than common Christians shall be made partakers of.”

Doctor Smith, when the hour of his departure hence shall arrive, will copy the example of the BELIEVER, or the INFIDEL, as it liketh him best. I must freely own, I have no opinion of that reader’s head or heart, who will not exclaim, as I find myself obliged to do—

Let ME die the death of the righteous, and let MY last end be like his !

I am, Sir, your very sincere Well-wisher, and

Humble Servant,

ONE OF THE PEOPLE CALLED CHRISTIANS.

POSTSCRIPT.

As it is possible, sir, nay, probable, that this little tract, because it is a little one, may be perused by many who have not leisure or inclination to go through large volumes, and yet wish to know what Mr. HUME's philosophical system is; I shall here subjoin a short but comprehensive summary of the doctrines which compose it, drawn up, some few years ago, by a learned gentleman, for his amusement, with proper references to those parts of our philosopher's works where such doctrines were to be found. And though I never heard that the compiler had the thanks of Mr. HUME for so doing, yet neither could I ever find that he or his friends disputed the fidelity and accuracy with which it was done.^u

A SUMMARY OF MR. HUME'S DOCTRINES, METAPHYSICAL AND MORAL.

Of the Soul.

That the soul of man is not the same this moment that it was the last;—that we know not what it is;—that it is not one, but many things;—and that it is nothing at all.

That in this soul is the agency of all the causes that operate throughout the sensible creation; and yet that in this soul there is neither power nor agency, nor any idea of either.

That matter and motion may often be regarded as the cause of thought.

Of the Universe.

That the external world does not exist; or at least, that its existence may reasonably be doubted.

^u See Dr. BEATTIE'S *Essay on Truth*, Part II. Chap. I. Sect. I. and Part III. ch. ii.

That the universe exists in the mind, and that the mind does not exist.

That the universe is nothing but a heap of perceptions, without a substance.

That though a man should bring himself to believe, yea, and have reason to believe, that *every thing in the universe* proceeds from some cause; yet it would be unreasonable for him to believe, that *the universe itself* proceeds from a cause.

Of Human Knowledge.

That the perfection of human knowledge is to doubt.

That we ought to doubt of every thing, yea, of our doubts themselves, and therefore the utmost that philosophy can do, is, to give us a doubtful solution of doubtful doubts.^v

That the human understanding, acting alone, does entirely subvert itself, and prove by argument that by argument nothing can be proved.

That man, in all his perceptions, actions, and volitions, is a mere passive machine, and has no separate existence of his own, being entirely made up of other things, of the existence of which he is by no means certain; and yet, that the nature of all things depends so much upon man, that two and two could not be equal to four, nor fire produce heat, nor the sun light, without an act of the human understanding.

Of God.

That it is unreasonable to believe God to be infinitely wise and good, while there is any evil or disorder in the universe.

That we have no good reason to think that the universe proceeds from a cause.

That as the existence of the external world is questionable, we are at a loss to find arguments by which we

^v The fourth Section of Mr. HUME's *Essays on the Human Understanding* is called, *Skeptical Doubts concerning the operations of the Human Understanding*; and the fifth Section bears this title, *Skeptical Solution of those Doubts*.

may prove the existence of the Supreme Being, or any of his attributes.

That when we speak of power, as an attribute of any being, God himself not excepted, we use words without meaning.

That we can form no idea of power, nor of any being endued with power, *much less* of one endued with infinite power; and that we can never have reason to believe that any object, or quality of any object, exists, of which we cannot form any idea.[†]

Of the Morality of Human Actions.

That every human action is necessary, and could not have been different from what it is.

That moral, intellectual, and corporeal virtues are nearly of the same kind: in other words, that to want honesty, and to want understanding, and to want a leg, are equally the objects of moral disapprobation.

That adultery must be practised, if man would obtain all the advantages of life; that, if generally practised, it would in time cease to be scandalous; and that if practised secretly and frequently, it would by degrees come to be thought no crime at all.

Lastly, as the soul of man, according to Mr. HUME, becomes every moment a different being, the consequence must be, that the crimes committed by him, at one time, cannot be imputable to him at another.[‡]

I BELIEVE, Dr. Smith, the reader is now fully prepared to enter into the spirit of your concluding sentence, which shall therefore be mine.

[†] The poor prodigal Gentile, in the parable, was hardly reduced to feed upon such *husks* as these. How good, and how joyful a thing it must be, for one that has been so reduced, to return to the house of his heavenly Father, where *there is bread enough, and to spare—to know the only true God, and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent!*

[‡] “*My Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals* is, of all writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably *the best.*”—HUME, in his own *Life*, p. 16.

“I have always considered Mr. HUME, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of A WISE AND VIRTUOUS MAN, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit!!”

THE END.

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ERRATA.

Page 122, Note y, *read* John iii. 36.
" 201, *line* 10, " obscure.
" " " 18, " tract *for* fact
" 207, " 3, " Finedon.
" 209, " 22, " Jenkinson









