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THE *Rev. Mr.*

SYSTEM OF DOCTRINES,

CONTAINED IN

DIVINE REVELATION,

EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED.

Showing their CONSISTENCE and CONNECTION with each other.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A *TREATISE* ON THE *MILLENNIUM*.

By SAMUEL HOPKINS, D. D.
PASTOR of the FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH in *Newport*.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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T H E
SYSTEM of DOCTRINES
CONTAINED IN
DIVINE REVELATION.

P A R T II.

C H A P. IV.

S E C T I O N VI.

Concerning Saving Faith.

T H E R E have been, and still are, various and opposite opinions in the christian world, and among Protestants, respecting saving faith; and very different definitions have been given of it. Instead of particularly describing these, and attempting to refute any of them now, it is proposed to examine the scriptures, and endeavour from them to find what is the nature, and what are the properties of this faith. And if in this way, which is doubtless the most proper to be taken, a clear and satisfactory idea of this subject may be obtained, all erroneous

neous opinions respecting it, which have been imbibed and propagated, will of course be detected.—In this view, the following things may be observed.

I. SAVING faith is represented in many passages of scripture as consisting in a belief and assurance of the truth and reality of those things which are revealed and asserted by God in the divine oracles. Or a conviction and assured knowledge, that the gospel is true ; that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world ; and they who have this belief, assurance or knowledge, are considered and declared to be in a state of salvation.

This is the account given of faith in the most express definition of it in the Bible. “ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*.” Here faith is described in the general nature of it ; and is said to be that by which invisible and future things are seen as evident realities. Hence it appears, that he who realizes and is assured of the truths contained in divine revelation, has true faith, by which men believe to the saving of their souls, which is the faith here defined, as appears from the words immediately preceding these, in the last verse of the foregoing chapter. “ We are of them that believe to the saving of the soul. Now faith, &c.”

When Peter said to Jesus, “ Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Jesus answered and said unto him, “ Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona ; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee ; but my Father which is in heaven.” Upon this we may observe,

1. That the faith which Peter possesses, is a belief and assurance that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah who was to come into the world.

2. That Christ declares this to be saving faith, in pronouncing Peter blessed upon this, and asserting that this faith was the effect of divine, supernatural influences.

Very

* Heb. xi. 1.

Very parallel to this is what St. John asserts concerning faith. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."* This is the same confession which Peter made; and this is here declared to be peculiar to a good man, a true christian who shall be saved. By confessing that Jesus is the Son of God, is meant a sincere and true declaration, of a belief and assurance of this truth. Such a belief and assurance of this truth, is the only proper ground of this confession, and is saving faith. Both these passages are explained and illustrated by the following words of this same Apostle. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God."† Here a belief of this single proposition, *Jesus is the Christ*, is asserted to be justifying, saving faith, which is peculiar to those who are born of God.

The same description of saving faith is found in the words of St. Paul, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus; and shall believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."‡ To believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, is the same with believing that Jesus is the Christ: And this is here asserted to be saving faith. This same faith the Eunuch possessed, upon which he was baptized by Philip, and admitted among the number of true believers in Christ. "And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."§ Agreeably to this Christ says, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."|| Here eternal life is connected with having a true idea or knowledge of God and the Saviour; or seeing their true character and believing them to be such as they are. This therefore must be the same with that faith to which our Saviour so often promises salvation; and

* 1 John iv. 15.

† Chap. v. 1.

‡ Rom. x. 9.

§ Acts viii. 37.

|| John xvii. 3.

and without which he repeatedly said, men cannot be saved.

In all these passages faith is represented as that by which the truth is seen, so that the truths of the gospel become present and real to the mind, attended with an assurance of their truth and reality : And that this belief of the truth, with what it necessarily includes, is the whole of saving faith : And is the same thing which is elsewhere called—*Coming to the light.* Being in the light.† Knowing the truth.‡ Coming to the knowledge of the truth.§ A belief of the truth.|| A being illuminated.¶ The light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, shining in the heart.** Beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.††*

II. SAVING faith, in a number of places, is represented in a light, which to some, especially at first view, may appear different from the description of it in the forementioned passages, if not contrary to it. It is considered and represented, as consisting in the exercise of the heart, and choice of the will ; this being essential to it, and including the whole.

Believing on the name of Christ, and receiving him, is mentioned as being one and the same thing, “But to as many as *received him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe on his name.*”†† Here receiving Christ, and *believing on him*, are synonymous expressions, and must mean the same thing. But receiving Christ is an exercise of will or choice, and is the same thing with voluntarily embracing him, as he is offered in the gospel. Faith in Christ, or believing on him, is termed *coming to him*, as being one and the same. “He that *cometh to me*, shall never hunger ;

* John iii. 31. † 1 John ii. 9. ‡ John viii. 31. § 1 Tim. ii. 4.

|| 2 Thess. ii. 13. ¶ Heb. x. 32. ** 2 Cor. iv. 6. †† Chap. iii. 13.

†† John i. 12.

hunger; and he that *believeth on me*, shall never thirst.”* As hungering and thirsting are the same mental exercise, so are believing on Christ, and coming to him. This is farther evident from the words following. “But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and *believe not*. All that the Father give thme, shall come to me; and he that *cometh to me*, I will in no wise cast out.”† Here Christ speaks of *coming to him*, as the condition of salvation by him, and as directly the reverse to *not believing on him*, with which he charges the Jews; and therefore by coming to him he can mean nothing but saving faith, even the same which he, in this discourse, repeatedly calls *believing on him*.‡ It may be also observed, that what Christ here calls *not believing*, he in another place denotes by *not coming to him*. “Ye will not *come unto me*, that ye might have life.”§ The charge of *not coming to him*, and *not believing on him*, is evidently the same. And that coming to Christ, is the same with believing on him, is confirmed from the evident synonymous use of those phrases in the words which follow those which have been mentioned. “And this is the will of the Father, that every one, that seeth the Son and *believeth on him*, may have everlasting life. No man can *come unto me*, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, *cometh unto me*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that *believeth on me*, hath everlasting life.”¶ And we find him speaking again after the same manner. “If any man thirst, let him *come unto me* and drink. He that *believeth on me*, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters.”**

Faith in Christ is denoted by *eating his flesh*, and *drinking his blood*.†† “Whosoever eateth my flesh, and

* John vi. 35. † v. 36, 37. ‡ v. 35, 40, 47. § Chap. v. 40.

¶ v. 40, 44, 45, 47.

** John vii. 37, 38.

†† John vi. 50,

51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58.

and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." It is not only evident from the words themselves, that by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, that uniting act of the soul to Christ is expressed, which is necessary in order to enjoy what he has obtained for men, which must be saving faith: But this is yet more evident by comparing them with the foregoing words, of which these are evidently designed as an explanation. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life."* And again, "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and *believeth on him*, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."† Here eternal life, and to be raised up by Christ at the last day, is promised in one place to believing on Christ, and in the other to *eating his flesh, and drinking his blood*: therefore it is certain that these are not two different things, but one and the same, which is connected with eternal life, and the condition of enjoying it. But eating the flesh of Christ, and drinking his blood, can mean nothing less than voluntary exercise, by which, from a taste and relish for the character of Christ, and his excellence, the heart receives and embraces him as a suitable and all sufficient Saviour.

Calling on the name of Christ, is spoken of as an exercise of faith, or a proper expression of faith in him. For the scripture saith, "Whosoever *believeth on him* shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that *call upon him*. For whosoever shall *call upon the name of the Lord*, shall be saved."‡ No one who attends to these words can suppose that believing on Christ, and calling on his name, are two distinct things, or doubt whether they are one and the same exercise.

To

* v. 37.

† v. 40.

‡ Rom. x. 11, 12, 13.

To the same purpose are those scriptures which represent faith in Christ by *looking unto him*, and *trusting in him*. “Look unto me, all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved.”* Here looking to Christ, and salvation, are connected. And this is represented as necessary to salvation, and the only condition of it. But this is the same thing with seeking him; coming to him, and accepting of him. In this passage there is doubtless a reference to the direction which God gave to the Israelites to set a brazen serpent upon a pole, in the wilderness, with a promise that every one who being bitten of a fiery serpent, looked upon it, should live: For this was a designed type of Christ, which our Saviour therefore applies to himself: and at the same time declares that looking upon the exalted serpent, denoted faith in him. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”†

Trusting in God, is often mentioned in the book of Psalms, and in other parts of the Old Testament, as necessary in order to enjoy his favour, to which promises of all good are made; in the same manner as faith in Christ is in the New Testament: from whence it may be safely inferred that they are the same. And agreeable to this, believing in Christ is called *trusting in him*, by St. Paul. “That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first *trusted in Christ*.”‡ “Isaiah saith, there shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles *trust*.”§ *Trust in Christ*, implies the exercise of the disposition or will, even the receiving and embracing of the heart: For men do not trust in any person or object for any thing but that which to them is a good, what is agreeable to them, what they desire and choose. Yea, *trust-*

B 4

ing

* Isaiah xlv. 22. † John iii. 14, 15. ‡ Eph. i. 12. § Rom. xv. 12.

ing is commonly used with respect to some great good upon which men set their hearts, and depend upon it for support, satisfaction and happiness. And that trusting in Christ is the same with looking and coming to him, and seeking him, will be evident from the last mentioned passage, by turning to the words of Isaiah, from which it is taken: For what the Apostle renders, "In him shall the Gentiles *trust*," is in the following words in the place quoted, "To it (that is to Christ) shall the Gentiles *seek*."

From these passages of scripture; and many others of the like tenor, it may be determined with certainty, that saving faith implies the consent of the will, accepting of Christ; choosing and embracing him, as he is revealed in the gospel; and that this is essential to it; so that where this exercise and consent of heart is not, there is no faith, and no real and proper conviction, knowledge or belief of the truth.

And if what has been said in the foregoing section, on divine illumination, be understood, and kept in mind, the account we have had of saving faith from the scripture, under the two preceding observations, will appear to be consistent and intelligible. It has been there proved from scripture, that a right disposition of mind is necessary in order to have that true discerning in things of a moral and spiritual nature which is implied in saving faith; and that seeing and understanding the truths of the gospel, implies exercise of heart, and the former cannot be distinguished and separated from the latter, even in idea and conception. Therefore a saving belief of the truth of the gospel, supposes and implies right exercises of heart, in tasting and relishing moral beauty, and embracing it as good and excellent: and thus embracing Christ and the gospel implies all that light, conviction and assurance of the truth, which is essential

essential to saving faith ; and both these, or rather *all this*, is really but one and the same whole.

The gospel is all of a *moral* nature ; by it is exhibited the plan of the moral government of God, or his moral, spiritual kingdom, to the best advantage, in the clearest and most striking light. In *this*, is the greatest and most clear manifestation of the Deity ; and it comprises the sum of all the moral beauty and excellence that is to be seen by created intelligences, in the whole universe. In Jesus Christ, the glory of God, his moral beauty and perfection, shines with the brightest effulgence, and to the greatest advantage. The glory of God, the bright emanation of the divine fullness, beauty and perfection, is to be seen in the face of Jesus Christ.* He is the image of God. In him, as in a mirror, the rays of the divine glory center, and by him are to the greatest advantage reflected on all finite intelligences. He therefore, who sees Jesus Christ in his true character, as a beautiful, suitable and all sufficient Saviour ; or understands the gospel, sees and understands what is the sum of all moral beauty and perfection ; which is the glory of the gospel, and infinitely distinguishes it from every thing which is merely human, or is not divine ; and without which the gospel would be infinitely unworthy of God, and want the evidence which the believer has that it is from God. Therefore he who discerns not this moral beauty and excellence, which is the same with having no taste of heart for it, the gospel is hid from him. He does not understand it ; has no true idea of Jesus Christ ; and consequently discerns not the proper and all convincing evidence that he is the Son of God, and a suitable and all sufficient Saviour : Therefore does not, and cannot believe it, with that faith which it demands.

But

* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

But such a true idea of Jesus Christ, such a knowledge of him in his true character, such a sight of his moral beauty and excellence, supposes, and takes place in the exercise of a right taste and disposition of heart, without which it cannot possibly be perceived. For, as has been proved, a discerning and sight of beauty, especially of moral beauty and excellence, depends upon the taste and disposition of the heart, and it cannot be discerned by the speculative understanding, as distinct from the will, and independent of it. But such taste and disposition of heart, which discerns the moral beauty and excellence of Christ and the gospel, and opens to the mind the all convincing evidence of their reality, necessarily implies, and carries in it, approbation of the gospel, and a cordial embracing it as excellent and divine, which is the same with receiving Jesus Christ, and trusting in him as a worthy and all sufficient Saviour.

All this, it is presumed, has been made so evident in the foregoing section, from scripture and the reason and nature of things, that it is needless to enlarge on the subject here, or repeat what has been said there. However, it may be proper to mention several passages of scripture, in addition to those here cited, which represent that light, knowledge and belief respecting the truths of the gospel, in which saving faith consists, to imply a right temper of mind, which is the same with a benevolent heart, without which there can be no true light and discerning with respect to those things; and therefore no saving faith.— And consequently that an evil heart, that is, a rebellious disobedient heart, under the power of selfishness, pride and lust, does not, and cannot believe on Jesus Christ, with that faith which is reasonable, and which the gospel requires.

Christ says to the unbelieving Jews, "How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the

the honour that cometh from God only ?”* Here a selfish, proud, worldly spirit, which alienated them from God, and rendered them so unfriendly to him, as not to desire the honour which he gives, is represented as inconsistent with believing on Christ, or a sight of that evidence of the truth of the gospel which is implied in saving faith. Therefore a contrary temper of mind to this is necessary in order to believe in Christ, and is implied in saving faith ; which must be a benevolent, humble, spiritual disposition, which is friendly to the divine character, and sincerely desires the spiritual blessings which he gives, the honour which cometh from God.—According to this, all the mere speculative knowledge, all the light and conviction, relating to the truths of the gospel, of which unrenewed men are capable, falls essentially short of true faith in Christ ; so that they are wholly destitute of any thing of the kind. Therefore men must have an obedient, holy disposition of heart, in order to exercise saving faith. It is with such a renewed heart that men believe unto righteousness.† With such an heart the Eunuch believed on Christ.‡ St. John asserts this in the strongest terms, in the following words, “Who-soever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.”§ Thus faith in Christ implies renovation of heart, a right disposition of mind. Where this is not, there can be no faith.

We find the same thing implied and inculcated in our Saviour’s parable of the sower, as he explains it.¶ He that received seed into good ground, is he who with an *honest and good heart*, heareth the word, understandeth, receiveth and keepeth it, and bringeth forth fruit with patience. Upon this it may be observed, that what is called *understanding the word*, by Matthew, is expressed by *receiving it*, by Mark. From hence it is certain, that

understanding

* John v. 44. † Rom. x. 10. ‡ Acts viii. 37. § 1. John v. 1.

¶ Matth. xiii. 23. Mark iv. 20. Luke viii. 15.

understanding the word is the same with receiving it; or, at least, that one implies the other. But *receiving* the word is an exercise of heart, which appears with great certainty from the words which Luke uses, "*Which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it.*" It is the honest and good heart which understands, receives and keeps the word; and he who has not such an heart, that is, an upright and benevolent heart, does neither receive, nor understand it. It is needless perhaps to observe, that saving faith consists in understanding or receiving the word, the truth of the gospel, which, according to this representation, is found in an honest and good heart, and in no other, and implies the upright, disinterested, benevolent exercises of such a heart. Before we leave this passage, it may be useful to observe, that according to this representation of our Saviour, the word of truth does not make the evil, hard, selfish heart, good; but where it finds such an heart, it produces no saving good, but leaves it as bad as it finds it. The heart must first be made honest and good; for such an heart only understands, receives, loves and keeps the truth, and brings forth good fruit; as the seed takes root so as to bring forth fruit, only in good ground.

The following words of Christ are to the same purpose, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."* To understand the doctrine which Christ taught, to see the divine stamp which is upon it, and to know that it is of God, is the description of saving faith, or the character of a true believer. They who have a heart to do the will of God, and none but such, have this discerning of true faith. Such an heart therefore, or a disposition and will, to do the will of God, is essential to saving faith. This is a discerning, wise and understanding heart, which sees the evidence of divine truth, and knows it to be of God.

Whereas

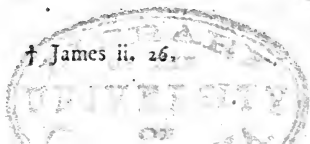
Whereas he whose heart opposes the revealed will of God, which requires LOVE, remains in darkness and unbelief.

It must be farther observed,

III. It appears from the scriptures that LOVE is implied in saving faith, and is essential to it ; so that where there is no holy love, there is no true faith. This is asserted by St. Paul ; by which he distinguishes true faith from all counterfeits, in the following words. " In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love."* The Apostle does not here say, that faith *worketh love* or *produces it*, as if faith preceded, as the cause of love ; and that love is connected with faith, and follows it, as the certain consequence and effect of it. But he says, faith *worketh by* love, as some machines move *by* wind or water, springs or weights. He asserts that love is the life and active nature of saving faith. By this it is a loving active faith ; love being the life and soul of it ; so that where there is no love, there can be no more than an inactive, dead faith. The Apostle James says, " As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."† The operative nature of any thing, is the life of it. Things are said to be alive, from the active nature which is observed to be in them. The active nature of man is the spirit which is in him : Therefore, as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without a working nature is dead also. What this working nature, or active fruitful spirit is, which is in true faith, St. Paul tells us in the words before us : It is LOVE. Love is the spirit and life of faith by which it acts, and produces all its operations, and is distinguished from a spurious, dead faith. These two Apostles perfectly agree in this point. According to them, that which distinguishes true saving faith,

* Gal. v. 6

† James ii. 26.



faith, from every kind of faith which is not so, is the life and operative nature of it, which consists in true love.

And that St. Paul is to be understood as has been now explained, when he said, "Faith worketh by love," is confirmed by his following words. "Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love,* I am nothing."† Here he asserts, there can be no faith that is of any worth, where there is not love. It follows, that saving faith implies love, in the nature of it. No faith availeth any thing, but that living, active faith, to which love is essential, and of which it is the life and active nature. And when he goes on to say, "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,"‡ the most easy, natural and consistent meaning of these words is thought to be, that love is the active nature and life of christian fortitude, faith, hope and patience, that these christian graces are exercised and maintained by love, which is the foundation and soul of the whole, so that where there is no love, there is nothing born, believed, hoped for, or endured, as christians do. Love *believeth* all things, that is, every exercise of true faith, is an exercise of love; and he who has love, believeth all things which are the proper objects of faith, and ought to be believed. In this view we see the force and propriety of his concluding words, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." Love is the greatest, as faith and hope are comprehended in love, as the active nature, life and essence of them.

That

*The word in the original is *love*; *αγαπη*, with its derivatives *αγαπαω*, and *αγαπηλος*, is used above three hundred times in the New-Testament, and translated *love*, *to love*, and *beloved*, except in about twenty places, besides the instances in this chapter, where it is translated *charity*; but ought to have been always translated *love*.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

‡ verse 7.

That love comes into the essence of saving faith, will be evident by attending to a quotation of St. Paul from the Prophet Isaiah.* The words of the Prophet are, "Men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear—what he hath prepared for him that *waiteth for him*."† For which the Apostle uses these words, "For them that *love him*." Waiting on God, or waiting for him, in the Old Testament, is the same with faith and trust in God; and therefore is the same with what is called faith or believing, in the New Testament. But for this, St. Paul uses the word *love*, which he would not have done, had not love been so essential to faith, and so far implied in it, that to trust or believe in God, and to love him, express near the same idea, and are in a measure synonymous.

The words of Christ to Nicodemus represent love as implied in saving faith, and essential to it. "He that believeth on him, is not condemned: But he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."‡ On these words may be observed the following things.

1. That our Saviour here represents men as condemned, or not, according as they believe on him, or not. He that believeth is not condemned: But he that believeth not is condemned.

2. That the ground of this condemnation is their *loving* darkness, and *hating* the light or truth. It follows from this, that loving darkness is the reason and ground of unbelief; and therefore that the love of the truth is necessary in order to believing on the Son of God, and

is

* 1. Cor. ii. 9. † Isaiah lxiv. 4. ‡ John iii. 18, 19, 20.

is implied in it. Yea, it appears from this representation, that *loving* darkness rather than light, and so refusing to come to the light, is unbelief itself. And therefore, coming to the truth in the love of it, or in the exercise of love, is saving faith.

This is very parallel with St. Paul's account of this matter. He says, "*Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie : That they all might be damned, who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*"* It appears from these words, that *not receiving the love of the truth*, or *not loving the truth*, and *not believing the truth*, are one and the same thing : And that *having pleasure in unrighteousness*, and *believing the truth*, are opposite to each other ; therefore, *receiving the love of the truth*, or *loving it*, and *believing the truth*, are not distinct exercises, but one and the same.

What our Saviour says to the Jews, implies, that love to God is assential to saving faith. "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not : If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only ?"† Here Christ ascribes their unbelief, and rejecting him, to their want of love to God ; and speaks of their *unbelief* as an evidence that they had no love. Therefore, love is here represented as so essential to faith, that where there is no love, there can be no faith. And faith is such a concomitant of love, that where there is no faith, it is certain there is no love. And the last words do plainly assert, that it is impossible any one should believe on Christ, who has no suitable respect or love to God.

Other .

* 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11, 12.

† John v. 42, 43, 44.

Other passages of scripture hold forth the same truth ; but it is needless to mention them particularly, since those which have been mentioned are so clear and express on the point before us. And if this were not so, and there were no such scriptures to be produced ; the truth asserted may be demonstrated from what has been before proved from scripture respecting divine illumination, and saving faith, viz. That true faith implies a right taste and exercise of heart, which can be nothing but love : And the light and discerning which is essential to faith, implies disinterested benevolence, or love. And who can help seeing that approbation of the character of Christ, and receiving and trusting in him as the Saviour of sinners, which has been shown is the scripture account of faith, does necessarily imply, and really is, love to him ? From all this the perfect consistency of the scripture on this head is apparent ; and that it is agreeable to the reason and nature of things.

IV. It appears from the scripture that true repentance is included in saving faith : That repentance comes into the nature and essence of faith, so that where there is no repentance, there is not, nor can be, any saving faith.

This will be evident to any one, who will well observe the following things :

1. The scripture represents repentance as necessary in order to pardon. We are told that John did “ preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”* That is, he preached repentance, as necessary in order to their obtaining forgiveness. Jesus Christ taught his disciples, “ that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.”† That is, that forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed and offered

to

* Mark i. 4.

† Luke xxiv. 47.

to all that should repent, and to none but such ; to which all should be invited and called. Accordingly, we find the Apostles preached agreeable to this direction. “ Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.”* “ Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.”†

2. As repentance is necessary in order to forgiveness ; so forgiveness of sins is promised to repentance. The passages mentioned under the foregoing particular are so full and express in this, that it is needless to repeat them, or to turn to others which assert the same thing. As repentance is required, in order to forgiveness, so forgiveness is connected with repentance.

3. Faith is represented in scripture as the only condition of pardon and salvation by Christ : As that without which no man shall be forgiven and saved ; and to which these are promised. “ He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.”‡ “ 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.”§ “ To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.”¶ A great number of passages to the same purpose might be cited.

From these premises it follows, that saving faith and repentance are not two distinct exercises, but imply and include each other, so that repentance comes into the nature and essence of faith. There is no other possible supposition by which the scripture account of this matter can be reconciled. If he who believes is forgiven, and shall be saved, and he who believeth not, is condemned ; and yet no one is forgiven, or shall be saved, unless he repent ;

and

* Act ii. 38. † Act iii. 19. ‡ Mark xvi. 16. § John viii. 36.

¶ Acts x. 43.

and pardon and salvation are promised to repentance ; then he who believes, does also repent, and he who does not repent, does not believe : Which could not be true, unless repentance and faith imply each other, so that there is faith in evangelical repentance, and repentance comes into the nature of saving faith, and is essential to it. Faith and repentance are not two distinct parallel conditions of pardon and salvation. They cannot be so, consistent with the representation of scripture respecting this matter, which has been produced. But they are so implied in each other, and so far connected, that one is not without the other.

It is abundantly evident that the Evangelists and Apostles viewed and treated the matter in this light. This appears not only from what has been already observed ; but it will be farther evident by attending to the account which the Evangelists, Mark and Luke, give of the gospel, which Jesus Christ directed his Apostles to preach to all nations. In Mark, we have it in the following words—“ And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved ; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.”* The good news to be proclaimed is summed up in these words, holding forth the condition on which eternal life is to be offered, and obtained, which is here called *believing*. Luke says that Christ directed, “ that *repentance* and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.”† These words contain the sum of what Christ ordered to be preached, and express the condition on which pardon and salvation were to be offered to all nations ; and therefore is parallel with the passage just cited from Mark, and does express the very same thing, though in different words. But what Mark calls *believing*, Luke calls *repentance*. Therefore, saving faith and repentance, are not essentially different ;

* Mark xvi. 16.

† Luke xxiv. 47.

but repentance implies what is essential to faith, and faith takes into the nature of it what is essential to true repentance, so that one may be put for the other consistent with propriety and truth.

The account we have of the Apostles preaching this same gospel, in the execution of their Lord's instructions, serves to prove that the above cited words of the Evangelists are intended to express one and the same thing, and point out the only condition on which they were to offer pardon and salvation, and that the Apostles understood it thus. When the hearers of Peter's first sermon were brought solicitously to ask, "What shall we do!" He said unto them, "*Repent*, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."* Here he expressly preached "*repentance and remission of sins*," exactly agreeable to the direction of Christ, as it is expressed by Luke. But when this same Apostle is called to preach the gospel to Cornelius, and tell him, "what he ought to do," we find him expressing himself in the following words. "To him give all the Prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever *believeth* in him, shall receive the remission of sins." Here, instead of *repent*, St. Peter uses the word *believe*, which is the only difference between this, and the above cited direction to his hearers. And in this he comes nearer the words in which Mark expresses the direction of our Lord, which was to be regarded as their rule in this case. "He that BELIEVETH—shall be saved." This Apostle cannot be reconciled to himself in any other way but that in which the Evangelists may be reconciled to each other, viz. that by *repentance* he means the same thing which at another time he expresses by *faith* or *believing*. And we cannot account for his expressing himself thus, but by supposing that faith implies repentance, so that he who believes, does in the very act of believing, repent.

But

But aside from the express testimony of scripture, it is demonstratively certain, that repentance comes into the nature of saving faith, from what has been proved concerning it, under the preceding particulars, viz. that saving faith implies a right disposition of heart; and that this right taste and disposition consists in love to God. For there can be no degree of right disposition, and love to God, or friendly disposition towards him, in an impenitent heart. Every degree of right exercise, and of love to God, by a sinner, implies repentance, as essential to such exercises. Therefore the impenitent man is always an unbeliever; and every believer is a true penitent.—Where there is no repentance, there is no faith.

That repentance is implied in saving faith, and the reason of it, will be still more evident, by considering the nature of true repentance, and in what it consists, according to scripture. The definition given of repentance by the Assembly of Divines, in the shorter catechism, appears to be agreeable to the scripture, which is in the following words, “ Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it, unto God—with full purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience.” Here repentance is defined as including the whole of a saving conversion: And he who attends to his Bible, must be sensible that repentance is commonly used there in this sense, and always, unless it be evidently used in a limited sense. Repentance has a first and more immediate respect to sin, discerning, realizing, and confessing the malignant nature, odiousness and ill desert of it, as committed against God, and a violation of his law. It therefore supposes and implies the true knowledge of God, discerning and realizing his being, greatness, excellence, worthiness and authority: And consequently a conviction

tion and sense of heart, of the righteousness, excellence and perfection of the law of God, both in the precepts and sanctions of it ; or an understanding, cordial approbation of it ; for it is in the light of those objects that sin, which is the transgression of this law, which derives its foundation and reason from the Divine character and perfection, appears in its true colours and extent, and as infinitely odious, and deserving infinite evil, even endless punishment. Repentance includes right views and exercises of heart respecting these objects, GOD, LAW, SIN, which right exercises of heart are supposed and implied in right views and sentiments concerning them. Therefore, repentance implies and consists in a hearty regard to God, as infinitely excellent and glorious ; or, which is the same, in love to the Deity ; and in a cordial approbation of the law of God, in which the divine character appears, and is effectually asserted ; and in a true love to this law, rightly understood ; and in hatred of sin, as committed against this law, and this God, and an hearty acknowledgment of his own guilt and vileness, and desert of the punishment, which the law of God threatens to sin. All this will be acknowledged to be implied in true repentance, and essential to it, by all who have properly attended to this subject.

But these sentiments and exercises are supposed and implied in saving faith, or faith in Jesus Christ. If we suppose this faith to consist in right speculative views of the gospel, in a conviction of the truth and excellence of it, exclusive of any exercise of heart, if this could be, yet even this supposes and includes right sentiments of God, law, and sin ; for without a right view of these, the gospel, or way of salvation by Jesus Christ, cannot be understood. For the gospel implies these truths respecting God, law, and sin, and is founded upon them ; and the existence, wisdom and glory of it are derived from the nature and perfection

perfection of God and his law, and the consequent nature and ill desert of sin. If these be left out of view, there cannot be any true idea or conception of the gospel, in the mind. The ideas and sentiments therefore, which are essential to repentance, are equally essential to faith in Christ.

But if saving faith includes a right disposition and exercises of heart, in receiving Jesus Christ, as he is offered in the gospel, as essential to the nature of it, which has been proved : Then it necessarily supposes and implies those exercises in which true repentance consists. Embracing Jesus Christ as a Saviour, or looking to him and trusting in him for salvation from sin and misery, implies a true view and cordial approbation of the character of God, and of his law, an acknowledgment of the desert of sin, and of his desert of endless destruction ; and a hatred of sin, and hearty renouncing it, and desire of deliverance from it. It is easy to see that a person cannot heartily approve of Christ as a Saviour from sin and misery, to which he is justly exposed by sin, and look to him, and accept of him, in this character, unless he sees and acknowledges himself to be a sinner, deserving eternal destruction ; and in his heart hates sin and forsakes it, as no impenitent person does, or can do : For the heart, in turning or cleaving to Christ, turns from, and renounces sin, in this very act. And applying to Christ for deliverance from the curse of the law, carries in it an acknowledgment of the desert of sin, and the righteousness of the divine law. It is therefore certain that repentance is implied in saving faith, and comes into the nature of it, and has a coexistence with it ; and is not properly a fruit or effect of faith in Christ. Therefore, as saving faith and true repentance are thus implied in each other, so that the exercise of faith is also an exercise of repentance, we may hence clearly see the reason and propriety of the

Apostles speaking sometimes of repentance as the condition of salvation; and at other times representing faith in Christ as the only condition; and that they are perfectly consistent in this.

Sometimes, indeed, repentance and faith seem to be used in a more limited sense; and, in this view, distinguished from each other. Thus we find St. Paul speaking, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."* Here the Apostle limits the meaning of the words repentance and faith, and so makes a distinction between them. And by *repentance toward God*, he appears to mean right views and exercises with respect to God, as lawgiver and judge, asserting and maintaining the rights of the Deity; and so right notions and exercises respecting the law of God, and sin, the transgression of this law; such sentiments and exercises as ought to take place in the mind of a sinner, and must take place, whenever he comes to a right taste and temper of heart, whether he have any distinct views of Christ, and the way of salvation by him, or not; and which are necessary in order to understand and embrace the gospel, as has been shown. By *faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*, he intends those views and exercises of heart toward Jesus Christ, as a suitable and all sufficient Saviour from sin, and the curse of the law, which are agreeable to the gospel, and to which sinners are invited. According to this distinction, as repentance toward God is put first, so it takes place in the mind first, in the order of nature, and precedes faith in Jesus Christ. Repentance toward God, in this sense of it, respects the term *from which* the sinner turns in conversion, and consists in a cordial approbation of the law of God, and self condemnation for his sin, and hating and renouncing it in his heart. Faith in Jesus Christ

respects

* Acts xx. 21.

respects the term *to which* the sinner turns, viz. God in Jesus Christ, or God manifest in the flesh; and consists in believing the gospel with all his heart, which implies receiving and trusting in Christ, as a sufficient and suitable Saviour for such a sinner.

The same distinction seems to be made between repentance, and faith in Christ, in the following passages.—“Repent ye, and believe the gospel.”* “And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.”† “But shewed unto them—that they should repent, and turn unto God.”‡ But all this is consistent with repentance being implied in faith, so that where there is no repentance, there is no faith in Christ; and repentance, taken in the full sense of it, implying saving faith: And the whole may be considered as one and the same complex act of the mind, viewed and distinguished according to the different and opposite objects to which it has respect, viz. sin and the curse; and God in Jesus Christ, which is a turning from sin to God, revealed in the gospel. And therefore, when faith or repentance is mentioned without any limitation, each comprehends the whole, even active conversion, or turning from sin to God, by Jesus Christ.§

To prevent mistakes, and farther to elucidate this point, it must be observed, that repentance toward God, which, in the order of nature, at least, is antecedent to faith in Jesus Christ, implies faith in God, or a real belief of his being and glorious perfection. For as has been observed, God must be seen in some measure in his true character, in order to see the reason and foundation of his law, and consequently the evil nature of sin, which can be known only by understanding the divine law.

* Mark i. 15. † Matth. xxi. 32. ‡ Acts xxvi. 20.

§ See Mr. Edwards's Discourse on Justification by Faith alone, page 103, 114, published in the year 1738. And Mr. Bellamy's Essay on the Nature and Glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Section viii,

law. This discerning and belief of the existence and perfection of God ; of the reason, reality, existence and extent of the divine law, and of the sinfulness and ill desert of man, is faith : It is the faith of a mind divinely illuminated, and implies right taste and exercise of heart : Or it is a belief peculiar to a renewed heart. And even this faith implies repentance ; for an impenitent heart is not capable of it, and does not discern and believe the existence and character of God, as the renewed penitent heart does. This faith now described is, in the order of nature, antecedent to faith in Jesus Christ ; as those objects must be seen as they are, and believed with a faith which implies exercises of heart in some measure answerable to them, before the gospel can be understood, or there can be any discerning or faith respecting Jesus Christ and the way of salvation by him. That the discerning and belief of these objects, God, law, sin, is true faith, and of the same nature with that by which men believe in Jesus Christ, is evident from scripture. " Faith is the evidence of things not seen. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear. He that cometh to God, must believe that he is."* Here the Apostle is speaking of the faith which is peculiar to good men, true saints : It is a belief that God is. It is true indeed that this faith is not complete, without believing that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, which is the same with believing the gospel, or believing in Jesus Christ ; but the belief of the former is first in the order of nature, and is necessarily implied in the latter. And the latter implies a true view and belief of the existence of the divine law, and the character of the sinner, as has been shewn. Our Saviour makes this same distinction between believing in God and believing in him, and

speaks

* Heb. xi. 1, 3, 6.

speaks of the former as prior to the latter, and the foundation of it, in his exhortation to his disciples, "Believe in God, believe also in me."†

It must be also observed, that what is properly called *evangelical repentance*, is not prior to faith in Christ. The repentance which precedes faith in Jesus Christ, respects the objects and truths, which are discerned prior to any true regard to Jesus Christ, or the knowledge of his character as the Saviour of sinners, the former being necessary in order to the latter, as has been shewn. Repentance, considered as it respects sins against Jesus Christ, and the gospel, and the great sin of unbelief, does not precede a belief of the truths of the gospel, or faith in Jesus Christ; for this is impossible. But repentance towards God, as it has been described above, is of the same nature with evangelical repentance; and implies a disposition to repent of the sin of not believing on Christ, when his character comes into view, and does always accompany, and is implied in, faith in Jesus Christ.

But though these distinctions may be made in theory, and are founded in the nature of things, and the connexion of revealed truth, and dependence of one revealed object upon another; and such distinctions may be proper and necessary in order more clearly to understand the subject to which we are attending: Yet a person may doubtless be a true believer in Jesus Christ, and not distinguish his views and exercises, so as to perceive experimentally which is prior to the other, and in what particular order they have taken place in his mind; and may entertain notions in theory on this point, which are really contrary to the truth of things, which may have been imbibed by education and wrong instruction, or
some

† John xiv. 1.—The words in the original, in both parts of the scripture, translated *believe*, are exactly the same, without any variation, and should have been so translated, not *ye do believe in God*, but *believe in God*.

some other way. But whatever contrary opinions have been advanced in theory, on this head, it is presumed, that it has been now proved from scripture, and the reason and nature of things, that repentance is implied in saving faith, and comes into the nature and essence of it; so that where there is no repentance, there is no saving faith; and that it is impossible that any person should believe on Jesus Christ in a saving manner, with an impenitent heart, which was the truth advanced, and to be supported under this head.

V. It is evident from the holy scriptures that the whole of evangelical obedience is included in saving faith. Or that saving faith implies all the holy exercises and works of a christian, and is the sum of all; so that where there is no faith, there is no true obedience, and where there is faith, there is obedience, and in this obedience, saving faith does essentially consist. Saving faith does not *produce* obedience, or the latter flow from the former, as the effect from the cause; but faith itself is evangelical obedience, and cannot be distinguished from it.*

When the Jews asked Jesus, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" He answered, "This is the work of God, *that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*"† The plain meaning of the question put by the Jews is this; What are these exercises, duties and works which God requires under the dispensation, and in the kingdom which the Messiah is to set up, in order to obtain that everlasting life which he will give? And Jesus comprized it all in *believing on the Messiah*. It is observable,

* When Peter says, the hearts of the uncircumcised Gentiles were *purified by faith*, Acts xv. 9. the meaning is not, that faith was the cause, and purity of heart, the effect; but that faith, was the purity of heart itself. This is illustrated by one expression of this same Apostle. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in (or by) obeying the truth, through the spirit." Peter i. 22. None will suppose that purity of heart, and obeying the truth, can be distinguished here, as if the former were the effect of the latter.

† John vi. 28, 29.

observable, that our Lord does not say, that in order to work the works of God, they must believe, so that their faith should become the foundation and principle of good works: But he says, This is the work itself. It will doubtless appear, that the natural and plain import of the words is, that faith in the Messiah, or believing in Jesus Christ, comprehends the whole of what the gospel requires, or is that in which conformity to the gospel in heart and life consists; and is therefore the sum of gospel holiness, or evangelical obedience.

Agreeable to this are the words of St. Paul, "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."* The Apostle is here speaking of his life as a christian, a life of christian holiness or evangelical obedience, and says, he lived this life by the faith of the Son of God; that is, by faith in Jesus Christ. For the faith of Christ, is the faith by which men believe in Christ, for righteousness, and justification. Hence it appears, that the spiritual life of a christian is his faith, or it is a life of faith. Therefore, that conformity to the gospel in which christian obedience consists, is called, *The obedience of Faith*. "According to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the OBEEDIENCE OF FAITH."† St. Paul uses the same expression in the beginning of this epistle, though it is a little varied in our translation. "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for *obedience to the faith* among all nations."‡ He is evidently speaking here of the same thing as in the above cited words; and the words which are there translated, *for obedience of faith*, are exactly the same here as in the original, and should have been so translated, as such a translation is most exact and literal.

And

* Gal. ii. 20.

† Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

‡ Chap. i. 5.

And that *the obedience of faith* intends conformity in heart and life to the gospel revelation, or evangelical holiness or obedience, not only appears from the words themselves, in the connexion in which they stand; but also from a parallel expression in this same epistle. "I have therefore, whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ, in these things which pertain to God—to *make the Gentiles obedient in word and deed.*"* The Apostle is evidently speaking here of the same thing, as in the above cited passages: He is speaking of the same persons, the Gentiles; of the same causes, means, and operation, the gospel preached and attended with the power of God; and therefore he is doubtless speaking of the same effect. This he here expresses by their being *made obedient in word and deed.* Hence it follows, that the obedience of faith, is the same with obedience to the gospel, or evangelical holiness. Agreeable to this, faith is called, *obeying the gospel*, in this epistle. "But they have not all *obeyed the gospel*; for Isaiah saith, Who hath *believed* our report?"† Faith then is gospel obedience; that is, evangelical obedience. Therefore, obeying Christ is mentioned as the same thing with believing in him. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation, unto all them that *obey him.*"‡ The christian life of holy obedience is expressed by "Fighting the fight of faith."§

What the Apostle James says of faith, serves farther to establish the point under consideration. He, speaking of saving faith, says, "Faith without works is dead." And again, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."¶ According to this, works, or holy exercises and obedience, are essential to true faith. They are the life of faith, by which faith lives and acts; and therefore, are faith living

* Rom. xv. 17, 18. † Chap. x. 16. ‡ Heb. v. 9. § 1 Tim. vi. 12.

¶ James ii. 20, 26.

ing and acting. As the body without the spirit, is not a true living man, but the spirit or life is an essential part of a man; so nothing can be called true faith, which is, or can exist without works; and works, or evangelical obedience, are included in faith and essential to it, and as really, and as much faith itself, as the spirit or life of a man is essential to the man, and is indeed the man himself.

The Apostle does not say, that faith *produces* works, which may be distinguished from saving faith, and are the effect and consequence of it: Nor is there any thing in the Bible to warrant such a representation of the matter: Nor does he mean any thing like this; for then the similitude by which he illustrates the subject would be ill chosen, and nothing to the purpose: For the body does not *produce* the spirit and life of a man, but this co-exists with the body, without which it would not be a man; and does itself produce every thing done by the man externally.

But it must be carefully noted, that the Apostle does not mean external actions merely; but those exercises of heart, that disposition of will, of which external actions are the proper and genuine expression; and in which all true evangelical obedience essentially and summarily consists. He does not mean mere external motions and actions, for there is no life in them, any farther than they are the fruit and expression of internal life and motion; which internal life and motion is the life of faith, or faith living and acting; and not any effect produced by faith, any more than the life and motion of the spirit of a man is the spirit and effect of a dead body.

It will farther appear that St. James includes the works of which he speaks, by which he means evangelical obedience, in saving faith, as essential to it, by attending to what he says of the faith of Abraham, the father and

pattern of all believers. "Seest thou, how faith wrought with his works; and by works was faith made perfect."* If faith operates in, or together with works; then works are the operation of faith, or faith exerting and exercising itself. And if faith be not perfect without works, then works are a part of faith, and belong to it, being included in the nature of it. If faith does not include evangelical obedience, which the Apostle means by works, then faith may be perfect without it, and cannot be perfected by it. But James says, faith is not perfect without this; therefore it is implied and included in faith. Evangelical obedience is saving faith, in such a sense and manner, that the one cannot be distinguished from the other; it is the obedience of faith; and where there is no such obedience, there is no faith.

If we compare three reasonable sentences of the Apostle Paul, it will appear, that according to him, saving faith and gospel holiness, or evangelical obedience, are not two distinct things; but really one and the same. They are the following: "For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision, availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, BUT FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE."† "For in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, BUT A NEW CREATURE."‡ "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, BUT THE KEEPING OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD."§ The two first of these sentences are the same in words, except the last clause in them. For *faith which worketh by love*, in the first, he puts, *a new creature*, in the second. There appears no way to make the Apostle consistent, but taking faith that worketh by love, and the new creature, to mean one and the same thing. But by the new creature is meant that holiness which takes place in men under the gospel, by their being "created in Christ Jesus unto good works."¶ Faith then, which

* v. 22. † Gal. v. 6. ‡ Chap. vi. 15. § 1 Cor. 7. 19. ¶ Eph. ii. 10.

which worketh by love, is the new creature exercising itself in acts of evangelical holiness. And it can be nothing else, according to the natural and necessary meaning of the phrase, "Faith which worketh by love," as it has been explained. For if the life and operative nature of faith be love; then gospel holiness is the essence of faith, and this is the new creature. And it hence appears, that the last sentence is perfectly agreeable to the former, and asserts the same thing; for faith which worketh by love, and the new creature, are gospel holiness, or evangelical obedience, and this consists in keeping the commandments of God our Saviour, and can mean nothing, more or less.

Thus it appears evident from the representation of this subject in the scripture, that saving faith, and evangelical obedience, are not two distinct things, or different kinds of exercises; but are so far one and the same, that believing on Jesus Christ intends and implies the whole. Not only is faith an act of evangelical obedience; but every act of gospel holiness is an exercise of saving faith, which implies the whole. And the reason and consistence of this will appear, if the whole that has been observed from scripture concerning faith, be kept in view, and properly considered.

It has been shewn, that saving faith does not consist in mere speculation, but right and holy disposition and exercise of heart is implied in it, and essential to it; and that this exercise of heart is *love*, which is the life and operative nature of saving faith. It is love, discerning, tasting and approving of the divine perfections and truths revealed in the gospel; and particularly, discerning and delighting in the character of Jesus Christ, and heartily receiving, adhering to him, and trusting in him, in the character and offices which he sustains, as the Saviour of sinners. And in these exercises all gospel holiness, or

evangelical obedience, consists. It all consists in *love*; for there is no obedience which does not consist in love, love to God manifest in the flesh, and the love to our neighbour, which is implied in this. This love is exercised in viewing Jesus Christ in the light in which the gospel sets him, in receiving and trusting in him, and paying proper acknowledgments to him; or, which is the same, in conforming to him, his character, example, doctrines and precepts, in heart and life. In one word, it is all comprehended and consists in RECEIVING Jesus Christ—and all external obedience or holiness, expressed in words and actions, is but a proper outward expression of an inward, hearty *receiving* Jesus Christ, in a cordial compliance with the gospel.

This may be illustrated farther, by attending to a few particulars. Harkening to Christ, or yielding and submitting to his teaching and instructions, is the same with receiving him as a prophet and teacher. Every act of true submission to Christ, and obeying him, is receiving him in his kingly office. All self denial for his sake, and every instance of voluntary suffering in his cause, is an exercise and expression of faith in him, and relying on his promises, or *trusting* in him. Following Christ as his disciple, and cleaving to him, in hope of salvation by him, is the same with actually receiving him and trusting in him, as a Saviour. The exercise of true humility, in self condemnation, and renouncing all self dependence, is implied in receiving Christ as our righteousness and strength. Actually forsaking sin in heart and life, is an actual acceptance of deliverance and freedom from sin; and therefore an actual acceptance of Christ as a Saviour from sin. And the practice of christian holiness, in every branch of it, is an actual acceptance of Christ, as our sanctification. Heartily engaging in the cause of Christ, forsaking all things for his sake, seeking the interest of his kingdom,

kingdom, as the first and most important object, is an exercise and expression of love and union of heart to him, and a cordial *receiving* him as the Son of God, and Saviour of men.

Therefore, if *receiving* Christ, is the same with believing on him, or comes into the essence of saving faith ; then all gospel holiness, as it has respect to Christ, and is a practical receiving him in his true character, is really the exercise of saving faith, and is all included in it.—This is that by which faith operates, in the proper exertions of it, and is made perfect. And we are hence led to see the meaning and propriety of the following words, as a concise description of evangelical faith and holiness. “As ye have therefore *received* Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye *IN HIM*. And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*.”*

But a question may be suggested in the minds of some, from the foregoing account of saving faith, which it will be proper to answer, as this may serve to render the subject more clear and intelligible. It is as follows :

QUESTION. If hope, love and repentance are saving faith ; and if every christian grace, and all the branches of gospel holiness, are implied in faith, and really are faith, why are these distinguished, and called by these different names, in the scriptures ? We find faith, hope, and love, mentioned and distinguished as different graces. And we often find a particular enumeration of the several christian graces, such as, faith, love, hope, joy, humility, repentance,

* Col. ii. 6, iii. 17.—“The obedience of a christian, so far as it is truly evangelical, and performed with the spirit of the Son sent forth into the heart, has all relation to Christ the Mediator ; and is but an expression of the soul’s believing union to Christ. All evangelical works, are works of that faith that worketh by love ; and every such act of obedience, wherein it is inward, and the act of the soul, is only a new, effective act of reception of Christ, and adherence to the glorious Saviour.”—President Edwards’s Discourse on Justification by Faith alone, page 83.

repentance, righteousness, goodness, godliness, meekness, patience, temperance, &c. If all these are faith, or included in it, why are they distinguished from it, as they seem to be ?

ANSWER, 1. It must be evident to every one who will attend, that the various christian exercises, which are denoted by different names in scripture, and commonly called *christian graces*, are not in themselves so distinct and different as not to imply each other. To suppose them to be distinct, separate and independent one of another, is manifestly contrary to truth, and tends to confuse and mislead the mind in attending to subjects of this nature.

True grace, or christian holiness, is, in the nature of it, one and the same thing, though as it is exerted, and appears in various exercises, on different occasions, in different circumstances, and towards different objects, there is a diversity, or it puts on different forms, from which it is called by different names ; while yet, in substance and essence, it is the same thing.

It is abundantly evident from scripture, that love is the whole of all christian grace. This is all that is required of men. In this the law is fulfilled and obeyed. Therefore, all christian holiness consists in this. It follows, that all christian graces are love in the various branches of it, exercised and expressed on various occasions, in different circumstances, and towards different objects.

The Apostle Paul says, "All the law (meaning the second table of it) is fulfilled in one word, even in this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* Yet he denominates the various exercises, in which men do by this love and serve one another, by different names, such as goodness, mercy, gentleness, patience, meekness, long-suffering, &c. In the same manner love to God, which

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is the whole that is required in the first table of the law, is called love, faith, trust in God, fear, hope, joy, repentance, humility, &c. according to the different views and circumstances in which this same love is exercised : All which, therefore, are the exercises of one and the same affection, and do involve and imply each other, and are in substance and essence the same.

The new creature, produced by the spirit of God in regeneration, by which men are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, is that in which all christian holiness consists. This is the moral image of God ; the divine nature communicated and implanted ; or Christ formed in the soul. And this consists in a principle of true love. And all the exercises and obedience of a christian, through the course of a holy life, are the exertions and exercises of this love, this new creature. It is the same life and active nature, by which the christian lives, and acts in a holy manner, on all occasions ; the new creature living and acting : As much so, as the various exercises of an animal are the same life, exerting itself and acting.

Unless we have this view of the grace or holiness of a christian, as it is exercised on all proper occasions, and towards different objects, and in manifold various circumstances, called love, faith, hope, repentance, &c. our thoughts on this subject will be attended with a degree of darkness and confusion.

ANSWER, 2. Notwithstanding christian holiness is one and the same thing in the nature and essence of it, and every branch of evangelical obedience is the exercise of the same principle and life ; yet this same love or holiness, as it is exercised in different modes and forms, on various occasions, in peculiar circumstances, and with respect to different and opposite objects, may properly be distinguished by different names : Yea, this is convenient and necessary, in order to the most exact and clear

communication of the ideas which are essential to the right understanding of this subject. In the course of a christian life, the same holy principle, the same in kind, nature and substance, exerts itself on various occasions, and puts on different modes, and appears in different forms, as it respects the different circumstances of the subject exercising himself, and the different and opposite objects, which are particularly regarded by the mind : And it is proper and necessary, in order to represent and express, in the best manner, this exercise in the different modes and forms of it, to call it by different names. And none can talk or write intelligibly on the subject any other way, without a perpetual, tedious circumlocution.

Right views and exercises of heart, respecting God, considered as being what he is in himself, is LOVE, considered in the general nature of it, as consisting primarily in disinterested benevolence, and comprehending all holy love. This is generally meant perhaps by love, when spoken of in scripture, in distinction from other graces, such as faith and hope, &c. and is the root and essence of all right exercises of heart.

The love of a sinner towards God, whom he has offended, so far as it regards those objects which relate to his essence, exercises itself in justifying God in all his declarations and proceedings against the sinner ; in confessing his sin with self condemnation and abhorrence ; in hating sin, and turning from it. And this is true repentance.

This same love, as it consists in believing in, realizing and relishing the true character of the invisible God and Saviour, as exhibited in divine revelation, is exercised in receiving and trusting in him as a wonderful, allsufficient, excellent and glorious Saviour of sinners. And this is saving faith, as distinguished from repentance, hope and love.

Love,

Love, considered as realizing and desiring the future good things, brought to light in the gospel, as the portion of the redeemed, and relying upon the divine declarations and promises, is hope, as distinguished from faith and love.

But it must be observed and remembered, that as faith, hope, repentance, &c. partake of the nature of love, and are really love diversified, with respect to the objects and operations of it; so they are included in each other, and where one is, there the others are, as comprehended in that. Yea, repentance, faith, hope and every christian grace, may all be comprized in the same exercise of heart. Thus, faith and repentance cannot be separated, but imply each other, and come into the very same act of the mind, as a true sight and sense of the divine character, and of the nature of sin, are implied in both, and essential to each: And a turning from sin to Christ, is both repentance and saving faith.

Hence it is that, though there is this variety and distinction in the exercises of the new creature, which is the proper ground of their being called by distinct names; yet as what is called by these different names, is really involved in the same act of the mind, and one is implied in the other, they are often used to denote the whole, or the whole is often intended to be comprehended by one of these names. Thus love is often mentioned in the scriptures as intending the whole of christian holiness. And repentance is frequently put for the whole of active conversion: And the same is often denoted by faith, as has been observed and shown. And hope is used to express the whole of saving faith.

The whole of the foregoing, concerning the nature of saving faith, will lead to the following definition of it.

Saving faith is an understanding, cordial receiving the divine testimony concerning Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by him; in which the heart accords and conforms to the gospel.

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The following observations may serve to illustrate this definition ; and farther explain and confirm what has been offered on this important subject :

I. THE things which the gospel contains, as peculiar to it, which relate to Jesus Christ, and redemption by him, and which are the objects about which christian holiness is chiefly exercised, are matters of *pure revelation*. The exhibition of them to us is by revelation only. And it is a revelation of spiritual, supernatural, mysterious and wonderful things, which without such revelation are wholly out of sight, altogether above our senses and reason, and out of the reach of any created faculties, as they depend entirely on the mere good pleasure of God. In this revelation alone, are exhibited the person and character of Jesus Christ, an invisible, wonderful and mysterious person. And here we have our state revealed as it respects him, and his character and works, our need of him, and concern with him, as offering himself to us as an allsufficient Saviour. And the benefits offered by Christ, are deliverance from invisible eternal evil, and the bestowment of good things, which are invisible, wonderful, incomprehensible and future, belonging to the unseen world.

II. THE gospel is not of the nature of a law exhibiting the sovereign authority and will of God, demanding of man what is his duty, which he is to perform and offer to him, being what he expects to receive of man, as the price of his favour: But it is of the nature of a *testimony* ; a revelation not of works to be done by us, in order to a reward, and the price of it ; but of what God has done for us ; and an offer made to us, to be received by us. It is a revelation testifying to us God's mysteries, wonderful mercy, wisdom and power, exercised in our behalf, making ample provision for the redemption of man, and

offered

offered to us, in order to a reception by us, answerable to such a revelation. It is a record and testimony which God has given of invisible, spiritual, supernatural good things, which are provided and suited to our circumstances and necessities, and freely offered to all who are willing to receive, as a free bounty, without money and without price. This leads to observe again,

III. THIS revelation represents man as altogether, universally and remarkably dependent on God for salvation and happiness: Nothing could set this in a more visible, sensible, striking light, than the gospel does. This represents man as infinitely guilty and miserable, as wholly undone, helpless and lost, and altogether dependent on the Redeemer for that help and grace, of which he is, and ever will be, infinitely unworthy.

Now, in the view of these observations, it appears, that the leading and principal exercise and manifestation of a right taste, or of the new creature, which consists in the concord or agreement of the heart with the divine truths exhibited in the gospel, is, in *believing* them, and acquiescing in them as true, and as really being just as they are reported by the word and testimony of God. And this, as has been shewn, is not an act of intellect merely; but of the whole soul, in the exercise of a right taste and temper of mind, which is holiness, or the new creature.

And as this divine revelation, in which the things of the gospel are exhibited, is a testimony of good things provided by God, and freely offered to man, in order to his reception, that exercise of the heart, which is answerable to this testimony, and by which the heart accords with this revelation, and embraces it as true and good, consists in a proper and cordial reception of the good things therein offered, which is the same with receiving Christ, in which, as has been shewn, christian virtue or holiness consists. And this also has been shewn to be saving faith.

And

And as the gospel represents man as standing in infinite need of the good things therein brought to view, and offered, he being in himself altogether undone and helpless, in an infinitely wretched and dangerous state, that exercise or *tour* which is answerable to this view of the case, by which it consents to this revelation and testimony, is a renouncing all self dependence, and looking to and trusting in Christ alone for righteousness and strength, and complete redemption. And this also is saving faith.

Saving faith is the proper, active union of the soul to Jesus Christ, as he is revealed in the gospel. But such union with Christ, consists in the actual agreement of the heart with Christ, and suiting and adopting itself to him and redemption by him, or actively receiving and embracing the testimony given concerning him, in exercises conformable to this revelation, as a revelation of invisible things, which are supernatural and wonderful, altogether beyond the notice of our senses, and above our reason and comprehension; a revelation of an invisible, wonderful, divine Saviour, and his supernatural, miraculous works of power and grace, and as one who was dead, and yet is alive, and lives forever; a revelation not of a law or command, as an expression of the authority of God, demanding something of us which we should render to him, as the price of his favour; but a revelation of his sufficiency for us; his wonderful grace and mercy to us, needy, helpless creatures, infinitely unworthy and guilty: A revelation of a way of salvation consisting in deliverance from infinite invisible evil, and the possession of good things which are unseen, spiritual, incomprehensible, future and eternal; which are all freely offered to him who will receive them, however unworthy and ill deserving he be. When the soul actively conforms in its views and exercises to such a revelation and testimony

as this, and acquiesces in the truths and objects revealed, as certain realities, excellent and divine, it does actively unite itself to Jesus Christ; and in this active union to him consists. And that act, and that course of exercises of the heart, which are proper and suitable to such an exhibition as this, to a revelation by God of such things, may most properly be called *believing*, receiving, seeking, looking, trusting, or in one word, *FAITH*. It may be presumed that no word can be found which so properly and fully expresses those views and exercises of the mind, by which it actively unites itself to Christ, as he is revealed in the gospel, as the word *Faith*, according to the proper meaning of the word in the original, as it was used when the New Testament was written; or according to the meaning and general use of the word *Faith*.

The revelation which God first made to innocent man, was a law, or covenant of works, expressing his will and authority in requiring of them supreme and perfect respect and love, which they must render to him, as the price of his favour, and which he would reward with eternal life; and the least neglect of duty required, he threatened with his awful displeasure. This is properly called a law, or covenant of *WORKS*; and compliance with such a revelation and command consists in *works*, working in order to a reward. These are "The *works* of the law."

The revelation made in the gospel, which is the exhibition of a covenant of grace to guilty man, is exceedingly divers, in many respects, from the other. This is not a manifestation of the authority of God as lawgiver, demanding obedience as a worthiness to recommend to his favour and rewards; but the revelation of a Saviour for lost man; the unspeakable free gift of God, as a remedy suited to his necessities; the offer of free undeserved mercy and glorious grace, through a worthy Mediator; and every one is invited to partake in this wonderful
glorious

glorious provision, however unworthy and guilty. Here then no virtue or moral goodness is, or can be given, as a price of the salvation exhibited and offered; but all the virtue and holiness that can be exercised in this case, consists in believing and receiving the things exhibited and offered, or acquiescing in them as real and excellent. And this, as it is opposed to obedience or works, as a worthiness to recommend to favour and a reward, is more properly called FAITH.

The Apostle Paul makes this distinction, as a very important one. He calls the gospel *The law of Faith*, by which he distinguishes it from the first covenant, and sets it in opposition to it, which he calls *The law of works*. "Where is boasting then?—It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith."* The gospel, or covenant of grace, is the law of faith. It is a revelation and testimony, a proper conformity to which, puts on that peculiar form, which is best denominated by calling it FAITH, in distinction from the obedience required by the law of works. He sets this in the same light in the following words. "Received ye the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"† Here he sets the covenant, or law of works, in opposition to the hearing of faith, or the report or revelation of the gospel or covenant of grace. The former requires works, perfect works, as the price of a reward: The latter brings and offers all good to him who will receive it, or which is the same, to him who believeth. In this same view he puts faith in opposition to the works of the law, or obedience to a covenant of works, in the following words, "Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law."‡ To seek righteousness, as it were by the works of the law, is to do works, or attempt acts of obedience to law, with a view to offer this as their
righteousness,

* Rom. iii. 27.

† Gal. iii. 2.

‡ Rom. ix. 32.

righteousness, and worthiness, to recommend themselves hereby to acceptance and favour with God. To seek righteousness by faith, is to receive and trust in the atonement and righteousness of the Mediator; or cordially to embrace the gospel, which is evangelical obedience, and as much a work, and exercise of gospel holiness, as any obedience to the gospel whatever, and is the obedience of faith, as has been proved.

From the foregoing, the following question may arise in the minds of some.

QUESTION. The Apostle Paul, says men are not justified by works : But if saving faith implies works, and cannot be distinguished from evangelical obedience, and men are justified by faith ; they are really justified by works, or evangelical obedience. Is there not an inconsistency in this ? And why is not evangelical holiness, a righteousness which recommends him who has it to the favour of God, as a moral worthiness, and a ground of boasting ?

ANSWER. What has been already said, is a full answer to the first part of this question ; and it is presumed every one who has understood it, will see the question to be wholly without ground. By the works and deeds of the law, is meant obedience to law as a covenant of works, in order to obtain the righteousness of the law, to be thereby recommended to the favour of God, as has been observed and shewn. This the Apostle opposes to faith, but does not oppose evangelical holiness to faith, but considers these as implying each other ; which gospel obedience, is not offered as a righteousness to recommend ; but consists in renouncing all worthiness or claim to any favour, and receiving pardon and salvation as a free gift, to an infinitely unworthy and ill deserving sinner. This point,

point, and the latter part of the question, will be more particularly considered in the next section.

IMPROVEMENT.

I. FROM the above description of saving faith, taken from the holy scripture, we learn that what has been called saving faith by some, is not so.

1. Saving faith does not consist in a person's believing that his sins are forgiven, that Jesus Christ died for him, and he shall be saved, and the like. A person may have a strong and most confident persuasion of this, without any good reason for it, and all may be gross delusion. No one can have any ground for such a belief, until he has exercised saving faith, and has evidence that he does believe in Christ, repent, &c. for none but such are pardoned, or can have any evidence that they shall be saved. Men must *first* repent and believe in Christ, in order to pardon, and a title to salvation, and therefore they cannot know or have any evidence that they are forgiven and shall be saved, until they have exercised saving faith. To believe they shall be saved, from any other supposed evidence, is mere delusion, and contrary to the express declaration of scripture. Indeed, a person's faith, which consists in true taste and discerning, and a cordial embracing the gospel, may be so strong and sensible, as to be attended with a consciousness and assurance that he does believe with a saving faith; and consequently that he is pardoned, and shall be saved. But saving faith does not consist in this belief and assurance; but must first exist in the mind, as the proper ground of such consciousness and assurance. Therefore, the former, may, and often, if not commonly, does take place, without the latter.

2. A mere speculative belief of the truth, not including any exercise of heart, is not saving faith. This, it is presumed, has been abundantly proved from scripture.

3. Saving faith does not consist in that belief, which includes works of the law, done in order to recommend persons to the divine favour, on account of their moral worth and excellence. This is the faith for which Arminians have plead. They say, true faith implies good works: But by good works they evidently mean, what the Apostle Paul means by the works of the law, done as the price of the favour of God; and not evangelical obedience, which stands opposed to the former, as it has been described above. Their faith and their works are wholly antichristian; and therefore opposed to true evangelical saving faith.

4. That is not saving faith which can be separated, even in theory, from good works, and evangelical obedience. This has been abundantly proved from scripture in this section. It has been too common for those who describe faith as implying exercise of heart, even a cordial reception of Christ, yet to speak of good works and gospel holiness and obedience, as the fruit and effect, of which saving faith is the cause, and as if they were two distinct things. It is not agreeable to scripture to make such a distinction. It is inconsistent with their own definition of faith, and contrary to the truth; and therefore of a bad tendency.

5. That is not saving faith which precedes regeneration, and the new heart. Some have supposed that the impenitent, unrenewed person believes, and by this faith, his heart is renewed, and becomes penitent and obedient. This is contrary to scripture and all reason, which has been made evident. Faith implies a right disposition of heart, and therefore does not precede it, and produce it. No person, but a regenerate one, has saving faith.

II. THE view we have had of saving faith serves to show why it is represented in scripture as a duty ; and men are commanded to believe on Jesus Christ : And why unbelief is represented as wholly inexcusable, and a great sin.

If saving faith did consist in mere speculation, and the heart had no concern in it, and no degree of disposition and exercise of that were implied in believing, it could not be required as a duty, or unbelief condemned and forbidden as a sin. For that in which the heart has no concern, and which does not imply any exercise of disposition or will, is neither virtue nor vice, sin nor holiness : It has no moral good or evil in it ; and cannot be the subject of command or prohibition, of blame or commendation. But whatsoever implies exercise of the heart, and depends upon the disposition of that, and in any measure consists in this, is morally right, or wrong, holiness or sin, and must be commanded or forbidden. As therefore saving faith implies the whole of christian obedience and holiness, it must be considered not only as a duty, but as comprising the whole of it : And unbelief must imply the contrary, and therefore be wholly criminal.

Agreeable to this, we find men are commanded in scripture to believe on Jesus Christ ; and this faith is every where represented as a duty. It is needless to mention all the particular passages of scripture which prove this, to the attentive reader of the Bible ; the following are sufficient to establish this point. “ Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “ Repent ye, and *believe the gospel.*”* “ Jesus answered and said unto them, *this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*”† “ Ye believe in God, *believe also in me.*”‡ “ And this is his commandment, that ye should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.”§

On

* Mark i. 14, 15. † John vi. 29. ‡ John xiv. 1. § 1 John iii. 23.

On the contrary, unbelief is considered as a great sin. Our Saviour blames and condemns the Jews for not believing on him, and ascribes it to the corrupt and wicked disposition of their hearts. And unbelief is ascribed wholly to an evil heart, and forbidden in the epistle to the Hebrews. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."* Our divine teacher not only represents unbelief as a sin of the first magnitude, but as comprehending all the sin of which men are guilty under the gospel. "And when he (the Holy Spirit) is come, he will remove the world of sin, *because they believe not on me.*"† "Not to believe the record God has given of his Son, is to make him a liar."‡ To slight and reject Jesus Christ, which is unbelief, as it is opposed to faith, is the greatest sin of which man can be guilty; and every sin which men commit under the gospel, is unbelief, or a sin of unbelief, as it carries in it opposition to Christ, and a rejection of him. Therefore, as saving faith, taken in its full latitude, comprehends all gospel duty or evangelical holiness, so unbelief involves all the sin which men commit under the gospel.

III. FROM the above account of saving faith, we learn, that the interest of holiness is secured and promoted in the salvation of sinners by faith in Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone, has been objected to and opposed by many, as a doctrine tending to licentiousness, and encouraging men to neglect good works and an holy life, depending on their faith to save them. But this objection has been formed wholly from ignorance of the doctrine, and misunderstanding it, not knowing what is implied in saving faith.

It is true, that many have abused this doctrine, and expected to be saved by a spurious, dead faith, without

works

* Chap. iii. 12.

† John xvi. 9.

‡ 1 John v. 10.

works and holiness of life; but this affords no argument against the doctrine, rightly understood; for there is no truth of the gospel which is not liable to be misunderstood, and abused to bad purposes, and which has not been so abused. Such there were in the days of the Apostles, whose dangerous mistake and wicked abuse of this doctrine, the Apostle James exposes and confutes, by shewing what saving faith is, viz. That true holiness, and all the virtue and life contained in good works, is implied in saving faith and comes into the nature of it; and that faith which does not imply, and is not all this, will not save; but is a vain dead faith. This is the faith which has been described in this section, as has been shewn, by explaining what this Apostle says upon it.

If faith implies the whole of evangelical holiness, then men cannot be justified and saved by faith without holiness; and holiness of heart and life is as necessary, as it could be, were they justified by the works of the law.

There is as real holiness exercised in approving of the holy character of Christ, and the way of salvation by him, and in receiving him, submitting to him, and trusting in him, as there can be in obedience to law, as a covenant of works. There is as real love to the law of God, and conformity of heart to it, in approving and trusting in the righteousness of Christ, for pardon and salvation, which consists in his honouring the law, by suffering the penalty of it, and obeying it, as there would be in obeying the law perfectly, as our own righteousness, were this possible.

IV. It appears from what has been said, on this subject of saving faith, that the Apostles, Paul and James, are perfectly consistent, wherein they have been, by some, thought to differ. Their consistence and agreement will appear, only by observing, that the Apostle Paul means the

the same thing by "faith which worketh by love," which the Apostle James does, by faith which operates by works, and by works is made perfect, as the working life of faith. By this living, active, holy faith, implying all the good works and gospel obedience of a christian, James says, a man is justified, and cannot be justified by any other kind of faith, which does not include all this. Paul says, a man is justified by faith, and that this faith operates by love, as the life and active nature of it, in which all the holiness and good works of a christian are implied and consist. In this they perfectly agree, and assert the same thing in different words. The Apostle Paul opposes this faith to *the works of the law*, to obedience to law as a covenant of works, as the price of the favour of God; and it has been shewn above, wherein the difference and opposition, between these, consist: Therefore, it is needless to repeat it here. The Apostle James says nothing relating to the works of the law; and speaks only of those works which are implied in faith and christian obedience, or the *obedience of faith*.

V. FROM the view we have had of saving faith, we may learn why pardon of sin and salvation are in the Bible promised to the least degree of true holiness and christian obedience, in whatever way it be exercised; such as love to God, or to our neighbour; and to our fellow christians; to hungering and thirsting after righteousness, humility, meekness, a forgiving spirit, &c.—The reason is, not because evangelical holiness in the least degree of it, is only *a sign of faith*, as something distinct from it; but because it is saving faith itself, and is that in the exercise of which the soul does unite itself to Christ: For every holy exercise of the christian has the nature of saving faith in it, as has been shewn. Every act of gospel holiness is connected with pardon and salva-

tion, as it is an act of faith, and implies in it a believing in Christ, and acceptance of pardon and salvation, as a free, undeserved gift.

Therefore, any person may know that he has saving faith, if he have evidence that he does exercise any degree of real holiness, in any branch of it.

VI. WE may hence see why saving faith is the gift of God; and in what respect it is so. The Apostle Paul says, "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."* "For unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, *not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.*"† The disciples of Christ prayed him to *increase their faith.*‡

Christ says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him. It is written in the Prophets, And they shall all be taught of God.—Every man therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."§ And he said to Peter, when he professed his faith in him, as the Son of God, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."||

Faith is the gift of God, as holiness is his gift, because they involve each other, and are really the same. If saving faith did not imply holiness, and were not holiness itself, it would be no more the gift of God, than any of the natural exercises of unrenewed men, and in no other sense: For there would be no more opposition to it in their hearts, than to any thing else whatsoever. It is the holiness of saving faith which puts it out of the reach of the unrenewed man, and all the difficulty of believing on Christ lies in this, and this is the only ground of the opposition of the carnal mind to saving faith. This difficulty

* Eph. ii. 8.

† Phil. i. 29.

‡ Luke xvii. 5.

§ John vi. 44, 45.

|| Matth. xvi. 17.

culty and opposition to believing, therefore, cannot be removed in any possible way, but by "Taking away the stony heart, and giving a new heart, by which men are created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, being saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." This point is illustrated by what has been observed in the preceding section, on divine illumination.

SECTION VII.

On the Sinner's Justification by Faith in Christ.

THIS doctrine has been considered by calvinistic divines, even in the sense in which they understand it, of great importance, and essential to the system of truth revealed in the scriptures, so that if it be secluded, or not understood, the whole system of christian doctrine falls with it, and comes to nothing. And if we attend to the writings of the Apostle Paul, especially his letters to the churches at Rome and Galatia, we shall find that he considers the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, for which he earnestly contends, as essential to the christian scheme; so that Christ and christianity can be of no advantage to them, who oppose and reject it. What is proposed in this section, is, to attempt to explain this doctrine, according to the scripture; and to evince the truth and importance of it.

What has been already said, in the foregoing part of this system, concerning the law of God; the apostacy of man, and the guilty lost state in which he is; the nature and demerit of sin; the character, design and work of the Redeemer; and the nature of saving faith, prepares

the way to understand the doctrine we are now to consider, as it is involved in these particular truths, as the foundation of it; and the proper application of them to this subject, will show what is meant by being justified by faith in Jesus Christ, according to the scripture, and that it is an important and essential article of the christian doctrine.

The justification of a sinner, now under consideration, consists in forgiving his sins, or acquitting him from the curse and condemnation of the law; and receiving him to favour, and a title to all the blessings contained in eternal life; which is treating him as well, at least, as if he never had sinned, and had been always perfectly obedient. Though these may be considered distinctly, as in some respects two, yet they are never separated, but are both always implied in the justification of a sinner. Both these are mentioned by St. Paul, as included in justification by faith. "Therefore, being justified by faith, *we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*"* By faith men are justified, in which they receive the forgiveness of their sins, and are made heirs of an eternal inheritance, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, agreeable to the following words of Christ. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me."†

For the illustration of this point, the following things must be observed.

I. THE sinner has nothing in himself, nor is it possible he ever should have any thing, that could render it proper and reasonable that he should, out of respect to that, be pardoned and received to favour. He is under the curse

* Rom. v. 1, 2.

† Acts xxvi. 18.

curse of the law, which curses every one who once transgresses it. Therefore, every sinner is under this curse, who is not delivered from it by Jesus Christ. Thus St. Paul states the case, "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse: For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."* The law curses the sinner, and leaves him under the curse; and that is all the law can do.—The curse dooms him to eternal destruction, as the just punishment of his crime; unless by some means it can be taken off, and yet the law be maintained and honoured as just and good. Nothing that can be done by the sinner to make atonement for his sin or recommend himself to favour, will do any thing towards removing the curse. The reason of this is plain, and easy to be seen. The sin of which he has been guilty, is an infinite evil, and has therefore rendered him infinitely ill deserving. It is as a weight infinitely heavy lying upon him; and he must eternally sink under it. Though he had all possible finite power, it could not remove it, or lighten it in the least degree; for finite power is nothing before an infinite weight, and can do nothing to remove, or make it less. Supposing the sinner comes to repentance, renounces his sin, returns to his duty, and becomes perfectly holy and obedient; he does no more than his present duty, by the supposition. This cannot make up, or atone for his past faults, or do any thing towards it; and therefore can do nothing towards removing the curse.—Besides, if he could do more than his present duty, and continued in his obedience a thousand years, or ever so long, this would do nothing towards removing the curse, or counterbalancing his crime; for his crime is infinite,

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* Gal. iii. 10, 13.

and all that he offers, or can offer, by his obedience, is but finite at most ; and therefore as just nothing towards counterbalancing his guilt ; as what is finite sinks into nothing, in comparison with that which is infinite.—When that which is infinite is put into one scale, and something finite in the other, the latter does nothing towards weighing down or lightening the former, and is just as if there were nothing put into the scale against that which is infinite. For the same reason, no past obedience of a creature will in the least extenuate a crime committed, after a course of obedience, however long, but he is as guilty, and deserves punishment as much, as if he had performed no antecedent obedience, according to the divine law. It cannot be remembered in his favour, when he has once transgressed. It cannot prevent, remove, or lighten the curse in the least degree. No preceding or consequent obedience, can atone for the transgression, or remove or mitigate the curse. Sin being an infinite evil, and deserving an infinite punishment, it swallows up, cancels and reduces to nothing, all the possible holiness of the creature, whether it take place before or after the sin ; so that it cannot be reckoned in his favour, any more than if he had no holiness ; for the law says, “*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law, to do them.*”

II. God will not show favour to the sinner, by pardoning and saving him, so as in the least degree to counteract and disregard his holy law : And therefore, will not, cannot, consistently forgive him, or treat him any otherwise than as an accursed creature, on account of any thing amiable or worthy in him, while no righteousness and worthiness, answerable to the demands of his law, can be reckoned and properly improved in his favour. The law of God is perfectly reasonable and right : It is found-

ed in the divine character and perfections. It is the voice of God. He looks upon the sinner just as the law represents him, as infinitely odious and ill-deserving; and he cannot be rendered acceptable to God, and obtain his pardon, on the account of any thing which is not agreeable to this law, and consistent with paying a proper regard to it in all respects. Hence it is impossible that the sinner should be pardoned and restored to favour, on account of his own worthiness and righteousness.

III. IN Jesus Christ the Redeemer, there is righteousness and worthiness enough to answer the law, and to deliver the sinner from the curse of it, and recommend him to all the favour he wants, when it may be with propriety reckoned in his favour; or when he is interested in it, so that he may, consistently with reason and truth, have the benefit of it.* “He is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.”† He has been made a curse, that he might deliver all who believe in him from the curse of the law.‡ And God can be just, can act consistent with his righteousness, and make a display of it, and do no injury to himself, his law and government, or to his creatures, but maintain the rights of all; and yet justify the sinner who believes in Jesus. “Being justified freely, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: When God hath set forth a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.”§ The scripture represents all favour, pardon of sin, redemption and eternal life, as given to men, not out of regard to any righteousness or worthiness of theirs; but purely for the sake of Christ, out of

* This has been before considered, in stating the character, design and work of the Redeemer. Part II. Chap. II, III.

† Rom. x. 4.

‡ Gal. iii. 13.

§ Rom. iii. 24, 26.

of regard for the atonement he has made by his own blood, and his righteousness and worthiness. The whole that is comprized in redemption, pardon of sin, peace with God, and eternal life, are given *through* Christ, that is, on his account, and for his sake. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, *through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"* "Being justified freely by his grace, *through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.*"† Righteousness recommends to favour; this the justified sinner has not in himself, but in Christ. His righteousness is unto all, and upon all them that believe. He is the end of the law for righteousness.‡ On this St. Paul placed his whole dependence. He says, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord: For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him; not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."§ Believers are accepted *in the beloved*, that is, purely out of respect to the worthiness of Christ.¶ Therefore, they are directed to ask for all the favour they want, in his name, that is, for his sake.

IV. IN order to be interested in the righteousness of Christ, so as to have the benefit of it, and be recommended to favour, and justified on his account, and for his sake, it is necessary, that men should be *united* to him by a peculiar union, so as to be the members of the body of which he is the head.

This union, or relation, which actually takes place between Christ and the justified, by which they obtain this privilege, it has been before observed, is represented by various similitudes; by the union of the branches with the

* Rom. v. 1.

† Chap. iii. 24.

‡ Rom. iii. 22. x. 4.

§ Phil. iii. 8, 9.

¶ Eph. i. 6.

the vine, by which they are one tree, and have the same life and sap running through the whole : By the head and members, which make one body : By the union of husband and wife, by which they become one flesh, and the wife shares in the riches, worthiness and honours of the husband, however poor, mean and unworthy she was, antecedent to her union to him. : This union of the justified with Christ, is often expressed in scripture by being *IN* Christ. “ That I may win Christ, and be found *IN* him.”* And, “ we are *in* him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.”† “ Abide *in* me, and I *in* you.”‡ The children of the first Adam, were to partake of the benefit of his righteousness, had he, by his obedience, obtained the righteousness of the law ; and they do actually share with him in the evil consequences of his sin, by virtue of their union with him. He and they are naturally united, as he is their common progenitor, and they his posterity. And by divine constitution he was appointed in such a sense, their common, public head, that the effects of his righteousness, should he obtain it, or his sin, should he transgress, should be transmitted to them. Yet they could not be justified by his obedience or righteousness, or condemned for his sin, without an express, or implicit, *moral*, voluntary union to him, which was indeed supposed and secured by the constitution. If Adam had obeyed the law perfectly, and obtained righteousness and life, his children could not have the benefit of it when they came to exist, in any other way, but by a *moral*, voluntary union of heart to him, by approving of his character and conduct, and of that constitution, which in this way, would bring them to share in the benefit of his obedience, so that they should have the benefit of his righteousness, and be made heirs of eternal life, without being in a state of trial themselves. And were it possible, in that case, and should any of his posterity

* Phil. iii. 8, 9. † 1 John v. 20. ‡ John xv. 4.

terity actually withhold their consent to what their father had done, and refuse to be thus united to him, and to be justified in this way, they must be excluded from all interest in his righteousness, and benefit by it. And since Adam did sin, guilt and condemnation came upon his posterity by their moral union to him, by either an implicit or express consent to his sinning, and approbation of him in this character. Therefore, if there be any one of the human race, who has lived heretofore, is now on the stage, or shall exist from this time to the end of the world, who never consents in any degree, either explicitly, or by implication, to the first transgression; but perfectly and constantly, through life, refuses to unite himself to him as a sinner; that is, does not commit one sin, but continues perfectly holy, he will not partake of any of the guilt of the sin of Adam, nor be condemned by any law or constitution whatever.

The second Man, the last Adam, of whom the first was a figure and type, is as really a public head and substitute for others, as the first, but not in every respect and circumstance like him; yea, infinitely different in some respects. He has so far united himself to man, as to become a real man, and take the place of man, under the law; and has made full atonement for sin, by taking the curse on himself, and suffering it in man's stead, the just for the unjust; and has obtained the righteousness of the law by perfect obedience to it; by which he has brought in everlasting righteousness, a righteousness unspeakably more excellent, and meritorious, and worthy of respect and reward, than all possible obedience of men or angels. And having thus obtained all that sinful lost man wants, in order to complete his redemption and happiness, he freely offers himself, with all his fulness, for man, to every one who comes within hearing of the gospel, and is willing to be united to him, and receive him, with the blessings

blessings he has to give, without money or price, without requiring or expecting any returns to be made by the sinner, as any degree of compensation.

But all this does not put the sinner in possession of the pardon of his sins, and a title to life. But he will as certainly perish in his sins, as if there had been no such Redeemer, unless a moral union take place between him and the Saviour, by his hearty approbation of his character, of his design, and of what he has done and suffered for the salvation of men; and he, cordially unite himself to him, in the character he sustains, as the Redeemer of sinners. It is not proper, it is not right and fit, it is incongruous, and therefore impossible, that he should have any interest in the atonement and righteousness of Christ, so as to be pardoned and received to favour, out of respect to that, while with his whole heart he opposes and rejects him, and is disposed not to come to him, that he might have life; because by this there is a moral discord between him and the Redeemer, and opposition to him, and refusal to be in any union or relation to him.

If a rich and honourable prince, offer himself to a mean woman, who is poor and greatly in debt, to be her husband, and make her honourable, rich and happy, this will not put her in possession of these benefits, or give her the least interest in them, or title to them, unless she consents to take him as her husband, and cordially receive him as he offers himself. It is by accepting the offer that the relation of husband and wife takes place, and they are so united as to become one flesh, in consequence of which she becomes rich and honourable, by the interest she has in her husband's riches and honours.

So, no sinner can obtain an interest in the atonement and righteousness of Christ, unless there be a real consent of heart, either explicit or implied, to receive him as he offers himself, by which a moral union, or union of heart, exists

exists between him and the Saviour, by which they are, in such a sense and degree ONE, that it is proper to reckon or impute the righteousness of the Redeemer to the sinner, so that he shall have as much benefit by it, as if it were personally his righteousness.

It has been thought by some, that if the sin of Adam be not imputed to his posterity, and they considered as guilty, and condemned, antecedent to their union to him, by consenting to his sin, there is no parallel between the imputation of the sin of Adam to his children, and of the righteousness of Christ to them who believe in him, which the Apostle Paul supposes there is, and asserts in the fifth chapter of his letter to the Romans. But the above representation of this point, may serve to show, that this objection is groundless. As the posterity of Adam become guilty, and fall under condemnation, by consenting to his sin, and a union of heart to him, as a transgressor; that is, by sinning themselves: so the righteousness of the Mediator comes upon men, or is imputed to them, for their justification, by their uniting themselves to him in a cordial approbation of his righteousness, and his holy character. It is true there is a necessary difference in many respects, but in this there is a parallel.

One great and remarkable difference, besides those mentioned in that chapter by St. Paul, is, that the first Adam, was constituted the public head and representative of all the human race, of whom he was the natural head and father, so that they should be holy or sinful, and consequently justified or condemned, according to his conduct in a state of trial, as he should persevere in obedience, or fall by transgression. The constitution or covenant with the first Adam, secured the obedience and holiness of all his children, that they should be united in their hearts to him, by a cordial, voluntary approbation of his character and righteousness, if he should

should persevere in obedience through the time of his trial, and consequently have eternal life. And, on the contrary, if he should be guilty of disobedience, all his children should join with him in his rebellion, as soon as they existed capable of moral agency, and have that in their hearts, which, at least, would imply a full consent to his transgression, and in their hearts unite with him in it, and consequently fall under condemnation with him. Thus, by one man sin entered into the world, and has spread, and taken hold of all the children of Adam; and by sin they are involved in condemnation and the curse.*

The last Adam, the Redeemer of men, has no such particular relation and union to all the human race, either by nature, or divine constitution, as the first Adam had. He has indeed become a man, and united himself to the human nature, and in consequence of what he has done and suffered, he has obtained a righteousness as sufficient for the salvation of one as of another, of all as well as of one, or of any part: He is able to save to the uttermost, all them who believe in him, and come to God by him.† And consequently invites all to come unto him, and be saved; and has ordered his gospel to be preached to all nations, to every son and daughter of Adam. But there is no provision or security in any divine constitution, or the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Mediator, that all shall believe on him and unite themselves to him, by a cordial approbation of his character and righteousness; so as to render it fit and proper that they should be justified and saved by him. But in this constitution, or covenant between the Father and the Son, only a certain number, a part of mankind, are given to the Redeemer, and the voluntary union of these to him by faith, by which the church, the body, of which he is the constituted head, shall be formed,

is

* Rom. v. 12, 19. † Heb. vii. 25.

is secured and made certain. This is declared by Christ in the most express, unequivocal words, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. And this is the Father's will who hath sent me, *that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.* Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."*

That Christ means by those who were given to him, not only his present disciples, but all that should be finally saved by him; and that these are not all mankind, but a part, who are taken out of the rest of the world, and to be united to him, and made one with him, as others are not, is evident from the following words of his. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are ~~thine~~—And all mine are thine, and thine are mine. Neither pray I for those alone (my present disciples, whom I have been particularly mentioning) but for them also which shall believe on me, through their word: That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be *one* in us."†

To the first Adam, all the human race were given, to be justified or ruined by him, in the manner explained above. To the last Adam, only a part of mankind are given, to be redeemed and saved by him; and their actual and everlasting union with him is made sure, without which union they could not be justified and saved by him. They shall come unto him, and shall never be cast out, or separated from him.

These who are given to Christ, the elect, are his seed. "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, *he shall see his seed, and shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. A seed shall serve*

* John vi. 37, 39. xvii. 24.

† John xvii. 9, 10, 20, 21.

serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.”* They are his adopted children. “Behold, I, and the *children which God hath given me*. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the *adoption of children*, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”† All mankind were the first Adam’s seed, his children. The elect only, who were chosen and given to Christ, before the foundation of the world, are his seed, his children.‡

V. SINNERS are thus united to Christ by faith, or believing in him.

It has been shewn, in the preceding section, that saving faith consists in a cordial approbation of Christ, and receiving him in the character he sustains, as the Redeemer of sinners, by which the sinner unites himself to Christ, and becomes one heart, and one soul with him. It is by this faith, according to scripture, that the heart is so united to Christ, that he dwells in the heart; and by faith they come into the relation of children of God, and *put on Christ*. “Ye are the children of God, *by faith*”

* Psalms xxii. 30. Isaiah liii. 10. † Eph. i. 4, 5. Heb. ii. 13.

‡ From this scriptural view of the matter, we see how contrary to the scripture, how unreasonable, as well as whimsical their notion is, who advance, that Christ is originally so united to all mankind, that he and they are so *one*, that whatever one is and does, the other is and does also: so that the sins of men are the sins of Christ, and mankind did and suffered what was done and suffered by Christ. This they imagine is implied in the representation of the union of Christ with his people; by the union of the head and members, of the human body; of the husband and wife; the vine and the branches, &c. And that, on this supposition only, there can be any justice or propriety, in the suffering of Christ for the sins of men, or in the justification or salvation of men by the righteousness of Christ. And they hence infer, as a certain consequence, that all mankind shall be saved. This consequence is contrary to numerous express declarations in divine revelation, and is built on a precarious sandy foundation indeed. See Relly’s Doctrine of Union.

faith in Christ Jesus : For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. That Christ may dwell in your hearts *by faith*.”* “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name.”† “He that hath the Son, hath life.”‡ Faith so unites the believer to Christ, that it is fit and proper that he should be considered and treated as so far one with him, as to pardon and justify him for the sake of Christ, out of respect to his sufferings and obedience, by which he has merited such favour for all his ; for all who are thus united to him.

Therefore, it is abundantly declared in scripture, that men are justified by faith, or through faith : that faith is counted for righteousness, and imputed to the believer for righteousness ; and the righteousness by which they are justified, is called, “The righteousness of faith,” not because there is any righteousness in faith to justify the sinner, or do any thing towards it ; but because faith receives the righteousness of Christ, and so unites the believer to the Redeemer, that by divine constitution and promise, the righteousness of Christ is reckoned in his favour, and avails for his justification. Faith is not connected with justification, because of any moral excellency or worthiness, which is, or can be supposed to be in it ; for the believing sinner cannot have any such worthiness in himself, or in any of his exercises, as in the least degree to recommend him to favour on that account, which is to be more particularly considered before this section is concluded ; but men are justified by faith, because it is connected with the righteousness of Christ, and the believer is so united to him that it is proper and fit that his righteousness should be improved in the sinner's favour, and he be justified on that account. Therefore,

* Gal. iii. 26, 27. Eph. iii. 17. † John i. 12. ‡ 1 John v. 12.

fore, justification by faith, is always opposed to justification by works; the works of the law, especially, in the writings of the Apostle Paul, as has been particularly observed in the foregoing section, and the reason of it given. It will be sufficient to mention the following passages of his, omitting a great number of others to the same purpose. “But now the righteousness of God, without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the Prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe. Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.”* Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ; even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.† “That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, through faith.‡”

SOME

* Rom. iii. 22, 28.

† Gal. ii. 16.

‡ Phil. iii. 9.—Some have supposed that by *the faith of Christ*, mentioned several times in the passages quoted, and in one or two other places, is meant *Christ's faith*, which intends the whole of the righteousness of Christ. But there does not appear any reason for such a construction. This is, at best, a very obscure and unusual way to express the obedience and righteousness of Christ. This the Apostle often mentions, and constantly holds up to view in his writings, in clear and intelligible expressions; such as, his righteousness; his dying for sinners, and giving himself for them; the atonement; his obedience; obedience unto death, &c.—And since he always means the faith of the believer, when he says men are justified by faith, except in these few places, it seems to be doing violence to those, to understand them in a quite different sense; especially, since the expression, though a little varied, may most naturally be understood to mean faith in Christ, or the faith by which men believe in him, and of which he is the object; and more especially, since this phrase must be understood so, in a number of other places. The following are instances of it. Mark xi. 22. “Have faith in God.” *Ἐχέτε πίστιν Θεοῦ*—Have faith

SOME have supposed that it was necessary to exclude all moral goodness, and consequently all exercise of heart, from the faith by which men are justified, in order to their being justified by free grace, in opposition to justification by works; and have thought, that if there be any moral goodness in justifying faith, especially all that moral goodness which is comprized in gospel holiness, as has been represented in the preceding section; they have a righteousness of their own, which will recommend them to favour; and therefore do not stand in need, or, at most, in so much need of the righteousness of Christ, and of free grace, as if they had no moral goodness; but have some ground of boasting; and that this therefore, tends to flatter the pride of man: Whereas the scripture says, that the way of justification by faith excludes all boasting; and that the *ungodly* who have no works, are justified by faith.

What has been already said in the preceding section, and in this, it is thought, is sufficient to show, that such an opinion is wholly without foundation, and contrary to the truth. But as this is a point of no small importance, it is proposed to attend to it more particularly, by bringing into view, and applying some things which have been before observed; and introducing some other considerations, which may serve to remove mistakes, and elucidate and confirm the truth on this head. To this end the following things may be observed.

1. It is impossible, according to the reason and nature of things, and the law of God, which is founded on this, that he who has once sinned, should, by any moral qualification,

of God. Acts 3. 16. "Through faith in his name." In the original it is, *Through the faith of his name*. Rom. 3. 26. "The justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." In the original it is, *τον ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ*—Him who is of the faith of Jesus. Jam. ii. 1. "My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, with respect of persons." Rev. xiv. 12. "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

fication, or holiness, render himself acceptable to God, or so as to be looked upon, or treated any otherwise, than an accursed, infinitely odious creature. The reason of this has been given : It is because the law of God, which is most reasonable, just and good, does curse the transgressor ; let his character be otherwise what it may, either before or after his sin, this cannot, in the least degree, remove the curse. “ For it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law, to do them.” As this is the law of God, and perfectly agreeable to unalterable reason and truth, he will look upon the sinner in the light in which the law sets him, and treat him accordingly ; and therefore will not pardon him, out of respect to any thing he does, or can do, as recommending him, in the least degree, to any favour. All moral qualifications of his, however great and good, must stand for just nothing, and be of no avail to recommend the sinner to pardon, &c. Whenever such an one is justified, it must be altogether on the account of the atonement and worthiness of Christ, who was made under the law ; and so made a curse, that he might deliver the believer in him from the curse. And whatever moral goodness there is in faith, he is not justified on this account, any more than if there were no moral goodness in it. The believer obtains justification by his faith, not out of respect to any moral goodness in it, how much soever it may contain ; but, because by it he is united to Christ, so as that it is proper he should have an interest in his righteousness, and be justified out of respect to that, and consistent with the law of God. “ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.”

It is indeed impossible that he who has once sinned, if he have any degree of virtue and true love to God, in the exercise of that, to seek or desire to recommend him-

self to God by it, so as to obtain pardon and his favour, merely out of respect to that ; for this would be to oppose God, and all goodness ; to rise in rebellion against his law, and holy government ; and therefore, contrary to love to God, and all true virtue, or moral goodness.— The reason of this has been given, viz. That it is contrary to the law of God, which curses the sinner, that he should be considered and treated any otherwise than as being accursed, out of regard to any thing he has, or can do, and while he is not united to Christ, so as to have the benefit to his righteousness, by receiving justification purely out of respect to that. Hence it is certain, that if a man seek righteousness and justification by the works of the law, or by any supposed virtue or goodness of his own, he does in that, act as an enemy to God, and to his law ; and his supposed moral goodness, is nothing but sin and rebellion. But if it were not so, and he were really and perfectly holy, this could not recommend him to pardon ; and would be no reason why he should be pardoned, and delivered from the curse of the law, rather than another, who is wholly destitute of all moral goodness. The reason of this has been given. Therefore, whenever he who has sinned, is brought to love God, and exercise any degree of moral goodness, he will not desire to be justified by it, and will be so far from offering it as a righteousness to recommend him to favour, that he will approve of the law of God which curses him, and condemns himself, as that does, as infinitely guilty and illdeserving ; and consequently places all his hope of pardon in the atonement of Christ ; and with Paul, not desire to be found in his own righteousness, which is of the law ; but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith. But of this, more hereafter.

2. Though

2. Though a sinner, upon his becoming perfectly obedient, after he had sinned, might be justified by his own righteousness, which has been proved to be impossible ; yet man is cut off from all hope of acceptance in this way, because every believer is, in this life, very imperfect, and sinful. In every act of his, there is much sin ; sin enough to condemn him, had he never sinned before. He has a great degree of opposition in his heart to God, and his law ; and all his exercises, in which there is a degree of moral goodness, are so defective, that he has reason to be ashamed of himself, and of them ; for every degree of defect is sinful. He does not love God half so much as he ought, and his heart is exceeding corrupt and abominable, viewed in all the exercises and defects of it. On this account the believer is unworthy of any favour, his goodness is infinitely far from rendering him worthy of the least favour ; and every act of his is attended with sin enough to condemn him forever, if viewed and treated as he is in himself, and according to his present character. In this view the Psalmist says, "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ! Enter not into judgment with thy servant : For in thy sight, shall no man living be justified."* And Job says, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear : But now mine eye seeth thee : Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."†

When it is considered, how much sin attends the believer in all his exercises ; how far he falls below his duty in every thing ; how much moral evil is constantly in his heart ; and how greatly every thing wrong and defective in him is aggravated, and more criminal than it was before he believed, by the greater light and conviction he now has, and the great, peculiar and distinguishing favours he has received from God ; and the advantages

* Psalms cxxx. 3, cxliii. 2.

† Job xlii. 5, 6.

tages and motives he now has to be holy as God is holy, by which his obligations are unspeakably increased : When all this is considered ; there will doubtless appear reason to conclude that he is now more criminal in the sight of God, and in this sense a greater sinner, and more hateful and abominable, than he was before he believed, or than any unbeliever whatsoever, notwithstanding his faith, virtue, and holiness. Surely then he has nothing in himself suited to flatter and raise his pride, by becoming a believer, and uniting himself to Christ ; but every thing is suited to lead him to humble himself in the sight of the Lord, and walk humbly with God, and constantly cry, " God be merciful to me a sinner."

This leads to another particular.

3. All the virtue or holiness ; all the right taste and exercises which are implied in saving faith, as described in the foregoing section, as was there observed, imply and consist chiefly in disclaiming and renouncing all pretences to any worthiness that the believer has, or can possibly be in man, that should recommend him to any favour, and in coming to Christ, as in himself, infinitely guilty and illdeserving, and trusting in his atonement and merit for justification. How then can this possibly lead men to trust in themselves that they are righteous, or flatter and encourage their pride ? It is the only thing that destroys such a spirit, and tends to pluck it up by the roots, and by which a believer humbles himself in the sight of the Lord, and walks humbly before him all his days. The more of this faith he has, the farther he is from pride, and the more humble. And he who has not this faith, and does not live by it, his soul is lifted up in pride, and is not upright in him.*

Faith, which worketh by love, discerns the excellence of the divine character and law, and the infinite evil of sin ; approves of the former and condemns the latter.

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In the exercise of this faith the law comes, sin revives, and the sinner dies; feels himself undone and lost forever, notwithstanding any help or righteousness in himself, if treated according to the righteous law of God. By this faith the sinner flies to the Redeemer for righteousness, justification and redemption, as a free gift to an infinitely unworthy creature, who has no righteousness of his own to recommend him to the least favour, and never can have any. And the more the sinner has of this faith, which implies love and repentance, and the longer he lives by it, the more he sees and feels the evil nature and ill desert of sin, and a view and sense of his own sinfulness increases; and the more he prizes and trusts in Christ for pardon, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. And if he be not really a greater criminal than he was before, he now sees much more of his sin and guilt, and a view and sense of this increases, as he grows in faith and grace. Thus all boasting is most effectually excluded by the law of faith, as faith itself discards and opposes all that which could be the ground of boasting.

Hence it appears, that they who exclude repentance and love from faith, take an effectual way to support boasting and the pride of man: For that faith in which there is no repentance, does not oppose the pride of the human heart, but leaves man as proud as before, and with the same disposition to exalt himself, and trust in himself that he is righteous. No one who has not a heart, that is truly penitent, and friendly to God, will humble himself before God, and be willing to be wholly indebted to free, sovereign grace for justification and redemption.*

4. If

* " There is that in the nature of repentance, which peculiarly tends to establish the contrary of justification by works, for nothing so much renounces our own worthiness and excellency, as repentance. The very nature of it is to acknowledge our own utter sinfulness and unworthiness, and

4. If faith did not imply a right taste and disposition, and true love to Christ, it would not in any manner or degree, unite the sinner to Christ so as to render it fit and proper that his righteousness should be reckoned in his favour, or be any reason why such a believer should be justified, rather than another, who does not believe. It has been shewn, that in the scripture the believer is said to be in a particular relation to Christ, to be *in* Christ, and to put him on; to be united to him as the wife is to the husband, and the members of the body to the head; and that this union is by faith. This gives him an interest in Christ, as, on account of this union, he may with reason and propriety be considered and treated as belonging to Christ, so as to have the benefit of his worthiness and righteousness, for his justification; and in this sense he is justified by faith. That faith therefore, which does not unite to Christ, cannot be justifying, saving faith. No faith can do this but that which implies love, for in this all true moral union consists. That faith which is consistent with the sinner's being at heart an enemy to Christ, does in no true sense unite to him, but is consistent with the greatest, with total alienation from him, and opposition to him. Therefore, there is no more reason or fitness that the man who has such a faith should be justified by the righteousness of Christ, than he who has it not, but is in every sense an unbeliever.

It must be still kept in mind, that faith does not bring into a justified state, because it is a good work, or out of respect to the moral goodness there is in it; but because of the *natural* fitness there is, that he whose heart is united to Christ, as it is by believing, should be recommended to favour, and justified by his worthiness and righteousness,

and to renounce our own goodness, and all confidence in self; and to trust in the propitiation of the Mediator, and ascribe all the glory of forgiveness to him." President Edwards's Discourse on Justification by Faith alone, p. 114.

righteousness, to whom he is thus united, and in whom he trusts. The believing sinner is considered, when viewed in and by himself, as destitute of any thing to recommend him to favour, and as unworthy and ill-deserving, as if he had no faith, and no kind or degree of moral goodness : And must be viewed so, according to the reason of things, and the law of God ; so that when he is justified, he is justified, as being *ungodly*, because he really is so ; that is, has no moral goodness, to recommend him, as the reason why he should be justified, rather than another, who has no moral goodness. In this respect all are alike, and upon equal grounds. This leads us to the true sense of the following words of the Apostle Paul, “ To him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that justifieth the *ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteousness.”*

By him that *worketh not*, is evidently meant one who does not attempt to work, in order to recommend himself to the favour of God by his moral goodness ; is not of those who are of the works of the law, and consequently under the curse of it, notwithstanding any thing they can do ; but renounces all pretence and desire to be justified in this way, by his works ; but directly contrary to this, believeth on him, and receives from him, as a free, undeserved favour, justification, who gives it to all such, though they have no righteousness or works to recommend them ; but are in this respect *ungodly*. This is evidently the Apostle’s meaning ; for he puts *not working*, and believing, in opposition to working in order to recommend themselves and render themselves worthy of a reward, so as, in this sense, to bring God into debt to them. This appears by the foregoing words, with which those are connected. “ Now to him that *worketh*, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him

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that justifieth the ungodly, &c." By *working* he means the deeds, the works of the law, of which he speaks, and sets them in opposition to faith, as he does here. What is meant by working to merit a reward, has been often explained in the preceding section, and in this. Faith is opposed to this, and looks to Christ, and receives justification, pardon and righteousness, as a free, undeserved gift to the *ungodly*, that is, to one who has no good works, no worthiness to recommend him to the least favour, but is infinitely unworthy, guilty and illdeserving. All this is consistent with faith, implying and consisting in all that moral goodness, gospel holiness, and obedience, which, according to scripture it does, as has been shewn in the section on saving faith.

5. If moral goodness in justifying faith, would recommend the believer to favour, on account of the worth in it, and render a sinner more worthy and deserving, or less unworthy and illdeserving in the sight of God, and therefore is inconsistent with justification by free grace; and consequently all moral goodness must be excluded from it; then it is equally necessary that the believer should never have any moral goodness, in order to his being saved by grace. They who would exclude all moral goodness from faith, and suppose, if it involves repentance, and love, and is really a holy exercise, this moral goodness, would render the sinner more deserving, or less illdeserving; and so would be inconsistent with his being justified wholly by the righteousness of Christ, and saved by free grace; do suppose, at the same time, that gospel holiness and obedience is some how connected with saving faith, and does take place, sooner or later, in the heart of every believer. But if moral goodness in those who have sinned, in itself considered, recommend to favour, and render them worthy of it; then when they attain to this they will have no more need of the

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the righteousness of Christ, nor of free grace ; but may and must trust in their own righteousness. And when they come to be perfectly holy, they may justly consider themselves as worthy of eternal life, and claim it as a debt, and not receive it as a free gift. Do not they who carefully exclude all moral goodness from saving faith, for the reason above mentioned, appear inconsistent with themselves, in this respect ? It is not yet seen how those things can be reconciled.

But if what has been proved concerning the law of God, and the true state of the sinner, viz. that no possible degree of holiness and obedience, continued any length of time by the sinner, can atone for one sin ; but if he once transgress the law, he falls under the curse of it, from which no moral goodness afterwards attained can deliver him, but he will forever deserve to be the subject of the displeasure of God, and condemned to eternal misery : If this be kept in view it will appear, that whatever moral goodness he attains, it does not render him the less unworthy ; and if he be pardoned and saved, it must be as much through the righteousness of Christ, and as really a free gift to him, and he as much the subject of free grace, as if he had no moral good ; and the believer must receive all favours, and continue in a justified state, through life, however obedient he be ; and forever, though perfectly holy, out of respect to the righteousness of Christ, and as a gift of free grace, as much as if he received justification at first. And there does not appear any inconsistency or difficulty in the matter, when viewed in this scripture light.

The redeemed, when perfectly holy in heaven, will, considered in and by themselves, be as deserving of the divine displeasure and everlasting punishment, as they ever were, and will be so forever. They continue in a justified state, and in the enjoyment of the favour of God,
by

by continuing united to Christ ; and were it possible that this union between the Redeemer and them should cease, they would, they must fall under condemnation, and sink into hell. It is true, that the obedience and holiness of believers is acceptable to God, and may be rewarded, as a testimony of this, in consequence of their union to Christ, and out of respect to his atonement and worthiness, because they are united to him, and love him, who is so infinitely worthy in the sight of God. Their persons and their obedience, and offerings to God, are pleasing and acceptable to him for the sake of Christ, and because they belong to him, and are in him, and do all in his name. This is the account the scripture gives of the matter. “ To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein *he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*”* “ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”† “ To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious ; ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, *acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ.*”‡ “ Now the God of peace—make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is *well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.*”§ The reason of this is, that by the atonement which Christ has made for sin, and out of respect to that, their sins are all forgiven ; they are blotted out, so as not to be remembered against them.—In this respect, their guilt is cancelled and done away, which otherwise would counterbalance, swallow up, and destroy, all their moral goodness. In this sense, God is reconciled to them in Christ, not imputing their trespasses unto them.|| And by reason of their relation to Christ, their moral goodness, in the exercise of which they cleave

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* Eph. i. 6.

† Col. iii. 17.

‡ 1 Peter ii. 4, 5.

§ Heb. xiii. 24.

|| 2 Cor. v. 19.

to Christ, and love and honour him, is more acceptable, precious and worthy in the sight of God, than it could be in any creature not so united to the infinitely worthy Redeemer. Their relation to him gives them a dignity and worthiness, which they have not in themselves, considered as separate from Christ, and renders all their holiness more acceptable and rewardable than otherwise it could be. This is expressed by Christ in the following words. "He that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father. The Father himself loveth you, *because ye have loved me*, and have believed that I came out from God."*

But farther to explain the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, now under consideration, it must be observed,

VI. MEN are brought into a justified state by one, the first act of saving faith. The promise of salvation is made to him who believeth. "He that believeth, shall be saved; he hath eternal life, and shall never come into condemnation." He therefore who believes, and exercises one act of true faith, however imperfect and weak, comes within the reach of this promise, is justified, and shall be saved. The reason of it is, because the first act of faith as really unites the sinner to Christ, as many, or a course of acts, do; and therefore is sufficient to render it fit and suitable that he should have an interest in his merit and righteousness.

It is true indeed, that in order to a person's continuing in a justified state, he must continue united to Christ, and therefore must persevere in his faith, in which the union, on his part consists, and by which it is maintained: And in this respect the faith by which a man is justified, and obtains the promises of life, is a *persevering* faith.— Though a man is pardoned and has a promise of eternal life,

* John xiv. 21. xvi. 27.—See President Edwards, on Justification by Faith alone, p. 92, 93.

life, upon the first act of faith ; yet this first act is not regarded by God, in his justifying him, as the only act ; but it is viewed as connected with a continued series of the acts of the same faith to the end : And the first act intitles to life, as the first, or beginning of a continued course of exercises of the same kind, or as a persevering faith.

The first act of faith, intitles to perseverance in faith, by virtue of a divine constitution and promise. God has promised that he who once believes, shall continue to believe, so that his faith shall not fail : That they shall be “ kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.”* If this were not the case, it would not be fit or congruous, that he who once believes, should have the promise of salvation ; and justification to eternal life would be suspended until the believer had persevered in faith.

In the first act of saving faith, the believer does virtually and implicitly, if not expressly, look to Christ and trust in him for perseverance, together with other blessings ; and so it gives a title to this benefit, among others. In this view, perseverance in faith is implied in the first act, and *as such*, it is justifying faith, and has the promise of salvation. The scripture sets this point in the same light. “ 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.”† Here, saving faith is represented as persevering faith ; and perseverance, as being that in faith, by which it becomes saving ; for believing to the saving of the soul, is put in opposition to drawing back unto perdition ; and therefore must mean a persevering faith.

In this view it may be seen why believers are daily to pray for the forgiveness of the sins, which they commit
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* 1 Peter i. 5.

† Heb. x. 38, 39.

after they are in a justified state ; and why God is represented as actually forgiving them ; and that this forgiveness is suspended upon their renewed acts of repentance and faith. The believer, upon his first believing, has the forgiveness of all his past sins, and the promise that all his future sins shall be forgiven ; so that he shall never come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life : But this justification is, the whole of it, in some sense, conditional ; it is granted upon the supposition that he will persevere in a course of repeated acts of faith, and that his present union to Christ will never cease, but be an everlasting union : If this should cease to exist, and this were possible, all his past sins, would be remembered against him, and he fall into condemnation, and under the curse of the law ; nor could any of his sins, which he should commit in future, be forgiven. He has the promise of the forgiveness of all the sins which he shall commit, upon condition he does persevere in repentance and faith ; therefore upon his renewed sinning, he renews acts of repentance and faith, and in the exercise of these, asks for pardon, and upon this he is actually forgiven, and not before, agreeable to the divine promise. But as his perseverance in faith is made sure by the promise of God, in the covenant of grace, pardon of all his sins and eternal life, are made sure to him, upon his first act of faith, and his justification.

VII. IN the justification of the believer by the righteousness of Christ, it does not become his righteousness, so as that he is considered as having actually done and suffered, in his own person, what Christ did and suffered ; for this is in no sense true, and cannot be made true.—But he being in Christ, united to him by faith, the righteousness of Christ, what he has done and suffered for sinners, and in their place and stead, avails for the believ-

er's justification, and he has as much advantage by it, in this respect, as if it were his own personal righteousness. It would be needless to mention this particular, if some had not entertained this notion of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, and represented it in this very absurd light ; and drawn consequences from it, most contrary to the truth, and many express declarations of scripture.

VIII. IN pardoning and justifying the believer, his sins are not so blotted out, or covered, as not to be any more seen or remembered. When sins are once committed, they never can become no sins ; it will be forever true, that they were committed. These facts, or the nature of them, cannot be annihilated or altered. And it is impossible that they should be forgotten by God, or out of his sight, while he exists the OMNISCIENT. And the believer's knowledge that he is justified, has no tendency to make him forget his sins ; but the contrary, viz, to fix them on his memory, to think much of them, confess them, and humble himself for them, and admire the grace of God in his forgiveness, for the sake of Christ. If he could forget his sins, he would forget that he was pardoned ; for the latter supposes the former, and is founded upon it. Paul, remembered and repeatedly mentioned his sins, and ranks himself among the chief of sinners, after he knew he was pardoned, and had obtained mercy. And if he could lose the idea of his sin and guilt, he would have no idea of the mercy of God to him, as long as he exists. His sin, in persecuting the saints, and the sins of other justified persons, on scripture record, are so far from being forgotten, covered or hid, that they are published to the world, and will be eternally known and remembered. The scripture speaks of forgiving sin, by such phrases as these, Not remembering them

them any more—covering them—casting them into the depths of the sea, &c. These are strong metaphorical expressions, to denote that God does not, and never will suffer them to rise and be brought against the believer, to condemn him, or do him any hurt. In this sense they are annihilated, blotted out, and never shall be remembered any more. That these expressions cannot be understood in any other sense, or be literally true, appears from the observations which have been made under this head.

IX. THE justification of the believer by the righteousness of Christ, does in no measure free him from obligation to be perfectly holy in his own person; but increases it, and his criminality in not being so. He is freed from the curse of the law, for not being perfectly and perseveringly holy, and from obligation to perfect obedience, in order to be justified; for he is already justified, without this. In this respect, he is not under the law, but under grace. But still he is under obligation to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. His faith is a conformity to these commands, as including repentance and love, and he cannot be perfectly holy, to which he is under indispensable obligation, till he comes to a perfect conformity to this law: For by this only, he can be holy, as God is holy. It is impossible he should not be under obligation to obey this law perfectly; for it is founded in reason, and cannot be altered or abated; and must therefore, forever be the rule of the duty of creatures; and every thing in them which is contrary to this law, or a disregard of it, is sin. Christ did not come to destroy, or make void the law, in this respect; but to fulfil it: And his fulfilling or obeying it, and suffering the penalty of it, does not release the believer from obligation to obedience

dience to it ; for this is impossible, because it would be infinitely wrong. Yet some have been so wild in their notions, and so absurd and infatuated, as to suppose he has done it !

It has been observed, that gospel holiness, or the holiness of faith, differs from legal holiness, or the holiness of man before he fell into sin, and that of the angels ; and the difference has been particularly stated in the foregoing section. Nevertheless the holiness necessary to justification by law, or the covenant of works, and that of the believer under the covenant of grace, are of the same nature and kind, and consist in obedience and conformity to the same law, in love to God, and to our neighbour : Though the latter may require exercises in some respects different, and towards new and different objects and truths, which could have no place or existence, under the former, such as sinful man, Redemption, the character of Jesus Christ, his sufferings and works, &c.

And it is worthy of observation here, that the holiness of faith, and of the redeemed, so far as, for the reason above mentioned, it differs from legal holiness, or that under a covenant of works, has a peculiar beauty and excellence, and renders him who possesses it, more happy than he could be under a covenant of works, though perfectly holy.

The redeemed are raised from the dark regions of infinite guilt and woe ; delivered from sin, in which they were totally involved ; and translated from the power and kingdom of satan, into the eternal kingdom of Christ, to sit down and reign with him on his throne. And this deliverance, happiness and honour, is not from themselves, in the least degree ; but from the free sovereign grace, and wonderful love of God ; and by the incarnation of the Son of God, and his taking the place of sinners, and dying for their redemption. All this makes

an amiable and glorious display of the love and wisdom of God, which could not have been made, had not redemption taken place. And all this new and wonderful scene lays a foundation for answerable exercises by the redeemed, in the deepest humility, in a sense and acknowledgment of their unworthiness, and absolute dependence on free sovereign grace for all the good, both negative and positive, comprised in redemption; and in the sweet love of benevolence, delight and gratitude, answerable to the divine love and holiness manifested in the redemption of sinners, and his unspeakable love and grace to them; by which they are laid under peculiarly great, and the most agreeable, everlasting obligations to gratitude and praise.

In these respects, and by their everlasting, and peculiarly near and dear relation to Christ, and union with him, by which they are the bride, the Lamb's wife, the redeemed church will shine in a peculiarly beautiful holiness, and glory, and enjoy greater happiness and honour, than any of those creatures who have not been redeemed, though perfectly holy. In this respect, as well as others, redemption is the *new creation*, the *new heaven and new earth*, far exceeding the first and old creation. In this there is a new display of the divine glory; a new mode of the exercise of holiness by a new kind of creatures, by putting on a form in which there is a new beauty and excellence; and a new degree of happiness; a new and glorious character in the Redeemer, the center of union, love and holiness, of the redeemed church; and, in one word, a new moral world, which could not have taken place, were it not for the apostacy of man, and redemption by Christ. In this sense, "Old things are passed away, Behold, all things are become new!"

X. ON the whole, the doctrine of the justification of sinners by faith in Jesus Christ, appears to be not only agreeable to the scripture, but rational, when examined and understood; there being nothing absurd or inconsistent in it. The law of God admits of a substitute to obey or to suffer for others in their room and stead. The first man was constituted such, and he was made a type and figure of the second man, who was to come, the Lord from heaven. He was able to do what the first man could not, even to redeem sinners from the curse of the law, by taking the curse on himself, and suffering it for them, as well as obeying it perfectly; being made under the law, and putting himself in their place. Thus he has a righteousness which answers the law; and therefore sufficient for the justification of all those in whose favour it can be properly applied, so as consistently to have the benefit of it, as much as if it were their own personal righteousness. This can be done only by the sinner's being cordially united to him, approving of his character, and receiving and trusting in him for righteousness, and redemption, which is done by *believing in him*. Therefore, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe." And this righteousness avails to their complete justification; their sins are pardoned for the sake of Christ, who is the propitiation for their sins; he suffering for them, the just for the unjust, has made full atonement; and they are made heirs of eternal life, being recommended by the merit and worthiness of Christ, they being in him, and one with him, as the members and head are one body.

It is agreeable to reason, and common sense, that one person should have favour shewn to him, out of respect to the merit and worthiness of another, purely on the

the account of the relation the former bears to the latter, who has no worthiness of such favour in himself, and to whom it would be improper to shew such favour, were it not for his relation to such a worthy person, by which he is in some sense united to him. This is really imputing the merit of one person to another, to recommend him to favour, who has no worthiness in himself. Thus, if we have a friend who is very dear to us, and has great merit and worthiness with us, and we see a child in wretched circumstances, starving and naked ; when we are informed that he is the son of our friend, we shall be disposed to shew him kindness and give him relief, feed and clothe him, for the sake of his father, out of regard to his merit in our eyes. Or, if such a worthy person, who has great merit, have a friend who loves him, though he may have no worthiness in himself, and has offended us ; yet if he come recommended by this worthy friend of ours, desiring that we would forgive him, and shew him all the kindness he wants, we shall readily do it, wholly for the sake of the worthiness of our friend, though otherwise it would be proper, and we should be disposed to treat him with neglect and contempt ; and this appears congruous and rational.

Much more is it so in the case before us. The Son of God, who is infinitely dear and worthy in his sight, has expressed his love to the Father, and zeal for his honour, and the honour of his law and government, and hatred of all sin against him, by putting himself in the place of sinners under the law ; and has borne the curse of it himself in the sinner's stead, and by obeying it perfectly, hereby manifesting his love to sinful man, and desire of their salvation, if consistent with the honour of God, and his law ; and that he might make it so, for all those who believe in him, has done and suffered all this, and in this way has exerted himself to the utmost, that

they may be pardoned and saved, and God honoured thereby : That God may be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in him. And in all this, in which he has exercised and expressed his love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity, in the best manner, and to the highest degree possible, he has merited infinitely with the Father ; he is well pleased for his righteousness sake, and is ready to give him whatever he asks ; especially that, for the sake of which, he has gone through all this labour and suffering. He asks that he would pardon and save every guilty sinner, who unites himself to him by believing on him, who shall love, receive, and trust in him, that his righteousness may be imputed to him, and that for his sake he will justify and save all such, whom he loves, and for whom he has done and suffered so much.* The Father is so well pleased with his righteousness, and he is so infinitely dear, honourable and meritorious in his sight, that he is ready to shew all needed favour to those who love his Son, and believe on him, for his sake, and purely out of respect to his suffering and merit, to justify them, and give them eternal life, though they be in themselves infinitely unworthy and illdeserving. Thus the righteousness of Christ is imputed to all them who believe for their justification. And who can shew that there is any thing unreasonable or contrary to the truth in this procedure ? Who will say it is not perfectly reasonable and proper ?

* See John xvii.

IMPROVEMENT.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

THE subject of this section leads us to see, and reflect upon the wonderful display of infinite wisdom in the salvation of man, by Jesus Christ.

It has been observed, that wisdom is a moral excellence; it is a moral perfection of God. It is included in benevolence or goodness, and cannot be separated from it. Where there is no benevolence there is no wisdom, and where there is no wisdom, there is no benevolence. And there is always, and in all instances, as much wisdom as there is goodness, and vice versa. Yet it is proper and necessary to distinguish between these, in order to think and speak most clearly of the perfection of God. And this is done in the scripture. The goodness of God is a *wise* goodness, is exercised in the wisest and best manner, to answer the best ends. God is as wise as he is good.

There is a most bright and glorious display of the wisdom of God in the redemption of man. Therefore, the gospel of the grace of God is called *wisdom*, the *wisdom of God*: And Christ is called so: And the Apostle Paul, speaking of the redemption of man, has the following remarkable expression. "According to the RICHES OF HIS GRACE, wherein he hath abounded towards us, in ALL WISDOM AND PRUDENCE."* And he says, the angels learn the manifold wisdom of God, in the redemption of his church by Jesus Christ. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known *by the church* the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."†

In order to lay the best and most ample foundation, and give opportunity and occasion for the greatest and
most

* Eph. i. 2.

† Chap. iii. 10. 11.

most glorious exercise and manifestation of the love and grace of God, it has been wisely ordered that there should be creatures in a state of infinite guilt and wretchedness, from which they could not be delivered consistent with the honour of the divine law, and the moral character and government of God, unless a divine person, the Son of God, became a man, and took upon him the form of a servant, putting himself under the law, and taking the sinner's place, so as to bear the curse in his stead, and die an ignominious, cruel and accursed death for him: And having thus suffered, and obeyed the law of God in the most trying circumstances, he is become the author of eternal salvation to all them who obey him. And in this way of salvation by Christ, there is no room for mere human righteousness and worthiness to come into the account. The righteousness by which man is accepted and justified, is a *divine* righteousness, the righteousness of God: A righteousness of which not a mere creature is the author; and the worth of it arises from the dignity of the divine nature, and not from any worthiness of a mere creature. In this way man is emptied of all worthiness in himself, and greatly humbled, and brought into a state of exceeding, peculiar dependence on God; and divine grace is exalted and honoured, while the believer receives from him "Abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness."*

And the redeemed are interested in this divine righteousness, not out of regard to any worthiness of their own; but when they are justified, they are considered in themselves, infinitely unworthy; and that by which they are united to this divine person, so as to have the advantage of his merit, the bond of union on their part, consists in an exercise of soul in which they discern and acknowledge that they are infinitely guilty, illdeserving, hateful creatures; that were there not an infinitely meritorious

righteousness

* Eph. v. 17.

righteousness in Christ, it would not be proper or consistent with the law and the perfection of God, that they should be pardoned and saved; and that the righteousness by which they are justified, is that of a divine person, the righteousness of God. They therefore, ascribe every good they receive, every thing better than endless destruction, to the free, sovereign grace of God, and give him all the glory of it. This is "to be justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: And it is of faith, that it might be by grace."* "By grace are ye saved, through faith." And the Apostle adds, "And that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."† This leads to observe, that the faith by which men are united to Christ, is the free, sovereign gift of God, in renewing their hearts, and forming them to such an exercise; in which he acts as an absolute sovereign, and has mercy on whom he will have mercy.

Every thing is so ordered in the work of redemption, as to give the greatest occasion, and advantage, and the best opportunity for the exercise of the infinite goodness and grace of God; and in such a manner as to make it most visible to creatures: And the redeemed are put under the best advantage to see it in the extent and glory of it, and be properly affected with it. The emptiness and nothingness of the creature, his infinite dependence on God, the fountain of being and all good; the infinite sufficiency for the creature, even for infinitely guilty and wretched creatures, and his free, sovereign, unbounded love and grace, are here set in the most advantageous and striking light, especially to the redeemed; so that in the final issue of things, when redemption is perfected, God will appear in the clearest light possible, to be ALL IN ALL.‡ And they will receive unspeakably greater good, than they could have wanted, or were capable of, had they not sinned, and had there been no divine Mediator

* Rom. iii. 24. iv. 16.

† Eph. ii. 8.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

diator and righteousness. And all "To the praise of the glory of his grace."*

Now the wisdom of God has contrived and laid the plan for all this. Therefore it is manifested, and glorified in this exercise and display of divine grace, in which God hath *abounded in all wisdom and prudence*. Here the wisdom of God is set in the most conspicuous, pleasing light, which draws the attention, raises the admiration, influences the love, and exalts the praise of Angels. And all who understand the gospel will cordially join with them, and with St. Paul, in his rapture and doxology. "O the depth of the riches, both of the *wisdom* and the knowledge of God! Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, **THE ONLY WISE GOD**, be honour and glory forever and ever, Amen."†

II. IN the view of this subject, we see how, and in what respects, the law is established in the justification of sinners by faith in Christ.

The Apostle Paul says, the law is established in this way. "Do we then make void the law through faith? Yea, we establish the law."‡ And when we consider what saving faith is, and how the sinner is justified by faith, we may see on what ground this is asserted.

The whole work of the Redeemer in his incarnation, obedience and sufferings, had reference to the law, in order to establish that, and magnify it, and make it honourable, consistent with the pardon and salvation of the sinner who believeth in Jesus. He was made under the law with this view, in order to suffer the curse of it, and obey it in the room of sinners, as their substitute and surety, and in this way obtain the righteousness of the law, for them, that he might be "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

That

* Eph. i. 6.

† Rom. xi. 33.

‡ 1 Tim. i. 17.

§ Rom. iii. 31.

That the law might be maintained and established by vicarious obedience or suffering, or by a substitute, was made known when man was first created, as has been shewn. The first substitute or public head, failed of obedience, and introduced sin and condemnation, which by divine constitution extended to all his posterity. All mankind are by the disobedience of the first man, constituted sinners, and by sinning are under the curse of the law; from which they cannot be delivered, without abolishing the law, unless it be suffered by them, or a substitute. They could not suffer this curse and survive it; for the evil implied in it, and which they deserved, is infinite. And for the same reason, no mere creature, in heaven or earth, could be a substitute, to suffer it in their room. But the last Adam, the second man, who is the Lord from heaven, is able to take the curse on himself and suffer it, and yet survive; and having by this made full atonement for sin, and satisfied the threatening of the law; and by his obedience done all that is required of man, in order to his justification, he has introduced a complete and everlasting righteousness; so that he to whom it may be properly imputed, and he have the advantage of it, as much as if it were his own personal righteousness, and he stood perfectly right in the sight of the law, may be justified, perfectly consistent with the law; and the law be more established, respected and honoured, by the divine righteousness of the Mediator, than it would have been by the eternal sufferings of every transgressor, and the obedience of all creatures.

But no man can be justified by the righteousness of Christ, unless he unite himself to him by faith in him; in which he is brought to see and heartily acknowledge the law which curses every transgressor of it, to be holy, just and good, and that he may be justly destroyed forever for his sin, and if he be pardoned and saved, it must be wholly by free, undeserved sovereign grace to him,
while

while he receives this favour purely on the account of the righteousness of Christ. And he highly approves of it, and is greatly pleased that the Mediator has done and suffered so much to establish and honour the law, so as to become the end of the law for righteousness, to him who believeth, and trusts in him, in the character of "The Lord our righteousness."* Thus the believer is a friend to the law of God, and does not wish to be saved in any way inconsistent with it. And by faith he is conformed to it, in the requirement of it, in a measure, and it is written on his heart. And he feels himself under indispensable obligation to perfect obedience to the law, as an unerring, excellent and perfect rule, and acknowledges that every thing in him, contrary to this law, and that does not come up to all that it requires, is inexcusable wickedness. And he looks to Christ and trusts in him, to bring him to a perfect conformity to the law of God, as without that he cannot be completely happy, and in which, in a great measure, his salvation consists. At the same time he is watching and fighting against sin and satan, and pressing forward after perfect holiness, working out his own salvation with fear and trembling.

Thus the law, both in the precepts and threatnings of it, is every way regarded, maintained and established, in the justification of sinners by faith in Christ, and is much more honoured than it could have been, had there been no Redeemer, and all transgressors of the law had perished, or had it never been transgressed.

* Jer. xxiii. 6.

SECTION

SECTION VIII.

On the Covenant of Grace.

THE Covenant of Grace, when understood in the most extensive sense, comprehends all the designs and transactions respecting the redemption of man by Jesus Christ, in opposition to the covenant of works, or law of works, under which, man was first made; and is the same with the gospel, considered in its original, and the form in which it is administered, and the effects of it.— In this view, it comprehends the eternal purpose of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to redeem man, fixing the manner of it, and every thing that relates to it, and entering into a mutual agreement or covenant; in which the part which each Person should perform, as distinguished from the other, was fixed, and voluntarily undertaken. The Father is represented in scripture, as first in this great affair, as giving and sending the Son, to redeem man; and determining the number and the individuals of the human race to be redeemed, and giving them to the Son, to redeem them, and promising that he should be upheld in this work, and carried through it, and be satisfied in his reward, and the salvation of those who were given to him. The Son agreed to all this, and undertook the part he was to act, saying, “Lo I come: I delight to do thy will, O my God.” The Holy Spirit undertakes to do the great part assigned to him in this work, particularly as the agent by whom the application of redemption is made to the elect, by sanctifying them, and effecting a union between the Redeemer and them; and by dwelling in them, forever,

as the spirit of love and holiness. But this covenant transaction is more particularly and often mentioned, as taking place between the Father and the Son; though not excluding the Holy Spirit.

It is needless to recite the numerous passages of scripture which represent the matter in this light, and refer to this covenant, to him who is acquainted with his Bible. That such a covenant must take place between the Persons of the adorable Trinity, is certain from the divine decrees; and necessarily implied in this one sentence of the Apostle James, "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world."* This covenant may be considered as including the whole of redemption of man, as every thing relating to it is hereby fixed, and they who are to be redeemed, have redemption secured to them; and the Mediator covenanted as the public head of his people, and their salvation was made sure; and in this respect, they are all included in this covenant. And this may be called a covenant of grace, as it is the effect and expression of sovereign love and grace, and is the foundation of all the favour and free grace which is to be given to the redeemed church to eternity, and comprehends it all.

But there is a covenant transaction, which takes place between God in Christ, and every believer, when the gospel is cordially embraced. This is often mentioned in scripture, and God is said to enter into covenant with men, and believers are said to be in covenant; and to make a covenant with him, and enter into covenant; and lay hold of God's covenant, &c. This is a covenant distinct and different from that which has been mentioned between the Persons in the Trinity, or more expressly, between the Father and the Son; though this eternal covenant comprehends that made in time with believers, in the manner which has been mentioned. This distinction

* Acts xv. 18.

inction therefore, must be made, and kept in view, would we think and speak clearly and intelligibly on this subject. They who have been sensible of this, have distinguished them by different names, calling the first, *the covenant of redemption*, and the last, *the covenant of grace*, without designing hereby, to exclude grace from the former, or to consider it as not comprehending the latter, in the sense above explained. But the difference consists partly in the different parties covenanting; the former is between the divine persons of the Godhead, or the Father and the Son; the latter between these divine persons, or God in Christ, and sinful man: Partly, in the different promises and mutual engagements between the parties covenanting.

This may be illustrated in some measure, perhaps, by the following instance. The son of a great king, and the king himself, had compassion on a poor wretched woman, who had been guilty of a capital crime, and was condemned to be put to death; and devised means to save her, and bring her to the honour and happiness of being the wife of the son. In order to this, and to make it consistent with the laws of the kingdom, and the honour of the father and son, the latter must go through a scene of suffering and disgrace. The son willingly undertook this; and the father engaged to give him all the necessary assistance and support through the whole: And in consequence of his doing this, and as a proper reward for his virtue, to give him a place on his throne, and to cause the woman to consent to be his wife, though she was now a great enemy to him; and to grant to her a free pardon, and that the son should make her as rich, honourable and happy as he desired; taking her into the nearest relation and union to himself. This agreement and covenant being made between the father and the son, the latter went through all the suffering and disgrace,

which he had promised to do, and was received to the power and honour which the father had promised.

The son being invested with authority and power to reclaim the woman, and bring her to consent to marry him, applied to her, and let her know all that had been done by him, in order to her being pardoned, and received to the greatest honour and happiness, upon her consenting to be his wife; and offered himself to her to be her friend and husband, and do all for her, which she could want or desire, *if she would consent to be his wife*; and give herself up to him to be thus related and united to him. The woman freely consented to the proposal of the prince, and accepted of his kind offer; and relying on his faithfulness and goodness, engaged to do the duty of a wife to him. Thus a particular covenant was made and took place between them, by their mutual promises to each other.

When Christ, the Mediator, had finished the part assigned to him, and which he had engaged in the covenant of redemption, in taking upon him the form of a servant, and becoming obedient unto death, he was raised from the dead, and exalted to the throne of the universe, and made head over all things to the church, as a reward for the great work which he had finished by his obedience and sufferings, by which he was openly approved and justified, as Mediator between God and man; and power was given unto him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as were given to him by the Father.*

And he has ordered the gospel to be preached to men, declaring his character, works and designs, and publishing the way of salvation by him, and freely offering it to all who will accept of it, and promising that all who believe on him, giving themselves to him to be his disciples and servants, shall be saved. This is the sum of the covenant

of

* John xvii. 2.

of grace, as it is published and preached in the gospel of the grace of God: And every one who embraces it, enters into this covenant; for this is the only condition on man's part; and by this, men are intitled to all the promises of the covenant, and salvation is made sure to them.

The following things may be observed, concerning this covenant.

1. All the promised blessings and good things contained in this covenant, are made sure to the believer on his first believing, and entering into covenant; because one of the promises of this covenant, as proposed to men by God, is, that he who once believes and accepts of the offer made, shall persevere in his adherence to it, and never fall from it, so as to fail of the blessings of it. It is in this respect an *everlasting* covenant, as it insures everlasting life, and can never fail, or be broken, by either party in covenant. This is the covenant described in the following words, "And I will make an *everlasting* covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, *that they shall not depart from me.*"* This is the covenant of which David speaks, as comprising the whole of his salvation, and all his desire.† The tenor of the covenant of grace is stated as follows: "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."‡

H 2

2. This

* Jer. xxxii. 40.

† 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

‡ Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.

2. This covenant is called in scripture, a *new* and *second* covenant, in distinction from another and foregoing covenant.

The covenant between God the Father, and the second person of the Trinity, is a new and second covenant. The first covenant was between God, and the first Adam, as representing all mankind, as their public head. That between God, and the last Adam, the Redeemer of men, the second public head, is a second covenant and a *new* one. And this lays the foundation of the covenant between God and man, of which we are now speaking, and really implies it, as has been observed.

But this covenant, between God the Redeemer, and those who believe in him, is expressly called a *new* covenant, as it is a covenant of grace, and herein distinguished from the covenant of works, under which all mankind were, antecedent to redemption by Christ: And which was brought into view, and kept most in sight under the Mosaic dispensation. The covenant made with the children of Israel was in the form of a covenant of works. The law of works was exhibited first, and brought most clearly into sight, that it might be known to be what it really is: And the covenant of grace, or the gospel, though revealed, and contained in that covenant, was not set in open light, but covered, and in a measure hid under the types and shadows of that covenant; and under the form of a covenant of works, as the nucleus or kernel is covered and hid with the husk or shell that surrounds it: So that they who were not spiritual, discerning and attentive, saw only the outside, and considered it as wholly a covenant of works; and hoped for justification by it, in that view. It is certain this was the case with the nation of the Jews in general, in the Apostles days. They sought righteousness and justification, as it were, by the works of the law. They were ignorant of God's righteousness,

teousness, and attempted to establish their own righteousness, the righteousness of the law.* This form of a covenant of works, is represented by the vail which Moses put over his face, when speaking to the people. "So that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which was to be abolished: But their minds were blinded: For even to the days of the Apostles, the same vail remained in the reading of the Old Testament (or the old covenant) but even to that day, when Moses was read, the vail was upon their heart."† In this view of it, and considered as exhibiting the covenant of works, St. Paul calls, the giving the law from Mount Sinai, and that dispensation, "The ministration of death and condemnation, written and engraven on stones."‡ It is therefore said, "The law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,"§ The dispensation under Moses was a legal dispensation, exhibiting law, in the form of a covenant of works: One particular, and perhaps the principal design of it, was to reveal the divine law, in the strictness, extent and glory of it; as necessary to prepare for the clear and open manifestation of the covenant of grace; which was then in a great measure hid, and more obscurely revealed under shadows and types, and in other ways; so that the whole was but a *shadow* of the good things of the covenant of grace. ||

Therefore, the revelation made by Moses, is called *the law*: And the covenant into which the children of Israel entered, is represented as a legal covenant, a covenant of works, to which the covenant of grace is opposed, as another, and a new covenant. A few quotations from scripture, out of many that might be mentioned, will ascertain this. "But now he (Jesus) hath obtained a more excellent ministry (than the high Priests under the law of Moses) by how much also he is the Mediator of a bet-

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* Rom. ix. 31. x. 3.

† 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14, 15.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.

§ John i. 17.

|| Heb. x. 1.

ter covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the *second*. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah : Not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt ; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. ** Therefore the gospel is called the *New Testament*, and the Mosaic dispensation is called the *Old Testament*. † “ Who hath made us able Ministers of the *New Testament*. For until this day, remaineth the same veil untaken away, in reading the *Old Testament*, which veil is done away in Christ. ” ‡

3. The covenant of grace has been revealed to man, and has been administered in different forms, and by various methods, ever since the first intimation of mercy to sinners, made soon after the first apostacy ; and by it all true believers have been saved from that time to this ; and none have been saved in any other way ; nor will any be saved in any other way but this, to the end of the world. And in this respect it is an everlasting covenant. This covenant was made known to Adam, and was administered, to the salvation of all the truly pious from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to Abraham, and from him to Moses. And nothing but the wickedness of man, and his opposition to the things contained and implied in this covenant, has prevented the publication of it to every one of the human race, and their salvation by it. And from Moses to the coming of Christ, the covenant of grace was made known and administered ; and the gospel was preached to the children of Israel, through all that time, and

* Heb. viii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

† The same word, in the original, is translated *testament* and *covenant*.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 6, 14.

and all the pious were saved by it, though it was covered under the form of a covenant of works, as has been observed and explained.

The law, as a covenant of works, was not exhibited in the revelation made to the children of Israel by Moses, as it has been now explained, under the notion that any man could obtain the favour of God, and be saved by this law or covenant; for this was impossible. But this law was thus revealed and added, that it might be known what the law was, and that men might be hereby convinced, that no man can be justified by the works of the law; as by his sins he is under the curse of it; and that under this conviction, and despairing of salvation by the covenant of works, they might be led to understand and embrace the covenant of grace, the way of salvation by faith in the Redeemer. [This is the light in which this point is set by the Apostle Paul. "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid. For if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."* This was the end which the revelation of this law answered, to those who were saved under that dispensation; and it is suited and designed to answer this same end to those who shall be saved, to the end of the world: For by the law, thus revealed, is the knowledge of sin, and the curse of God, under which all men are, who do not believe in Christ. Thus St. Paul states the matter, with regard to himself. "I had not known sin but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. For without the law sin was dead. I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."†

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Though

* Gal. iii. 21, 22.

† Rom. vii. 7, 8, 9.

Though the Redeemer had not actually performed and gone through what he had undertaken to do and suffer; yet it being engaged and made certain, all believers who lived before his incarnation, were saved by virtue of his sufferings and obedience, which were certain to take place, in due time.

4. The difference and opposition between the covenant of works and the new covenant, the covenant of grace, has been particularly stated in the two preceding sections. The former requires perfect obedience, as the condition of life, as the price to recommend to the favour of God, which is the righteousness of the law of works. The latter consists in a testimony and promise on God's part, requiring nothing of man, but that belief of this testimony and promise, which implies a cordial reception of the good things, exhibited and offered in this covenant, without offering any thing as the price of them; but receiving them as a free gift to a sinner, infinitely guilty and wretched. The condition of the first is out of the reach of man. It is impossible he should obtain righteousness by it, because he is a sinner. The last is possible to all, and saves every one who believeth.

The Apostle Paul states the difference and opposition between these two covenants, from the writings of Moses; which proves that both these covenants were revealed in that dispensation. His words are these: "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doth those things, shall live by them.* But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down) or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ again from the dead) But what faith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart.† That is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth,

* See Levit. xviii. 5.

† See Deut. xxx. 11, 12, 13, 14.

mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

5. In the preaching of the gospel, the covenant of grace is proposed, and the blessings it contains are offered to all to whom it comes, upon their believing, and heartily approving the way of salvation therein proposed. For all who thus comply, come up to the condition of the covenant, on their part, and consequently are interested in all the promises of it.

The atonement and righteousness of Christ, is sufficient for the justification and salvation of all them who believe, be they ever so many, even all the human race. Therefore, the offer of salvation is made to all, without exception, and promised to all who believe, or willingly embrace the offer, to which they are invited and commanded. The direction and command is to preach the gospel to all nations, to every creature. But this cannot be done if the blessings of the covenant of grace be not offered to all, even pardon, justification and salvation, who are willing to receive them. For it is no gospel, no good news, to those to whom this offer and invitation cannot be made. The gospel cannot be preached to the devils, because the offer of salvation cannot be made to them, on any condition whatsoever: And if there be any of mankind to whom this offer may not be made, the gospel can no more be preached to them, than to the fallen angels.

The gospel may be preached, and all the blessings of the covenant of grace be offered to those who are not willing to accept of the offer, and never will believe the report, and be saved. It is contrary to all reason and common sense, to say, that no good thing can be offered to him who is not, and never can be persuaded to be willing to accept it; that his rejecting the thing offered, renders it no offer to him, and annihilates the

* Rom. x. 5-9.

good will and kindness of him who made the offer :— Therefore, that there can be no goodness manifested or exercised, in making an offer of the greatest good, to him who does not receive it ; and there is really nothing offered. But all this is implied in saying, that salvation by Christ cannot be offered to those who, by rejecting him, shall not be saved, but perish forever.

It is known to God, that some to whom the gospel is preached, and salvation by Christ offered, will reject it, and who they are who will do so, and consequently fail of salvation. But if their refusing the offer, be consistent with their having it really made to them ; then the knowledge that they will refuse to accept it, cannot render the offer less real and sincere.

But that the blessings of the covenant of grace are offered to all, without exception ; and all to whom the gospel comes, are invited and commanded to repent and believe, is as evident and certain a truth, as any contained in the Bible. When Christ sent his disciples to preach, he directed them to say to all, “ Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “ And they went out and preached, that men should repent.”* And they offered peace and salvation to every person in the houses, into which they entered.† And Christ himself “ preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel.† And “ Now God commandeth all men, every where, to repent.”§ That is, to comply with the condition of the covenant of grace, and be saved : For, as has been shown, repentance is put for the whole of conversion, and implies faith, and is connected with pardon and salvation. Christ says, “ He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him.”¶ None can reject him, to whom he is not offered. Therefore

* Mark vi. 12.

† Luke x. 5.

‡ Mark i. 14, 15.

§ Acts xvii. 30. ¶ John xii. 48.

fore he, with all his benefits, is offered to all who hear the gospel. The Apostle Paul, offered salvation to all who were present and heard him preach in a synagogue of the Jews, "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, (that is, all who are not of the stock of Abraham, but profelytes from other nations) *to you* is the word of this salvation sent."* And when the Jews contradicted him, and blasphemed, He and Barnabas said to them, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : But seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."† But to quote any more of this kind, is needless : And not so much would have been offered on this head, were it not that there are some who think that salvation by Christ cannot be offered to any but to those who are elected, and shall believe, and be saved. And as no man can know who they are, so as certainly to distinguish them from others, salvation cannot be offered to any, on any condition or terms whatever. How contrary this notion is both to the scripture, and to reason, and how inconsistent with preaching the gospel to any, will appear from the observations which have been now made.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

HOW great is the privilege, which all enjoy, who live under the gospel ! Salvation is sent unto them, and laid at their feet, and Christ is waiting for their acceptance, standing at the door, and knocking for admittance.—How amazing, how inconceivably great is their folly, madness and guilt, who reject this most benevolent counsel of God against themselves, and perish by flighting this offer, and despising the Redeemer !

How

* Acts xiii. 26.

† verse 46.

How safe and happy are they who lay hold of this covenant of grace ! By infinite wisdom it is formed and suited to the state and circumstances of man, and contains every thing he can want to eternity. They may espouse the language of St. Paul, "God hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began."* "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."†

* 2 Tim. i. 9.

† Romans viii. 35, 38, 39.

S E C T I O N IX.

The Manner of the Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, and the Preaching of the Gospel.

IN the conclusion of the preceding section, it has been observed and shown, that the covenant of grace, is to be exhibited and proposed to all men ; and that the blessings contained in it, to those who comply with it, are to be freely offered to all to whom the gospel is preached ; which Jesus Christ has commanded to be preached to all nations, to every creature, that is, to all mankind. It is now more particularly to be considered, how this is to be done, and what is implied in preaching the gospel.

* This

This subject may be stated and illustrated under the following particulars.

I. PREACHING the gospel, implies a declaration of the whole system of truth and duty, contained in divine revelation ; as all these are implied in the gospel, and have relation to the covenant of grace. Though some truths are more essential and important than others, and the gospel may be said to be preached, while some are overlooked ; yet it cannot be *fully* preached, unless the whole are brought into view ; and must be in a degree defective, by opposing and rejecting any revealed truth. Therefore, to preach the gospel, is to *declare all the counsel of God*, as the Apostle Paul did.* Every doctrine revealed in the Bible, and every duty prescribed, has a connection with the whole ; and all make but one consistent system. The whole may be summed up and epitomized, in a more general and comprehensive way, by expressly mentioning only the leading and most essential truths contained in the gospel, while others, though not mentioned, are implied ; and every particular truth, and branch of duty, may be more particularly brought into view, and explained, as there is occasion, and opportunity offers ; in which the longest life may be spent in teaching, and making advances in learning, and the knowledge of the truth.

Some of the most essential truths implied in the covenant of grace, or the gospel, have been brought into view in the foregoing part of this work, and others are yet to be considered, in their order and connection, together with the duties which are included and enjoined. It appears from what has been said in the preceding chapters, especially in that on the nature of saving faith, that there is such order and connection in revealed truth, and such dependence of one on another, that some things must first be taught, understood and believed, before others can be

brought

* Acts xx. 27.

brought into view, so as to appear in their true light.— This may be illustrated by the following instances, some of which have been already mentioned.

The being of God, his attributes and perfections, in which the divine character consists, must first be understood and believed; as this is the foundation of all religious truth, so that every other revealed doctrine depends wholly upon it. Consequently, a gross mistake respecting the character of the Deity, will lead to error through the whole system of theology, and pervert the gospel. This knowledge of God is necessary, in order to know what is the nature of his moral government, and the reason and extent of his law, and the obligation under which men are to obey it. And a right conception of the moral government and law of God, is necessary, in order to know what is the moral character and state of man, viz. wholly depraved and sinful, under the curse and displeasure of God, infinitely guilty and wretched, according to the sentence of a most righteous and good law. All this must be exhibited, understood and believed, before redemption by Christ can be understood, or come into view. Those truths are therefore implied in the gospel, and the covenant of grace; and the gospel cannot be preached without exhibiting them in a true and proper light. In the light of these truths, the way is prepared to discover, and set before men, the design and work of redemption; the person, character, design and work of the Redeemer, and the grace and salvation opened in the gospel; and to show what is necessary, in order to be saved by Christ, and in what this salvation consists, and what are the duties, and promises, and threatenings, which are revealed in the Bible.

II. The publishing of the covenant of grace, and preaching the gospel, does not disannul the law of God, or discharge men from duty and obedience; but re-

quires

quires and demands obedience of all to whom it is preached.

The law is not in the least abated in the extent and strictness of the precepts of it, by the gospel. The obedience of Christ does not discharge any man, even those who believe in him, from perfect obedience to the law of God; or free them in the least degree, from their obligations to be perfectly holy. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth:" So that he may be delivered from the curse of the law, be pardoned and justified, consistent with the law, though he has no personal righteousness and obedience, which answers the demands of it. But this does not remove his ill desert in any degree, or take away, or lessen, his obligation to obey the law perfectly: And it remains as much the measure and rule of duty to him, as ever it was. And he is no farther holy, or does any duty, than he conforms to the law of God, and obeys it, requiring him to love God with all his heart, soul and strength, and his neighbour as himself. Thus the preaching of the gospel does not make void the law; but establishes it.*

In this view, the law must be exhibited in preaching the gospel, not only as necessary to show the sinner his state and character, and to lead him to understand the gospel, and to see his need of Christ, that he may be saved by free grace; but to set before him what is, and ever will be his duty, and the rule and measure of his obedience; and that it may be known that the gospel does not abate his obligation to perfect obedience: But when understood in the full extent of it, carries this demand in it, and increases the obligation of believers to be perfectly holy; and cannot propose any other or lower rule of duty.

The gospel does indeed introduce new objects, and proposes and enjoins duties, which could have no existence, had there been no redemption for man. But these

* Rom. iii. 31.

duties, which arise from a dispensation of the covenant of grace, cannot be neglected without disobedience to the original law of God; which must be considered as independent of the gospel, and antecedent to the apostacy of man. For the law which requires man to love God with all his heart, binds him to comply with every institution, proposal or offer, which God shall make to him; and to obey every command, which he shall reveal, be it what it may: And not to comply with such institution, or not to accept of any proposal or offer he shall make; and to disobey any command of God, is disobedience to that law. Consequently, such institutions, commands, or offers of pardon and salvation, do not disannul or abate the law, but the contrary.

Though the gospel consists most essentially in the free offer of mercy, on condition of a cordial acceptance; yet it necessarily implies and carries in this offer, an obligation and command to accept the offer; which acceptance, taken in its full extent, implies and consists in a perfect conformity to the law of God; and every degree of compliance with the gospel, is an equal degree of real holiness, or obedience to the divine law, as has been shewn in the section on the nature of saving faith. Though obedience to the gospel, or compliance with it, and acceptance of the salvation which it offers, be a different form and manner of the exercise of holiness, which is, so far, more beautiful and excellent, than obedience to mere law, unconnected with the gospel; yet the former is of the same nature and kind with the latter, and consists in loving God with all the heart, and his neighbour as himself. This has been observed, and explained in the above mentioned section.

In the preaching of the gospel, there is an offer of a free pardon, and complete redemption, to all who are willing to comply with it; but men are not at liberty to reject it, without being accountable and held guilty for

such

such conduct. They are required and commanded to accept of the offer, and conform to the gospel ; and that upon the most dreadful penalty for refusing to obey.— Christ himself required of all to whom he preached to “ Repent and believe the gospel ;” and he, and John, who came before him, declared that he who believeth not on the Son of God, is condemned ; that the wrath of God abideth on him, and he shall be damned.* The Apostle Paul says, “ Now God commandeth all men, every where, to repent :” And that in preaching the gospel, he “ Taught publicly, and from house to house, testifying, (that is, urging and requiring) both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”† He who truly repents and believes the gospel, and so really embraces it, and complies with the covenant of grace, though in an imperfect and low, even the lowest degree, is interested in the promises of the covenant, and shall be saved, though he do not come up to all that is required, at first, and to a perfect compliance with the gospel ; and he will not come to a full and perfect compliance, and conformity to the covenant, until he is perfectly holy : For every degree of moral depravity, or all sin, is opposition to the gospel.

Believers are not under the law, but under grace.— By grace they are pardoned, and delivered from the curse of the law : And it is not by the righteousness of the law, or obedience to it, that they obtain pardon and the favour of God, and are made heirs of eternal life ; but by the atonement and righteousness of Christ ; and all this comes to them, as a free gift by sovereign grace. Nevertheless, they are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ ; and their obligations to perfect obedience do not cease, but are greatly increased ; and all their christian

exercises

* Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 18, 36.

† Acts xvii. 30. xx. 20.

exercises and life, and the whole of their duty, consist in "keeping the commandments of God;" even those two commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* And they do not arrive to the full and most perfect character of christians, of the redeemed by Christ, nor are in the highest and most complete sense united to Christ, until they are perfectly conformed to this law; which never takes place in any instance while in the body, in this life.

III. IN preaching the gospel to sinners, nothing is required or proposed, to be done by them, which is short of repentance and faith in Christ, or which does not imply this, in order to their obtaining salvation.

This is implied in the preceding observations; and the contrary is really inconsistent with them. In preaching the gospel, salvation is freely offered to all who will accept of it; and men are invited and commanded to do this, and inevitable destruction is denounced against them who refuse, and neglect the offered salvation. But a cordial acceptance of salvation, implies repentance and faith in Christ, which is a conformity and obedience to the law of God, so far as it takes place, and the exercise of real holiness. If in the dispensation of the gospel, it were proposed to sinners to do something, and they were required to do it, which does not imply obedience to the law of God, nor acceptance of salvation, and which they may do, consistent with their continuing enemies to God, and to reject the offered salvation with their whole heart, it would be really to drop and lay aside all which the law requires, and so make it void, and to substitute something in place of it, which stands in direct contradiction to it; even as contrary as sin is to holiness. The command to

* Matth. xxii. 37, 39. 1 Cor. vii. 19. ix. 21.

love God, cannot make that a duty in which there is no love to God; but the exercise of enmity against him. And to require this, or any thing like it, as a duty, is to make void, and even oppose this command.

But as the contrary to this has been practised by many in preaching the gospel, by exhorting and urging sinners to do that which does not imply repentance and faith, or a cordial acceptance of the gospel offer; but is consistent with their continuing impenitent, and rejecting and hating Christ and the gospel, and living in total disobedience to the law of God, requiring them to love him with all their hearts; and doing that which is consistent with all this, has been urged as their duty; and a set of duties, and a course of obedience, have been prescribed for such impenitent sinners, to be done by them, while they continue impenitent enemies to Christ and the gospel: And since there have been a difference of opinion, and not a little dispute on this point, of late years, especially in New-England; it is thought proper to attend to this subject more particularly in this section; hoping that something may be said which may serve to give light, and establish the truth. A careful attention to the following particulars, considered together, and brought into one collected view, with their natural and just consequences, may help to decide this point.

FIRST. MAN is naturally, and while unrenewed, in a state of total moral depravity. His mind, his heart, is enmity against God, and his law: This is the nature and tenour of all his moral exercises, while he continues an impenitent sinner, and rejects the gospel.

This will now be taken for granted, as the evidence of it has been already given, and it is so abundantly asserted in scripture.* The consequence from this is, that im-

penitent, unrenewed sinners, do no good thing, no, not one of them, but are in all their moral conduct, wholly disobedient: Therefore, they cannot be exhorted and commanded to do, what they actually do, while impenitent, without being exhorted and commanded to do that which is unreasonable, wrong, and forbidden in the divine law; and such a command would be very absurd, unreasonable, and wrong. Therefore, it is certain, no such command can be found in the Bible; and no man has a right to form and give such commands; or to imagine that impenitent sinners, while they continue such, ever do any duty, or any thing, as God requires it. God commands all men every where, to repent and believe the gospel. If at the same time, he should direct and command them to do any thing, while they continue impenitent, and in unbelief, and which implies disobedience to his command to repent; would not one command stand in direct contradiction to the other; and the latter be at least an implicit annulling or suspending the former, and an allowance to live for a time, at least, in impenitence and unbelief?

SECOND. THE moral depravity of men, and their obstinacy in impenitence and rebellion, however great and strong, does not in the least remove, or abate their obligations to repent, believe, and obey the divine commands; or afford any excuse for their disobedience, or extenuate the criminality of it. This has also been considered in the former part of this work*—and is indeed a selfevident proposition, as the contrary is a plain contradiction. It follows, from this proposition, that the moral depravity of man, and the opposition of his heart to repentance, however total and strong, is no reason why any thing short of true repentance, should be recommended to him, and

and required of him, as his duty ; but is rather a reason against it, as such proposal and requirement, would imply an excuse for continuing impenitent, because they have such a strong aversion from it ; and that repentance is not their immediate duty ; as something else which is consistent with such aversion, and with total impenitence, is substituted in the room of repentance. And it is presumed no one would have thought of prescribing impenitent, unbelieving duty, to sinful men, which is consistent with their total opposition of heart, to God, and his law, to Christ and the gospel, had he believed the above proposition, and kept it properly in view : And that it will appear to those who properly attend to this subject, and the manner in which it has been treated, that they who plead for a set of duties to be done by men, while impenitent unbelievers, and without conformity of heart to the law of God, or the gospel, do really suppose that the moral depravity of man is attended with an *inability* to repent and embrace the gospel, which does, in some degree at least, excuse him for not repenting immediately : And if their minds were wholly freed from this notion, they would no longer contend for such duties, or imagine they could have any existence.

It may be proper to observe here, that from the particulars now mentioned, with the arguments from them, if they be just, it appears that it would be inconsistent with what has been already advanced in this system, to admit that the gospel enjoins or proposes any duty that does not imply repentance, as it has been asserted, as important, fundamental truths, that man is totally depraved ; and yet this does not diminish his obligation to repent and embrace the gospel, and even to be perfectly holy ; or afford the least excuse for one sin : And that there is no duty which does not imply conformity of heart to the law of God.

THIRD. ALL the law, and commands of God, respect the heart or will ; and there is no obedience to any command, or any moral agency, in which the will is not concerned and active : And no obedience or duty is done by any man, if his heart be not obedient, and conformed to the command. There is no virtue or vice, or any morality, in external actions, any farther than they are connected with the will, as the production and fruit of that. And whatever is the production and fruit of a vicious heart, or will, acting from unreasonable and bad motives, and for a wrong and forbidden end, is not duty, but sin, whether it be in words or actions, or whatever it may be ; and whatever be the appearance of it in the sight of men, who cannot see the heart. This is so plain a case, and the irresistible dictate of the feelings and common sense of mankind in general, that it is needless to try to prove it, or say any thing more to illustrate it.

From this it follows, that whatever is said, or done, in external actions, by a person who is wholly impenitent, and with a wicked, disobedient heart, is not duty, but sin. Therefore, it is certain, that God never commands any man to do any thing so ; and with a disobedient, impenitent heart. And when only an external action, is mentioned, and commanded, the command has respect to the heart, and requires the action to be done in obedience to him ; and not in impenitence and disobedience. Therefore, no man has a right to direct sinners to any thing as duty, and as commanded by God, with an impenitent, disobedient heart ; or to flatter him that he may do some duty, while he continues wholly impenitent, and wicked.

FOURTH. THE scripture does not afford any support to the opinion that sinners are required to do duty, which they may do while they continue impenitent, as nothing

is there required as duty, which does not imply repentance; but the contrary. Whenever sinners are there addressed, and called upon to do, they are commanded to repent and believe the gospel, or to do that which implies this, and a real conformity of heart to the moral law of God.

If sinners were to be directed and commanded, in preaching the gospel, to do some duty, in order to be saved, which is not repentance, nor implies any love to God, or acceptance of Christ, most certainly Jesus and his Apostles, would have done this, and some instances of it, at least, would have been recorded. But as there is not one instance of this, nor the least hint of it; but many instances of the contrary, is not such a notion and practice wholly without any warrant? When the Apostles were applied to, with the serious, important question, What shall we do? They answer, "Repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."* And this was agreeable to the example and command of Christ: In preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, saying, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."† He commanded his disciples to go forth, and call on men to repent. And when he gave commission to the Apostles to preach the gospel, he directed them to preach repentance and remission of sin, in his name:‡

When the young ruler came to Christ, and asked him what he should do, that he might inherit eternal life? Jesus did not direct him to do any thing lower than keeping the commandments, and that which implied love to him; even to sell all that he had, and give it to the poor, and come and follow him. This was most contrary to the reigning disposition of his heart, and Christ knew he was not willing to comply with it; and he went away sorrowful. Why did not Christ direct him to something lower,

* Acts ii. 38. xvi. 31.

† Mark i. 14, 15.

‡ Luke xiv. 47.

lower, which he might do consistent with his reigning lust, and his continuing an impenitent sinner? If it were proper to give such direction to any sinner on earth, was it not so in this instance? Why was he not told, that though he could not now find in his heart to forsake all for Christ, and heaven; yet he might do some, yea, much duty, which would bring him nearer to heaven, and might issue in that happy event; even that which is consistent with an impenitent, worldly mind, which it was possible with God only to remove?

Therefore, since there is no instance to be found in scripture, of directing and requiring sinners to do that as their duty, which is consistent with continuing impenitent; but whenever they are addressed, they are exhorted and commanded to repent, or to do that which implies repentance, and love, and submission to God; this serves to confirm the reasons which have been given under the preceding particulars, to prove that impenitent sinners do no duty; and that nothing which does not imply repentance, can reasonably be proposed or required of them as their duty, in preaching the gospel to them.—Is not the invariable conduct of Christ and his Apostles sufficient to decide this matter? May not their example be safely followed? Is it not wrong, and even presumptuous to deviate from it, and prescribe to men, as their duty, that which they never mentioned in their address to sinners.*

FIFTH.

* Some have mentioned the following passages, and some others, as directions and calls to sinners to do what is there commanded, while they continue impenitent, and in a state of sin. “Strive to enter in at the strait gate. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life, &c.” But it has been observed, by those who have attended to these passages, and others, which have been adduced to the same purpose, that when properly considered with the context, and other parts of scripture, they do not appear to direct to duties, to be done by sinners, while they continue impenitent; but imply those obedi-

FIFTH. TEACHING sinners, that while they continue impenitent, they do no duty, nothing that God requires of them, and that he commands them to repent and embrace the gospel; and that they can have no excuse for not doing it immediately, has no tendency to remove or discourage their attention to the things of the gospel, which relate to their salvation, and to make them careless and secure in their sins; but it has a contrary tendency, viz. to awaken their attention, and to promote their conviction, concern and engagedness of mind, to obtain the salvation of their souls.

In preaching the gospel to them, they are to be told what is their state and character, how guilty they are, and wholly inexcusable in their sins; how infinitely dreadful and dangerous their situation is. The gospel is to be opened and explained to them, and what is necessary in order to their obtaining the salvation, which is therein offered to sinners; And they are to be called upon to repent and embrace the gospel as their first and immediate duty; for the neglect and refusal of which, they can have no possible excuse; but it is a most aggravated and dangerous sin. The motives and encouragement to embrace the gospel, are to be set before them; and the promises to all who comply are to be urged; and the awful threatnings to all who refuse, and continue in their impenitence, denounced. "He that believeth, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

Surely nothing can be thought of or devised, that would be better suited than this, to arrest and awaken the
attention

ent exercises of heart, which are connected with salvation. No command or direction which is to be found in scripture, can reasonably be understood as prescribing only that which sinners are to do, and may do, while impenitent and disobedient; unless it be expressly said that they are to do it, and may do what is commanded, while such. It may be presumed, no such passage of scripture will ever be produced, as it would appear to contradict the rest of the Bible, and to be even a contradiction in terms.

attention of sinners ; and give them the greatest uneasiness and concern, in a view of the wretched, dangerous situation in which they are, while they continue impenitent rejecters of the great salvation. And it is impossible that any person should go on, careless and easy in sin, who so believes and realizes these truths, as to make the deep impression on his mind, which they are suited to produce. This has been proved by fact and experiment in thousands of instances. By such preaching, a great and general awakening and concern was spread through the nation of the Jews, under the ministry of John the Baptist ; and many pressed into the kingdom of heaven. He laid before them their sin and danger, and called upon them to repent and fly from the wrath to come ; and prescribed no duty or doings short of this, of which we have the least intimation. The Apostles preached after the same tenor, and were succeeded in being the instruments of awakening and converting many thousands. Three thousand were awakened and converted in one day, and under one sermon, preached by the Apostle Peter, in which he proposed nothing to them as duty, to be done by them, short of repentance and believing on Christ. This he inculcated as their next and immediate duty.

The doctrine, that impenitent sinners do no duty, and consequently nothing is required of them as duty, to be done by them, while they continue impenitent, is liable to be abused by men ; and no doubt has been perverted and abused to bad purposes ; as the gospel itself, and every truth contained in it, has been, by men of corrupt minds. But this is not the least evidence, that it is not an important, revealed truth. It has been said, that according to this, nothing is required of impenitent sinners, and they have nothing to do. Since they have no heart to repent, they have nothing to do ; they will therefore

therefore not concern themselves about religion or salvation, nor pay any attention to these things. And some, perhaps many, are professing to practice upon this, and to neglect all attention to religion, and concern about it; and to indulge themselves in a course of vice, under the notion that nothing is required of them, which they have a heart to do; and therefore there is no encouragement to attend to the gospel, or any advantage in it.

What has been just now observed, is a sufficient confutation of such a sentiment and practice. It appears that there is enough to be said to sinners; and how much is required of them, even more than they are disposed to do. And are they to be wholly excused; and is nothing to be required of them, because they are not willing to do it? They are to be warned, and called upon to repent, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. Thus the prophets were ordered to do; and thus did John the Baptist, Christ and his Apostles. And by attending on them, many were convinced and persuaded, and found a heart disposed to repent and obey. And there is no encouragement to hope for salvation in any other way.

It is contrary to the plain dictates of reason and scripture, to suppose, that men may not be required and commanded by God, to do that which they are not willing to do, and when it is certain they will not comply with the command, unless God shall give them a heart to obey, make them willing by his power, and work in them to will and to do it. He has a right to speak and command, whether they have a heart to obey or not. If he have not, there can be no law, moral government, or sin.

There are the following reasons for pointing out to men their duty, and requiring them to repent and embrace the gospel, in order to be saved, though they be now impenitent, and have no heart to comply; and it

is certain they never will have, till God gives them a new heart.

1. Because this is their duty, and it is proper and important that they should be told, and be made to know what is their duty : For,

2. If they know not what is their duty, and what is necessary for them to be and do, in order to be saved, they cannot know what their state and character is, whether they be willing to comply with it or not ; and consequently, will not know what obstinate, wicked hearts they have, and what need they stand in of sovereign grace, to give them new hearts ; which is of the greatest importance to be known.

3. Because they must so far actually comply, as to repent and obey the gospel, or perish. Therefore, as they must really do this, and it must be their own voluntary act, in order to be saved, it is proper and necessary, that they should be made to know it, by requiring it of them. And the gospel cannot be preached in any other way.

4. Because in this way, sinners are brought to repentance, and have a heart given them to embrace the gospel. As they could not be under advantages to do this, unless the gospel were preached to them, and they were called upon to repent and believe ; so men are brought to this in no other way, and by no other means, but the preaching of the gospel : And under this, and when men enjoy the gospel, God opens the hearts of whom he pleases, to receive the truths which are published, and to obey them, as he opened the heart of Lydia to receive the gospel preached by Paul. When men are required to repent and embrace the gospel, it is not known to any man that they will not have a heart, and be willing to comply, till the experiment is made, and it appears that they continue impenitent : And if they appear to remain impenitent

itent for a time, it is not known that they will not soon come to repentance. God is under obligation to none, and he gives a heart to repent, to those who live under the gospel, to whom he pleases, and when and where he sees fit. But it appears that all have not such an heart given them. The gospel is preached to many, who persevere in rejecting it, and perish more dreadfully, than if they had never heard of it. It is made a savour of death unto death to them.* Therefore,

5. Many important ends are answered by preaching the gospel to them who never have a heart to repent and embrace it; by which they have salvation freely offered to them, and they are required to hear and obey.

This is necessary, in order to preach the gospel to any; for none knows but God, who will repent and accept of the salvation which is offered, till the trial is made, and the offer is made to all who hear it; and no distinction can be made, till men distinguish themselves, by believing, or rejecting the gospel. This is also necessary in order fully to express and show the free grace exhibited in the gospel. By this are discovered the exceeding obstinacy and wickedness of man, in his rejecting such a kind offer of pardon and salvation, and his great ill desert; and it will greatly illustrate the justice and propriety of his eternal punishment. And the distinguishing, sovereign grace of God, to those who embrace the gospel, and are saved, will hereby be set in a more clear and affecting light, than otherwise it could be.—And many other important ends will be doubtless answered, which are not now thought of by man.

SIXTH. TEACHING men that they may do that which is their duty, and what God requires them to do, while they continue impenitent, and in an unconverted state,

* 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

state, appears to have a bad influence many ways, and tends to delude them, and prevent their embracing the gospel.

This tends to deceive them, with respect to their own true character, and make them to think much better of themselves, than they ought to think ; and to overlook the exceeding obstinacy and wickedness of their own hearts ; and that there is no good thing in them, and they are wholly undone and lost in themselves : And therefore tends to prevent their understanding the gospel, and coming to Christ, who came to seek and to save those only who are lost.

Men, through the natural pride of their hearts, are disposed to shut their eyes against that light which discovers their evil deeds, and lays open the total depravity and wickedness of their hearts ; and are therefore ready to lay hold on any thing which opposes, and tends to shut out this light. And so long as they are told, and believe they are doing some duty, they will think they have some good thing in their hearts, and do that which is pleasing to God ; and will naturally, and even necessarily rely upon it, as in some degree, at least, recommending them to the favour of God, which will effectually prevent their coming to Christ, as poor and wretched, blind and naked.

And this way of teaching sinners, has a natural and strong tendency to lead them to think and feel, that they have some excuse for not repenting and believing on Christ ; and that they are not blameable for this, nor can it reasonably be required of them. For while they are directed to do some things as duty, which are consistent with impenitence, and are expressly told they are to be done by unrenewed sinners, antecedent to their repentance, and embracing the gospel, they are naturally led to think, there is such difficulty in the latter, to which they
find

find no heart or inclination, that they are not obliged to repent immediately; and that their duty consists chiefly, if not wholly, in waiting on God, for a heart to repent and embrace the gospel: And in this way, they continue blind to their greatest sin, and which is the chief aggravation of all their sins, viz. unbelief; and imagine they are doing their duty, and waiting on God for his blessing, with an impenitent, rebellious heart, and while they are "abominable disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate!"

It has been observed, that it is probable, duties to be done by impenitent, unconverted sinners, while they continue such, would never have been thought of and urged, had not an opinion been entertained, that they are under an inability to repent and believe on Christ, which does excuse them, in some measure, at least, for continuing impenitent, and unconverted. From this apprehension and sentiment, sinners have not been called upon to repent and embrace the gospel immediately; but to do some lower duties, which do not imply repentance, or renovation of heart; which are required as the *instrumental duties*, in order to obtain saving mercies; and which they may and can do, while unconverted; and therefore can have no excuse for neglecting them. And this appears to be confirmed by fact. Most, if not all of those, who have pled for such duties, and have prescribed them to sinners, to be done by them, as unconverted and impenitent, have, at the same time, either expressly or implicitly represented them as under such an inability to perform duties in a holy manner, which does, at least, in some measure excuse, and does not wholly consist in their having no desire or inclination to repent, and opposition of heart, to it; but that there is, in their case, a *cannot*, independent of a *will not*; and that the latter is therefore distinct from the former; and that the former

kind

kind of inability does excuse, as it certainly must, so far as it does not consist wholly in the evil inclination of the will, and is independent of it. And from this opinion, many public teachers, and authors, have not called on sinners and required of them, to repent immediately; but have directed them to do many duties, while they continue unconverted; or at least have insisted chiefly on the latter, as they consider them able to do the latter, though they cannot do the former.

This appears to be one great and chief mean of promoting, confirming and spreading far and wide the doctrine, that sinners are under an inability to repent and believe on Christ, which is a good excuse for neglecting it, and living in an unconverted state. Hence, when they are, in scripture language, called upon to repent, and accept of offered mercy, it is common for them to say, they *cannot* do this, and offer it as an excuse for their not turning to God, and embracing the gospel. And as this is a sentiment so agreeable to the hearts of sinners, as it excuses their impenitence, and helps to shield them against a true conviction of their criminality, in continuing in an unconverted state; and leads them to think they have sincere and strong desires to be christians; but cannot, through some insuperable difficulty, independent of their will, which cannot be removed by their inclination and endeavours to do it; they greedily imbibe it, and are disposed to hold it fast. So long as this sentiment is cordially embraced, it will prevent a true and thorough conviction of their own character and state; and therefore, has a bad and dangerous tendency.—It is an implicit denial of the total depravity of man; and misrepresents the nature of the sinner's moral depravity, and inability to do that which is holy and good; as if it rendered him innocent and blameless, while he continues unholy and disobedient.

Jesus Christ, indeed, says, "No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him."* And it is abundantly declared in the scripture, that no man will repent, and do what is required of him, unless his heart be renewed by divine influence. But, at the same time, their neglect and refusal to hear and obey, is represented as wholly their own fault; and that their inability is their crime, consisting wholly in the inexcusable wickedness of their own hearts. And the requirement is not laid aside or lowered, because they are unwilling to obey; and something short of a compliance substituted in the room of it. When Christ spake the words that have been mentioned, the context shows that he did not mention their inability as any excuse for their not coming to him; but considered it as very criminal in them, and as rather an evidence and aggravation of their wickedness. And he constantly invited and required all to come to him; and told them their inability consisted in the strong and fixed opposition of their hearts to it. He said, "Ye *will not* come to me, that ye might have life." We do not find him saying, Since ye are not able to come to me, I will prescribe to you some other duty, which you may and must do, while you refuse to come to me, and have such a strong opposition of heart to me, that you cannot come. Nor has any one yet been able to discover any duty enjoined by him, which men may do with a heart which is wholly in opposition to him.

It is now left to the reader to judge, whether the particulars which have been here mentioned, considered in their connexion and consequences, do not prove the truth of the proposition to which they relate; and make it evident, that in preaching the gospel, nothing is proposed and enjoined as duty, to be done by men, which is consistent with their rejecting the offers of it, and continuing impenitent.

SECTION

S E C T I O N X.

That all true Believers, do persevere in Faith and Holiness, to the End of Life, and cannot fail of Eternal Salvation.

TH E doctrine of the perseverance, and final salvation of all who believe in Christ, and are once interested in the covenant of grace, has been repeatedly brought into view, especially in the three preceding sections. It has been asserted, or often supposed, in what has been said on faith, justification, and the covenant of grace ; and some scriptures have been mentioned, which do suppose and assert it. But it is proper that this point should be more particularly considered and explained, and the evidence of the truth of it, be set in as clear and convincing light as may be.

Indeed, this doctrine is so connected with the other doctrines which have been advanced in the foregoing parts of this system, and so implied in them, or follows from them, as a natural and undeniable consequence, that they who understand and believe them, will not hesitate about the truth of this. They only are disposed to deny, or doubt of the truth of this doctrine, and do not see the evidence of it in divine revelation, who do not believe man, to be naturally so totally corrupt, and so absolutely dependent on God, for a new heart, and every degree of holiness, and for salvation ; and that all this so wholly depends on the decree and will of God, as has been represented above : But imagine that the sal-
vation

vation of men, depends on their free will and conduct, independent of God, in such a manner and measure, that *they* turn the scale in favour of their salvation, and not God, by any powerful influence of his, which shall determine whether they shall be saved or not. And therefore, if they do now believe, and are in favour with God, it wholly depends on themselves, and not on any particular, determining influence of heaven, whether they shall persevere or not, in faith and holiness, to the end of life; consequently there is no security against their falling away, and perishing. Therefore, if the doctrines which have been advanced in this system, have been proved to be contained in the holy scriptures; and consequently, that the scheme just mentioned, is erroneous and unscriptural, the doctrine now under consideration, will be admitted of course, without any dispute. In order to explain this doctrine, and remove or obviate mistakes and misrepresentations respecting it, and state the evidence of the truth of it, the following observations must be made.

1. That believers never will totally and finally fall away, so as to perish, is not owing to the nature of true grace, or any power or sufficiency in themselves to persevere unto the end; but this depends wholly on the will, and constant influence and energy of God, working in them to will and to do. They are kept *by the power of God*, through faith unto salvation. It is God, who having begun a good work in them, will carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ.* If the holy spirit were taken from the believer, and he left to himself to stand or fall, he would immediately cease to be a believer, and fall totally from a state of grace.

2. The perseverance of believers is consistent with their being sanctified but in part; and guilty of much

sin ; and even by surprise, and great temptations, of particular gross outward acts of sin. But they never become totally corrupt and sinful, as they were before, and as all the unregenerate are ; and they do not sin *with their whole heart* : They being born of God, do not commit sin, in this sense, and as others do ; “ for his seed remaineth in them : And they cannot thus sin, because they are born of God.”* By falling into sin, they may bring themselves into great darkness, and lose all sensible evidence that they are born of God : But their faith and grace never wholly fails ; so that they do not fall from it totally ; but this spiritual life continues in some degree of it, at least, and it will sooner or later, and will doubtless in ordinary cases, very soon, kindle up in renewed sensible acts of repentance, faith and love. Peter was an instance of this ; by which this observation is illustrated.

3. The certain perseverance of true saints in faith and holiness, unto salvation, does not imply or suppose, that they shall be saved, whether they thus persevere or not ; or that they shall persevere without persevering. It would be quite needless to observe, that such a palpable contradiction is not implied in this doctrine, were it not that some have seemed to understand it so. They object to the doctrine ; the tendency of it, to make those who believe it, careless about a holy life, and to lead them to indulge their lusts, and live in sin. There can be no tendency in this doctrine to this, unless the certainty of the perseverance of believers in faith and holiness, renders it needless to persevere in faith and holiness, which is impossible, as it is a contradiction in terms. If true believers shall persevere in faith and holiness ; then such perseverance is absolutely necessary to salvation, and there is no other way to be saved ; and he is not a
true

* 1 John iii. 9.

true believer who does not thus persevere. No doctrine therefore, can more assert and establish the importance and necessity of a careful and resolute perseverance in holy living, than this. And it affords the greatest encouragement to the believer, to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling, while he relies upon the promise and grace of God, to work in him, both to will and to do.*

This leads to another observation.

4. The certain perseverance of the saints, in faith and holiness, does not render their activity, constant care and exertions, needless, or suppose this unnecessary; but the contrary. It is *their own* perseverance in faith and holiness which is made certain; they themselves, therefore, must live by faith and in the practice of holiness; for they cannot persevere in any other way, but by a constant attention to this matter, watching and praying, and working out their own salvation with fear and trembling. To neglect this, and to take a contrary course, is to draw back unto perdition, and not to believe to the saving of the soul.† How absurd is it then, for a person to say, or think, that since his care and activity, in living a holy life, are made certain, as necessary in order to his salvation: therefore he will exercise no care and concern about it, nor do any thing towards it, but the contrary! It is very certain, that he who has a prevailing disposition to think and feel thus, is not only guilty of gross contradiction, but is a stranger to true faith, and has neither part nor lot in this matter. Therefore,

5. The doctrine of the certain perseverance of believers unto the end of life, is so far from rendering the use of means, and setting motives before them, in order to promote and effect, their living a life of faith and holiness, unreasonable or needless, that all this is as impor-

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tant

* Phil. ii. 12, 13.

† Heb. x. 39.

tant and necessary, as if this doctrine were not true, and their perseverance were not made certain.

If God have promised that all who are interested in the covenant of grace, shall persevere in a holy life, and in this way be saved; this supposes that they shall be under advantages, and have proper means used with them, in order for this, and that they shall have motives constantly set before them, to induce and persuade them to obedience, and live a holy life; and to guard them against the contrary. Hence the propriety and necessity of all the institutions of the gospel, directions, instructions, exhortations and commands, and the various and numerous motives, to furnish believers with proper means, and to induce them to persevere in their faith; without which, the intention and promise of God, that they shall persevere, could not be effected in a proper, rational way, consistent with the nature of man.

How greatly mistaken are they then, who suppose, if the perseverance of believers be made certain in the covenant of grace, this would render all such means, motives, exhortations, promises and threatnings useless and unreasonable! And because these do take place, according to the word of God, they infer, that this doctrine cannot be true!

6. This doctrine supposes perseverance to the end of life, in faith and holiness, necessary in order to salvation; that such only shall be saved: Therefore, that they who do not persevere, will not be saved, but perish; whatever good attainments, faith and holiness they may appear to have for a while; and however confident they may be that they shall be saved.

If believers might be saved, without persevering in faith, to the end of life, there would be no need that their perseverance should be made sure; and there would be no propriety in promising this, as such a great privilege,

privilege, and as if it were, necessary to salvation. It is abundantly declared in scripture, that they only who overcome and keep the words of Christ to the end, shall be saved. "He that continueth to the end shall be saved. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. If a man *abide not in me*, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered."* These and many other declarations in the scripture of the same kind, are so far from being inconsistent with the doctrine of the certain perseverance of all true believers, that the truth contained in such passages, is supposed, and implicitly asserted in this doctrine.

It has been asked, why such declarations are made in the scripture, if no true believer does ever fall away ; but certainly will continue to the end ?

The answer is at hand. They are made, because it is true that none can be saved, unless they persevere ; and it is proper and important, that this truth should be known, and kept in view, to prevent persons flattering themselves, that they have been, and are true believers, though they sit still and do little or nothing, neglecting the work of faith, and labour of love ; and though they have fallen into a settled course of apostacy. And such declarations, are suited, and even necessary, to distinguish true believers from others ; and to excite them to care and watchfulness, lest they should apostatize ; and to zeal and activity in obedience, and engagedness to persevere in faith and holiness, by a patient continuance in well doing, seeking for glory, honour and immortality.

If any say, that these declarations suppose that true believers may fall away, and perish ; and therefore are inconsistent with the certain perseverance of all such :

Answer. This is certainly a mistake. They neither assert, nor suppose, any such thing. Every true believer

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may

* Mat. x. 26. John viii. 31. xv. 6.

may persevere to the end, consistent with these declarations, and they may be the means of their persevering.— It is true, that he who does not persevere, but draws back and apostatizes, shall not be saved ; but it is equally true, that all such never were true believers ; but their faith was essentially different from true faith, and therefore, only a temporary faith ; and this is discovered by their falling away. Therefore, the Apostle John says, of such apostates, “ They went out from us, but they were not of us : For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us : But they went out, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.”* These declarations do indeed suppose, that persons may set out and run well to appearance, for a time ; but after that, when temptation comes, fall away, because they had no root in themselves, and never were true believers ; and are suited to detect such, and to warn and guard all against apostacy.

7. That the perseverance of believers in holiness to salvation, is secured to them in the covenant of grace, is abundantly asserted in divine revelation. A number of passages which express or imply this doctrine, have already been occasionally mentioned, in the foregoing sections, and it would swell this section into a volume, to transcribe all the passages of scripture, which either expressly assert, or imply the certain perseverance and salvation of all who once become truly pious : Only a few therefore, of the many, will be mentioned. Indeed, if there were but one sentence in the Bible, which expressly, or even implicitly asserted this doctrine, which is so reasonable and desirable, it would be a sufficient warrant to receive it, as an important truth.

The promises so often made to them who believe, that they shall be saved, do connect salvation with the first
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act of faith, which supposes, as has been before observed, that true faith, is always a persevering faith; which could not be so, were it not made such, by the promise of God in the covenant of grace, by which he engages to the believer, that his faith shall never fail; but that he shall persevere in believing, so that the end of his faith shall be the salvation of his soul. The Apostle Peter gives this account of the matter, and tells in what way, believers persevere unto salvation. Speaking to believers, he tells them, That an inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is reserved in heaven for them, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.* The certainty of the final salvation of every one who believeth on him, is very particularly and expressly asserted by Christ, in the words following: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."† The believer could not be said to *have everlasting life*, and to have already passed from death unto life, so as never again to fall into a state of condemnation, unless salvation were made sure to him, upon his first believing, and consequently perseverance in faith, unto salvation, in the covenant of grace, the tenor of which is here expressed by the Redeemer. Still more express and strong, if possible, is the following declaration of his: "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, *I will in no wise cast out*. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."‡ And again he says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither

* 1 Peter i. 4, 5.

† John v. 24.

‡ John vi. 37, 40.

neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all ; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* Agreeable to this, he prays the Father, that all who did then believe him, and all that should believe to the end of the world, might be kept secure from falling away, and persevere in holiness to eternal life. " Holy Father, keep through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word."†

The Apostle Paul asserts, that salvation and eternal glory is connected with conversion and justification, in the following remarkable passage, in his letter to the church at Rome ; where he traces the salvation of sinners, from the foundation to the topstone. We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified : And whom he justified, them he also glorified."‡ From this he goes on to the end of the chapter, to show the impossibility, that any true christian, should be separated from the love of God and Christ, and so perish. The Apostle John says to believers, " The anointing which ye have received of him, *abideth in you* : As the same anointing teacheth

* John x. 27, 28, 29.

† John xvii.

‡ Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30.

teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie ; and even as it hath taught you, *ye shall abide in him.*”* By the anointing is meant the Spirit of Christ, which he promised his disciples should be in them and *abide with them forever.* “ I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, *that he may abide with you forever ;* even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him ; but ye know him, for he dwelleth in you, *and shall be in you.*”† Of the same holy spirit he speaks, in his discourse with the woman of Samaria, when he says, “ Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him *shall never thirst :* But the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, *springing up into everlasting life.*”‡ By this spirit, believers are said to be *sealed to the day of redemption.* “ Who hath also *sealed us,* and given the *earnest of the spirit* in our hearts.”§ To be sealed, is to be secured as the property of Christ, and belonging to him, and a certain token of complete redemption. The *earnest*, is a part given, as a token and pledge that the whole shall be granted, even eternal life.

8, That all true believers in Christ, should persevere in faith, and none of them perish, is consistent with all other truths contained in divine revelation, and is really contained in many of them ; and this appears every way proper and reasonable.

That this doctrine is not inconsistent with any thing contained in the scripture, has been made evident ; it is hoped, from what has been briefly said, in some of the above particulars, to obviate the objections which some have made to it, from not understanding it, or the scriptures, on which they have grounded their objections. And if man be so wholly dependent on God for salvation ;

* 1 John ii. 27. † John xiv. 16. 17. ‡ Chap. iv. 14.

§ 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. iv. 30.

tion ; so that this must be determined by his sovereign will, as it has been made evident the scripture represents him to be ; and he is brought into a state of salvation, by the sovereign, almighty influence of the divine Spirit, giving him a new heart, and making him a new creature, by which he is brought into a spiritual, vital union to Christ, and made a living member in his body, the Church ; and is pardoned and justified for Christ's sake ; being, by this union, interested in his atonement and righteousness ; and is constantly dependent on God for every holy act and right thought : Then it is unreasonable to suppose, that after God has done all this, of his own sovereign will, and made the believer so far meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, having delivered him from the power of darkness, and translated him into the kingdom of his dear Son ;* he should relinquish this work, and give him up to the power of sin and satan, and leave him to perish forever : But on the contrary, it is most reasonable to conclude, with the Apostle Paul, and with him, " Be confident of this very thing, That he who hath begun such a good work in him, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."†

I M P R O V E M E N T.

I. SEE how exactly the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace are suited to the circumstances, and to the heart of the believer ; and to exhibit and display sovereign grace. He is absolutely dependent on God for holiness, and perseverance in it, unto salvation ; he feels himself infinitely unworthy of any favour, and without strength in himself to do any good thing ; he is surrounded with temptations and dangers ; and satan, that strong and subtle enemy, is seeking to destroy him. He would sink into despair immediately, were it not for the promised

* Col. i. 12, 13.

† Phil. i. 6.

promised power and grace of Jesus Christ, who has promised he will never leave nor forsake them who trust in him: But this gives him sufficient and full support, and he acknowledges and admires the wisdom and grace of this covenant, as everlasting, and ordered in the best manner, in all things, *and sure*; and says with David, "This is all my salvation, and all my desire." He knows this is no contrivance of man, no fiction, but an important, glorious reality, which has a divine stamp upon it. He believes, and rejoices, in hope of the glory of God.

II. WE hence learn, what encouragement the poor, lost, infinitely guilty, and miserable sinner, has to come to Christ, and trust in him for every thing he can want. Christ ensures salvation, and perfection in holiness, to every one who will come to him; and promises he will *in no wise* cast them out, or forsake them. He will be their righteousness, wisdom and strength. He will furnish them with the whole armour of God, and teach their hands to war, and their fingers to fight, successfully against sin and the devil, and lead them on to complete victory.

III. THIS doctrine affords sufficient encouragement to the trembling believer, who knows his own weakness, to make a public profession, and espouse the cause of Christ before the world, and engage, by his grace and assistance, to serve him, devoting himself to his interest and honour.

Some, who thought they were friends to Christ, have been afraid to make a public, christian profession, lest they should fall away and dishonour him, by their sinful conduct. This is owing to their not well attending to the promises of the covenant of grace. If they have a heart

heart to devote themselves to the service of Christ sincerely, and choose a holy life, in obedience to him, as the greatest privilege and happiness, they may safely trust in him for that assistance by which they may live a holy life; for he has promised never to leave nor forsake them, but that his grace shall be sufficient for them.

SECTION XI.

Concerning Believers Assurance of Salvation.

THEY who deny the certain perseverance of all true believers, do of course, not believe it is possible that any man should be sure of his own salvation: And it is certain, that the latter, would not be possible, were the former not true. But if the covenant of grace contain a promise, that all who believe, shall persevere in faith unto salvation; so that there is a certain connexion between the first act of faith and salvation; which has been proved in the preceding section; then, if the believer can know that he does now believe, he may infer, with certainty, that he shall be saved. He has just so much evidence, that he shall be saved, as he has, that he is a true believer, or is possessed of any thing which implies saving faith: And if he can be sure, that he has any exercises of this kind, he may be equally sure of final salvation.

This subject, may be explained, and the truth vindicated, by attending to the following particulars.

1. Assurance of salvation, is not essential to saving faith; or a person may believe in Jesus Christ, and hereby be brought into a state of salvation; and yet not know

know that he does believe in Christ, as they do who shall be saved.

Many have thought, that saving faith consists in believing that they shall be saved ; that God loves them, and designs to save them, and Christ died for them, &c. or that this is, at least, implied in faith ; that it is in this sense, an *appropriating act*, taking salvation as their own, knowing that it belongs to them, and that they shall be saved. But it has been shown, in the section on the nature of saving faith, that such a notion of faith is not agreeable to scripture. Saving faith is a direct act, believing the gospel to be true, approving of it, and receiving Christ as he is there offered. This may take place, and a man be a real believer in Christ, without any knowledge or consciousness, or even the least thought, that he does believe, or that his exercises are saving faith ; for the latter consists in reflex acts of the mind, in a view or consciousness of what does, or has taken place in his heart, or what are the direct acts of it towards Christ, &c. The knowledge or assurance, that we do believe, is a reflex act of the mind, upon what has taken place in our hearts, by which we obtain a knowledge that we have believed, or do now believe : So that assurance of salvation, or that we have saving faith, is consequent on our believing ; and saving faith must exist in the mind, and every thing essential to it must take place, before we can be conscious that we do believe, or have any knowledge of it, which consists in reflecting on those acts of our hearts, which are saving faith, or do imply it. These are, therefore, two distinct things in their nature, and are not necessarily connected. A person may have saving faith, and yet not reflect upon the acts of his own heart, so as to know or believe that they are those in which faith consists.

Saving faith is an appropriating act in this sense ; it is receiving Christ as our saviour, taking salvation, as it is offered,

offered, and laying hold of the covenant of grace, so as to insure all the blessings of it, to ourselves. But this may be done without knowing that we do it, or thinking that the exercises of our minds, in which this consists, are of the nature of saving faith. This knowledge is obtained by reflecting upon our own exercises, with discerning to see of what kind they are; and the latter is not necessarily connected with the former, as has been now observed.

It is granted, that saving faith, even in the first acts of it, may be so strong and clear, that it may be attended with a consciousness, and assurance, that the person does believe, and shall be saved; so that believing and assurance of salvation, may be both together, and connected, in this respect; but still they are two distinct things, and consist in distinct acts of the mind; and the latter is consequent on the former; though the believer may not distinguish them, and not know that they are not one and the same act.

2. Assurance of salvation, therefore, consists in a person's consciousness of the acts of his own heart, that he does believe in Christ; and knowing from intuition or reflection, that he has attained to those things which imply saving faith, and do accompany salvation, being infallibly connected with it, by the promise of God, in the covenant of grace.

3. It is certain, from fact and experience, that persons may know what the exercises of their own hearts are; and it is reasonable to suppose this may be the case in the instance before us. We do know what we love, and what we hate, in many instances at least; and what kind of exercises we have, respecting many objects with which we are concerned, which are agreeable, and which are not so. We know we love some persons, and that others are very disagreeable to us. And no reason can be given, why

we may not believe and be sure, that the gospel is true, and that Christ is the Son of God, and be so pleased with his character, and the way of salvation by him, and have such strong and fervent love to him, as that we may be conscious that we have these exercises, and be sure we do believe, and love the Lord Jesus Christ, in sincerity and truth. Peter, was so conscious and sure that he loved his Lord, from an intuitive view, and reflection on the feelings and exercises of his own heart, that he could say, with confidence, and great assurance, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." And it is very unreasonable to suppose, that no person can have such constant, strong love to Christ, as to be sure he does love him, and has all those exercises which are implied in faith and love. Nothing can prevent this, but the low degree and weakness of these exercises, and the strength and appearance of contrary exercises, or mistakes with regard to the nature and operation of true grace.

4. It appears from scripture, that many good men, were in fact assured of their salvation. Job says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God : Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."* The Psalmist says, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. My flesh and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."† And it appears from the New Testament, that the Apostles, and many, if not the most of the primitive christians, were sure that they should be saved.—The Apostles speak in the language of assurance ; and represent this to be common to believers of that day,

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* Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

† Psal. lxxiii. 24, 26.

by using such language in their name. The Apostle Paul says, "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded (or confident) that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that day. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course: Henceforth, there is laid up for me, a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me, at that day."* And he speaks of himself as sure of salvation, in his letter to the church at Philippi. "I know that this shall turn to my salvation, through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."† And he uses this language of assurance, when he speaks in the name of others, as well as of himself. "We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, &c."‡ The Apostle John, speaks the same language. "We know, that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. We know, that we are of God. And we know, that the Son of God, is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true: And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."§

Thus it appears from scripture, that believers have been in fact assured of their salvation: And therefore, that it is possible, that others, and even all believers, may attain to this, in the same way in which *they* obtained it, viz. by arriving to such a degree of faith and christian exercises, as to produce a consciousness, and certain knowledge, that they have faith, or christian holiness, which is connected with salvation.

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* 2 Tim. i. 12. iv. 7, 8.

† Chap. i. 19, 21, 23.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 1-8.

§ 1 John iii. 14. v. 19, 20.

This leads to another particular.

5. There is no other way of obtaining this assurance, but by having such high degrees of christian holiness, in actual exercise ; and accompanied with such spiritual discerning, as that it is seen and known by the person who has it, to be real gospel holiness, or true, saving faith. True grace, or holiness, is in the nature of it, clearly distinguishable from every thing which is not so : And if it be not distinguished, by the believer, and seen and known to be what it is, it must be owing either to the small degree of it, so that it cannot be discerned, or to the want of spiritual sight and discerning, or both of them. And indeed, it is always owing to both these, if they may be considered as distinct things, which they really are not ; for they both go together, and are inseparable.* Holiness is itself, light and discerning ; and the more there is of this in the heart, and the stronger and more constant the exercises of it are, the more the mind is illuminated, and sees spiritual things, more clearly ; and with greater certainty discerns and distinguishes between true grace, and that which is not of that kind. Therefore, an increase of holiness, magnifies the object, and renders it more visible, and easy to be seen by the spiritual eye, so as to be distinguished from every thing else ; and at the same time, is the spiritual eye, and increases the spiritual sight and ability of discerning, so as more clearly and with greater certainty to see and distinguish truth from falsehood. Therefore, in proportion to the degree of holiness exercised, other things being equal, there will be evidence to the mind, that such are the exercises of it, and consequently that they are connected with salvation ;

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and

* Though the exercise of holiness, and spiritual discerning, are several times mentioned distinctly, in this section, it is not intended that they should be understood as two really distinct things. Holiness, is spiritual light and discerning ; and spiritual light, is holiness. See the Section on Divine Illumination.

and they may rise to such a degree, and holiness be acted out in such a measure and manner, as to be accompanied with great and well grounded assurance, that it is real holiness, which is by the promises of the covenant of grace connected with salvation. Therefore, this is the way which professing christians are exhorted to take, in order to have and maintain, assurance of their salvation.—“And we desire, that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope, unto the end. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.”*—The “Assurance of Faith,” is mentioned in this Epistle,† by which is meant, an assured belief of the truth of the gospel, which is expressed in the following words, by Peter. “*We believe, and are sure*, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”‡ The *assurance of hope*, is an assured hope of salvation, which is the same with assurance of their salvation. And the way to obtain this, which is here proposed, is diligence and engagedness in the exercise and expression of love to Christ, and to his people, in opposition to sloth and negligence; which is the same with the strong and fruitful exercise of christian grace. Therefore,

6. The believer is wholly dependent on God for assurance of salvation. Believers are entirely dependent on God for the least degree of holiness, as it is his sovereign gift; but they have a special and peculiar favour from him, who are brought to such a degree of holy exercise, and spiritual discerning, as to be assured that they are born of God, are his children, and shall inherit everlasting life. It is by the spirit of God witnessing with their spirits, that they are brought to see and know, they are the children of God. This the scripture declares. “The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”§ This is done, not
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* Heb. vi. 11, 12. † Chap. x. 22. ‡ John vi. 69. § Rom. viii. 16.

by any immediate suggestion, revelation or testimony to the believer, that he is a child of God, as some have seemed to imagine ; but by forming the heart to that degree of holy affection, and spiritual discerning, that the believer is able to look on this work of the spirit, and know, that he is born of the spirit. Thus the spirit of God produces this evidence and witness in the heart of the believer, that he is born of God, and gives that discerning to him, that it becomes a witness to his spirit, that the spirit of God is in him, and has formed him to holiness, by which he is become a child of God, and has the spirit of a child, disposing him to look to God, as his Almighty Friend and Father. What the Apostle John says, amounts to the same thing, and may serve to illustrate these words of St. Paul. " Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us. Hereby know we, that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit."*

7. The assurance of salvation is not common to all christians ; many never attain to it, and few, or none of those who do, have it constantly, without interruption.

This is not promised to all believers in the covenant of grace, as perseverance is ; but is given, or withheld, as is most agreeable to infinite wisdom and goodness, and so as to answer the best ends, and be most for the glory of God, the best good of his Church, and of the individual members of it. Assurance is most common among them who are called to distinguished and eminent service and sufferings in the cause of Christ, as they seem to stand in most need of it, to support and animate them, in the midst of the greatest trials, dangers, and worldly evils. Thus, assurance of the love of God, and eternal salvation, seems to have been enjoyed, not only by the Apostles,

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but

* 1 John iii. 24. iv. 13.—See President Edwards, on Religious Affections, First Edition, p. 125—133.

but by christians in general, in their day, as they were called to suffering in a peculiar manner and degree, in consequence of their becoming christians. And those christians who have been called to the greatest labours and sufferings, in all ages since, have appeared to have, and express, the greatest assurance of their own salvation. It has been common for martyrs, to go to the stake, or to other most cruel deaths, in the joyful assurance, that they were going to heaven; as ecclesiastical history abundantly informs us. And in the times of the greatest sufferings of the church of Christ, christians have appeared to be more generally assured of their interest in the covenant of grace.

And this can be accounted for, from what has been said above; for they who are called to extraordinary labour and suffering in the cause of Christ, not only need this support, more than others; but their circumstances are suited to awaken their graces, and excite them to a higher and stronger degree of exercise, than common; by which they have clear evidence, that they have true grace; and God grants his spirit to such, in uncommon degrees, which is a witness within them, to their spirit, that they are the children of God. And often, when christians are on a dying bed, and called to encounter the king of terrors, and feel themselves going into the invisible world, they have a greater measure of the holy spirit, and their faith, and every grace, are in a stronger and more sensible exercise; and they are assured that Christ is their Saviour, and that they are passing into a state of perfect holiness, happiness and glory.

There are different degrees of assurance, which different persons may have, or the same person, at different times. In this imperfect state, none, perhaps, may be properly said to be *perfectly* sure of their own salvation, so that there can be no addition to their assurance. They
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are not so sure of salvation, as they will be, when they actually arrive to heaven, and find themselves in possession of it ; or as *they* are, who are now in heaven. And one christian may properly be said to have a *stronger* assurance than another, and the same believer may have a higher or greater degree of assurance, at one time, than at another, when he may be said to be sure. The disciples of Christ, say to him, upon a particular occasion, " Now are we *sure* that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any one should ask thee : By this we believe that thou camest forth from God."* They believed this before, and were sure that he knew all things ; but now their faith, and assurance, were stronger and increased.

Christians who are not assured of their being in a state of grace, but entertain a *hope* of it, may, and actually do, have a stronger hope, or more hope, at one time, than at another, according to the different degrees in which their graces are in exercise, and as different feelings and exercises, in different circumstances, and on different occasions, take place. Sometimes their hope is assaulted with great and overbearing doubts and fears, and they hardly know, whether they have any hope or not ; and are ready to conclude against themselves, that all is wrong, with respect to them, and they are really in a graceless state. At other times their hope revives, and is stronger, and their doubts, in a great measure, subside. And one christian differs very much, in this respect, from another. The hope of one is more strong and constant ; and he has not so many doubts and fears, respecting his state : Another is generally full of doubts, and his hope is weak, and attended with great diffidence, and does not often rise, so as to expel his fears. This difference, is doubtless owing, in many instances, to the stronger and more

constant exercise of christian holiness in the former ; he having more grace, and with greater fervency of spirit, lives a watchful, prayerful life, and with more engagedness and constancy, attends on all the duties of christianity, than the latter.

But it is not always owing to the different degrees of holiness, that persons thus differ, in their hopes and confidence, respecting their own christian character : But two persons, who have an equal degree of holiness, may greatly differ, as to their hope and confidence, of their being real christians. This may arise partly, from their natural temper and disposition ; partly from other causes, such as the manner of their education, and the instructions under which they have lived ; the habitual way of thinking, to which they have been led, by those with whom they associate ; or the mistakes into which, one or the other has fallen, about the nature and operation of true holiness : The strong, habitual propensity of one, to look on the dark side, and view and attend most to the corruption and evil propensity of the heart, and less to any contrary exercises ; being inclined to conclude against, rather than in favour of himself : The other is of a contrary disposition, and looks more on the favourable side, and makes the best of what he sees in himself, and is not so much disposed to give way to doubts and fears, and suggestions against himself. These and other things, and circumstances, may take place and be the cause of the difference mentioned, in two persons equally holy ; yea, he who doubts the most of his being a real christian, may have more grace than the other, who doubts less, supposing they are both christians, as this difference does not arise always, from their different degrees of holiness, but from other causes, some of which have been mentioned.

If he may be called an assured christian, who rises above all doubts or fear, with respect to his being a real christian, perhaps every believer has this assurance, at some seasons in his life, either at his first conversion, or at other times. At least, his mind is so attentive to the truths of the gospel, and he is so pleased and delighted with them, or with some particular truths; and he is so entertained with the divine character, and that of the Redeemer, that he has no doubts or fears about his own state; and perhaps, for a while, thinks little or nothing about himself; and when he does, and reflects on his own views and exercises, he is raised above all doubt, whether he be in a state of grace or not. But these views and exercises may soon vanish, in a great measure, out of sight, and cease to be so strong and sensible; and his doubts may arise in as great strength as ever, and greater; and he call all in question, and greatly fear he has been deluded, and never known what true holiness is.

And whatever be the degree of positive assurance, to which a christian may arise, above a being freed from all doubts and fears, respecting his present state, and future salvation; yet it must be imperfect, as has been observed, and he liable to change, and to lose it, at any moment. The mind of the best christian is not so fixed, but it may fluctuate like the waves of the sea. He is peculiarly favoured by God, indeed, who is enabled to maintain a constant assurance through a course of years, upon good evidence. He must be eminent in grace, and live in the constant, strong exercise of faith and love, and every branch of christian holiness. But we have abundant reason to conclude, this is not generally true of christians. In this imperfect state of temptation and trial, in which the best christians, have so much sin cleaving to them; if they rise at times above all doubts, and have great assurance, it does not commonly continue, uninterrupted,

a long time, but often subsides soon, and gives place to darkness and doubts. It being built on the sight and knowledge of their holy exercises, it must change and fail, as they alter, and become less visible and sensible, and the sensible and strong exercise of corruption takes place.

It must be observed, however, that the christian, through a long course of experience, in which, after many doubts respecting his state, he has had frequent revivals of his hope, and his doubts have often entirely subsided; and his exercises of grace have been so strong and evident, that he has had a great degree of assurance; may hence be led to maintain a more steady hope, and not admit doubts of his having true grace, when the exercises of it are not so visible and sensible, and much of the contrary, appears in his heart. By long experience, he has found, that though his faith and love have, at times, been out of sight, and contrary exercises of heart, have taken place, and appeared, to an awful degree; yet he has, after this, frequently been revived, and his exercises of christian grace, have been so strong and sensible, that all his doubts have vanished. Hence he is more acquainted with the life of a christian, and the nature of saving grace; and learns that he may have true grace, though it be not always sensibly discerned, and little or nothing but contrary exercises, are perceived; and so does not give way to overbearing doubts, even at such times; but maintains his hope in a more steady manner, grounded on his past experience. But he cannot, at such seasons, when gracious exercises are not actually perceived, and in sight, be *assured*, that he is a christian, and should he continue long in this situation, great doubts and fears, must arise.

8. Every believer would always have assurance that he is a christian, and shall be saved, were it not for the imperfection

imperfection and weakness of those exercises in which christianity consists, and, which is really the same, his small degree of spiritual discerning ; and were there not so much sin, stupidity, and spiritual blindness in his heart.

The holiness in which christianity consists, is, in the nature of it, distinguishable from every thing else, and tends to discover itself, in acting according to its own nature. And nothing can prevent a sight of it, and knowing that it is true holiness, but want of attention and discerning, together with a small degree of it, and that in a great measure, hid and buried in the remaining sinful disorders of the heart, which render it, in a great degree, stupid and blind to the things of the spirit of God. The rules and directions in the scripture, are plain and abundant, by which, true christian holiness, is described in the exercises of it, and distinguished from every thing, which is not holiness : And the spirit of God, in producing, and maintaining grace in the heart of a christian, bears witness, and produces evidence, that he is a child of God ; and if it be not discerned by his spirit, it must be for the reasons just mentioned. It therefore follows, that were it not for those things mentioned, which are in the way of it, every christian would have constant assurance, that he is a believer, and shall be saved. Were his graces in high and constant exercise, and acted out in all proper ways ; and were his moral corruptions consequently in a great measure subdued, and mortified, he could not have a doubt, he must be sure that he is a friend to Christ, and does most cordially embrace the gospel ; and is interested in that everlasting covenant, that is ordered in all things and sure.

9. It is the duty of every christian, to have and maintain a constant assurance that he is a christian, and shall be saved ; and it is, therefore, wholly his fault, for which
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he can have no excuse, if he be at a loss, and doubts whether he be a believer in Christ, or not.

This follows from what has been observed under the last head.

For if it be the duty of christians to live in the constant, vigorous exercise of every grace, and clear discerning of spiritual things, and mortify all their lusts ; with which assurance is connected ; then it is their duty, constantly to have and maintain this assurance, and they cannot fail of it, unless they come vastly short of their duty. It is indeed their duty to be perfectly holy, and every thing short of this, is so far sinful ; but the exercise of holiness, which is greatly short of perfection, is sufficient to assure the christian, that he is really holy, and shall be saved.

It has been observed above, that the believer is entirely dependent on God, for every degree of holiness, and especially for that degree which is necessary in order to a well grounded assurance. But it cannot be inferred from this, that it is not the duty of christians to be holy to such a degree, as to render them sure they shall be saved ; unless such dependence on God, be inconsistent with any possible duty, or sin, which cannot be asserted, consistent with reason, or the Bible. There is no truth asserted more clearly and constantly in the holy scripture, than these two, viz. Man's entire dependence on God for all moral good, or holiness ; and his obligation to be holy, as God is holy ; that this is his duty, and all neglect, and every thing in him, contrary to this, is his crime. He who denies either of those, does so far renounce the Bible.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

I. FROM what has been observed, on this subject, we learn, that they embrace a great and dangerous delusion, who think they are assured of salvation, without the least

least evidence, that they are sanctified, in any degree, or looking inwards to find any holy exercise ; and that to build such assurance upon our good frames, and holy exercises of heart, is a low, legal way of getting assurance, and is not the proper assurance of a christian. That true christian assurance, is built upon a more firm foundation, upon Christ, and the word and promise of God, and not upon the uncertain and changeable feelings and impressions of the heart.

If the assurance, for which they plead, and which they think they have, be examined, it will appear to be built on a sandy foundation, or rather upon nothing. To whom is Christ a Saviour, and to what are the promises of the gospel made ? Christ saves them who believe in him, and them only ; and the promises are made to a certain character, to that faith in Christ, which implies all the branches of christian holiness ; and to no person who has not this character. And no man can have the least evidence, or reason to believe, that he has an interest in any of the promises of the gospel, or shall be saved by Christ ; who has not that holiness which is implied in saving faith, and unless he has evidence of this, in his own mind, by seeing what passes in his own heart, and what are the exercises of that. If assurance of salvation, be not founded upon the knowledge of our own character, it is built upon nothing, and is mere delusion.

II. We learn that no person can have assurance of salvation, from any thing, any circumstance or attainment, which is merely external. Real holiness, or sanctification, is the only evidence that any one can have, that he shall be saved : But this consists in the exercises of the heart, and not in any thing external, any farther than it comes from the heart, and is an expression of what takes place there. Men may make a profession of religion ;

ligion; attend on all the ordinances and institutions of Christ; and their whole external behaviour may be regular and blameless in the sight of man; they may be just and beneficent in their conduct to others; yet if all this do not proceed from a holy disposition and exercises of heart, it is no evidence that a man shall be saved; and considered as separate from the heart, there is no real christianity in it. This is decided by the Apostle Paul: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels; and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor; and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing, and I am nothing."* Men must be acquainted with their own hearts, and know of what nature their internal exercises are, in order to know whether they be christians or not. Indeed, if men think their hearts are right and holy, when their external conduct is not good, regulated by the commands of Christ, they deceive themselves; for though a regular, and good external behaviour, be not any certain evidence of holiness of heart, yet the want of this, and an irregular external conduct, is a good evidence that the heart is not right.

Too many seem to take all the evidence, hope and confidence they have, that they shall be saved, from something merely external, and foreign from any thing in their hearts; either because God smiles upon them, and prospers them in his providence, or from their attending upon the external duties of religion; their regular external conduct, and the practice of justice and beneficence towards their fellow men; and not living in those vices, which many others practice. Such are strangers to true religion, and are wholly deceived in their hopes and expectations of the favour of God. Their character is given by Christ, in the Pharisee, who went up to the temple to pray, and said, "God, I thank thee,
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* 1 Cor. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in a week, I give tithes of all that I possess.”*

A christian may, indeed, have his hope and assurance that he does love Christ, strengthened by adhering to his duty, and steadily obeying him in his external conduct, when called to that which is difficult, and in which he must greatly deny himself. When his grace is thus tried, and does not fail, it is a farther and confirming evidence, that he is, indeed, a true friend to Christ; but in this, the motives and exercises of his heart, are not out of the question, or out of view; but are by such trials, brought into view, and his holiness of heart, shines out more bright, and becomes more evident and visible, not only to others, but to his own conscience; as gold shines more, and proves itself to be true gold, by being tried in the fire. Thus Abraham’s ready obedience to the divine command, to offer his son Isaac, for a burnt offering, was a confirming evidence that his heart was truly pious. “And the Angel of the Lord, called unto him, out of heaven, and said, Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.”†

III. FROM what has been observed on this subject, we learn, that they have no true assurance of their salvation, but are deluded, who say they have great and constant assurance of this, while they live carelessly, and in many respects unbecoming christians. There are such, who do not appear to be conscientious, humble, meek, watchful and prayerful christians, but the contrary; who often express, with the greatest confidence, their absolute assurance of their own salvation. This is an evidence against them, in the view of the judicious, that they do not know what true religion is; and they may reasonably

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* Luke xviii. 11, 12.

† Gen. xxii. 11, 12.

be considered, as “Proud boasters, speaking great swelling words of vanity.” And some speak of their not having a doubt of their being real christians, for a great number of years; but have enjoyed full assurance of their salvation all that time, in such a manner, and who have appeared to live such lives, as to give reason to conclude they know not what true assurance is. If a person who has lived a life eminently devoted to God, and in the constant practice of all the duties of christianity, shining externally in good works, and all the graces of our holy religion, should, on proper occasions, humbly and modestly declare to his christian friends, that he was raised above all doubts about his state, and had, for a long time, enjoyed full assurance of his salvation, no one would have reason to call it in question. But when they make high pretensions to this, whose lives are in no measure answerable; and make no proper appearance of living in the constant and lively exercise of true religion, in a strict, conscientious, holy walk, they are to be considered as poor, mistaken, deluded creatures.

IV. WE learn that the believer's assurance of salvation, has no tendency to lead him to live a careless, ungodly life, but the contrary. It is not consistent with such a life. It necessarily supposes, strong, lively exercises of holiness, and zeal to live a holy life; and can continue no longer than these continue: Whenever his zeal for good works, abates, and is not perceived, and carelessness and sloth take place, the christian will lose his assurance, in a great degree at least, if he were before assured that he was a christian; and doubts will of course arise. The assured christian, therefore, is the most lively, holy christian, and most engaged to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. And he sees more clearly than others, or than he did before, the necessity

cessity of persevering in this way, not only in order to maintain his assurance, but in order to be saved; and feels the great and peculiar obligations he is under, to this, and to love Christ and keep his commandments, who has loved him, and given himself for him; "That he should not hence forward, live unto himself, but unto him who died for him and rose again."* Every assured christian, can espouse the language of an eminent ancient christian, who, when he had full assurance of salvation, said: "I run, *not as uncertainly*: So fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away."†

V. THE doctrine of assurance, as it has been now stated, and explained, may assist persons to determine whether they be believers, or not, and point out the way to obtain assurance that they are such.

1. The true believer desires no assurance of his salvation, but that which has its foundation in holy exercises, and consists in them, so that the former cannot be obtained without the latter. Assurance of salvation would be worth nothing to him, if he could have it, without holiness, or while he had no stronger and more sensible exercises of love to Christ, &c. than he now has. He therefore does not ask for such assurance, nor desire it. It pleases him, that assurance cannot be obtained in any other way, than in the lively and sensible exercise of holy affection.

There are some, who earnestly desire and long for assurance that they shall be saved, and feel, that if they could obtain this, they should be happy, while holiness is not so much the object of their desire and pursuit. These are not seeking the assurance which the christian desires,

* Gal. ii. 20. ‡ Cor. v. 15. † 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27.

desires, nor can it be true assurance, or of any real worth, were it obtained, without holiness. Such assurance will satisfy a selfish person ; because, if he can be assured that he shall be happy, he cares for no more ; and in his idea of happiness, holiness is not included. But not so the true believer.

2. From the preceding particular, it follows, that the true believer, prizes holiness more than assurance, and is more concerned to obtain the former, than the latter.— To be conformed to Christ, and obedient to him in all things, earnestly and constantly devoted to his service and honour, and filled with strong, benevolent love to God, and to man ; is a thousand times more the object of his desire, and prayer, than to be assured, that he shall be saved. Therefore, he desires no other assurance of salvation, than that which is implied in such holiness, as has been observed. Indeed, the true christian, in the exercise of holy affection, or disinterested benevolence to God and man, is seeking more important objects, and events, than his own salvation, and they have the first place in his heart. He seeks first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

On the contrary, the selfish person, desires and seeks his own personal interest, his own happiness, as the most important and supreme good ; and if he can be assured of his own happiness, he has all he wants. Therefore, when persons prize and desire assurance of their own salvation, more than holiness, it is a sign that they are not true believers.

3. The true christian, can have joy and peace in believing, or the joy of faith, without assurance of salvation. The reason of this has just now been given, viz. that he desires and seeks, and consequently places his happiness in better, greater and more important objects, than his own salvation. He rejoices in the truth. In the truths contained

contained in divine revelation, in the divine character, in infinite wisdom, rectitude and goodness ; in the felicity and glory of God ; in the character of Christ, and the way of salvation for man, by him, &c.

The selfish person, seeking nothing but his own interest and happiness, can have no religious comfort and joy, any farther than he thinks himself sure, or hopes that he shall be saved. Therefore, his religious light and darkness, his trouble or comfort, arise wholly from, or consist in his fears, that he is no christian, and shall not be saved ; and in his hope and confidence that God loves him, and he shall be saved. When this appears to be true of any person, it is a sign he is no real christian.

4. The hope and confidence of the true believer, that he is a christian, and shall be saved, rises and sinks, according to the degree of holy exercise, in love to God, &c. This has been illustrated in this section. The hypocrite, can enjoy his assurance without any holiness, or concern about it.

Therefore, the only right way to obtain assurance of salvation, is to press forward in the exercise of holiness, in every branch of it, so as to be *sensibly* a friend to Christ, and devoted to his honour and interest.

SECTION XII.

On the Doctrine of Election.

WHAT has been said in the fourth chapter of the first part, on the decrees of God, includes and establishes the doctrine of particular election ; and this doctrine has been supposed, and in a measure brought into view, a

number of times, in the foregoing sections : But it is thought expedient, and of importance, that it should be more particularly considered, explained, and vindicated. And this will be most properly done in the chapter on the application of redemption, as this limits the application, and points out the subjects to whom it is effectually applied, and who, in the issue, receive the whole benefit of redemption.

The doctrine of election imports, that God, in his eternal decree, by which he determined all his works, and fixed every thing, and every event, that shall take place to eternity, has chosen a certain number of mankind, to be redeemed, fixing on every particular person, whom he will save ; and giving up the rest to final impenitence, and endless destruction.

This doctrine may be explained, and the evidence of the truth of it produced, by attending to the following propositions.

I. MANKIND are entirely dependent on God, on his determination, and sovereign mercy, for salvation. All creatures depend on God for all the good they have.— Their existence, and all their enjoyments, are the fruit of his determination and appointment, which has made the difference between one and another, in every respect. But man is, in a peculiar sense and degree, dependent on the sovereign will and pleasure of God, for salvation. He is utterly *lost* in sin ; not only infinitely guilty, and deserving to be destroyed forever ; but wholly inclined to rebellion, and fixed in a disposition to oppose God, in every method he can take, to recover and save him, unless his heart be renewed by almighty power and grace ; to which favour, none have the least claim, or can have, but are infinitely unworthy of it. And when the way was opened for the pardon and salvation of sinful man,

man, by what the Mediator had done and suffered, consistent with the divine law and righteousness ; yet none could be saved, unless they be renewed by the spirit of God, and made willing in the day of his power. This therefore depends on the determination and purpose of God ; and he “ has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth.” God being under no obligation to save any one of mankind, it must depend on his sovereign will, whether any should be saved : And if any, whether all, or only a part of mankind : And if only some of them, how many, and the particular persons that should be the subjects of this favour. This must be determined by God ; for there is no other being that has a right to determine it, or that can do it ; and it is impossible that God should not determine it. He is infinitely powerful and wise, he knew what was best to be done, and it wholly depended on him to determine and do, that which is on the whole, wisest and best. It belonged to him to decide and fix every thing respecting this matter, “ who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will.”

II. It is infinitely best, and most desirable, that this should be determined by God. He only is infinitely wise and good ; therefore, whatever he determines shall be done, and take place, is perfectly right, most wise and best. It is therefore, infinitely desirable, that he should order ever thing that takes place; and all events ; but more especially those things that relate to the eternal existence and endless happiness or misery of man, whether any shall be saved, or all lost ; and if only a part of mankind be saved, how many, and what particular persons, shall be included in this number. This is a matter of great importance, and not of indifference, whether this person shall be saved, rather than another, and it requires infinite wisdom to determine it right, so as to answer the best ends. Were any creature to determine it, in any

one instance, especially, apostate man, the event might be undesirable, and of infinitely evil consequence. Were man to decide it, independent of God, and were this possible, it would be most undesirable and infinitely dreadful to the wise and good; and they rejoice that this important affair, with all others, is in the hand of him who is infinitely wise and good; who has a right, and to whom it belongs to decide the state of every man, whether he shall be saved, or not; and that he has done it, by an unalterable decree.

III. It is certain from the scripture, that God has determined not to save all mankind; but only a part, and a particular number of them. The Redeemer himself has declared this expressly, and it is abundantly asserted in the Old Testament, and in the New. A number are to go away into everlasting punishment, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is unquenchable: And the smoke of their torment, shall ascend up forever and ever, &c. &c.* Had not God revealed this, it could not have been known what would be the event of redemption, whether all will be saved, or not: But God has made it known.

We are not told in the scripture, the precise number that shall be saved; nor what proportion of mankind will be of this number; but from what is revealed, respecting this matter, it is reasonable to suppose, that many more will be saved, than lost, perhaps some thousands to one.† But, be this as it may, we are certain that the number that shall be saved, is fixed, by infinite wisdom and goodness, and every one of these is known unto

* This has been particularly considered, and proved, by a number of authors. See Dr. Edwards, against Dr. Chauncy. And an Inquiry concerning the Future State of those who Die in their Sins.

† See Dr. Bellamy, on the Millennium. And the forementioned Inquiry. Page 167, &c.

unto God, and their names are written in the book of life, before the foundation of the world. We are also certain, that it is not owing to the want of goodness in God, or the insufficiency of the atonement and merit of Christ, that all mankind are not saved ; for the latter is as sufficient to save the whole human race, as part of them, or one individual ; and the only reason why all are not saved, is, because it is inconsistent with infinite wisdom and goodness ; that is, it is not for the greatest general good. Infinite goodness, in all cases, and forever, opposes and forbids that to take place, which is not for the greatest general good, be that what it may ; and approves and effects that which will answer the best ends, and produce the greatest good, in all cases. We are as certain of this, as we can be, that there is an infinitely wise, good, and omnipotent Being. Therefore, since God has declared, that he has determined, not to save all mankind, we know that this is not consistent with his goodness ; that is, that it is not wisest and best, or, which is the same, it is not for the greatest good of the whole, that all should be saved. God, does not delight in the destruction of sinners, in itself considered, or for its own sake ; and not one would be suffered to perish, if it were consistent with wisdom and goodness, to save them all ; or if this were consistent with the glory of God, or the greatest good of the universe. Nothing can be more certain, than that all will be saved, that can be saved by omnipotence, clothed with infinite wisdom and goodness ; that is, that can be saved consistent with these.—What is inconsistent with infinite wisdom and goodness, cannot be done by a Being infinitely wise and good, though omnipotent. It is *morally impossible* ; for he cannot deny himself, and act contrary to wisdom and goodness. Any man may be absolutely sure that he shall be saved, if it be not inconsistent with the goodness of God, to save him, and,

in this sense, impossible ; or if it be consistent with the greatest glory of God, or the general good. And who, in his senses ; that is, who that is wise and benevolent, would desire to be saved, or could ask for the salvation of any of his fellow men, unless this might be consistent with the glory of God, and the greatest good of the universe ?

As we know not what number of mankind can be saved, consistent with infinite wisdom and goodness, so we are utterly incapable of judging, what particular persons can be saved, consistent with these : But God has determined this, without a possibility of any mistake. He knows what individuals of the human race can be saved, consistent with his glory, and the greatest good of his eternal kingdom ; and who cannot be saved consistent with this, and has determined, and does act accordingly. In this he acts as a sovereign, as being under obligation to none, or not to one, more than to another ; but not arbitrarily, without any wisdom or reason. There is a good reason, why one should be saved rather than another. There is a good reason, why every one of those should be saved, who are, or shall be saved ; and why every one of the rest should not be saved ; from the different natural formation, or capacity, or the different circumstances, to us unknown, and undescribable, which render it wisest and best, most for the glory of God, and the good of his kingdom, that the former should be saved, and the latter lost. This difference in circumstances, &c. originates in the divine decree, and is ordered by God, according to the infinitely wise counsel of his own will ; but it is as real a difference, as if it had not this origin.

IV. We learn from the holy scriptures, that a particular number of individuals are chosen from among mankind,

kind, on whom the divine love and sovereign grace are to be displayed, in their salvation.

Reason teaches us, that this must be so, as has been observed; for it must be determined by God, and he makes the distinction between those who are saved, and those who are lost, as it cannot be done by any one else; and if it were possible, not to be determined by infinite wisdom and goodness, it would be infinitely disagreeable and dreadful to all the wise and good: And God determines all his works, all he will do from eternity. Accordingly the scripture asserts this most expressly and abundantly, in the following passages, and in many others, which it will be needless to mention. The Redeemer often speaks of those who were given to him by the Father, to be redeemed and saved, as being a number selected from the rest of mankind; and says they shall come to him, and he will keep and save them; and his words strongly imply, that they only shall be saved; and that there never was a design to save any, but those who are thus selected and chosen, and given to him, to be saved by him. Therefore he declares, that he does not pray for the salvation of any, except these elect ones, who were given to him. He says, "All that the Father *giveth me*, shall come to me: And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, *that of all which he hath given me*, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."* "I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Fa-
ther,

* John vi. 37, 39.

ther, *which gave them to me*, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life *to as many as thou hast given him*. I pray not for the world; *but for them which thou hast given me*, for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. Holy Father, keep through thine own name, *those whom thou hast given me*, that they may be one as we are. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me."† Could the doctrine of election be expressed more fully and in a stronger manner, by any words whatever? That a particular number of mankind, with every individual of that number, are chosen and selected from the rest, and in the covenant of redemption given to Christ, to be redeemed and saved by him; and that, these alone are to be saved? Agreeably to this, Christ repeatedly speaks of the *elect*, whose salvation is secured; and for whose sake, he orders the great events in the world. "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: But for the *elect's sake*, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, *if it were possible, even the very elect*. And then he shall send his angels, and shall gather together *his elect*, from the four winds."‡

The Apostle Paul, represents the salvation of the redeemed, as originating in the eternal purpose of God, by which they are selected from others; and who, in consequence of this choice and appointment, are saved. "We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called, *accord-*
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* John x. 15, 16. 27, 28, 29.

† John xvii. 1, 2. 9, 10, 11. 21.

‡ Mark xiii. 20, 22, 27.

ing to his purpose. For whom he did *foreknow*, (that is, whom he fixed upon, and chose to salvation,) he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called : And whom he called, them he also justified : And whom he justified, them he also glorified. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's *elect* : It is God that justifieth."* "For the children not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him who calleth. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy, on whom I will have mercy ; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. Therefore, he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth."†

The doctrine of election, as stated above, is implied in these last words, and they are sufficient to prove it, were there nothing more said of it, in the Bible : For if the will of God determines who shall be the subjects of divine mercy, and be saved, and who shall not ; as is here asserted ; then God determined from eternity, whom he would save, and whom he would not save, and fixed upon, and chose a particular number of persons, to be the subjects of his mercy, in their salvation, exclusive of the rest of mankind ; for what God wills to do, he does not begin to will to do it in time ; but his determinations and will, respecting all his works, are without beginning ; His will is unchangeable. "He is of one mind, and none can turn him."

This Apostle, brings the doctrine of election again into view, and most expressly asserts it, in the following words, "God hath not cast away his people which he *foreknew*."‡

Even

* Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30, 33.

† Chap. ix. 11, 15, 18.

‡ The foreknowledge of God, is mentioned here, and in other places, as implying his purpose and decree of election. See Acts ii. 23. xv. 18. Rom. viii. 29. 1 Peter i. 2. The reason why this word is used to denote the

Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant, *according to the election of grace.* What then?—Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; *but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.*”*—

And in his letter to the saints at Ephesus, he considers their election, or being chosen by God, before the foundation of the world; that is, from eternity, by his eternal purpose and decree, as the source and cause of their becoming christians, and of their salvation. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ. *According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.*”†—He speaks the same language in his letter to Timothy. “Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.”‡ He also says, “Therefore I endure all things *for the sake of the elect*, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.”§ The Apostle had no expectation or desire of the salvation of any but the *elect*, whom God hath chosen to salvation, from eternity. Therefore, when he had evidence that any person was a true believer and made holy,

the divine determination, is because the foreknowledge of God, does necessarily imply his purpose or decree, with respect to the thing foreknown; for God foreknows what will be, only by determining what shall be. Therefore, foreknowledge and decrees cannot be separated; for they imply each other, if they be not one and the same. “Grotius, as well as Beza, observes, that *προγνωσις* must here signify *decree*; and Elsnor has shown, it has that signification in approved Greek writers.”—Doddridge’s Note on Acts ii. 23.

* Chap. xi. 2; 5, 7.

† Eph. i. 3, 4, 5.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 9.

§ Chap. ii. 10.

holy, he considered it as the consequence and fruit of election, of his being chosen by God, from the beginning, that is, from eternity. This is his language to the christians at Thessalonica. “We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, *because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.*”*

The Apostle Peter sets this matter in the same light with Paul, and considers true christians, as elected to this privilege, and to eternal life, by the counsel and purpose of God, as the origin and foundation of all this good to them. “Peter, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, *Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.”†

Whoever well considers these passages of scripture, with others of the same tenor, and observes how consistent this doctrine is with the whole of the scripture, which represents man as lost in sin, and wholly dependent on God for salvation; and therefore, that their salvation must all originate in the sovereign purpose and grace of God; and how consistent this is with reason, and that it is indeed, impossible, it should be otherwise: Whoever takes a proper view of all this, must believe, and rest satisfied in the truth, that all the redeemed were chosen to salvation, by the eternal purpose of God, as the origin and foundation of their salvation; and that they who are not thus elected, do perish in their sins. And he who does not see this doctrine plainly revealed in the Bible, must be supposed to read it with strong prejudices against the truth, or with very wrong and false conceptions.

* 2 Thess. ii. 13.

† 1 Pet. i. 1, 2.

tions respecting the subject. To obviate and remove these, is the design of some part of the following.

V. THE elect are not chosen to salvation rather than others, because of any moral excellence in them, or out of respect to any foreseen faith and repentance ; or because their moral character is in any respect better than others. The difference between them and others, in this respect, whenever it takes place, is the fruit and consequence of their election, and not the ground and reason of it. All mankind are totally sinful, wholly lost and undone, in themselves, infinitely guilty and illdeserving. And all must perish forever, were it not for electing grace ; were they not selected from the rest, and given to the Redeemer, to be saved by him, and so made vessels of mercy, prepared unto glory. This is abundantly declared in scripture. This is strongly asserted in a passage which has been mentioned. “ For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, *not of works*, but of him that calleth.” In their election, they are predestinated to be conformed to Christ, in true holiness, and not because it is foreseen they will, of their own accord, be holy, and chosen to salvation for the sake of this. They are elected, through sanctification of the spirit *unto obedience*. Sanctification and obedience, are the consequence of their election, and the privilege to which they are chosen ; and not that out of regard to which they are chosen to salvation. The Apostle tells the elect at Ephesus, that electing love found them dead in trespasses and sins, as sinful as others, and as much the children of wrath. “ But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ. By grace are ye saved, through
faith ;

faith ; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. *Not of works*, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath *beforeordained*, that we should walk in them.”* Election is a doctrine of grace ; it is therefore called “ The election of grace.” “ Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant *according to the election of grace*. And if by grace, then it is no more of works : Otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace : Otherwise work is no more work.”†

VI. THE elect are not chosen to salvation, without holiness and obedience, or whether they be holy, and obey Christ, or not. This is asserted in the passages which have been quoted. Those who are chosen to salvation, are predestinated, or ordained, to be conformed to Christ. They are elected to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience. Holiness, is part of the salvation to which they are elected, and they cannot be saved without it, which consists in activity and obedience. Therefore, no person can have any evidence that he is elected, in any other way, but by making it evident that he is holy and obedient.

This therefore detects the great mistake and delusion, in which they are, who say, if they be elected, they shall be saved, let them do what they will, and live and die in a course of allowed sin. No proposition can be more false than this : It is as contrary to the truth, as it would be for a man to say, if it be appointed that I should live seven years, I shall live, though I die tomorrow. Or if it be appointed that I shall go to such a city, I shall go, though I do not go, and never move out of the place in which I now am.

This

* Eph. ii. 1—10.

† Rom. xi. 5, 6.

This doctrine, therefore, affords no encouragement to sin, or to be indifferent and careless about holiness, obedience and salvation : For this is as certainly the road to hell, if continued in, as if there were none elected to salvation ; and holiness, and care, watchfulness, and diligence, in active obedience, are as reasonable, important, and necessary, as if this doctrine were not true.

VII. THE use of proper means, is as necessary, in order to the salvation of the elect, as it would be, were none elected to salvation. As none are elected to salvation, without holiness, or whether they be holy or not, because this is a contradiction, and impossible ; so none can exercise holiness, and be obedient, without means ; for this is as great a contradiction as the other ; for it is the same, as to suppose that a person may be holy and obedient, without knowledge, attention, and activity ; or without holiness and obedience. Means are as necessary, in order to convert and save the elect, and their persevering in holiness, as they would be if they were not elected.

This is illustrated in the story of the shipwreck of Paul, and those with him. They were all elected to be saved from being lost at sea, and to arrive safe on shore. God had determined this in their favour, and revealed it to Paul, and he had published it to them who were with him in the ship. Yet when the seamen were about to leave the ship, who only had skill to manage it, “ Paul said to the Centurion, and to the soldiers, except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.”* They were elected to that salvation, and it was hereby made sure to them ; but this did not render means, and their activity useless, for they were elected to be saved in this way, and in no other ; and therefore, their salvation was not possible in any other way. And if the Centurion had said to Paul, “ If we are elected to be saved, though the
seamen

* Acts xxvii. 31.

seamen leave the ship, or if we use no means to get to the land, and take no care or thought about it, and though every one of us do what he can, or what he please, to drown himself, and all the rest," he would have spoken contrary to reason and truth.

And there is as much encouragement to use means for the salvation of sinners, as if there were none elected to salvation, and much more: For there would indeed be no encouragement to use any means, or to do any thing, for the salvation of any one, if none were elected to be saved: For if that were true, there would be no salvation for any. St. Paul, therefore, took his encouragement to travel round the world and preach, and go through great labours and sufferings, from the doctrine of election, that he might be the means of saving some of the elect. He says, "Therefore, I endure all things for the sake of the *elect*, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus."* And the Lord Jesus Christ, encouraged him to persevere in preaching at Corinth, because he had much people in that city; that is, there were many elected to salvation in that city.† And there would be no reason or encouragement for any person to use any means, or do any thing, in order to be saved, if none were elected to salvation.

VIII. THE doctrine of election, as it has been stated, does not represent God as *a respecter of persons*, as some have supposed.

To have respect to persons, is to regard and treat them differently, on the account of some supposed or real difference in them or their circumstances, which is no real ground or good reason of such different regard and treatment. As when a judge regards, justifies and rewards, one, rather than another, because he is rich and the other

poor,

* 2 Tim. ii. 10.

† Acts xviii. 9, 10.

poor, or has given him a bribe, or is a near relation of his, or his particular friend; when the other is as really worthy of regard, and his cause more just. This character, of a respecter of persons, belongs rather to a judge, or one who is to regard and reward others, according to their different characters, which are the real ground, and a good reason of making a difference. And is not applicable to a benefactor, in his granting favours, and free, undeserved gifts, to one, rather than another, where there is no desert of such favour, in one more than another; and the favour is not granted under any such notion or pretence. The benefactor, in this case, has a right to do what he will with his own, and bestow his gifts in such a manner, and on such persons, as will best promote his own benevolent purposes, and the general good. And he who is neglected, and does not receive any favour, as he has no claim to any, has no reason to complain. This leads to observe;

IX. No injury is done to those who are not elected, by the election of others to salvation. No one of mankind has any desert of the least favour; but all the human race might justly have been left in a state of ruin, to be lost and miserable forever, and no injury would have been done to any. In this case, the showing favour to one, and saving him, is no injury to the other, who has no favour, and is left to perish; he deserves this as much as if none were saved, and his case is not rendered the worse, in any respect, merely because others do not suffer with him, who deserve it as much as he does. And if the actually making this difference, and saving some, and leaving others to perish, be no injury to the latter, and they have no cause to complain, any more than if others perished with them; then the determination to do this, and electing some to salvation from eternity,

ty, and not electing all, is in no respect injurious to the nonelect, and is no ground of complaint. If a king, pardon a certain number of those criminals who are justly condemned to be put to death, and give the rest up to be executed, they all, equally deserving to die, he does no injury to the latter; they deserve to die as much, and their execution is as just, as if all were put to death. Mercy being showed to others, gives them no claim to it, and they have no cause of complaint, that the same undeserved favour is not showed to them. And it alters not the case, though the king had determined long before it took place, to save some of the criminals alive, and fixed on the individuals, on whom he would bestow this favour, in distinction from the rest.

X. SALVATION may be offered to all men, though only a certain number of them are chosen to salvation, and will be finally saved.

It is not necessary that all should certainly be saved, and that this should be known to be the event of making the offer of salvation to men, in order to make the offer of it to them, with propriety. Men may have the offer of salvation, or of any other good thing, though they refuse to accept of it, and so never obtain it. This, it is presumed, none will deny.

Salvation may be offered to men, though it be certain, and known to God who makes the offer, that they will reject it, and so never be saved. If salvation may be offered to men, though they refuse to accept of it, and their rejecting it be not inconsistent with the offer being made, or their having the offer; then such offer may be made, though it be known, and certain, that they will reject it, and perish; for this being *known*, does not alter the case with respect to the offer; it is as really made, and as really rejected, as if it were not known, but it were

wholly uncertain what the event would be. A rich man may offer an estate to a poor man, though he be certain that he will reject the offer, and die in poverty, as the consequence of his refusal to accept of the favour which is offered.

And if the offer of salvation may be truly and properly made, when it is known to him who makes the offer that it will be rejected; then it may be so made and rejected, though the knowledge of this imply the divine purpose and decree, respecting the matter, or be founded upon it. The sinner is disposed to reject the offer of salvation, and will certainly reject it, unless his heart be renewed by the spirit of God: But he being under no obligation to the sinner to do this, in any instance; and his making the offer of salvation does not lay him under any such obligation, or infer it; he may determine not to do it, by which it is certain, the sinner will not accept of it, and be saved. Notwithstanding this, the offer is really made, and the sinner really rejects it, and is as voluntary and criminal, as if nothing were determined and foreknown, respecting the event. Though God have power to renew every sinner's heart to whom the gospel is preached, and bring them all to embrace the gospel, and be saved; yet he has determined not to do it: And his making the offer of salvation, does not imply that he will do it.

Though a rich man offer an estate to one that is poor, and it is in his power by some extraordinary means and exertions to persuade him to accept it: Yet his making the offer lays him under no obligation to effect it, though he know the consequence will be his rejecting it, and dying in poverty. He may have good reason not to make those extraordinary exertions, and yet be sincere in the offer, on condition he is willing to accept it; and the poor man has the estate really offered to him, and he

he as really rejects it, and is as foolish and criminal in doing it, and as justly suffers the evil consequence, as if the rich man knew not what would be the consequence of making the offer, whether it would be rejected or not; and had no power by any means, to persuade him, and make him willing to accept of it.

It is wise and important, that salvation by Christ should be offered indiscriminately to all, in the publishing and preaching of the gospel, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. It has been observed, that the gospel cannot be preached to any, to whom the offer of salvation is not made, upon their acceptance of it. They who will comply with the offer, or the elect, who shall come to Christ, live promiscuously, intermixed with others; and are not to be distinguished by men from others, until they have the gospel preached to them, and thereby salvation is offered to them, and they believe and embrace the offer. Therefore, the gospel cannot be preached to them, unless it be preached to all. And, as it may be properly preached to all, and salvation be really offered to every one, whether he will accept of it, or not; and the provision made for the salvation of sinners in the gospel, is as sufficient for one as another, and it is offered as a free gift, to every one who believeth, or will receive it: And none can fail of salvation, and perish under the gospel, but by constantly rejecting it to the end of life. Therefore, it is important and necessary, that this offer should be made to all, without any distinction, in order to the salvation of any, even the elect. Besides, this is necessary in order to set in the clearest light, and even to discover, the following important truths.

1. That mankind are so fixed in their rebellion, and such obstinate opposers and enemies of God, and all moral good, that they are disposed constantly, and with all their hearts, to reject mercy and salvation, though

freely offered to them. Nothing is, or perhaps can be, more suited, effectually to bring out and discover the exceeding wickedness and obstinacy of the heart of man, than this. It is of great importance, that a clear and full discovery of this should be made, in order to manifest to their consciences, and to all, the justice and propriety of the awful sentence which will be pronounced against the wicked at the last day.

2. That every one who fails of salvation under the gospel, perishes by his own fault and aggravated wickedness, obstinately persisted in through life : And must ascribe his loss of eternal life, and his falling into endless destruction, wholly to his own folly, and constant voluntary rejecting salvation, freely offered to him : That he has *destroyed himself*, and nothing could have prevented his salvation, and have brought endless destruction upon him ; no decree of heaven, nor satan, nor any of his fellow men ; nor his outward circumstances ; poverty or riches ; honours and high stations ; or a mean and low condition in the world ; health or sickness ; or any temptation and trying situation in life whatsoever ; had he not with all his heart rejected the gospel, and constantly, through his whole life, refused to accept of the salvation which was offered to him ; for which folly and sin he has not the least possible excuse.

This coincides with the preceding particular, and serves to show, how important and necessary it is, that they who perish from under the gospel, should have salvation offered to them, as by this it will appear more clearly, than otherwise it could, that sinners perish by their own fault, and can lay the blame of it to none but themselves ; and that they are justly cast into endless destruction, however infinitely awful and dreadful it be.

And this will serve effectually to confute an assertion which many now make, and show the falsehood of
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of it, viz. that if they be not elected, they must be damned, whatever they may do. It will appear, when the real truth comes to light, that they perish by rejecting the salvation offered to them; and that if they had believed, and been willing to be saved by Christ, they would not have been lost. Their destruction is the consequence of their great, inexcusable wickedness, in flighting Christ, and neglecting the great salvation; by which they have brought it on themselves; which could not have come upon them, had they not done this; but accepted of the kind offer which they had.

3. The offer of salvation to all, serves more clearly to display and discover to the redeemed, than otherwise could have been, the riches of that sovereign grace, by which they are saved. It is of great importance, that this should be seen by the redeemed, in the clearest light, and to the best advantage, that God may have the glory of it, and they the greatest benefit possible. While they see others perish under the same advantages which they have enjoyed; they see what they should have done, had they not been distinguished by sovereign grace, and made willing in the day of divine power. They see the human heart acted out in the unbeliever, and the awful consequence in his perishing; and know this would have been their case, had not God created in them a new heart, and given them to believe on Christ, in consequence of his electing love. They see this, and give all the glory to sovereign grace, and in a greater degree, are happy in the enjoyment of the love of God. St. Paul was sensible of the importance of christians seeing and enjoying the great and distinguishing love of God to them; and of their giving all the glory to him; and therefore, labours to set this in the strongest light, in the two first chapters of his letter to the church at Ephesus,

as he also does in most of his other epistles, which the attentive reader of the Bible must have observed.

That the offer of salvation is in fact made to all to whom the gospel is revealed, has been before proved.* And it may be added here, to the evidence there produced, that if there were no other proof of this, but the parables of Christ, recorded in Math. xxii. and Luke xiv. these are sufficient to put it beyond dispute. There our Saviour represents the gospel, by a feast which is made, to which numbers are invited, who refuse to come, and consequently never taste of the supper. The invitation is, "Come to the feast, come to the marriage, for all things are ready." How can this represent the gospel, if salvation be not offered to those who never accept of the offer? But to return; salvation is in fact, offered to all, wherever the gospel is published. Some have supposed this to be inconsistent with the doctrine of election, as it has been stated; but it is hoped, that what has been offered, has sufficiently proved that they are both consistent with each other.

XI. THE doctrine of election, is so far from being a discouraging doctrine, that it affords the only ground of all true encouragement and hope.

Many have been so grossly mistaken, as to think this a gloomy, discouraging doctrine, and that it tends to lead persons to despair; whereas, it is the only well grounded support against despair, and the sole foundation of all reasonable hope of salvation. It does indeed, tend to cut off all *their* hopes of salvation, who build them upon themselves, their own good disposition, will and exertions, independent of God; supposing they shall determine it in their own favour, and, in this sense, save themselves. The doctrine of election, demolishes this foundation, and destroys such a hope; as it teaches, that man is absolutely dependent

* See Part II, Sect. VIII. Page 105, &c.

dependent on God for his salvation, and *he* must determine whether he shall be saved or not. As this, therefore, is a false hope, and dangerous delusion, it is desirable it should be destroyed; and it affords an argument in favour of this doctrine, that it tends to take away all such hope from man.

When persons are brought to know themselves, in some measure, and see how guilty and lost they are, how sinful and obstinate their hearts are, being wholly corrupt, and so strongly indisposed to any thing that is right, and inclined to evil, that if left to themselves, they never shall repent and embrace the gospel, but shall go on to certain destruction: Therefore, if God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, have not determined in their favour, that he will give them a new heart, and save them by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, they shall not be saved, but be certainly lost forever. They despair of distinguishing themselves, so as to render themselves more deserving of the favour of God, and of salvation, or less ill-deserving, than others. They know of no greater sinners than themselves, or more deserving of endless destruction, or farther from embracing the gospel, than they are, and always shall be, if left to themselves. Their only hope therefore, is in the revealed purpose of God to save some of mankind, without any regard to their desert of it, or their distinguishing themselves from others, not being so great sinners, or being less unworthy; but has mercy on whom he will have mercy: And they have no reason to conclude, they are not of this number; but may hope they are elected to salvation, though utterly lost in themselves, and the most guilty and vile of all others.

It is true, that some have abused this doctrine, and improved it to bad purposes to themselves, through their ignorance, the perverseness of their own hearts, and the
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cunning agency of satan, the deceiver. They have not been willing to be in the hand of God, and wholly dependent on him; and the thought that they are so, has irritated and galled their spirits; they have been such enemies to God, that they have concluded he will decide against them, if it be left to him to determine, whether they shall be saved or not; and knowing they have greatly offended him, they conclude they are not among the number of the elect, and so sink into despair. It is not the doctrine of election, or the belief of it, which produces this despair, or has any tendency to it; but the opposition of the heart to it, and drawing a wrong and false conclusion from it: For this doctrine has a direct contrary tendency and effect, when properly improved, as has been shown.

XII. THE doctrine of election, is perfectly consistent with the greatest possible degree of human liberty.

This has been particularly considered, in the chapter upon the Decrees of God, and need not be repeated here. Many have entertained such wrong notions of this doctrine, and of liberty, or the freedom of the will, as to suppose, if this were true, the nonelect are chained down to destruction; and the elect fixed in a state of salvation, inconsistent with their exercising any freedom of choice. The divine purpose of election, does not affect the liberty of any man, unless the certainty of events be inconsistent with it. It is certain it is not, if liberty consists in acting voluntarily, or in volition; which it is presumed, has been proved; and that there can be no other or higher liberty in nature. The elect are perfectly free, in embracing the gospel, and in all their exercises, and in every step they take, in order to obtain complete salvation. This is necessarily supposed in their election to eternal life; for they can be saved in no other way, but
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by their free choice, which is, therefore, secured in their election, that they shall go to heaven by their own free consent, in the full exercise of perfect liberty, in opposition to any compulsion. Whatever God decrees or does, respecting their salvation, does not interfere with their freedom; but infallibly secures and establishes it.— *He worketh in them, to will and to do:* Therefore, does nothing inconsistent with their willing and doing, but promotes and effects it; in which all their freedom and moral agency consist.

The non elect, go to destruction by their own choice. When salvation is offered to them, they reject it with their whole heart, and most freely choose to have no part in it. *They will not come to Christ,* that they might be saved. The election of others to salvation, does not affect them, or alter their case, or circumstances, in the least.— They go to destruction just as freely, and as much by their own choice, as they would, or could do, were there none elected to be saved; and their destruction is not made any more necessary, or certain, by the election of some of mankind to salvation, than it would have been, were there no election.

XIII. THOUGH it be known, that a certain number of mankind are elected by God, to salvation, in distinction from others; because it is revealed, and the reason of the thing teaches it must it must be so; yet it cannot be known to men in this world, who they are that are elected, and shall be saved, any farther than there is evidence that they embrace the gospel, and are become true christians. This is otherwise known to God alone. He knows them by name, and they are given to Christ, to be saved. “The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.”* But this cannot be known to men, nor can there be the least

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real evidence, till they come to Christ, nor any appearance of it, any farther than they appear to be real christians. In this way, the Apostle Paul judged of the election of persons. "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. And ye became followers of me, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Ghost."* It is in this way alone that believers can come to the knowledge of their election, or get the least evidence of it. This evidence will be perfectly established, when they are actually saved, and shall abide so forever. Every one of the redeemed will know his own election of God, and that of all others who are saved; and will look to this, as the source and foundation of their redemption.

While the elect are in a state of unbelief, none in this world, neither they themselves, nor any one else, can know they are elected, and shall be saved: And the non elect cannot know that they are not elected, nor can any one else know this of them, while they are in this world, unless it be known that they have committed the unpardonable sin.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

I. THE doctrine of election, as it has now been stated and explained, is suited to stain and humble the pride of man.

The pride of man, prompts him to lift himself above his Maker; and he would do it, were it possible; and many fondly think themselves, in a measure, independent of him; especially in matters of the greatest importance; respecting their moral character, and their eternal interest and happiness; that their life is in their own hands,

* The II. i. 4, 5, 6.

hands, so far that they can determine whether they shall be virtuous and holy, and be saved, or not, without any determination of God, respecting it, or his unpromised, undeserved, special influence, or assistance, to turn the point in their favour. And nothing can be more crossing and mortifying to this pride, than to be absolutely dependent on God for all moral good, as a free undeserved gift from him; and for salvation, so that the whole must be determined by God, and not by man, any farther than it is the effect of the divine determination. Such absolute dependence on God, for holiness and salvation, is implied, and held forth in the doctrine of election; and no man can understandingly, and cordially receive it, so as to have the feelings of his heart conformable to it, without "Humbling himself in the sight of the Lord."

Every doctrine of the gospel, and the whole system of revealed truth, is levelled directly at the pride of the human heart, and suited to humble man; and when it has its proper effect, and is cordially received, this pride is slain and relinquished; and what God, by Isaiah foretold, should be the effect of it, takes place in a very sensible, conspicuous degree. "The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted, in that day."* Therefore, humility, in opposition to pride and self exaltation, was frequently mentioned by our Divine Teacher, as essential to a christian; and he often said, "Every one that exalteth himself, shall be abased: And he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."† And the Apostle James says to sinners, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."‡

This is an evidence, among others, that the doctrine of election, is a doctrine of the gospel, in that it coincides, in this respect, with all the peculiar doctrines of divine revelation,

* Isaiah ii. 11, 12. † See Matth. xviii. 4, xxiii. 12. Luke. xiv. 11. xviii. 14.

‡ James iv. 10.

revelation, in being suited to humble the pride of man, and exalt the sovereign grace of God; and therefore must be agreeable to the heart of every humble christian.— In this view, it is no wonder that it should be so strongly opposed, and rejected with great abhorrence and confidence, by men, with all the other most humbling doctrines of the gospel; and a scheme of sentiments be introduced in their room, which are really subversive of the gospel, and suited not to abase, but to flatter and gratify the pride of man; according to which he has something, which he did not receive, even true virtue and holiness, the highest excellence and glory of man; and by this has made himself to differ from others, without any special distinguishing influence of God; and in this respect is independent of him; which he therefore ascribes not to the grace of God, but to himself, and glories in it. The following sentence of St. Paul, is leveled at this pride and haughtiness of man, and if properly regarded, sufficient to demolish it. “Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst *receive it*, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?”*

The humbling doctrine of election, may be, indeed, abused, and so improved as to gratify the pride of man, while it is not really understood, nor in truth cordially received. A man may be led to conclude, even from the pride of his heart, and without any reason, that he is elected to salvation, and herein distinguished by God, from most others; and this may be very pleasing to his pride, while he does not understand, and in his heart admit the only ground of this distinction, when made by God: And he, at bottom, feels as if he was distinguished from others, and had received this peculiar favour, out of respect to some good thing in him, by which he differed from others. Or he attends only to *the distinction*
itself,

itself, without considering the ground of it, and is pleased with this, and becomes a zealous, *proud* advocate for the doctrine of election. Therefore, many of the opposers of this doctrine suppose, that all who are advocates for it, are pleased with it, only from selfishness and pride, because they consider themselves as the elect of God, and hereby distinguished and favoured above others. And there is, perhaps, no other way for pride to account for it, or to be reconciled to it. The true christian receives it, as glorious to God, and exalting sovereign grace, and humbling man, while he considers himself as infinitely guilty and vile, and wholly lost in his sins, and if he be saved, it must be by the distinguishing, sovereign grace of God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, according to his decree of election, which affords the only ground of hope to man.

II. WHAT has been said in this section, on the doctrine of particular election, may serve to discover and state the character of a true christian, so far as his views and exercises relate to this doctrine, and those connected with it.

1. This is not a discouraging doctrine to him, nor disagreeable, though he do not know that he is a christian, or is elected to salvation; but has great and prevailing doubts of this. He knows that if he were left to himself, he should not determine the point in his own favour; but his impenitent, unbelieving heart, would reject Christ, and he go on to destruction. That he is wholly dependent on God for salvation, and if *he* do not determine in his favour, and have not elected him to salvation, and do not distinguish him from others, by granting him those influences, and that renovation, which they who perish have not, he shall not be saved, but perish forever. Therefore, the doctrine of election
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can be no matter of discouragement to him, it cannot render his case worse, than it would be if none were elected : for then he could have no hope of salvation ; and the only hope he can have is grounded on this doctrine, and that he may be one of the elect. And his hope rises or sinks according to the evidence he has of this, by perceiving himself to be the subject of the regenerating, sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit : Or the contrary.

2. The true believer is pleased, with being entirely dependent on God for his salvation, and that he should determine whether he shall be saved or not ; and does not desire, that he himself or others, should be saved in any other way, but according to the eternal purpose of God. It is most disagreeable to him, that any creature should determine this, in any one instance. He knows it belongs to God, to decide this important matter ; that he has a right to do it, and he only is able to determine it perfectly right, agreeable to infinite wisdom and goodness, so as shall be most for his glory, and promote the interest of his kingdom. He is pleased, that in this way, God is exalted, in the exercise of sovereign grace, and the sinner humbled, and the most important interest forever secured and promoted in the best manner. He desires no other salvation, for himself or others, but that which is the free gift of God, and the fruit of his electing love ; and which infinite wisdom sees will be most for the glory of God, and the general good ; and that without knowing whether *his* salvation be consistent with this, or not, and whether he be one of the elect, or not.

3. All the christian's prayers and devotions are upon this plan, and agreeable to this doctrine. They contain in them, either, an express or implicit acknowledgment of his entire dependence on God for salvation, and every thing, for which he prays or gives thanks ; and that all

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the good he desires, must be the fruit of the determination of him, who changes not in his purpose and design; and express, or imply, an unconditional, implicit resignation to his wise and holy will.

The opposers of this doctrine, in heart and words, do often really acknowledge it in words, in their prayers to God for salvation, &c. But the real christian does it with his heart. He may indeed, through the prejudices of education, or otherwise, by not understanding the doctrine in theory, and entertaining wrong conceptions of it, and of other points, which are connected with it, be led to oppose it, in speculation; but so far as his heart is renewed, all his religious exercises and devotions, are agreeable to the doctrine of election, and an acknowledgment of it. And so far as it appears, that any person is at heart an enemy to that doctrine; there is just so much evidence that he is an enemy to him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

SECTION XIII.

Whether any of the Redeemed arrive to Perfect Holiness in this Life.

THAT no man, whatever his advantages and attainments may be, does arrive to sinless perfection in this life, seems to be clearly asserted in a number of passages of scripture. Solomon says, "There is no man that sinneth not. There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"* These are strong expressions, asserting, that there is no man on earth

* 1 Kings viii. 46. Eccl. vii. 20. Prov. xx. 9.

earth so perfect, as to be wholly without sin. Job says, "If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse."* How could his saying, he was perfect, prove him to be perverse, unless it be on this ground, that no man is perfect in this life? This being certain, if a man say he is perfect, it proves that he is deceived, and knows not the truth, and therefore, is not a good man. The Apostle Paul, who probably was the holiest man that ever lived, declares he was not perfect. "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."† And he gives such a particular and sad description of his own sinfulness, in his letter to the church at Rome, that many who are strangers to the corruption of the human heart, and the great degree of sin attending true christians, and their keen sensibility of it, cannot believe that he means there to describe his own exercises and character, or those of any christian.‡ And this same Apostle represents all christians, as in a state of warfare, by reason of evil inclinations and lusts in their hearts, which oppose that which is the fruit of the spirit, in them, and prevents their doing what they would. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: And these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."§ To will was present. When they looked forward, they wished actually to do and be all that which christianity dictates, and of which they could have any idea; but when they came to act, they always fell

* Job ix. 20.

† Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.

‡ See Rom. vii. 14—24.

§ Gal. v. 17.

fell short, and sinful inclinations prevented their doing as they desired, and defiled their best exercises.

The Apostle James testifies to the same truth. He says of himself, and of all christians, that in many things, they all offended.* And the Apostle John says, "If we say, we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."† Here it is not only asserted, that every christian is attended with sin, in all he does in this life : But that it is so evident to the real christian, and so much his sensible burden and unhappiness, that it is certain, that he who says, or thinks, he has no sin, is not only greatly deceived ; but is a stranger to real christianity, and knows not the saving truth.

These passages of scripture are decisive, and prove that it is made certain by a divine constitution, that no man shall be without sin in this life : For these are declarations from God, of this truth. Solomon could not say, "There is no man that sinneth not—There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not ;" if there were not a divine constitution, which rendered it certain, that the most righteous, and best of men, are not without sin, in this life : For this is affirmed of *man*, of every man in this world, in every age of it, from the beginning to the end of it. How could the Apostle Paul say to a christian church, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. And these are contrary the one to the other ; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would :" And how could the Apostles John and James say, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us—In many things we all offend ;" if this were not true of all, and common to all christians, at all times ? It is impossible they should say this under inspiration, were there not a known constitution of heaven, that no man should be

* Jam. iii. 2.

† 1 John i. 8.

free from sin, in this life. Therefore, these declarations demonstrate that there is such a constitution: That God has determined, and made it known, that no man shall live in the body, without sinning.

Hence we may be certain, that when the Apostle John says, "Whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not: Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.—Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin: For his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God;"* he does not mean to assert, that every true christian, or any one of them, is free from sin in this life: For then he would expressly contradict himself in this same letter. But his meaning in the last quoted passages, must be, That he who is born of God, and united to Christ by faith, does not sin as others do, or as he did before he was born of God. He no longer *lives in sin*, and makes it his trade and business, as the unregenerate do; but lives a holy life, devoted to Christ, though attended with much imperfection and sin. If this be not his meaning, which is a natural and easy one, he not only contradicts what he had said in the words quoted from the first chapter, by asserting that christians *may* live without sin in this world: But asserts that every one that is born of God, does not, from that time, commit one sin, or have the least degree of sin in his heart or conduct: Which few or none of those who have made use of these passages, to prove christians may be perfectly holy in this life, do believe is true; so that these words prove too much, or nothing at all, for them.

Christians are frequently represented as being *perfect*, in distinction from those who are not real christians, or from other real christians, who are not *perfect*. This has been improved as an argument, that some christians do obtain sinless perfection, in this life, supposing that this is intended by being perfect. But the careful reader of

the Bible, will find, that *to be perfect* has a various and different meaning, when used with respect to different subjects and relations. When used with respect to God, it means *absolute perfection*, in which sense it is not applicable to any creature; especially to man in this state.—When applied to christians, it sometimes means real sincerity and uprightness of heart, or their being real christians, or good men, in distinction from those who are so only in appearance and pretence. In this sense Hezekiah appears to use it, when he says, “Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.”* And in this sense God speaks of Job as a perfect and upright man.† Job himself uses the word in a different sense, when he says, “If I say I am perfect, it would prove me perverse.‡ Otherwise he would contradict his Maker, and himself too; for he held his integrity fast, and appealed to God that he was upright.§ Sometimes it means, whole and entire christians, acting out every christian grace, or every branch of christianity, in distinction from those who were defective in some christian attainments, while they appeared to be chiefly attentive to others. And sometimes they are called perfect, who have made greater proficiency in the christian life, and are stronger and more thorough christians, in distinction from the weaker, and those of less attainments. He who carefully studies his Bible, will find, that christians are not said to be perfect in any higher sense than these. The Apostle Paul, in a forecited place, says, that he did not think himself perfect; yet in the very next words speaks of himself and others as being perfect. “Let us therefore, *as many as be perfect*, be thus minded.”|| He must use the word in two different senses, otherwise he would contradict himself. When he says, he does not think or pretend that he is

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perfect,

* Isaiah xxxviii. 3.

† Job i. 8.

‡ Chap. ix. 20.

§ Chap. xxxi. 6.

|| Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14, 15.

perfect, he means sinless perfection. When he says, "As many of us as be perfect." He means those who had made considerable improvement, and advances in christianity; not being, in this respect, babes or children, but grown men.*

It is certainly the duty of all christians to be perfectly holy, in obedience to the law of God, requiring them to love God with all their heart and soul and mind and strength; and their neighbours as themselves. And every thing contrary to this, or short of it, which takes place in their hearts or lives, is criminal. The law cannot be abated, nor their obligation to obey it perfectly, annulled in the least degree. But it does not follow from this, that any one does, or will, come up to the rule, and do the whole of his duty, in this life. For this the christian depends wholly upon God. He is no farther holy, than he is made, so by the omnipotent energy of the divine spirit; and though God requires them to be perfectly holy; yet he is under no obligation, by promise, or any other way, to make them perfectly holy, in this world. His requiring it of them, does not imply any such obligation, and the covenant of grace contains no promise of this. In that there is a divine promise, that they shall persevere in holiness to the end of life; and that they shall be perfectly holy in his kingdom forever; for this is necessarily implied in perfect happiness and eternal life. But it contains no promise of any particular degree of holiness, more than is necessary to prevent their falling totally and finally, from a state of grace. As to the degree of holiness and the particular exercises of it, in every christian, God orders it as he pleases; to answer his own wise and infinitely good purposes.

The Redeemer is able to make every believer perfectly holy, from his first conversion, so that he never should be

* See Heb. v. 13, 14.

be guilty of another sin. And if this had been wisest and best, it would have been so ordered. Therefore, we are certain, it is most wise and best, that none of the redeemed should be perfectly holy in this life, though we were unable to see any reason why it is so. But we may now see some of the wise ends which are answered hereby, and reasons why the redeemed are in such an imperfect state, and in so great a degree sinful, while in this world; a few of which will be mentioned here.

1. If they were perfectly holy, they would not be so fit to live in this disordered, sinful world. There would not be that analogy of one thing to another, which is observed in the works of God, and which is proper and wise. This is not a world and state suited to be the dwelling place of perfectly holy creatures. It is a proper state of discipline, suited to form and train up the redeemed from among men for a state of perfect holiness and happiness, in another world.

2. If christians were perfectly holy in this life, it would not be so much a state of trial, as now it is. Their temptations could not be so many and strong, as now they are; and satan could not have so much power and advantage to tempt, and try to distress and seduce them. And their danger would not be so great and visible.— And they would not have that opportunity or occasion of the exercise of some particular graces, such as constant humiliation and repentance for their renewed sins, loathing and abhorring themselves, fighting against and mortifying their own lusts, longing for deliverance, and faith and patience, in these dark and disagreeable circumstances, as now they have; by which they honour Christ, and are preparing for greater happiness and rewards in his kingdom.

3. Such a state of imperfection and sin, is suited and necessary, more effectually to teach them, and make them

know, by abundant experience, their own total depravity by nature ; the evil nature and odiousness of sin ; their own ill desert ; the exceeding, inexpressible, and inconceivable deceitfulness, obstinacy and wickedness of their own hearts ; and their absolute dependence on sovereign grace, to prevent their eternal destruction, and to save them ; their need of the atonement which Christ has made ; and the greatness of that power and grace which saves such creatures. These, and many other things, are more thoroughly and effectually impressed on their minds, and they are instructed, and learn them to better advantage, in the school of Christ, in this state of imperfection and sin, than could be, in a state of perfect holiness.

King David, by falling into sin, was led to reflect upon, and confess his native depravity ; the exceeding evil of sin, as against God ; his desert of destruction, and the justice of God in punishing him ; his need of pardon, and of an atonement, and of the renovation of his heart, and his dependence on God for this. On that occasion, the following is his language. “ According to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin ; for I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight : That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold ! I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”*

4. Believers, by being sanctified but in part, and attended with so much sin in this life, obtain a more clear view, and greater sense of the evil of sin, and the miserable state of the sinner ; and are hereby prepared to know and enjoy the happiness of a perfectly holy state, to a greater degree,

* Psal. li. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10.

degree, than otherwise they could : The more sensible they are of the evil from which they are delivered, the greater will the positive good, which they enjoy, appear to them. And their gratitude and praise for the sovereign grace, of which they are the subjects, will rise proportionably higher ; by which God will be more glorified, and they more happy forever ; so that all this will turn to their good in the end, and they will be much more happy, than if they had been perfectly holy from their conversion ; and had not, after that, gone through a state of conflict with sin and satan ; and through much tribulation, entered into the kingdom of heaven.

5. By this, the power, wisdom, goodness, truth and faithfulness of the Redeemer, are in a peculiar manner, exercised and displayed, as they could not be, in any other way. This gives occasion and opportunity, for the most apparent and glorious manifestation of these ; by which he glorifies himself, and the happiness of the redeemed is greatly advanced. Therefore it is, on the whole, most wise and best, that the work of sanctification should be gradual, and not perfected at once ; and that the saints should be sanctified but in part, while in this world, and attended with much imperfection and sin to the end of life.

The exceeding greatness of the power of God, is exerted and displayed, in renewing the depraved heart of man, and forming it to true holiness.* It is a power which subdues the obstinacy, and all possible opposition of the human heart ; and which overcomes and casts out satan, and all his host of combined enemies to God and man. Therefore, this is a greater exertion of power, than that by which the natural world was made ; for that was formed out of nothing : Therefore, there could be no opposition and resistance to creating power, in that instance. And the power displayed in creating holiness,

appears

* Eph. i. 19.

appears as much greater and more excellent, than that which is exerted in creating the natural world, as the former effect is greater, more important and excellent, than the latter.

But this power, is made more conspicuous and sensible, in preserving and maintaining a small degree of holiness in the heart of a christian, in the midst of the opposition, with which he is surrounded and assaulted, by the strength of evil propensities within him, by the world, and by satan, than it would be, in forming him to perfect holiness at once. In this way, the weak christian, in the midst of strong temptations, and potent enemies, constantly seeking, and exerting all their power and cunning, to devour and destroy him, is preserved and upheld, through a course of trial, by the mighty, omnipotent hand of the Redeemer; and the little spark of holiness, implanted in the believer's heart, is continued alive and burning; while there is so much, both within and without, tending to extinguish it; which is really more of a constant miracle, and manifestation of the power of Christ, than it would be to preserve a little spark of fire, for a course of years, in the midst of the sea, while the mighty waves are fiercely dashing against it, and upon it, attempting to overwhelm and extinguish it. The christian is, by this situation, and his experience, made more and more sensible of this, and learns that he lives by the power of Christ, and repairs to this, that he may be "Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," or his mighty power, that he may be able to stand, and persevere in the midst of enemies.* Out of weakness, he is made strong, and becomes valiant in the spiritual combat.† And Christ, by these babes and sucklings, ordains and displays strength, and perfects praise. To this the Apostle Paul attests. "My strength is made perfect in weakness.

* Eph. vi. 10.

† Heb. xi. 34.

weakness. Most gladly therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, *that the power of Christ may rest upon me.*”*

The wisdom of the Redeemer is also employed and manifested, in carrying all believers, and the church militant in general, through this life, and to the end of the world, safe to a state of perfection in glory. He conducts all things, external and internal, with respect to every christian; and so orders the degree, manner and time of his influence and assistance, as to keep them from falling, totally and finally; and carries on the work of sanctification in the wisest manner, and so as to defeat satan in all his wiles and cunning devices, by which he attempts to seduce and destroy them. It requires infinite skill and wisdom, to sanctify a corrupt heart, and to order every thing so, with respect to each individual, at all times, and every moment, as effectually to prevent his falling away, though he walks upon the verge of ruin, and has such strong enemies within him, and without: And so adjust every circumstance, that even those things and events, which seem to be calculated for his ruin, shall promote his holiness and salvation. Were there no such persons, weak and very imperfect and sinful, to live in a world full of enemies, and to be conducted on through all dangers, in the midst of cunning enemies, having great skill and success in destroying men, and carried safe to heaven at last, there would be no opportunity for such exercise and display of infinite, unsearchable wisdom, as this gives. Were not the Redeemer as wise as he is powerful, no christian could be saved; but on his wisdom they may and do rely with confidence, comfort and joy. In his hands they, and the whole church, are safe, and all adverse things shall work for good, and issue in their perfection in holiness, and eternal salvation. And well may they, with admiration, exclaim with the Apostle Paul: “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom

* 2 Cor. xii. 9.

wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !”* And in heaven they will ascribe wisdom to the Redeemer forever.†

The goodness, tender love, and wonderful condescension of the Saviour, are also manifest, and acted out, in his constant and kind attendance on believers, though they be so imperfect and sinful, and offend in so many things; and are constantly guilty of that, which would be sufficient to provoke him to give them up to sin and ruin, were he not infinitely good and kind : There is much more opportunity to exercise and discover this goodness and condescending grace, forbearance and long suffering, than if they were perfectly innocent and holy, from the time of their conversion. This remark is illustrated by the character and conduct of the true disciples of Christ, when he was on earth, in the human nature ; and his goodness, condescension and forbearance, towards them. They had, and discovered, much selfishness and pride, worldliness, ingratitude, stupidity and unbelief. They were slow of heart to believe, to learn and get understanding, under the teaching of Christ, and in his school, while he was so abundant in his labours with them. They were honest, and true friends to their master, but did not improve the advantages which they had, as they ought to have done ; and in many instances grossly abused them : Yet Christ did not leave off his kindness to them ; but bore with them, in all their dullness and wickedness, and loved them unto the end ; and took effectual methods to cure all of them, of their great moral disorders, and prepare them to enter into a state of perfect holiness at death ; except Judas the traitor, who never was a true disciple. Had they been perfectly holy, from the time they commenced his disciples, or at any time while he was with them, there would not have been such occasion and opportunity, for Christ

to

* Rom. xi. 33.

† Rev. v. 12.

to exercise and discover, such condescending grace, and long suffering towards them.

Thus he treats all his true disciples, while in this life. Their imperfections and sins, and froward dispositions, by which they abuse him, in all his goodness to them, call for infinite condescension, grace and forbearance, in the continuance of his loving kindness to them. They are, in some measure, sensible of this, while in this world, and lament their sinful defects, and great wickedness, and admire the goodness and patience of the Redeemer, in bearing with them, and not casting them into hell; but still continue very far from what they know they ought to be. But in heaven, they will see this in a more clear light, and forever remember, and with the most sensible gratitude, admire and adore the condescension, and wonderful grace, which the Saviour exercised towards them, while they were so stupid, perverse and abusive. This could not take place, were real christians perfectly holy in this life.

The truth and faithfulness of the Redeemer, are also by this, tried, and made conspicuous. He promises, that he will never leave nor forsake, or cast out them, who come to him, and enter into covenant with him. And he fulfils his word, and is faithful to them, though they are in such an awful and provoking degree, perverse and abusive. Though they fall, they shall not be utterly cast down; for the Redeemer upholdeth them with his hand.* When they transgress, he often visits their sin with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes. He chastiseth them for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness; yet he will not utterly take away his loving kindness from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.†

Thus the wisdom and goodness of God appear, in ordering it so, that no man, even the greatest saint, shall be perfectly

* Psal. xxxvii. 24.

† Psal. lxxxix. 30—33.

perfectly holy in this life ; but all the redeemed, shall, in this world, be very imperfect and sinful, from the reasons which have been mentioned, and the ends which are answered hereby. More might be thought of and mentioned ; and there is no reason to think, that the one half, are discerned by us now. A clear and full view, of the wisdom and goodness of God, in this, is reserved to the future state, when the redeemed will review all the dispensations of heaven, and the wise counsel and works of him, who is “ Wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working,” towards themselves, and the church, with wonder, gratitude, and everlasting joy, “ Saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.”*

But though the wisdom and goodness of God appear, in ordering it so, that no man in this life shall attain to sinless perfection ; and that the church on earth should by passing through a state of discipline, trial and temptation, be trained up for a perfectly holy and happy state in heaven ; and that this shall be the common lot of christians : Yet for equally wise reasons, there are some exceptions, with respect to the latter : Some are taken out of the world immediately, or soon after their conversion, and are made perfectly holy, without passing through a scene of trial, temptation, and sinful imperfection. The thief, who was converted on the cross, is an instance of this : And how many are converted on their death bed, and just before they pass into the invisible world, cannot be certainly determined by us, while in this state. And all the infants who are saved, are instances of this.

IT has been a question with some, Whether christians ought to pray that they may be perfectly holy, in this life ? Some have thought this question must be answered in the affirmative, and that believers may, and ought to pray for perfect holiness, while in this world ; since it is their duty to be perfectly holy, and it is desirable ; and therefore ought to be desired : And consequently, they may and ought to pray for it.

ANSWER. It is, in itself considered, desirable to be perfectly holy ; and this must appear desirable to all christians, viewed in and by itself. But as God has determined and declared this shall not be, that no man shall be without sin, in this life ; and therefore it is known, that it is not, on the whole, best that any man should be perfectly holy, in this world ; in this view of it, it is not desirable ; nor ought any to pray for it. An event which is contrary to the known will of God, that it should take place, is not desirable, in this view of it, and no one ought to pray that it may take place ; for such a desire and prayer is opposition to the declared will of God, and carries in it real rebellion against him. No man ought to pray for any thing without an entire resignation to the will of God ; therefore, he ought not to pray for any thing, but on supposition that it is agreeable to the will of God. But no such supposition can be made, when God has already declared it is not agreeable to his will to grant it. It has been proved, that God has revealed that it is not his will, that any man shall be perfectly holy in this life ; therefore, no man can, in this view of it, pray for perfect holiness, while in this life, with resignation to the will of God ; and therefore ought not to pray for it. This would be praying for that, which is known not to be desirable, and not wisest and best, that it should take place, and is opposition to the known will of God, which is opposition to God.

Therefore,

Therefore, it is not to be supposed, that a christian does ever pray that he may be perfectly holy in this life, while he has a full conviction in his mind, that it is contrary to the revealed will of God, that this should ever take place, in any instance. But a christian may not have attended to the evidence there is from the Bible, that no man is to be perfectly holy in this life ; or through some prejudice, not be convinced that this is there revealed ; and consequently, may pray that he may be perfectly holy, while in this world, and not know or believe, that he asks for that which is contrary to the will of God to grant.— In this case, his sin consists in not properly attending to what God has revealed concerning this, or in not believing it, though the evidence be clearly set before him.

And as the christian is not omniscient, and sees not every truth at once, or with equal clearness and constancy, of which he has been convinced in theory and speculation ; and one thing has a vastly greater impression on his mind, than another ; and at different times, the same truth, may have much more of his attention, than at another, and make a more sensible impression : It is therefore possible, that he should have such a clear view, and great and sensible impression of his own sinfulness ; of the evil of sin, and the hatefulnes of it ; and of the desirableness of deliverance from it, and of being perfectly holy, and conformed to Christ, as earnestly to pray, that, if it be consistent with the will of God, he may be freed from all sin, and live a perfectly holy life, for time to come ; not at that time reflecting, that God has revealed that no man shall be so, in this life, or thinking any more of it, than if it were not true : And yet he cannot be said to *disbelieve* it ; for as soon as it comes into his view, and he reflects upon it, he believes it, and withdraws his petition. This is doubtless possible, and may have

have taken place in many instances ; and perhaps is not sinful.*

IMPROVEMENT.

* Perhaps the prayer of the Redeemer may well be accounted for in this way, when he said in the garden, " O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matth. xxvi. 39. The human mind of Christ, had such a view and sense of the sufferings which were before him, that it was in a degree overborne and swallowed up with the dreadfulneſs of them, and the impossibility of his going through them, without more divine assistance than he then experienced. And it was so ordered by God, that the absolute necessity of his suffering thus, should not then be in view, his mind being wholly arrested by the view and sense of his sufferings, and the dreadfulneſs of the cup which was then set before him ; and the human nature did, in a sense, shrink back, at the view of it. And in this situation of mind, he prayed as above. It was wise and important, that the human nature of the Redeemer, should be placed in such a situation at this time, for two reasons. *First*, That he might have the best opportunity to discover his disposition, and how he would act under this severe trial, when his sufferings were set before him, in all the greatness and dreadfulneſs of them. The dreadful cup was set before him, that he might have the clearest sight of it ; and in this situation, discover what he chose, and whether he was willing to drink it, if necessary for the glory of God, and the salvation of the elect ; and make the choice in the sight of all worlds, that he might be, and appear to be, perfectly voluntary, and take this suffering upon himself, when he was in a situation to have the clearest view, and greatest sense possible, of the evil to be suffered ; of the dreadful ingredients of the bitter cup. In this most trying situation, he voluntarily gave himself up to this dreadful suffering, if this were necessary, and the will of his Father : The latter not being present, and so impressed on his mind as the former, as a certain reality : And so was in a measure out of view, and did not demand his particular attention ; in consequence of a particular divine influence on his mind, at that time. *Secondly*, By this, the necessity of the Redeemer's suffering as he did, in order to the pardon and salvation of sinners, and the impossibility of their being saved in any other way, but by his making atonement for their sin by his own blood, and being made a curse in their stead, was set in a most clear and striking light. Since the infinitely worthy Redeemer, the only begotten, well beloved, Son of God, did not consent to suffer, on any other supposition ; and earnestly prayed that he might not suffer, if it were possible for him to be released from it, consistent with the glory of God, and the salvation of sinners ; his petition would have been granted, if it were possible, that he should not suffer, and yet these ends be answered.

I M P R O V E M E N T.

I. FROM the subject of this section, we may be certain, that they are not real christians, who say, or think they are arrived, to such a perfect state, as to live without sin. A christian may, through the prejudices of education, ignorance, or otherwise, think that some christians may, and actually do attain to sinless perfection, in this life. But he can never think *himself* to be without sin. His acquaintance with the law of God, in the spirituality and extent of it, and with his own heart, is such, that by keeping these in view, and comparing them with each other, his own sinfulness stares him in the face; and he condemns himself before God, as very far from what he ought to be, and exceeding guilty and vile. And the higher he rises in holy exercises, and the more circumspect and watchful he is, the greater light and discerning he has to see the defects and corruptions of his own heart; and the more painful is the view of his own character, and he is disposed to exclaim with the Apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!"*

The Apostle John decides this point, in most express terms. He says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."† He does not mean, "If we say we never did sin," because this is contrary to his express words, which are in the present time, If we say, *we have no sin*, now, at this present time. According to this, no man can with truth say, at any time of his life, "I have no sin, or I am without sin, and perfectly holy." Therefore, no real christian will say it, or can think this of himself; none but those who are deceived about themselves, to such a degree, as is inconsistent

* Rom. vii. 24,

† 1 John i. 8.

inconsistent with their being the children of light and of the day, can say, or even think this of themselves. This Apostle, in the next verse but one, speaks of the time past, and says, "If we say, that *we have not sinned*, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." This is a different proposition from the foregoing; it respects what they had been and done. If they had no sin now, and this could be said with truth, they could not say they had never sinned, without contradicting the whole gospel, which declares all men to be sinners; and so making God the Saviour, a liar. But the other proposition, respects what they were, at that time, or should be in any future time, while in this world; so that none who is not deceived, and has embraced the truth, can ever say or think, while in this life, that he now has no sin. There have been, and now are, those who say they have no sin. By this they declare, they are deceived, and strangers to real christianity, and give greater evidence that they are not true christians, than they could, by only saying in express words, that they are not; for persons may really think, and may say, that they are not christians, when they are really such.

II. FROM this subject we learn, that persons have no reason to conclude they are no christians, merely because they see much sin in themselves. This sight of sin, often arises from their having that discerning, which none but true christians have; who, by reason of this discerning, see more sin in themselves than others do, and are more affected with it. And their complaints of themselves, of the amazing corruption and wickedness of their hearts, which they now see more clearly than ever before; and which they mention, as an evidence that they have no grace, are often, in the view of the judicious christian, to whom they are made, an evidence, that they are real christians.

Great degrees of sin, are consistent with some degree of true holiness. Therefore, if any thing can be found, that is of the nature of holiness, a sight of great sinfulness is not an evidence against a person, that he is not a christian, but the contrary. They who have made the greatest proficiency in holiness, see most of their own sinfulness.

III. THIS subject teaches us, not to be forward to censure others, as no christians, because of great imperfections, and many things which are unbecoming and disagreeable. For the best of christians are very imperfect and sinful in this state : And in many things all offend. There too often appears in persons, a *cenforious spirit* towards their fellow christians, which is a greater evidence of the want of real religion, than those things for which they censure others, as no christians.

IV. LET none improve this doctrine, as an encouragement to sloth and sin, and a discouragement to watchfulness against sin, and exertions and strivings after greater degrees of holiness. They who are disposed to make this improvement, of the imperfections and sinfulness of all christians, and indulge themselves in it, have no reason to think themselves to be christians ; for this is directly contrary to the spirit of a christian. If it be rightly improved, it will be a motive to press forward, to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; and to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

SECTION

S E C T I O N XIV.

Concerning Death ; a Separate State ; the General Resurrection and Judgment ; and the Eternal State of Happiness or Misery.

I. **W**HEN man had sinned, and God had opened to him a new constitution, for the redemption of some of the human race, by a Saviour, by saying to the serpent, " I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel ;" * He said to Adam, and in him to all mankind, that under this new constitution, and from this new state of probation, he should pass into another state, and go into the invisible world, by a separation between soul and body ; and his body should turn to dust, from whence it was taken. " Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This sentence must refer to his body only ; for this only was dust, and taken out of the ground. His spirit or soul, was immaterial, and not dust, or taken out of the ground, but a distinct existence from the body, by which he bore the image of God. " And God said, let us make man in our own image, after our likeness. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." † Therefore, Solomon describes what is contained in this sentence, in the following words, " Then shall

* Gen. iii. 15.

† Gen. i. 16. ii. 7.

the dust return to the earth, as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it."* The death of the body, does not imply the death of the soul, but the latter exists, when the former is turned to dust. This is declared by our Saviour. "Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul."†

This separation between soul and body, by which the latter is dissolved, and turned to dust, was not included in the threatning, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" for had there been no redemption, mankind must have been miserable, in soul and body forever; which death, all they who are not redeemed will suffer, when the work of redemption is finished, which is called the *second death*, with reference to the body's turning to dust, which is called death, and is the *first death*. Man is indeed, considered as a fallen creature, a sinner, when he is doomed to this first death; and also, as in a new state of probation; and it is wisely ordered, as subserving the design of redemption. It is proper and important, that the future state should be invisible to sense, which it would not be, if all men passed into it with their bodies; or without dying. But when the body dies and turns to dust, all that is visible and discerned by our senses, is left behind, and the invisible part of man, departs into another state *insensibly*; and thus the future state is kept invisible, as the object of faith, not of sight. And this tends more sensibly to keep in view, the fallen, sinful state of man, while all are doomed to death, which could not take place, had man been innocent; and it tends to humble man in his own eyes, since his body is soon to turn to dust; and to make him feel his wretchedness, if he have no security of existence and happiness in a future state, and to excite an attention to Christ and the gospel, which brings life and immortality

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* Eccl. xij. 7.

† Math. x. 28.

to light, and a future resurrection of the body, formed every way perfect, beautiful and glorious, never to die again.

The only time of probation allotted to man, is that of this life, to which the death of the body puts an end; so that every one, will be happy or miserable in the future, endless state, according to his character, which is formed before the soul is separated from the body. This is plain and certain from the scripture, where there is not a word, or the least hint of another state of trial, after the death of the body: But much is there said to the contrary of this. This life is represented, as the sowing, or seed time; and that men shall reap in a future state, according to what they do in this life. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: But he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."* This life is represented, as the only time to lay up a treasure in heaven; to make to ourselves friends, so as to be received into everlasting habitations, when we fail here, when this life ends: To make our peace with God, which Christ represents and urges, by agreeing with our adversary, while we are in the way with him, otherwise we shall be cast into prison, from whence there is no deliverance. And he represents Lazarus and the rich man, as *fixed*, the former in a state of happiness, and the latter in a state of misery, immediately upon their going out of this world. And it is said, "It is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment."† And if nothing were said, relating to this point but the following words, it is fixed in them, beyond a doubt. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive *the things done in*

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* Gal. vi. 7, 8.

† Heb. ix. 27.

his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* If at the final judgment, when the endless state of men will be fixed, they shall be judged according to what they have done in the body: Then this life is the only time of probation, and in the body they fix their character and state for eternity.

The time of man's death, and the way and means by which the soul shall be separated from the body, are all hidden from man. He is exposed to death as soon as he begins to exist in the body, and knows not how soon it may come; and no circumstances, nor any thing he can do, or that others can do for him, can secure him from death a moment. This is wisely ordered so, and answers many good ends, which it is needless particularly to mention here.

Death is not a calamity, but a great benefit to the redeemed. It has no sting for them, but comes to them as a friend, by which they are delivered from all moral and natural evil, and become perfectly holy, and enter upon a life unspeakably better than to live here in the body. Therefore, the Apostle Paul, had a desire to depart, to die, and be with Christ, *which was far better*. And he considered the death of his body, as his great gain.† “Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints.”‡ Which denotes that it is an important, and desirable change, by which he is glorified, and their good is promoted. Christ has taken away the sting of death to them, and gives them the victory over it, which he will complete at the general resurrection. In the prospect of this, christians may now say, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”§

Death

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

† Psal. cxvi. 13.

‡ Phil. i. 21, 23.

§ 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57.

Death is justly terrible, and a dreadful evil, to those who are in their sins. It deprives them of all good : It puts an end to their probation state, and to all hope, and fixes them in a state of sin, despair and endless misery. This is necessarily implied in the words just cited. "The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law." Death could have no sting, by sin or the law, more than any other change or event in life, if it did not fix the curse of the law upon the sinner, when he dies, and put an end to his probation and hope. The sting of death, is the evil which sin deserves, and which the law denounces, which is the second death. The death of the body fixes this sting in the sinner's heart, which is endless destruction.



A S E P A R A T E S T A T E.

II. THAT the soul does not die with the body, but exists in a separate state, till the general resurrection of all the bodies of men which have died, has been supposed in what has been said on the death of the body ; and is asserted or implied, in several passages of scripture, which have been mentioned under the foregoing head : But this requires a distinct, and more particular consideration. And that the soul or spirit of man does not die, or go into a state of insensibility, when the body is turned to dust, is made evident and certain, by many other passages of scripture, which have not been yet mentioned. The promise of Christ, to the penitent, believing thief on the cross, proves that the death of his body did not put an end to his existence or sensibility. "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."* The word paradise, was
used

* Luke xxviii. 43.

used by the Jews, at that day, for heaven, or a state of happiness. The soul of this man was not injured by the death of his body ; but he existed in a state of greater sensibility and enjoyment, than when united with the body, and went directly to heaven ; nor is there the least evidence, that this is not equally true of every believer, when his body dies. Stephen, the first martyr, expected and prayed for this, when his body was dying. " And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.*"* And none can doubt that the Redeemer was as ready to grant his petition, as that of the thief.

The Apostle Paul expected the same, and speaks of it as certain, that when his body died, and he should be no longer in this world, he should be in heaven with Christ. " For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."† He did not consider himself as dying with the body ; but when that died, and he left this world, he expected to depart, and be with Christ in heaven. And he could not mean his being with Christ, after the resurrection ; for he puts his continuing in the body, and abiding longer in this world, in opposition to his being with Christ ; which could not be true on that supposition : For he would be with Christ as soon, though he should live an hundred years longer in the body, as if he died immediately. And he would gain nothing, in this respect, by dying ; and therefore, it could not be *far better* than to live longer in the body. And he expresses the same sentiment, with regard to others as well as himself, in the following words. " We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Therefore, we are always confident

* Acts vii. 59.

† Phil. i. 21. 23.

confident (or courageous) knowing that while we are at home (or sojourn) in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are confident (courageous) I say, and willing, rather *to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.*** Here he considers, being present with the Lord; or being with Christ, as taking place, in consequence of death, or being absent from the body; so that when separated from the body, they shall be with Christ, in a sense and degree which cannot take place while in the body: And these two states are opposed to each other. And he says, they *knew* that when they should die, or their body be dissolved, they should be in heaven.

This same Apostle, supposes he could exist, perceive, think and enjoy to a high degree, when out of his body, or absent from it, when he speaks of the visions and revelations which he had, when carried to heaven; and says he could not tell whether he was in the body, or out of it, and separate from it: For if the soul could not exist, perceive and enjoy, when separate from the body, he could have known that he was not out of the body, but in it, when he had those revelations, perceptions and exercises.† And he speaks of “The spirits of just men, made perfect,” as being then in heaven, with the holy angels, and with Jesus Christ; by which he expressly asserts a separate state, and that the spirits of the just, when the body dies, are made perfect in holiness, and go to heaven, to be with Christ, and the happy inhabitants of the invisible world.‡ The souls of the martyrs, are represented as existing in a state of sensibility, happiness and honour, in a separate state, after their bodies had been slain.§ And the dead, who die in Christ, are declared to be blessed, and to be received to a state of happiness and rewards.|| The Apostle Peter, speaks of the spirits of those who perished by the flood, as existing when he

* 2. Cor. v. 1, 6, 8.

† 2 Cor. xii. 1, 2, 3.

‡ Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

§ Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11.

|| Chap. xiv. 13.

he wrote, and being in prison.* And Christ proves to the Sadduces, that the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had an existence, and were not dead, long after they had left this world, and their bodies were turned to dust.†

These passages of scripture, it is presumed, are sufficient to convince every honest unprejudiced mind, that the soul exists separate from the body, in the invisible world, from the death of the body, till the general resurrection; notwithstanding the attempts which have been made, by those who deny a separate state, to put a meaning on them, so as to make them consistent with such denial.

And the account which the scripture gives of this matter, is very agreeable to reason, and all the appearances, relating to it. It is very unreasonable to suppose that the Redeemer, who by his power and grace, has made them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, or the holy inhabitants in heaven, should so order it, that death should put an end to their existence, till their bodies are raised to life, so as to have no perception, exercise, or enjoyment, during that interval of time; and deprive them of all that holiness and happiness which they might enjoy, during that time, with him, in his kingdom; especially since by becoming his friends, in this world, they are formed to the greatest aversion to falling into such a state; and have strong and unconquerable desires, to live, and be with Christ; and in the company of his friends and servants, in the invisible world. For all true christians have the same desires which Stephen expressed, when dying, "Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit." And which the Apostle Paul said, he had: "For I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." And this would not be agreeable to the tender love which he expressed to his
disciples

* 2 Peter iii. 19, 20.

† Matth. xxii. 31, 32.

disciples and friends, when on earth. He said to them, "In my Father's house, are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."* "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant also be."† When he says, "Let him follow me," he has reference to the death of the body, which appears from the context; q. d. Let him follow me through death, as I am to die; and then he shall be with me in heaven. Agreeable to his prayer for his friends, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." How inconsistent is this, with his excluding them from heaven, thousands of years, from the death of their bodies, to the general resurrection, when he is able to introduce them there, to be with him, as soon as the body dies!

While the soul is in the body, by virtue of a union, which God has constituted, it is dependent on that, in a measure, for its perceptions and sensible exercises; and is affected with the disorders of it, in such a manner, as to be an argument with some, that the soul is not capable of perception and reason, except it be in union with a proper organized body; and therefore must die with the body, and cannot exist in a separate state. But this fact and appearance, is not a sufficient ground for such a consequence. It is proper and wise, that the body should have such an influence and effect on the mind, while in this state, and one is so closely united with the other.—And God, who has ordered this, when the ends of this constitution are answered, can as easily cause the soul to exist, perceive, reason and act, separate from the body,

* John xiv. 2, 3.

† Chap. xii. 26.

as now he does in union with the body : And make it to act in a more perfect manner, and have more clear and extensive views, and higher enjoyments. There is nothing contrary to reason and experience in this.

When the souls of the redeemed leave the body, they are delivered from all sinful imperfection, and made perfectly holy ; and find themselves with Jesus Christ, and in the company of the holy inhabitants of heaven. This is a very great change indeed ; but not too great to be effected by him who has all power in heaven and earth, and is therefore *omnipotent*, and is infinitely wise. We are ignorant of the particular manner in which the spirits of the just, perceive and act in a separate state ; or how, and by what means they have intercourse with other spirits, by receiving and mutually communicating ideas and sentiments : But this does not afford the least argument, that there can be no such thing ; and that it does not take place in much higher perfection, and to greater advantage, than any thing we know of the kind, in this state. The illiterate barbarian, has no conception of the manner and convenience, or even the possibility of persons exchanging ideas, and conversing by letters. He may as reasonably infer from this, that there can be no such thing ; as we can, that separate spirits do not perceive, converse, act and enjoy, in a much more perfect manner than we do, because we cannot tell how, and in what way this can be done.

When the spirits of the just, are separated from the body, the world which to us is invisible, opens to their view. They find themselves unconfined, surrounded with the most pleasing objects, and the best company, enjoying the serene, bright light of heavenly day, where there is no darkness, no sin, or sorrow. They are set at liberty, to range without restraint in the regions of bliss, while their views, exercises and enjoyments are high, and increased

increased to a degree, far beyond our conception. They are, in this respect, like a bird, liberated from a cage, in which it has been long confined, and now flies, and sports unconfined in the open light and air. Or like one who has been long shut up in a dark, uncomfortable prison, and is now set at liberty ; enjoys the pleasing light of day, is surrounded by his friends, and has all the enjoyments and comforts of life.

And by going to heaven, they do not get out of the sight and knowledge of this world, and the important affairs which Jesus Christ is carrying on here. We are told in divine revelation, that the angels of heaven are all attention to the things which concern the work of redemption ; and that they are all actively engaged in promoting this design among men, and ministering to them who shall be heirs of salvation. And that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. There must therefore be in heaven, where the spirits of the just are, with the angels, a very particular knowledge of the events which take place in this world ; and a much more clear and certain knowledge of the state of the church of Christ, and the conversion of sinners, than any have while in the body. The spirits of departed saints, have the interest of Christ, and his church in this world, as much at heart, as they had when in the body, and much more ; and therefore must be greatly attentive to it, and know all the events which are in favour of it. They do not go into some dark corner of the universe, out of sight of heaven, of Christ, his church, and this world ; but when they leave the body, they rise into light, and take a station, in which they are under advantages to see all these things, and all worlds, being all attention to them, and having a perfect discerning, without the least cloud or darkness ; seeing and enjoying the glory of the Redeemer, and the prosperity and success of the work of redemption.

tion among men. And their happiness must increase, as the cause of Christ advances on earth, and the power and kingdom of satan sinks, and is destroyed; and as the powers of their minds, and their knowledge are enlarged.

They are delivered from all sin and pain, upon passing into the invisible world, and are therefore, perfectly happy; but at the day of judgment, when they shall be reunited to their bodies, fitted for a heavenly state, their happiness will be increased, which therefore they are expecting with desire and joy.

The spirits of those who die in their sins, pass into a state of darkness, despair, and tormenting wickedness; and all hope, comfort, and enjoyment, being taken from them, they must be totally lost and overwhelmed in misery; yet looking forward to a resurrection and judgment to come, with aversion and dread, as involving a great increase of their sufferings, which can have no end.—These are the *spirits in prison*, of which the Apostle Peter speaks, who are reserved to the general judgment, when each one shall receive according to what he has done in the body.



THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

III. THE General Resurrection will put an end to the separate state. When the bodies of all who shall have died from the beginning of the world, to that time, will be raised, and come forth, in union with the souls which had been separated from them by death. This will take place when Jesus Christ shall come to judgment. This is frequently spoken of in the scriptures, and expressly asserted, in more places than it is needful to mention here, for those who read the Bible. Our Saviour says, “The hour is coming, in the which, all that are in
the

the graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.* When the Apostle John, had a vision of the general judgment, the general resurrection is connected with it. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: And they were judged every man according to their works."† The Apostle Paul treats particularly of the resurrection of the bodies of the redeemed, as an important and essential doctrine of christianity.‡

We depend entirely upon divine revelation, for the notice and knowledge of this doctrine of a future resurrection; as it could not be known by any other means. But when we find it revealed, it does not appear contrary to reason; but is agreeable to the dictates of it; and in no respect incredible, if the account the scripture gives of it, be properly considered, and understood. There were indeed, some professing christians in the Apostle's days, as there have been since, who denied this doctrine. This was the occasion of St. Paul's writing so particularly and lengthy upon it, in the chapter just now quoted. This doctrine was thought incredible, impossible and ridiculous, by the heathen philosophers, and others, in the days of Christ and his Apostles. And this same incredulity has been transmitted down to this day, among those, who pay little or no regard to the Bible. They say, it is impossible, that all the same bodies which have died, should be ever recovered and raised again. It is not thought necessary to state their objections, and answer them here, as this has been done over and over again, by many able writers. It will be sufficient to observe, that the remark which Christ made upon the Sadducees,

* John v. 28, 29.

† Rev. xx. 12, 13.

‡ 1 Cor. xv.

ducees, who denied this doctrine, as impossible, is applicable to them, viz. That they do greatly err, because they do not believe, or understand the scriptures; nor the power of God. When they can tell, in what *identity* consists, and what is necessary in order to constitute the resurrection body the *same*, with that to which the soul was united in this life; and what omnipotence, and infinite knowledge and wisdom can do, and cannot do, with respect to this; and can prove that the Bible is not a revelation from God; then let them undertake to prove, that the doctrine of a general resurrection of the same bodies which have died, or shall die, to the end of the world, is impossible or incredible.

The resurrection bodies of the redeemed, will be beautiful and glorious, far beyond our present conception: They will be like the glorified body of the Redeemer; every way fitted for a state of immortality, constant activity, and perfect happiness, as the eternal monuments of the power, wisdom and goodness of Christ. They will have no defect, but be perfectly suited to accommodate and furnish the holy soul, to all that activity, work and enjoyment, which are implied in a state of perfect happiness. This is called in scripture, a *spiritual body*; which some have thought to be a contradiction. It is indeed beyond our comprehension. But where is the inconsistency or impropriety, in calling that a spiritual body, which is so much unlike any body which we know, or of which we can have any adequate idea, that it is perfectly suited to promote the perceptions, activity and enjoyment of a holy mind, and answer every desirable end, with respect to all external objects?

The bodies of those who died in their sins, will be an awful contrast to those of the redeemed. "They will rise "To shame and everlasting contempt."* They will

* Dan. xii. 2.

will be every way suited to the souls which are wholly sinful, and enemies to God, prepared for condemnation, despair and endless destruction.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

IV. THAT there will be a General Judgment, when all moral agents, angels and men, good and bad, shall give an account of themselves, of their moral character and conduct, to God their Judge, and receive of him, and be treated by him, according to what they are, and as their moral conduct has been, while in a state of trial, is expressly and abundantly asserted in the scriptures. And this appears reasonable, desirable and important, to all who have any proper conceptions of moral government, and are friends to it.

The precise time, when the day of judgment shall commence, is fixed, and Jesus Christ the Redeemer, is appointed to be the Judge of all. This he commanded the Apostles to publish, in preaching his gospel to the world, as Peter declares. "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and testify, that it is He which was ordained of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead."* The Apostle Paul, therefore, kept this in view, in his preaching and letters. In his discourse to the assembly at Athens, he introduces this, as an important article. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at : But now commandeth all men, every where, to repent : Because he hath appointed a day, in the 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 when he spoke before Felix, concerning the faith

* Acts x. 42.

† Acts xvii. 31, 39.

in Christ, "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come."* And he often brought this into view in his letters. He says, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. So then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God."† "Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."‡ "I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and kingdom."§

Jesus Christ is the appointed Judge. This appears wise and desirable; that he who is God manifest in the flesh, and by this medium, and in this sense, the visible God, should take this high, and infinitely important and honourable station, and decide the character and eternal state of all moral agents, especially of man. This will be a bright and glorious manifestation of Deity in the human nature, when he shall come in the glory of the Father, with all the signals of divinity, attended with all the holy angels; and shall raise the bodies of all the dead, and summon all before him as their final judge, taking upon him an office and business, infinitely too high and great for a mere creature. This will strike conviction into the mind of every intelligent creature, that he is really God and man. And it is highly proper and important, that he who stooped so low, and took upon him the form of a servant, and submitted to reproach and contempt, and to die an ignominious and cruel death, by the

* Acts xxiv. 25.

† Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12.

‡ 1 Cor. iv. 5. 2 Cor. v. 10.

§ 2 Tim. iv. 1.

the hands of wicked men, for the salvation of sinners, should be thus rewarded and honoured; and every knee be made to bow to him, as God, and their final Judge.* Nothing could be more pleasing, and give greater joy and happiness to the redeemed, and the holy angels, than to have the Redeemer thus exalted and honoured as the Judge of all; and nothing more disagreeable and confounding to devils and wicked men.

The place in which the General Judgment will be attended, will be such as shall be in the best manner suited to such a transaction; to accommodate the Judge, and all concerned in the business of that important solemn day. It will be so contrived and situated, that every one of the vast assembly, which shall then be collected, will be under advantage to see the Judge, and all that is done, and hear every word that shall be spoken by the Judge, or by any one else, through the whole process. The Apostle Paul says, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: And the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive, and remain, shall be caught up, together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."† It hence appears, that this scene will not be on this earth, but in some more convenient place, which shall be fixed and formed for that purpose; which Christ, by whom all worlds were made, can effect at once, with infinite ease. It is not certain, from the Apostle's mentioning clouds, and the air, that it will be in the atmosphere of this earth; for if this be meant by the air here, which is not certain, though the redeemed shall meet Christ in our atmosphere, this may be, that they may accompany him to some other more distant place, where the judgment shall be, and to which all intelligent creatures in the universe will be brought.

The design of the General Judgment, is not to inform the Judge, that he may know the character and actions of all, so as to be able to pronounce a proper and righteous sentence upon them; for he is omniscient. But it is to make known to creatures, upon what grounds he proceeds in giving rewards, and inflicting punishment; that all may be under the best advantage, to see and approve the righteousness and propriety of the final sentence. Therefore, in the scripture it is called "*The day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.*"* In order to this, the moral character of every one, will be laid open, and set in a true and clear light, so that all the spectators shall be under the best advantage to see it. Every single person must be called forth, and take his turn to be scrutinized; and all he has done, whether secretly or more openly, will be made manifest to all creatures, while all attend to every particular; for there will not be one inattentive spectator there. All disguise and hypocrisy will be detected; and every exercise of heart, and outward action, with the motive and design, will be made to appear in a true light. In this the scripture is very express. "For God will bring *every work* into judgment, with *every secret thing*, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."† "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light: And that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops. I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."‡ "In the day when God shall judge *the secrets of men* by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness,

* Rom. ii. 5. † Eccl. xii. 14. ‡ Matth. xii. 36. Luke xii. 2, 3.

ness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts.”*
 “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”† “And they were judged *every man* according to his works.”‡

It hence appears, that the day of judgment, will not be finished in the space of a natural day of twenty four hours ; but the process may continue and go on during the term of many thousand years, much longer than from the creation to the commencement of that day ; though days and years, and time, as we now measure it, will then be at an end ; yet there will be a succession of events, and of ideas and perceptions, among creatures ; and this must continue without end. And it must take time, as we now term it, and conceive of it, for creatures to recollect and take a particular view, of every character that has existed ; of all that has been done, secretly or openly, by every particular person, of angels, devils and men, from the beginning of the world, to that time : Even though the exhibition shall be made in the best and most advantageous manner, and creatures shall be able to think and receive ideas, with much greater celerity, than men can in this state. Solomon seems to have reference to this long duration of the day of judgment, in the following words. “I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked : For there is a time there, for every purpose, and for every work.”§ That is, however long a term, it may take, to bring every purpose, and every work of men into view, so as to judge them according to their works, yet time will not be wanting ; and God will take time enough for it.

In this transaction, it may be supposed, the Redeemer will give, or cause to be exhibited, the best, most perfect, and entertaining history of mankind, and of all intelligences, without the least error, or misrepresentation, in-

Q 4

cluding

* Rom. ii. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 5.

† Rom. xiv. 12.

‡ Rev. xx. 13.

§ Eccl. iii. 17.

cluding all the thoughts, exercises and actions of moral agents, all their motives and designs in external conduct, with respect to God, and creatures ; all their enjoyments and sufferings, and every event which relates to them ; including the designs, agency and conduct of God, with respect to them ; and the ends answered thereby : By which one connected, important scene, will rise into view, and be seen, from the beginning to the end, comprehending all the sins, and all the virtue and holiness, that have taken place among creatures, together with the superintending hand of God, in every thing ; his decrees and designs ; his universal energy, and governing providence, wisely conducting every thing, and all events, to bring them to their intended issue : By which his power, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, truth and faithfulness, shall be set in the clearest light. And as the scene proceeds, in this divine exhibition, and history, which the Redeemer will give ; all his friends will be entertained and gratified, in a very high degree, and their enjoyment and happiness will rise, and be on the increase, from the beginning to the end ; however long it shall continue.

On the other hand, it will be a most distressing and dreadful scene to the enemies of Christ, both devils and wicked men ; and their pain and torment will increase from the beginning, till the infinitely dreadful sentence is passed upon them, " Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And while they hear the blessed sentence pronounced, inviting the righteous into the eternal kingdom of God, and see them received there ; this will increase their misery and torment, to an unspeakable degree, which never can be abated. At the same time, the enjoyment and happiness of the blessed, will rise to an inconceivable height, which will continue and increase without end.

The redeemed will not be publicly justified, and received to eternal life, because of their obedience to the law of God ; for if treated according to that, they would be found guilty, and must be cursed. But Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to them ; and they will be judged according to the gospel, as friends to Christ, and believers in him ; since God can be just, and yet publicly justify every one who is publicly known to be a believer in Christ. And when it is said, that every one shall be judged, and shall receive according to his works, which he has done in the body, in this life, the gospel is supposed, and kept in view ; and every one, who shall, by setting the whole of his character and works in clear and public sight, appear to be a friend to Christ, and united to him, shall, on this account, and according to the gospel, be publicly justified, and rewarded with eternal life, which he could not be, if treated according to the law of works. And they who shall be found not to be friends to Christ, while in this world, shall be condemned, and fall under the curse of the law. This is agreeable to the representation which Christ gives of the general judgment.* And the Apostle Paul, sets it in the same light.†

It has been a question, Whether the sins of the redeemed would be brought into view, and laid open before all intelligences, at the day of judgment ; or would be covered and kept out of sight ? And different opinions have been entertained of this. But it is thought, if the matter be properly considered, it will be evident that all their sins will be brought into view, and laid open before all ; and that it will appear that there is not any evidence from the scripture, that their sins will be concealed ; but the contrary. It is indeed said in scripture, that the sins, of the people of God, shall be
blotted

* Matth. xxv. 31, &c.

† 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9, 10.

*blotted out, covered, cast into the depths of the sea, and remembered no more.** But these are metaphorical expressions, to denote the free and full pardon of all their sins, so that they should never be remembered against them, so as to condemn them to suffer the just consequence of them ; but they shall be treated as well as if they never had been guilty of one sin. It cannot be true, that God will remember their sins no more, in any other sense ; for it is impossible he should forget them, or any thing else. This has been already observed, in the section on Justification.

1. That the sins of the redeemed, should not be brought into view, at the day of judgment, appears contrary to the express declaration of scripture, which has been mentioned. It is said, "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Which cannot be consistent with passing over and concealing all the sins of the redeemed.

2. It appears impossible, that their sins should be concealed, consistent with the sins of the wicked, being fully laid open ; for believers and unbelievers, are so many ways connected, that the thoughts and conduct of the latter, cannot be fully discovered, without making known the sins of the former, at least in many instances ; of which every one must be sensible, who attends to the matter. For instance, is it not impossible that all the sins of an unbelieving husband, should be clearly discovered in all their circumstances and aggravations, while all the sins of his believing wife, are wholly concealed ; which were the occasion of many of his sins, and to which they have a particular reference ?

3. The holy exercises and good works of the saved cannot be set in a true and just light, without discovering their

* Isaiah xliii. 25. Psal. xxxii. 1. Jer. xxxi. 34. Mich. vii. 19.

their sinful infirmities and defects, at least, with which they have all been attended ; and their sins have been the occasion, and reason of their gracious exercises, in many instances. How can their repentance of their sins be discovered, and clearly seen, while the sins of which they repent, are wholly concealed ? How can their humility, and their humbling themselves in the sight of the Lord, be discovered, unless the sins for which they humble themselves, be known ? How shall their love and faithfulness, in reproving a believing brother for his sins, and their labours and prayers for him, which have been the means of his recovery, reformation, and salvation, be made known, without discovering the sins of that brother ? And how can their trust in Christ, for the pardon of their sins, and their penitent confessions of their sins, be discovered, without, at the same time, discovering their sins, to which these exercises have reference, and without which they would not be virtuous or reasonable, or even intelligible ? In short, all the holy exercises and works of a christian, take their particular complexion, and peculiar beauty, from their sins, of which they were guilty, before conversion, and afterwards, which cannot be seen any farther than their sins come into view.

4. Many sins of the redeemed, have been already published to the world, in divine revelation ; and will be known by all who read the Bible, to the end of the world ; and at the day of judgment ; and will forever be known and remembered by all the redeemed ; by all the angels and devils, and by many, if not by all wicked men. The reader will recollect many more instances of this, than Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Peter, and the rest of the Apostles : And the Apostle Paul, took pains to keep in view and publish his great wickedness, before his conversion. God has ordered all these to be published : And therefore we know it is wise
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and best that they should not be concealed, but made known; and that this will answer some important, good end. And who can say, that God will not publish all the sins of every one of the redeemed, at the day of judgment; and that this will not be necessary to answer some important ends? This leads to another particular.

5. It seems necessary, that the sins of the saved should be known and published, in order to discover and set in the most clear light, the goodness and grace of God, in pardoning and saving them; and that their need of a Redeemer, and the efficacy of his atonement and righteousness, should be seen to the greatest advantage: And the work of the Holy Spirit, in his effectually applying redemption to them, and subduing such rebels, cannot be otherwise fully revealed, in every particular instance. Of this, every one must be sensible, who will reflect on the subject. There is doubtless, something peculiar, in the character of each one of the redeemed, with respect to his guilt, the circumstances and aggravations of his sins, and the manner in which he is brought to repentance, &c. which serves to illustrate the sovereign grace of God, in his pardon and redemption; and it is so ordered, that he should sin in just such a manner and degree, and in such particular circumstances, to answer some end; and particularly this, that God might be more glorified, in the exercise of his sovereign, wise, wonderful goodness and grace, in his pardon and salvation.— But in order to this, the particular sins, the guilt, and circumstances in which he sinned, must be known; and must be known to all, in order to the greatest and most public display of sovereign grace, in his pardon and salvation, that all may glorify God, and give thanks, and praise him, on his behalf. This leads to another observation.

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6. Every one of the redeemed, ardently desires, that God may have all the praise and glory of his pardoning mercy, and sovereign grace, exercised towards him, in his pardon and salvation; and the more this is known and celebrated, the more pleased he will be. But this cannot be known, it cannot be seen what God has done for *him* in particular, any farther than his sins, with their circumstances and particular aggravations, are published and known. Therefore, it will be so far from being undesirable to him, or giving him the least uneasiness, to have his sins, with all their aggravations, most particularly, and clearly laid open before all; that they may see his guilt, and the odiousness of his character, as he does; that it will give him a peculiar satisfaction, and high degree of pleasure; as it will promote the happiness of all his friends, and be matter of their gratitude and praise to God, for his sovereign grace, exercised and manifested in his pardoning and saving such a sinner; and God will have all the praise and glory.

Where is there a real christian now, who, when he reflects on his amazing guilt and vileness, the multitude and aggravations of his sins, his desert, and danger of perishing forever, which has been prevented purely by the sovereign grace of God, exercised in all wisdom and prudence, towards him, in pardoning, rescuing, and saving him, who does not say, at least, in his heart, "Let God have all the praise and glory of his rich and sovereign grace, exercised towards me, in pardoning *such a sinner*, so infinitely guilty and vile, attended with such particular aggravations. Let all heaven, the angels, and all the redeemed, know what God has done for me, and praise him forever." In this view, he desires and wishes that his case might be particularly and fully known to all, that they all might join with him, in giving praise and glory to God. And at the day of judgment, this disposition

position and desire, will be stronger and perfect; and he will, by having all his sins set in order, and in the clearest light before him, and all creatures, have a more clear and enlarged view himself, of the multitude and greatness of his sins, than he ever had before, and of the wonderful mercy of God, in pardoning him, and of the boundless sufficiency of the atonement of Christ, and of his merit, by which he has obtained forgiveness of all his sins, and complete salvation. This will prepare him to be highly gratified, and exceedingly rejoice, that the whole is now brought out and made known to all the friends of God, that they may all be under the best advantage to join with him, in giving all the praise and glory to God and the Saviour, of his unbounded love, and sovereign grace, in which he hath abounded towards him, in all wisdom and prudence. In this view, he cannot desire to have one of his sins concealed, for which Christ has atoned, and which is pardoned; and would not have his sins in general secreted, on any consideration.

In a word, Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of SINNERS; he came into the world to save *sinners*, even the chief of sinners. This is his work, and in this is his glory: That the redeemed are sinners, must therefore be known at the day of judgment, in order to his having the glory of their salvation. And the more clearly their true character is seen, and their sins, in their number and aggravations are discovered, the more will Christ be glorified in their salvation. Therefore, the brightest possible discovery will be made of this by him, at the day of judgment. And by this the redeemed will be gratified and pleased, to a high degree. It will appear, at that day, that the redeemed are not saved, because they deserve such favour, or are less unworthy, or less sinners than others; but because Christ loved them, and gave himself for them, and they are united to him, and have put their trust in him

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for pardon, righteousness and complete redemption. And though they may then appear to have been greater sinners, and more illdeserving, than those who perish; as doubtless many, if not all of them will; and their greatest crimes will appear to be those, which they committed after their conversion; yet this will not hinder their justification and salvation, or render it in the least degree improper, more than if they were less sinners; but the Redeemer will be hereby more glorified in the salvation of *such sinners*, and they will be the more happy. For they, to whom most is forgiven, will love the most.

Though the Redeemer has not altered the nature of sin, or rendered it less odious and criminal, either in the redeemed, or in those who perish; but much more so; yet he overrules it, and turns it to his own glory, and the glory of his kingdom; and makes the sins of those who are saved, the occasion of their greater holiness and happiness forever.

When every character of those who are to be judged, shall be set in the clearest light, and fixed; and all the past conduct and transactions in the moral world, both of God and creatures, shall be set in a clear, connected view; and all creatures shall be under the best advantage to see the righteousness and propriety of the final sentence, it will be pronounced by the Judge, in the sight and audience of all. This will be, in some respects, the most solemn, weighty, joyful and dreadful scene and transaction, that had ever taken place: Which will fix the righteous in a state of endless, inexpressible happiness and glory: And send the wicked away, into inconceivable, eternal misery. We have a summary of this sentence, on each of these, left on record, for our instruction and warning, by the Judge himself, in his awful representation of the day of judgment, in the xxvth chapter of Matthew.

STATE OF HAPPINESS OR MISERY.

V. THE General Judgment issues in an endless State of Happiness or Misery, as has been just observed. Much is said of this endless state, both of the happiness and misery of it, in the scriptures, in the promises and threatenings, and declarations there made : But those opposite states, both of happiness and misery, are more particularly described in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, made to the Apostle John, for the support and encouragement of christians, and to excite them to faith, resolution, patience and perseverance in the service of Christ, and a faithful, constant adherence to the truths of the gospel, in the evil times which were to take place, and the opposition, and sufferings to which they are exposed in this world, and the trials and temptations which await them here.

But with all the instruction we have on this subject, and the utmost attention to it, of which we are capable, our conceptions are dark and low, and fall unspeakably short of a full, comprehensive view of the truth. However, the following thoughts will be suggested, as agreeable to the scripture.

First, The righteous will go from the judgment, into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, where they shall enjoy everlasting life, in a state of unspeakable happiness and glory.

Their bodies will be beautiful and glorious, like the body of the glorified Jesus, active and sprightly, without the least possible weariness or decay, by the greatest, uninterrupted activity ; every way suited to the employment of such a place and state, which shall in no degree confine or impede the mind in its exercises and enjoyment ; but shall greatly assist and promote these : So that the soul

soul will be invigorated by its union to such a body, and be more happy forever, than it could be in any other situation and circumstances whatever.

There is an external place and city, or kingdom, formed in the greatest beauty, convenience, and glory; suited to be a dwelling for the incarnate SON OF GOD, and the imbodyed spirits of the redeemed; where every one will be perfectly accommodated, and pleased, every circumstance being answerable to his desires, and suited to his employment, and to render him most happy. Jesus Christ said to his disciples, "In my Father's house, are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you."* Though this house and kingdom, were made, when the world was created, yet it may be capable of alterations and additions, to increase the convenience, beauty and glory of it. When Christ ascended to heaven, in his glorified body, it may be supposed, the place was, in a degree, fitted up, and better suited for the reception and residence of the Redeemer, in his glorified body. And after the day of judgment, there will probably be a still farther addition to the beauty and glory of this place, and new accommodations be formed, for the imbodyed church of the redeemed; so that the place which was always glorious, will then exceed in glory.

The redeemed, thus situated, furnished and surrounded, with every thing convenient and desirable, there being nothing, nor any circumstance, which will not be suited to give them pleasure, and furnish them in the best manner for their employment; will be perfectly holy. Every thought, and all their exercises and conduct, will be perfectly right, and with the greatest propriety. They will, by their holy, ardent love, be united to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by a strong, most happy, and everlasting union. They will behold this God in a full

* John xiv. 2.

blaze of light. In his light, they shall see light, and all moral darkness shall be excluded forever. God and the Lamb, shall be the eternal, undiminishing light of that holy city. They shall see his glory without a veil, and enjoy all his beauty and perfection, to the utmost of their capacity, with the greatest assurance, that this God, is their God, and will be their friend forever. "The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters."* He will be the great and eternal medium of communications from the Deity, and discoveries of his love, perfection and glory ; and of their access to God, and enjoyment of him. Their peculiar and close union, and conformity to him, will be the eternal source of a high degree of honour and happiness, which no other creatures can enjoy. They shall sit down with him on his throne, and share with him in all his honour and happiness, to the utmost of their capacity. And what happiness must they enjoy, who love God, and the Redeemer, with all their hearts, with the most strong and fervent love of benevolence and complacency, when they see how greatly he is glorified, and will be forever, by their redemption and salvation ! And what joy will they have in praising and giving glory to him ! And their infinite obligations to him, for redeeming them from sin and hell, and giving them eternal life, will be felt by them, and be the constant, eternal source of the sweetest, most happyfying love of gratitude ; and in expressing it, they will have the highest pleasure and enjoyment.

They will be most happy in the society which they shall form, of which every individual will be a member. They will be perfectly united by the strongest, most sweet, and everlasting bond of love, and the happiest friendship, mutually enjoying and rejoicing in the happiness of each other ; each one knowing that every one in
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this great kingdom, is perfectly beautiful and amiable, and a cordial friend to him. And there will doubtless be ways of expressing their love and friendship for each other, in a better and more agreeable way and manner, than we now know, and of which we can now have no conception; by which they will mingle souls, with the greatest freedom and intimacy, having no reserve, or secret, which they cannot with pleasure impart to each other.

And those who have been intimate friends in this world, and mutual blessings to each other, will know one another in heaven; and what has passed between them in this life, will be the occasion of peculiar pleasure and joy in each other. This appears reasonable, and may be with certainty inferred from what the Apostle Paul says to those, of whose conversion he had been the instrument. He addresses them thus, "As you have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming. For ye are our glory and joy."*

If there be such peculiar and high satisfaction and pleasure, in christian love and friendship, in this imperfect state; how unspeakable must be the enjoyment and happiness, when those friends meet in heaven; having put off all their imperfection and sin, and become perfectly beautiful and excellent; formed every way for the highest and everlasting friendship, without any thing to keep them at a distance, or occasion any reserve; but every thing suited to their enjoyment of each other, in the most exalted, refined friendship, in the greatest intimacy and union of hearts, expressing their sentiments and feelings, with the utmost freedom and ease, without any danger, or possibility of being misunderstood! At

the same time, their hearts glowing with love to Christ, in whose presence they are ; and who is the author and center of all the love and friendship in heaven : And the more they love him, the stronger and more sensible is their union of hearts to each other, and the greater happiness they have in their mutual friendship.

The church of the redeemed, is the body of Christ, of which he is the head : The fulness of him who filleth all in all. He is the former of this society and kingdom. And when completed by his hand, it will be as perfect, excellent and glorious, as infinite power, wisdom and goodness, united together, and exerted, will make it.— There will be not one member too many, nor one wanting, in order to make it most complete and perfect.— Every one will be fixed in his proper place, and be formed, in all respects, so as to render the whole the most perfect, beautiful, harmonious, and happy society possible.

The three Persons in the Godhead, form an infinitely high, holy, and happy society, the original and perfect pattern of all true love, friendship, and happiness. And the society of the redeemed, the church and kingdom of Christ, will be an eternal imitation and image, of the infinitely high and perfect society of the THREE ONE, the *One in Three*, and a most beautiful, happy and glorious emanation from him, who necessarily exists infinitely the most beautiful and happy society, without beginning, change or end, being entirely incomprehensible by creatures. This idea seems to be expressed by Christ, in his prayer to the Father, which will be completely answered in heaven. He prays for the elect, in the following words. “ That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee ; that they also may be one in us. The glory which thou gavest me, I have given to them ; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they

they may be made perfect in one. I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it ; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.”* And the words of the Apostle John, if considered in their full meaning, seem to express the same thing. “ If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. God is love : And he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.”† Jesus Christ the Mediator, is the medium by which the society of the redeemed in heaven, will be united to the infinitely more excellent and perfect society, the Eternal Trinity of Persons, who dwell in the infinitely high and holy place, far beyond the reach or comprehension of creatures ; from whom the same benevolence and social love, is shed down through the Mediator, on these redeemed ones, forming them into one most happy society, in union with the blessed Trinity, and so as to be a little image of the Deity, the Three in One, and One in Three.

The holy angels belong to this society and kingdom : But though their natural powers be great, and in this respect they may be superior to man, they will not be in so honourable a station as the redeemed, nor can they enjoy that peculiar happiness which the latter will have, in consequence of being redeemed, and sharing in *redeeming love*, and their near, honourable and happy union to Jesus Christ, by which they are *the bride, the Lamb's wife*. The angels are unspeakably more happy than they could have been, had there been no Redeemer, and no redemption of sinners. They are employed and happy in looking into these things, and knowing more of God by this mean, and seeing his manifold wisdom, and wonderful goodness.‡ They are happy in serving Christ, in carrying on the work of redemption, and in ministering to the redeemed, and serving them ; and will doubtless be so

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* John xvii. 21, 22, 23, 26.

† 1 John iv. 12, 16.

‡ Eph. iii. 10. 1 Peter i. 12.

forever. "Are they not ALL ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation?"* Hence it appears, that man is more of an ultimate end than the angels. The angels were made for man, and not man for the angels. For we may know the end of God in making any creature or thing, by the use which he makes of it. However, they are a necessary part of this most beautiful, happy and glorious society and kingdom, and are in a very honourable station, in serving Christ and his church.

The happiness of the redeemed in heaven, will not consist in rest and indolence, in opposition to activity, but the contrary; in activity, and incessant, unwearying labour and service, from which they will not cease or rest. They will join in worshipping and praising the UN-DIVIDED THREE, God, and the Lamb, and the Holy Ghost; and the Redeemer will find business and employment for them continually; though we cannot now tell particularly, what it will be. Perhaps there will be public teachers, who will assist others in their speculations, and in exciting their love and pious affections. Some will have greater abilities than others, and more existence and holiness, and will be able to assist and instruct them who have less. The Apostle Paul says, there will be a difference between them, as one star differs from another.† They will converse together with the greatest pleasure; sometimes in larger, and sometimes in smaller companies; and at other times only two together. And doubtless sometimes they will have high enjoyment in conversing with Deity, and with Christ, by themselves alone, in retirement, by meditation and devotion. But with respect to these particulars, we are in the dark, and unable to determine with certainty. It is enough for us to know, at present, that every thing will be ordered, and take place in the best manner, for the brightest display of the
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* Heb. i. 14.

† 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

divine perfections, and the greatest happiness of the members of this kingdom ; and that each one will be constantly active, in that business which shall be most proper for him ; in which he shall take the greatest pleasure, and shall be most for the general good. “ Therefore, are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night, in his temple.”*

There will be a perfect, uninterrupted harmony and agreement, in this society and kingdom. They will be united, not only in affection, but in sentiment. They will be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. Every one will be full of light, according to his capacity and advantages to know ; and not one will make any mistake, or judge wrong, concerning any matter or thing, throughout endless ages ; for this would be morally wrong or sinful. None of them will be omniscient, and some may know more than others. But they will pass no judgment about things, of which they have no evidence, and concerning which they have no knowledge, except it be, that they do not know, and therefore, cannot determine. There will, therefore, be no dispute and jar in heaven ; but every one will be all attention, and all ear, to learn what he does not yet know ; and suspend his judgment in every matter, till he has light to decide it perfectly right.

And there will be nothing to offend them, or give them the least uneasiness, or one disagreeable painful idea, thought or sensation, to eternity ; but every object will excite, or be the occasion of, the most pleasing sensations, and every thought will be attended with extatic delight. All, through which they have passed in this world, the scene of sorrow, pain and sin, will not be forgotten ; but their reflection upon it, while it is all in the clearest view, will be the occasion of their greatest enjoyment and happiness. The wicked, in a state of suffering and

punishment, will not be out of their sight; but will be seen by all the inhabitants of heaven. "They shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever."* But this will give them no pain, or one uneasy thought or sensation; but it will be the occasion of their joy and praise.

Not that the misery of any, in itself considered, and for its own sake, will give them pleasure; but they will have such a constant sense of the justice, propriety, and necessity of their punishment, to answer the best end, for the glory of God, and the general good: That they will, in the full view of this, sing and say, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; for they are worthy. Even so, Lord, God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments."† And this will be the occasion of exciting and maintaining, in a higher degree, than otherwise could be, a sense of the happiness of the redeemed; and of the sovereign, distinguishing goodness of God in their salvation; and of their indebtedness to sovereign divine grace; which will raise their gratitude to the highest key: And will keep in constant view, the excellence, worthiness, power and grace of the Redeemer. This is the representation the scripture gives. The inhabitants of heaven, rejoice and praise God, in full view of the punishment of the wicked. "After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Hallelujah: And her smoke rose up forever and ever. And

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* Rev. xiv. 10, 11.

† Rev. xvi. 5, 6, 7.

the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Hallelujah.”*

And reason teaches, not only *why* the punishment of the wicked will be the occasion of the greater joy and happiness of the redeemed, agreeable to this representation of scripture; but that it *must be so*, in order to the perfect happiness of the inhabitants of heaven. For if this were not, on the whole, all things considered, agreeable to them, it must be matter of uneasiness, and the occasion of constant grief and pain; which would render heaven, in a great measure, an unhappy place. It is impossible that the wicked should be punished, unless God were pleased with it: Therefore, so far as the inhabitants of heaven will be like God, and be pleased with that which is pleasing to him, this punishment will be the occasion of joy and happiness to them.

And while they are in the full enjoyment of all this happiness in heaven, they will have the greatest assurance that it shall have no end, but continue forever. Without this, their happiness would not be complete at any time. For whatever happy circumstances they were in at present, and however happy they might be, the thought that they were liable to lose it, and having no assurance that it should never cease, would be a great alloy to their present enjoyment, and be inconsistent with their *complete* happiness. Therefore, the certainty that they shall exist without end in this state, is a necessary ingredient in their felicity, in order to their having fulness of joy, at present, as well as pleasures forevermore.

From the nature of the human mind, and the circumstances in which the redeemed will be in heaven, it is reasonable to suppose, that they will increase, and make continual progress, in knowledge, holiness, and happiness, without end; and they will make advances in these,

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* Rev. xix. 1, 2, 3, 4.

with greater celerity, the longer they exist. The greatest and chief objects of knowledge are infinite : This therefore, is a foundation for progress in knowledge, without end ; and however swift the advances be, the subjects to which they attend, can never be exhausted. However much they may know, at any supposed time, they will be so far from knowing all that may be known ; that the advances in knowledge, which they have then made, will be little, compared with what may take place ; and will put them under advantages, to make yet swifter advances in knowledge, for time to come. The mind is capable of enlarging its ideas and knowledge, by attention and exercise, when objects present, and invite to new discoveries ; and so far as we can conceive, must enlarge and grow in strength and capacity, in these circumstances ; and every degree of increase of knowledge, will prepare the mind, to make yet greater and more swift advances in knowledge, to which no bounds can be set, so as to put a stop to the progress. And in proportion to the increase of their knowledge, will their love and holiness increase, and consequently their enjoyment and happiness.

The Deity, who is the infinite fountain and source of existence, is almighty, infinitely wise and good, can open new scenes successively, by which the blessed shall know more and more of him, and grow in degrees of holiness and happiness ; and however fast they increase, in progress and advances in knowledge, holiness, and happiness, they will forever be infinitely below the Deity, and fall infinitely short of infinite existence, holiness, and felicity. This view may serve, in some measure, to give us an idea of the greatness of the felicity of the redeemed, and of the advancing grandeur and glory of the eternal kingdom of Christ, which far exceeds the utmost stretch of our thoughts and imagination.

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And this is agreeable to the scripture, if it be not expressly or implicitly asserted there. The following words of the Redeemer, may be considered as expressing, or at least implying this. "I am come, that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly*."* These words have been understood to express the greater happiness which the redeemed shall have by Christ, than that which they could have had by the first Adam, had he not sinned. They may be understood to express more, even the abounding, and endless increase of eternal life. They shall have it multiplied and abounding with increase forever. It is said of the redeemed in heaven, "The Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and *shall lead them unto living fountains of waters*."† Which may import not only the fulness of happiness, and the care of Christ to supply them constantly; but the progress that shall be made, in new discoveries of divine truth and grace, and in enjoyment and happiness. They shall be led from one fountain of living water to another, and new ones shall be constantly opening, for their greater refreshment and pleasure.

In heaven they will contemplate and search out the works of God, and marvellous things without number, which to us, in this world, are unsearchable.‡ These great and marvellous works of God, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, will be then explored and sought out, with the greatest attention and pleasure.§ They will search into, and see the divine plan, comprehending all things, and all events that have come to pass, formed by infinite wisdom and goodness, and executed by the all pervading energy of omnipotence, they will behold it with pleasing admiration and wonder, as it has been opened in divine providence; and be more and more pleased with the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God. They will learn his manifold wisdom, in planning and conducting all

* John x. 10.

† Rev. vii. 17.

‡ Job iv. 9.

§ Psal. cxi. 2. Isai. xxviii. 29.

all things to the most happy issue, and understand, with pleasing wonder and adoration, more of his judgments and ways, which in this state, are unsearchable, and past finding out. They will see more and more of their own entire, absolute, and universal dependence on God for all things, and of all creatures and things; that they are the clay, and he is the sovereign Potter, and former of all things; and this will appear to them to be just as they would have it; and the greater sense they have of this, the more pleasure and happiness will they have; while they rejoice, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and will reign forever.* For God will then be all in all; "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: To whom be glory forever. Amen."†

Secondly, THE wicked will go from the judgment unto everlasting punishment. The scripture sets this punishment in an awful and terrifying light; not only as it will be endless, but amazingly great and dreadful in degree. It is represented by their being cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, where they have no rest, but shall be tormented night and day: That is, without any cessation, forever and ever: Where they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever.‡ If these are to be taken as in some measure metaphorical expressions; yet we must not think that they are designed to represent to our view and imagination, the sufferings of the wicked; as greater and more dreadful, than they really will be; for this is not consistent with the dignity and truth of God, to attempt to fright men, by threatening them with a greater evil than he ever will inflict on any; or by representing them as suffering more than the wicked will suffer. Besides, the wicked will be "vessels fitted to destruction;"

* Rev. xix. 6.

† Rom. xi. 36. 1 Cor. xv. 28.

‡ Rev. xiv. 10, 11. xx. 10, 15.

destruction ;" which implies that their whole capacity shall be devoted to suffering ; but they are capable of suffering as great evil as they can conceive or imagine. All the use which God will have for them, is to suffer ; this is all the end they can answer ; therefore, all their faculties, and their whole capacity will be employed, or used for this end ; otherwise they would be useless, and answer no end.

As the wicked are to suffer in the body, they will be capable of suffering by means of the body, or of suffering bodily pain, as well as that which is purely mental.—The body can, by omnipotence, be made capable of suffering the greatest imaginable pain, without producing a dissolution, or abating the least degree of life and sensibility. The bodies of the wicked will be raised, and united to their souls, that they may be punished, and suffer misery in body and mind, in union. And God can render a future separation impossible, and so form the body, as that it shall continue in full life, and with quick sense, in union with the soul, in the hottest fire that can be imagined, or exist, through endless ages. And since the scripture speaks of them as tormented in a lake of fire and brimstone, perhaps we have no reason to conclude there will be nothing of this kind ; or that the suffering of this kind will not be so great, as to equal this representation. The scripture says, "What if God, willing, (or determining) to show his wrath, *and make his power known*, endureth with much long suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction ?"* And that they "Shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and *from the glory of his power*."† One way in which God will show his power in the punishment of the wicked, will be in strengthening, and upholding their bodies and souls, in suffering torments, which otherwise would be intolerable ; while at the same

time,

* Rom. ix. 22.

† 2 Thess. i. 9.

time, his power is gloriously manifested in the manner in which the punishment is to be inflicted.

The Apostle Peter, speaking of the day of judgment, and the destruction of the wicked, says, "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men." By the heavens are generally meant, in scripture, the sun, moon, and stars. These, with the earth, are reserved against the day of judgment, and for the destruction of ungodly men, by being all set on fire, with this earth. "When the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."* If the heavens, the sun, moon, and fixed stars, with all the planets that accompany them, together with this earth, should be thrown together with a tremendous crash and noise, so as to make one common mass of liquid fire, and the wicked be cast into it, at the day of judgment, to remain there forever in this unquenchable fire; it would be agreeable to this description of it by Peter, and other passages of scripture. And perhaps this is the most natural construction of the words now cited. This would be a great and amazing display of omnipotence and represents the punishment of the wicked, by their bodies, as very dreadful; but not greater than they will deserve, or than God can inflict, and make them strong to bear.

But be this as it may, and in whatever way or degree the wicked will suffer pain by the body, it is not to be doubted, that their mental pain and sufferings will be the chief part of their punishment. Indeed, such a situation and torture of their bodies, as has been now mentioned, is suited to fill their minds with an amazing sense of the awful power, and dreadful anger of God, which must occasion inexpressible mental terror, anguish and torture.

A great part of the punishment of the wicked, will consist in a sense of the greatness, power and terrible majesty of JEHOVAH, and his wrath, and displeasure with them, manifested in their proper effects. This will fill their minds with excruciating pain, and horror inexpressible, while the tokens of all these are exhibited in the most dreadful manner to them, in their punishment.

But there are other circumstances and things, which will be dreadful ingredients in the cup of their punishment. Their own disposition and exercises of heart, their selfishness and pride, and enmity to God, which will rage to a dreadful degree, will be a source of constant misery. These will render the shame and contempt which they shall suffer, most keenly painful, and, in a sense, intolerable. They will never be in any degree reconciled to the divine decrees and government, and their dependence on God, and being absolutely in his hands; but all this will be most painful to them; they will be disposed to justify themselves, and find fault with the law of God, and his treatment of them. Their opposition to all this, will be so strong and constant, and their enmity will rage, so that a constant conviction in their judgment and conscience, that God deals justly with them, may not take place; and they will sometimes, if not continually, in the utmost rage, blaspheme the God of heaven. It will be, beyond our present conception, painful and tormenting to them, to know that they have not a friend in the universe, and never shall have one, who will show them the least kindness, or have any pity on them: That God is against them and will cast evil upon them, and not spare; and all the inhabitants of heaven highly approve of his treatment of them, and praise him for his righteous judgments, in punishing them as they see he does. The conviction they will have of the happiness of the redeemed, some of whom
they

they despised and hated, when in this world, will excite their envy and malice to a high degree ; which are tormenting passions, in proportion to the strength of their exercise.

Their company will add to their misery. They will not find a friend among them ; but all will be full of hatred, rage, and malice. The sight and presence of the devil and his angels, who have had a great hand in their ruin, and who will continue their ill will, and torment them in all the ways their cunning and malice can invent, will be very dreadful. And whatever intercourse they may have with those of mankind, who are suffering with them, it will give them no relief, but add to their misery. And those who have had the greatest connexion with each other in this life, will be most unhappy together ; who have injured each other, or been the means of their eternal ruin. And those companions and supposed friends, who have tempted and seduced each other into the practice of vice, and way to ruin, will, by their mutual accusations and curses, be a vexation and torment to each other.

And all their attempts to get relief, which may be many and constant, will be in vain, and only add to their misery. Every thought and idea which passes in their mind, will be a painful one. Reflections on what they passed through in this world, (and they must think and reflect) on the favours and comforts they had, and the advantages they were under to obtain salvation, and the happy opportunities which they abused ; and the counsels, warnings, and admonitions which they had, &c. will but increase their misery. And when they look forward, the assurance they will have, that nothing better is to come ; but if there be any change, it will be against them ; and they must be miserable without end, and without hope ; will fill their minds with the insupportable

portable gloom, anguish and horror, of absolute despair ; and sink eternally without any possible comfort or support.

This is a short sketch, and some of the outlines of the punishment and sufferings of the wicked. But Oh ! How little can be told ; how short are all our conceptions, and imaginations, of the truth and real greatness of this infinite evil ! It will take an eternity to tell ! And none but the Infinite Mind, does comprehend it.

It must be observed, however, that though the punishment of every one of these, will be endless, and great in degree beyond all present conception, and perhaps will increase without end ; yet some will suffer a much greater degree of misery, than others ; and there will be a great difference between them, in this respect, according to their different advantages and capacities, while in this world ; to the light and conviction they had ; according to the number of their sins, and the different degrees of criminality of them, &c. The omniscient, almighty, and just Judge, will be able and disposed to weigh and adjust the crimes and guilt of every one in exact and just balances, and proportion the degree of punishment, exactly to the criminality or ill desert of each one, by ordering every circumstance perfectly agreeable to it.— From Christ the judge, “ Every one shall receive the things done in his body, *according to that he hath done*, whether it be good or bad.”* Agreeable to this, Christ says, It shall be more tolerable, at the day of judgment, for Sodom and Gomorra, than for those who reject the gospel, preached by him, or his disciples. “ And that servant who knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”†

I M P R O V E M E N T.

I. FROM the brief and imperfect view which has now been given of Death, a Separate State, Judgment, Heaven and Hell, we may reasonably be led to reflect, upon the infinitely grand, important, and interesting scenes that are before us, in which every one of the human race will have a part. A realizing view of these, will make all the things and concerns of time and sense, which are temporal, and relate to this state only, appear in their true littleness and vanity ; and to be of no worth and importance, any farther than they relate to these future scenes, and may put us under advantage to be prepared for them. How reasonable and important is it, that we should, with the Apostles, and primitive christians, constantly look, aim at, and pursue the things which are not seen, and are eternal ! *

II. How infinitely dreadful is the end of the wicked ! In what an unspeakably dangerous state, is he in this world ? His feet stand on slippery places, exposed to fall every moment into endless destruction, into which he will soon plunge, if he continue impenitent while in the body. "After his hard and impenitent heart, he is treasuring up, unto himself, in this life, wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." †

How great is the deliverance, when any one sinner is plucked as a brand from this eternal, infinitely dreadful fire ! This gives joy in heaven. How happy is he who is the instrument of turning any from sin, to righteousness ; of saving immortal souls from endless burnings ! What can be more desirable and pleasing, to a benevolent

* 2 Cor. iv. 18.

† Rom. ii. 5.

lent mind ! He shall have an unspeakable reward, and shine as the stars, forever and ever.

III. How great, how glorious and happy is the Redeemer in being able to save, and actually saving multitudes of sinners, from such infinite misery, and raising them to such high and endless happiness and glory ! How worthy is he to be trusted, loved and honoured. The inhabitants of heaven, will be eternally sensible of this, and say, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing ; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests."*

What infinite wickedness and folly is that of which they are guilty, who reject him, or cast the least slight upon him, and do not fly to him, without delay, as a refuge from the wrath to come ; and for eternal happiness ! Blessed are all they who trust in him. Surely he is infinitely precious, to all them who believe.

* Rev. v. 9, 10, 12.

C H A P. V.

On the Church of Christ.

S E C T I O N I.

General Observations, concerning the Church of Christ.

THE word in the original, *ἐκκλησία*, generally translated Church, is found above an hundred times in the New Testament ; and signifies an assembly of men, called and collected together, for some special purpose. It is used in the scripture, except in a few instances, in an appropriated sense, for believers in Christ, or the redeemed, as a collective body, or society, united in, or under him as their head.

By the Church of Christ, is sometimes meant the redeemed ; all who have been, or shall be saved by Christ, who shall at last be collected into one general assembly, society and kingdom. This is called the *invisible* church, being at present hid, and out of our sight, as those in heaven are not seen by us, while in this life, and true believers, who are on earth, cannot be certainly distinguished from others, who are not such.

The church of Christ on earth, consists of those who are united together as professed friends to Christ, and believers in him, and are under explicit engagements to serve him, and attend upon all his institutions and ordinances, and to watch over, and assist each other ; including both parents and their children. This is called the *visible*

visible church of Christ, as it is a society erected in the view of man, and consists of members, who are visibly, or in appearance, among the number of the saved, and real friends to Christ, though many of them, may not be really such.

This church is considered as one common catholic society, comprehending all visible christians in the world, composed of numerous particular societies, or assemblies of christians, in different places ; and which, by a succession of members, will continue the same society or church, to the end of the world. This is meant by the church, when Christ says to Peter, " And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* And the word is used in this sense, in many other places.— But every distinct society of visible believers, agreeing and united together to attend on the worship and ordinances of Christ, is called a church. As the church at Antioch ; the church at Ephesus ; the churches in Judea ; the churches of Galatia ; all the churches, &c.

Wherever a number of persons voluntarily unite together, under the profession of believers in Christ, and friends to him, to attend upon his institutions and ordinances, according to his direction and commands, they are a visible church of Christ, so long, and so far, as they appear to embrace and maintain the great and essential truths of christianity ; and to live in some good measure, agreeable to them.

Concerning the church of Christ in general, his visible church in this world, and such a particular church, the following things may be observed, in order to give a more clear idea of the subject, and to show the reason and importance of it.

1. It is reasonable and important, that the friends of the Redeemer, should be his professed friends ; and that

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they should unite in a profession of faith in him, and publicly espouse his cause and interest in the world ; and in assisting each other, as his servants, and in attending upon his institutions, and obeying his commands ; hereby distinguishing themselves from the rest of mankind.— Accordingly, Christ has enjoined upon his friends and disciples, to confess him before men, and to form themselves into a public society, or particular societies, by which they shall be as a city, that is set on a hill, which cannot be hid ; the light of the world, to shine before all men.*

2. The church of Christ, is a free, voluntary society, in opposition to any force or compulsion used to oblige the members of it to join and come into it, contrary to their consent and free choice. All are invited to be members of it, and none are to be rejected, who appear to be willing to come and to conform to the rules which Christ has given ; and none who have been received, are to be rejected and cast out, who choose to continue members, unless they behave disorderly, and refuse to obey the laws of Christ.

3. Jesus Christ is the sole legislator and ruler in his church. No particular church, or the church in general, has any authority or right to make any laws or rules in order to govern or regulate the church, or individual members of it ; but are commanded to attend to those which Christ has given, and obey and execute them only.

The church is not a worldly society ; and is not to be ruled or regulated by civil laws, or rulers of political, worldly societies ; such rulers have no more authority in the church, than any other member of it. The visible church is called in scripture, “ The kingdom of heaven ; the kingdom of God, and of Christ,” who said, “ My kingdom is not of this world.” It is a distinct, and entirely different society and kingdom, from civil, worldly societies

* Matth. x. 32. v. 14, 15, 16.

societies or kingdoms, and cannot be connected with them, so as to be in any respect or degree, dependent on them, or have any alliance with them. The church wants no support from civil authority, and ought not to be governed or controled, in any respect, by the civil magistrate. When he attempts this, and to make laws to govern or regulate the church of Christ, he invades the rights of Christ, and usurps the authority which belongs only to the head of the church, who is the sole ruler in it.

The church, when it is regulated by the laws of Christ, and obedient to him, is friendly to human, civil society ; and Christ commands his subjects, the members of his church, to obey magistrates, and seek to promote the peace and greatest good of such societies ! And all they expect or desire from the civil magistrate, is to be protected in the enjoyment of their civil rights, and their religion, so long as they are not injurious to their neighbours, and live quiet and peaceable lives.

4. Every member of the church, has a right to judge for himself, what are the laws of Christ, and what is his duty, being accountable to none but Christ, for his judgment and conduct ; and none have a right, or authority, to dictate to him, or control him, in these matters. In matters wherein the church, as a body, are to decide, and act, they must be determined by the voice of the major part, or the greatest number of the members, as is done in other societies ; this being considered as the voice and determination of the church. And if they be not unanimous in any thing, to be determined by the church, they who dissent from the judgment of the majority, must submit, and conform to them ; unless the judgment and conduct of the church, appear to them, so inconsistent with the truth, and the laws of Christ, that it is his command, and their duty, to refuse to conform, and to leave

and renounce the church. In this case, no one has any right to control them.

5. The visible church, the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, was small in the beginning of it; but is to increase, and grow, till it shall be great, and fill the world, and all nations shall come into it, and be members of it; and shall continue forever, the only, most happy and glorious society and kingdom. God has had a church in the world, ever since the apostacy of man.— Before the flood, there were the sons of God, distinguished from the rest of mankind, who called on the name of the Lord. It continued in the family of Noah, and some of his descendents, till the days of Abraham, when it was more particularly formed in his family; and farther established and regulated among those who descended from him, the people of Israel. When the christian dispensation took place, the church put on a new form, in many respects, though it was the same church, as to the essentials of it, and was still the church of God, the church of Christ.

The *christian church*, consisting of the professed followers of Christ, was small in the beginning of it; but Christ foretold that it should grow, and become great, and promised, that it should continue and live on earth, to the end of the world. He said, the gates of hell, (*Hades*, death) should not prevail against it: That is, that it should not die, or cease to be a visible church on earth. He represented the growth of it, till it should cover the earth, and fill the world, by the following similitudes. “The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; Which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake he unto them,

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The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

6. The visible church of Christ, is and will be, in an imperfect state, and in a greater or less degree, impure and corrupt, while in this world. All the members of it are in a great degree imperfect, corrupt and sinful; and many, who are totally corrupt and enemies to Christ, are professed and visible friends to him, and, as such, are admitted into his church. Christ has not made any provision, by which unworthy persons, who are not his friends at heart, can be excluded from his church in this world, so long as there are such, who put on the outward appearance, and profession of friendship and submission to him, and offer themselves to join this society. He has not constituted any infallible judges, to determine who shall be admitted into his visible church, who are able to detect every hypocrite, and reject all who are unworthy members. When the utmost care is taken, and the rules of Christ, with respect to this, are faithfully regarded and practised, still the heart cannot be certainly known; and christians must act according to the visibility, or outward appearance, and profession of friendship to Christ, which hypocrites may put on, and so be admitted into the church, who have no right to a place there, in the sight of God. And the members of particular churches may be, and often are, so injudicious and careless, as to admit members, which are visibly unqualified, and ought not to be admitted; by which the church becomes more and more corrupt, and proper discipline is not kept up; and those who ought to be cast out, are tolerated: And by degrees, through the influence of erroneous teachers, great errors may be imbibed and maintained, and corrupt and evil practices take place; and many customs and rites be introduced, which Christ has not commanded;

but

* Matth. xiii. 31, 32, 33.

but are the inventions and commandments of men of corrupt minds, by which the purity and beauty of the church is greatly tarnished.

Particular churches, and the visible church of Christ in general, may become in a great degree corrupt, in some or all those things; and yet be, and continue the visible church of Christ. And it is difficult to determine, how far a particular church, or the church in general, may be corrupted and deviate from the laws of Christ, and yet be visibly a church of Christ, so as to have a right to be considered and acknowledged to be a true church, though corrupt and wrong in many things. In this case, particular christians must judge for themselves; and particular churches must judge of other churches; and great caution and prudence ought to be used: Every one ought to judge and act right, and according to the rules which Christ has given, in this case, and all are accountable to him for their opinion and conduct.

A church may doubtless become so corrupt, and go off so far, from the faith and practice of true christians, and sink so far into gross errors, and open conduct, contrary to the gospel, and the express commands of Jesus Christ, as that it ought to be rejected, as not a visible church of Christ; and his commands to his faithful followers, may be, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you."* The church of Rome, or the papal church, has doubtless been visibly, not a true church of Christ for many years: It has been so, perhaps, ever since the time of the reformation from popery. Though it was really a corrupt, false church before; yet it was not visibly so, till the marks of a false church were clearly discerned, and it was known to the reformed visible church of Christ, to be the beast, and the great harlot, described in the Revelation. Then the voice of Christ

was

was heard, speaking to them, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." And then she was visibly, and publicly excommunicated by Christ and his visible church; and consequently, was no longer a visible church of Christ; but the contrary.

The reformed church, or the different churches which have taken place in the protestant world, upon the reformation from popery, and since, are far from being wholly purified from a great mixture of error, and from practices which are not according to revealed truth; and which would cease, were they to be conformed to the pattern described in the word of God: Some are nearer the rule, and others farther from it; and many are doubtless greatly degenerated from what they once were. And it is probable, that the spirit, maxims, and practices of Antichrist, or that are really antichristian, do take place, in a greater or less degree, in all these churches, at this day; and that they will, the most of them at least, grow more and more corrupt, in doctrine and practice, till they become like the incurable leprous house in Israel, which was ordered to be wholly demolished, that another might be built in the room of it. So, when the millennium comes on, these corrupt churches, which will be too far sunk in error and sinful practices, to be patched up and healed, will be removed and vanish away, sharing with Antichrist in ruin, and giving way to a church which shall be built upon the gospel plan. Then the bride, the Lamb's wife, will put on her beautiful garments, and arise and shine in the light that shall then come, and the glory of the Lord which shall rise upon her.* But even then, the visible church will not be perfect in the beauty of holiness; though the uncircumcised and unclean, may no more enter into it;† yet not one

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* See the Dissertation on the Millennium, subjoined to this System.

† Isaiah lii. 1.

of the members will be perfectly holy. The most perfect beauty and glory of the church, will not take place till after the resurrection.

Those of different denominations and churches, in the christian world, who believe and expect, there will be a more perfect state of the church in the millennium, are disposed to think, that the denomination and particular church to which they belong, will be the pattern; and that all christians, will, in that day, conform to that, and that those things in which others differ from them, both with respect to doctrine and practice, will then be relinquished and cease. But most of them, if not all, will be greatly disappointed in their views and expectations with respect to this. A church will then arise, which will have all that is good, right and excellent, in the different denominations and churches, that exist now, or have been; and will renounce all the superstitions and corruptions, in principle or practice, which have taken place. Blessed are all they, who are real members of the invisible church of Christ.

S E C T I O N II.

Concerning the Officers of a Church.

EVERY distinct and particular church, in order to be complete, and properly organized, must have officers, or persons distinguished from the members in general, by being chosen and appointed to particular service and duties, who are to superintend the affairs of the church, to preside and act a particular part, in teaching and exhortation, and administering the ordinances which

which Christ has appointed ; and taking particular care of the temporals of the church.

Of these, pastors, elders, presbyters or bishops, are the first and most important. By these names, not different orders, higher and lower, or different offices, are meant ; but one and the same person, in one and the same office, is called by all these names ; and therefore they denote the same office. This has been abundantly proved, by many who have attended to the subject ; therefore, it is needless particularly to attend to it here.

The Apostles were a distinct and superior order of men, and appointed by Christ immediately, as extraordinary officers, to constitute the first churches, and to give infallible rules and laws to them, by which they were to be regulated and governed : In which extraordinary office they had no successors. The Apostles were elders, or presbyters or bishops, and more ; they were appointed immediately by Christ, as infallible judges and dictators to the churches. They ordained presbyters or bishops, as being such themselves, in their ordinary capacity ; but their extraordinary commission was not, nor could be, transmitted to others ; but died with them : And there have been no Apostles in the church since their death ; nor will there be any such officers again in the church, to the end of the world.

The Apostles ordained elders or bishops in the churches, which they constituted, who were first chosen by the members of these churches, or they did it with their consent. " And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."* The word in the original, here translated, *when they had ordained*, χειροτονήσαντες, signifies to point out persons, by lifting up of hands, or voting, and the sense has been given in the following words : " When they had, with
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* Acts xiv. 23.

the concurrent suffrage of the people, constituted presbyters for them in every church ;”* or, “ They ordained them elders, by the votes of the people.”† The Old English bible, translates it, “ When they had ordained them elders by election.”‡ This is essential to a free society of any kind, that the members of it should choose their own officers. There must be one or more elders in every church, in order to furnish it to all the duties and transactions of a church, and to have it complete. From the above quoted passage it appears, that one elder was ordained in every church, if not more. It appears also, from the addresses which Christ sent to the seven churches in Asia, by his servant John, that there was but one elder in each of these churches, who is called, *the angel of the church*.

The business of this office, is to preside in all the transactions of the church ; to administer the ordinances of Christ ; to preach the gospel, and lead in the public worship of the church : “ Giving themselves constantly to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”§ To teach, exhort, warn, reprove and rebuke, publicly, and more privately. The qualifications and character of these elders or bishops, are particularly given and stated by the Apostle Paul, in his letters to Timothy and Titus. These pastors or bishops, being chosen by the church, are constituted officers, by being publicly ordained to that office, by some other elders or elder, by laying on of hands.¶ Thus Timothy and Titus, were directed by the Apostle Paul, to ordain elders.||

It has been supposed by some, that the right and power to ordain their pastors or bishops, is in the churches ; at least, that it is not wholly lodged in the hands of the elders,

* Doddridge on the place.

† Mr. Harrington.

‡ See Doddridge's note on this verse.

§ Acts vi. 4.

¶ 1 Tim. iv. 14. v. 22. 2 Tim. i. 6.

|| 1 Tim. v. 22. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. i. 5.

elders, and confined to them : And there have been some instances, of the ordination of ministers by the brethren of the church, without the assistance, or even the presence, of any other elder or pastor of a church. But there does not appear to be any example of this, or warrant for it, in the scripture. It is said, if the church have no authority or right, to constitute and ordain their own officers, then there must be an uninterrupted succession of ministers, from the Apostles, to the end of the world ; and if this chain of succession be once broken or interrupted, it cannot be renewed again ; but the succession must necessarily cease, and there can be no more ministers and officers in the church, to the end of the world. To this it may be answered, that if this be an appointment of Jesus Christ, a constitution which he has made, that his church shall be furnished with ministers, by such a succession from one to another ; then he will take care, that it shall never be interrupted, but shall be continued, so long as there is a church on earth.

But to this it has been said, that we have no evidence, that such succession has not in fact been interrupted many times ; and not one minister or elder at this day can prove, or have any evidence himself, that he has been ordained, by one or more, who have received this right and power, to ordain by an uninterrupted succession from the Apostles ; which he ought to have, in order to be satisfied, that he has a right to act in this office ; and to be able to prove it to others, in order to their receiving and treating him as an elder. Besides, if this succession could be proved, it must be brought down through the hands of the pope, and the false antichristian church, which is not the church of Christ ; and necessarily interrupts the succession of the ministers of Christ.

Upon this the following things are to be observed.

1. If there be evidence from the scriptures, that such an order and succession of men, as officers in the church, has

has been instituted by Christ ; and is implied in the commission which he gave to his disciples ; “ Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you : *And lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*” * This is sufficient, positive proof, that such a succession of ministers, does in fact take place, in the visible church of Christ ; and that this commission has been transmitted down from one to another, from that time to this day ; and this succession has not been interrupted, and will not be, to the end of the world. This therefore, may safely, and with all desirable certainty, be taken for granted, without any farther positive proof, by every minister of the gospel ; unless there be strong, positive evidence, that such succession has been interrupted, with respect to him ; and that he has been irregularly introduced to that office, by him or them, who have not had their commission and authority to ordain, handed down by succession, from the Apostles to them.

Therefore, since the above recited commission implies, that there should be a succession of officers in the church to the end of the world, to proselyte, baptize, and teach men, to observe the institutions and commands of Christ, to whom he has promised his presence and assistance : And since the Apostles appear to understand their commission in this light, and to practice upon it accordingly, by ordaining elders in every church which they formed : And elders or presbyters, ordained others by laying on their hands ; and they who were so ordained, were directed to commit the gospel, that is, the preaching and dispensation of it, “ to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also ;” and to lay hands upon them, not suddenly, but after proper examination and acquaintance ; † which can be nothing less or more, than ordaining

* Matth. xxviii. 19, 20.

† 1 Tim. v. 22. • Tim. ii. 2.

daining them to the work of the ministry : And Titus is directed to ordain elders in every city in the island of Crete :* Since all this is evident, and certainly so ; and there can nothing be found in the scripture to contradict such a succession appointed by Christ, or in the least, inconsistent with it ; it may and ought to be considered as positive evidence that there is, in fact, such an uninterrupted succession, sufficient to satisfy the judgment and conscience of an honest man, who is ordained to the work of the evangelical ministry, that he has derived his ordination and commission from Christ, by an uninterrupted succession ; unless there be positive proof to the contrary, with respect to his ordination.

2. Though the succession of ordinations, in order to its being uninterrupted, must come through the hands of the pope, and the ministers of the church of Rome, (which is not certain, as it has been shown, how it might be transmitted down by others, who were not members of that church) yet this affords no positive proof, that a proper, uninterrupted succession has not taken place. A visible church may be very corrupt, and yet be a visible church of Christ, and the public administrations and acts of the officers of it, authentic and valid. And who can prove, that the pope, and his adherents, were visibly antichrist, and that the church of Rome, was visibly, not the church of Christ, but a false church, and was really and properly renounced and excommunicated, by the true church of Christ, before the time of the reformation from popery ? During the preceding dark times, there was not light enough, even among real christians in general, to render that church visibly, not the church of Christ ; and so long as this was the case, the officers, the ministers in that church, were visible ministers of Christ, and their visible acts, their ordinations, &c. were valid,

* Titus i. 5.

notwithstanding

notwithstanding they were very corrupt and wicked.* When the reformation came on, light arose and increased, and the great corruptions and wickedness of the church of Rome, and of particular churches, included in it; and the irregularity and wickedness of the officers of it, and of their administrations, were clearly seen and exposed; and they were admonished, and great pains were taken to convince and reform the pope and his clergy, and all orders and degrees of men in that church. But they who still adhered to that church, were deaf and obstinate, and refused to repent and reform. Upon which, those who were convinced of the errors and wickedness of that church, came out, and separated from it, and formed other churches, more agreeable to the word of God; among whom there were ministers, or numbers of the clergy, who had been ordained in the church of Rome, while that was visibly a church of Christ. They, by the consent of the reformed churches, took the oversight of them, and administered ordinances, and ordained others to be elders in the churches; and in this way, an uninterrupted succession of ordinations, and ministers in the protestant churches in general, has taken place; and may continue down to the end of the world; and certainly will, if this be the will and appointment of Christ; though

* A minister in the purest church, may be a very wicked man, and practise abominable vices: But so long as this is not visible and known, he is a visible minister of Christ, and his public administrations are as authentic and valid, as those of any other minister, until he is detected, and his wickedness becomes visible, and he is deposed from his office in the church, by those who have a right to do it, according to the laws of Christ. So the church of Rome was visibly a church of Christ, till there was light to discover, or eyes to see the corruptions and wickedness of it, and the veil and covering was taken off, so that the marks of the beast, and the great harlot, described in the scripture, were publicly seen to be upon it; and events took place, by which it was visibly rejected by Christ, for the great apostacy, of which the members of it, had been guilty, and who continued visibly impenitent.

though the church of Rome should be considered *now*, not the visible church of Christ, and properly excommunicated, agreeable to the laws of Christ ; and though there may have been some instances of irregular ordinations, and which have not taken place in this succession, in some protestant churches.

3. There is satisfactory and abundant evidence from history, and otherwise, that it has been the general, if not the universal custom of the churches, to ordain ministers by the laying on of the hands of others, who were before so ordained ; and that great care has been taken to keep up a succession in this way. And even those churches who have believed, they had the power of ordination of their ministers, within themselves, have generally thought it most regular and proper, to have them ordained by other ordained ministers, when and where this was practicable. And there have been very few instances of ordinations performed without the assistance of one or more, who had been before ordained in this way ; and if there have been any such, they have had no influence to interrupt a general and almost universal succession of ordinations by the hands of presbyters, from the Apostles down to this time.

When all this is well considered, will it not be evident, that every minister of the gospel, who has been ordained by the hands of presbyters, or bishops, or at least of one, by whatever name they or he may be called, has good warrant to consider himself and act as a visible minister of Christ, who has received his commission and authority for this, from Christ, by an uninterrupted succession, unless there be good, positive evidence, that this cannot be true, with respect to himself ; he being a known exception from what has generally, and almost universally taken place ?

It has been objected to the doctrine of an uninterrupted succession, as necessary to continue this order of

officers in the church, that this will, in many instances, put it beyond the power of christians to obtain ministers or pastors, so as to be a regular church, and have the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, administered to them. A number of christians may be cast away on a desolate island, and be obliged to live there, where they cannot obtain a pastor, unless they can ordain him themselves, and give him authority to perform all the business of this office. And a number of true christians may live in a country, and at a time, where no ministers can be found, who will ordain any one to be their minister, whom they shall choose, or think to be fit for that office. Must those be deprived of ministers and the ordinances of the gospel?

A reply to such an objection, has been already suggested. It is really begging the question: For if Christ has made such a constitution, and ordained that those officers in his church, shall be continued by an uninterrupted succession, he will not only see that it does take place, and that it shall not be interrupted; but will always put it in the power of his people to be supplied with ministers in this way; and there never has been an instance to contradict this, and never will be. The supposition therefore which is made in the objection, is a groundless one, and impossible. Christ will not suffer such an instance to take place, unless it be for his glory, the good of his church in general, and best for the individual christians, who are deprived in this way, of gospel ministers and ordinances. And if there be any such instances, they can be no objection to this institution of Christ.

These ministers and officers in the church, are to be devoted to the business of their station and office, and to give themselves to this work, which they have undertaken, in preaching the gospel, and administering the ordinances of Christ; in taking care of the church, and presiding

siding in all the public transactions of it, acting with the concurrence and consent of the church. For they have no authority to dictate to the church, and control it in any matter, contrary to their judgment and consent.— They are indeed said to *have the rule over the churches* ;* but this means only to take the lead or preside in the churches, in their public devotions and transactions, as the word in the original signifies. The churches, and every particular member of them, are obliged to submit to them, and obey them, so far as they preach the doctrines of the gospel, and urge the commands of Christ ; for so far as they do this, they have all the authority of Christ ; and disobedience to them, when they declare the will of Christ, and urge obedience to his laws, is disobedience to Christ, and rejecting him. But of this the members of the church are to judge for themselves, whether, what they preach and dictate, be agreeable to the revealed will of Christ, and if they judge it to be contrary to revealed truth, they will consider the minister as having no authority, and themselves under no obligation to regard him in those things ; and he has no authority to compel them to obedience to his dictates, or to inflict any punishment upon them, or subject them to any worldly inconvenience, on this account. They are indeed, accountable to Christ for their judgment and conduct in such cases, and to him alone, as he has commanded them to judge and act right, and will condemn every thing that is not so ; and is the final judge, to whom all appeals are to be made.† Thus the elders of

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* Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24.

† This is said with reference to the whole, or the majority of a church. If particular members, or the minor part of a church, reject the doctrines and refuse to practise the duties which the pastor inculcates, as prescribed by Christ, and the majority of the church approve of them ; the former are so far accountable to the church, as to be the proper subjects of discipline, and may be rejected by the church, as those who, in their judgment, refuse to obey the truth, and walk disorderly.

the churches, are not to be lords over them ; but to lead them, and be examples to them, while they preside as overseers, or bishops, feeding them, by preaching the truths of the gospel to them, and declaring the whole counsel of God.*

There are other officers in the church, called deacons, who have the care of the temporal, worldly concerns of the church. The church, when regulated according to the laws of Christ, makes provision for the support of public religion ; for a decent and convenient place in which they may attend public worship ; the support of the ministers of the gospel ; and furnishing the table of the Lord. They are also to provide for the relief and comfort of the poor members of the church. The care and oversight of this provision, is committed to the deacons. And they are more especially to distribute to the poor out of the common stock of the church, and take care that no one may suffer for want of the necessaries and comforts of life. We have a particular account of the institution of those officers in the church, in the beginning of the sixth chapter of the Acts. The church pointed out, and chose, those whom they thought best qualified for this office, and presented them to the Apostles, who ordained them to this office, by laying their hands on them, and praying.

It does not appear from the scripture, that there are more distinct orders of men, and officers, appointed in the church, than these two, viz. elders or bishops, and deacons. Both of these are repeatedly mentioned together, as being the only officers in the church, as nothing is said of any other. The Apostle Paul, when he is directing Timothy, in his regulating the churches in which he had a particular concern, and ordaining officers, mentions only elders or bishops, and deacons, and particularly

ticularly describes the qualifications of these. And he directs his letter to the church at Philippi, in the following words, "To all the saints which are in Christ Jesus, at Philippi, with the *bishops and deacons*." Had there been any other order of officers in that church, it may be presumed, he would have mentioned them, when he directs so particularly to these. This same Apostle says, that when Christ ascended to heaven, "He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors, and teachers."* Some have supposed, there are more than two orders of ministers, mentioned here; but there does not appear to be any evidence of this. By Apostles and Prophets, are intended the extraordinary gifts and officers in the primitive church, who were not to continue; but ceased, when those miraculous gifts, with which they were endowed, ceased; the church having no farther need of them.— And if Evangelists, were not also extraordinary officers; and accordingly ceased with the others mentioned before; they were ordinary ministers of the gospel, ordained to travel, and preach at large, not being confined to a particular church, city, or country. Pastors and teachers, were the same office, which every elder in particular churches sustained. So that by evangelists, pastors, and teachers, but one sort and degree of officers is meant, viz. ministers of the gospel.

* Eph. iv. 11.

SECTION III.

*On the Public Institutions, Ordinances and Worship
of the Church.*

SO C I A L and public worship, consisting in prayer, singing psalms or hymns, and in preaching and hearing the gospel, appears to be an institution of Christ, from what is recorded in scripture. The disciples of Christ, after his ascension, met together, and continued with one accord in prayer and supplication; being about an hundred and twenty.* And when converts were multiplied, and a church was formed at Jerusalem, "they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers. And continued daily with one accord in the temple, praising God."† At Antioch, Barnabas and Saul assembled themselves with the church a whole year, and taught much people.‡ It appears, that the church at Corinth, often came together into one place, to attend on the preaching of the gospel, prayer, singing psalms, and the administration of the Lord's supper.§ Christians had places convenient for them to convene in public assemblies, and attend on public worship.|| And they were commanded, "Not to forsake the assembling themselves together," for public exhortation, and mutual edification, &c.¶

Public worship being an institution of Christ, this necessarily implies, a place where this may be attended decently, and with the greatest convenience to the members

* Acts i. 14, 15. † Acts ii. 42, 46, 47. ‡ Acts xi. 26.

§ 1 Cor. xi. 18. &c, and Chap. xiv. throughout.

¶ Jam. ii. 1—10.

¶ Heb. x. 24, 25.

bers of the church; which is to be agreed upon and provided by the church, using all such help and assistance, as the head of the church shall, in his providence afford them. They are to assemble on the first day of the week, for public worship; and at any other time, which the church shall judge is agreeable to the will of Christ, as best suited to promote his cause, and their edification. And there may be special calls in divine providence, to public fasting and prayer, or thanksgiving. And particular circumstances may render it proper and important to meet oftener, and to spend more time in public worship, at some times, than at others.

It has been observed, that the bishops, or overseers of the church, are to preach the word, and to preside and lead in public prayers, to which they are to devote themselves: And they are, on this account, to be counted worthy of double honour, and be decently supported with the necessaries and comforts of life. For Christ has ordained, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel.*

The stated time for public worship, is the first day of the week, which the Apostles, under the inspiration and particular direction from Christ, fixed upon, and appointed, to be the christian sabbath. The Jewish seventh day sabbath, which was a type and shadow of that redemption which was, in a peculiar sense and degree, effected by the sufferings and death of Christ, from which he rose on the first day of the week; and of the rest, into which the christian church entered, upon this ceased and was abolished; when the substance, and the things typified by it took place. With reference to this, the Apostle Paul says to christians; "Let no man therefore, judge you, in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days. Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."†

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* 1 Cor. ix. 14. Gal. vi. 6. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. † Col. ii. 16, 17.*

The Apostle has respect to the Jewish rites, respecting meat and drink ; and to their feast days, new moons, and their weekly sabbaths, and declares, that christians, especially those who were Gentiles, were not under any obligation to observe them. This has no respect to the christian sabbath. This was observed by the Apostles and christian churches in their day. Christ having risen on the first day of the week, he appeared repeatedly to his disciples, while they were together on this first day. And on this first day of the week, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, and they were all with one accord in one place," the holy spirit was poured out on them, and they spake with tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance : And Peter preached to the multitude, who were collected on that occasion, and great numbers were converted.* The day of Pentecost, was always on the first day of the week.† And this day of the week was honoured by this remarkable event, and not the seventh day of the week, which was the Jewish sabbath. And no reason can be given, why the church were together in one place on that day, but that it was the day of the week on which they were directed, and used to assemble for instruction and worship.

Accordingly, we find, that on the first day of the week, christian churches used to assemble for public worship, with the Apostles approbation. When the Apostle Paul, and his companions in travelling came to Troas, they continued there seven days, without meeting for public worship. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them."‡ By this it appears, that the first day of the week was the day on which christians used to meet for public worship. If the seventh day of the week had been their sabbath, why did they not meet on that day to hear Paul preach, and to break bread, that is, to partake

* Acts ii. 1. &c.

† Levit. xxiii. 15—21.

‡ Acts xx. 7.

take of the Lord's supper? That christian churches were wont to meet on the first day of the week for religious purposes, is evident from the following direction which this Apostle gives to the church at Corinth. "Now, concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye, upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."* It appears from this, that christian churches in general, or rather universally, assembled together on every first day of the week; the reason of which cannot be given, unless this were their sabbath, on which day they attended public worship: And this was a proper time to make a collection for the poor saints, which is to be considered as an act of public worship. Nor can it be supposed, that the churches would all agree in fixing on this day, to meet together for public worship, unless it were by the direction of the Apostles, which they gave to all the churches, as from Christ, who had instructed them in this matter, before his ascension, or had since communicated it to them, by inspiration. In this view, there appears a consistency, in all the facts and assertions concerning this, which have been mentioned.

And the words of the Apostle John, are a confirmation of all this, when he says, "I was in the spirit *on the Lord's day*."† By the Lord's day, he must mean some particular day of the week, which was known by this name to the churches of Christ, as distinguished from all other days; for otherwise, it would not be saying any thing, which would be intelligible to christians, or of any signification. It supposes there was one day in the week, consecrated to the honour and service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that this was therefore called, *the Lord's day*; as that repast of bread and wine, which was instituted by Christ,

* 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

† Rev. i. 10.

Christ, and observed in the churches, *in remembrance of him*, was called, *the Lord's supper*, to distinguish it from all other eating and drinking together, as peculiarly consecrated to his use and honour. And that this day, which for this reason, the Apostle John calls, the Lord's day, is the first day of the week, is evident, beyond a doubt, in that this day, and no other day of the week, has been distinguished and known by this name, in the church of Christ, from that day to this, of which there is incontestible evidence.

And that the first day of the week is appointed by Christ to be the christian sabbath, to be observed by his church as holy time, and distinguished from other days, by being devoted by them, in a peculiar manner, to his service and honour, will be further evident perhaps, and some objections removed, by the following observations.

1. It is evident from divine revelation, that it is the will of God, that one day in seven, should be observed as a sabbath by his people, to the end of the world, and not under the Mosaic dispensation only.

This may be argued, from the institution of a holy sabbath, which God blessed and sanctified, when he first made man : Having himself wrought six days, and finished the work of creation, he rested on the seventh. And this is mentioned in the fourth commandment as a reason, why men, after they had attended to secular business six days, should rest from such labour, and observe the seventh day as a holy sabbath.

And the command, to remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy, &c. being given from Mount Sinai, and written on one of the tables of stone, and put into the ark with the rest of the commands, containing the moral law, which is perpetually binding on all men, and in this way distinguished from those particular precepts which were temporary : This is a strong argument, that it is equally perpetual

perpetual with the other nine commands, and points out the duty of all men, at all times, to whom this command shall be made known. If this command respected that nation only, and were to cease when the Mosaic dispensation ended, it cannot be accounted for, that it should be revealed in the same peculiar manner, with that in which the moral law was revealed, and incorporated with the moral law, written with it, on tables of stone, and put into the ark : It has all the external marks of being perpetual and binding on all men, which attend the rest of the commands of the moral law.

Moreover, there are some things said in the scripture, which indicate, that it is the will and design of God, that the command to keep holy the sabbath day, should take place and be observed under the gospel. The fifty sixth chapter of Isaiah, is evidently a prophecy of gospel times ; and there, keeping the sabbath from polluting it, is repeatedly mentioned, as an important duty, to which promises are made. And in the eleventh chapter are these words, with reference to Christ and the gospel dispensation. “ And in that day, there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people : To it shall the Gentiles seek, *and his rest shall be glorious.*” The word translated *rest*, is the same, which in other places is translated *sabbath*. His sabbath shall be glorious. And it is not improbable that the Psalmist has reference to the first day of the week, as distinguished and appointed by Christ, and made holy by him, as the day on which he rose from the dead. He foretells the resurrection of Christ in the following words. “ The stone which the builders rejected, is become the head of the corner.” These words are cited by the Apostle Peter, and applied to the resurrection of Christ.* The Psalmist adds, “ This is the Lord’s doing, it is marvellous in our eyes. *This is the day which the Lord hath made ; we will rejoice and* be

* Acts iv. 11.

be glad in it.* These words, "This is the day which the Lord hath made," considered in their connexion with the foregoing, and referring to the resurrection of Christ, may naturally be understood of the day on which Christ rose, as a day of the week, which should be a joyful day to the church, on which this great and happy event should be celebrated by believers in Christ to the end of the world; it being made by him, and appointed to be a holy sabbath of rest, and peculiar gladness and praise.

2. The fourth command in the decalogue, does not specify any particular day of the week, to be kept holy as a sabbath; but only commands men to observe one day in seven, as a holy sabbath. "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God." We must look some where else in divine revelation, to find, what day of the week is to be observed as a sabbath, and when to begin to reckon. The Israelites were told, which day of the week they should keep holy as a sabbath; but not in this command. The day of the week on which their sabbath should be, was made known to them, before this command was given from Mount Sinai; therefore, this command obliged them to keep the seventh day of the week as their sabbath. And when Christ made it known to his church, that it was his will, that the first day of the week, on which he rose from the dead, should be observed as a sabbath, he having abolished the Jewish sabbath; this laid christians under as great obligations to keep the first day of the week, as their sabbath, as the Jews were under to keep the seventh day: And this did not in the least degree, fet aside, or alter the fourth command; for christians remember the sabbath day to keep it holy, when they, having attended to their secular business six days, keep the seventh day as a holy day of rest from

* Psalm cxviii. 22, 23, 24.

from all unnecessary worldly employment : And the fourth command, as much binds them, to keep their sabbath on the first day of the week, as it did the children of Israel to keep the seventh day. The evidence, that Christ has revealed this to be his will, has been briefly stated above.

3. The Jewish sabbath was not to be perpetual ; but did cease and vanish away with other types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation, being equally a shadow with them, and in some respects the greatest and most remarkable type, which will be more fully considered under the next particular. That the weekly Jewish sabbath is abolished, seems to be expressly asserted by the Apostle Paul, in the words which have been mentioned.* But since the sabbath of the fourth command is to be perpetual ; and the Jewish sabbath was not so ; it follows, that another day of the week is appointed by Christ, who is Lord of the sabbath, to be observed by his church, which appears, from what has been observed above, to be the first day of the week.

4. There is no evidence from scripture, that the sabbath, which God gave to the people of Israel, by Moses, was on the same day of the week with that, which was instituted when the work of creation was finished ; but it is very probable, if not certain, that it was not.

The day on which God rested from the work of creation ; and which he blessed and sanctified, to be an holy sabbath for man, was the seventh day from the beginning of the creation : But it was really the first day of Adam's life. He was created on the latter part of the sixth day, but soon fell into a deep sleep, and had no great enjoyment or thought, till the next day. It is certain, the sabbath day was the first whole day of his life, and he would naturally begin to reckon time and weeks, from that

* Col. ii. 16, 17.

that day, as the first day in the rotation of weeks.* This day was observed by the antideluvian church, and by Noah, and his posterity, as the first day of their week; which has continued by an uninterrupted rotation of weeks, to this day. When mankind, after the flood, corrupted their religion, and apostatized from the instituted worship of the only true God, to idolatry, and deified, and worshipped the sun, moon and stars, which was the first kind of idolatry practised by mankind, they consecrated their sabbath, which was the *first* day of their week, and considered as a high day, the most important and honourable of any of the days of the week, to the sun, which is the first and brightest luminary of the heavens, devoting this day to the worship of this god. And hence it obtained the name of *sunday*: That is, the day of the sun, as it was devoted to the worship of this heavenly luminary: As most, or all the other days of the week, have had names given them from the particular planets, to the worship of which, they were devoted. The original sabbath, or the first day of the week, being thus perverted, God saw fit, for this, and other reasons, some of which will be mentioned, to appoint another day of the week to be a sabbath to the children of Israel, when he brought them out of Egypt. He ordered it so that they should pass through the red sea, on the seventh day of the week, which completed their redemption, and deliverance from Egypt; and he appointed that day of the week, to be their sabbath, in commemoration of this remarkable deliverance; on which day, they praised God, for this redemption, and sang the

song

* See Bedford's *Scripture Chronology, demonstrated by Astronomical Calculations*; and Kennedy's *Complete System of Astronomical Chronology, Unfolding the Scriptures*. In which they have undertaken to demonstrate by astronomical calculations, that the seventh day, from the beginning of the creation, has been reckoned the first day of the week, from that time to this.

song recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus. And in the next chapter this their sabbath is first mentioned; and was probably the statute, and ordinance which God made with that people, spoken of, chapter xv. verse 25. And when some of the people went out on the seventh day to gather manna, and found none, the Lord said, "See that the Lord hath given you on the sabbath, therefore, he giveth you on the sixth day, the bread of two days." *The Lord hath given you the sabbath.* This naturally expresses his having then appointed a day to be their sabbath, as peculiar to that people; and not that he had appointed a sabbath for all mankind, when men were first created. There were two reasons, if not more, for appointing this seventh day of the week, to be their sabbath.

First, This was suited, with many other laws, which were given to them, to keep them a distinct and separate people, from other nations, and prevent their joining with others in their idolatrous improvement of the first day of the week. This was then observed by the nations round them, as a high day, and a festival in honour of the sun, and other gods, which they worshipped, and it was of great importance, that they should be kept a distinct people, and not join with them. Their keeping another day of the week for their sabbath, was suited to do this as much or more than any other law which was given to them, for this end, excepting circumcision.—Accordingly, they were in after ages, mentioned with contempt, and ridiculed by the heathen for this peculiarity.

Secondly, As their deliverance out of Egypt was a great and remarkable event, and a designed type and pledge of the redemption and salvation of the church by Christ, it was proper, and of great importance, that it should be kept in mind, and commemorated by a day appointed

to be observed out of a particular respect to that event. Therefore, that day of the week was fixed upon by God, to be their weekly sabbath, on which this deliverance was completed. This appears to be the truth respecting this appointment, from the words of Moses, when speaking to them of the command of God, to keep their sabbath, he says, God commanded them to keep it, out of respect to this deliverance. "Keep the sabbath day, to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm: THEREFORE, the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day."* This must respect the seventh day sabbath, which was peculiar to them, appointed out of respect to that deliverance, and more especially to commemorate that, not only as a great event in itself, but as a remarkable type of the spiritual and eternal redemption of the church of Church, which is mentioned and referred to in scripture, as such.† This is the reason of God's appointing the seventh day of the week for *their* sabbath, and commanding *them* to keep it as a sabbath day; but is no reason why other nations, and mankind at all times, should observe a sabbath. Therefore, in the fourth command, which was written on one of the tables of stone, and put into the ark, and is binding on all men, in all ages, this is not mentioned as a reason for observing it; nor is any particular day of the week pointed out, as has been observed. The seventh day of the week had been before given to the Israelites for their sabbath; and Moses gives the reason for this particular appointment and command of God to them, in the words above rehearsed. And the fourth command, in the decalogue, was a command to them, to keep the seventh day of the week as a sabbath, because God had before

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* Deut. v. 15.

† See Isai. li. 9, 10, 11. 1. Cor. x. 1—11. Jude v.

fixed on this day for them to observe. But it prescribes no particular day to any other people ; unless it be the first day of the week, sanctified by God, and handed down from the first sabbath ; and which has been established by Christ, to be the holy sabbath for christians ; which lays the christian church under as great obligations from the fourth command, to observe the first day of the week, as their sabbath, as those under which the Israelites were, to observe the seventh day of the week as their sabbath.

The seventh day sabbath, being given to the Mosaic church as a commemoration of their deliverance out of Egypt, which was a distinguished type in that typical church, was itself therefore a typical institution, and a shadow of good things to come, as was the passover, and other festivals in that church. Therefore, with truth and the greatest propriety, the Apostle Paul mentions their weekly sabbaths, with other Mosaic institutions, as shadows of things to come, which of course ceased and were done away, when the things of which they were types and shadows, took place.* And then the sabbath took place according to its original institution and course, on the first day of the week ; and perfectly agreeable to the fourth command, and in a degree more so than the Jewish sabbath.

5. Upon the whole, it must be observed, that some time should be fixed upon, and set apart, and distinguished from other time, to be in a peculiar manner devoted to the exercises of piety, and public worship, in which all pious men and christians should agree and unite, appears reasonable, desirable, and important. If this were left to men, they would not be competent judges of the proportion of time, that it would be most suitable and proper to be set apart for those purposes ; and could never agree in the particular days, and the precise pro-

portion of time that should be thus distinguished and improved. And if they could do all this, they have no power or authority, to make one part of time, or one day more sacred or relatively holy, than another. God alone, who is the owner and Lord of time, and of all things, can make this distinction, and in this sense *sanctify* any day or part of time, and set it apart for particular holy purposes ; and he only has authority to command men to observe it accordingly, and keep it holy. And he only knows what proportion of time is wisest and best to be thus sanctified ; so as to be best suited to answer the purposes of it, and circumstances of man, to promote the good of his church. It is therefore desirable, and to be expected, that God would determine this, in the revelation which he gives to the world. Accordingly, we find he has done it, when he first made man, specifying the day which he blessed and sanctified, and setting an example to man, that after six days of labour, he should rest from his worldly business on the seventh day, and keep it holy. This he afterwards inserted among those commands containing a perpetual moral law, commanding men, all men, without distinction, to observe the sabbath, and keep one day in seven holy, or the seventh day, after six days labour. In the mean time, for particular, wise, important reasons, he separated a people from all other nations, and formed them into a church, giving them laws and statutes, suited to keep them separate from the idolatrous nations, and to point out by types and emblems, the Redeemer of man, and the great salvation by him ; and to prepare the way for his coming into the world, dying and rising again, and setting up his kingdom on earth : And among the rest, they received a command to keep the seventh day of the week, as a holy sabbath, which was much insisted upon during that dispensation, as an important article, which
should

should be to them a constant visible sign, that they were a holy people, devoted to God. When the end of this seventh day sabbath was fully answered, and the thing of which this, and the event it was to commemorate, were a type and shadow, took place, it was abolished, and the sabbath of the first day of the week, took place, by his order and command, who is Lord of the sabbath, in commemoration of his resurrection from the dead, and the eternal redemption of the church, which he had obtained by his blood, and which he arose to accomplish.

And nothing could be more suited by this institution to gratify and please the friends of Christ, than to have the first day of the week, on which their dear Lord arose from the dead, consecrated and sanctified; that they may keep a holy sabbath, on this day, and honour and praise him, and celebrate the work of redemption. This has been to the people of God in general, in the christian church ever since, a high day, a delight, holy of the Lord, and honourable; and is so even now. And if any of the true servants of Christ, be otherwise minded, God will show it unto them.*

IT has been a question, upon which professing christians have been divided, When a christian sabbath begins? At what time of the twenty four hours of the day, it commences? Whether at the setting of the sun,

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* That the first day of the week, which is the christian sabbath, is the same day of the week, which was sanctified as a sabbath, when creation was finished, appears probable from what has been observed, and it is thought, serves in some degree, to illustrate this point. But though this supposition be natural and probable, and there be nothing in scripture inconsistent with it; yet it is not pretended to be demonstration, or necessary, in order to prove the first day of the week, to be the christian sabbath. For if what has been supposed, and observed, concerning this, be considered as meer conjecture, and without any foundation, the other arguments for the abolition of the Jewish sabbath, and the divine appointment of the first day of the week, to be the christian sabbath, stand good, and sufficiently establish the point.

at midnight, or when the light comes on in the morning? Some have supposed that it cannot be certainly determined; and that it is of no importance, when it begins; that if persons act conscientiously, and according to their own judgment, though they differ, and one observes the night preceding the day; and the other the night following the day; they are equally right, and do equally well. Others, being at a loss about the time of beginning the sabbath, will observe both the evening before, and that after the day, that they may be sure to keep the right.

Perhaps the following observations may give some light on this point. They are offered to the serious, attentive, and unprejudiced.

1. If God has sanctified one day in seven, or the first day of the week, all the hours of that day, being twenty four, are holy time; and there is a time when they begin, independent of us, or our opinion or practice. Man cannot make any time holy. If God have not done it, there is no holy time; and if it be made holy by him, it is so, independent of man; and the hours which are sanctified, are fixed and stated, so that when the first hour of that time comes, it is holy time, and continues so, till twenty four hours be passed, and then holy time ceases, another sabbath comes on, and commences at the hour that the preceding sabbath did. And men do not change or commute it, by neglecting that time which God has sanctified, and keeping some other day, or some hours of another day, as holy time. Therefore, if the first day of the week be sanctified, the precise hours of that day from beginning to end, and when they begin, are fixed, and all those hours are holy time, and not the hours which precede or follow; and it is a piece of superstition to keep them as holy time. Therefore,

2. We have reason to believe and be sure, that there is light enough in the Bible to discover to every christian, who

who will faithfully use the advantages he has, to get light on this head, when, or at what time the sabbath begins, as well as what day of the week is sanctified as a sabbath. For if such light and information be not given, the command to keep the day holy, cannot reach him, as he has no capacity to obey it. There may be light enough in the scripture to determine this; and yet not be seen by christians, through some blameable defect in them. They may be too inattentive, or prejudiced, or both, and follow the opinion of others, without properly examining for themselves, with that care and honest impartiality, which becomes a christian; and be satisfied with arguments, which really have no weight in them. If this be not decided by any one express declaration in scripture, telling when the sabbath is to begin, it may be as clearly revealed otherwise, to an attentive, honest discerning mind. Whatever proposition or truth, clearly follows from what God has said in his word, from beginning to end, is part of divine revelation, and is the light and truth it contains, or is discovered by it.

3. This cannot be determined by the hour, or time of day, on which the Redeemer rose out of the grave or tomb: For this is not certainly known, which would have been revealed, had the time of beginning the sabbath depended on this: But if it were known, this would not decide the matter; for no reason can be given, why the day, which is sanctified as a commemoration of that event, should begin precisely at the hour when he rose from the dead. But if any reference be had to the time of the resurrection of Christ, it is as probable, and perhaps more so, that he rose soon after the Jewish sabbath ended, which was at sun setting, when the first day of the week did certainly begin, unless there were a chasm of time between the seventh day of one week, and the first day of another, and which belonged to neither.

Matthew says, "In the end of the sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary came (or went) to see the sepulchre." The same word in the original, here rendered *began to dawn*, is used by Luke, and rendered, *drew on*: "The sabbath drew on;*" and it must have that meaning there. And the words of Matthew may be accordingly rendered: "In the end of the sabbath, as the first day of the week drew on, as soon as the Jewish sabbath was over, which ended at sun down, these women went to the sepulchre; that is, sat out to go: But that earthquake and storm, which Matthew goes on to relate, took place then, and stopped them on their way, and prevented their getting there till next morning; at which time of the earthquake, &c. Christ rose from the dead, the first day of the week having began.†" So that he rose on the first day of the week, as much as if he had lain in the grave till midnight, or the next morning. But be this as it may, the time of the first day of the week, on which Christ rose from the dead, whether between sun down and dark, or at midnight, or at the dawning of the day, or at the rising of the sun, were it certainly known, cannot determine when the sabbath begins.

4. The time in which men consider their civil day as beginning, and ending, will not determine when the sabbath, which God has sanctified, begins, or ends. In this, men are arbitrary, and different nations begin their civil day, at different times and hours.

5. Time did not begin with light, or in the morning; but darkness, or night, preceded the light of the first day; and the evening and the morning were the first day, and not the morning and the evening. And so the succeeding days, in which the world was created, are reckoned to begin with the evening, or night, and to end with the light:

* Luke xxiii. 54. † See Mr. Knight's Harmony, on Matth. xxviii. 1.

light :—“ And the evening and the morning were the second day,” &c. Therefore, the seventh day, from the beginning of creation, which was blessed and sanctified as a sabbath, began with the evening, and ended with the light, or with the setting of the sun. By this we learn, how time was reckoned by God ; and at what time he fixed the beginning of the day. Not in the morning, or at midnight, but the evening which preceded the morning. And the first sabbath which was sanctified, began at evening, and included the night preceding the light of the day. And why is not this a sufficient guide to us, in determining when the day is to begin, which God has set apart for himself, and made holy ? We are told by him how he reckoned time and days, when they first began, and that he connected the preceding night with the following light, to make a whole day ; and that he sanctified such a day, which began in the evening and ended at the next evening, and blessed it for the use of man ; and may it not be safely and with certainty inferred, that all holy days, which God hath made so, begin with the evening, since there is no intimation in the Bible that he has altered his way of reckoning days, since the beginning of time ? Nor has left it to men to determine as they please ? But the contrary ; for,

6. When God made known, and gave a weekly sabbath to the children of Israel, and appointed other holy days, he ordered them to begin all of them at the evening, or going down of the sun. This none will dispute, who attends properly to his bible.

The Jews, when Christ was on earth, began their sabbath at the setting of the sun, and ended it at the same time of the day. This is evident from what is related by three of the Evangelists.* When Christ had attended the public exercises of the Synagogue on the sabbath, and had cured a man found there, possessed by an unclean

* Matth. viii. 16. Mark i. 32. Luke iv. 40.

clean spirit, he went into the house of Simon : " And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils ; and all the city was gathered together at the door." The rulers and doctors among the Jews, held and taught, that it was not lawful to heal on the sabbath ; and strictly forbid all persons coming to Christ on that day. When Jesus healed a woman whom he found in the synagogue on the sabbath, " The rulers of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work : In them therefore, come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day."* Therefore, the people did not bring any of the diseased to Christ, to be healed on the sabbath day. But at evening, when the sun was set, they came in crouds to the house where Jesus was, bringing their sick and possessed to Christ, to be healed. This fact renders it certain, that the Jews did then consider the sabbath as ended when the sun did set ; consequently they began at the setting of the sun. And the Jews have practised agreeable to this, from that time, down to this day ; beginning their sabbaths, and all their other festivals, at the going down of the sun.

Jesus and his disciples, observed the Jewish sabbath, which began, and ended, at the setting of the sun. And the Apostles would of course, begin the christian sabbath at the same time, which succeeded the Jewish sabbath, on the first day of the week, and began when that ended ; and ought to do so, unless they had a particular command to begin it at a different time, of which there is not the least intimation. Though the Jewish sabbath is abolished, and the first day of the week is appointed to be the christian sabbath, and thus *the day* is altered ; yet this is no warrant to alter the time of *beginning* the day ; but it must

* Luke xiii. 14.

must remain the same, unless God has manifested it to be his will that it should be altered, and fixed another time, on which to begin the day, which he has not done. Since the change is only of the day, and not of the time of beginning it; and the first day began, when the seventh day ended, which was at sun down; is not this sufficient evidence, that it is the will of God, that the christian sabbath shall begin at the going down of the sun, when the Jewish sabbath ended? And does not this, in conjunction with what has been observed in the preceding particular, sufficiently discover the will of God respecting the beginning of the holy days, which he makes so for the use of man? And is it not presumption, and willworship, to begin the sabbath at any other time of the day, without a divine warrant, sufficient to counteract what God has done and revealed, in the instances which have been mentioned?

7. It is as proper and convenient to begin the sabbath at sun down, as at any other time, and in some respects, more so. A care and exertion, to have all worldly affairs and business finished, so as to be laid aside by that particular time, is a proper expression of regard to a divine institution. And if the heads of a family, and their household be pious, and delight in the sabbath, they will find no insuperable difficulty, in ordinary cases, to be prepared to meet and welcome the sabbath, when the time comes on; and come together, and begin it in joining in social worship. The Jews find no insuperable difficulty or inconvenience, in punctually beginning their sabbath at sun down, when they commonly join in social worship. And christians may certainly, with equal convenience and propriety, begin their sabbath at the same time.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

BAPTISM is an ordinance, or sacrament, which Christ has instituted. This is to be performed by the application of water, to the person baptized, in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In order to be a proper subject of baptism, a person, if adult, must profess his faith in Christ, and subjection to him, and engage to do all those things which he has commanded; and appear to be a true christian, or real believer in Christ; and to understand and believe, the great and essential doctrines, and precepts of the gospel. This ordinance is to be applied to every one, who appears to be qualified, according to the rules which Christ has given, to be a member of the visible church. And no one is to be considered and treated as a member of the church and kingdom of Christ, unless he be baptized with water, as this is the only door, by which persons can be introduced into the visible kingdom of Christ, according to his appointment. And all who are baptized according to his direction, are visible members of his church. Christ, in his commission to his disciples, directed them to baptize all whom they proselyted.* And we find, by the history we have of their preaching and conduct, that they practised accordingly. The words of Christ to Nicodemus, express the essential qualifications, by which a person becomes a true and real member of his visible church. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."† By the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, when mentioned by Christ, he commonly means, his visible church and kingdom in this world. By being born of the spirit, is meant that reno-
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* Matth. xxviii. 19.

† John iii. 5.

vation of heart, by which persons become real christians, and members of the invisible kingdom of Christ. To be born of water is to be baptized with water, according to the institution and command of Christ, by which persons enter into the visible church, and become members of the visible kingdom of God ; without which they cannot enter into this kingdom ; as this is the only appointed way, to enter into that covenant, of which baptism is the initiating seal, and so to be made a visible member of this kingdom. The former, his being born of the spirit, does not make him a member of the visible church or kingdom of God. But in order to this, he must profess his faith, and enter into covenant, and have this visible seal of the covenant put upon him. As a person may be born of the spirit, before he is a visible member of the kingdom of God, and must be so, in order to be a real and true member, at any time ; and he is supposed and appears to be such an one, when he is baptized, and by it becomes a visible member of this kingdom : So a person may appear to be born of the spirit, and profess that which implies it, and be baptized, and enter into the visible kingdom of God, and yet not be really born of the spirit. He is not a member of the invisible church, but may be a member of the visible church, admitted according to the rules which Christ has given to his church. He is not in the kingdom of God, in the sight of God ; but is so, in the sight of men. But he who is born of the spirit, and is baptized, has entered into the kingdom of God, in the sight of God and man, and appears to be what he really is, and shall be saved : Whereas the other, who is born of water only, is a hypocrite, and is a member of the kingdom of God only in appearance, that is, he is a *visible* member only, and not a complete one, and has no title to salvation.

Baptism is an appointed seal of the covenant of grace, both on the part of Christ, and of him who is baptized. It is a seal of the truth of the promises of this covenant, to all who believe, and are the true friends of Christ. And he who is baptized, makes this a visible seal and token of the truth of his profession, of his believing in Christ, and of his friendship to him; and his willingness to obey and serve him; so it is a visible, solemn covenant transaction, between Christ and him who is baptized; by which his sins are visibly washed away and forgiven, and he is visibly intitled to all the promises of the covenant of grace, and numbered among the saved; and is really so, if his heart be answerable in any degree to his profession, and this solemn transaction; as it is, if he be born of the spirit of God.

Christian baptism, is not to be repeated, or administered, more than once to the same person, because we have no precept or example for this in the scripture. And there does not appear any reason for doing it; for by this, persons are introduced into the visible church of Christ, as appearing to be real members of his kingdom. And if one, so baptized and introduced, be afterwards rejected and cast out, for his visible bad conduct; and after this, profess and appear to be a true penitent, there can be no visible evidence that he was not a real christian when he was baptized, and first introduced; therefore, there is no more reason for rebaptizing him, than for repeating the baptism of any other visible member of the church; and though he has been rejected, his relation to the church does not cease, on supposition he shall repent; therefore, when he appears to repent, he restores himself to the same station in the visible church, in which he was before.

Baptism is a public ordinance, and the church is to know who are baptized, and who are not; and it is therefore,

therefore, in ordinary cases, to be administered in public. But there may be instances in which it is proper and necessary, to do it more privately ; of which we have examples in the days of the Apostles.

There have been, and still are, different and opposite sentiments, among professed believers, respecting the ordinance of baptism ; especially with regard to the mode of applying water in baptism ; and the proper subjects of this ordinance : And many volumes have been written, containing controversy on these points. And as no new light can perhaps be given now on these subjects in dispute, it is not thought needful to enter particularly into this controversy here. A few things however, will be observed, respecting these points, of the propriety and truth of which, every one will judge for himself.

1. The difference and opposition in sentiment and practice, respecting this institution, and all other christian doctrines, duties and ordinances, is not owing to any want of light and instruction in the scriptures, on these points. To suppose this, is a reproach on divine revelation, and the author of it, and an implicit denial that it comes from God. All differences of this kind, are owing to something defective and wrong in man, by which is he blind to that which is clearly revealed in scripture. This ought to encourage and excite every honest man diligently to search the scriptures on this subject, as well as others, praying that he may not be blinded by prejudice or any wrong bias ; but that his eyes may be opened to see what God has revealed. We are not to confine ourselves to one part of the Bible in neglect of others ; or to conclude nothing to be revealed, which we do not find asserted in express words ; but all parts of scripture are to be carefully examined, and compared together, in order to learn what is the whole revealed will of God : And whatever is the just and necessary consequence from any one, or two, or more

more propositions or facts, which are expressly asserted, is as really revealed, as those propositions and facts themselves.

However we may differ now in sentiment and practice, on the subject of baptism, and oppose and censure each other ; when men shall be more upright, discerning, and diligent, in attending to the Bible, ready to receive with meekness, what God has revealed, as they will be in the days of the millennium, all those differences will cease, and what is so much disputed now, will then be seen to be clearly decided in divine revelation : All former errors will be rectified. And doubtless it will then be seen, that we were all, more or less, in the wrong, on this point. We must therefore go to the law and the testimony ; and if we think and speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in us, while it shines sufficiently clear in the Bible.

2. As to the mode of baptism, and the form and manner of using and applying water in this ordinance, to the person baptized, it does not appear to be decidedly fixed in the scripture ; whether it be by plunging, pouring on water, aspersion or sprinkling. Each of those ways have been embraced and practised by different churches, and some do insist that plunging the person wholly under water, is the only scriptural mode of baptism, and that none are really baptized, who are not thus plunged.— But when the scripture is carefully examined, it will not appear that this form of baptism was instituted by Christ, or practised by the Apostles ; or that the word in the original, translated baptism, or to baptize, invariably signifies plunging the whole body in water. This has been particularly considered and proved over and over again, by writers on this subject. Therefore, their opinion and practice with regard to baptism, seems to be most agreeable to scripture, who think no particular form of applying

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ing water in baptism is prescribed there, by precept or example, or by any thing that is there said on this point ; therefore, every church is left to adopt that particular mode which appears to them most decent and convenient ; or that different persons may be baptized in different ways of application of water, as shall be most agreeable to them, allowing all to be really baptized, to whom water is religiously applied by a proper person, in the name of the sacred Trinity, whether by plunging, pouring on water, or by asperision and sprinkling : As the christian baptism does in no degree consist in the particular manner of using and applying water ; and that it is as real baptism, according to the institution of Christ, when performed in different modes. And they seem to be rigid beyond any scripture warrant, and in a degree superstitious, who insist that all shall be baptized by plunging ; and reject all those to whom water has not been applied in this particular mode, as not baptized. This is doubtless making that essential to this ordinance, which the scripture has not made so, and rejecting those from christian communion, and the privileges of the visible church, whom Christ receives. If they who have adopted this mode of baptism, by plunging, did not make it a term of communion, and exclude all, as not baptized, who have not had water applied to them in this particular way, and not visible christians, the dispute and contention, would be at an end ; and they who think and practise differently, might hold communion with each other, and be members of the same churches ; though baptized in different modes.

3. The proper subjects of baptism, if adult, are those who by profession, and in appearance, are believers in Christ, and true friends to him. None but they who are really such, do in heart “ put on Christ,” and approve of the covenant of grace, and the way of salvation by him, and

devote themselves to his honour and service, which all who come to baptism, profess to do, and by this transaction, are admitted into the church, as the servants of Christ, and are visibly interested in the blessings of the covenant of grace, and are considered as among the number of the saved, and are thus distinguished from all others, as saints, or holy persons. They must therefore be really holy, in order to put on this visibility and profession of it, with propriety and truth, which they do in baptism: For if they be not really such, they are utterly unqualified in the sight of God, to be admitted to baptism, as it is, on their part, only a piece of hypocrisy.—Therefore, none are to be admitted to this ordinance, but those who in the view of the church, appear to be true friends to Christ, or believers in him, and really holy, and are justly considered by them as such, who can judge only by outward appearance, and cannot certainly know what is in the heart.

That none but such, who are thus visibly, and in the charitable judgment of the church, and of those who administer this ordinance, believers in Christ, and really holy, are the proper subjects of this ordinance; and to be admitted to baptism, is abundantly evident from scripture, as well as from the nature of the transaction, and the reason of things. The Apostles, when they first began to administer christian baptism, and form a church, baptized none but such who “Gladly received the word.”* When the Eunuch desired to be baptized, Philip said, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayst.”† This implies that he was not qualified for baptism, or a fit subject of that ordinance, unless he were a true believer in Christ; and that he could not baptize him, unless he professed and appeared to be such a believer. Hence all who were baptized, and formed into churches,

* Acts ii. 41.

† Acts viii. 37.

churches, were considered and addressed by the Apostles, in their letters to them, as saints or holy persons, believers in Christ, and friends to him ; as those who were saved, and heirs of eternal life : Or, which is the same, as real christians : Of which every one must be sensible, who reads the Acts of the Apostles, and their epistles.

I N F A N T B A P T I S M.

W H E T H E R infants, the children of visible believers, and members of the visible church, who have been now described, are the proper subjects of baptism, is an important question, upon which professing christians are greatly divided ; and which has been the subject of much dispute in the three last centuries. It is not thought proper, or that it will answer any good end, to enter here very particularly into this dispute, upon which so much has been written on both sides. It will be sufficient briefly to state the chief arguments for the baptism of such children ; and the ground, and import of this ordinance, when applied to them.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

I. T H E arguments may be exhibited under the following particulars,

1. It is observed from the scripture, that God, in his dealings with men, in his constitutions and conduct, and covenants with them, does connect children with their parents, and considers the former as included in the latter ; so that the children take their moral character, and visible relation to God, and derive good or evil, a blessing, or the contrary, from their parents, according to *their* character and conduct.

When God first made man, he considered the children of Adam as included in him, and they were included in the covenant made with him; so that they were to be blessed, or not, according to the conduct of their parent; and his moral character and conduct, was to determine and fix theirs. Though there were some things peculiar in this constitution; especially as it was more general and comprehensive, taking in all the natural descendants from Adam, to the end of the world: Yet thus much is to be gathered from it, viz. That children may be included in the covenant which is made with their parents, so as to take their moral character from them, and derive good or evil, according to the moral conduct of their parents, and that God has actually done this, in a perspicuous and most striking instance, in which he may be considered, perhaps, as setting a pattern and example of his conduct with mankind, in his public, covenant transactions with them; and that in all such covenants, children are to be considered as included with their parents.

When God made a covenant with Noah, after the flood, his children and seed were included. And God's covenant with Abraham was with him, and his seed after him. And his children and posterity, had favour and blessings in consequence of this covenant, and out of respect to it. "He remembered his holy promise, and Abraham his servant. And he brought forth his people with joy; and his chosen with gladness. But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend."* And God saved the children and posterity of David from evil, and shewed them special favours, for his sake, and out of respect to the covenant made with him.†

From

* Psal. cv. 42, 43. Isai. xli. 8. See also Gen. v. 4, 5, 24. Exod. vi. 5. Levit. xxvi. 42.

† 1 Kings xi. 12, 13, 32, 34, 35. 2 Chron. xxi. 7. Isai. xxxvii. 35.

From these instances, it appears, that God has in fact, entered into covenant with parents, in which their children or seed, were included in such a sense and degree, that he has shewed favour to them, out of respect to such covenants, and to the parents with whom the covenant was made. When God entered into covenant with the children of Israel, on the plains of Moab, their children, even their *little ones*, or infants, are expressly included in the covenant.* They are said to enter into covenant with their parents. Therefore, infants and children did enter into covenant with their parents, as included with them, in the solemn transaction.

Agreeable to this, God says, "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me : And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."† Here, on the one hand, God says, he brings evil on the children and posterity of wicked parents, as the consequence of their iniquity. It hence is evident, that the moral character of the children of wicked parents is, by divine constitution, affected, formed, and fixed by, or in consequence of the parents iniquity, who are enemies to him : For God has declared, that the child who does not imitate his father in his iniquity, shall not suffer for his father's wickedness.‡ The words cited from the second commandment, are not repeated or contradicted, by this passage in Ezekiel, as some have suggested, but are explained ; and hereby we learn, that visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children, does not intend punishing the children for the iniquity of their fathers, whatever be the moral character and conduct of the children, and though they abhor and renounce their father's iniquity, and fear and love God. But their moral character is supposed to be like that of their wicked

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father ;

* Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. † Exod. xx. 5, 6. ‡ Ezek. xviii. 1—20.

father ; and is necessarily implied in the iniquity of their father, being visited upon them ; that they shall not renounce, but approve of the sins of their father, and suffer natural evil or punishment, for their own disposition and conduct, and because their moral character and conduct is like their father's. Hence it appears, that the moral character of the children of wicked parents, is the consequence of the iniquity of their parents, and is formed by it, as the foundation of the natural evil which they suffer ; and that this is meant by visiting the iniquity of the fathers, who hate God, upon their children. These fathers do hand down, and entail to their children, their iniquity, or their own moral character ; as there is no other possible way, in which their iniquity can be visited upon their children.

On the contrary, God shews mercy unto a thousand generations successively of them who love him, and keep his commandments. This is God's covenant with such ; which appears from the words of Moses, in which he has reference to the declaration and promise in the second command. " Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations."* From these words, we learn two things.

First, That the mercy mentioned in the second command, which God exercises and shews, is *covenanted mercy*, mercy which he has promised to them who love him, and keep his commandments, who have entered into covenant with him.

Secondly, That *thousands* in the second command, means a thousand generations ; and so is a promise of mercy not only to those individual persons, now on the stage of life, who love God and keep his commandments ; but that these by fearing God, and keeping his commandments,

mandments, shall transmit and hand down mercy to the next generation, or to their children ; and those children, by faithfully following their parents steps, and keeping covenant, shall likewise procure mercy for their children of the next generation. And in this way, unless the covenant be broken by unfaithfulness and disobedience, mercy will go down, from one, to another, even to a thousand generations ; that is, to all generations ; and the course can never be interrupted ; and in this respect it is an *everlasting* covenant.

And that this is the meaning of the words in the second commandment, is evident from the words themselves, taken together. For the promise is set in opposition to the threatening : The threatening respects posterity or children, or generations yet to come—"Unto the third and fourth generation." Generation is not in the original, but is necessarily understood, and therefore properly supplied by our translators. Therefore, the promise has respect to the same ; and "Shewing mercy unto thousands," means a thousand generations ; and might have been thus translated, and supplied, with as much reason and propriety as the foregoing clause, and agreeable to the sense Moses gives of the words, in the place just cited. As evil descends from father to children, to the third and fourth generation : So, on the other hand, mercy descends from parents to children, to a thousand generations : That is, to all generations, without any limitation, a certain number, or many, being mentioned, for an unlimited one. The descent of evil from father to children, from generation to generation, is limited, and has an end, either by the interposition of mercy, to put a stop to the succession of evil, as it sometimes does, and so "mercy rejoices against judgment ;" or by cutting off the posterity, and putting an end to the succession of evil, which is often the case. But mercy descends

from parents to children, from generation to generation, without limitation or end, unless the succession be interrupted and cut off by disobedience, and breach of covenant, by the parents.

And as the disobedient parents transmit a bad moral character to their children, by their iniquity, this being implied in the threatning, as has been shown ; and their iniquity is in this way visited upon their children : So by the promise, which is opposed to the threatning, the love and obedience of the parents affects and forms the moral character of their children ; so that their piety and obedience, does by the promise, convey spiritual blessings to their children, which is the mercy promised and shown to the parents who love God and keep his commandments, in opposition to the judgment and evil threatened to disobedient parents. As their impiety and disobedience is in judgment visited on their children, in the manner above explained : So, on the contrary, the piety and obedience of them, who love God, and keep his commandments, is in mercy visited upon their children, transmitting a good moral character to them, and all those blessings which are implied in this ; and thus, as the Psalmist declares, "The generation of the upright shall be blessed : His seed shall be mighty upon the earth."*

All that is to be inferred from this passage, at present, (though farther use may be made of it before this subject is finished) and from those mentioned before, under this particular, is, that God, in his transactions and covenanting with men, does include children with their parents, and they are so connected together, that children derive their moral character, at least in many instances, from their parents : And God, in entering into covenant with parents, extends the promises and blessings of his covenant to their children ; which are suspended on the character

* Psal. cxii. 2.

after and conduct of their parents, on their fulfilling the covenant, on their part, or not. It is presumed this is undeniably certain, from the passages of scripture which have been here cited.

As this has in fact, been the way of God's dealing with mankind, and this is declared to be his method of conduct, and the tenor of his covenanting with his people, in the second command; not as a temporary, but a perpetual rule of his proceeding and covenanting with man; and this appears rational and natural; no reason can be suggested, why it should not take place under the gospel, to as great a degree, if not greater, in God's covenanting with christians; but this gives good reason to conclude, with great certainty, that this is the way in which God deals with christians, and christian churches universally; and that his covenant with them includes their children also.

This is thought to be one good and strong argument, for the baptism of children, of parents who are visible believers, and are in covenant with God, and members of a christian church. Since the covenant has respect to their children, as well as to them, and the children are really included in it; this is a good reason why the seal of the covenant should be applied to them, as well as to their parents; therefore, they are proper subjects of baptism.

2. That the above reasoning is right and conclusive, from the facts and declarations recorded in scripture, which have been mentioned; that the children of those who enter into covenant, are proper subjects of the seal of the covenant, and have an equal right to it with their parents, is confirmed by the express direction and command of God, to administer and affix the seal of his covenant to the children, as well as to their parents. Of this there is indisputable evidence, both from precept, and from fact.

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When God entered into covenant with Abraham, the father and pattern of all believers to the end of the world, and formed a visible church in his house and family; and appointed circumcision to be a token and seal of the covenant, his children, and all the children in his family, were included in the covenant, and by an express direction and command, were to be circumcised at eight days old. And this was the seal of the covenant, between God and the seed and posterity of Abraham, and all who were profelyted, and joined with them, by which they were visibly in covenant, and distinguished from others; and was constantly applied to children, from Abraham, down to the christian dispensation, and till the right of circumcision was expressly set aside and abolished in the church; and another rite appointed in the place of it by divine authority; which is baptism with water. And the circumcision of infants was so strictly enjoined, and made so important and necessary, in order to continue and maintain a visible church, that when a parent rejected to circumcise his children, the covenant was broken with respect to the children, and the parent, and they were cut off from the church.*

The Abrahamic covenant, and that into which the children of Israel entered, which is in substance the same, included the promise of spiritual blessings, even all the good things which are contained in the covenant of grace, which takes place between God and the visible churches of Christ, and every individual believer; and the latter is the same with the former, in the essence and substance of it. Nothing greater or more is promised to man in the Bible, nor can more be promised by God, than that he will be a God unto them. This promise was contained in the covenant made with Abraham, and his seed.† And this promise contains all the blessings of the gospel covenant,

* Gen. xvii. 9, 10, 14. Exod. iv. 24, 25, 26. xii. 48.

† Gen. xvii.

covenant, or the new covenant, called so, to distinguish it from the covenant published from Mount Sinai, in the form of a covenant of works; which did however, under that form, more darkly contain the covenant of grace.* And nothing more is to be promised, on man's part, than to *keep this covenant*, which was enjoined upon Abraham and his seed. "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt *keep my covenant* therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations."† To enter into covenant with God, and acknowledge and receive him as their God, is to engage to do all the duty enjoined in the covenant, which is necessary, in order to partake of the promises; to love God, and keep his commandments: Which is expressed to Abraham in the following words: "The Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; *walk before me and be thou perfect.*"‡

This covenant did indeed, contain a promise of temporal blessings, and of possessing the land of Canaan; but this does not make it essentially different from the covenant under the gospel; for this contains a promise of temporal good things, which shall be proper and needed: It has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come:§

Therefore, the token or seal of this covenant, on the part of those to whom it was applied, signified a new heart, a heart to love God, a humble, penitent, obedient heart. And an heart opposite to all this, is called, an uncircumcised heart. "Circumcise therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked. And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live."||

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* Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, 33, 34. Ezek. xxxvii. 27. Heb. viii. 10. Rev. xxi. 7.

† Gen xvii. 9. ‡ verse 1. § 1 Tim. iv. 8. || Deut. x. 16. xxx. 6.

“If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled.”* “Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the holy Ghost.”† “He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh : But he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and *circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.*”‡ Circumcision therefore, implied, and did signify as much, and the same thing, as baptism does, when applied to the adult, or any other person.

The argument from this fact, and divine constitution, is stated in the following manner : When God formed a church in the family of Abraham, and in Israel his posterity, upon the same foundation and covenant, as to substance, with that upon which the church under the gospel is founded ; requiring the same character in order to be members of it, and containing the same mutual promises and engagements ; and appointed a token or seal of this covenant, by the application of which, persons were introduced as visible members of this church, and were distinguished from all others, as a visibly holy people : He did, at the same time, order this distinguishing seal of the covenant to be applied and administered to their children, and they were taken into covenant with their parents. The children of parents in the christian church, are as capable of being included in the covenant with their parents, and of having the qualifications for baptism, and the things signified by it, as the infants of Abraham and his posterity were, of being included in the covenant made with them ; and of having the qualifications, and those things which were signified by circumcision, these being in substance the same ; there being no other alteration or change, but that which is circumstantial ; and the ancient initiating rite and seal of the covenant,

* Levit. xxvi. 41.

† Acts vii. 51.

‡ Rom. ii. 29.

covenant, changed from circumcision to baptism with water, which is the christian circumcision. Therefore, the children of believers in the christian church, are included in the covenant into which the parents enter, and are to have the initiating seal of the covenant applied to them, as being the proper subjects of baptism. And the divine command to Abraham, and his posterity, to circumcise their children, is as binding on christians, who are the children of Abraham, to baptize their children ; unless this command and institution of God be expressly, or clearly, by necessary implication, repealed and set aside ; which is not to be found in the Bible, nor the least intimation of any such thing, but the contrary ; as will be shewn under the next particular. It was a favour and privilege, to both parents and children, in the Abrahamic church, to have the latter admitted into covenant with their parents, and to have the seal of the covenant applied to them ; and no reason can be given or thought of, why it is not as great a favour and privilege to both now, as it was then ; no man therefore, can set this divine institution aside, unless he have a warrant from heaven to do it, without disobedience to God, and injuring the church of Christ, and offending those little children, the children of believing parents.

God, by instituting a church in the family of Abraham, set a pattern, and appointed a form of a church, in all the essentials of it, agreeable to his own wisdom and goodness, in which he included both parents and their children, and ordered the initiating seal of the covenant to be applied to infants ; hereby declaring them to be the proper subjects of it. This was a great favour and privilege to parents and children ; and was therefore, strictly enjoined, and much insisted upon, as an important duty, the neglect of which, brought the parents under censure, and excluded them from the privilege of the church, and injured

injured the children. Therefore, this institution continues, and is binding on the christian church, and will continue to the end of the world; and there is no reason to expect or desire, that it should be set aside, and be made to cease; or that it should be expressly enjoined again, and the command renewed, under the gospel; because this is wholly needless; it having been once expressly enjoined, and actually put into practice, a total silence about it afterwards, is a tacit command to continue the observation of it.*

3. It has been just now observed, that if nothing be recorded in the New Testament that was said or done by Christ or his Apostles, contrary to including the children of believers, in the covenant with their parents, and baptizing them; then the constitution which God had already made in his church, with respect to this, must stand unrepealed; and it may be safely concluded, that it is the will of Christ, that this should take place in his church, and that it actually did take place, and was practised, though nothing be said directly concerning it. But it must be now observed, that there are things said in the New Testament, which do imply this, and show that the children of believers, were then considered in the same light and character, and treated as the children were in the Abrahamic church.

What Christ said of little children and infants, and did to them which were brought to him for his blessing,

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* They who are expecting and demanding, that Christ or his Apostles, should expressly renew and enjoin on christians, the appointment and command of God, to apply to the infants of believers, the initiating seal of the covenant, in order to warrant men to do it; refusing to acquiesce in the decision of this point, which God had already made; *if the argument above be conclusive*, are imitating Balaam, who did not rest satisfied with the decision which God had once made, respecting his going to curse Israel, but expected and required, that God should speak again, if he did really forbid his doing it. And are acting as the Scribes and Pharisees did, who demanded a sign from heaven, to prove that Jesus was the Messiah; while they disregarded all the signs, and the abundant evidence, which had been given to confirm this truth.

is remarkable. The disciples rebuked those who brought them, for doing it ; but Christ was much displeased with them for doing so, and said to them, " Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And he took them in his arms, and laid his hands on them, and prayed for them, and blessed them.* Upon this the following things are to be observed :

1. They who brought those children and infants to Christ, were believers in him, and friends to him ; for none but such would, in these circumstances, bring their children to him, to obtain his blessing.

2. They were not brought to Christ to be cured of any bodily disease : For if this had been the case, and the children had need of healing in this sense, the disciples would not have rebuked them for bringing them to be healed ; beside, there is not a word said, intimating that they were cured of any bodily disorder, or that they had any.

3. Christ encouraged their bringing their little children and infants to him ; and discovered his approbation, by shewing his displeasure with his disciples, for discouraging and forbidding them to do it ; and charging them not to do so again ; and by granting the request of those who brought them.

4. Christ, by taking them in his arms, and praying for them, and blessing them, declared that they were capable of receiving spiritual saving blessings ; of being the subjects of all the blessings contained in the covenant of grace, and of all that is signified in the ordinance of baptism ; and that he actually fixed this character upon them, and conferred these blessings, and numbered them among the saved ; those who are redeemed by him. For his praying for them, and blessing them, must imply all this ;

* Matth. xix. 13, 14, 15. Mark x. 13, 14. Luke xviii. 15, 16:

this; as he was always heard, and they whom Christ blesses are blessed, and shall be blessed forever.

5. When Christ says, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven;" he, in these words gives the reason, why little children should be brought to him for his blessing. By the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, which is the same, is meant the visible kingdom of Christ in this world, or his church; in which sense, this phrase is most commonly used by Christ. What he here declares therefore is, that such children as these, that is, the children of his friends, who believe in him, belong to his kingdom, and are to be members of his visible church, and to be with their parents, numbered among the redeemed.

This declaration of our Saviour, sets the children of believing parents, under the gospel, in the same situation in which the children of the visible members of the ancient church, in the family and posterity of Abraham, were placed. Such were introduced with their parents, into that church and kingdom, and were as real members of it as their parents. But they cannot enter into this kingdom of God, the visible church of Christ, in any way but by being baptized with water: Therefore, this is as proper, important and necessary, as was the circumcision of children, under the covenant made with Abraham. If children of visible believers, are to be considered as having a right to be visible members of the kingdom of God, and to be treated as such; in which light Christ has set them in those words; then they are to be introduced to this visible standing in this church and kingdom, by the only door which Christ has fixed and opened for this, which is, by being baptized with water, in the name of the sacred Trinity; or being born of water.

In sum, what Christ said and did on this occasion, is entirely conformable to the institution in the covenant
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with Abraham, and the practice of the church of Israel, respecting children; and is really an approbation of it, and a manifestation of his will, that the children of his disciples, and members of his visible church, should be considered and treated, as the children of Abraham, and his posterity were, as being in the same covenant and kingdom with their parents.

What the Apostle Paul says to the church of Christ at Corinth, and particular members of it, respecting their children, is an evidence that they had the same station and character in the christian church, which they had in the church before the incarnation of Christ. "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.*"

Here it is asserted, that the children of believing parents, even if one of them be a believer, are *holy*. The meaning of the word *holy*, here, is doubtless plain and determinate, and will appear so, when properly considered, and compared with other parts of the Bible. It is not certain that this word, especially in the New Testament, when applied to a moral agent, denotes a moral character, and means real holiness, or the appearance of real holiness, in the view and judgment of those persons who are to form a judgment of their moral character, and treat them accordingly? This is the same with *visible holiness*: That is, real holiness in the sight and judgment of men, who are to judge and act upon it. To be visibly holy, is to be really holy in appearance to men, so far as they can, or have a right to judge; and is a sufficient warrant for them to consider and treat them who have this visibility of real holiness, as if they were in fact really holy, though this visibility, or the signs and evidence by which they are to judge, be not infallibly connected with real holiness.

In this sense all the members of the Apostolic churches were holy. They were therefore called "Holy brethren,"

thren," and SAINTS, which is the same word in the original, by which the character of children of believers is here expressed; and might be translated, "Else were your children unclean; but now are they *saints*." This is an epithet common to all who were baptized and received into the churches, professing faith in Christ, and entering into covenant with him, and with each other, to obey his laws, and to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were thus called saints or holy, and considered and treated as being really such, because they had that appearance in the sight of men, according to the rules by which they were to judge and act in their treatment of them; and not because they infallibly knew they were real saints. They were visibly real saints, according to the marks and evidence, and the appearance they made in the sight of men, by which Christ had ordered them to judge and act. Thus they were *visible saints*: All the members of every church were so. They were baptized and received as members of the church, as appearing to be real saints, which is meant by a *visible saint*. All who were not real saints, or really holy in the sight of Christ, which was true of some, were hypocrites, and not what they professed and appeared to men to be. In this case the fault was wholly in them, who made an appearance and profession, not agreeable to the truth; and not their's who acted according to the rules which Christ has prescribed, in forming a charitable judgment of them, and receiving them, as being really holy, and friends to Christ.

In this sense, the children of the believer are holy or saints. Christ has put this character upon them, and directed his people to consider and receive them as such; which character is derived wholly from the believing parent. If the parent of the children be a *visible saint*,

or holy person ; that is, appears to men to be a real saint ; the children are visible saints, or holy also ; that is, they have the appearance and character of real saints ; as really as their parents, and are to be treated as such, until this appearance ceases : How this appearance and visibility may cease, and on what ground it is derived to children, from their parents, will be more particularly considered in the sequel.

It has been said, that the unbelieving parent is sanctified, according to this text ; which is the same with being made holy : Such parent is therefore here represented to be as holy as the children ; consequently the latter are no more, and in no other sense holy, than the former, according to these words.

Answer. No one can suppose, that to be sanctified, and to be holy, do here express the same character ; or that the unbelieving parent is asserted to be holy, in precisely the same sense, in which the children of believers are holy. Therefore, the unbelieving parent being said to be sanctified by, in, or to the believing parent, whatever this may mean, does not in the least determine what is the character of the children, which is expressed by their being called holy ; and is as consistent with their being asserted to be really holy, in the sense which has been now explained, as it is with their being holy in any other sense. And it is to be considered, whether the sense here given, be not the most natural, consistent sense : And whether any other sense, which is consistent and unforced, has ever yet been mentioned, or can be suggested.

When the unbelieving parent is said to be sanctified by, or to the believer, the meaning is plain and easy, viz. That the believer may live in such a connexion, consistent with maintaining a christian character ; and the unbeliever may, to such a degree, answer the ends of that

relation to the believer, as to be improved by the latter to the holy purposes of true religion. Thus the unbeliever is sanctified to the believer, as every kind of food, and every creature of God, is sanctified to such, by the word of God, and prayer.* Therefore, the children of such parents are holy : They derive their character from the believing, holy parent, and not from the unbeliever : Which could not be the case, if the unbeliever were not sanctified by, or to, the believer, in the sense above explained. Who does not see the difference between the unbeliever being sanctified by, in, or to, the believer ; and the children of the believer being consequently holy ? The latter, according to the use of the word in the New Testament, denotes a moral character, and fixes it on the children : The former has no respect to the moral character of the unbeliever ; but of the believing parent, from whom that of the children is derived.

According to this view of the words under consideration, the children of believers and members of christian churches, are to be considered, and were considered by Christ and his Apostles, and the primitive churches, as having the same character with their believing parents ; just as the children of parents in the Abrahamic church, were considered and treated, viz. as being in the same covenant, and having the same character with their parents. The children of Abraham, and of Israel, when more particularly formed into a church, and they renewed and entered into covenant at Mount Sinai, after they had greatly apostatized, during their long servitude in Egypt, were denominated by God, " A holy nation, and a holy people." And all their children were included in this covenant, as has been shewn, and this epithet was applied to them, as much as to their parents : The seal of the covenant was therefore applied to them, by which they

* 1 Tim. iv. 5.

they were visibly separated and distinguished from all other people, as a holy nation, both parents and children.

Is not this sufficient evidence, that it was the will of Christ that the churches erected by the Apostles should make no alteration with respect to children, from that which took place in the church, formed in the family of Abraham; but they are to have the same character and privileges with them? How contrary is this, to a supposed repeal of the institution, by which children were received into covenant with their parents, and had the seal of it applied to them, in the family of Abraham?

And if the children of believers be holy, in the sense explained, and were so in the Apostolic churches; are they not the proper subjects of baptism? Who can forbid water, that they should not be baptized?

It may be added, that consistent with these words, thus understood, this Apostle treated and addressed the children of believing parents, as being numbered with the saints, and so as saints. He addresses his epistle to the church at Ephesus, and to that at Colosse, *To the saints* at Ephesus, and at Colosse, and to no other persons; and he speaks to such and no others, in those, and in all his epistles. Yet here we find him particularly addressing, and exhorting children, as included in the church, and among the saints. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Children, obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."*

Other passages in the New Testament have been often mentioned, by writers on this subject, in support of the baptism of the children of believers: But it is not thought needful, particularly to consider them here: Since these which have been brought into view, are supposed sufficient to shew, that it is the will of Christ, that the institution of a church in the family of Abraham, so far as it

* Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 20.

respects children, including them with their parents, and applying the seal of the covenant to them, should not be repealed under the gospel.

4. That the Apostolic churches and primitive christians, did admit their children to baptism, as proper subjects of it, is argued from the general, and almost universal practice of it in all ages since, from that time. This is a fact, which writers on this subject have abundantly proved. From writings now extant, it appears, that infant baptism was practised in the christian churches, in the second, third, and fourth centuries. And it was asserted by writers in the church in those ages, that it had been the universal practice from the days of the Apostles; and not one person appears to have denied it, or to suggest that it was not thus handed down, as an institution of Christ. And it appears to have been the common practice in christian churches for above a thousand years, at least; and it is to this day, the general practice in the christian world. If this were not the practice of the first christian churches, formed by the Apostles, it seems impossible that it should be introduced at so early an age, as the universal practice, without opposition by any one church or person, as an innovation, and contrary to the practice of the primitive churches; and without any account, or notice given, when it was done, and by whom, and by whom it was opposed. Various heresies took place in the churches soon after the Apostles days, by which christians were divided in their sentiments and practice in many things, of which we have the history handed down to us; informed when, and by whom they were introduced. And learned men, who took pains to inform themselves, and were under advantages to do it, who lived in the early ages of the church, have given a particular account of the heresies which had arisen among christians in different parts of the world.

world, and at different times; but they never mention infant baptism, as one of them; nor the omission or denial of it, as a christian institution, by any church or single person, who practised the baptism of any with water. By those heresies, professing christians were divided into parties, and became spies upon each other; and if they had not all been agreed in baptizing infants, and it had not been the universal practice, before those divisions rose, but was introduced afterwards, it would have been impossible that they should all agree in it; or that they should be silent about it; and that none should dispute against it, and oppose it. If one party had adopted it, the other would oppose it, as an innovation, never known to be practised before, &c. But while they differed about many things, in this practice they were all agreed, as an institution handed down from the Apostles.

Corruptions and practices have taken place in churches, especially in the church of Rome, which are contrary to the institutions of Christ, and were not practised by the primitive churches; but we have an account when most of those were introduced, and of great opposition made to them by many; and they have never been universally received by the churches. If the baptism of children be not a divine institution, it is a great error indeed; a great corruption and abuse of the ordinances of baptism, and an utter perversion of it, to a purpose for which it was not instituted. And it is perfectly unaccountable (and may we not say impossible) that it should so universally take place in the church of Christ, and that so soon after the death of the Apostles, without any opposition by any one person, for many centuries, and no account be handed down, of the time when it was introduced, and by whom, if it were not universally practised from the days of the Apostles, but is an innovation, contrary to the original institution and practice of the churches.

But if the baptism of the children of believers, be a divine institution, and universally practised by the churches in the Apostles days, agreeable to the foregoing arguments; and was handed down from them in the christian churches: Then its taking place so generally, and even universally, from the earliest times, for so many ages, can be well accounted for, and appears perfectly consistent. This fact therefore, increases the evidence, and serves to strengthen and confirm other arguments, which are thought to be in themselves, fully conclusive, that the baptism of infants is a divine institution, and was practised by the Apostolic churches.



THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF INFANT BAPTISM.

II. THE next thing proposed, on the subject of infant baptism, is, to consider the import and design of it, and what good ends it may answer to the parents and their children.

If it be evident and certain, that this is a divine institution, it ought to be punctually attended and practised, though the reason, design, and end of it were not to be discovered, and none could tell or see of what benefit it can be to the parents or children. But if this were in fact the case, and it should appear to us, only an unmeaning useless ceremony, and really of a bad tendency; this would greatly tend to blind us to the evidence, that it is indeed, an institution of Christ; and to prejudice our minds, and shut our eyes, so as not to see it, however clear it may be. It is therefore, no wonder that persons, who have imbibed this notion of infant baptism, and look into
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the Bible, and attend to the arguments which are brought in favour of it, and what is said against it, with this prejudice on their minds, should not be convinced that it is a divine institution ; but reject it with a great degree of confidence, and religious zeal. In this view, the enquiry now before us, is very important and interesting. And if a rational and consistent account, can be given of this institution, and the ground and design of it be discovered by the help of the scripture ; and it can be shown in what respect it is suited to promote the good of parents, and their children, and of the church ; it will tend to remove prejudices, and to confirm the arguments which have been offered from the scripture, in favour of infant baptism.

This will be now attempted by offering the following observations and conclusions to the candid consideration, and careful examination of those who are willing to attend to this subject, and desirous to form right conceptions of it, and to know what is the reason, design and advantage of this institution.

1. The baptism of the children of believers, is a *covenant transaction*, by which, in some sense or other, and in some degree, at least, the children are visibly taken into covenant, so as to be included in it ; and are to be considered as sharing in the blessings of it, with their parents. No less than this can be made of the transaction with Abraham ; and the covenant made with him and his seed, in which the seal of the covenant was applied to them. And the same constitution takes place in the christian church, with respect to children ; and the appointed seal of the gospel covenant, is therefore applied to them. If this were not a covenant transaction, which has respect to the children, and they were in no sense included in the covenant, the application of the seal of the covenant to them, by baptizing them, would

be an unmeaning transaction indeed ; or rather would be a signification of that which is not true, and does not really take place. Nor would it answer to what was intended, and actually took place in the circumcision of children in the Abrahamic church, which was expressly called the token of the covenant, and the covenant itself, which God made, and established between himself, and Abraham and his seed. " I will make a covenant between me and thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee ; and thy seed after thee ; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee : Every man child among you, shall be circumcised : And it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant."* What can be more plain and certain, than those words make it, that the children of Abraham were as really included in the covenant made with him, of which circumcision was the appointed token and seal, as he himself was ; and consequently that all the parents in Israel, and their circumcised children, were equally included in the same covenant ? And who that believes in infant baptism, will deny that this is as much a covenant transaction as was the circumcision of the children of Abraham ; and that the baptized children of believers are as really and as much in covenant, as the circumcised children of Abraham ? Therefore, they who believe the baptism of infants to be a christian institution, have generally, if not universally, considered it as a covenant transaction, importing the children of believers to be included in the same covenant with their believing parents ; though they may have differed in their notion of this covenant, as it respects children.

2. This

* Gen. xvii.

2. This covenant transaction in baptizing the children of believers, is between God and the parents. It respects the children indeed, which are baptized, but they are incapable of acting in the affair, so as to enter into covenant, by any act of theirs. If they be brought into covenant, and the seal of it set upon them, it must be by what is done for them, and determined and acted with respect to them, in which they are the subjects, and not the agents; and all this takes place previous to their knowing any thing of the matter. In this, all are agreed.

3. A covenant is commonly understood to imply mutual engagements and promises, on some condition expressed or understood, between two parties, so covenanting. Thus, when God enters into covenant with men, or a covenant takes place between them, he proposes and promises to grant some good thing to them, on some condition to be performed on their part; which they engage and promise to perform, approving of the proposal, and complying with it. But the condition on which the divine promises is made in the covenant which he proposes, and into which he enters with man, is all implied in a cordial approbation of the promise, and acceptance of the thing promised; and perseverance in this, and expressing it in a proper and answerable conduct; for this is to love God, and keep his commandments.

The absolute, unconditional promises of God, are indeed called a covenant, and he is said to make a covenant with those to whom he makes such promises. Thus he is said to establish his covenant with Noah and his seed, in which all mankind, who were to exist after that, are comprehended; and with every living creature.* Which covenant, consisted in an absolute unconditional promise,

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that he would not destroy the world again by a flood.— Of the same kind are many of the promises made to the church ; that God will never forsake it ; but that it shall continue to the end of the world, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it ; and that it shall yet prosper and flourish and fill the world, &c.

The covenant of grace, which is called the new covenant, is in a sense unconditional. As it is established with the redeemed, the church as a body, it is called a promise and testament, in which are contained all the good things which are implied in the complete, eternal redemption of the redeemed church : And whatever is necessary on their part, is comprised in the promise, in which God engages that it shall take place, and be wrought in them, so that they shall will and do the things necessary to their being in covenant with God, and sharing in all the blessings of it. This is evident from the particular description which the Apostle Paul gives of this covenant, in a quotation from the Prophet Jeremiah. “ Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord ; I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts : And I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people. And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : For all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”* Here God promises to do all that is to be done ; and if there be any condition necessary on the part of the church, it is included in the promise, and God engages that it shall take place. “ I will put

among them laws, and they shall obey them, and they shall be my

* Heb. viii. 8, 10, 11, 12.

my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and they shall be to me a people." This is to be considered as a condition which must take place in all of the redeemed church, and implies saving faith, or love to God, and obedience to him, in keeping his commandments. But in this covenant of grace, this condition of salvation, and all that is implied in eternal redemption, is promised to the church. This is the legacy, the testament, or promise which Christ has left to his church.

But this does not exclude, but necessarily includes, a condition, or something which must take place in every individual, in order to his being interested in the blessings of this covenant, or being properly in covenant with God. This may properly be called a condition, the condition of the covenant, on man's part, as necessary in order to his being in covenant.

How the children of believers are visibly included in this covenant, and may really be so, having the condition of it wrought in them, will be shown in what follows. But the observation in this particular, under which some digression has been made, that it might not be misunderstood, is, that in the covenant transaction between God and the parents in the baptism of their children, there are mutually promises and engagements between them, which do particularly respect the children. What they are, will be considered under the following particulars.

4. The parent who offers his child to baptism, does expressly or implicitly renew his covenant with God, and dedicates himself to him, to love him and keep his commandments; and does renewedly lay hold of the covenant, acting for himself and child. He brings his child to Christ, for his blessing, and dedicates, and gives it away to him; and promises to bring it up for him, "In the nurture and admonition of the Lord," as one of Christ's children. All this is professed, and promised

in this visible, external transaction : And if this be done understandingly and heartily ; or is a true expression of the heart of the parent, it is really done in the sight of God. This is true, in the view of the church, who look only on the outward appearance, and cannot see the heart. The parent is considered by them as sincere and hearty in making his profession and promises ; that he does really dedicate his child to Christ, and will do all that is implied in bringing it up for him, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

What is implied in this engagement and promise, will be more particularly considered hereafter. Whatever this may be, all who believe the baptism of the children of believing parents is a divine institution will grant, that all which has been now expressed, is implied in the profession and promise made by the parent in offering his child in baptism.

5. Jesus Christ does, in this transaction, receive the child into the same visible standing and character with the parent, as a visible saint, or holy person, and orders the church to consider and look upon it in this light, as being one in their view, and so far as they are to judge, really holy, and among the number of the saved. Of this holiness, the child is as capable as the parent ; and by the command of Christ, who has put this character upon all such children, and said, *they are holy* ; they are to be considered and received by the church as such : That is, in appearance, to their view, really holy. He has commanded his church to receive all those adult persons who make a proper profession and appearance of real holiness, and to look upon them as being really holy ; that is, to consider and treat them as being really what they appear to be, though they may not in fact, be really what they appear to men to be ; though they may not be really holy, and there be no reason to be-
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lieve that they are all such ; and how great the number is of those who are visible saints, that is, who appear to the church to be real saints, and whom they are commanded to receive and treat as such, and yet are not really saints, none can tell. In like manner, he has commanded his people to receive their children, whom they bring to the church, in the same character with their parents, as really holy ; that is, as appearing to them to be really holy, which is the same with being visibly holy ; because he has put this character upon them, which he has put upon their parents, and ordered them to be called saints, or holy, though they may not be really so ; and there may be as many, among such children, not really holy, as there are among their parents, or the adult members of the church, or more. Their connexion with their parents, and having the same character put upon them by Christ, by saying, " Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God," and calling them saints or holy, is a good warrant to the church to receive them, with their parents, into the visible, holy covenant, and apply the seal of the covenant to them, as the children of the parents of the ancient church were, and were called holy, and the holy seed.

Two reasons may be given, why the redeemer has affixed the same character to the children of believing, visibly covenanting parents, as he has to the parents themselves, and ordered them to be taken into the same covenant, and to have the seal of the covenant applied to them, and to be numbered among the redeemed, both in his ancient church, and in that under the gospel.

1. Because he has ordered that those who are made really holy, and are saved, should be chiefly taken from, and found among visible believers, and their children. Therefore, he has directed us to look there, for really
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holy persons, that shall be saved, and no where else. He has, for wise reasons determined, that real holiness, and salvation, shall chiefly and ordinarily descend in this line, from believing parents to their children. Therefore, he has ordered them all to be looked upon by the church to be holy, and to be numbered among the saved; for the same reason that all adult professing believers, are to be received by the church, as really holy, viz. because they who are really holy and shall be saved, are to be found among those who have this appearance, and are to be looked for among them; and one cannot be distinguished from another, so as to be known to be really holy, and the other not; therefore, all such must be considered as really holy, and have this character put upon them.

That it is God's common way, to convey saving blessings down from godly parents, to their children, and to bless the children for the sake of their parents, may be argued from many passages of scripture; some of which have been mentioned heretofore. "The righteous is ever merciful and lendeth: And his seed is blessed. The just man walketh in his integrity; his children are blessed after him. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon the earth. The generation of the upright shall be blessed."* God promises his church, which has a special respect to the gospel church, that, he will bless them and their children with spiritual blessings, and the promise is made as much to their offspring as to them. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty; and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."† And still speaking of the church, he says, "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord,

* Psalm. xxxvii. 26. cxii. 1, 2. Prov. xx. 7. † Isai. xlv. 3.

Lord, my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble : For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.* " And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them."† Thus the children are connected with their parents, and the good, the blessing, is represented as descending from parents to children ; and the latter are included in the promises of good to the former. To the same purpose are the following words, which have reference to the gospel day, " And the Lord thy God, will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live."‡ And the covenant which God makes with his church and people, is represented as conveying blessings from parents to children, to a thousand generations.§ Thus piety and spiritual blessings are represented as descending down in a line from parents to children, in the church ; and there we are to look, and expect to find holiness, if any where : And the children of visibly pious, holy parents, are to be considered and looked upon as of the same character with their parents, and as the blessed of the Lord, and holy with them, so long as they do not discover the contrary.— Therefore, they are to be considered and treated as in the same covenant with their parents, and heirs of the same blessings with them, so long as they are incapable of acting for themselves ; which cannot be done without applying the seal of the covenant to them, by baptizing them.

Agreeable

* Isai. lix. 21, lxxv. 23.

† Jer. xxxii. 38, 39.

‡ Deut. xxx. 6.

§ Exod. xx. 6. Deut. vii. 9.

Agreeable to the representation of scripture, which has now been brought into view, this appears to be true in fact, from what has taken place in the visible church, in all ages. Ever since there has been a visible church in the world, those who have been saved, have generally been members of that, and this salvation has been handed down from parents to children, until by apostacy, and open breach of covenant, they have been destroyed, or cast off by God, and ceased to be a visible church.—When the church was erected in the family of Abraham, and was enlarged, as his posterity multiplied; which continued down to the crucifixion of Christ, and even to the destruction of the temple and nation of the Jews by the Romans, before it was wholly abandoned and destroyed true religion, real holiness, and salvation, were chiefly confined to that church, and handed down from parents to children. The most of the truly pious and holy people in the world, were to be found in that church, during all that time, from generation to generation.—This church was therefore called the inheritance of the Lord, and his heritage. And is represented by the Apostle Paul, by an olive tree, which had flourished a long time, a holy tree; but when the branches were broken off by unbelief, and an open breach of covenant, the Gentiles were inserted in their place, into the holy root of this olive tree; and then the Gentile and christian church, being in the foundation and essence of it, the same with the church which had subsisted in the family and posterity of Abraham, was the visible holy society, including parents and children. And as Christ says, salvation was of the Jews, while they continued branches in the holy olive tree; so when they were broken off, as a nation, and agreeable to the ancient prediction, the law went forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, unto the Gentile nations; and

and many people heard, and said, " Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."* From that time, salvation was of the christian church, and has been handed down from parents to children, to this day. And though some particular churches, or branches of the christian visible church, and however many and great, have been broken off by apostacy ; yet still the true visible christian church subsists, and will continue, from parents to children, to the end of the world. And the parents and children, of which it consists, are visibly holy, and heirs of salvation ; and no others are, or can be so.

2. Another reason why the same character is affixed to the children of believers, which the latter sustain ; and why they are received into covenant with them, and have the seal of the covenant applied to them, and which may be considered as the foundation of what is observed as a reason of this, in the foregoing particular, is this, *That real holiness, and salvation, are secured to the children of believers, by the covenant into which the parents enter with God, as it respects their children, if the parents faithfully keep covenant, and fulfil what they profess and promise, respecting their children, when they offer them in baptism.*

It has been observed, that parents offering their children in baptism, is a covenant transaction, between God and them, with regard to the children, to whom the seal of the covenant is administered ; and that there are mutual promises and engagements, between the parties covenanting, without which it would not be a covenant transaction : And it has been also observed, that the baptism of children, has been generally considered in this light, by those who have believed it to be a divine institution, and have vindicated it as such. The parent, in this transaction, professes to devote his child to Christ,

and give it away to him, asking his blessing on it, as the greatest and only portion he wishes for his child ; and promises, that if he and the child shall live, to bring it up for Christ, as belonging to him, as one of his lambs in his flock, and bearing his mark and name, to train it up in the way in which he should go, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

And Jesus Christ, as the other party in this covenant transaction, visibly receives the child as belonging to him ; and on the condition which the parent professes and promises to perform, he promises to bless the child, and bestow salvation upon it. Therefore, such children are visibly saints, and numbered among the saved : For the profession and engagements of the parents, are to be relied upon by the church ; and that they will fulfil their promises, respecting their children ; upon which the promise of Christ will be made good to them.

That this is the tenor of the covenant between God and believing parents, respecting their children, seems to be evident from the transaction itself in baptism, as it has been now stated and explained : And this will fully account for the children of believers belonging to the visible kingdom of God, and their being called holy, or saints. But this may be farther confirmed by those passages of scripture, which contain promises of saving grace, or of salvation, to the children of those parents who are faithful in keeping covenant with God.

The covenant with Abraham, which has been mentioned, by which a visible church was formed in his house and family, who is the father and pattern of all believers : And which covenant and church was handed down in his posterity ; and is not essentially different, but really the same covenant and church, which still exists, since the natural posterity of Abraham have been broken off or cast out, by their unbelief and open breach

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of covenant, as has been shown : This covenant with Abraham, included his children ; and the promise it contained was made as much to his children as to him. The words of the promise are, "To be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." The promise to be a God unto Abraham, included the blessings of the covenant of grace, even saving mercies, and it must imply the same when made to his seed. This promise was made on a condition, on Abraham's part, which is implied, and is expressed in the context. "The Lord appeared unto Abraham and said, Walk before me, and be thou perfect : And I will make my covenant between me and thee."* The condition of the covenant, which was required of Abraham, is here expressed in these words, "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." And the condition of the covenant or promise, is again expressed in the following words, "This is my covenant, *which ye shall keep*, between me and you, and thy seed after thee : Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."† The external rite of circumcision is not here intended, as the only condition of the covenant ; but this implies the things signified by circumcision, the sign being mentioned, as including what was the import and signification of it. Therefore, it is here called the *token* of the covenant. When Abraham circumcised his children, he devoted them to God, and promised to treat them as God's children, and educate them for God, which implied praying for them, and with them ; instructing them in the things of this covenant, and directing and watching over them, and exercising parental care and government of them, and using all proper means, to lead them to know and do their duty to God and man, as soon as they

* Gen. xvii. 1, 2.

† v. 10, 11.

should be capable of acting for themselves ; at the same time, setting a good example before them in all his conduct, both of true piety towards God, and righteousness and benevolence towards men. This was the covenant between God and Abraham, on Abraham's part, with respect to his children, of which circumcision was the sign, token, and seal ; and though he circumcised his children, if he did not in heart dedicate them to God, and faithfully perform the duties signified and promised in this transaction, he did not keep the covenant of circumcision, but would break it, in the most important and essential part of it. Upon this condition, implied, professed and engaged, in Abraham's circumcising his children, God promised to be their God, to bless them with the blessings of the covenant, or that they should be holy and happy forever. Thus God entered into covenant with Abraham and with his seed ; and the promise was to him and his children, upon condition he would keep the covenant of circumcision, which was a token and seal of the covenant, by both the parties covenanting.

This is here said to be an *everlasting covenant*. " And my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant."* True religion and salvation, would be transmitted to a thousand generations, even without end, or to the end of the world, from parents to children, if parents were faithful in the covenant, as it respects their children. But this covenant may be broken, by the parent's not keeping covenant, and not acting up to his obligations, profession and promises, with regard to his children, and being guilty of great and persevering neglect of his duty, and by his unfaithfulness. This is evident from the words which follow, and is plainly expressed in them. " And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people : He hath broken my covenant."†

Upon

Upon these words the following observations may be made.

First. In the case mentioned, the child does not properly break the covenant ; for he is not in the least active or guilty in the affair. The covenant is broken by the parent's neglect of his duty to the child. Therefore, when it is said, " He hath broken my covenant," the meaning is, the covenant is broken, as it respects the child, and by this mean the child is out of covenant, and excluded from the privileges of it ; but the parent is the covenant breaker, as it is wholly by his neglect to circumcise his child.

Secondly. As the covenant made with Abraham, was visibly broken by a parent's refusing or neglecting to circumcise his children ; so it was really broken by the parent, if he refused and neglected to do what is implied in the circumcision of children, and what he professed and promised in that transaction. Though he performed the external rite, yet if his heart were not answerable to it, and he were disposed to neglect all the important duty respecting his children, which he professes and solemnly engages, in performing the external rite of circumcision, he breaks the covenant as much, and more, in the sight of God, than if he had not circumcised his children ; and forfeits all the promised blessings of the covenant to his children, which were promised on condition of his faithfulness in keeping this covenant. Circumcision, considered as a mere external rite and ceremony, was not the circumcision which was commanded by God. If the moral exercises and duties implied in it, and signified by it, and which were professed and engaged, did not take place, but were neglected. These were of the essence of circumcision ; the external rite was but a sign or token of the other, in which the covenant consisted ; and if the things signified, professed and promised, by

this external sign and token, did not take place, the external sign and transaction was a mere nullity in the sight of God, and in the sight of men too, so far as this was apparent, and known to them. This is expressly asserted by the Apostle Paul, when speaking of circumcision. "Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh."*

Therefore, when a parent in Israel circumcised his children, and neglected to do the duties enjoined, professed and promised, of which the circumcision of his children was a token and pledge, and so did not keep the law of circumcision, but broke it; his children were, in this respect, as if they had not been circumcised, and the covenant of circumcision was as really, and as much broken, as if he had neglected to circumcise his children; and his children were, by this neglect, cut off from the promises and blessings of the covenant. Can any thing be more plain and certain than this? What moral exercises and duties, respecting the children, the parent professed and promised, and what was the law of circumcision, in this respect, has been briefly stated above, and will be more fully explained, before this subject is closed.

Thirdly. Hence it appears, that the covenant of circumcision, as it respected the seed or children of the parents, who circumcised them, did not extend, in the promises of it, any farther than to the children thus circumcised; though the parents were faithful in keeping covenant, and acted up to their profession and engagements. They could transmit the blessings of the covenant, according to the promises of it, no farther than to their children, which were circumcised by them. If these children should neglect to circumcise their children; or if they

* Rom. ii. 25, 28.

they should circumcise them, and yet not keep the law of circumcision, but neglect the duties, with respect to their children, which they had professed and engaged, the covenant would be broken, and their children be cut off from the promises and blessings of it. And thus, this *everlasting* covenant, which, if faithfully kept, would transmit spiritual blessings and salvation to all generations, to the end of the world, may be, and has been broken; by which breach of this covenant, all the dreadful and prevailing evils and the curse, which have fallen upon mankind, have been introduced, and spread over the world, agreeable to the words of God by Isaiah. "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, *broken the everlasting covenant*. Therefore, hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate."*

But the following question will be suggested here, which requires an answer.

QUESTION. IF spiritual blessings and salvation, the blessings promised in the covenant, be transmitted from parents who keep covenant, to their children, these children will be holy and obedient, according to the promise made to their parents; consequently, their children will be holy and obedient also, and so on through every generation, to the end of the world. How then can this covenant be broken, so that any children in this line of succession, should be unholy and disobedient? Must not holiness and salvation, be infallibly transmitted from parents to children, to the last generation, according to this notion of the covenant, without a possibility of a breach of covenant.

ANSWER. THE covenant, as it respects the parents, in their own persons, and the duties required of them,
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* Isaiah xxiv. 3, 6.

in order to their own salvation, is different from the covenant, and the duties required, as they respect their children. What regards their children is a distinct branch of the covenant, and differs from what respects their own persons only.

The covenant, as it respect the individual person entering into covenant, promises salvation to him who believeth, even to the least and lowest degree of true faith, by which he lays hold of the covenant ; it promises that all such shall be finally saved ; that they shall be furnished with every thing necessary for this, and shall be kept by the power of God, through their faith, unto salvation. The person entering into covenant, as it respects his own person, professes this faith, and to devote himself to God in the exercise of it ; lays hold of the covenant, and promises by divine assistance, relying upon the promised grace of God, to live a life of faith and holiness.

The covenant, as it respects the children of believing parents, and includes them, promises spiritual blessings and salvation to them, on condition of the parents faithfulness in devoting them to God, and bringing them up for him, persevering in the exercises and duties, which are implied in this. And these exercises and duties, respecting their children, are professed and promised by the parents, when they devote them to God, in this covenant transaction, and in applying the seal of the covenant to them. But there is no promise in this covenant, that if they do, with a degree of sincerity, give up their children to God, and profess all those exercises, and promise to perform all that duty towards them, which are implied in bringing them up for God, that they shall certainly do all this ; but they may be very deficient and unfaithful in this covenant, as it respects their children, and bring a curse upon them, rather than the blessings promised in the covenant.

Therefore,

Therefore, though the parents may be true believers, and interested in all the blessings of the covenant, so far as they respect themselves, in their own persons; yet they may be so negligent of the exercises and duties of the covenant, as it respects their children, and which they have promised; and by this so break the covenant, with respect to them, as to cut them off from the promised blessings of the covenant. Though the parents of children may, in one instance or more, be faithful in performing their promised duty to their children, and their children be made partakers of spiritual blessings, in consequence of it; yet these children, though true believers, and interested in the blessings of the covenant themselves, may so neglect their duty to *their* children, as not to keep covenant, as it respects them; and consequently their children be deprived of the blessings of the covenant; and so the covenant, and the succession of blessings, from parents to children, be broken and cease.

Though Abraham was faithful in this covenant, and fulfilled the duties of it, as it respected his children; yet Isaac or Jacob, or both, though good men, and interested in the promises of the covenant in their own persons, might be so negligent and unfaithful, in their duty to *their* children, or some of them, at least, as to cut them off from the promises of the covenant, as it respected them. Eli appears to have been a good man; yet he was so negligent of his duty to his sons, that by this, evil came upon them. And king David, who was in many respects an eminently holy man, appears, from the history we have of him, and his family, to be very unfaithful in his duty to many of his children; and indulged a partiality in their favour, and a parental fondness, which was inconsistent with his treating them as he ought to have done; and led him far astray from his duty to them. Even his marrying so many wives, was inconsistent

sistent with the regard he ought to have had for his posterity, and tended to prevent his doing his duty to his children. The Prophet Malachi, speaking against polygamy, refers to the original institution of marriage by God, who made only one woman for one man, and says, "And did he not make ONE? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore ONE? That he might seek a GODLY seed."* It appears from these words, that in the institution of marriage, God had regard to the good of children and posterity, that they might be a holy seed: And that if the duties of this relation, particularly as they respect their offspring, be properly and faithfully attended to, and performed, their children will be holy, inherit the blessings of the covenant, and be saved. It also appears, that polygamy is contrary to the good of posterity, and has a strong tendency to produce an ungodly seed; as it is unfriendly to the duties which parents owe to their children, and in many respects inconsistent with them.

It is to be observed, and must be kept in mind, that what has been said on the Abrahamic covenant, and the circumcising his children; the profession, promise and duties implied in this, and what depended upon these, with regard to the children, is equally applicable to parents, and their seed, and to the baptism of their children, under the christian dispensation.

All that has been observed, concerning the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, may be yet farther illustrated, and made more evident, by attending to the following words of God, concerning Abraham, and his children and household. "For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."†

First.

* Mal. ii. 15.

† Gen. xviii. 19.

First. We may observe what is here said of Abraham, which God knew he would do. He knew he would do it, because he had determined to work in him to will and to do it; for Abraham was wholly dependent on God for this, as for every thing else. “I know him, *that he will command his children, and household after him.*”—This implies the whole of the duty which he engaged towards his children, and household, in the covenant of circumcision; and when he circumcised his children; and by doing this, he kept the covenant, as it respected them. *Commanding them after him*, implies proper and careful instruction of them, in the way of the Lord, teaching them the great doctrines of religion, what the way of the Lord is, what true religion is; and what are the revealed commands of God, and what duties they must do; for the exercise of authority and commands, without such instruction, would be improper, unreasonable, without a meaning, and absurd. This branch of duty cannot be done, without constant study, and great care and pains, watching every opportunity for it, and repeating it without cessation, which cannot be done without a good degree of religious knowledge, and great assiduity, concern and zeal. This part of the duty of parents to their children, is particularly and repeatedly inculcated by God, on the parents in Israel. “These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”* And again, “Therefore, ye shall lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. That
your

* Deut. vi. 6, 7.

your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon earth.*

Parental government, is also implied in these words. Without a proper and wise government of children, they cannot be properly and with success instructed. They must teach, in this sense, *with all authority*. Children who are disobedient to their parents, which is always the case, where there is no proper government, cannot be instructed by them. Therefore, a proper, steady, wise government of children, in the exercise of parental authority, is essential to their good education; and parents must *command their children after them*, if they would bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The importance and necessity of family government, for the good of children, and of the church, are exhibited in a striking light, by the law which God gave to Israel, which ordered that no ungoverned, disobedient child, should live there; but that every one of this character, should be put to death; and the parents were commanded to see it executed, upon every child who would not submit to their government, and obey their commands.†

This branch of the education of children, which is so important and essential, cannot be properly and faithfully executed, without great and constant care, circumspection, prudence, and resolution; continually watching over their children, and treating and governing them, in a manner best suited to answer the end of government, and lead them both to fear and love their parents.

These words also necessarily imply, that Abraham did *pray* constantly and with earnestness and importunity for his children, that God would indeed bless them, and render his endeavours successful, so as to form them to true piety, and secure their salvation. And also that he

* Chap. xi. 18, 19, 21.

† Deut. xxi. 18—21.

might be faithful and wise in attending upon, and executing the important charge, respecting his children. A pious believer, who feels towards his children in any good measure, as he ought to do, and acts up to his character and obligations, in the religious education of his children, must thus pray for himself, with regard to his duty to them, and for them. He feels the infinite importance of their having the blessing of God, and of their salvation ; that all their interest lies here ; and he is a thousand times more concerned about this, and desirous of it, than of any temporal, worldly interest, whatsoever.* He knows his obligations, and the vows he has solemnly taken upon himself ; and is sensible of his dependence on God, for wisdom and fidelity in the performance of what is justly expected of him ; and that God only can bless the means he uses, and grant salvation to his children : A weighty sense of all this will bring him on his knees, in humble, constant, earnest application to God by prayer, for assistance and success, in this most important and interesting matter. To neglect such prayer, is grossly to neglect his duty to his children ; and does imply a neglect of the other branches of their religious education, implied in commanding them after him. Therefore, when God said he knew Abraham, that he would command his children and his household after him, it is implied that he knew he would pray for himself, that he might faithfully do this ; and for his children, that they might have the blessing of God, and be saved.

These

* It is to be observed, that these are the views, feelings, and conduct of parents, who come up to what might be justly expected of them.— But this is not true of every pious parent. Such may be very unsteady in their views and feelings with respect to their children, and come vastly short of their duty in their conduct ; and say and do many things which have a contrary and bad influence on their children, and be very offensive to God, and a gross violation of their obligations and vows.

These words also imply the good example that Abraham would set before his children, and his household, of piety and righteousness. He would command them *after him*. He would set them an example of that religion, in which he educated them, and instruct and command them to follow him. This is essential in the proper and religious education of children. The parent who is not exemplary in his conduct, and does not set before his children an example of piety, righteousness, and benevolence, cannot give them a religious education. If he attempt to instruct, direct, and command them in the ways of religion, he will, in their sight, be guilty of gross contradictions; and will appear to them, not to be sincere and in earnest; and his bad example, or want of a good one, will counteract and defeat, all his attempts to instruct, exhort, and govern them, and will have more influence to corrupt them, than any thing he may say, or do, in favour of religion, can have to form them to piety and righteousness, if he should say or do any thing of this kind: But even this is not to be expected of such a parent. They who do not love religion, and practise it themselves, will not take any proper methods, and exert themselves suitably, to make their children truly religious.

This branch of duty, requires great and constant care, watchfulness and circumspection; that the whole of their conversation and conduct, may be as becometh godliness, and recommend religion to all with whom they live and converse; setting a calm, steady, dispassionate example of humility, uprightness, sincerity, truth, justice, benevolence, and mercy. Expressing their piety in all proper ways, and on every suitable occasion; and practising religion and devotion in their families, and in a constant attendance on all divine institutions.

Abraham was under obligation to do all this. He professed to have a heart to do it, and promised to do

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all this duty to his children and household, when he circumcised them. And God, who knew all things, and on whom Abraham wholly depended for grace and assistance, to perform this difficult and important branch of duty, determined to work in him to will and to do it; and therefore knew that he would be faithful in keeping covenant, and not neglect to do it. And christian parents, who bring their children to baptism, profess, and engage all this duty in their treatment of them. And their obligations are increased, and are much greater, and more extensive, than those under which Abraham was; and they are bound to greater attention, concern and zeal, and to do much more in instructing and educating their children, than he was, as they have much greater light and advantages, than he had. The future state being much more clearly brought into view now, than it was then; and consequently, the importance that children should be religious and be saved, ought to be more strongly impressed on the minds of parents, and animate them to greater concern and zeal in this matter. And as they enjoy so much more light, they are under greater advantages to understand the great truths of religion, and to teach them to their children, and constantly inculcate them, both by words and example, their duty is enlarged, and their obligations to faithfulness, in the performance of it, greatly increased; and every neglect of duty toward their children, is much more criminal, than such neglect would have been, in the father of the faithful.

Secondly. In these words, is declared the consequence of Abraham's faithfulness in his duty to his children, in their education; and the certain connection of the former with the latter. "And they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." This is to be truly pious and holy, and to go in the way which leads to eternal salvation. Here then is a declared and promised

ed connection between Abraham's being faithful and thorough in the covenant of circumcision, as it respected his children, and their holiness and salvation, the latter following as a certain and promised consequence of the former. This explains the covenant mentioned in the seventeenth chapter, which God made with Abraham and his seed, in which he promises to be a God to him and his seed after him ; and confirms what has been observed above, concerning this covenant, as agreeable to the truth, viz. That in this covenant, God promised spiritual blessings, and salvation to the children of Abraham, upon condition of his faithfully performing what he professed and engaged to do, with respect to them, when they were circumcised by him ; and that on this ground, they were denominated a holy seed, and to be numbered among the saved.*

And as this covenant with Abraham, including his seed with him, was the covenant of grace, which, as to substance, is the same into which God enters with all believers and their children, and is a pattern and example, of God's entering into covenant with believers in all ages, taking in their children with them, which all hold, who believe in the baptism of the children of believers ; then why does not, why *must not*, this same covenant, contain the same promise to believers, of the holiness and salvation of their children, upon the same condition to be performed by them, through all ages, to the end of the world ? If this covenant made with Abraham, including his seed with him, has been now rightly explained, agreeable

* It has been supposed by some, that Ishmael, Abraham's son, was not a good man ; but none ought to think so, unless there were clear positive evidence of it, which it is believed there is not. This supposition is inconsistent with the express declaration of God, in the words which have been considered. viz. That the children of Abraham should keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. It is said of him, when he died, " He was gathered unto his people." This is said of the good ; but of no wicked man.

agreeable to the plain meaning of it, the consequence will certainly follow. And that the true sense and meaning of the mutual promises between God and Abraham, with respect to his seed, has been given ; and consequently, that the seed of believers have the promise of holiness and salvation, upon the parents being faithful in keeping covenant, as it respects their children, will appear yet more evident, from other passages of scripture, which are now to be considered.

Those words of God, which have been mentioned, "Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments," compared with the words of Moses, which have reference to these, "Know therefore, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,"* serve to explain the covenant made with Abraham, and his seed, and to confirm the sense which has now been given of it.

It has been shewn, that these words in the decalogue, contain a promise to parents who love God and keep his commandments, of mercy to their children ; and that this mercy shewn to their children, in consequence of the parents keeping the commandments of God, respects their moral character, which implies true piety, and final salvation : And that the course of this mercy, descending down to posterity, cannot be interrupted, unless the parents are unfaithful in keeping covenant. It has also been shewn, that keeping the commandments of God, includes their duty to their children, in devoting them to God and bringing them up for God. And what is implied in this has been particularly explained, and needs not to be repeated. It has been also shewn, that godly parents, who have a degree of true love to God,

may grossly fail of keeping his commandments, as they respect their children; and so break the covenant between God and them, so far as it regards their posterity, and fail of having any share in the promise of mercy to them. But those who do not greatly fail of their duty, in this respect, but are faithful in the covenant, have the promise of mercy to their children, and are the happy instruments of conveying holiness and salvation to them, and no farther; but if their children be also faithful, they hereby hand down spiritual blessings to their children; and so on to a thousand generations; and the succession cannot be interrupted, but by breach of covenant, by some of the parents. These words, therefore, thus explained and understood,* (and it is believed that no other consistent sense can be put upon them) do confirm what has been said of the covenant made with Abraham, and his seed, and with all believers and their children, to the end of the world; and prove that the covenant of grace and mercy contains a promise of mercy and salvation to the children of parents who faithfully keep the covenant and commands of God, as they respect their children.

And in this view, the natural and easy sense of those words of the Apostle Peter, which have been the subject of so much altercation, offers itself, as another proof of the point under consideration. The words are, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. *For the promise is unto you, and to your children.*"†

The covenant with Abraham, contained a promise to him and his children, which is denoted by *the promise*. And as the Apostle is speaking to the Jews, they would naturally

* See page 309, &c.

† Acts ii. 38, 39.

naturally understand this covenant by *the promise*, and that these words of Peter imported, that this covenant was still in force, and was not curtailed or altered in this respect : And though now baptism was the token and seal of the covenant, instead of *circumcision*, yet still it contained the promise of saving mercy to every penitent believer, and to his children ; as did the covenant of *circumcision*, made with Abraham their father. It was natural, and of importance, when he spoke to the Jews of baptism, and exhorted them to submit to it, to explain to them the covenant and the promise, of which baptism was the seal, and to mention the nature and extent of it ; and to show that it reached their children as well as themselves, and included them as much as their parents, as did the covenant with Abraham and their fathers, the covenant of *circumcision*.

The Pedobaptists have generally understood these words in the sense which has now been given, and considered them as a strong and conclusive argument for the baptism of the children of believers, as included in the covenant of which baptism is the seal, and interested in the promise ; though they have not agreed in the meaning and extent of the promise made to the children of believing parents ; nor in explaining the condition on which the promise is made. It is for them now to consider and judge, whether the true meaning of these words has not been stated above, according to the scripture ; and whether any other consistent meaning in favour of infant baptism, and agreeable to the passages of scripture which have been considered under this head, can be thought of, and supported.

The following words of Solomon, connect the wise, faithful, and pious education of children, with their piety and salvation ; and amount to a promise, that the latter shall be the consequence of the former. “ Train up a

child in the way he should go ; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* These words assert the same thing which God says of Abraham and his children, which has been considered, “ He will command his children, and his household after him ; and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.” And they coincide with all that has been said on this point ; and serve to strengthen the evidence, that parents have a promise in the covenant of grace, that upon their faithfulness in keeping covenant, as it respects their children, they shall go in the way to heaven.

What he says elsewhere, concerning the education of children, may be considered in the same light. “ Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child ; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. Withhold not correction from the child : For if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest : Yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.”† *Correcting a child, the rod of correction, and beating him with a rod*, intends the whole of a wise and faithful education of children, as a proper government of them is an essential part of such education, and cannot be properly and thoroughly, and with success, maintained and practised, where the other parts of education are neglected. To such proper and wise government, and the faithful, painful, religious education implied in it, are connected the wisdom, piety and salvation of the children, and repeatedly promised in those words. It will drive foolishness far from them. Consequently they will be wise, which implies true piety. They shall not die, but their souls shall be delivered from hell : Therefore shall be saved. They shall give rest and delight to the pious parent, which they cannot do, unless they are wise and holy. There

* Prov. xxii. 6.

† Prov. xxii. 15. xxiii. 13, 14. xxix. 17.

There are many other passages of scripture which coincide with the idea of the covenant of grace, which has been now given ; and serve to strengthen the evidence which has already been produced from the scripture, that it contains promises of saving good to the children of those who keep covenant, as it respects their offspring. Several of these have been mentioned, which contain declarations and promises of blessings to the children of those who love God, and keep his commandments ; and that this shall take place, especially in the millennium, when parents shall in general be more faithful in keeping covenant. There are others of the same tenor, such as the following, “ I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people : All that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble : For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.”* “ He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children : That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born ; who should arise and declare them to their children ; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God ; but keep his commandments.”† In these words, it is represented, that according to the covenant and appointment of God, piety was to be handed down from parents to children, by the care and fidelity of the former, in educating and instructing the latter. The following passage has reference to the words in the decalogue, which have been considered, and confirm the meaning which has been given of them.

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* Isaiah lxi. 8, 9. lxxv. 23.

† Plac. lxxviii. 5, 6, 7.

"The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto childrens children, to such as keep his covenant, and to those who remember his commandments, to do them."*

When the prophet Malachi foretells the introduction of the gospel dispensation, and of John the Baptist, the messenger who should prepare the way before Christ, and the effect and consequence of all this, he comprehends the whole in the following words, with which the Old Testament concludes. "And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."† These words do not only express the effect of the preaching of John, while he was on the stage of life; but the nature and effect of the christian dispensation which he should introduce, so far as it should take place. This effect took place, in some degree, in the days of John, and his preaching tended to promote it: And this is the natural tendency of christianity; it had this effect in the days of the Apostles to a greater degree than in the days of John. And so far as christianity has been understood, and the true spirit of it has been imbibed, in any age and nation since that time to this day, it has tended to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers. But when true religion shall flourish, and take place universally, to a greater degree than ever it has yet done, this prediction will be accomplished in a much higher degree, and more apparently, than ever before; to which the ministry of John, and all that has taken place since, may properly be considered as an introduction; and to which those words therefore, have a principal reference; and the chief accomplishment of them, will be in that day, which is yet to come.

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* Psal. ciii. 17, 18.

† Mal. iv. 6.

By the heart of the fathers being turned unto the children, is not meant the exercise and increase of what is called natural affection; for this is found in a sufficient degree, in almost all parents, at all times; and if it were increased, it would not alter their moral character, or answer any good end. It must therefore intend the exercise of a religious, pious affection towards them, leading them to a proper and great concern for their salvation, and a zeal and engagedness to do their duty faithfully, and in all respects, as it concerns their children, and which has a tendency to promote their holiness and salvation, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord: Sensible of their covenant engagements to do this, and of the strong motives and great encouragement God has set before them, to be faithful and laborious in this, by the gracious promise he has given them.

The heart of the children is turned to their parents, when they are disposed to obey them in the Lord, and grow up in the exercise of piety and righteousness, or keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; following and imitating their parents in this, as the children of Abraham did. When they hearken to their pious fathers, saying, "My son, receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."* Then the heart of the children will be turned to the fathers.

It is to be observed here, that the turning of the heart of the children to their parents, is in consequence of the heart of the fathers being turned unto the children, as being connected with it. This is agreeable to those scriptures which have been considered, as they have been explained;

explained; shewing that there is a constituted or promised connection between parents keeping covenant, and doing the duty towards their children, which they have promised, which is expressed by their heart being turned towards them; and the piety and salvation of the children, which is necessarily implied in their heart being turned toward their parents, hearkening to them, and obeying them in the Lord, in all things.

It is here represented, that this shall take place under the gospel dispensation, which John the Baptist should introduce, in a higher degree than it had done before; and christianity, and true religion, should be propagated in this way, and handed down from parents to children; and that this shall take place, especially in the millennium, of which time the prophet speaks particularly, in the preceding part of this chapter; when christianity shall have its proper and genuine effect, to a much greater degree, than ever before; and which will, therefore, be, in the highest sense, the gospel day, the day of salvation; when the heart of fathers will be turned unto their children, in the sense above explained, to a vastly higher degree than they ever were before; and consequently the heart of children will be turned to their fathers, more universally, in the high exercise of piety, from their youth. And in this view, these words coincide with those scriptures which have been mentioned, where God promises that he will then circumcise the heart of parents and of their children, to love the Lord, &c. That he will pour his spirit upon the seed of his people, and his blessing upon their offspring. That his church shall be established in righteousness, and all her children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of her children. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. "As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my spirit which is upon

upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth, and forever. I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: All that see them, shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them. And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*—“Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” By these words, it is represented, that the only way, according to divine constitution and appointment, to keep up true religion in the world, and transmit it down to the end of it, and so to prevent mankind becoming totally corrupt, so as to be destroyed by the curse of God, as they once were by a flood, is to turn the heart of the fathers to their children, and the heart of the children to the fathers. And that this will take place, in an eminent degree, in the millennium, by which the everlasting covenant will be maintained, and appear in its full force and operation; by which means, the curse of God on mankind, by his terrible judgments, for their wickedness, in breaking the everlasting covenant, renouncing it themselves, and with respect to their children, not training them up for God, in the ways of true piety, but for the devil,

* Deut. xxx. 6. *I*sa. xlv. 3, 4. *liv.* 13, 14. *lix.* 21. *lxi.* 8, 9. *lxv.* 23. *Jer.* xxxii. 38, 39, 40.

devil, in the ways of sin, shall have a stop put to it, and proceed no farther, as it otherwise must, and would, to the total extirpation of mankind. These words may perhaps receive some illustration by the following passage in Isaiah, which has been mentioned. "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof: Because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant; therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left."* This chapter is a prophecy of the introduction of the millennium, and of the awful judgments on mankind, and especially on corrupt, nominal christians, previous to that, by which a great part of men shall be destroyed; as a testimony of the displeasure of God with them, for their great wickedness, and not fearing God themselves, nor educating their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but the contrary; training them up in sin, and the service of satan; and thus transgressing the law, changing the ordinance of God, and breaking the everlasting covenant, which if kept, would convey true religion down from generation to generation. But all mankind shall not be destroyed, because the remaining few, compared with the whole, shall be truly pious, and their hearts shall be turned to their children, and the hearts of the children to them, and so a pious race shall be propagated and multiplied, and fill the world; "for God will then pour his spirit on them, and on their seed, and his blessing on their offspring; and they shall spring up as among grass, as willows by the water courses." This is represented in the following words, in this same chapter. "When thus it shall be, in the midst of the land, among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning of grapes, when the vintage is done. They shall

* Isai. xxiv. 5, 6.

shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea.”*

The reasonableness and importance of such a constitution and covenant between God and parents, with respect to their children; and the good ends this is suited to answer, will farther appear by the following observations; which will, at the same time serve to strengthen the evidence, that the covenant of grace does contain a promise of saving good to the children of parents, who are faithful in keeping covenant, as it regards their offspring.

1. It appears from reason and the circumstances of the case, and from fact and experience, that the good education of children is of great importance, and necessary for their good, and the good of society.

Children are very much formed in their disposition and manners by their education. If this be bad, or wholly, or in a great measure neglected; and they be not governed and instructed, and have not good examples set before them, but the contrary; the bad effects of this are generally seen in them, and they become injurious to society, rather than a benefit. God has so constituted things, that if parents be wise and faithful in educating their children, they will have more influence on them, than any others can, and this has a great tendency, to form them to a good moral character and conduct. And the parents must have the first and chief hand in teaching them, and forming their minds, and regulating their conduct; as they are under the best advantages to do this; and if it be wholly neglected by them, other means and advantages are never like to reach them, so as to do them any great good, according to the ordinary course of things. It is certain, that no instruction from any other quarter, or any means that can be used with them, can have an equal tendency to their benefit; and if
parents

parents neglect their duty to their children; other means used for their instruction and benefit, are commonly useless, and in vain to them.

It is known, from experience, that the character of children is not only often, but commonly formed for life, while they are in their minority, while they are under the care and education of their parents, or of others who are substituted in their room. And a foundation is generally laid then, if ever, for their piety and moral christian character, so far as we can judge from appearance and facts.

2. Therefore, this branch of duty, the wise and faithful education of children, is much insisted upon, and often strictly enjoined in scripture. This is frequently inculcated on the members of the church of Israel, as a very important part of their duty. "Only take heed to thy self, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thine heart all the days of thy life: *But teach them thy sons, and thy sons sons.* Gather the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, *and that they may teach them their children.* These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt *teach them diligently unto thy children,* and shall talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."* This is so important a command that it is repeated again.† "And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

It is again and again enjoined in the following words: "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children,

* Deut. iv. 9, 10. vii. 6. vi. 7. † Chap. xi. 19.

children, that they may hear, and that they may learn to fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law. And that their children which have not known them, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God.”* “Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day ; which ye shall command your children to observe, to do all the words of this law : For it is not a vain thing for you ; because it is your life.”† It was repeatedly enjoined upon parents to teach their children, the great works God had done for them, and the deliverances he had wrought for his people ; and to explain to them the meaning of the religious rites, which were instituted by God, and the commands and ordinances which he had given them.‡

God speaks of it as an excellent and important part of the character and conduct of Abraham, That he would command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.§ The Psalmist mentions the command of God to instruct and educate children, as an important article, and as necessary to transmit true knowledge and piety to posterity. “He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, *that they should make them known to their children* : That the generation to come, might know them, even the children which should be born ; who should arise *and declare them to their children*, that they might set their hope in God, &c.”||

Solomon often speaks of the importance and advantage of the faithful and wise education of children, and inculcates it as a duty. He says, “He that spareth his rod, hateth his son : But he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes. Chasten thy son while there is hope, and

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* Chap. xxxi. 12, 13.

† Chap. xxxii. 46, 47.

‡ Exod. x. 2. xii. 25, 26, 27. xiii. 14, 15. Deut. vi. 20—25.

§ Gen. xviii. 19.

|| Psal. lxxviii. 5, 6, 7.

let not thy soul spare for his crying. Train up a child in the way he should go : And when he is old, he will not depart from it. Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child ; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. Withhold not correction from a child ; for if thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. The rod and reproof give wisdom : But a child left to himself, bringeth his mother to shame. Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest : Yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.* And the nine first chapters of the Proverbs of Solomon, are designed to express the concern parents ought to have for the spiritual good of their children ; and their constant attention to them in this view, watching over them, instructing, admonishing and warning them : and through the whole exhibit the importance and necessity of the childrens hearkening and obeying their parents, in order to their good ; and the happy consequence of this to them. And the awful consequence of slighting and disobeying parents is repeatedly mentioned in that book.

This is the first command in the second table of the decalogue, " Honour thy father and thy mother." To which is annexed a promise of good : Which supposes the duty of parents to govern and instruct their children, and to exercise great and constant care in their education ; and to conduct so, as to be worthy of love, respect, and honour from their children. And an awful curse is denounced upon those children who do not obey this command, " Cursed is he that setteth light by his father or mother."† And God made a law, which if observed, did effectually prevent any disobedient children living in the congregation of Israel. For if parents had a disobedient child, they were commanded to bring him forth

* Prov. xiii. 24. xix. 18. xxii. 6, 15. xxiii. 13, 14. xxix. 15, 17.

† Deut. xxvii. 16.

forth to the elders of the city, and witness against him; and he was put to death.* This law was suited to awaken, and keep alive, the feelings of pious parents towards their children, and excite a great concern, and unremitting care and exertion, early and constantly to govern them, and keep up their authority in the wisest and best manner, suited to form them to love and obedience; and to instruct, admonish, and warn them; and educate them in the best manner which shall tend to promote their obedience, and true piety; having the awful event constantly in view, which might be the consequence of their neglect, and would certainly take place, if their children should grow up ungoverned and disobedient.

And this law had a mighty tendency to impress the hearts of children with a sense of the evil consequence to them, of disobedience to their parents; and to guard them against the least degree of a disposition to disregard and slight them; and to excite them to a constant care, and resolution to attend to the instructions, and admonitions of their parents, and strictly obey all their exhortations and commands. In what an important and interesting light does this law, and the other directions and precepts which have been mentioned under this head, set the wise and faithful education of children; and their obedience to the instructions and authority of their parents! It is suited powerfully to turn the heart of the fathers to the children; and the heart of children to the fathers.

And under the gospel dispensation, the faithful and pious education of children, and their obedience to parents in all things, are strictly enjoined. The command is, "Children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Children obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. And ye fathers, provoke

* Deut. xxi. 18, 19, 20, 21.

provoke not your children to wrath: But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* And no man who had a family could be an officer in the church unless he was "One that ruled well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity," even faithful or believing children.†

3. Since the faithful, prudent, and religious education of children, is of such vast importance, and so necessary for their good, and the good of the church, according to the natural course of things, which God has constituted; and since this is so strictly enjoined upon the people of God, and so much inculcated in divine revelation; it may hence be inferred, that God has set before parents the strongest motives, and the greatest encouragements to be faithful and laborious in their duty to their children, and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and which will have the greatest tendency to animate them to engagedness and perseverance in this difficult work, in which they will meet with much opposition, and many discouragements, from themselves, the world, satan, and their children. This may be reasonably expected, especially in the covenant of *grace*, or that *gracious* covenant which God makes with believers, as it respects their children, and their duty to them: For the greater the blessings are, which are promised to their offspring; and the greater the motives and encouragements are to do the duty enjoined, or perform the condition on which the blessings are suspended, the more grace is contained and exhibited in the covenant.

4. A promise that the children shall be blessed with spiritual blessings and salvation, on the parents faithfulness to them, and bringing them up for God, affords the strongest motive, and gives the greatest encouragement to pious parents, to be faithful and perform the condition of the covenant, as it respects their children, that can be thought

* Eph. vi. 1, 4. Col. iii. 20.

† 1 Tim. iii. 4. Tit. i. 6.

thought of as possible ; and renders the covenant, in this respect, in the highest degree a covenant of grace.

If pious parents felt as they ought, and had exercises which might be reasonably expected towards their children, their greatest concern would be that they may be sanctified and saved. This they would desire for them unspeakably above all other things. To have them live and die in sin, is to such parents, infinitely dreadful. They had much rather have no offspring, than to bring forth children for such a death, even eternal destruction. If their children may not be holy and saved, they have nothing to ask or desire for them ; their existence, and all they can have and enjoy, is, on the whole, worse than nothing ; infinitely worse ! Therefore, that they may be holy and saved, is the great object of their desires and prayers. And what can be more agreeable and pleasing to such parents, than for God to take their children into covenant with them, and to say, " If you will be faithful to your children, and treat them as becomes pious parents, and bring them up for me, I will be their God, and they shall be holy and happy forever : Therefore, let all your concern for the good and salvation of your children, excite and animate you to proper exercises and faithfulness, with respect to them ; for they are committed to you, to bring them up for me ; and if you will do this faithfully, they shall be blessed, and saved ?" What christian parent is there, whose views and feelings are in any good measure answerable to his character, who would not admire the condescension and grace of such a promise ; and rejoice to enter into such a covenant, and promise, through Christ's strengthening him to perform the condition of the covenant, and give up his children to Christ, and have the seal of the covenant put upon them ?

And upon this ground, the children of believers are holy, and numbered among the saints and the saved.

Holiness and salvation are secured to them, by divine promise, on condition, the parents are faithful in the covenant, which they solemnly profess and engage to be. The church, relying on their profession and engagements, that they will be faithful and keep the covenant, as it respects their children, consider them, receive and look upon them, as holy, and those who shall be saved; so they are as visibly holy, or as really holy in their view, as their parents are.

BUT here several questions, which may be suggested, from what has been said, on this point, must be answered.

QUESTION I. Is not this doctrine, that the covenant of grace contains a promise of the holiness and salvation of the children of parents, who are faithful in their duty to them, and in educating them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, contrary to known fact and experience, in that so many children of pious parents, appear as destitute of holiness as other children, and are of a contrary character, when they are capable of discovering their disposition by their conduct; and many of them appear to live and die so: And there are many known instances of children, whose parents appear to be eminently pious, and careful to educate their children well, who yet appear to have no piety, but are openly and notoriously vicious, and appear to live and die so? And how can all the children of professors of religion, who enter into covenant with God, be considered, as really holy, or how can it be expected that they will grow up pious children, and be saved, when this does not appear to be true in fact, in so many instances; but the contrary?

ANSWER 1st. It does appear from fact, that the education of children, if in any good measure practised,
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and so far as it has taken place, has a great influence on children in general ; and many of them who have had any degree of a pious education, do themselves become professors of religion, and appear to be holy. How much greater and more universal might be the good effect of such education, if parents were more faithful and thorough in this branch of their duty, than they generally are, even as diligent and faithful, as might reasonably be expected, considering the importance of the case, and the motives and encouragements they have ?

This leads to

ANSWER 2d. Parents who have been professors of religion, and have entered into covenant with God, have been, in general, grossly negligent of their duty to their children, and have lived in the constant violation of the covenant, as it respects their children. This will appear to every one, who will consider what is implied in bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, as it has been briefly stated above ; and judge what might reasonably be required and expected of parents, in this important and interesting matter : And at the same time, will, in the light of this, observe how the children, even of the professors of religion, are in general educated. He will be sensible there is but little wise and prudent government, steadily and perseveringly maintained from the early days, in which children are capable of discipline and government, until they cease to be minors : And that much of the contrary, generally takes place, which is suited to weaken all parental authority, and tends to ruin the children. He will find few instances, if any, of that careful, wise and constant instruction, assiduously endeavouring to instil into their young minds, the principles of true knowledge and wisdom, and watching over them, to guard them from wrong notions, errors and delusions, in things of religion,

which are most reasonable and important, and which we find so strictly enjoined in the Bible. And what bad examples, of evil speaking, and backbiting, of vain, trifling conversation ; of passion ; of covetousness, and worldliness ; of great indifference, and neglects respecting the exercises and practice of piety, in reading and studying the Bible, and the worship of God, are to be found among professors in general, which have a great and destructive influence on the minds of children ? And how few are there who are not greatly deficient in the example they set before their children, which could not take place, were they not grossly negligent in their duty to them, and had they a reasonable and proper concern for their good ? How little is done or said by parents, in general, which is suited to excite and maintain a proper and faithful education of children, in all the parts of it ? How little do they appear to regard or understand their covenant engagements, or the nature of the covenant into which they have entered, and the encouragements and promises made to faithfulness in keeping covenant ; and the infinite importance of this to their children ? And the churches take no care in this matter, to watch over one another, with respect to the education of their children ; and to warn and exhort, and assist each other to do their duty in this respect ; which is certainly a great neglect.

When these things are properly considered, the general want of piety, and the too common irreligion and vice, which are found among the children of professors of religion, may be accounted for, consistent with their being a promise in the covenant of grace, that the children of parents who faithfully perform the duties of the covenant towards them, shall be holy, and share in the great salvation ; and does not afford the least shadow of an argument that there is no such promise.

True

True religion has generally been in so low a degree in the church, and still is, and there have been so many members of it wholly strangers to a life of godliness, not being true believers, that the life and power of christianity has not had the proper influence and been acted out by professors in general, as it ought to be, and might be reasonably expected.

Most real christians have been, and now are, shamefully deficient, as to the strength and constancy of their religious exercises, and in every branch of duty; and their discerning and knowledge in the doctrines and duties of christianity, has been in so small a degree, that when, considering the time and advantages they have had, they ought to be teachers, especially of their children, they in general, need themselves to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. And the nature and extent of the covenant of grace, as it respects the children of believers; and the design and meaning of the institution of baptism of such children, and what is implied in it, have not been generally understood: And the duty which parents engage to do towards their children, has been greatly overlooked and disregarded, even in theory, as well as practice: And the promise of the success of faithfulness in this duty, in the holiness and salvation of their children, has not been believed by the most, and they are now disposed to oppose this sentiment; and so cannot feel the motives and great encouragement this affords, and sets before parents, to care and faithfulness in this branch of duty; nor the vast importance of it, to them and their children.

It is therefore no matter of wonder, that the children of professors in general, and of really pious parents, have not received the blessings of the covenant of grace, as the duties of the covenant have been so grossly neglected by almost all; and they have not so much as believed

that there is any such covenant between God and themselves, respecting their children. This is what might be reasonably expected, as things have gone, and still take place, with regard to children, in the great neglect of that duty, to which the promise of success is made.— Which branch of duty has doubtless been more neglected by real christian parents, than other branches of christianity; not only because it has been less understood, and inculcated, and the motives and encouragement to faithfulness in it, have been kept out of sight, or at most, been less in view: But because there are peculiar difficulties and temptations in the way of a wise and faithful discharge of this duty; and satan, who knows how much depends upon the parents faithfulness, and what advantages he gains, against children, and the church, and the interest of religion in general, by the gross neglect of this branch of duty, exerts all his cunning and power, and improves every advantage he has, to lay snares and stumbling blocks in the way of their duty; and in magnifying the difficulties and discouragements, to deter them from it; offering every temptation he can, to neglect it, and to do that which has a contrary, and most fatal tendency, even to ruin their children. Nor is there any certainty that this influence of the devil will cease, or that the power of godliness will so take place in general, as to lead parents to be faithful in their duty to their children; and to keep covenant, so that the blessings of it shall descend from father to son, through many generations, until satan shall be bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up there a thousand years, that he may deceive men no more, during all that time: And when christianity shall have its proper and full effect, by the effusions of the Holy Spirit, in greater degrees than before; forming christians to eminent degrees of holiness, and true zeal and engagedness to do their duty in all the branches

branches of it ; especially that which they owe to their children, which is now so much and so generally neglected. Then the heart of the fathers will be turned to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, as they never were before ; and the covenant of grace, which contains promises to parents and their children, will take place in the full extent of it, and the happy consequences of it be seen and enjoyed.

Such a time, is abundantly spoken of and predicted in the scripture. And all that takes place previous to that day, is preparatory to it. That is the time of salvation, in the highest sense, when the doctrines and institutions of the gospel will be better understood, than ever before, and have their proper and full effect. The Bible itself has principal reference to that time, and will be then understood, prized and improved more and better, than ever before. The institutions and ordinances of Christ, have been and now are, greatly misunderstood, perverted and abused, by most christian churches, and professors of religion, and great irregularities take place in attendance on them. The time preceding the millennium, may be compared to the winter, when things appear in great disorder and confusion, and the influences of the sun are weak and small, and have little effect ; but all is preparatory to the spring and summer, when the sun and rain will have their proper effect, in producing the fruits of the earth.

These observations are made to show, that we cannot judge of the good effect, of the proper, pious, and faithful education of children, and of the extent of the promises of the covenant of grace, and of the design and meaning of the baptism of the children of believers, by what has already taken place in the christian church : But we must learn this from the Bible ; and not expect that the proper and happy effect of this institution will take place

in any great degree, until the spirit and power of christianity shall be more felt, and exerted in practice, which will introduce the millennium. Then parents, with their hearts full of love to Christ, and in a sense of the infinite importance of the salvation of their children, and ardently desiring to be the happy instruments of it, will give them up to Christ in baptism, rejoicing in this seal of the divine promise to bless them, on their acting a consistent and faithful part towards them; and with a heart, admiring the grace of God in this covenant, and strongly desirous and disposed to be faithful, they will lay hold of the covenant; and make it their great concern, and an important branch of their duty, to bring up their children for Christ. Then the happy effect of this will be seen in the early piety of the children, who will grow up in the fear of God, and walk in his ways, to the unspeakable satisfaction and joy of the parents, and the comfort and edification of the church. Then, when a large congregation of christians shall be assembled for public worship, all possessed with a realizing belief and sense of the truth of the gospel, and the great salvation, and their hearts glowing with fervent love to Christ, and to each other, what pleasure and joy will it spread over such an assembly, when children are brought by their parents, and publicly dedicated to Christ in baptism; solemnly, and with all their hearts engaging to bring them up for him, and laying hold of the gracious promise of the covenant to their children: All will consider these children, as heirs of the blessings of the covenant, and numbered among the saved, confident that the parents will faithfully keep covenant with God; and having seen the general happy effect of this, they will join in all the solemnities of this transaction, with great pleasure, fervency, and joy, and every one be edified, and animated to the duty of his station, and go away with enlarged

larged views of the grace of the gospel, and the condescension and love of Christ.

ANSWER 3d. Though some of the children of parents who appear eminently pious, and to take much pains in the education of their children, do, when they come to adult age, renounce all religious duty, and live in open vice; yet this affords no real evidence, that the doctrine to which this fact is alleged as an objection, is not true; for,

1. We cannot be certain that those who appear to be christians, and to excel many others, are really such. They may deceive others, and be themselves deceived, and never truly and with their heart, devote their children to God. The first, in appearance and profession, may be last, and wholly destitute of true holiness. No argument can be justly formed from such instances, unless there were a certainty that the parents are real christians, and faithful in keeping covenant with God.

2. Parents who are real christians, and excel in some respects in pious zeal, and in the practise of many of the duties of christianity, may be very deficient and unfaithful in their duty to their children. They may be guilty of neglecting that which is important and essential in the good education of children, in some instances at least, and of doing or saying that, which tends to hurt and ruin their children, in some particular instances, and on some occasions, which may be the means of giving an evil bias to their minds, and issue in their abandoning themselves to vice. And this may be the case with regard to one particular child, while they are more wise and faithful in their treatment and education of their other children. And such instances of neglect or wrong conduct, toward some or all of their children, may so displease God, as to give up the children to sin and ruin. It has been observed,

served, that parents may keep covenant, as it respects their own persons, and yet neglect the duties of it, as it respects their children. This is so difficult a part of duty, and satan is so watchful, and exerts all his policy and power to prevent parents doing it, and to promote that which is contrary to it; and the proper education of children is so little understood, and the importance of it not much attended to and realized; and the encouragement and promise God has given, to the faithful discharge of this duty, is so generally not believed, or overlooked, that it may be reasonably supposed, that some parents who are eminently pious, and devoted to the duties of religion in other respects, may so fail of their duty to their children, in some important part of their education, as shall tend to bring a curse on them, rather than a blessing.*

And it is left to the reader to consider, whether it be not more reasonable, and for the honour of God and religion, when such instances of the impiety of the children of parents who appear eminently godly, take place, to impute it to the unfaithfulness of the parents in this branch of their duty, in some very important and capital instance, rather than to curtail the covenant of grace, and doubt of the promise of saving blessings to the children of parents who are faithful in keeping covenant; or of the faithfulness of God to fulfil his promise, whenever the condition is in some good measure performed.

ANSWER

* When all this is well considered, it will not appear incredible, or unaccountable, that pious parents, and even those who may appear eminently so, in many respects, may be greatly deficient and unfaithful in their duty to their children; and much more so, than in any other branch of their duty, notwithstanding the natural affection they have to them, and the desire they must be supposed to have of their salvation. And he who contemplates and keeps in view, the nature and extent of this duty, and carefully observes the general conduct of those parents, whose piety is not questioned, as it respects their children, will find it confirmed by lamentable and too notorious fact. On what ground then can it be doubted?

ANSWER 4th. Though parents who have given up their children to Christ in baptism, and promised to bring them up for him, have in so many instances neglected their duty, and come so far short in the education of their children, that they have generally grown up without any appearance of piety; this is not a sufficient reason to lay aside the institution of Christ, and practice it no more. We are to hope that professors of religion, will in future be more faithful. The church has no right to reject those who offer their children in baptism, and profess and promise to devote them to Christ, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and refuse to receive their children, as holy and belonging to Christ, because so many children of professors who have been thus devoted, and received, have discovered, when they became adult, that they were not truly pious, and have refused to obey Christ. This should rather excite christians to watch over each other, and exhort one another daily, respecting their duty to their children; and awaken the church to the practice of a more strict and thorough discipline; and to take more care of the children of the church, those lambs of the flock, as soon as they are capable of public admonition and discipline.

There are too many instances of persons who are received into the church, in adult years, as holy and real christians, who afterwards fall from their christian character and violate the laws of Christ, and are rejected by the church, or ought to be, as those who have disappointed their hopes and expectations: Yet such instances, however numerous, cannot be justly alleged as a reason why they should receive no more, upon their profession and engagements to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, because they have been deceived in others, who have fallen from their christian profession. This ought to

to excite the church to greater care in receiving persons as real christians; and to a more strict and constant watchfulness over those they do receive, and the use of all proper means to prevent their apostasy, and all unchristian conduct, and to induce them to obey Christ in all things.

QUESTION II. IF there were such a promise of saving blessings to children, on a condition to be performed by the parents, and which they engage, is it not reasonable to suppose this condition would be specified, and so particularly stated and described, that parents might distinctly know what it is, and when they come up to it, or fall short of it; and would not this be necessary, in order to afford any proper encouragement and satisfaction to parents? The covenant of grace contains promises of salvation to faith, repentance, or love to God; and these are defined, and the nature and concomitants of them particularly described; and the promise is made not only to those who exercise these graces in a particular high degree; but to the lowest possible degree of these; so that if persons know they have any thing of this nature, they may from that be certain of salvation. But in the case before us, no such thing is supposed, or can be true; but the matter is left so vague and uncertain, that none can know, whether he has come up to the condition to which the promise is made, or not, or how far he is from it. Is not this a strong and unanswerable objection to the doctrine now advanced?

ANSWER 1st. All will grant, that there are certain exercises of heart, a constant course and degree of them, and of external duties, which are the proper expression of those exercises of heart, which parents owe to their children, and which may reasonably be expected of pious parents, and must take place, in order to their acting

a consistent part, and answerable to the christian character, and to such a relation. And they who practise infant baptism, consider parents as professing a desire and willingness to perform this duty ; and promising to be faithful in doing it : That they profess to give up their children to Christ, desiring for them, above all other things, that they may be saved ; and promise to bring them up for Christ, and act a faithful part to them, agreeable to such dedication, and such desires.

Now, if any one will tell what is implied in this engagement and duty, which the parent must perform, in order to fulfil his promise, and perseveringly conduct agreeable to this transaction ; and state it with such exactness, that the parent may know when he has come fully up to it, or how far he has been deficient ; then it will be easy to tell precisely what is the condition on the parents part, to which the promise of saving blessings to his children is made, so that the parent may know whether he has performed it or not, and how far he has fallen short of it ; for he has already done it, in shewing what is the duty promised by the parent, and justly expected of him.

But if this cannot be done, it is as much of an objection to there being any duty promised or required of the parent, in order to his acting a faithful and consistent part towards his child, as that which has been mentioned in the question under consideration, to there being a promise of saving blessings to children, on a condition which is required, and yet not precisely stated. If duty may be required of parents towards their children, which they may and ought to promise to perform, without pointing out the precise degree of duty, or the particular manner and circumstances in which it is to be done ; then this same duty, thus required and promised, may be made the condition of saving blessings to the children.

Surely,

Surely, if it may be required and promised, it may be required and promised as a condition, to which God, who requires it, promises blessings to the children.

ANSWER 2d. The condition of the promise is expressed as particularly, and as plain as the nature of the case will admit ; and so as to be sufficiently intelligible to an honest, pious mind. The whole is contained and expressed in the following sentence and injunction, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath ; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The whole Bible is suited to explain this sentence, and show what is the meaning of it, and the duty implied in it, so that he who is willing to know and do his duty, in this branch of it, and comply with this injunction, and will properly attend to the matter, will sufficiently understand the meaning of it, and be at no undesirable uncertainty concerning it.

It is certain, that in these words a duty is enjoined on parents, or a course of exercises, exertions and conduct, to such a degree, and with such constancy, care and faithfulness, as to *educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. And all will grant that this command is sufficiently plain, and does clearly point out the duty, so that parents may know what it is, and comply with it ; and that it is stated as precisely as the nature of the case and kind of the duty will admit. And must it not then, for the same reason be granted, that it is as sufficiently plain to be the condition of a promise ; and that, as such, it is as fully and clearly expressed, as the nature of the case requires, or will admit ?

ANSWER 3d. The condition, or the kind and measure of the duty to which this promise is made, is as precisely and fully stated in the scripture, as is desirable, and so as to be suited to answer the end designed by it.

It is enough for the parents to know, that it is a covenant of GRACE, into which God enters with them, and that the condition of the promise of saving blessings to their children, is as low as can be, consistent with answering the ends of it ; and that Christ, who is infinitely gracious, and knows what is right, and has stated the condition, will not be rigorous, but make all proper and possible allowances in their favour ; even all that they can reasonably desire ; for *grace* will look on their exercises and conduct in the most favourable light. They have therefore all possible encouragement, to exert themselves constantly, and strain every nerve in doing their duty to their children, that they may be faithful, and come up to the condition ; knowing that no advantage will be taken of them, for their many imperfections and defects, which they constantly confess and lament, if they be laborious and faithful, in any good degree answerable to the importance of the case, and the motives and encouragements which are set before them. And their not knowing whether they have come up to that degree of exercise, care and faithfulness, which is the condition of the promise, and fear that they have not, will be a constant spur to them, to greater care, watchfulness and diligence, that, if by any means, they may obtain the promised blessing to their children. And the greater and more constant their care and exertions are, and the more strongly they find their hearts turned unto their children, in the practice of parental duty toward them, the more comfort they will have, in the hope, and confidence, that the heart of their children will be turned to them, and that God will bless, and save them ; while they are still constantly and with importunity looking to him for grace and assistance to do their duty to their children, and that they may be blessed indeed.

QUESTION III. Is not this a *legal scheme*? Salvation, according to this, is given to children for the good works of the parents; or the children are saved by the obedience and good, and meritorious deeds of the parents. Is not this directly contrary to salvation by free grace!

ANSWER 1st. It is certain from scripture, that God has given blessings to children out of regard to the obedience and faithfulness of their parents and ancestors.—There are many instances of this in scripture, which the attentive readers of it, must have observed. Abraham, Caleb, and David, are instances of it. Yet these blessings were as much of free grace, as if they had not been given in this way.

ANSWER 2d. Many and great blessings both in this world, and in heaven, are promised and given to men as a reward of their obedience: And yet these blessings and rewards are as much the fruit of free grace, as they could be, if given in any other way; because they are really no more *deserving* of the blessings and rewards they receive, than if they had not obeyed.

ANSWER 3d. The obedience and faithfulness of the parents in keeping covenant, does not render their children more deserving of blessings, than if they had not obeyed. Holiness and salvation come to the children, as much a free gift, and there is as much free grace in this gift to them, as if it did not come to them in this way, in connection with the obedience of the parents. And the parents obedience has not the least merit or desert of such blessings. Therefore, the promise made to them, of saving blessings to their children, on condition of their obedience, is a *gracious* promise, wholly the fruit and expression of free, undeserved grace; as much as if
their

their obedience were not the condition. And the parents depend on free, sovereign grace, for a heart and assistance to perform the condition. So that it is all of free grace, from beginning to end; from the foundation, to the topstone. The covenant of grace is therefore hereby enlarged, and contains more grace, by the promise of saving mercy to the children of those who keep the covenant, than if it contained no such promise. The parents, who have been in this way, the instruments of bringing salvation to their children, will forever admire and adore that infinite free grace, which so constituted the covenant of grace, as to include their children with them, and given them grace to be faithful in the covenant, and perform the condition on which the promise of salvation to their children was made, and by which it has been conveyed to them. The children who are saved in this way, will forever celebrate and adore that sovereign grace of God, exercised towards them in constituting such a gracious covenant, and ordering that they should be born of such pious parents, by whom they were brought into covenant, and dedicated to God; and in giving their parents a heart to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and in this way giving them holiness and salvation. This is therefore, so far from being inconsistent with salvation by free, sovereign grace, that it serves to display it; and instead of curtailing, it enlarges the covenant of grace.

QUESTION IV. How are the children who are thus in covenant, and holy, in the sense explained, to be treated by the church?

ANSWER. Before they come to years of understanding, so as to be capable of acting in matters of religion for themselves, they are not to be admitted to receive the Lord's supper, because they are incapable of receiving

ing any benefit by it, or of attending upon it in the manner, and for the ends prescribed by Christ, viz. to do it in remembrance of him. But when they shall be able to act for themselves, the church of which they are members, is to expect and require that they conduct as pious christians, and profess and appear to understand the doctrines and duties of christianity, and to be willing to obey Christ, in keeping all his commandments, and attending on all his institutions, to which they are to be admitted, and treated in all respects as the disciples of Christ. But if they be immoral, or neglect the duties of christianity, and refuse or neglect to make a christian profession, and attend upon the Lord's supper, the church is to use proper means to reclaim them, and bring them to their duty ; and if they still neglect and refuse to hear the church, and comply with their duty, they are to be rejected and cast out of the church, and treated in all respects as any adult persons are to be treated, who have been members of the church, and are rejected for disobedience to the laws of Christ.

As soon as the children are capable of being taught, they are to be instructed and told, what their standing is, what has been done for them ; what will be expected and required of them, when they come to act for themselves ; that if they do not then say " I am the Lord's," and subscribe with their hand to the Lord, and comply with all the institutions of Christ, they will fall under the censure of the church, and be cast out, as unworthy of the station into which they were brought by their parents. And this is constantly to be held up to their view, and urged upon them.

It has been observed, that if the laws given by Moses to the congregation of Israel, were strictly observed, no child who was disobedient to his parents, and refused to serve the Lord, could be suffered to live among them ;
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for all such were to be put to death : And that this law was suited to have a constant and mighty influence on parents, to awaken and excite them to the greatest care, prudence and faithfulness in educating their children ; and on the minds of children, from their early days, to lead them to hearken to their parents, and obey them, and to make it their great concern to fear and serve the Lord.

The christian institution, now under consideration, is suited to answer the same end, and to have a salutary effect on the minds, both of parents and their children. Though under the milder dispensation of the gospel, no one is to be put to death for rejecting Christ and the gospel, even though he were before this, a visible member of the christian church ; yet he is to be cut off, and cast out of the visible kingdom of Christ. And every child in the church, who grows up in disobedience to Christ, and in this most important concern will not obey his parents, is thus to be rejected and cut off, after all proper means are used by his parents and the church to reclaim him, and bring him to his duty. Such an event will be viewed by christian parents as worse than death, or only to have a child taken out of the world by death ; and is suited to be a constant, strong motive to concern, prayer and fidelity respecting their children, and their education : And it tends to have an equally desirable effect on the minds of children ; and must greatly impress the hearts of those who are in any degree considerate and serious.

QUESTION V. ACCORDING to this plan, if children grow up and continue in a state of sin, and a course of disobedience to Christ, it must be owing to the parents neglect, and breach of covenant ; must they not therefore be censured and excommunicated by the church, as well as their children, as covenant breakers ?

ANSWER. This question must be answered in the negative, for the following reasons :

1. Though it be evident, that parents have not done their duty to those of their children, who grow up and continue in disobedience to Christ, and refuse to walk in the way in which they should go ; yet if no course of actions, nor any particular overt act, contrary to their duty ; nor any gross, known and designed neglect of their duty to their children, can be proved, or alleged against them, there can be no ground of public censure.

2. Though it could be proved, and were known, that they had been guilty of many mistakes, much imprudence, and great neglects, in the education of their children, and were far from doing their duty, and complying with all that is implied in bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; and so had broken the covenant between God and them, with respect to their duty to their children ; yet this may be consistent with their being true believers, or real christians ; and therefore, cannot be a sufficient ground of censuring them, and casting them out of the church ; for nothing can be the proper ground of such censure, but those overt acts, or that neglect of duty, which if persisted in, is inconsistent with a person's being a real christian. It has been observed, that a person may be a true believer, and be intitled to the blessings of the covenant of grace, as to his own person, and yet not perform the condition of the covenant, as it respects his children : Therefore, though the latter may be proved, this is no evidence against him, with respect to the former ; consequently is not a ground of rejecting him as no christian.

QUESTION VI. IT is a known truth, and often mentioned, that parents cannot give or convey grace to their children, by any thing they can do. Is not the doctrine

doctrine now advanced, which teaches that the holiness and salvation of children, is the certain consequence of their parents doing their duty to them, contrary to this truth?

ANSWER. It is true, that holiness is wrought in the heart, by the power and energy of the holy spirit, and cannot be communicated to children by any means or endeavours used by parents; but is wholly effected by divine influences. In this view and sense, parents do not convey grace to their children; this is wholly out of their power: It is the work of God. But it does not follow from this, that God has not so constituted the covenant of grace, that holiness shall be communicated by him to the children, in consequence of the faithful, commanded endeavours of their parents, so that, in this sense and by virtue of such a constitution, they do, by their faithful endeavours, convey saving blessings to their children.

In this way, they give existence to their children.—God produces their existence by his own almighty energy; but by the constitution he has established, they receive their existence from their parents, or by their means. By an established constitution, parents convey moral depravity to their children. And if God has been pleased to make a constitution, and appoint a way, in his covenant of grace with man, by which pious parents may convey, and communicate moral rectitude or holiness to their children, they by using the appointed means, do it as really and effectually, as they communicate existence to them. In this sense therefore, they may convey and give holiness and salvation to their children.

This is a maxim often mentioned by parents, when the faithful education of their children is brought into view,

and urged, that parents cannot give grace to their children, however faithful they are in their education. This is not true, in the sense now mentioned, if the covenant of grace contains a promise that their children shall be holy, if they will use all proper and commanded endeavours to this end, by which there is a constituted connection between such means, and the end. And whether this has not been proved from scripture, the reader will judge, when he has considered what has now been offered on this point. There is reason to fear, and even to believe, that the above maxim is too often mentioned by parents, in order to exculpate and excuse themselves from fault, when their children grow up ungoverned, ignorant and vicious. In this view, it is desirable it should be laid aside.

QUESTION VII. If this be a doctrine plainly taught in scripture, and explains and points out the meaning, design and importance of the baptism of the children of believers, why has it not been understood and believed in all ages in the christian church ; but remained in the dark, and unknown till this time ?

ANSWER 1st. It was taught by Christ and his Apostles, as they said things which do necessarily imply it, as has been shown : And it was therefore doubtless understood and believed in the churches constituted by the Apostles ; which, with other doctrines and practices enjoined by them, was soon corrupted, misunderstood and in a great measure lost in darkness and error. And that this was an apostolic institution, may be argued from the opinion which was handed down in the christian church, that baptized infants, were regenerated ; and hence their baptism was called regeneration, which appears by the writings of those who lived in the second century

century of the christian church, and since. Though the true reason of baptized children being considered and called holy, viz. their being the children of parents who dedicated them to God, and had engaged to bring them up for God, on which condition they were to be holy and saved, according to the divine promise, was, soon after the days of the Apostles, too generally overlooked and misunderstood ; yet the doctrine, that such children were to be considered to be regenerated and holy, was still taught and believed ; and has been embraced by many, even to this day. But instead of understanding the true ground of this, and giving a rational and scriptural account of it, the most of them have either given no reason for it, or attributed it, not to what the parents had done, or should do for them, and the promise made to them in the covenant of grace, upon their faithfulness ; but to the efficacy of the ordinance of baptism itself ; and thought that the bare administration of baptism would sanctify and save them, without regard to any condition to be performed by their parents, or others.

ANSWER 2d. This doctrine has been expressly asserted by writers of this and the last centuries :* And many divines, if not most, who have written in favour of
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* “ Baptism seals our introduction and initiation into the visible church and body of Christ, and our adoption to the heavenly inheritance.”—— Calvin. Epist. 185.

Dr. Thomas Goodwin, in his discourse on 1 Cor. vii. 14.—*Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy*, says, “ The meaning is this, that whereas unbelievers children are, in the account of the gospel, and of God himself, under the gospel, pronounced unclean (that is, as remaining in the state in which they were born, viz. of sin and uncleanness)—On the contrary (saith he) *your children* (although born in sin, as others) are yet, by God’s true sentence of them, in his word and revealed will, proclaimed *holy* ; and so are to be judged of by us, as truly regenerate and born again. He means therefore, evangelical holiness : That though they be born in sin, as others

infant baptism, have said that which really implies this doctrine, while they assert that the children of believers are received into covenant with their parents, and have a visible title to the promise of the covenant, which is, that God will be a God to them, or their God; and therefore are *federally holy*. Which implies the whole that has been now advanced on this point, if these words be taken

others are, yet they are in part sanctified, or regenerate and made holy in state, and so are not in a state of sin, but of evangelical holiness.

For the *terminus*, or object of our thoughts, it is *real holiness*; that is, which we are to think real and true. Some divines have said, that because the church was to judge any such child holy, though all were not so, that therefore it is but a reputative holiness, and an outward, sacramental holiness, that we, in our judgments are to give them. But they are mistaken; for though in the event indeed, it proves in many of them, but a reputative holiness, and only in esteem; yet still so, as the *terminus* of the church's judgment, or that holiness, which they are, in their judgments to attribute to them, is true, real holiness: But it is called reputative, only in respect to the event, in that we should attribute true holiness, to those who prove not so: Yet still the holiness we are to think in them, is no other than real to our thoughts: Even as it is in our judging those of riper years to be saints, when admitted into churches; it follows, not that it is a mere outward holiness, that is to be the *terminus* of our thoughts, or that which we are to content ourselves to find in them, or think of them: But that they are truly and really holy; though in the event it proves no other, in many, than an outward, titular holiness; yet the holiness we pitch upon, and aim at, and judge of, and embrace men for, is a holiness, to our judgments real, though we be often mistaken."—Dr. Goodwin's Works, second volume. Of Election, page 406, 422.

The Assembly of Divines, at Westminster, in the Shorter Catechism, composed by them, say, "Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the blessings of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's." And in the next sentence say, "The infants of such as are members of the visible church, are to be baptized." This catechism is received by the church of Scotland, and by all, or most of the presbyterian and congregational churches in England, Ireland, and America; and taught to their children. If baptism signifies and seals, what it is here said to do; then infants, when they are baptized, are visibly, or in the view of the church, ingrafted into Christ, and partakers of the blessings of the covenant of grace; which is the same with being intitled to holiness and salvation, on some condition, which, if not expressed, is supposed and understood.

taken in any proper consistent sense ; or if indeed they have any real meaning. It cannot be denied indeed, that many of these same authors have passed over this point, without an explanation, or have so explained this assertion, as to leave it without any consistent sense, or nothing but words without any meaning : And have denied that to be the meaning, which is the only natural and consistent one.

ANSWER 3d. If this doctrine were wholly neglected and lost, ever since the age in which the Apostles lived, and had not been revived or thought of, till this time, or even till the millennium shall commence, this would be no argument against the truth of it, whenever, upon inquiry, it be found to be contained in the Bible.

Those doctrines and duties of christianity, which are most contrary to the selfishness, pride, worldliness, and the various natural corrupt inclinations of men, are most exposed to be soon rejected and lost, or greatly corrupted ; and though once taught and established, and continue to be contained in divine revelation, will be neglected and discarded, when the power and spirit of true religion declines. And they will not be long maintained and practised in their original purity and strictness, in christian churches, unless divine influences be granted, to form the hearts of successive generations, to discern and love the truth and practise it. This observation has been verified by fact and experience. The christian church, in general, soon became corrupt, and sunk into darkness and error, in principles and practice, after the days of the Apostles. And this declension and apostacy from the truth once delivered to the saints, became greater and more general, as the spirit of true religion vanished ; and error in doctrine, and superstition and corruption in practice encreased. There were, from
time

time to time, some degree of partial revivals of truth and religion; and particular men were raised up to investigate and declare, some of the most important truths contained in the Bible, and oppose the general corruption in christian doctrine and duty: And this took place to a remarkable degree and extent in the reformation from popery. But who will presume to say or think, that any of the different sects and denominations of christians in the protestant world, have come up to the purity in doctrine and practice, of the primitive church; or that the Bible is yet understood, in all the important branches of truth and duty, as they are there revealed? Christians in general are still in a great degree of darkness, and much of the light held up in the Bible is not received, through the inattention, prejudices and blindness of men. The scripture has not been so well and so fully understood, as it will be in the days of the millennium, when the Spirit of God shall be poured out on christians in general, in much greater degrees than it has been, by which they shall have more discerning, and be disposed to search the Bible, with a sincere and earnest desire to know the truth, and a strong disposition to receive it, and practise agreeable to it. The Bible will then be improved to much better purpose, than it had ever been before; and many important truths and duties which had in ages before, not been understood or seen, will then appear plain and easy to be understood. Then the Bible will answer the end for which it is given to men, as it never had done before, as it was chiefly designed for that day, by the proper improvement of which, the knowledge of God, and of all revealed truth, will fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

The doctrine now under consideration, may be then well understood by all, and the evidence of it appear much more strong and clear, than it can be made to do
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now, and being reduced to practice, the good effect of it will be seen, as has been observed above. This doctrine, taken in its full length and breadth, when reduced to a practice agreeable to it, is directly contrary to the natural disposition of man, and peculiarly so in many respects : And it is not expected, that however evident the truth of it is from the Bible, that it will be generally believed ; and that it will be received, and properly conformed to, and practised by many churches, if by any, in the christian world, at this day. Religion, even the true spirit of christianity, must rise much higher than it now does, in order to practise the duties implied in the baptism of infants, and many other duties which are commanded, and ought to take place among christians, and in christian churches.

QUESTION VIII. IF a right account of infant baptism has now been given, then the baptism of children of believers is an institution of vast importance, and an indispensable duty, as well as a great privilege ; and they who deny, that infant baptism is a christian institution, and refuse to practise it, are very erroneous and wicked : Ought they not therefore, to be rejected as no christians ?

ANSWER. They who believe the baptism of infants is evidently a christian institution, and think it to be as important and useful, and suited, and designed by Christ, to be of such advantage to parents and their children, and to the church, as has been represented above, must look upon those who refuse to comply with this institution, but oppose it, as in a great error, and as offending Christ, and those little ones, who being the children of believing parents, ought to be considered and received as believers in him.* But they are to be thought of,
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* See Matth. xviii. 5, 6. Luke ix. 48.

and treated, with great candour, tenderness, and christian charity : Especially since there is reason to believe, that most, if not all, who believe in the baptism of children, and practise it, are more guilty and offensive to Christ, in their treatment of this institution, than the antipedobaptists are. The pedobaptists believe infant baptism to be a divine institution, and baptize their children ; but most of them, if not all, refuse to comply with, and practise the most important and essential duties implied in the institution, which they solemnly profess and engage to do. They make use of the external rite, but treat it as a mere ceremony, because it is the custom of their denomination, or to gratify their pride, or superstition : They generally shew, that they do not heartily devote their children to Christ, by their neglect to educate them for him. In this respect, their children are not distinguished from those who are not baptized : And let them behave as they will, they are not treated as being under the care of the church, or subjects of discipline, and most, if not all the parents who bring their children to baptism, do not desire they should be censured and cast out by the church, if when they are adult they refuse to obey Christ ; but stand ready to oppose it. It is a common practice to baptize the children of those who are not visible believers, who do not obey Christ, in attending upon all his institutions, and, in many instances are in other respects immoral : And in those churches, where no children are baptized, but of parents who make a profession of religion, and are members of the church, the baptism of children is generally treated as a mere ceremony : When that is performed, no more is done for the children by the parents, or the church, than is done for those who are not baptized. How short do they come of the duty which is reasonable and important, and solemnly engaged by the parents,

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and the church, if the above representation of this duty be in any measure just ! How greatly is this institution abused and perverted even to bad purposes, by most of the pedobaptists ! The error and sin of the antipedobaptists, consists in their not believing infant baptism to be an institution of Christ, and therefore rejecting it, as a mere human invention. Theirs is a sin of ignorance. Their ignorance and unbelief are criminal ; but who are the greatest criminals in their treatment of this institution, it is easy to determine.

The words of Christ to them, who brought to him a woman guilty of adultery, and said Moses commanded such to be stoned, are applicable to this case. " He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." Too many of the pedobaptists, have treated those who deny infant baptism, with unreasonable censoriousness and severity ; especially since they themselves have been so faulty in this very matter ; and have denied or neglected, in principle and practice, the most useful, important, and essential part of this institution. To such, may be applied the words of the Prophet Obed, to the host of Israel, with a little variation. " Ye have condemned and censured your brethren, with a severity and rage that reacheth up to heaven. But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God ?"*

THIS subject will be concluded by observing, that what has been offered from the scripture, to prove that the baptism of infants is a divine institution ; and whatever other arguments from it have been mentioned by others, or may be thought of, stand good, and ought to be considered in their full weight, independent of what has been now said, to show what is the design and import of

* Chron. xxvii. 9, 10.

of this institution ; and whether this can be sufficiently supported from scripture, or not : Though it is thought that the view which has been here given of it, if it be admitted, will serve to strengthen the evidence that it is an institution of Christ, and to show the propriety and importance of it. Therefore, they who shall not be convinced that there is any promised connection between the faithfulness of parents in the covenant, as it respects their children, and the conveyance of saving blessings to the latter, will not find the evidence on which they believe and practice infant baptism, in any degree weakened : While they who believe that such a connection is evident from scripture, will, by this view of the matter, be more confirmed in the reality, usefulness and importance of this institution ; and excited to improve it accordingly. It is presumed that this attempt has no tendency to prejudice any one against the practice of infant baptism, or to lead him to doubt whether it be a christian institution : And that no one can have any reason to think, that the belief of such a connection, and a practice agreeable to it, can tend, in any respect, to slur the institution, or to render it less important and useful to the christian church ; or be hurtful to any.

If what has been now offered on this subject, shall in any degree awaken the attention of divines, and christians in general, to this matter, and excite to a more careful and strict examination of it, which, it is thought, has not yet been thoroughly explored ; but has been generally treated in too loose and indeterminate a manner ; and if, in consequence of this, greater light on this point shall be obtained, and a more consistent and scriptural account of it shall be given, than is here exhibited, the composing and reading of these pages will not be in vain.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

THE Lord's Supper is also an institution of Christ, which he has commanded his followers to observe, and attend upon ; and has appointed it to be celebrated in his church to the end of the world.

The elements of this ordinance, are bread and wine. The bread consecrated and broken, represents the broken body of Christ, in his death on the cross. The wine poured out, represents his blood in his death, which was shed for the remission of sins. The professed followers of Christ, by eating the bread and drinking the wine, when consecrated and blessed, by prayer and thanksgiving, and distributed to them by the officers of the church, do, by this transaction, profess cordially to receive Christ by faith, and to live upon him, loving him, and trusting in him for pardon and complete redemption, consecrating themselves to his service. And by the ministers of the gospel, consecrating those elements, and ordering them to be distributed to the communicants ; Christ is exhibited as an allsufficient Saviour, and the promise of salvation is expressed, and sealed to all his friends. This is therefore a covenant transaction, in which those who partake of the bread and wine, express their faith in Christ, that they are his friends, and devoted to his service ; and their cordial compliance with the covenant of grace ; and solemnly seal this covenant by partaking of these elements. And at the same time, they are a token and seal of the covenant of grace, on the part of Christ. All this is asserted by the Apostle Paul, when speaking of this ordinance. " The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? " *

* 1 Cor. x. 16.

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“For I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, in the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of ME. After the same manner also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood.*”* And the church, by coming together, and celebrating this holy supper, not only profess their love to Christ, and union of heart to him; but that peculiar love and union to each other, which takes place between the true disciples of Christ, and is essential to their character. This is expressed in the following words of the Apostle Paul. “For we, being many, are *one bread*, and *one body*: For we are all partakers of that *one bread.*”†

The appointment, therefore, of this holy supper, is an instance of the wisdom and goodness of Christ, as it is suited to be a repeated and continual exhibition of a crucified Saviour, and hereby to excite the faith and love of christians, and to lead them to renew their covenant with him, dedicating themselves to his service and honour. And is also adapted to the communicants united expression of their mutual love and union of heart to each other, while they jointly partake of one common good, even all the benefits of Christ crucified.

That this is appointed by Christ to be a standing ordinance, to be observed by his church, and by every professed baptized believer in him, to the end of the world, is evident by the words and manner of the institution of it, recorded by the Evangelists Matthew, Mark and Luke; and is farther evident by the history we have of the observation of it by the churches, in the days of the Apostles. We are told, that on the first day of the week,

* Chap. xi. 23, 24, 25.

† 1 Cor. x. 17.

week, the disciples at Troas, came together to break bread ;* that is, to celebrate the Lord's supper. The church at Corinth, attended upon this ordinance from time to time ; which appears from what the Apostle Paul says to them respecting it, when he undertakes to correct their abuse of it.† And in order to reform them, he refers them to the original institution by Christ, and tells them particularly what it was, as he had received it from the Lord Jesus Christ himself ; and adds the following words. " For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till he come.*" Which words strongly assert, that this ordinance was to be observed to the end of the world, when Christ the Lord shall come the second time, without sin unto salvation.

This ordinance, according to the nature, signification and extent of it, is to be repeated by the same persons to the end of life, as it expresses the believer's living upon Christ ; and the nourishment of his soul, by faith in him, and is suited to excite renewed acts of christian love and holiness. There is the same reason why a participation of it should be repeated, as there is that it should be once attended. " As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till he come.*"‡ There is a difference between this ordinance and that of baptism, in this respect. As the latter is the initiating ordinance and seal by which persons are visibly introduced into the church and kingdom of Christ. And this being *once* done, the end of it is answered, and there can be no reason or propriety in repeating it, by applying it more than once to the same person.

The infant children of believers are as capable subjects of baptism, and of all that is signified by it, as adults are, as has been shown. But as they are not capable of that which is signified by partaking of the Lord's supper, till they arrive to

years of understanding, this is not to be administered to them before that time, when they shall be able to "discern the Lord's body, and examine themselves." There is no evidence that the circumcised children in Israel were admitted to the passover, and to partake of the pascal lamb, until they were able to understand the reason and end of that institution. The Jews say, children did not partake of the passover till they arrived to the age of twelve years. This seems to be confirmed by the history we have of the parents of Jesus taking him with them to the feast of the passover at Jerusalem, when he was twelve years old, which plainly implies that they did not do it before. "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast."* This may be considered as a guide to christian churches, in admitting baptized children to the Lord's supper.

This ordinance, according to the nature and design of it, is to be administered and attended upon *publicly*, by every particular church; and is not designed to be administered privately, to one single person. Of this we have no example in scripture: But the disciples, the whole church, *came together* to break bread, and eat the Lord's supper. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples *came together to break bread.*"† "When ye *come together* therefore *into one place*, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. Wherefore, my brethren, *when ye come together to eat*, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; *that ye come not together* unto condemnation."‡

As to the frequency of administering this ordinance in a church; this does not appear to be fixed by any precept or example in scripture; and therefore seems to be left to the discretion of the church to determine how of-

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* Luke ii. 41, 42.

† Acts xx. vii.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 20, 33, 34.

ten they will attend upon it, and have it administred to them, according to their circumstances, and as they shall think it to be most convenient to them, and most for the honour of Christ, and their edification. It has been often said, that christians in the first ages of the church, celebrated the Lord's supper, at least every Lord's day. But it may be asked, by what authentic history this can be made evident? What author has produced this evidence? And if it were certain, that some churches did attend upon it every Lord's day, and oftener, this would not prove that this was commanded by Christ, or his Apostles. Some have thought it evident that this ordinance was attended by the first christian church, which was formed by the Apostles at Jerusalem, at least every first day of the week, if not every time they met for public worship, which they must have done by the direction of the Apostles; and is therefore as binding on all christian churches to the end of the world, as if there were an exprefs precept to attend upon it in the same manner, and so often. But the words on which this conclusion is grounded, do not appear sufficient to support it, when carefully examined: They are these: "And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."* "They continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine." That is, they attended constantly on the instructions and preaching of the Apostles, and stedfastly adhered to the truths delivered by them. "And in fellowship:" That is, in communicating and making collections and distribution, to supply the bodily necessities of those who stood in need of assistance and support. This is the

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meaning

* Acts ii. 42, 46.

meaning of the word *κοινωνία*, which is here translated *fellowship*. "And in breaking of bread." This probably means their partaking of the Lord's supper. "And in prayers." That is, joining in public prayers, and in singing psalms, which is included in prayer; which were constantly performed when they attended the other parts of public worship. Here then every part of their public worship is mentioned, viz. public teaching; distribution to the necessities of the poor saints; attendance on the Lord's supper; and prayer; including psalmody, which is devotion, and a particular manner of prayer. But it does not follow, from this enumeration of the different parts of their public worship, that every part was attended upon, every time they met for prayer or preaching; or that they made a contribution for the poor, or broke bread, every time they met together for public worship: But that these were performed, as often as was convenient and proper. Breaking bread from house to house, and eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,* does not appear to mean their eating the Lord's supper from house to house; but their partaking of their common food, and eating together; exercising liberality and friendship one towards another, in eating their common meals. But if breaking bread does here mean the Lord's supper, and it were certain that believers at Jerufalem did, in their then peculiar and extraordinary circumstances, administer and partake of this ordinance, whenever a number of them met in a particular house, it would not hence follow, that the disciples of Christ are by this bound in all ages of the world to attend the Lord's supper in the same manner, or thus frequently.

When it is said, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread:†" It does not import, that breaking bread was the only or chief

* Verse 46.

† Acts xx. 7.

chief thing for which they came together on that day ; for this was not true, as appears by the relation. Nor does it follow from those words, that they always came together on the first day of the week to break bread. It is only said, that on *that* first day, they did so. They might, consistent with this, come together on many other first days of the week, not to break bread ; but to attend on other parts of public worship, without partaking of the Lord's supper.

S E C T I O N IV.

Concerning the Discipline of the Church.

THE Discipline of a Church consists in their admitting or rejecting those who offer themselves to join with them ; in the members watching over each other ; in reproving and admonishing those who walk disorderly, and taking all proper methods to reform them ; and in rejecting those who will not be reclaimed, but continue obstinate and unreformed, when all proper means have been previously used to bring them to repentance.

The proper exercise of discipline, is important and necessary, in order to the comfort, edification, and prosperity of a church ; and where this is wholly neglected in a church, it will go to ruin ; and such a society is not worthy of the name of a christian church. Therefore this is particularly enjoined by Christ and his Apostles.

The following particulars may serve to illustrate this subject.

I. IN the exercise of discipline, the church is to be wholly governed by the laws of Christ. He is the only

law giver in his church ; and in exercising discipline, christians are to execute his laws, and have no authority, or right to do any thing, unless it be agreeable to his direction and command. And whatsoever is done by the church in his name, and according to his laws, is done by authority derived from him, as they are authorized by him to execute his laws : But when, and so far as they deviate from this, they have no authority ; and what they do is null and void, and disapproved by him.

II. THE power to execute the laws of Christ, is not given by him to any one man, or to any particular class or order of men in the church ; but to the church, as a particular and distinct society ; though some particular members, or officers, in the church, may in many instances have a distinguished influence, and lead in the transactions of the church, and put into execution their decisions. When the head of the church said to Peter, “ I will give unto thee, the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven : And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven ; ”* we are not to suppose that this commission and authority was given to Peter alone, or to the Apostles only, or to any distinct succession of men or officers in the church ; but to the church, which Peter represented in the confession he had then just made ; and of which Christ speaks in the preceding words. “ Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” And what Christ says in the next chapter, confirms the truth of this supposition ; for when he is there speaking of the doing of the church, in censuring and excommunicating an offender, he repeats the words above mentioned, which he had spoken to Peter,

* Matth. xvi. 19.

Peter, and gives this same authority to the church, and sanction to their doings, according to his laws. "Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven : And whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."* Two things appear evident from hence. In the first place, that Christ did not give this commission and authority to Peter only, in distinction from the rest of his disciples ; but to them all, as much as to Peter. And in the next place, that this authority was given to them, not as a distinct order of men in his church, but as his disciples, and his church, as they composed the only church which Christ then had on earth, from whom all the professed disciples of Christ, and members of his visible church, have descended, as their successors, being the followers of Christ, and members of his church, as his first disciples were.—Therefore, this power and authority is given to the church, and is to continue in it, as long as there is a church on earth, even to the end of the world.

III. THIS authority therefore, to maintain and execute the laws of Christ, is given to the church, as a body or society ; each member of the church having an equal concern and right to judge and act in all decisions to be made by the church, in the exercise of discipline ; and the act of the majority is to be considered as the act of the church, as no society can decide and act in any other way. And that the whole church are in this way to judge, decide and act, is evident from scripture. When our Saviour is giving particular directions respecting discipline, he gives the authority to judge and act to the church, as a society, and not to any particular member of it. "Tell it to the church ; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican."† According to this, every matter is

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* Chap. xviii. 18.

† Matth. xviii. 17.

to come before the church, and is to be decided by the judgment and voice of the church, as a body; which cannot be done in any other way but by the judgment and voice of all the members of it, or of the majority.— Agreeable to this, are the words of the Apostle Paul to the church at Corinth, when he gave them direction to discipline a particular member of the church, who had been guilty of a scandalous crime. “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *when ye are gathered together*, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto satan.”* This was to be done by the church, in order to which, they must all come together, that it might be the act of the church. And in the whole that he says, on this subject, he speaks to the whole church as concerned, and acting in this matter. “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother, be a fornicator, or covetous, &c. with such an one, no not to eat. Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from yourselves that wicked person.” And when they had rebuked and excommunicated this person, the Apostle speaks of it as being done by them all, or the majority of the church. “Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted by many,” or by the most, or major part, as the word may properly be rendered.† And he speaks the same language to other churches, when treating of this subject. “I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them: For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies.”‡ “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye
withdraw

* 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.

† 2 Cor. ii. 6.

‡ Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye have received of us. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.* Hence it appears, that when this same Apostle, directs Timothy and Titus, respecting the exercise of discipline in the churches in which they presided, he does not mean that they had any authority in the matter over the churches ; but that they should excite and lead the churches to a proper care and conduct in the strict and faithful exercise of discipline : For in any other view and sense, he would be inconsistent with himself.

It has been observed, that in every decision and act of the church, in the exercise of discipline, there must be the voice of the major part, or greatest number of the church, at least ; and every such act is to be considered as the act of that particular society or church. But it is desirable, that the church should be unanimous in all their decisions and votes ; and therefore, all proper and possible care and pains ought to be taken to effect and maintain this unanimity in all their proceedings. And when this cannot be obtained, and there appears a difference in judgment among the members of the church, and a number do not view the case before them, in the same light with the majority, they are to be treated with love and tenderness, and the latter ought to use all proper means to enlighten and convince their dissenting brethren, that they may think and act with them, and manifest a reluctance to proceed and act without their concurrence and consent ; and, if possible, persuade them, at least, to say, they are willing the majority should act as they think best, and though they cannot see with them, at present, they will not be offended, nor are disposed to make any division or uneasiness in the church.

And

* 2 Theff. iii. 6, 14.

And the minority, who cannot act with their brethren in any instance, when they have offered the reasons of their dissent in meekness and love, ought to acquiesce in the decision of the church, so as to take no offence or do any thing to interrupt the peace of the church ; unless they consider the case to be so important, and the proceedings of the majority so contrary to the laws of Christ, that they ought to remonstrate, and think they cannot be faithful to Christ and their brethren unless they take some farther steps. In such a case, it will be the duty of the church to join with the dissatisfied in asking judgment and advice of other churches. And in any instance, where the matter to be decided is intricate or difficult, or when the person, concerning whom the decision is to be made, desires it, it is proper and wise to ask the advice of other churches, in order to get all the light and help they can obtain respecting the matter to be determined. But every particular church, after asking counsel and advice, and making the best improvement of it they can, must act according to their own judgment, they not being bound implicitly to submit to the dictates of any other churches or councils, or having authority to decide for them in any matter ; or any farther than they receive light and conviction.

IV. THE females are included in the male members of the church, and are to act only by them, as thus included ; or the males act for them, and the women are not to dictate and vote in the church, in any matter which is to be decided, as this would be usurping and exercising that authority over the men, which is forbidden in scripture, and is inconsistent with that state of inferiority to men, which God has for wise reasons constituted, by which they are not to rule, but to be in subjection. But they have a right to know all the concerns and proceedings of the
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the church, as they are equally interested in them with the male members ; and it is desirable that they should be satisfied with all the transactions of the church, and know the reasons on which they proceed. They have therefore a right to be present in all the meetings of the church, and ought to attend with the males, and give all the light and evidence they can in any case, in which it is desired ; and may propose any difficulty or uneasiness in their minds respecting the proceedings of the church, in order to get information and satisfaction. And they have a right to be regarded and treated with respect and kindness by the brethren, who ought to give the sisters all the light and satisfaction in their power, in every case.

When a particular church is to be formed and constituted in any place, the proposed members of it, are to satisfy each other that they are so far agreed in their understanding and judgment respecting the Bible, as to the doctrines and truths therein revealed, so far as they regard faith and practice ; and that they have such a practical acquaintance with the christian religion ; and that their life and conversation is so far agreeable to the commands of Christ, that they can receive each other as real christians to a state of church fellowship, and agree to walk in all the commands of Christ, and in attendance on his worship and ordinances. By this they are prepared to unite in a confession of their faith, or of their understanding and belief of the important and essential doctrines contained in divine revelation, and of the institutions and duties which Christ has appointed : And to enter into mutual and solemn covenant, to walk in the ways and ordinances of Christ, blameless ; and to assist and watch over each other in their christian practice, and in the exercise of that discipline which Jesus Christ has instituted, to prevent corruption and apostacy in the church,

church, in doctrine or practice, and for their mutual edification in love. And when the necessary officers of a church are chosen and ordained, they are prepared to attend upon all the institutions of Christ, and to exercise that discipline which he has appointed.

In the exercise of this discipline, they are to admit or reject those who offer to join with them, as members of their christian society ; which is to be done with care, discerning and judgment. After proper acquaintance with such, and a careful examination into their knowledge and belief of the most important doctrines of revelation, and their experimental acquaintance with them, and cordial approbation of them ; if they appear to the church to understand and approve of those doctrines which they hold important and necessary to be understood and believed, in order to be real christians, and to be willing to devote themselves to Christ, and observe all his commandments ; and to make public profession of this, and enter into a solemn covenant to obey all the commands of Christ, as members of that church, they are to receive them as real christians, so far as they are warranted to judge and determine. But if they appear to them ignorant of the essential truths and doctrines of the gospel, or not to believe them ; or do not appear to have embraced them cordially and experimentally ; or if their temper and conduct have not been agreeable to the gospel, and they do not manifest a disposition to repent and reform, they are to be rejected, as not appearing to be real christians ; and therefore unworthy to be visible members of a christian church.

When any who are members of the church, shall fall from their profession and christian character, by embracing error, or any unchristian practice, of which there is sufficient evidence ; and after proper methods taken with them to bring them to repentance and reclaim them, without

without success ; they are to be rejected and cast out of the church, as unworthy of a place in the visible church of Christ : But may afterwards be received again, upon their giving proper evidence of true repentance.

There is to be special care taken of the children of the church, viz. the children of those parents who are or have been members of the church, who have dedicated them to Christ, in the ordinance of baptism, and have been received by the church, as visible members of Christ, the lambs in his flock, in the manner and on the grounds which have been before explained. Every adult member of the church ought to be concerned that these should have a christian education, and watch over one another, with respect to this, and direct, admonish and exhort, those who appear negligent and deficient in their duty to their children. And every gross and continued neglect, ought to subject the person guilty, to the censure of the church. And when the children arrive to an age in which they are capable of acting for themselves in matters of religion, and making a profession of their adherence to the christian faith and practice, and coming to the Lord's supper : If they neglect and refuse to do this, and act contrary to the commands of Christ in any other respect, all proper means are to be used, and methods taken to bring them to repentance, and to do their duty as christians. And if they cannot be reclaimed, but continue impenitent and unreformed, they are to be rejected and cast out of the church, as other adult members are, who persist in disobedience to Christ.

V. THE general rule of exercising discipline towards those members who give offence in words or conduct, and which is applicable to every case, is given by Jesus Christ in the following words : " If thy brother shall trespass :

trespasses against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”*

It has been supposed by some, if not generally, that this direction respects private and personal offences only, and that it is not applicable to general and public offences. But perhaps this will appear to be a mistake, when the matter is properly considered; and that the method and steps here pointed out, are to be taken with every offender, as most agreeable to the dictates of christian love, and best suited to reclaim such; and the most proper regulation and guard to prevent unreasonable and frivolous complaints being brought to the Church.

When a member of the church acts contrary to his christian profession, and transgresses any of the laws of Christ, and walks disorderly, he trespasses or sins† against every brother in the church, and offends him as really, and as much, as if he injured him in particular in his person, character or estate: And there is the same reason and obligation to take steps to reclaim him, as if his trespass were against one individual only. And if his sin be not of a private, but of a public nature, and is known to many, or to all, this is no reason why every person should not feel the trespass against him, and be ready

* Matth. xviii. 15, 16, 17.

† The word in the original *αμαρτησιν* translated *trespasses*, is the word which is used for *sinning*. It is so translated in the 21st verse. “How often shall my brother *sin* against me, and I forgive him?” And it is so translated in the following passage: “But when ye *sin* so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.” 1 Cor. viii. 12. And it is to be observed, that by sinning against the brethren, he does not mean, any particular personal injury or offence.

ready to take proper steps to bring him to repentance, and be the first to apply to him to that end, unless particular circumstances render it more proper and convenient for some other person to do it.

And however public the offence may be, every individual ought to be disposed to make private application to him first, unless some other person shall do it, before he speaks of it to others; and to consider this as necessary in order to obey the command of Christ, and the law of love, which ought to govern, in every step taken in such a case. Perhaps the person offending, does not view what he has done in a true light, or think himself guilty of unchristian conduct, or does not know that others are offended with him. And if he should have his crime properly set before him in a private way, he might be made sensible of what he had done, and that he had given just offence, and voluntarily make christian satisfaction by a public confession, without any public accusation, or process before the church. If the brethren were all under the proper influence of christian love, and felt that concern and tenderness towards an offending brother, which is the attendant of such love, such a method would doubtless appear most agreeable to them, and they would be ready to take it, whenever there is opportunity and a call to do it; and it will be peculiarly agreeable to them, to have a brother who has sinned, reclaimed in such a private and easy way. And it is presumed there is no christian who is a member of a church, who would not wish to be treated in this manner, if he should in any instance, give offence to any or all of his brethren; and who would not think it a privilege to be in union with brethren who would deal thus privately and tenderly with him, whenever he should give them any just, or supposed ground of offence. And therefore if he should neglect to take this method

with any of his brethren who should give offence to him, he would not do to him, as he would desire others to do to himself, and so transgress the law of love, and this wise law of Christ, which commands christians to endeavour to heal every offence, in the most private, easy and tender manner. It may be the supposed offender will satisfy his offended brother, that he is innocent, and has really given no ground of offence. But if he be not able to do this, and be not made sensible of his fault, and so do not hear his brother, he must take one or two of his brethren, whom he thinks most likely to convince and gain the offender; as this is most agreeable to christian love, and best suited to answer the end. If they, when they have heard and considered the case, judge there is just ground of offence, and do convince the offender of it, and persuade him to make christian satisfaction, the faulty brother is gained. If they judge that there is no sufficient ground of offence, or no proper evidence of the fact with which he is charged, the matter cannot be carried any farther, and laid before the church. If they think there is just ground of offence and evidence of the fact of which he is accused; but cannot convince the offender of it; and therefore judge it ought to be laid before the church; the way is prepared to bring a complaint to the church, which ought to be received when it comes to them by the approbation of two or three, and not otherwise. And thus, "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word is established."—They are witnesses which ought to have great weight with the person's conscience with whom they deal, and which is suited to convince him, and bring him to his duty, if they condemn him. They are witnesses to the church, that private methods have been taken to convince and reclaim him; that he will not hear them, and that he ought to be called to an account by the church.

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And in this way, the church go on proper and safe ground in receiving a complaint against any of the members, and proceeding to call the accused person before them, in order to hear and judge of the matter of which he is accused. And there is a proper guard placed against accusations being brought to the church by individuals, which might be wholly without any foundation, which would give needless trouble to the church, and might be very injurious to those against whom the complaints are made.

On the whole, it will doubtless appear to all who well consider the matter, that the rule our Saviour has given in the words under consideration, extends to all instances of offences given by any professing christians ; and that no person can, according to this, be called before the church to answer for any fault, whether private or public, unless a complaint be brought against him, in the way here prescribed : And that the wisdom and goodness of Christ appears in forming this short and plain rule of proceeding in all such cases, which is perfectly agreeable to the law of *love*, and is in the best manner suited to promote the peace and edification of the church, and the good of every individual member : And consequently every deviation from this rule, is contrary to the law of christian benevolence, and tends to evil.*

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* It has been supposed by some, that the direction in this passage to go to an offending brother, "and tell him his fault, between thee and him *alone*," is applicable to no case but such wherein none knows of the fault of which the brother is guilty but the person who applies to him. But this cannot be true : For in such a case he would not be able to prove to the church or any one, that his brother has been guilty of any fault ; and therefore has no right to take one or two more to deal with him, or to speak of it to any person in the world. It must remain a secret between him and his brother ; and to tell it to others, would be a violation of the law of love, and a real slander ; and would expose himself to suffer as a slanderer of his brother, having spread an evil report of him, which he cannot prove. Therefore, in the case of a trespass mentioned by Christ in this passage, it is supposed that it can be proved
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IV. WHEN the accused person is thus regularly brought before the church, if they judge he is censurable, and he remains impenitent, and will not hear them ; or if he refuse to appear and answer to the complaint, when desired, he is to be rejected and cast out of the church ; and cannot be restored again, without a proper manifestation of repentance. This is expressed by Christ in the following words : " But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." That is, consider and treat him, as you are accustomed to view and treat heathens and publicans.—The Apostle Paul expresses the same thing in the following words : " I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat."*—And to the same purpose he says again : " Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."† The Jews avoided the company of heathens and publicans, and did not eat their common meals with them. And in the above passage, Christ commands the members of his churches

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by other witnesses than him who tells him his fault, or those whom he takes with him in the second step ; otherwise he cannot take such a step ; and it is so secret that though he knew the fact to be true, he may not speak of it to any one ; and cannot be a matter of public discipline.

If it be asked, What an offended brother can do in such a case ? The answer is plain and easy. He ought to deal with his faulty brother privately, and try to convince and awaken his conscience, and bring him to repentance. But if he remain obstinate, he must leave the matter in secret till the day of judgment, and continue to treat his brother before the world, and in the church, as visibly in good standing, and a visible christian, as he really is, whatever be the secret sins of which he is guilty.

* 1 Cor. v. 11.

† 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14.

to treat those who will not hear the church, in the same manner. And the same thing is enjoined by St. Paul, when he commands the church at Corinth not to keep company with such, *no not to eat*. He tells them he did not forbid their keeping company with the wicked men of the world; for this would be inconsistent with their living in the world. But if he, who had the name of a christian brother, transgressed the rules of Christ, and fell from his profession, they should renounce him, and not only exclude him from the privileges of a visible christian in the church; but treat him with peculiar neglect and slight, and avoid his company at all times, and never so much as eat with him at a common table; as suited to keep in his view his character and situation in the sight of christians, and to excite those feelings, and that shame, which tended to bring him to repentance.

Such a treatment of an excommunicated person, is proper, and necessary, in order to answer the ends of the censures of the church, so as to have their desired effect. By this their authority is exercised, maintained and kept in view, and their particular abhorrence of the character and conduct of the censured person, is constantly expressed to him, and to the world; and the distinction between him and those who are in good standing, and his awful situation, is made manifest in all their conduct towards him: And it is suited constantly to affect and impress his mind, to give him uneasiness in his situation, to make him ashamed, and bring him to repentance.— Thus the salutary ends of the censures of the church, are in this way answered, both with respect to the church, the excommunicated person, and the world.

VII. THE brother who commits a fault, by which he falls under the censure of the church, may be restored

to good standing again, by reformation, a public confession, and profession of repentance, and not without this.

Some have thought that a confession before the church only, is sufficient in order to a person's being restored to good standing ; and that this is all that can be reasonably required. But it ought to be considered, that the church is a public society, a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid ; and their light is to shine before others. When a christian falls from his profession in his conduct, he puts out his light *before others*, as well as in the sight of the church, and cannot recover it, and cause it to shine again, but by a profession of repentance, and condemnation of himself, before them, or in their sight. And a true penitent will desire to do this before all to whom the knowledge of his crime may have come, and wish all may know that he does repent. A contrary disposition to this, is found only in the impenitent.

VIII. IT is to be observed, that Jesus Christ has not given to his church any authority to inflict any corporal punishment on men for disobedience to his laws ; to imprison or fine them, or subject them to any worldly inconvenience, except what is implied in casting them out of the church, and treating them in the manner mentioned above.

All that has been done, of this kind, in the christian world, by the professed followers of Christ, has been an abuse and violation of the laws of Christ, and has proceeded wholly from an antichristian spirit. The kingdom of Christ is in this respect, as well as others, *not of this world*.

IX. ON the whole, it is observable, that the prevalence of the spirit of christian love, is necessary in order to the proper and useful practice of discipline in the churches

churches of Christ. Christ and his Apostles have insisted much on this, as that without which the laws of Christ cannot be obeyed in any degree. It is this alone by which the disciples and church of Christ are to be distinguished from the men and the societies of the world. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* Where a spirit of true christian love prevails, it will be natural and easy to obey the laws of Christ respecting the discipline to be exercised in his church; it will appear important and necessary that these laws should be observed and executed with great care and strictness: And the good effect will be apparent. By this the church will edify itself in love, and become "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." And when this spirit of christian love is not in exercise, the proper practice of discipline will not take place; and all attempts to practice it will proceed from selfishness, pride and a worldly spirit, and promote confusion, divisions and contention, rather than peace and edification, which has been verified in too many instances.

* John xiii. 35.

CHAPTER VI.

On Christian Practice.

EVERY doctrine which comes into the system of truth, exhibited in divine revelation, and which has been brought into view, in the preceding work, is, in a greater or less degree practical; and the whole, considered in a collective view, do lead to, and involve every thing essential in the whole system of christian exercise and practice, which consists wholly in practising the truth, or walking in the truth.* This will therefore serve as an help and guide in the brief delineation of this, which is now proposed.

The temper and exercises of a christian, which take place in the view of revealed truth, have been in some measure brought into view and described already. They consist summarily and most essentially in *love*: In loving God with all their heart; and loving their neighbour as themselves. Christian practice, consists in expressing, and acting out this affection, on all occasions, in every suitable way, in obedience to all the holy laws of God. The christian owes perfect obedience at all times, as he always did before he was a christian, and which all men do. His becoming a christian, and obtaining pardon and the divine favour, is so far from freeing him from obligation to obey the laws of God perfectly, that his obligation to this, are hereby greatly increased.

There is no real obedience, or any thing morally good or evil in mere words and external actions, considered

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* John iii. 21. 2 John 4. 3 John 3, 4.

as unconnected with the heart, and aside from the motives and affections of which they are the fruit and expression ; for all obedience and virtue consists in the disposition and exercises of the heart ; and in the expressions and exertions of it, in words and external actions : And when the latter are not the fruit and genuine expressions of the former, whatever they may be, there is no holiness or moral good in them. And when they are the fruit and production of a wrong and sinful disposition, motives and exercises of heart, they are bad fruit, and considered in this connection are sinful. This is expressly asserted by Christ : “ Either make the tree good, and his fruit good ; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things : And an evil man, out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.”* The external appearances and expressions, in words and conduct, of both of them, in some, yea many instances, may be the same, or so much alike, in the view of man, as not to be distinguished. But those of the one are good, as they proceed from a good heart, and are the proper expression of his true benevolence and goodness. Those of the other are evil, as they proceed from an evil heart, and are the fruit and effect of selfish motives, or of self love ; and all the appearance they have of the contrary, is nothing but falsehood and hypocrisy.

Mankind in their state of depravity and blindness, are liable to make great mistakes, not only with respect to real holiness of heart, in what it consists ; but as to the way and manner in which an honest and good heart is to be expressed in words and actions ; and therefore stand in need of particular instruction and direction with regard to this. God has been pleased to furnish man with direction, in the revelation which he has given, and has abundantly taught us how, and in what manner we are

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to express that love, in which all holiness consists, and what are the natural effects of it, in words and actions, on different occasions, and towards different objects. This is done more summarily in the ten commandments spoken from Mount Sinai by God himself, in the audience of all the people of Israel, and afterwards written by him on two tables of stone. But this is more particularly taught and explained, by numerous precepts respecting our conduct on various occasions, and towards different objects and persons; and by the history and example of good men; and especially by the precepts and example of Christ.

By these, the conduct which is a proper expression of love to God and to our neighbour, including ourselves, is so particularly delineated, that they who are under the influence of this love, are not exposed to make any great mistakes; but will be directed and excited to all christian practice, in each branch of it.

I. CHRISTIAN practice, as it more immediately respects God, and the things of the invisible world, which is the practice of piety, consists chiefly in the following things:

1. A public profession of a belief of the great, important truths and doctrines, contained in divine revelation, and sincere approbation of them; a profession of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ; and that we do dedicate and devote ourselves to his service, submitting to him as our Lord and Saviour; promising to obey all his commands, and attend upon all his ordinances: At the same time, professing love to the visible disciples of Christ, and a desire to join to a society of such, who are mutually engaged to promote the cause and kingdom of Christ in the world, and maintain his worship and ordinances, in a way which is agreeable to our judgment,

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and conscience. Such a public profession is due to God, and no man can properly honour Christ without it ; and is therefore the natural expression of love to God, and the spirit of true piety. This therefore has been required and practised in all ages, under the Old Testament and the New, as the only way in which a visible church has existed in the world, or can exist. This is expressed in scripture in the following words : “ Ye stand this day all of you, before the Lord your God ; that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.”* “ I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among grafs, as willows by water courses. One shall say, I am the Lord’s ; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob : And another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.”† “ Then they that gladly received the word, were baptized : And the same day there were added unto them, about three thousand souls. And the Lord *added to the church* daily, such as should be saved. And believers were the more *added to the Lord*, multitudes, both men and women. And much people was added unto the Lord. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus is the son of God.”‡ “ He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.”§ Baptism, necessarily implies such a profession, and an express engagement to obey and serve Jesus Christ.

2. If a person has not been baptized in his infancy, a submission to this commanded right is required of him, as a christian, without which no profession of faith and obedience to Christ, is to be considered as credible, or can constitute him a visible christian. If he has been baptized in his infancy, and so made a visible member of the

* Deut. xxix. 10, 12.

† Isaiah xlv. 3, 4, 5.

‡ Acts ii. 41, 47. v. 14. viii. 37. xi. 24.

§ Mark xvi. 16.

the church, in the sense explained above, his approbation of this, and of all that is implied in it, must be expressly or implicitly declared in the public profession which he makes. And when such a professor who is baptized, and a visible member of a church, has children, he is required to offer and dedicate them to Christ in baptism, and promise to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This, and his faithful performance of his engagements in this transaction, is an important part of the practice of piety, and the duty which he owes to Christ, which at the same time is a duty which he owes to his children, and to the church.

3. A serious, devout, and constant attendance on all the religious institutions of Jesus Christ, is an important part of christian practice. These are public worship; consisting in prayer, singing praise to God, and hearing the word preached. Attending on the Lord's supper, whenever it is administered in the church to which he belongs. A careful and strict observation of the christian Sabbath, in abstaining from all secular business, labour or recreation; except that which is of real necessity; and works of charity and mercy; and devoting the whole day to religious exercises, in public and more privately. This is an important part of the practice of christian piety; and every branch of the christian's exercise of piety, will commonly keep pace with his observation of the Sabbath. If a christian feels in any good measure as he ought to do, this will be a high day with him, as in a peculiar manner consecrated to the honour and service of Christ. He is ready to welcome it, on every return of it, with peculiar satisfaction and joy; and be concerned to order his worldly circumstances and business, so as to have the least possible interruption, in the duties of the Sabbath. Thus he will turn away his foot from the Sabbath, from doing his worldly pleasure on God's holy day;

day ; and will call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable ; and will conscientiously honour him, not doing his own ways, nor finding his own pleasure, nor speaking his own words.*

4. A free and cheerful contribution for the support of the gospel and public religion, according to his ability and opportunity, is a necessary part of the practice of a christian. This cannot be maintained and supported, according to the institution of Christ, without cost and expense, and the Lord Jesus Christ has ordained, that they who preach the gospel, should live of the gospel.† Love to God, and divine institutions, and a regard for the honour of Christ, will open the heart of a christian ; and he will be ready to contribute liberally for the support of the gospel, and will much rather retrench his expenses in other things, than fall short of his duty in this, which he will consider as a privilege, rather than a burden. And it is the duty of every christian, to make all those exertions, and be at all the expense, which may be necessary to spread and propagate the gospel, to those who have not enjoyed it, according to his opportunity, capacity and ability, to promote such an important design.

5. A serious, pious manner of conversation, which is the proper effect and expression of a belief of the great truths of christianity, and a sense of their importance and excellence ; being ready to speak and hear of the things of religion on all proper occasions ; speaking of God, his works, and ways, and institutions, and the things of the invisible, eternal world, as being realities, and with becoming reverence and solemnity ; and carefully avoiding all vain, trifling conversation. " Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."†

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* Isaiah lviii. 13.

† 1 Cor. ix. 14.

† Eph. iv. 29.

6. The christian ought to give great and constant attention to his Bible, reading and studying it daily, that he may know what is the will of God there revealed, and understand the important truths it contains, and that they may be more and more impressed on his mind, and be plain and familiar to him. "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night."* And he will be disposed to improve all the advantages and helps which are in his reach to understand the scriptures, and make advances in divine knowledge, both by reading the writings of those who have explained the scriptures, and inculcated the doctrines and duties of christianity; and by conversation with those from whom he may hope to get instruction. In this, and in his devotions, he spends all the time which can be spared from his particular worldly business and calling, and for which the Sabbath gives him special advantages.

7. The pious education of children, and of all who are under his care, is a duty comprehended in the practice of piety. This consists in family government, and giving them religious instruction, at all proper opportunities, and in advising, exhorting and admonishing them, respecting their religious exercises and conduct. This was strictly enjoined on the children of Israel, as has been particularly observed in a former chapter; and is implied in St. Paul's direction to christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

8. Prayer, or devotion, is a great and important branch of christian exercise and practice, and is the constant employ of a pious heart, and essential to true christianity. This comprehends, adoration, confession, petition, thanksgiving and praise; of all which God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is the immediate object. Adoration

tion consists in thinking and speaking of the divine perfections, character and works, in devout addressees to Him. And as this is to be done with veneration, and a sense and acknowledgment of the divine worthiness, excellence, and glory, consisting and appearing in these, which is praise: Therefore, adoration and praise are not to be distinguished, as to be considered distinct and separate from each other. Confession consists in an acknowledgment made to God of our sins, unworthiness, guilt and misery; and of our absolute dependance on God for every good. And profession may be considered as implied in this, of repentance, and dependance on God for pardon and all the good we want, in a belief and approbation of the truths contained in divine revelation. Petition, is making request to God, and asking for the good things which we want and desire for ourselves, or others, or for any good which appears to us desirable, and not contrary to the revealed will of God to grant or do. Which petitions are always to be made with an unreserved, absolute resignation to the will of God. Thanksgiving consists in expressing our gratitude to God, for all the expressions and exercises of his benevolence, which come within our view: For benevolence or goodness expressed, is the only object or ground of true gratitude, wherever it appears, and whoever be the subjects of it; and however it may be abused and perverted by individuals, and turned into the greatest evil to them.

Prayer, taken in this large sense, as comprehending all this, even the whole that is implied in addressing God, and holding intercourse with him, in secret, private or public, is much spoken of in scripture, and recommended by many precepts, and examples of pious men, and of Jesus Christ himself. He spake a parable to show, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint, and to encourage them to do it.* And we are commanded, in

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* Luke xviii. 1, &c.

every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let our requests be made known to God. "To pray without ceasing : To pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance." And the greatest motives and encouragement to prayer that are possible, are exhibited in divine revelation, both by precept, example and promises ; of which every one must be sensible, who is well acquainted with the Bible. It is therefore thought needless to go into particulars to prove or illustrate this.

The christian is always near the throne of grace. God represents his ear as always open to the cry of them who look to him, and trust in him. The Mediator has opened the way of access to God, for sinners, and bid them ask all good things in his name ; and promises that they shall be heard, and have their petitions granted. Therefore, we may have free access to God, on all occasions, and at all times, and we may pray always, with all prayer ; and this is both the duty and interest of a christian. Where ever he is, whatever be his circumstances and business, his heart may rise to God, in any part of devotion, petition, thanksgiving, praise, &c. in desultory ejaculations, and he pour out his heart before God, in groanings which cannot be uttered in words. With this sort of prayer, every christian is acquainted ; and the higher he rises in the exercise of christianity, the more he practises it.

Set times of secret prayer also, come into the practice of a christian ; when he retires from the world, and out of the sight of men, and summonses his heart to attention to the worship of God in secret. Of this particular kind of prayer, Christ speaks in the following words : "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."* It is plain, that Christ speaks

* Matth. vi, 6.

here of personal prayer, in distinction from that which is social. No christian can live comfortably, or as he ought, without the daily practice of this sort of prayer. It is suited to keep religion alive in his heart. He has many wants and particular concerns between God and his soul, which cannot be expressed in social worship, which it is highly proper and greatly beneficial for him to express before God in secret, where he may do it with unrestrained freedom.

Social prayer is also a duty, in which christians join with each other in worshipping God, in a greater or less number, more publicly or less, according to their particular connections, and special occasions. It is highly proper, and greatly beneficial, that each family should practise social worship together, and as a family daily, and in a constant, uninterrupted course. They have many family wants, mercies and afflictions, which are changing, and may be renewed from day to day, and which call for particular acknowledgment, confessions and petitions, which cannot be so properly made in any other way, but by the family uniting together, morning and evening, in social worship. And this, when properly practised, tends to keep up a view and sense of the things of religion, in the members of the family, and to solemnize and quicken all of them. And it cannot be conceived how parents and heads of families can properly educate their children, and those of whom they have the care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and treat them in the best manner that tends to form them to piety and religion, if they do not pray daily with them and for them, in this social way ; joining the serious reading of the scriptures with their devotions.*

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* Devout singing in families, seems to be a proper part of family worship. It has been, and now is, practised by many devout families. Christians are directed to sing psalms and hymns ; and they doubtless did it in their families, as well as more publicly. They taught and admonished one another in
psalms

A number of instances of our Saviour's praying with his disciples, which were his family, are mentioned; and there is no reason to think these were the only instances; but they are so related, that it is reasonable to conclude, that this was his constant practice.* The Apostle Paul, when he presents salvation to christians, frequently mentions and salutes the churches in their houses, by which he means the members of christian families. They are *little churches*, when they unite in daily worship, and reading the holy scriptures; and proper instruction, order and discipline are maintained: And are little nurseries, from whence more large and extensive churches are supplied and supported. But the families, in which there is no religious worship practised, make a contrary appearance, and have a contrary tendency, even to demolish the church and root out religion; and are too commonly the places of irreligion and vice.

It is also agreeable to the nature and dictates of the christian religion, that persons of different ages and sexes, should unite and form themselves into different societies, and meet together at times and places upon which they shall agree, as most convenient for prayer and religious conversation, or reading the word of God, or books suited

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psalms and hymns; and spiritual songs, singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord. Col. iii. 16. Paul and Silas prayed; and sang praises unto God, when only they two worshipped together in prison. Where this is wholly neglected in families, their worship appears to be defective. And doubtless, when religion shall appear in the true spirit and lustre of it in families, singing in a sweet, harmonious manner, will be one part of their daily worship. It is owing to a defect in the education of children, that they are not all taught to sing when young. If proper attention were paid to this, there would be but few, if any, unable to sing so as to add to the music and harmony. And children would be trained up in families, so as to be able to join with others in this part of public worship, and render it more universal, beautiful and melodious, and more becoming a christian, worshipping assembly. In the millennium, children will sing Hosannas to the Son of David, not only in public, but in families, when all will join with one heart, and one mouth, to sing praises unto God.

* Luke ix. 18, 28. xi. 1.

ed to instruct and excite them to their duty. This tends to promote religion, to keep up a sense of it on the mind, and to unite the hearts of christians one to another, and direct and quicken them in relative duties. Thus young men may form themselves into a society, to meet frequently for those purposes; and young women, by themselves. And elderly men by themselves, and women apart by themselves. Or societies of males in general, older and younger, may meet by themselves, and females of every age apart in a distinct society: Or both males and females may meet together in different neighbourhoods, when it can be done under proper regulations, and may be found most convenient. It is easy to see that such societies, under good regulations, tend to promote religion, union and good order among christians. And it has been found by experience, that revivals of religion have actually produced this effect, and led people to form into praying societies of this kind; which, when properly conducted, have proved salutary and profitable.

The prayers and devotions of public worship, are to be constantly attended with a serious and decent behaviour, so as not to disturb, but promote and assist others, in this part of public, solemn devotion. The constant practice of secret, family, and other social prayer, which has now been mentioned, is suited to prepare for this more public and solemn worship. “Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to offer the sacrifice of fools.”* “Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.”† “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.”‡ “And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of

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hosts :

* Eccl. v. 1.

† Isai. lvi. 7.

‡ Acts iii. 1.

hosts : I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.*

9. Fasting is to be joined with prayer, at certain times, and on special occasions. Religious fasting consists in abstinence from common food and drink, for a certain time, longer or shorter, as shall be found most convenient, and best suited to answer the ends of fasting, which are to promote and express engagedness of mind in prayer and devotion ; especially to express humiliation, contrition, and concern of mind, and a readiness to crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts, and mortify the body. This is to be practised, especially when under any particular and great calamity, spiritual or temporal ; or when such calamity is threatened, and persons set themselves to seek of God deliverance from the evil that is upon them, or that the threatened evil may be averted. Also, when any great and special mercy is to be sought, it is proper to do it with fasting and prayer. This is a commanded duty ; and there are many instances of it, as practised by pious persons, both in the Old and in the New Testament. There are many instances of personal fasting recorded in scripture, which is to be performed by single persons, and is to be done as secretly as circumstances will permit. Of this personal fasting Christ speaks, when he says, "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face ; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret : And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."† Social fasting and prayer, is also a duty, in the practice of which particular families have sometimes a call to join ; and more public societies, or whole churches, as the duty may be pointed out in divine providence. Our Saviour supposes it will frequently be the duty for christians to fast, and implicitly,

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* Zech. viii. 21, 22.

† Matth. vi. 17, 18.

at least, enjoins it, when he says of them, "The days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."*

Before this account of the devotion which is essential to the practice of christians, is dismissed; it will be proper to consider the following question.

QUESTION. It is granted, that the scripture reveals an omniscient and unchangeable God: And at the same time, directs and commands men to pray. But how these are consistent, is not so readily seen. What encouragement or reason can there be to pray to an omniscient and unchangeable God?

ANSWER 1. If there were no omniscient, unchangeable God, there could be no just ground, or reason for prayer. On this supposition, there would be no God; for none but an omniscient and unchangeable Being can be God. But if this were possible, and God were changeable, there would be no reason to trust in him for any thing; because what he would be disposed to do, and whether he would grant any petition made to him, or fulfil any of his promises, would be utterly uncertain; and therefore, there would be no ground and encouragement for prayer. But if there could be any encouragement to pray to a changeable Being, and we knew he was able to grant, and would give whatever we asked of him, and do as we desired, it would be the greatest presumption to ask him for any thing, unless we knew it was for our own good, and for the general good, to have it granted; and so might set ourselves up as judges, directors, and governours of the universe. Therefore, the truly humble, pious person, would not dare to pray for any thing, if God were not omniscient and unchangeable. Hence it follows, that if there be any reason and

encouragement to pray at all, it must be, because God is omniscient and unchangeable. The truly pious do not set up their own will, or desire any petition which they make should be granted, unless it be consistent with the infinitely wise, good and unchangeable will of God.—To this, they refer all, and in this they trust, with the most pleasing confidence; and say implicitly or expressly, in all their petitions, “If it be consistent with thy unchangeable, wise and holy will: Not our will, but thine be done, whatever it may be.” Any petition which is put up with a disposition contrary to this, is an act of impiety, and enmity against God.

ANSWER 2. There is good reason, and all desirable or possible encouragement to pray to an omniscient, unchangeable God. For,

1. It is reasonable and proper that the pious should express their wants and desires to God, and their dependence on him, and trust in him for the supply of their wants. If they have such wants and such desires; and feel their dependence on God for a supply, and trust in him alone, and such feeling and desires be right and proper, it must be reasonable and proper that they should be expressed. And indeed, the very existence and exercise of such feelings and desires, are a kind and degree of expression of them before God, and therefore the expression of them is essential to their existence: And the more clear, strong and particular the expression of them is, the more properly and the better do they exist. But these are expressed in the most natural and best manner in prayer. It appears from what has been now observed, that such feelings and desires are themselves a sort of mental prayer; and it is therefore too late not to pray, when they exist. And the more particularly and distinctly, and with the greater strength they

they are acted out and expressed in thoughts and words, in particular and solemn addresses to God, the more reasonable and proper are these exercises of the mind. Besides, this is the only way in which pious christians in this world, can, not only express their piety in the most proper manner ; but also pay proper acknowledgments to God, and give him the honour due to his name.

2. Asking God for the favours they want, is suited to prepare them to receive them, and fit them for the mercy he designs to bestow upon them, so as to render it the greater and better to them. Though God be unchangeable, the christian stands in need of being changed ; the change is therefore to take place in him. And nothing can be more suited to prepare the christian to receive good things, than a proper asking for them, and the views and exercises implied in this. The expressing our wants and our desires to God, in a particular and solemn application to him ; and our dependence on him for help, and trust in him, and our conviction and sense of his sufficiency for us, tends greatly to strengthen these views, feelings and exercises of the heart, and to excite and maintain the constant exercise of them ; and to form the mind more and more to a preparedness to receive them, as a free gift from God, and to render the blessings which are asked, more sweet, and of greater worth to the soul. In this view, the reasonableness of prayer, and the great encouragement to practise it, are evident.

3. From the foregoing, it appears, that prayer is a real, proper and necessary mean of obtaining and receiving blessings from God ; and as much so, as if he were not omniscient and unchangeable. Though God has determined to bestow blessings on men, this does not exclude the means by which they are to be received, but necessarily supposes and includes them ; and prayer

is one of them. Therefore, when God had declared by the Prophet Ezekiel, what blessings he determined to bestow on his church and people, he nevertheless said, "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them."*

4. Hence it appears, that God hears the prayers of his people, and regards them as much, and as really answers them, and they receive blessings as really and as much by this mean, and in answer to them, as if he were not unchangeable. Therefore, there is as much reason and as great encouragement to pray, as if he were changeable : Yea, and much more ; for it has been shown, that if he were not unchangeable, there could be no safety in trusting in him, or encouragement to pray to him.

5. The satisfaction and pleasure that is to be enjoyed by the christian in prayer and devotion, is a sufficient reason for it, and encouragement to practise it, if there were no other. This is not performed by the pious christian as a task and burdensome duty ; but as a privilege and high enjoyment. The benevolent friends of God, have great support, enjoyment and happiness in casting all their care upon Him, and expressing the desires of their heart to him ; and " by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, making known their requests to him. They would pray, were it only for the enjoyment which they have in exercise, and say in their hearts, " I will call upon God as long as I live : " While others restrain prayer before God, and say, " What is the Almighty, that we should serve him ? And what profit should we have, if we pray unto him ? They are pleased with the way which is opened for sinners access to God by an infinitely worthy Mediator, and admire the divine condescension and grace in this. And though they be certain that God is unchangeable, this does not tend to

* Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

prevent,

prevent, or in the least abate the pleasure and enjoyment they have in making known their requests to God, or their desire constantly to practise it ; but this truth gives them support and consolation, and increases their delight in calling upon God : And were not God unchangeable, they would see no reason, nor feel any encouragement to pray unto him, or even *dare* to ask any thing of him, as has been observed.

II. CHRISTIAN practice consists in part, in a proper conduct towards our fellow men, or in that conduct of which our neighbour is the more immediate object ; and is employed in relative and social duties. And this consists wholly in obeying the law of love ; in loving our neighbour as ourselves, and in expressing and acting out this love, in the most natural and proper manner, in words and actions, on all occasions, and at all times.— All this is comprized in the two following particulars.

1. In doing justice to all with whom we have any concern and connection : In giving to every one what is his due, what he has a right to from us ; which is opposed to every instance and the least degree of dishonesty and injustice, whereby any person is injured by words or actions, in any of his interests, in his name, estate or person. The least violation of the rights of any person, by taking, or withholding from him any thing which is his due, and to which he has a right, is contrary to that comprehensive precept of Christ, of which every rational man cannot but approve in his conscience. “As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”*

2. Benevolence is expressed and acted out farther, in doing good to all men, and promoting their true interest and happiness, as far as we have opportunity, or according to our capacity, and the advantages we have to do it.

This

* Luke vi. 31.

This is necessarily included in loving our neighbour as ourselves ; and in doing to others, as we would they should do unto us : And is expressly commanded in the following words : “ As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.”*

These two generals comprehend a great number of particulars, some of which must be mentioned.

1. Speaking the truth in all cases, and at all times, in opposition to every instance and degree of falsehood, and deceiving our neighbour. This includes a punctual fulfilment of all covenants and promises we make with men ; and the careful and exact payment of all just debts ; honesty and uprightness in all our dealings with our neighbour ; taking no advantage of his weakness, ignorance or necessity, and dependence on us. And we are not only to be concerned to conduct honestly ; but to take special care and pains to appear in the view of others to do so, and guard to our utmost against all contrary appearance. Our love to Christ, to our neighbour, and ourselves, will lead to this ; and it is commanded by the Apostle Paul. He directs christians, “ To provide for things honest *in the sight of all men.*”† And this he says he took care to do himself, “ Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also *in the sight of men.*”‡

2. Taking great care and pains, and doing their utmost to live in peace with all men ; and to preserve or make peace between others with whom they have any influence and connection as far as this is possible, consistent with truth and duty. Christians live in peace with all men as far as is possible, and are peace makers, so far as is in their power, and are disposed, when it is consistent with truth and duty, to give up their own right and interest, for the sake of peace. They are concerned,

* Gal. vi. 10.

† Rom. xii. 17.

‡ 2 Cor. viii. 21.

ed, and study and endeavour to " Give no offence, neither to Jews nor Gentiles, nor to the church of God. But to please all men, in all things, not seeking their own profit, but the profit of many."*

3. Giving all the assistance and relief in their power to others who are suffering under temporal bodily wants and distresses ; being disposed to do good, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, and minister to the help and comfort of others, as far as they have ability and opportunity.† " Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"‡

4. As christian benevolence seeks the greatest good and happiness to all, so far as is consistent with the greatest general good ; and considers man as capable of infinitely better and greater good, than any carnal or worldly comfort and happiness ; and views him as infinitely miserable, unless he be renewed, and saved by Jesus Christ ; the christian is disposed to do all in his power to prevent the eternal destruction of men, and promote their salvation, by their becoming real christians. In this view he attempts, according to his ability, opportunity, and station in life, and connection with others, to instruct the ignorant, convince and reclaim the erroneous, reform the vicious, and awaken the attention of all to the great truths and important duties of christianity, " If by any means he may save some." And he exercises a constant care and watchfulness with respect to all his words and conduct before others, not to say or do any thing which would tend to prejudice them against true religion, or be any way injurious to their souls ; but on the contrary, to speak and act so, on all occasions, as shall tend to remove prejudices against the truths and ways of Christ, and lead them cordially

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* 1 Cor. x. 32, 33.

† 1 Tim. vi. 18.

‡ 1 Joh. iii. 17.

to embrace the gospel; and to cause his light so to shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father which is in heaven.* In this there is the exercise both of piety and humanity.

5. As christianity forms the true christian to a tender concern both for the temporal and eternal interest of all, and aims to conduct so as not to hurt it in any respect, but to promote it; so he is particularly tender of the character of others, and careful not to injure it, by backbiting, speaking evil of them, and slandering them. And this requires the more care and resolution, as the contrary is so common among men, and even many professing christians; and as the tongue cannot be properly bridled with respect to this, without constant care and watchfulness. Christianity forbids all slander, backbiting and speaking evil of others, as this is directly contrary to that charity or benevolence which is essential to a true christian. Therefore, he carefully avoids the practice of slander and speaking evil of others, in the following instances:

First. He does not make or spread an evil report of others, which is not true; or which magnifies the faults of which they may be guilty, and represents them worse than they really are. This he avoids, as contrary to truth, and the highest kind of slander. He will not only, not make a false report, and spread it; but will not *take up* an evil report concerning others, and spread it; merely because he has heard it asserted by others, while he has no certain evidence of the truth of it. For this is contrary to the law of love, and real slander, however commonly it may be practised by men.

Secondly. He will not speak of the evil conduct of any person, of which he knows him to be guilty, or divulge that to any one whomsoever, which is known to no one but himself, and the person who is guilty, and
which

which therefore he cannot prove to be true. For this is contrary to loving our neighbour as ourselves; and is real slander. If we ourselves should be guilty of any action which is very wrong and odious, we should not be disposed to speak of it to others, or if we should do it, it would be wrong, and an addition to our crime. And though it should be done in the view of some one person, he would have no right to discover it to any one else; but is obliged to keep it an inviolable secret in his own breast, as he cannot speak of it to any other person, consistent with loving his neighbour as himself. And if he do speak of it, and spread this evil report of his neighbour, of the truth of which he is not able to give any evidence, but his own assertion, which is no proof, he is guilty of slandering his neighbour, and it is proper that he should suffer as a slanderer. At least, he ought to be considered as a slanderer, and is justly exposed to suffer as such.*

Thirdly.

* If it should be asked, Whether the person who is really guilty of the evil deed, though there can be no legal proof of it, ought not to confess it, seeing he knows it to be true: And how can he deny it, consistent with truth? The answer is, The guilty person has no more call or right to confess and publish his fault, than if the other had not reported it, and therefore he cannot it, consistent with his duty. The other person has declared what he cannot prove; and therefore has done it in his own wrong; and it really remains as much of a secret, as if he had not asserted it. Nor is his silence and refusing to say whether he be guilty or not, in any degree, denying the fact, or intimating that the report is not true; or that it is true, and he is guilty. The person, who is in this manner accused by a single evidence who reports it, without any circumstance sufficient to confirm what he asserts, ought not to have the question put to him, Whether the report be true, and he be really guilty? Because he has no right to answer in the affirmative, if he be really guilty, agreeable to the report; and he cannot answer in the negative consistent with the truth. But if any one, imprudently, and without any right, do question him; he has a right to refuse to give any answer, in the affirmative, or the contrary. His proper answer will be to this effect: "Since my neighbour, or brother, has reported that I have been guilty of such a crime, let him prove it. If he cannot, he ought not to be believed, but must be considered as a slanderer, and is liable to suffer as such. And he who believes the report, and is disposed to treat me as if I were guilty, and takes up this report and spreads it yet farther, injures me, and is guilty of slander."

Thirdly. The christian is bound by his religion not to spread an evil report concerning his brother or neighbour, or make it more public than it already is, though there be good evidence that it is true. If he hear an ill report of his neighbour, or is a witness of some crime of which his brother is guilty, among other witnesses, he will be sorry to see, or hear such evil things; but will not go and spread them farther, by telling others of them. This would not be consistent with his loving his neighbour as himself. For if a christian be guilty of a fault, the more public it is, and the farther it is known, the more disagreeable it is to him. And it is contrary to his duty, as well as to his inclination, to publish his own faults, which otherwise might be kept more private. And he who is disposed to publish his neighbour's faults, and makes them more known than otherwise they would be, is guilty of evil speaking, and real slander. But it must be here observed, that there is an exception from this rule, when it is necessary for the public safety and good, or the security of individuals, to have the more private evil deeds, or bad general character of our neighbour made public; or when persons are called to give evidence against men, and be witnesses of their crimes before civil authority, in order to their being brought to proper punishment, for the benefit of society, and the suppression of such evil deeds. Or when this is necessary to bring an offending brother before the church, that he may be brought to repentance, or rejected and cast out. And in that case the most private steps are first to be taken, in order to bring him to repentance more privately, as has been observed in the section on church discipline.

Fourthly. While a christian is disposed not to publish the faults of others, to make them known, or speak freely of them; but to hide and cover them, as far as consistent

ent with the public good, and the safety of his neighbour, and his duty ; he will be ready to say every thing, which he can with truth, and consistent with his duty, in the favour of those in whom he sees some, and perhaps many faults. He will be more ready to speak of the good part of their character, than of the bad, and of those things which are commendable in them. And will appear in their cause, and vindicate them, when they appear to be too severely censured, and unjustly condemned.

6. Christian practice includes the faithful and punctual performance of all relative duties, founded in the different relations and stations in which persons stand in this life. These are various, and call for different and various duties ; but may be all comprehended in the different relations included in superiours, inferiours, and equals. Love will form the christian to the duties required in those different relations ; and they all consist in expressing this love in all proper ways in those different relations.

The first relations which are the foundation of all others, are those which commonly take place in a family, which require different duties. The heads of a family are generally the parents, husband and wife. It is the duty of the sexes in general, to enter into the marriage relation with each other, unless their circumstances be so ordered, in divine providence, as to be inconsistent with this. The standing command to mankind, is to multiply and fill the earth, in this way, with inhabitants. And the command is, " Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." And there is no marriage but this of *one* husband with *one* wife, consistent with the divine institution, or the good of mankind. This is a peculiar and near relation, suited to the comfort and happiness of human life ; and real christianity exalts the enjoyment and happiness

ness of this relation unspeakably, when it takes place in a proper degree in each party. - The union consists in love. The husband is the superiour, and the wife is the inferiour. They are by love to serve each other, by mutually promoting each other's comfort and usefulness, and everlasting happiness. The inferiority and submission of the wife, when expressed properly in the acts of love, will be in no respect disagreeable, but pleasing, and greatly contribute to the happiness of the relation. The superiority of the husband, expressed in the most tender love, in supporting, protecting, honouring, and nourishing his wife, is suited to render the relation as complete and happy, as any can be in this life.

Their natural affections to their children, will give them pleasure in ministering to them, and providing for them. But christian benevolence will operate strongly to prompt them to give them a religious education, to govern, instruct, exhort, and persuade them to the exercise and practice of piety, training them up for Christ.

The children, as soon as they become pious, and are capable of expressing a christian spirit, will be all obedience and submission to their parents, and will delight to please, comfort and honour them in all proper ways. As brethren and sisters they will be united in the most sweet bonds of christian love, added to their natural affection to each other, living in the most happy peace and harmony, and striving to serve and please each other in constant acts of kindness. And if there be any other domestics, they will quietly, and with fidelity, prudence and cheerfulness, do the duty of their place, so as to be most useful and comfortable to every member of the family, taking care that nothing be wasted and lost; but that the best interest of the family is secured and promoted. Thus regulated and happy is every family, where the true spirit and practice of christianity take place, in a proper manner and degree.

Different

Different families, and the individual members of them, are connected with others by natural relation, near neighbourhood, &c. from whence arise a number of duties, which are to be practised towards them, according to their character, circumstances and stations in life, whether superiours, equals or inferiours ; whether virtuous or vicious, friends or enemies. Christianity requires such a conduct towards all, as shall express uprightness, humility, meekness, and good will to all, however different their relation to us, or their character may be. A forgiving spirit, and love of benevolence to enemies, is peculiar to a christian, and essential to his character. However they may hate him, and injure and abuse him, he will not be disposed to revenge himself, or do or wish them the least hurt ; but will freely forgive them, and wish they may enjoy the highest good ; and be as ready to do them good, and pray for them, as if they did not hate him, and had not injured him. In the practice of this, christian benevolence appears in the true, distinguishing nature, beauty and excellence of it : And is therefore particularly and repeatedly enjoined by Christ on his disciples. He says, “ If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.”*

Christianity lays the best and only foundation for true friendship ; by the influence, and in the exercise of this, friends may be formed, and the most endearing and happy friendship take place, and be cultivated. There is a peculiar friendship between christians. They love one another with a peculiar love of benevolence and complacency ; And therefore are disposed, as they are commanded,

* Matth. v. 44. vi. 25.

commanded, to acts of beneficence and kindness to such especially and in the first place.* But they who are most acquainted with each other, will exercise and enjoy this friendship to a much higher degree. They take a peculiar pleasure in conversing with each other, in which they are under no restraint, opening to one another their sentiments, and their hearts, with great freedom. They put great confidence in each other, and are faithful in keeping the secrets which are between them, and in doing good to each other, and praying for one another; and expressing their love and friendship in all proper ways, while it is in a great measure concealed from the men of the world.

The christian, considered as a citizen, and a member of civil society, connected and supported by civil government, is a peaceable and useful member, sincerely seeking the public good, and ready to promote it in all proper ways, acting with fidelity and discretion, according to his ability, circumstances and station, whether he be a ruler or subject. As a subject, he submits to civil authority, and obeys, and does what he can to support the laws of civil society, carefully performing every social duty, desiring to "lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." And as a good and faithful member of the community, he will be ready to join with them in all necessary and proper ways to defend themselves from the unreasonable and violent assaults which others may make upon them, to destroy them.

Every christian is, or ought to be, a member of some particular church or society of christians, united in solemn covenant, to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, support and promote his cause and kingdom; maintain his worship and ordinances; and watch over, and assist each other, in christian love, and mutual forbearance, tenderness, and faithfulness. The nature and design of such

a church, have been considered above. This is a society distinct from civil, or worldly communities, and independent of them, and there are relative duties peculiar to the members of such churches. They are to pay a particular respect to the elders of the churches, to esteem them very highly for the sake of their work; and give them double honour; not only by attending upon their ministry, and submitting to them, when they declare the truths and duties which Christ has revealed and commanded; but also by giving them a sufficient and decent support. They have much duty to do to one another, in faithfully attending to that discipline which Christ has instituted, and practising it with prudence, impartiality and resolution. They are also to provide liberally for the poor of the church, and freely to contribute for the supply of their bodily wants, so that none shall suffer for the want of the necessaries of life. And it is not only the duty of individuals to give relief to particular persons, when they see them to stand in need of their help; but they ought to contribute a sufficient sum, to be lodged in the hands of the deacons, to enable them to give full relief to all the needy of the church; whose duty it is to acquaint themselves with those who may want, and with prudence and faithfulness to distribute, so as in the best and most private manner to relieve and comfort them. If the institution and command of Christ with respect to this, were in any good measure observed, every member of his churches would be so supplied with the necessaries for the body, that they would have no occasion to apply to the men of the world, or to any worldly society for help and relief.

These duties of christians, as members of churches, are expressions of piety, and have been mentioned as such; but they are also relative duties, of humanity and mercy: While every one attends to the duties of

his place and station, according to the grace which is given unto him, so as to promote the peace and comfort of every individual, and the edification of the whole body.

III. THERE are duties included in christian practice, which have a more immediate respect to himself, his own person, while they have a more remote respect to God and his neighbour.

Universal, disinterested benevolence, which is opposed to selfishness, desires and seeks the highest happiness of all, and therefore of the benevolent person himself, so far as is consistent with the good of others, and the greatest general good. And as his individual person is more immediately under his care, and as he is under greater advantage to take care of his own personal interest, than others commonly are ; and as there are certain exercises and duties which respect himself more immediately, which are necessary for his own personal comfort and greatest happiness, as well as for the greatest good of others ; these are essential to the christian character, and necessarily implied, in loving our neighbour *as ourselves*. These duties may be ranked under the following heads.

1. Temperance and frugality in eating and drinking. The body requires constant nourishment by food and drink ; and what of this is necessary for health, and to preserve a person in a state most fit to answer the proper ends of life, is commonly taken with pleasure. But all excess and intemperance in eating or drinking, is hurtful to the intemperate person, and injurious to others with whom he is connected. The christian therefore is bound by the law of love to be temperate in all things ; and to eat and drink for strength and health, and so that he may be best fitted for the duties of his station, and promote his own greatest enjoyment and happiness, and that

that of others. In this he is obliged to consult his own constitution, experience and circumstances, that he may find what degree and kind of food and drink is best suited for his health and usefulness ; and not to gratify and indulge his appetites any farther than is necessary to answer these ends ; but to keep his body under and bring it into subjection to these rules. And in this way alone he can eat and drink, not unto himself, but to the glory of God.

2. Frugality, decency and prudence in apparel. The christian is to put on nothing superfluous, or to gratify pride, or any lust ; but only that which is necessary, and best suited to answer the ends of clothing, in which some regard is to be had to a person's station, business and circumstances in life. The christian, whatever apparel he is obliged to wear, or thinks proper to put on, ought to take care to be, and appear neat and clean, as the contrary is indecent, and tends to injure the health of the body. The short, but comprehensive and important command of Christ, being strictly and judiciously observed, would regulate and fix the christian's practice, both in eating and drinking, and in putting on apparel ;
 "LET NOTHING BE LOST."

3. Chastity in thought, speech and behaviour, is an important christian duty. This is strictly commanded, and much insisted upon in the scripture. Christians are commanded to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness."*—
 "But fornication and all uncleanness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints. This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication : That every one of you should

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know

* Rom. xiii. 14. Gal. v. 19.

know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.”* The strictest chastity is most for the comfort and happiness and honour of those who practise it, and for the benefit of all with whom they are connected ; and every thing contrary to this, has the most pernicious and fatal tendency, and is injurious in a greater or less degree to those who indulge it, and those with whom they are concerned : Therefore, strict chastity is obedience to the law of universal benevolence ; and the contrary, and every thing which tends to it, is opposed to this. There is no virtue more recommended in scripture, than inviolable chastity and continence ; and no vice more condemned, and the evil consequences more exposed, both in the historical and preceptive parts of scripture, than incontinence and uncleanness. This is particularly done by Solomon in his address to young persons in the first chapters of his proverbs, which is proposed as a proper example for all parents, in their instructing and warning their children. Youth are most exposed to violate the rules of strict chastity ; therefore, have need of instruction, warning and restraint, on this head, and ought to keep at the greatest distance from the contrary vice, and carefully shun every temptation and snare, by which they may be decoyed, as thousands have been, and never have recovered from the evil consequences. Therefore, the young christian is under the greatest obligations to “ Flee youthful lusts.”

4. A careful government and suppression of all those passions, which disturb and ruffle the mind, and unfit persons for duty, and make them uncomfortable to themselves and to others. As christians ought to govern their bodily inclinations and appetites ; and not to gratify, but suppress and mortify all those, so far as they tend to hurt themselves or others ; so they are under obligation

* Eph. v. 3. 1 Thess. vi. 3, 4.

obligation to regulate and govern their mental passions ; and so to rule their own spirits, as to suppress and lay aside all the angry, unruly passions, which are the production of selfishness and pride ; and render themselves unhappy, so far as they are indulged : And, on the contrary, they are commanded to maintain and constantly to exercise a calm, gentle, meek, peaceable, patient spirit, which are the natural attendants and genuine fruit of benevolence, and necessary in order to the christian's proper possession and enjoyment of himself, and attendance on the duties of christianity. " He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city. He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."* Agreeable to this are the apostolic injunctions. " Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."† " Let your moderation be known unto all men."‡ " The wisdom that is from above, is peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated."§ " Charity suffereth long, and is kind ; charity envieth not ; is not easily provoked ; thinketh no evil."¶

5. A constant and careful cultivation and improvement of the mind, in seeking, pursuing and acquiring useful knowledge, and wisdom. Solomon says " It is not good that the soul be without knowledge." This is the life and enjoyment of the mind ; and is unspeakably the highest and most noble kind of enjoyment, of which a rational creature is capable. All the knowledge which a person of an honest and good heart obtains, is useful to him, and puts him under advantage to be

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* Prov. xvi. 32. xxv. 28.

† Eph. iv. 31, 32.

‡ Phil. vi. 5.

§ Jam. iii. 17.

¶ 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.

more useful to others. This is not to be obtained, and a constant progress made in it, without labour, by diligent attention and inquiry, in the improvement of all those helps and advantages with which we are furnished. The objects of knowledge are various, and infinite ; and the knowledge of any of them is not useless to a mind well disposed, and every branch and degree of knowledge is suited to improve such a mind ; it really adds to its existence, and increases true wisdom, in a wise and benevolent heart. Some objects are more important, grand and excellent than others, and men have more concern and connection with some, than with others ; and therefore the knowledge of them is proportionably more excellent, important and useful. And that knowledge which is of the moral kind, and implies a good taste and right exercises of heart ; and is therefore the knowledge of the great objects and truths which respect the moral world, and belong to that, is the most important and excellent kind of knowledge, and does most enlarge the soul, and gives the highest degree of enjoyment. This kind of knowledge is therefore to be sought in the first place, and with the greatest thirst and engagedness of mind.

And as God is infinitely the greatest part of existence, and includes the sum of all the natural and moral world, and the knowledge of his moral character includes the knowledge of his laws, moral government, and kingdom, and of all morality, and of every thing necessary to be known in the moral world ; the knowledge of God, is in scripture considered, as comprehending the whole.—

“ And this is life eternal, that they might *know thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”*

“ Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”†

“ If

* John xvii. 3.

† Phil. iii. 8.

"If thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding : If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her, as for hid treasures ; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord ; and find the knowledge of God."* "Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth : For in these things I delight, saith the Lord."† This is the knowledge which includes true understanding and wisdom, of which Solomon speaks so much in his writings. It is the duty and interest of every christian to make advances in this knowledge, and in all kinds of knowledge and speculations for which he has opportunity ; as subservient and advantageous to this. In this way he is to "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

And this is one end which the christian ought to have in view, among others, in his devotions and prayers, and in his daily reading and studying the "Holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, being 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."‡ This is one end of his constant attendance on public instruction, and the preaching of the gospel, that by hearing the word, he may *understand* it, and bring forth fruit. For this end he is to meditate, read and study, as he has opportunity, that he may improve and advance in useful knowledge : "Trying all things, and holding fast that which is good." And this ought to be one end in his conversing with his neighbours, and christian friends. He ought not only to study to speak to their benefit and edification, but to converse in order to get instruction himself, and im-

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* Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5. † Jer. ix. 24. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 15, 16, 17.

prove his own mind in knowledge and understanding ; and will therefore “ Be swift to hear, and slow to speak.” And, in this view he will avoid, as much as may be, all trifling and vain company, as well as that which is worse ; and he will be ready to obey the command given by Solomon, “ Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge.”*— And, on the contrary, he will seek the company of the serious and wise, from whom he may hope to get instruction. “ For he that walketh with wise men, shall be wise : But a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”†

6. The christian is diligent and faithful in attending to, and prosecuting the business of his particular calling, in which he is fixed by divine providence, in opposition to sloth, idleness, and mispense of time. He attends to his own proper calling and business, and pursues that with industry, prudence, and diligence, and is not a busy body in other mens matters ; not an idle tattler, and brawler, going from house to house, and spending his time in idle chat, which is of no advantage to himself or to any one else, but the contrary : But abides in his own calling, steadily prosecuting his business, doing every thing in the proper time and season. He does not sit up late, when there is no particular and extraordinary call to it, which tends to injure his health, and unfit him for his proper business, or prevent his rising early to attend in the proper season on the duties of his calling. Thus, he conscientiously and with care obeys the command, “ Not to be slothful in his business ; fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ; abiding with diligence in the same calling, wherein he is called.”‡

REFLECTIONS.

* Prov. xiv. 7. † Prov. xiii. 20. ‡ Rom. xii. 11. 1 Cor. vii. 20.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

I. FROM the above brief sketch of christian practice, and the character of a true christian, it appears that christianity is in the best manner suited to make those happy in this world, and forever, who cordially embrace and practise it ; and to render society, whether public, or more private, beautiful and happy.

So far as the true spirit, and proper practice of christianity takes place, it delivers each subject of it from those passions and lusts, which war against the soul and contain evil and unhappiness, even in the indulgence of them ; and it forms them to those views and exercises, respecting the most grand and excellent objects, and that practice, in which they enjoy peace of mind, and conscience, and have the best and highest kind of enjoyment of which the human nature is capable, which never can cloy or cease ; but is in the nature of it reasonable, pure and permanent. And it forms the christian to the highest and most excellent kind of social felicity. It constitutes the best, most perfect and happy society that can be imagined, or that is possible. It spreads the most happy peace through the whole community, however large it may be, fixes every one in his proper place, and makes him useful to the whole ; and at the same time gives each individual the highest satisfaction and pleasure, in being a member of such a society, composed of the most excellent friends to each other, and to him ; and he as a friend to every member of the society, and to the whole, enjoys the good and happiness of the whole, to the extent of his capacity. Christianity forms society to the strongest, most permanent and happy union, so far as the true spirit of it is imbibed, and carried into practice. It binds them together by the strong, everlasting and most perfect bond, charity, or christian LOVE.

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And it must appear to all who properly use their reason, that piety, and the practice of it, is essential to the best good and greatest happiness of society, and of individuals in this world. It is that love which unites men to God and the Redeemer, and forms them to all the acts of piety, and gives them the highest enjoyment; which at the same time unites them to each other, and forms them to all social duties and enjoyments. The latter cannot exist without the former. Where there is no piety, there may be a sort of union in society, and a degree of enjoyment, in imitation of christian social virtues and duties; but it must be a low, mean thing, without any real benevolence, or proper, lasting foundation; and therefore not to be depended upon.

How greatly mistaken then are they, who do not consider the exercise and practice of piety, as any part of social happiness, or in the least advantageous to it, and leave christianity wholly out of their idea and scheme of public virtue, and social happiness! It is impossible there should be any great degree of personal or public social happiness, without christian piety and morality, founded on christian principles: And so far only, as these take place, personal and public happiness is secured and promoted. And they must certainly have a low, debased, and corrupt taste for enjoyment and happiness, who think they can be more happy, both personally, and in society, without real christianity than with it; and are expecting and seeking it for themselves and the public, in opposition to christian practice, and in disregard to the laws of Christ, and by an open violation of them. Their enjoyment, considered personally and by themselves, or in society, must be mean and low at best, and very unworthy of man, who is made capable of unspeakably higher and more noble happiness in his own mind, independent of others, or in society, in the exercise and practice

practice of christianity, and the social virtues and conduct which it prescribes.

It will be asked by some, Whether all this be not confuted by fact and experience, since christianity has not rendered societies and kingdoms happy, where it has been generally received and professed; and has been the means of the contrary, and produced contentions, cruel persecutions, and wars: And christians have contended with christians, and persecuted and destroyed each other?

ANSWER. That christianity has had no better and no more happy effect, where it has been in a sense received and professed, has not been owing to the nature and tendency of it; but to the abuse of it, and opposition to it, and a refusal cordially to receive it, and practise agreeable to the spirit, and revealed laws of it. By this it has been perverted to very bad purposes, and made the occasion of great mischief and unhappiness among men. Any one may be certain of this, by attending to the Bible, and well observing what are the principles, rules and practice, there inculcated and prescribed; and what would be the certain effect, if they were cordially received and obeyed. We must consult the Bible if we would know what christianity is; what are the truths there revealed, and what disposition, exercises and practises it does recommend and enjoin. And in this way alone can we learn, and be able to judge of the nature and tendency of it, and see how far it has been abused and perverted by men. He who will attend to the Bible with impartiality, candour and discerning, will be sure, that whenever the truths and religion there revealed shall be properly received, and reduced to practice by all the people; and christianity shall have a genuine and complete effect, it will effectually banish all the evils which now take place in society among men, whether more
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private or public, by putting an end to all unrighteousness and oppression, unfaithfulness and fraud ; to all contention and war, pride, ambition and selfishness, and to the indulgence of every lust, in word or conduct, which tends to evil, or to hurt any one. And on the contrary, it will introduce that uprightness, and universal righteousness in practice, that benevolence, and beneficence to all, every one taking his proper place, and doing the duties of it, so as to advance the good of the whole ; which will spread universal peace, prosperity and happiness, through the whole society, nation or kingdom : And that nothing can destroy or disturb, the peace, good order and happiness of society, but a deviation from the truths and duties inculcated in the holy scriptures.

The scripture foretels the evils of which the gospel would be the occasion, by the abuse of it ; and the opposition which would be made to it ; and the corruption and apostacy, both in doctrine and practice, which should take place among the professors of christianity, which would be the occasion of persecution, and innumerable calamities. And these having actually taken place as they were predicted, is so far from being an objection to the truth and excellency of christianity, that hereby is exhibited a standing evidence of its divine original ; and may justly be considered, as a pledge of the advantage and happiness which it shall produce in this world, in the last days, when it shall have its proper effect on the hearts and lives of mankind, which is also foretold.

The salutary influence christianity has had already in the world, forming men to be peaceable, harmless, and useful members of society, in the practice of righteousness and goodness, where the dictates of it have been in any measure properly regarded and obeyed, of which there have been many instances, is sufficient to convince every candid mind, that when it shall be no longer abused
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and perverted to evil purposes, by men of perverse minds, but universally understood, embraced and practised; it will render mankind and society, unspeakably more happy than they have ever yet been, or can be, while men are ignorant of it, or refuse to regard and obey its dictates. That there is such a happy era coming, is abundantly foretold in the divine oracles, when by the influence and power of the gospel, in the hand of the exalted Redeemer, he will reign universally in the hearts of men, and they shall obey him; and the happy effect of christianity shall be seen in fact and experience, in extirpating all unrighteousness and violence from the earth, and introducing universal peace, love and beneficence, when men shall learn war no more; but practise all the social virtues, each one in his proper sphere; honestly and wisely seeking and promoting the greatest public good, and the happiness of every individual, so far as he has ability and advantage.

But the most complete and happy effect of christianity will take place, and appear in the fulness, importance and glory of it, when the kingdom of Christ shall be brought to perfection in the future state; when the most beautiful, harmonious and happy society will be formed by it, in the exercise of love to God and to one another, by which the most perfect union, and the highest possible happiness shall exist forever. Here then we are to look, to see what is the nature and genuine tendency of christianity; and what will be the happy effect of it to individuals, and to society, when it has overcome all opposition, and shall reign in perfection, in the heart and practice of every member of the kingdom of Christ.

II. FROM this view of christian practice, and it being thus in all respects suited to promote the good of mankind and the welfare and happiness of society in this

this world, arises a strong and forcible argument that the Bible is from God, and christianity has a divine original.

They who reject the Bible as a revelation from God, do generally confess that the rules of moral conduct contained in it are suited to promote the good of society, and the peace and happiness of mankind in this world: And that christian morality, and attendance on the institutions of the christian religion, public worship and instruction, tend to promote civility and good order among men, and the political good of society. In this they appear to be really inconsistent with themselves, and confute their own creed. For this being granted (and grant it they must, or deny what is evident from reason and fact) the inference is clear and strong, that the Bible is a revelation from heaven.

Were the Bible a contrivance of man, of one man, or any number of men, who joined to form a plan to promote the good of society, it cannot be reasonably supposed there would be no gross mistakes in it; or that it would be suited to promote the good of society in every age, and different nations of the world, and in all the various and different circumstances of mankind, under all the different forms of civil government, as it really is. Much less can this be supposed, when it is written by different men, unknown to each other, in various ages and nations, and widely differing in their education, and particular tastes, habits and customs. That a book should be written by these men, in such circumstances, on so many different occasions, which, when carefully examined, contains one consistent system of rules for moral life, suited to the comfort and happiness of every individual, and the greatest good of all human societies; and in this respect far exceed the best code of civil laws that was ever invented, without any light and assistance from this book, is the most incredible position that can be asserted.

CONCLUSION.

C O N C L U S I O N.

HAVING diligently and with care examined the holy scriptures to find what is that system of doctrines, truths and duties revealed there; and endeavoured to state them, and set them in a proper and clear light; and having at length finished what was proposed and undertaken, we may now look back, and upon a general review of the whole, it is presumed that the following conclusions may be deduced with clear and abundant evidence.

I. THAT there is a connection, consistence and harmony in the system of truths, taken from the holy scriptures, stated and explained in the foregoing work.

Care and pains have been taken to support and prove each by the sacred oracles; but it is hoped that all these considered collectively, and the whole put together, and joined in one system, will, "like an arch, add strength and firmness to each part," and increase the evidence that every doctrine that has been advanced as important truth, is indeed contained in the Bible, and so essential to the whole, that it cannot be excluded and rejected without marring, and in a sense rejecting all the rest, which are connected with it, and really implied in it. It is certain, that doctrines inconsistent with each other are not to be found in divine revelation. If any two or more truths are plainly revealed, between which we cannot see the consistence, we may be sure they are consistent with each other, and that it is owing to our ignorance, and to some mistake we are making, that we do not see them to agree perfectly. But when the agreement and consistence of every important doctrine revealed in the Bible is discerned, this gives satisfaction to the

mind, and casts a lustre of light and beauty over the whole. No pains therefore ought to be spared in examining the Bible, in this view, that we may learn what are the doctrines there revealed ; and be able to see their connection and consistence.

There is one chain, or consistent scheme of truth, which runs through the whole of the Bible. And every doctrine contained in this divine plan, is not only consistent with the rest, but as much a part of the whole, as is each link of a chain, so that not one can be broken or taken out, without spoiling, or at least injuring the chain. In this view, the foregoing system is offered to the examination of all, who are willing to search the Bible daily, and in the light of that, to try every doctrine that has been advanced, that they may find, whether they be agreeable to the scripture, and consistent with each other, or not ; and accordingly receive or reject them. It is not pretended, that every particular article which has been mentioned, as matter of conjecture or probable, of which there are some instances ; or that is considered as more evident from scripture, than the opposite, is essential to the system. If it be consistent with the whole, it may be received, though it be not essential ; and if it should be thought by any, not worthy to be received, or not so evident from scripture as the contrary, it may be rejected, and the contrary believed, perhaps, as consistent with the system of connected truth. Of this every one will judge for himself. And though persons may differ in their judgment on some sentiments of this description, which have been mentioned ; yet they may agree in receiving every doctrine which is essential to a system of truth, which is harmonious in every part, and forms one connected, consistent plan of divine truth. But if any doctrine be denied and rejected, which is a necessary part of the system of truth revealed in the scripture,

ture, or which is really implied in it, the connection is hereby broken, and the whole system is destroyed; and every truth contained in it, is implicitly given up and denied: As a chain is broken and spoiled, by taking away one link of it; and a well cemented and strong arch is broken down and demolished, by removing a small, but necessary part of it. From this it follows,

II. THAT there is no other scheme, or system of supposed truth, which is connected and consistent with itself, through the whole of it.

This follows as a necessary conclusion from the foregoing. If that be true therefore, this must be also true. There is but one consistent plan of religious truth, which is revealed in the scripture; and another cannot be invented, or exist, which is consistent with itself in every part. Therefore, if we can find what is the system of doctrines revealed in the Bible (and this we may and shall do, if it be not wholly our own fault) we may be sure no other, which is throughout consistent, can be found, or is possible. As every divine revealed truth is perfectly consistent with the whole truth; and every doctrine comes in, to make and complete one whole, and is so connected as to make one uniform system, which is not capable of any alteration, without rendering it imperfect: So error and false doctrine, is always necessarily inconsistent with itself; and no system of error can be invented, which is not inconsistent, and does not imply a contradiction. Thus error is always crooked, and cannot be made straight. False doctrines may be, and often have been advanced, and formed into a sort of a system, and have a degree of connection and agreement with each other, and may be joined with some truths; and be made to appear plausible, and even consistent with all truth, to a superficial; undiscerning eye;

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and especially to a mind filled with prejudices against the truth, and real disgust of it. But when these doctrines, or system of errors, are critically examined by a discerning mind, they will be found to imply gross inconsistencies and contradictions. And a mind thus prejudiced, and disaffected with the great truths of divine revelation, may view them as inconsistent with reason, and with each other, and think he finds innumerable contradictions in the Bible; and consequently reject it, and embrace what appears to him a more consistent, or at least a more pleasing scheme. But nothing is obtained by this, but a temporary pleasing dream, and delusion; which when properly examined will appear to consist in confusion and self contradiction, and if followed in the natural and genuine tendency of it, will land the infidel in total darkness, and universal scepticism, the greatest of all contradictions and absurdities. This has been verified by numerous facts in the christian world; and instances of it are multiplying at this day.

Those doctrines, which are inconsistent with the absolute supremacy and independence of God; his omniscience, unchangeableness, and infinite felicity; his infinite wisdom, rectitude and goodness, must be false doctrines; and all that are connected with them, and follow from them, must be also contrary to the truth, and are an implicit denial of the being of the true God, and inconsistent with any proper acknowledgment of him. The denial of the decrees of God, and that he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass, and all those doctrines which are implied in this, and follow from it, are inconsistent with this true character of God, and therefore are false doctrines, and an implicit denial of the being of the only true God, and inconsistent with all true piety, and if followed in their true consequences, will lead to universal scepticism, darkness and delusion.

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Those tenets relating to human liberty, and that moral agency of man, necessary in order to render him capable of virtue or vice, praise or blame, which are inconsistent with the decrees of God fixing all events, and all the actions of men, are inconsistent with the divine character, and even with the existence of God; are inconsistent with the holy scripture; and are inconsistent with themselves, implying self contradiction, and the greatest absurdity; which, it is supposed, has been in some measure made manifest in the foregoing work. And without mentioning more particulars, it is left to the candid, considerate reader to examine every doctrine which has been proposed in this view; and it is presumed that he will find the whole, and especially all the leading sentiments, not only consistent with each other, but with the being, perfections and character of God, revealed in the scripture; and that no other scheme of doctrine can be consistent with these, or with itself; but tends to infidelity, and to remove all important, religious truth: And if so, and he be disposed to receive the truth in the love of it, his mind will by this be more established in the truth, and know it, and that no lie is of the truth; but that this is the true God, and eternal life.* And the farther he proceeds in the line of truth, and the more clear and comprehensive view he obtains of it, the greater will be his confidence and assurance that this is the only system of doctrines, which is agreeable to the divine perfections, the word of God, and with itself; and that these are the doctrines which are according to godliness: And the greater satisfaction and joy will he have, in contemplating, loving and obeying them.

III. It appears from the whole of the foregoing, that it is of great importance, that the doctrines and truths contained in divine revelation, should be understood, be-

lieved and loved ; that this is necessarily implied in the exercise and practice of true religion, without which there is no salvation.

If this were not important and necessary, there would be little or no need of a divine revelation. This is a revelation of a system of truth, and of duty ; the foundation and reason of which is the revealed truth ; and all obedience consists in knowing, loving and obeying the truth. Therefore, were there no doctrines, no truth and articles of faith revealed, no duty or obedience could be enjoined, or known. The Bible reveals a system of truth : It reveals the being and character of God ; his works and designs ; the state and character of man ; the person and character of the Redeemer ; his work and designs, and the way of salvation by him ; what God does, and what man must be and do, in order to his salvation ; The Bible opens the invisible world to men, and sets before them the great, important truths relating to the invisible eternal kingdom of Christ ; And there cannot be one exercise of piety or charity, or any duty of either of these performed by any man, unless it be in the view of those revealed truths, or in conformity to them.

The holy scripture therefore, represents the knowledge and belief of the truth, as necessary to salvation. That faith, without which men cannot be saved, is " The belief of the truth." " He that believeth shall be saved." This supposes some truth to be believed ; and what can this be but the truths of the gospel ; the truth, to which Christ came to bear witness ? Were there no revealed truths, there would be nothing to be believed ; no objects of faith ; for faith is a belief of the truth. Surely none will say, saving faith consists in believing nothing, or in believing a lie ! Christ speaks of the knowledge of the truth, as necessary in order to salvation, and peculiar to his followers. " If any man will do his will, he

he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.”* “And ye shall know *the truth*, and *the truth* shall make you free.”† “Sanctify them through *thy truth*, *thy word is truth*.”‡ When the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.”§ The Apostle Paul represents the great design of the gospel to be, to bring christians to a union in knowledge and faith, or a belief and practice of truth. “Till we all come in the *unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every *wind of doctrine*, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. But *speaking the truth in love*, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.”|| He speaks of the *doctrine which is according to godliness*, as necessary to be known and obeyed by every christian.¶ He directs Timothy to “Hold fast the form of sound words,” which he had heard of him.** By the form of sound words, nothing can be meant, but the system of gospel doctrines, which the Apostle taught, and in which he had instructed Timothy. And he was to hold fast those sound words, those wholesome, important, solid truths, by meditating upon them, and maintaining and preaching them. Which is the same with holding and preaching *sound doctrines*, and being sound in the faith, which he repeatedly mentions.

And the knowledge and belief of the truth revealed in the Bible, is so important and essential to a christian, that all christian practice is denoted by obeying the truth, “Obeying from the heart the form of doctrine which has been delivered to them.”†† Doing the truth,

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* John vii. 17. † John viii. 32. ‡ John xvii. 17. § John xvi. 13.
 ¶ Eph. iv. 14, 15. ¶ 1 Tim. vi. 3. ** 2 Tim. i. 13. †† Rom. vi. 17.

and walking in the truth.* And christians are exhorted to "Contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints."† The faith which had been delivered to the church, can be nothing but the system of doctrines contained in divine revelation; the truths implied and exhibited in the gospel, which were to be believed and maintained by christians. The Apostle Paul, in all his epistles, shews how important the doctrines and truths of the gospel are, and the necessity of their being understood and embraced, in order to be saved: That the gospel consists essentially in these; which therefore is overthrown and destroyed, by embracing and promoting the opposite errors. Christ says to Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, *that I should bear witness unto the truth.*"‡ By *the truth* here, is not meant one particular truth, but all the truths and doctrines of divine revelation; the system of truth, in which the gospel consists. This sets the importance of the doctrines of the gospel, and the necessity of understanding, believing and practising them, in a striking light. For to oppose, or neglect and live in ignorance of these, is to oppose or slight that, which Christ came into the world to establish and promote. If the doctrines of the gospel be rejected, or overlooked and not understood, the only foundation of christian faith and practice is removed, and there remains nothing to be believed, and no duty to be done.

Hence it appears, how contrary to reason and scripture, and to common sense, that position is, which has been espoused and maintained by many, either expressly or by implication, viz. That it is of no importance what men believe, or whether they believe the truths contained in divine revelation, or not, if their external conduct be regular and good. This position is of the most dangerous

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* John iii. 21. 3 John 4.

† Jude 3.

‡ John xviii. 37.

ous and evil tendency : For it wholly sets the gospel aside, and excludes that as altogether needless, which Christ says, he came into the world to establish and promote. According to this it is of no importance whether christians act from principle, or not, or from what principle they act, if they act from any ; or whether they believe or understand one truth contained in the gospel ; or disbelieve and reject all. This makes all creeds and confessions of faith, or bearing witness to the truth, entirely useless and vain : And according to this, no candidate for admission into a church, or to the work of the ministry, ought to be examined as to his understanding and knowledge, or belief of any doctrine contained in divine revelation, as any qualification necessary in order to his being admitted : For however ignorant he may be of the principles of Christ, or whatever he believes, he may be as good a christian, and as fit for an officer and teacher in the church, as any other person whatever.

And the directions and commands which the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy and Titus, respecting the sound doctrines of the gospel, were highly improper ; or, at least, are out of date now. Such are the following :—
 “ I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, that thou mightest charge some that they teach *no other doctrine*. Take heed to thyself, *and to thy doctrine*. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *to the doctrine which is according to godliness*, he is proud, knowing nothing. *Hold fast the form of sound words*, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*
 “ A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, holding

* 1 Tim. i. 3. iv. 16. vi. 3, 4. 2 Tim. i. 13. ii. 2.

holding fast the *faithful word*, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by *sound doctrine*, both to exhort and to convince gainayers, whose mouths must be stopped. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be *found in the faith*. But speak thou the things which become *sound doctrine*. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works : *In doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity ; sound speech that cannot be condemned.*”*

The consequence and evil tendency of the sentiment now under consideration, appears from fact. That which is now called liberality of sentiment, and catholicism, which is spreading far and wide, and is celebrated by multitudes, as a most excellent, noble way of thinking, has its foundation in this. This liberality and catholicism, discards all attachment to any particular system of truth, or belief of any distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, as useless and hurtful ; and holds that it is no matter what a man's religious creed or practice is, or whether he regards any, or not ; as he may be a good man, and go to heaven without any thing of this kind. This really renounces the Bible, and paves the way to infidelity : And this leads on to the darkness and horrors of atheism itself.

IV. FROM the foregoing system of truths and duties, which is contained in the Bible, and taken wholly from it, arises the most clear and satisfying evidence that it is a revelation from God, and no human invention : “ But holy men of God have spoken and written it, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

The evidence that the Bible contains a divine revelation, has been in some measure exhibited and considered, in the first chapter of this system ; especially what is called the external evidence. And some of the internal evidence

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* Tit. i. 7, 9, 11, 13. ii. 1, 7, 8.

was mentioned : And it was observed, that this would be made to appear in the clearest and most advantageous light, by prosecuting the inquiry concerning the doctrines and duties revealed and inculcated in this book ; which was then proposed. This is now finished. And upon a careful review of the whole, must it not be evident to every attentive, honest, candid mind, that in this book only is to be found such a system of truth, which could not be contrived, or even thought of by man ; but must be from God : That it contains a system of doctrines and commands, which man's wisdom does not teach, and never can ; but which the Holy Ghost alone teacheth.

Here the true God is represented in his glorious character, subsisting in a manner infinitely above our comprehension ; yet suited, so far as we can conceive, most perfectly to accomplish his revealed designs, and to raise creatures, the objects of his love, to the highest happiness. He is clothed with unlimited power, wisdom and goodness, absolutely independent, self sufficient, and allsufficient ; and has fixed on a plan of operation, which is wise and good, like himself ; including all his works and every event that shall ever take place, suited in the highest degree to glorify himself, and effect the highest good and happiness of the creation : And they must be blessed who love and trust in him. His law is perfectly right, wise and excellent, and expresses the moral character and perfections of God ; is infinitely important, and must stand forever, as the only rule of moral rectitude : And every one must be happy so far as he is conformed to it. Here rebellion against God, and violation of this law, is represented in the infinitely evil and malignant nature of it ; and all the dispensations and works of God, and his conduct towards his creatures, are suited and designed to make the clearest and most lasting display of this. Here is revealed the way in which mankind

are become universally sinful, mortal and miserable ; and the infinite guilt and misery of their state is discovered ; and that they are totally ruined and lost, in themselves. This lays the only foundation for the discovery of infinite benevolence and sovereign grace in the redemption of man ; and is the ground of the existence and revelation of the person, character and works of the Redeemer, and salvation by him. And every thing relating to redemption, is in the highest degree suited to make the brightest and most glorious manifestation of the power, wisdom, righteousness, goodness, truth and faithfulness of God, and his infinite displeasure with the sinner, to humble man, and shew his absolute and entire dependence on God, consistent with the infinite vileness and criminality of the least deviation, even in heart, from perfect obedience to his law ; to discover the infinite evil of the just consequence of sin ; and set before creatures the reasonableness and importance of obedience, and the strongest motives that are possible, to avoid every sin, and fear and obey God. And every truth of divine revelation is leveled against the sin and rebellion of man ; and every thing included in redemption, is perfectly suited to form the redeemed to the most beautiful, sweet, perfect holiness, and to raise them to the highest happiness and glory. And while eternal happiness, on the one hand, and endless misery on the other, are set before men, and one or the other must be the certain portion of every one, according to his conduct in this life, in embracing the gospel and obeying the Redeemer, or rejecting him, and living in sin ; this tends to solemnize every mind and fill every one with the greatest concern, and awaken him to the utmost exertions to escape the one, and obtain the other ; and “work out his own salvation with fear and trembling.”

And the exercise and practice of piety, righteousness and benevolence in all the branches of religion and christian

tian morality, which consist in conformity of heart and life, to the doctrines and precepts contained in the scripture, is the only way to render every man happy in this life, in their various connections, and proper business, and in the use and enjoyment of the things of this world. And were this to take place universally, it would necessarily form men into the most happy society that can take place in this state ; and at the same time rectify and enlarge their hearts, and raise their pleasing hope and prospect of glory and honour, and immortality, in the favour of God, and the society of all his friends, in the everlasting kingdom of the Redemer, in consequence of their patient continuance in well doing.

When all this, and more, which might be mentioned, and will naturally come into the view of him who properly attends to the subject, is well considered, together with the external evidence, that the scripture was formed by divine inspiration, mentioned in the first chapter, it must produce a conviction and fixed persuasion that the Bible contains a divine revelation of a system of important saving truth, which is not to be found any where else, and never could have been known, or invented by the reason of man, in his present corrupt state, had it not been thus revealed from heaven ; unless the mind be greatly biassed and prejudiced against the truth by the false taste and evil propensities of the heart, by which the reason of man may be so perverted and abused, and the mind so greatly blinded, as to reject the plainest, most consistent and important truth, as gross error and absurdity ; and imbibe the most inconsistent and erroneous sentiments, in opposition to the truth.

It is true, indeed, that in order to discern the internal evidence of the truth of the holy scriptures, and see it in its true, clearest and most convincing light, the mind must possess a right taste, and be friendly to true wisdom ;

for

for the great and leading truths of divine revelation, are more objects of taste, than of mere speculative reason, and cannot be discerned in a true light, in their true beauty, excellence and importance, without the former, and by the latter only. Wisdom is seen and justified only by the children of wisdom ; and not by the children of folly and vice, who are under the power of a false taste and disposition of mind, which necessarily blinds the mind to the beauty, excellence and consistence of the things and truths of the highest concern in the moral world. But he who has a true and proper moral taste and discerning, whose heart is disposed to be friendly to heavenly wisdom, is prepared to see the divine original of the Bible, from the system of truths it contains, and the exercises and duties there required, conformable to the doctrines revealed ; and to perceive, with a peculiar satisfaction and pleasure, the all convincing evidence, that what the scripture reveals is divine, and comes from God. He believes, and has the witness within himself, that this is the testimony of God. He has an understanding to know him that is true ; and that this is the true God, and eternal life.* This is expressly asserted by Christ, “ He that is of God, heareth God’s words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me : As a shepherd goeth before the sheep, and they follow him ; for they know his voice, and a stranger they will not follow.”† And the Apostle John says, “ We are of God : He that knoweth God, heareth us : He that is not of God, heareth not us.”‡ The same is asserted by the Apostle Paul, in plain and strong language. “ The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God : For they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

But

* 1 John v. 9, 10, 20.

† John viii. 47. x. 4, 5, 27. ‡ 1 John iv. 6,

But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.”* “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost : In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.”†

Nevertheless, persons who are destitute of this right taste, and are at heart, and in practice unfriendly to the dictates of true wisdom, and enemies to it, may be rationally convinced, and in this sense believe, that the Bible is a revelation from God. They may be so persuaded of the external evidence of this, and see so much of the internal evidence, in a degree, as to assent to it in their reason and judgment. They may attend to it so much as to be in a degree convinced of their moral blindness, and their want of a new heart, and right taste ; and that it is wholly owing to this, that they do not see, and are not pleased and charmed with the glory of the gospel ; and that this is altogether their own fault ; and that they are, on this account, in a very miserable condition : Yea, they may be in their reason and judgment, in a measure convinced of all the truths contained in the Bible, while they have no relish for them ; and they are in their hearts real enemies to them.

And where this conviction does not take place, it is owing to ignorance or prejudices, which take place by a bad education, or from the want of a good one, together with the strong, evil and corrupt biases of their hearts, and the indulgence of various foolish and hurtful lusts, and to many other things of this kind, by which many have been led to conclude, that the real and true doc-

trines.

* 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.

† 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4, 6.

trines of divine revelation, are inconsistent and absurd, and to embrace contrary doctrines, more agreeable to the selfishness, pride, and other lusts of men. While others have, from the same evil biases, been prejudiced against the scriptures, and rejected the Bible, as so fabulous, inconsistent and absurd, as not to be worthy of the regard of a rational man; and have hereby plunged themselves into an abyss of darkness and uncertainty, while they have boasted that they were following the infallible dictates of their own reason.

All these of every class, however distinguished in some respects, are wholly answerable and blameable for their ignorance, incredulity and error, and that they do not discern, relish, and love the truths of divine revelation, in a view of their beauty, consistence and glory, and are not pleased and charmed with the divine character, and that of the Redeemer, displayed in the Bible. For this is as really owing to a shutting the mental eye against the light shining in the scriptures, and a refusing to come to it and see it; as is a person's shutting his bodily eyes, and refusing to admit the light of the sun, when it shines in its meridian brightness; and is as real a voluntary exercise of the governing taste and propensity of the heart, opposing the light of the truth, as any other exercise of heart of which man is capable, though there may be a difference in many respects. How criminal then is all infidelity, and turning away from the truth revealed in the scriptures, in all those who live under the gospel! And how awful the consequence!



MILLENNIUM.

SHOWING from SCRIPTURE PROPHECY,
THAT IT IS YET TO COME ;
WHEN IT WILL COME ;
IN WHAT IT WILL CONSIST ;
AND THE
EVENTS WHICH ARE FIRST TO TAKE PLACE,
INTRODUCTORY TO IT.

BY SAMUEL HOPKINS, D. D.
Pastor of the First Congregational Church in NEWPORT, *Rhode Island.*

THIS shall be written for the generation to come : And the people, which shall be created, shall praise the LORD.—PSALM CII. 18.



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MDCCLXXIII.

M U I N E I L I M

SECRET

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1400

1. The first group of people who are not in the labor force are those who are not in the labor force because they are not in the labor force.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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DEDICATION.

*To the PEOPLE who shall live in the DAYS of the
MILLENNIUM.*

HAIL, YE HAPPY PEOPLE, HIGHLY FAVOURED OF THE LORD!

TO you the following treatise on the Millennium is dedicated, as you will live in that happy era, and enjoy the good of it in a much higher degree, than it can be now enjoyed in the prospect of it. And that you may know, if this book shall be conveyed down to your time, what is now thought of you, and of the happy day, in which you will come on the stage of life. You will be able to see the mistakes which are now made on this head; and how far what is advanced here, is agreeable to that which is noted in the scripture of truth, and a true and proper description of the events which are to take place; and to rectify every mistake. All is therefore humbly submitted to your better judgment.

When you shall learn what a variety of errors, in doctrine and practice, have been, and are now imbibed and propagated; and in what an imperfect and defective manner they are opposed and confuted; and the truth explained and defended: And observe how many defects and mistakes there are in those writings which contain most truth, and come nearest to the standard of all religious truth, the holy scripture, you will be ready to wonder how all this could be, where divine revelation is enjoyed. But your benevolence and candour, will make all proper allowances, for all the prejudices

prejudices and darkness which take place in these days, and pity us ; while your piety will lead you to ascribe the greater light and advantages which you will enjoy, and your better discerning and judgment, not unto yourselves, but to the distinguishing, sovereign grace of God.

Though you have yet no existence, nevertheless, the faith of the christians in this and in former ages, beholds you “ at hand to come ;” and realizing your future existence and character, you are greatly esteemed and loved ; and the pious have great joy in you, while they are constantly, and with great earnestness praying for you. They who make mention of the Lord, will not keep silence, nor give him any rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. For you they are praying and labouring, and to you they are ministering ; and without you they cannot be made perfect. And you will enter into their labours, and reap the happy fruit of their prayers, toils and sufferings.

They will be in heaven, with the holy angels and the spirits of the just made perfect, when you will come upon the stage in this world ; and they will rejoice in you, in your knowledge, benevolence, piety, righteousness and happiness : And all their past prayers for you will be turned into joy and praise. And you will, in due time, be gathered together with them unto the Lord Jesus Christ, in his eternal kingdom, and join in seeing and praising him forever, ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto the only true God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.



A

T R E A T I S E
ON THE
M I L L E N N I U M.



I N T R O D U C T I O N.

A PARTICULAR history of the church of Christ, from the days of the Apostles, to this time ; of the various changes through which it has past ; of the doctrines which have been taught and maintained ; of the discipline, worship, and manners, which have taken place ; of the grand apostacy in the church of Rome, and of the reformation, &c. might be properly subjoined to the foregoing system, were it not that this has been done by a number of writers already ; so that all who are disposed to acquaint themselves with ecclesiastical history, may obtain this information by books already extant : Which, at the same time, serve to confirm the truth and divine original of christianity, by discovering, in how many instances the state of the church, and the events which have had a particular respect to it, have been foretold, and have taken place according to the predictions. This subject has been particularly illustrated by Mr. Lowman, in his “Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation of St. John.” And since, more largely, by Bishop Newton, in his “Dissertation on the Prophecies, which have remarkably been fulfilled, and at this time are fulfilling in the world.”

A treatise on the Millennium, however, and of the future state of the church of Christ, from this time to the end of the world, as it is predicted and described in divine revelation, is thought proper

proper and important, not only as it has been more than once referred to in the preceding work ; but as it appears not to be believed by many ; and not to be well understood by more ; or attended to by most, as an important event ; full of instruction ; suited to support, comfort and encourage christians, in the present dark appearance of things, respecting the interest of Christ, and his church ; and to animate them to faith, patience and perseverance in obedience to Christ ; putting on the hope of salvation for an helmet. And to excite them more earnestly to pray for the advancement and coming of the kingdom of Christ : Of which kingdom, as it is to take place in this world, or of christianity itself, there cannot be so clear, full and pleasing an idea, if the scripture doctrine of the Millennium be kept out of view.

In the first three centuries after the Apostles, the doctrine of the Millennium was believed and taught ; but so many unworthy and absurd things were by some advanced concerning it, that it afterwards fell into discredit, and was opposed, or passed over in silence, by most, until the reformation from popery. And then a number of enthusiasts advanced so many unscriptural and ridiculous notions concerning it, and made such a bad improvement of it, that many, if not most of the orthodox, in opposing them, were led to disbelieve and oppose the doctrine in general ; or to say little or nothing in favour of the doctrine, in any sense or view of it.

But few of the most noted writers of the last century in Britain, or in other parts of the protestant world, have said any thing to establish or explain this doctrine : And they who have mentioned it, do appear, at least the most of them, not to have well understood it. In the present century, there has been more attention to it ; and the scriptures which relate to it, have been more carefully considered, and explained by a number of writers ; and it has been set in a more rational, scriptural and important light, than before. Dr. Whitby, has written a treatise on the Millennium. And Mr. Robertson, and Mr. Lowman, have asserted and explained it in some measure, in their exposition of the book of the revelation by the Apostle John ; especially the beginning of the twentieth chapter of that book. And the late President Edwards, attended much to this subject, and wrote upon it more than any other divine in this century. In the year 1747, he published a book, entitled " An humble attempt to promote explicit

pllicit agreement, and visible union of God's people, in extraordinary prayer for the revival of religion, and the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth, pursuant to scripture promises and prophecies concerning the last time." In which he produces the evidence from scripture, that such a day is yet to come. And in a posthumous publication of his, intitled "A history of the work of Redemption," this subject is brought into view, and particularly considered. There is also extant, a sermon on the Millennium, by the late Dr. Bellamy. And other writers have occasionally mentioned it. And this subject appears to be brought more particularly into view in the public prayers and preaching, and in conversation, in this age, than in former times; and the doctrine of the Millennium is more generally believed, and better understood.

This is rather an encouragement to attempt farther to explain and illustrate, this important, pleasing, useful subject, in which every christian is so much interested, than a reason why nothing more should be said upon it. The subject is far from being exhausted; and as the church advances nearer to the Millennium state, we have reason to think the predictions in divine revelation respecting it, will be better understood; and the minds of christians will be more excited to great attention to this subject, and strong desires to look into those things, and to earnest longings and prayers for the coming of the kingdom of Christ, as it will take place in that day. And all this is to be effected, by means and proper attempts and exertions. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

The prophecies of events which are yet to take place, cannot be so fully understood before these events come to pass, as they will be when they are fulfilled; and there is great danger of making mistakes about them. And it is certain, that many have made mistakes, since they have made very different and opposite constructions of the same predictions; and therefore all cannot be right. So far as the prophecies which respect the Millennium, of which there are many, can be understood, and the real meaning of them be made plain, by a careful and diligent attention to them, and comparing them with each other, men may go on safe ground, and be certain of their accomplishment. And whatever is a plain and undeniable consequence, from what is expressly predicted, is equally revealed in the prediction, as an event, or circumstance

cumstance of an event, necessarily included in it. But every opinion respecting future events, which is matter of conjecture only, however probable it may be in the view of him who proposes it, ought to be entertained with modesty and diffidence.

The following treatise on the Millennium, is not designed so much to advance any new sentiments concerning it, which have never before been offered to the public, as to revive and repeat those which have been already suggested by some authors, which are thought to be very important, and ought to be understood, and kept constantly in the view of all, in order to their having a proper conception of the church of Christ in this world, and reading the scriptures to their best advantage, and greatest comfort: Though perhaps something will be advanced, respecting the events which, according to scripture, are to take place between the present time, and the introduction of the happy state of the church, which have not been before so particularly considered.

SECTION

SECTION I.

In which it is proved from Scripture, that the church of Christ is to come to a state of prosperity in this world, which it has never yet enjoyed; in which it will continue at least a thousand years.

THE first revelation of a Redeemer, in the prediction spoken to the serpent, may be considered as implying the destruction of the kingdom of the devil in this world, by the wisdom and energy of Christ. "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* Satan has bruised the heel of Christ, in the sufferings and dishonour he has been instrumental of bringing upon him, and in the opposition he has made to the interest and church of Christ, in this world. And it is natural to suppose, that Christ shall bruise his head in this world, by destroying his interest and kingdom among men, and gaining a conquest over him, in the struggle and war which has taken place between the Redeemer and seducer of men. And by the Redeemer's *bruising the head* of the serpent, is signified that he will not destroy him by the mere exertion of his power, but that by his superiour wisdom, he will confound and defeat satan, in all his subtilty and cunning, on which he depends so much, and by which he aims to disappoint Christ, and defeat him in his designs. And by this he will make a glorious display of his wisdom, as well as of his power, while he discovers the craftiness of satan to be foolishness, and disappoints him in his devices, carrying all the counsel of this cunning froward enemy headlong. If all this could not be gathered from this passage, considered by itself; yet that this is the real meaning, will perhaps appear, from what has already taken place in accomplishing this prediction; and from other prophecies respecting this, some of which are to be brought into view in the sequel: Without which the full meaning of this first promise could not be known.

B

In

In order to bruise the head of the serpent, in this sense, most effectually ; and turn his boasted wisdom and cunning into foolishness, and entirely defeat him in this way, he must have opportunity and advantage to try his skill and power, and practise all his cunning, in opposing Christ, and the salvation of men. And in this way be overcome and wholly defeated, in the ruin of his interest and kingdom among men ; so that all his attempts shall turn against himself, and be the occasion of making the victory and triumph of the Redeemer greater, more perspicuous and glorious, in the final prevalence of his kingdom on earth, by drawing all men to him ; and destroying the works and kingdom of satan in this world, and setting up his own on the ruins of it, and so as to turn all the attempts and works of the devil against him, and render the whole subservient to his own interest and kingdom. And thus the coming and kingdom of Christ will be, "As the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." When the sun rises in a clear morning, after a dark night, attended with clouds, rain and storms, the morning is more pleasant, beautiful and glorious, and the grass springs and grows more fresh and thrifty, than if it had not been preceded by such a stormy night. So the prosperity and glory of the church, when the sun of righteousness shall rise upon it, with healing in his beams, will be enjoyed to a higher degree, and be more pleasant and glorious, and Christ will be more glorified, than if it had not been preceded by a dreadful night of darkness, confusion and evil, by the wickedness of men, and the power and agency of satan.

The words above cited, are the last words of David the Prophet, and sweet Psalmist of Israel, and are a prophecy of the glorious event now under consideration. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake by me. He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be like the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by clear shining after rain."* The first words may be rendered so as to give the true sense more clearly. "He who is to rule over men (i. e. the Messiah) is just, ruling in the fear of God." The words *must be*,
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in our translation, are not in the original, and the helping verb *is*, which is commonly not expressed, but understood, in the Hebrew, should have been supplied; “He that ruleth, or is to rule over men, *is* just.” This is evidently a prophecy concerning Christ, his church and kingdom, when he shall take to himself his great power, and reign in his kingdom, which shall succeed the reign of satan during the four preceding monarchies, which were first to take place, which will be more particularly explained, as we proceed in examining the prophecies of this great event, *The latter day glory*. And that these words of David, are a prediction of the reign of Christ on earth, after the long prevalence of satan and wicked men, is farther evident from the words which follow, relative to the same thing. “But the sons of Belial shall *all of them* as thorns be thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands. But the man that shall touch them, must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear, and they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the same place.”

Exactly parallel with this prophecy, is that of the Prophet Malachi. “Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as the calves in the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.”*

But to return from this, which may seem to be some digression, or anticipation: The great and remarkable promise, so often made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and more than once mentioned by the Apostles, will next be considered. This promise was made to Abraham, and of him, three times. “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”† “All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him.”‡ “And in thy seed shall the nations of the earth be blessed.”§ And this same promise is made to Isaac. “I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father—and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”|| And to Jacob. “In thee and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth

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* Mal. iv. 1, 2, 3.

† Gen. xii. 3.

‡ Chap. xviii. 18.

§ Chap. xxii. 18.

|| Chap. xxvi. 4.

be blessed.”* The Apostle Peter mentions this promise as referring to the days of the gospel. “Ye are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.”† The Apostle Paul speaks of this promise as referring to Christ, and all who believe in him, making him to be the promised seed, and believers in him to be those exclusively who are blessed in him, in whom the promised good takes place. “Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.—Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”‡

This prediction and promise is very express and extensive, That all the families, kindreds and nations of the earth, should be blessed in Christ, by their becoming believers in him. This has never yet taken place, and cannot be fulfilled, unless christianity and the kingdom of Christ shall take place and prevail in the world to a vastly higher degree, and more extensively and universally, than has yet come to pass; and all nations, all the inhabitants of the earth, shall become believers in him, agreeable to a great number of other prophecies, some of which will be mentioned in this section.

The reign of Christ on earth, with his church and people, and the happiness and glory of that time, is a subject often mentioned, predicted and celebrated in the book of Psalms. To mention all that is there spoken with reference to that happy time, would be to transcribe great part of that book. Only the following passages will now be mentioned, which are thought abundantly to prove that the kingdom of Christ is to prevail and flourish in this world, as it has never yet done; and the church is to be brought to a state of purity, prosperity and happiness on earth, which has not yet taken place, and so as to include all nations, and fill the world.

In the second Psalm, it is predicted and promised, that the Son of God shall inherit and possess all nations, to the ends of the earth; which necessarily implies, that his church and kingdom shall

* Chap. xxviii. 14.

† Acts iii. 25.

‡ Gal. iii. 7, 8, 9, 16.

shall be thus extensive, reaching to the ends of the earth, and including all the nations and men on earth. "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree : The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." By Zion here is meant, as in numerous other places in the prophecies, the church of Christ, of which Mount Zion was a type.

The twenty second Psalm contains a prophecy of the sufferings of Christ ; and the glory that shall follow ; and of the latter it is said ; " The meek shall eat and be satisfied. They shall praise the Lord that seek him : Your heart shall live forever. All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord : And all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's ; and he is the Governor among the nations : For evil doers shall be cut off : But those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be ; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace."* This is a prediction of an event which has never taken place yet. Evil doers and the wicked, have in all ages hitherto possessed the earth, and flourished and reigned in the world. When it is promised, that they who wait upon the Lord, and the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace, the meaning must be, that persons of this character will yet have the possession of the earth, and fill the world, when no place shall be found for the wicked, as they shall be all destroyed, and their cause wholly lost. And all of this character who have lived before this time, and waited upon the Lord in the exercise of meekness, shall flourish and live in their successors, and in the prosperity and triumph of the cause and interest, in which they lived and died. This is agreeable to other prophecies of this kind, as will be shewn in the sequel. " All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord : And all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." Who can believe that this has ever yet been ? But few of mankind, compared with the whole, have yet turned unto the Lord. By far the greatest part of the nations of the earth, even to the ends of the world, have worshipped and do

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* Psal. xxxvii. 9, 10, 11.

now worship false gods, and idols. But when all the ends of the world shall remember, and turn to the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him; then the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The whole of the sixty seventh Psalm is a prediction of the same event, and of the same time, which is yet to come. It is a prayer of the church that such a time may take place; at the same time expressing her assurance that it was coming; and the whole is a prophecy of it. "God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

The seventy second Psalm, the title of which is, "A Psalm for Solomon," contains a prophecy of Christ and his kingdom, of whom Solomon was an eminent type. The Psalmist looks beyond the type to the antitype, and says things which can be applied to the latter only, and are not true of the former, considered as distinct from the latter; which is common in the scripture, in such cases. Here it is said, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. All kings shall fall down before him: All nations shall serve him. His name shall endure forever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun and moon shall be blessed in him: All nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name forever, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen."

"Arise, O God, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit all nations."* In this Psalm, the rulers and judges among men are accused of unrighteousness, and condemned; and then the Psalmist concludes with the words now quoted, which refer to some future event, in which God should judge the earth, and inherit

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all nations, in a sense in which he had not yet done it. In the second Psalm, the heathen, i. e. the nations, all nations, are given to Christ for his inheritance; and here the same thing is expressed, "Thou shalt inherit all nations." And by his *judging the earth*, is meant his reigning and subduing the inhabitants of the earth, to a cordial subjection to himself; which will be more evident by what follows, where we shall find the same thing predicted.

The ninety sixth Psalm, relates wholly to redemption by Christ; to the happiness and glory of his kingdom, and his reign on earth. "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: *Fear before him, all the earth.* Say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth: The world also shall be established, that it shall not be moved, he shall judge the people righteously. Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad: Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." What is here foretold, is to take place before the end of the world, and the general judgment; and it relates to the whole world, all the earth and the nations in it; the kingdom and reign of Christ is to extend to all of them: And his coming to judge the earth, and the world in righteousness, intends his reigning in righteousness, and bringing all nations to share in the blessings of his salvation and kingdom. Agreeable to this, it is said by Christ, by Isaiah and Jeremiah, "Behold a king shall reign *in righteousness.* In those days, and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute *judgment and righteousness* in the land," or in the earth.*

Great part of the prophecy of Isaiah, relates to the flourishing and happy state of the kingdom of Christ, and the prosperity of the church in the latter days. When he foretells the return of the people of Israel from the Babylonish captivity, which was a type of the deliverance of the church of Christ from spiritual Babylon, and from all her enemies in this world, visible and invisible, he commonly looks forward to the latter, and keeps that in view, and says things of it, which are not true of the former, and cannot be applied to it. And as Zion, Jerusalem, and Judah, and
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* Isai. xxxii. 1. Jer. xxxiii. 15.

Israel, were types of the church and kingdom of Christ, as including all nations; the former are commonly mentioned only as types, being put for, and signifying the latter. And when the gospel day, the coming of Christ, and his church and kingdom, are brought into view, all that is included in these is comprehended; and commonly chief reference is had to the Millennium, or the day of the flourishing of the kingdom of Christ on earth, which is in a peculiar manner, and eminently the day of salvation; and will issue in the complete redemption of the church, at and after the day of judgment. He who reads this prophecy with care and discerning, will be convinced of the truth of these observations; and in any other view, great part of it cannot be understood.

Only part of the many prophecies of the glory and extent of the kingdom of Christ in this world, which are contained in this book, will be now mentioned, as those which are most express and clear, with reference to the subject in view. They who attentively read this prophecy, will find many more which refer to the same event.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”* It is certain, that this prophecy has not been yet fulfilled, except in a very small degree, as the beginning, and first fruits of it.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor,

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and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth : And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together : And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”*

This is evidently a prophecy of Christ, and his kingdom on earth. He shall judge and reprove for the meek of the earth, and slay all the wicked on earth, that the meek may inherit it ; which is exactly agreeable to the forementioned prophecy in the thirty seventh Psalm. “ Evil doers shall be cut off, and yet a little while and the wicked shall not be ; but the meek shall inherit the earth ; and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.” And this universal peace and harmony among men, which shall take place at that time, is expressed in the prophecy before us, in very strong, figurative language ; by the wolf dwelling with the lamb, &c.— And the ground and reason of this is given. “ For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” By the knowledge of the Lord is meant true religion, or real christianity, which consists most essentially in benevolence and goodness, as has been shown. So far as this takes place, love, peace, and the most happy concord and union, are promoted ; and every thing contrary to this suppressed and banished. Therefore, when this shall take place universally among men, and fill the earth, as the waters cover the sea, there will be nothing to destroy or hurt, but universal safety, peace and love. No such time has ever been yet known. The true knowledge of God has been so far from filling the earth ; that gross darkness has covered much the greatest part of it ; and real christianity has been confined to narrow bounds ; and but very few of mankind have attained to the character of true christians, even where the gospel has been published. And a horrible scene of oppression, cruelty, war and murder, has

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spread all over the earth ; and will continue to do so, until Christ shall arise and smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and slay the wicked with the breath of his lips ; and cause the earth to be filled with the knowledge of God. Such a happy time is yet future, and will certainly come.

The twenty fifth chapter contains a prophecy of the same event, some of which is worthy to be transcribed. "And in this mountain, shall the Lord of hosts make unto *all people* a feast of fat things, a feast of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over *all people*, and the vail that is spread over *all nations*. He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth ; for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us : This is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation."

The gospel is here represented by a rich feast ; and it is promised that all people and nations shall have their eyes opened to see it ; and all reproach, and opposition to the church of Christ, shall be taken away from off all the earth ; and there shall be universal joy in the salvation, for which the church has long waited, and which shall come in the last day.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned : For she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low ; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and *all flesh shall see it together* : For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."*

This is a prophecy of the times of the gospel, as it is thus applied in the New Testament. It does refer to the first introduction and the coming of Christ into the world ; but is not confined to this : It gives a comprehensive view of this great salvation, and the favour and glory which is to come to the church of Christ in

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this world, and looks forward to the day, when the glory of the Lord shall be so revealed that all flesh, that is, all nations, all mankind, shall see it together. This has not yet been fulfilled; but is to be accomplished in a time yet to come, when “The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”* All that precedes this day is preparatory to it, as the ministry of John the baptist, was an introduction to it, and more immediately prepared the way for Christ.

From the beginning of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, to the end of the sixty sixth chapter, with which his prophecy closes, there is almost one continued series of predictions and promises of good, salvation, happiness and glory to the church of Christ, which have principal reference to the latter day when the Millennium shall take place; and when they will have their chief accomplishment. It will be sufficient to answer the end now proposed, to mention the following passages.

Salvation by Christ, is frequently represented as actually extended to the ends of the earth, which has not yet been accomplished. “Look unto me, and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth*; for I am God, and there is none else. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation *unto the end of the earth*. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of *all nations*, and *all the ends of the earth* shall see the salvation of our God.”† The same phrase is used by the prophet Micah. “And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide: For now shall he be great *unto the ends of the earth*.”‡

The sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, is filled with comfort and promises to the church, as also are the preceding chapters. The following expressions may be particularly noted. “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to thy rising. Therefore, thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be

* Hab. ii. 14.

† Isai. xlv. 22. xlix. 6. lii. 10.

‡ Chap. v. 4.

brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish : Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." No such event has been yet. When this shall take place, all nations, all mankind, must belong to the church ; for all others shall be *utterly wasted*. The same thing is foretold by the Prophet Zechariah.*

The sixty first chapter of Isaiah, is on the same subject, and the sixty second throughout. Upon such promises made to the church, she breaks forth into joy and praise, in the prospect of the good that is coming to her. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation ; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth ; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth *before all nations*." "For Zion's sake, I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake, I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory : And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem *a praise in the earth*. Go through, go through the gates ; prepare you the way of the people ; cast up, cast up the highway, gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed *unto the end of the world*, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh ; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord : And thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken."† "Who hath heard such a thing ? Who hath seen such things ? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once ? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth ? saith the Lord. Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb ? saith thy God. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all

* Chap. iii. 14—19.

† Chap. lxii. 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12.

all ye that love her ; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her : That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations ; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.”*

In the prophecy of Jeremiah, the following passages are found, which predict the utter abolition of idolatry on earth, and the conversion of all nations to christianity, which events have not yet come to pass. “ At that time they shall call Jerusalem (i. e. the church) the throne of the Lord (i. e. The Lord shall reign in and by it.) And all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem ; (i. e. shall become members of the church.) Neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.”† They shall wholly renounce their idolatry, and all their wickedness. “ Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under those heavens. They are vanity, and the work of errors. In the time of their visitation they shall perish.”‡ According to this prophecy, this will take place while this earth and the heavens remain, and therefore before the day of judgment.

This subject is set in a very clear light in the book of Daniel the Prophet. It is there repeatedly declared that the church, or kingdom of Christ, shall be the last kingdom on earth ; that it shall succeed four preceding monarchies, become great, and fill the world, and exist in a very happy and glorious state on earth. By the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and the interpretation of it in the second chapter of Daniel, the kingdom of Christ is set in this light. The image which Nebuchadnezzar saw, represents four kingdoms or monarchies, viz. 1. The Babylonian. 2. The Medo Persian, or that of the Medes and Persians. 3. The Macedonian or Grecian. 4. The Roman. These are all to pass away and be destroyed, to make way for a fifth kingdom, which shall be great, and fill the world ; which is described in the dream, by the following words : “ Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and break them in pieces. Then were the iron, the clay,

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* Chap. lvi. 5, 9, 10, 11, 12. † Chap. iii. 17. ‡ Chap. x. 14, 15.

the brass, the silver and gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them : And the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and *filled the whole earth*. This is interpreted by Daniel in the following words : “ And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed : And the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. For as much as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and gold, the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter.” That this last kingdom is the kingdom of Christ, there can be no doubt.* The same is called in the New Testament, “ The kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven.” This is to succeed the kingdom of the Romans, and to fill the whole earth, in which all nations, all mankind will be included. The Roman empire or kingdom, is not yet wholly destroyed ; therefore what is here predicted of the kingdom of Christ is not yet accomplished, but shall take place in some future day. Nothing can be plainer and more certain than this.

In the seventh chapter of this book there is a representation of the same thing in a vision which Daniel had. He saw the same four empires or kingdoms in their succession, represented by four great, wild, fierce beasts, coming up from the sea. The last kingdom turned into a little horn which came up last ; and Daniel “ beheld till this fourth beast with the little horn was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.” And then the vision proceeds, “ I saw in the night visions, and beheld, one like the Son of man, come with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him : His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” This vision is briefly explained to Daniel in the following words : “ These great beasts, which are four, are four kings (i. e. kingdoms) which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even for-

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* See Newton on the Prophecies, vol. I. p. 426, 427, &c.

ever and ever." Daniel requested a more particular explanation of the fourth beast, and of the ten horns, and of the little horn, "Even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. And the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them; until the ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." And he is then told, "That the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth. And the ten horns out of this kingdom, are ten kings that shall arise: And another shall rise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: And they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it to the end. *And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High*, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

As in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, so in this vision, the fifth and last kingdom, is the kingdom of Christ, consisting wholly of saints. It is Jesus Christ whom Daniel saw, "And behold, one like to the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him." His kingdom and dominion is universal, including all the inhabitants of the earth. And these shall be all saints or holy persons; as no others can be the proper subjects of this kingdom. "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." The strongest expressions are used and repeated, to assert the universality of this kingdom, comprehending all mankind who shall then live on earth. And it is repeatedly declared, that this kingdom shall stand forever. It shall not be destroyed by any succeeding power or kingdom, as the former kingdoms were, but shall continue to the end of the world, and then be removed to heaven, to a more perfect and glorious state; and there exist and flourish in the highest perfection forever and ever.

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The little horn which was on the beast, and destroyed with the beast, whose body was given to the burning flame, is the Pope of Rome, with the kingdom and power, civil and ecclesiastical, of which he is the head.* This beast with this horn, is not yet destroyed. When this is done, the kingdom and power of sin and satan in the world will fall; and then the kingdom of Christ will rise and fill the world, as is predicted here, and in the second chapter of this book. This is very evident by these prophecies, if there were no other; but this truth is greatly illustrated and established, by those predictions of the same event which have been considered; and more so, by those which are yet to be mentioned.

The Prophet Micah predicted the prosperity of the church of Christ, and the prevalence of his interest and kingdom *in the last days*.† And there is a particular prophecy of the same event by Zephaniah.‡ This is also particularly foretold by Zechariah: “Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion, for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee.”§ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold thy king cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off; and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: *And his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.*¶ The whole of the fourteenth chapter relates chiefly to this great event, and happy time; of which only the following words will be transcribed. “And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, and dark. But it shall be *one day*, which shall be known to the Lord, not day and night: But it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem: Half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: In summer and in winter it shall be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one.” This

* This is abundantly proved in Newton's Dissertation on the Prophecies, vol. I. page 441—498.

† Chap. iv. 1—4. v. 1—4.

‡ Chap. iii. 8, to the end of the chapter. § Chap. ii. 10, 11.

¶ Chap. ix. 9, 10.

This is a prophecy of the Millennium state, in figurative language. Then, in the moral world, the church, there shall be no night or darkness; no change of day and night, as there was before, when the church was in a state of affliction, when her days of prosperity were short, and soon succeeded by darkness and night of degeneracy and affliction: But at the time when night used to come on, it shall be day; so that it shall be constantly light and day, and the enjoyment of prosperity, light and holiness, without interruption. And there shall be a constant flow of living waters, without any interruption, into all parts of the earth, among all nations; that is spiritual blessings, consisting in spiritual life, holy joy and happiness. And then all idolatry and false worship shall be wholly abolished; and Christ shall reign in all the earth, and all nations shall trust in him, and obey him. This prediction agrees exactly with all those which have been mentioned, pointing out the same important glorious event.

THE prophecies in the New Testament, foretold the universal spread of christianity, until all nations shall become the servants of Christ; and that Christ and his people shall reign on earth a thousand years; when satan shall be cast out of the earth, and his subjects and kingdom shall be destroyed; agreeable to the numerous prophecies in the Old Testament, which have been mentioned.

Jesus Christ has foretold this, by the following parables.—“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which indeed is the least of all seeds: But when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake he unto them, The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”* By the first of those parables Christ teaches, that his church and kingdom, though small in the beginning of it, should increase and become great in the world. In the next, he makes an advance, and more fully predicts the universal extent of this kingdom; that the gospel shall not cease to spread and influence the world; till all mankind, living on earth, the whole world, shall be formed by it, and imbibe

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* Math. xiii. 31, 32, 33.

the spirit of it ; so as to become the children of this kingdom. If the kingdom of heaven shall not finally prevail and extend to all nations, and fill the whole world, how can this parable be a just or true representation of it ? In this view of it, it agrees exactly with many of the prophecies which have been mentioned ; and with others, which are yet to be considered.

Agreeable to this, are the following words of Christ, in which indeed he asserts the same thing, "Now is the judgment of this world : Now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."*—What is here foretold by Christ, is not yet accomplished, except in a very small part, as the first fruits and pledge of the whole.—A foundation for this was laid in the death of Christ, when he was lifted up on the cross ; but the prince of this world, the devil, is not yet cast out of the world ; nor has Christ yet drawn all men unto him. Christ has drawn great numbers to him, who have become his faithful subjects and servants, and has made great inroads upon the interest and kingdom of the prince of this world ; but very few of mankind, compared with the whole, have been drawn to Christ ; by far the greatest number even in the christian world, have rejected and opposed him ; and the kingdom of satan has been great and strong, including the most of men who have lived in the world, from the time in which these words were spoken by Christ, to this day. Both of these events are therefore yet future, and the former is to make way for the latter ; or rather one is included in the other. The same things which are here foretold, are predicted in different words, in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, which will be considered. When Christ says, He will draw *all men* unto him, he does not mean that every one of mankind shall come unto him ; for this is contrary to known fact ; and to many express declarations of Christ. But that in consequence of his death, the kingdom of satan shall be utterly destroyed on earth, and then all nations, even all men then in the world, shall become his voluntary subjects, and believe in him.

This was suited to support and comfort his disciples and friends at that time, when he had been speaking of his own death as at hand, in the view of the glory that should follow his dying on the cross : and served to explain what was spoken by the voice from

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heaven, in answer to his petition, "Father, glorify thy name."—"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."*

What the Apostle Paul says in the eleventh chapter of his epistle to the Romans, of the Jews and Gentiles, which comprehend all mankind, holds forth this same truth. He there speaks of the Jews who were then, the most of them, broken off from the church by unbelief, as yet to come into the kingdom of Christ, even all of them, which he terms their *fulness*. And he says, that when they shall in their fulness be brought in, the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in also. The fulness of the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles, must include the whole of all nations. And he speaks of what had taken place in the days of the Apostles, in the conversion of Jews and Gentiles, as only the first fruits, the root, foundation and beginning, of the whole lump, and the tree which were to follow in the coming in of the Jews and Gentiles, of the whole world, in the fulness thereof.†

This leads to recollect the many prophecies by the ancient Prophets, of the restoration of the Jews to a state of holiness and happiness, in the last days, which has not yet come to pass, some of which it may be proper to mention here, as they serve to confirm the point under consideration. The thirty fourth, thirty sixth, and thirty seventh chapters of Ezekiel, relate chiefly to this event. Though the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, may be implied in this prophecy, and some expressions may have particular reference to that; yet it evidently looks farther, to a deliverance and salvation, of which their return from Babylon was a type or pledge: And there are many things predicted, which cannot be applied to the former, and were not true of it. Particularly the following: "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David: And he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. One king shall be king to them all. And I will cleanse them, so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David, my servant, shall be king over them, and they all shall have one shepherd. They shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their childrens'

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* Verse 28.

† Verses 12, 16, 25.

children forever, and my servant David, shall be their prince forever.”* By David, Jesus Christ the Son of David is meant, as the former was an eminent type of the latter. Therefore this must refer to their restoration and happy state under Christ, which is certainly not yet come ; but will take place, when there shall be one fold, and one shepherd, and Jews and Gentiles shall be united in one church under the Redeemer, which, after the Millennium, shall be transplanted from earth to heaven ; where the spiritual David will reign over it forever.

The same is foretold by the Prophet Hosea. “The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days.”†— ‘The children of Israel are now in the state here described, without a king, and without a prince ; without a sacrifice ; for their temple is destroyed, and they cannot go to Jerusalem, and their law forbids them to sacrifice in any other place. They are without an image, without an ephod and teraphim ; for they have a great and obstinate aversion from all kinds of idolatry, to which they were once so much addicted. They have been a long time, many days, in this state, and will continue so, until they return, and seek Jesus Christ their king, and submit to him, which is yet to come.

These prophecies, and others of the same kind, if they be considered as having reference to the Jews exclusively, and not including the whole church of Christ, in the latter day, composed of Jews and Gentiles, do prove that there is yet to be a time, when the church of Christ shall be universal, and include all nations : For it appears from what St. Paul says, that when those prophecies shall be fulfilled to the Jews, the fulness of the Gentiles will also come in, and all men in every nation will be subject to Christ, and his kingdom shall be glorious, and fill the world. And in this sense “All Israel shall be saved.”

In the revelation made by Jesus Christ to the Apostle John, the final victory and triumph of the church on earth, over all her enemies, and the happy state to which it will be brought, which shall
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* Chap. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 22, 23, 24, 25.

† Chap. iii. 4, 5.

continue a thousand years, is, in some respects, more clearly set forth, than in the preceding prophecies ; by which they are illustrated, and their meaning is more fully fixed and confirmed. Here the general state and circumstances of the church, from the time when the revelation was given, to this time, and down to the end of the world, are predicted. Here the afflictions and persecutions, through which the church should pass ; the respite which she should have, and victory over the persecuting power of heathen Rome, in the days of Constantine ; the grand apostacy which should take place in the church by the rise of the Pope, and the hierarchy of the false church of Rome ; the gross idolatry which should be practised in that church ; and the violent opposition of this power to the true followers of Christ ; their cruel persecutions of them, and shedding their blood, for a thousand two hundred and sixty years ; the judgments that should be executed on that corrupt church and her adherents, and on the whole world, for their obstinacy in wickedness ; and the final overthrow of the Pope and all who support him, and of the kingdom of satan in the world, and the deliverance of the church of Christ into a state of rest and peace, when this kingdom of Christ shall increase and spread, and fill the world ; and continue in this happy state on earth a thousand years : All this is foretold ; much of which is already come to pass ; but the most happy and glorious events are yet to come. The great and remarkable things which have come to pass, as they were foretold, are a standing, incontestible evidence and demonstration, that the prophecies in this book are from heaven : For it is as certain, that none but the omniscient God can know and predict such events, which take place according to the prediction, as it is that this world was made by him. And the events which are come to pass, and are now taking place in the world before our eyes, agreeable to the prophecies in this book, at the same time that they prove that those predictions are from God, are also a pledge and assurance, that the prophecies of things not yet come, will be fulfilled in due season.

The subject now in hand, will lead more particularly to consider what are the prophecies in this book, which relate to the future prosperity of the church and kingdom of Christ in this world, in which all the darkness and afflictions which do attend it, being oppressed and trodden down by enemies, while they prevail
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and triumph, shall issue ; and to show that such a day is certainly coming, according to the predictions which are to be found here.

In the fifth chapter of the Revelation, the four and twenty elders, who represent the church, appear rejoicing and praising Christ in the prospect of their reigning on the earth. “ And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof : For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests : *And we shall reign on the earth.*” This is spoken of *the church*, and is not literally true of every particular member of it, that then actually existed in heaven, or on earth. When the church shall reign on earth, consisting of the numerous members who shall then exist in this world ; all those who are gone out of the world, and are in heaven, will reign in and with the church on earth, as members of the same society and kingdom ; and will partake in all the joy and glory of this event, in a much higher degree than if they were personally on earth : They will reign in their successors, who represent them, and in the prevalence, victory and triumph of that cause, which is theirs, and in which they lived and died. But this will be more particularly considered hereafter.

“ And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.”* Here it is asserted, that under the seventh trumpet, which contains all the events from the time of its sounding, to the end of the world, all the nations and kingdoms in this world shall become one kingdom, under Christ, and shall be wholly swallowed up in this kingdom, which shall not be succeeded or give place to any other kingdom ; but shall stand forever. It shall continue the only kingdom on earth to the end of the world, and exist forever in heaven. Which is perfectly agreeable to many other prophecies which have been mentioned. The meaning is not, that this event shall follow immediately upon the sounding of the seventh trumpet ; but that this is comprehended in the events of this trumpet, to which all the preceding have respect, and in which they shall issue, as the most important and glorious event,

* Chap. x. 15.

event, to which all the inhabitants of heaven were attending, and in the prospect of which they had peculiar joy.

The same event is celebrated in heaven, as having actually taken place, in the former part of the nineteenth chapter. "And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth : Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him ; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white : For the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Here the Lord Jesus Christ is represented as reigning, as he never had done before ; which is the same event which is so often predicted in the Psalms, and by the Prophets, especially by Daniel, by the Lord's reigning, that is Christ. And which is mentioned and celebrated in the tenth chapter ; and in the twentieth chapter ; " And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." By the bride having made herself ready, and being arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, is meant the eminent degree of holiness and moral beauty, to which the church will arrive at that day, in the Millennium state. This is represented as taking place upon the fall of antichrist, and the great whore, the false idolatrous church of Rome. And it succeeds the overthrow of satan's kingdom in the world, and not only the destruction of the Roman empire under antichrist, but of all the nations of wicked men ; which is described in the sixteenth chapter, verse seventeenth, &c.

And the same event is again represented in the latter part of the nineteenth chapter, and in the beginning of the twentieth. " And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse : And he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war." From the following description it appears, that this person is Jesus Christ prepared, and going forth to destroy his enemies on earth. And an angel is seen standing in the sun, in the most conspicuous place, calling with a loud voice upon all the fowls of the air to come " to the supper of the great God,"

to eat the flesh of kings and captains, &c. and the flesh of *all men*, both free and bond, both small and great. And he saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies *gathered together*, to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." And the beast and false prophet were destroyed by him ; and the remnant of those who joined with the beast and were enemies to Christ, were slain by him. This battle, and the destruction of the enemies of Christ, does not follow in time, and is not to take place after the events mentioned in the first part of this chapter, viz. the joy and praise in heaven, upon the reigning of Christ on earth, and the bride, the Lamb's wife, making herself ready, &c. but is a repeated and more particular representation of what is to precede that happy event, which had been before mentioned in the sixteenth chapter, from the thirteenth verse to the end of it. There the kings of the earth, and the whole world, are said to be *gathered together to battle* ; " The battle of the great day of God Almighty." So here " The beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies, are *gathered together to make war* against him that sat on the horse." And there the battle is described as coming on, upon the pouring out of the seventh vial, and great Babylon, which is the same with the beast, and the false prophet, and all the enemies of Christ, are destroyed in battle. Which is exactly parallel with the war and battle of which there is a more particular description in the nineteenth chapter, and must be one and the same event. This is confirmed, by what immediately follows this destruction of the enemies of Christ, in the beginning of the twentieth chapter, which, as has been observed, is the same event with that described in the nineteenth chapter by the marriage of the Lamb, whose bride, that is the church, was made ready, and arrayed in fine linen, clean and white. A more particular and remarkable description of this same thing, in the twentieth chapter, is in the following words.

" And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled : And after that, he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them,

them. And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands : And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection. On such the second death hath no power ; but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

A particular explanation of this passage of scripture will be attempted in the next section. That it does express and confirm the truth which is contained in the numerous prophecies which have been mentioned, and which is set up to be proved in this section, the following observations will show.

1. This event here predicted, is to take place after the overthrow of the Roman antichristian kingdom, and the destruction of all the enemies of Christ and his church on earth. This is evident from the account of the destruction of these in the prophecy immediately preceding these words, and upon which the glorious scene opened in this passage, is to take place. And the same is predicted in the last part of the sixteenth chapter, as has been shown. This is agreeable to the prophecies of the same event, in the Psalms, and by Daniel, and others, viz. that the time of the reign of Christ, and of the saints on earth, shall succeed the destruction of the wicked, and the total overthrow of all the preceding kingdoms and powers in the world, which has been from time to time observed upon them, when they were transcribed. And in this very passage, satan himself is represented as bound, and cast out of the earth, and shut up in the bottomless pit, antecedent to the reign of Christ, and his followers, in the world ; which necessarily implies the total ruin of his cause and kingdom on earth, and the extirpation of all the wicked, who are his children and servants. Therefore, the time here predicted, is not yet come.

2. All this is to take place before the end of the world, and the day of judgment. This is very evident and certain, since it is said, that when this happy time of a thousand years is ended, satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth : And then, after this, Christ is represented as coming to judgment, of which

there is a particular account ; and of the final and eternal destruction of all his enemies.

3. Christ is here said to reign, and his saints to reign with him, which, without any doubt, is the same event, and the same period, which is foretold by Daniel and other Prophets, as a most happy and joyful time, when that nation and those men who will not serve Jesus Christ, shall be destroyed ; and there shall be given to him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High, and all dominions shall serve him. And the extent and universality of the kingdom of Christ, and of those who reign with him, as including all nations and all men, is supposed and implied in his binding Satan and casting him out, “that he should *deceive the nations no more*, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.” Satan is said to deceive the whole world.* And when he is cast out of the whole world, Jesus Christ and his people will take possession of it, and reign in all the earth.

4. Christ and his people are to reign on earth A THOUSAND YEARS.† All have not been agreed in the length of time denoted here by a thousand years. Some have supposed that a thousand years, is used indefinitely, not to express any precise number of years, but a great number of years, or a long time. But this cannot reasonably be admitted as the sense of the expression here, since this precise number of years, is mentioned six times in this passage, which appears inconsistent with its being used in such an indefinite, vague sense. And besides, there is nothing in the connection here, or in the nature or circumstances of the case, to lead any one to understand this number, as put indefinitely.

There are others who suppose, that these are to be understood to be a thousand prophetic years, that is, as many years as there are days in a thousand literal years, a day being put for a year.—According to this way of reckoning, a thousand years are put for three hundred and sixty thousand years ; for in that age, a year was reckoned to consist of three hundred and sixty days. It is said, that in this book of Revelation, a day is constantly put for a year. A thousand, two hundred and sixty days, mean so many years,

* Chap. xii. 9. † Hence this time is called the MILLENNIUM, which signifies a thousand years.

years, and forty two months, mean as many years, as there are days in so many months, reckoning thirty days to each month, as they then did ; which therefore amount to the same number of years, i. e. one thousand, two hundred and sixty years. And a time and times, and half a time, i. e. three years and an half, mean as many years as there are days in three years and an half ; which are just as many as there are in forty two months ; that is, one thousand, two hundred and sixty years. It is therefore concluded, that these thousand years, must be understood in the same way ; that is, that a day is put for a year ; which will amount to three hundred and sixty thousand years.

It is acknowledged that this supposition is supported by some colour of argument, and plausibility : But there are objections to it, some of which will be mentioned.

1. It does by no means follow that these are prophetic years, in the sense mentioned, because a day is put for a year, in other places in this prophecy. There may be reasons for putting a day for a year, in other instances ; and yet there be no reason for putting a thousand years for as many years as there are days in a thousand years, in this instance ; and therefore no reason for understanding them so. And a day is not put for a year in every other instance in this book. The dead bodies of the two witnesses are said to lie in the street of the city, three days and an half,* which do not mean three years and an half, as no event respecting them can be made consistent with such a meaning.

2. The number, *a thousand years*, being repeated so many times in one short paragraph, seems to be a reason that it is to be understood literally, for just so many years, and not so many prophetic years. Especially, as there is nothing in this case to lead us to understand it in the latter sense ; but it may, as consistently with every thing in this book, and this prophecy in particular, and more so, as will be now observed, be understood literally. And it is farther to be observed, that there is no instance in this book, or in the whole Bible, where a precise number is so often repeated in the same words, that is not to be understood literally.

3. It seems to be out of all proper proportion, to suppose there will be so long a time as three hundred and sixty thousand years of prosperity and happiness, and of great and universal holiness in this world, the habitation of an apostate, sinful race of men ; and

but six thousand years of evil times. And this does not appear consistent with this world being represented as an *evil world*, as it is in the scripture: Or with its being cursed in consequence of man's rebellion. One thousand years may be an exception out of seven thousand, in which the curse may be mitigated, and in a great measure removed; and yet, on the whole, or the whole taken together, it may be considered and called, an evil and accursed world, for man's sake. But if there were to be only six thousand years of evil and the curse, and three hundred and sixty thousand years of good and a blessing, it would not, on the whole, be an evil or cursed, but a happy and blessed world.

4. It has been observed, that the natural world is evidently a designed type or shadow of the moral world, especially of the redemption by Christ. And that creating it in six days, and then resting on the seventh, is designed to be a type of bringing the moral world in the work of redemption, to a state of rest; that there are to be six thousand years in which every thing with respect to redemption and the kingdom of Christ, is to be done and prepared, for a seventh thousand years of peace and rest, and joy in this glorious work. And it will be shown in the sequel, that there are institutions in the Mosaic ritual, which point out the same thing. The Apostle Peter seems to allude to this, when speaking of the coming of Christ, and the end of the world. "But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise; but the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," &c.* Hence the constant revolution of weeks, consisting of seven days, is an emblem of the revolution of time, which will come to an end, when the world has existed seven thousand years. And there has been a tradition among both Jews and Christians, agreeable to this sentiment.†—

Now,

* 2 Peter iii. 8, 9, 10.

† "There is an old tradition both among Jews and Christians, that at the end of six thousand years, the Messiah shall come, and the world shall be renewed, the reign of the wicked one shall cease, and the reign of the saints upon earth shall begin." Newton's Dissertations on the Prophecies. Vol. I. Page 490.—And again, Vol. III. Page 410.—"According to tradition, these thousand years of the reign of Christ and the saints, will be the seventh millenary of the world; for as God created the world in six days, and rested on the seventh, so the world, it is argued, will continue six thousand years, and the seventh thousand

Now, this sentiment and tradition suppose, that the thousand years of the Millennium, is but one literal thousand years, or the seventh part of the time in which the world is to stand. And as far as there is any weight in them, oppose and overthrow the notion that the world will not come to an end, till it has existed three hundred and sixty thousand years, after the Millennium shall begin.

5. All the ends of such a day of peace and prosperity, of victory, triumph and salvation to the church on earth, and of the so much celebrated reign of Christ with his saints, in this world, will be fully answered in a literal thousand years, so far as it can be learned what they are, from scripture ; or man can conceive them to be ; as much and as fully answered, as they could be in hundreds of thousands of years, or in any supposed length of time.

Satan will be as much defeated, and his kingdom and interest wholly destroyed in the world ; the cause of wickedness, and evil men, will be entirely ruined and lost, and they all banished from the earth. The wisdom, power, grace, truth and faithfulness of Christ will have a proper and glorious manifestation, by introducing such a state, and continuing it as long as is most for his glory, and the best good of his church, though it shall continue but a thousand years. The church may have all the reward and enjoyment in that time, that it is proper or desirable that it should have on earth ; and it may be wisest and best, then to take it to a more perfect, happy and glorious state in heaven. A thousand years will be time enough for Christ to show what he can do, in bringing good out of evil, and vindicating his cause and church, and triumphing gloriously over all opposition from earth and hell, and filling the world with his powerful presence and kingdom, with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord ; with holiness and happiness. There will be full opportunity in this time, to show and demonstrate, from fact and abundant experience, what is the nature, beauty and excellence of christianity ; that it is exactly suited to form the world into a state of love, union and happiness ; and that all the preceding evils among mankind have been chiefly owing to ignorance or neglect of Christ, and the true spirit of christianity, and opposition to those in life or heart, or both. And this will be time enough to show, that all means are ineffectual to reclaim

and will be the great *sabbatism*, or holy rest, to the people of God : *One day being with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*"—

* Peter iii. 8.

reclaim man from sin; and that this can be effected by nothing but the spirit of God, poured down in plentiful effusions; and to give a sample and foretaste of the beauty, happiness and glory of the holy society and redeemed church in heaven.

And in this thousand years the work of redemption, and salvation, may be fully accomplished, in the utmost extent and glory of it. In this time, in which the world will be soon filled with real christians, and continue full, by constant propagation, to supply the place of those who will leave the world; there will be many thousands born and live on earth, to each one that had been born and lived in the preceding six thousand years. So that if they who shall be born in that thousand years, shall be all, or most of them, saved, as they will be, there will, on the whole, be many thousands of mankind saved, to one that shall be lost.*

The only end that can be imagined would be answered by protracting this time of the prosperity of the church in this world, is, that greater numbers of mankind might exist, and be saved. But that this is really desirable or best, all things considered, there is not the least evidence. A desire that more of mankind should be saved than will be saved, in a thousand years of the prevalence of holiness and salvation, in all the families of the earth, never could be satisfied: For though three hundred and sixty thousand years should be added, and all should be saved who lived in that time; still, for the same reason that this is desired, it will be equally desirable, and more so, that the time of salvation should be lengthened out yet longer; and so on without end. This reason for making the time longer, that more may be saved, cannot cease; and a desire of more time, on this ground, or for this reason, is like the four things which Solomon mentions as never satisfied, and say not it is enough. It is most wise and best, that a certain number and proportion of mankind should be saved: And God only knows what this number is, how great, and what proportion it bears to the whole human race. And no man has any reason to think, that this number will not be compleated within a literal thousand years, after the Millennium commences. Nor can there be the least evidence from any quarter, that it will not, unless there be evidence that the Millennium contains a longer time; which is the question under consideration. And it is supposed that

* See Bellamy's Sermon on the Millennium.

that no evidence of this has yet been produced, or can be at present : And it is certain, that the salvation of more of mankind, were the time to be longer, is no reason why it should be longer. But this will be best, and most infallibly decided by the event which will take place in due season : Which perhaps cannot be determined with certainty now, or so that all shall be satisfied and agreed in the matter. And it may not be wise to be very confident on either side of the question.

THE evidence has now been produced from scripture, that there is a time coming, in which the cause of Christ shall prevail in this world ; and his kingdom spread and fill the earth, as it has never yet done ; in which time, the church and people of Christ shall come to a state of peace and prosperity ; when the kingdom of satan shall be utterly destroyed ; and all wicked men shall be put down, and cast out of the earth, and there shall be none to destroy, hurt or oppose the truth and ways of Christ, or his people : And this happy, glorious day shall last a thousand years.

This is foretold, not by one single prophecy, but is repeatedly and abundantly mentiond in the sacred, prophetic writings, and represented by a variety of strong expressions, and by different similitudes, and in figurative language : And yet all perfectly agree to point out the same thing. And there are many prophecies of the same event, by Isaiah, and in other parts of the Bible, which have not been particularly mentioned.

Nothing has yet taken place in favour of the church of Christ, and in opposition to his enemies, which is in any measure answerable to these predictions. By far the greater part of mankind have been in a state of ignorance of christianity, or of opposition to it, ever since the gospel has been preached to men ; and satan has had a greater and stronger kingdom on earth, than Christ, most of the time since his ascension. And sin, and real opposition to Christ, in principle and practice, have abounded in every age, even among nominal christians. The overthrow of the Jews by the Romans, and the consequent spread of christianity among the Gentiles, were events favourable to the church of Christ, and were a pledge and type of what he will yet do, in overthrowing his enemies and delivering his church, in the latter days. And so was the overthrow of heathen Rome, and the spread and prevalence of christianity through all the Roman empire, in the days
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of the Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century. But this was of short continuance, and within twenty years the church fell into a state of great calamity, by divisions, contentions, and heresies ; and the empire was involved in confusion and war. And from that time to this, the church has been in a low, afflicted state. The many promises made to Israel by the prophets, of restoration to a long abiding state of obedience, holiness and prosperity, have not been in any measure fulfilled to that nation, nor to the church, including Jews and Gentiles, represented and typified by Israel, Jerusalem, Mount Zion, &c. If such a day of prosperity of the church of Christ, comprehending Jews and Gentiles, and all nations, were not yet to come, great part of the prophecies in the Bible could have but a very low and little meaning, and would be in a great measure, if not wholly, useless : Whereas, if they be understood according to the most natural, plain import of them, they open a most pleasing, wonderful scene, suited to support and animate the christian, and fill him with gratitude and joy, on the agreeable prospect.

It appears reasonable and desirable, that Jesus Christ, who suffered shame and reproach in this world, and was condemned and put to death as a malefactor, by men, should have this reproach wiped off in the sight of all men, and that the cause in which he suffered and died, should prevail and be victorious in this same world, where he suffered and died : That he should, agreeably to ancient prophecies, be here on earth, “ Exalted, and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at him (his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men) so shall he sprinkle many nations, and kings shall shut their mouths at him : For that which had not been told them shall they see ; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. He shall divide the spoil with the strong ; because he hath poured out his soul unto death ; and was numbered with the transgressors.”*

And it appears very desirable, that the enemies of Christ and his church, should meet with disappointment, be defeated and confounded in this world, and that the reproach which has been cast upon the church should be removed : That the church should put on her beautiful garments, and shine in the true beauties of christianity :

* *Isai. lii. 13, 14, 15. liii. 11, 12,*

christianity: That it should be seen from experiment in this world, what christianity is; when acted out, according to the true nature and spirit of it; and that this, and this only, can render men and society happy in this state. All this is therefore predicted, and promised. "Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and I will get them praise and fame in every land, where they have been put to shame: For I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth."*

One reason why this day of salvation is delayed so long after the death and resurrection of Christ, doubtless is, that there may be proper and full opportunity to discover the depravity and wickedness of man, and the insufficiency of all means that can be used, or methods taken, to bring men to repentance, and a cordial submission to Christ, unless accompanied by the special, omnipotent influences of the Holy Spirit, to renew their hearts: And clearly to manifest the natural enmity in the hearts of mankind against Christ, and the truths of the gospel, and their strong disposition, and unconquerable by all possible external means and advantages, to oppose, and pervert the gospel, and abuse it to the worst purposes; that it may appear in the most clear and striking light, how greatly and wholly depraved, and utterly lost, men are, unless they be saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; and that the whole praise and glory of the salvation of every one, may be ascribed to the sovereign grace of Christ, and man be forever abased. When God has sufficiently tried men, and used a variety of the most proper and powerful means to bring the world to repentance, and all has proved in vain, he will then pour out his spirit upon all, and renew their hearts, and converts will spring up as grass after showers of rain; and the obstinacy of man, and the power and sovereign grace of Christ, will be acknowledged by all; and that men are saved, not by human might or power, but by the spirit of the Lord.†

And it appears proper and wise, that this day of prosperity and salvation, should be in the latter end of the world, in the last times, as this is suited to excite and support the faith and patience of christians, who live in the preceding dark and evil times; and to encourage and animate them to faithfulness and constancy, in following Christ, and adherence to his cause, in the midst of tempta-

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* Zeph. iii. 19, 20. † Zech. iv. 6. Rom. xi. 32. 1 Cor. i. 21.

tions and trials; and this use is made of it in the scripture, especially in the book of Revelation. And this is suited to excite the prayers of christians in all the preceding ages of darkness, affliction and suffering, and the prevalence of sin, and satan, for the coming and kingdom of Christ; which he has prescribed as the first and most important petition in the pattern of prayer which he has given. "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. *Thy kingdom come.* Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Daniel was excited and encouraged to fast and pray for the deliverance of the people of God, from their affliction and distress in their captivity, by finding that this was foretold and promised by Jeremiah the Prophet.* And this has actually excited christians to pray for this event, in all ages of the church; and doubtless they will be awakened and stirred up to pray more generally, constantly, and fervently for this important, glorious event, as the approach of it is found by prophecy to be nearer: And it will be introduced in answer to the prayers of thousands and millions, who have been, and who will yet be, crying to God night and day; resolving not to keep silence, or give him any rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.† For he will be enquired of for this by his church and people, to do it for them."‡

* Dan. ix. 2, 3, 4. † Isai. lxii. 6, 7. ‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 37.



S E C T I O N II.

In which it is considered, in what the Millennium will consist, and what will be the peculiar happiness and glory of that day, according to Scripture.

THERE have been, and still are, very different opinions, respecting the Millennium, and the events which will take place in that day; which are grounded chiefly on the six first verses in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, which passage has been brought into view, in the preceding section; but is to be more particularly considered in this.

Some

Some have supposed, that this passage is to be taken literally, as importing that at that time, Jesus Christ will come in his human nature, from heaven to earth ; and set his kingdom up here, and reign visibly, and personally, and with distinguished glory on earth. And that the bodies of the martyrs, and other eminent christians, will then be raised from the dead, in which they shall live and reign with Christ here on earth, a thousand years. And some suppose, that all the saints, the true friends to God and Christ, who have lived before that time, will then be raised from the dead, and live on earth perfectly holy, during this thousand years. And this they suppose, is meant by the first resurrection. Those who agree in general in this notion of the Millennium, differ with respect to many circumstances, which it is needless to mention here.

Others have understood this paragraph of scripture, in a figurative sense. That by this reign of Christ on earth, is not meant his coming from heaven to earth, in his human, visible nature ; but his taking to himself his power, and utterly overthrowing the kingdom of satan, and setting up his own kingdom in all the world, which before this had been confined to very narrow bounds ; and subduing all hearts to a willing subjection, and thus reigning over all men, who shall then be in the world, and live in that thousand years. And by "The souls of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," living again and reigning with Christ a thousand years ; they suppose, is not meant a literal resurrection, or the resurrection of their bodies, which is not asserted here, as there is nothing said of their bodies, or of their being raised to life : But that they shall live again and reign with Christ, in the revival, prosperity, reign and triumph of that cause and interest in which they lived, and for the promotion of which they died ; and in whose death, the cause seemed in a measure, and for a time, to die and be lost. And they shall live again in their successors, who shall arise and stand up with the same spirit, and in the same cause, in which they lived and died, and fill the world and reign with Christ a thousand years, agreeable to ancient prophecies. "The meek shall inherit the earth. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High ; whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,

and all dominions shall serve him." And they suppose, that this revival of the truths and cause of Christ, by the numerous inhabitants of the earth, rising up to a new and holy life, and filling the world with holiness and happiness, is that which is here called the *first resurrection*, in distinction from the second, which will consist in the resurrection of the body ; whereas this is a spiritual resurrection ; a resurrection of the truths and cause of Christ, which had been in a great degree, dead and lost ; and a resurrection of the souls of men, by the renovation of the Holy Ghost.

That this important passage of scripture, is to be understood in the figurative sense, last mentioned, is very probable, if not certain. And the following considerations are thought sufficient to support it.

1. Most, if not all the prophecies in this book, are delivered in figurative language, referring to types and events recorded in the Old Testament ; and in imitation of the language of the ancient Prophets. And this was proper and even necessary in the best manner to answer the ends of prophecy, as might easily be shown, were it necessary. The first part of this passage, all must allow, is figurative. Satan cannot be bound with a literal, material chain. The key, the great chain, and the seal, cannot be understood literally. The whole is a figure, and can mean no more than that when the time of the Millennium arrives, or rather previous to it, Jesus Christ will lay effectual restraints on satan, so that his powerful and prevailing influence by which he has before deceived and destroyed a great part of mankind, shall be wholly taken from him, for a thousand years. And it is most natural to understand the other part of the description of this remarkable event to be represented in the same figurative language ; as the whole is a representation of one scene ; especially, since no reason can be given why it should not be understood so : And there are reasons against taking it in a literal sense, which will be mentioned in the following particulars.

2. To suppose that Christ shall come in his human nature to this earth, and live here in his whole person visibly a thousand years, before the day of judgment, appears to be contrary to several passages of scripture.

The coming of Christ, and his appearing at the day of judgment in his human nature, is said to be his *second* appearance, answering to his *first* appearance in his human nature on earth, from

from his birth to his ascension into heaven, which was past. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them who look for him shall he appear the *second time*, without sin, unto salvation."* The appearance here spoken of, is the appearance of Christ at the day of judgment, to complete the salvation of his church. This could not be his appearing the second time, were he thus to appear, and to be bodily present in his human nature on earth, in the time of the Millennium, which is to take place before the day of judgment. The coming of Christ, does not always intend his coming visibly in his human nature; but he is said to come, when he destroyed the temple and nation of the Jews, and appeared in favour of his church. So his destruction of heathen Rome, and delivering his church from that persecuting power, was an instance of his coming. And he will, in the same way, come to destroy antichrist, and the kingdom of satan in the world, and introduce the Millennium; and in these instances, and others, he may be said to appear. But his coming to judgment, and appearing to complete the final destruction of all his enemies, and to perfect the salvation of his church, is his last coming and appearance. And though this will not be his second appearance and coming, in the sense now mentioned, and with reference to those instances of his coming; yet, as he will then come and appear visibly in his human nature; this will be his second coming and appearance in this way and manner, having never appeared on earth in his human nature more than once before, or since his first ascension to heaven, after his incarnation. Therefore, when the final judgment shall take place, Christ is represented as being revealed, and coming from heaven, and this is often called, by way of eminence, his *appearing*; meaning his appearing and coming from heaven in visible splendor and glory, in his whole person, in both natures, divine and human. But if he were here on earth, visible in his human nature, and reigning in his glorified body, during the Millennium; he would be already here to attend the last judgment, and he could not be properly said to come from heaven, and to be revealed from heaven, because this was done a thousand years before. Therefore, that Christ should come from heaven, and appear and reign in his human nature and presence before the day of judgment, seems to be contrary to the following scriptures: "For the Lord himself

shall

* Heb. ix. 27, 28.

shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: And the dead in Christ shall rise first. When the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed from heaven*, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, &c. When he *shall come* to be glorified in his saints.* This is evidently his appearing the second time, for the salvation of all them that look for him; and were he on earth before this, in the human nature, during the time of the Millennium, how could he be said to be *revealed*, to *descend* and *come from* heaven to judge the world?

3. As it seems to be contrary to the above mentioned scriptures to suppose, that Christ will appear on earth, and reign a thousand years in his human nature; so it appears contrary to all reason. Jesus Christ is now on the throne of the universe, having all power in heaven and earth given to him as God-man, and Redeemer, being made head over all things to the church. He is in the most proper, agreeable, and convenient situation to govern the world, and take care of his church. It does not appear agreeable to his station and office, as king and head over all things, for him to descend in the human nature, and erect a throne on earth; which, so far as can be conceived, would be no advantage to his person, design and work; but very much to the contrary. He is gone to heaven in the human nature, that he might reign there, till his enemies are made his footstool, and all things shall be subdued under him. And his church on earth will enjoy him to as great a degree, and as much advantage, as if he were personally on earth in the human nature, and more; and will have as great enjoyment of his presence. He is now in the best situation to be adored and worshipped by his church on earth. Though they now do not see him, yet believing and loving him, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And it would not tend to increase this faith, love and joy, to have him come from heaven, and live in some place on earth, in his human nature; but the contrary: For but few, compared with the whole inhabitants of the world, could have access to him, or see him more than they now do. And when the human nature is in heaven, all may equally have access to him, love and worship him. His church and kingdom on earth will be as happy, splendid and glorious, as if he were on earth, as he is now in heaven, and much more so; for these will consist in his spiritual presence and influence, which may

* 1 Theff. iv. 16. 2 Theff. i. 7, 8, 10.

may be as great while his human nature is in heaven, as if it were on earth; and in their holy conformity to Christ, which would not be increased by his being in that sense on earth. It hence appears in no respect advantageous or desirable, but the contrary, that Jesus Christ should come personally in the human nature from heaven to earth, to reign here with his church, or that he should thus appear, till he shall come to judgment. It is therefore unreasonable to expect or suppose he will thus come, unless it were expressly asserted in scripture, which it certainly is not; but there are some, if not many passages, which seem to be inconsistent with it.

It may be proper to observe here, that the question respecting the manner in which Christ will reign on earth in the Millennium, has no concern with the question concerning the literal or figurative meaning of this passage, as the former does not depend upon the latter: For no man will suppose, that Christ's reigning on earth, is to be understood in a figurative sense. If he shall reign on earth in the hearts of men, by their voluntary subjection to him, he will reign as literally, as if he were present on earth in his humanity. The question, whether this passage is to be understood literally or figuratively, respects the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, &c. their living and reigning with Christ a thousand years. This therefore leads to other observations.

4. The Apostle Paul in his writings, does not appear to expect to have his body raised from the dead to live here on earth again, after he died; or say any thing to lead the christians of this day to expect any such thing, but the contrary.

He says, "It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment." And leads christians to look forward to the second coming of Christ, when he will come to judgment, as the next great event that will immediately respect them; which seems to be inconsistent with the saints having their bodies raised, and living in this world again, a thousand years before the day of judgment. He addresses christians in the following words, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is
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our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”* He directs them to expect and seek enjoyment in heaven where Christ is; and not to expect that he will leave his throne there, till he shall appear the second time, to receive his saints to glory in heaven. For appearing with Christ in glory, means, appearing with him in heaven, as that is the place of glory, where the redeemed are brought to be glorified, to be where Christ is, to behold his glory. The Apostle Peter, speaking of the dissolution of the heavens and earth, says, “ Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”† Some have supposed, that this is the Millennium state, which shall take place after the general conflagration, by which the earth will be renewed; in which a perfectly holy and happy state shall commence, to which all the saints who had died shall be raised, &c. But such a notion cannot be reconciled to other passages of scripture, in which, as has been observed, the Millennium is represented as taking place before the general conflagration and the day of judgment. And after these are over, and the wicked are cast into endless punishment,‡ the Apostle John says, “ And I say a new heaven and a new earth: For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”§ By which the heavenly state is chiefly if not wholly meant, where redemption and the church will be perfected. By the new heaven and new earth, is meant the work of redemption, or the church redeemed by Christ. This is the new creation, infinitely superiour to the old creation, the natural world, and more important, excellent and durable; of which the latter is a faint type or shadow.

The renovation of the hearts of men, by the Spirit of God, by which they become true christians, is in scripture called a new creature, or as the original words *κίνη κτίσις* may as well be rendered, *a new creation*. “ Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: Old things are past away, behold, all things are become new.”|| “ For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”¶— Therefore, every true member of the church belongs to the new creation, and is part of it; and this new creation of the new heaven and new earth, goes on and makes advances, as the church is enlarged

* Col. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

† 2 Pet. iii. 13.

‡ Rev. 20.

§ Chap. xxi. 1.

|| 2 Cor. v. 17.

¶ Gal. vi. 15.

larged and rises to a state of greater prosperity, and proceeds towards perfection.

The new heavens, and new earth, the redeemed church of Christ, will be brought to a very happy and glorious state in the Millennium, and greater advantages will be made then in this new creation, than were ever made before. Therefore, to this event, the following prophecy of Isaiah, does chiefly refer, if not wholly. "For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth. And the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice forever, in that which I create : For behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."* It appears from the preceding and following context, that this prophecy refers to the Millennium, in which the new creation, the church of Christ, will come to the most perfect and happy state to which it will be brought in this world ; from which it will pass to a perfect state, and be completely finished, after the general resurrection and judgment. Then the old creation, the heavens and the earth shall pass away, and be burnt up, and the new creation shall be finished, and brought to a most perfect, beautiful, happy and glorious state. To the new heaven and new earth, thus completed, wherein that righteousness or true holiness, which is the beauty, happiness and glory of the new creation, will *dwell*, i. e. continue and flourish forever, the Apostles Peter and John have chief reference in their words, which have been transcribed above.

5. It does not appear desirable, or to be any advantage to the departed saints, or to the church of Christ on earth, to have the bodies of all who have died before the Millennium, raised from their graves, and come to live a thousand years in this world, before the general resurrection. They are now perfectly holy and happy ; and so far as can be conceived, it would be no addition, but a diminution to their happiness, to come and live in this world, in the body, to eat and drink, and partake of the enjoyments of the world. This would be a degradation, which on no account can be desirable to the spirits of the just, now made perfect in heaven. And it would be no advance in the work of redemption, which is then to be carried on in a greater degree, than ever before. Nor would this be any advantage to the church, in that happy state, to which it will then be brought ; but the contrary, as they would take up that room in the world, which will be then wanted

for those who will be born in that day. And the spirits of the just could not know or enjoy so much of the prosperity and happiness of the church, in the salvation of men, were they to live in bodies on earth, in that time. The inhabitants of heaven have a more particular and extensive knowledge, of what takes place in favour of the church on earth, than any in this world have, or than they could have, were they to come and live here. They know of every conversion that takes place in this world; and they must have the knowledge of the state of the church on earth, and of every event which comes to pass in favour of it, and see the whole of its prosperity. And they have great joy in every thing of this kind. "There is joy in heaven, in presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth." How greatly will the happiness and joy in heaven be increased, when all the inhabitants of the world shall be converted to Christ, and the church of Christ shall fill the earth, and appear in the beauty of holiness! Agreeable to this, the inhabitants of heaven are represented as greatly rejoicing in the prosperity of the church on earth, and the overthrow of all her enemies. "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah; salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God; for he hath judged the great whore, &c. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."*—Surely none will desire to leave that place of knowledge, light and joy, and come and be confined in the body in this world, which will be darkness and solitary, compared with that: Such a change of place could be no privilege or reward; but rather a calamity. Therefore, it is not to be believed, unless it be plainly, and in express words revealed; which, it is presumed, it is not. This leads to another observation.

6. There is nothing expressly said of the resurrection of the body in this passage. The Apostle John saw the *souls* of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, &c. and they lived and reigned with Christ. The resurrection of the body, is no where expressed in scripture, by the soul's living. And as there is nothing said of the body, and he only saw their souls to live, this does not appear to be a proper expression, to denote the resurrection of the body, and their living in that. This therefore does not seem

to be the natural meaning of the words ; and certainly is not the *necessary* meaning. We are therefore warranted to look for another meaning, and to acquiesce in it, if one can be found, which is more easy and natural, and more agreeable to the whole passage, and to the scripture in general. Therefore,

7. The most easy and probable meaning is, that the souls of the martyrs, and all the faithful followers of Christ, who have lived in the world, and have died before the Millennium shall commence, shall revive and live again, in their successors, who shall rise up in the same spirit, and in the same character, in which they lived and died ; and in the revival and flourishing of that cause which they espoused, and spent their lives in promoting it, which cause shall appear to be almost lost and dead, previous to the introduction of that glorious day. This is therefore a spiritual resurrection, by which all the inhabitants of the world will be made spiritually alive, where spiritual death before had reigned ; and they shall appear in the spirit and power of those martyrs and holy men, who had before lived in the world, and who shall live again, in these their successors, and in the revival of their cause, and in the resurrection of the church, from the very low state, in which it had been before the Millennium, to a state of great prosperity and glory.

This is agreeable to the way of representing things in scripture, in other instances. John the baptist was Elijah, because he rose in the spirit of Elijah, and promoted the same cause in which Elijah lived and died ; and Elijah revived and lived in John the baptist, because he went before Christ, in the spirit and power of Elijah.* Therefore Christ says of John, " This is Elijah who was to come."†

It is also to be observed, that the revival and restoration of the church to a state of prosperity, from a dark, low state, is represented by a resurrection to life, or as life from the dead. " Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise ; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust ; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."‡ In the thirty seventh chapter of Ezekiel, this is represented by bringing dry bones to life ; and from them, raising up a very great army.— This is a metaphorical or figurative resurrection. " Then he said unto me, son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel :

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Behold,

* Luke i. 17. † Math. xi. 14. ‡ Eze. xxvii. 19.

Behold, they say our bones are dried, and our hope is lost ; we are cut off for our parts. Therefore, pphcey and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." The Apostle Paul, speaking of the conversion of the Jews to Christ, at the Millennium, says it shall be as "life from the dead."*

In the Millennium, there will be a spiritual resurrection, a resurrection of the souls of the whole church on earth, and in heaven. All nations will be converted, and the world will be filled with spiritual life, as it never was before ; and this will be a general resurrection of the souls of men. This was represented in the returning prodigal. The father says, "This my son was dead, and is alive." And the Apostle Paul speaks of christians as raised from the dead to life. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ."† "If ye then be *risen* with Christ."‡ And this will be a most remarkable resurrection of the church on earth from a low, dark, afflicted state, to a state of great life and joy. It will be multiplied to an exceeding great army, which will cover the face of the earth. And heaven will in a sense and degree, come down to earth ; the spirit of the martyrs, and of all the just made perfect, will now revive and appear on earth, in their numerous successors, and the joy of those in heaven will be greatly increased.

This is the first resurrection, in which all they who have a part are blessed and holy: "Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection : On such the second death hath no power." It is implied that *they only* are blessed and holy, who share in this resurrection ; and therefore that all the redeemed in heaven and earth, who are blessed and holy, are the subjects of it, or have part in it. All who have been or shall be raised from death to spiritual life, have by this, a part in this first resurrection ; and they, and they only, shall escape the second death. This is a farther evidence that this first resurrection is a spiritual resurrection, a resurrection of the soul ; for if it were a literal resurrection of the body, no one would think it would include all the happy and holy, all that shall be saved. The second resurrection is to be the resurrection of the body, in which all shall have part, both the holy
and

* Rom. xi. 15.

† Eph. ii. 4, 5.

‡ Col. iii. 1.

and the unholy, the blessed and the miserable ; which is to take place after the first resurrection is over, and the Millennium is ended, and after the rise and destruction of Gog and Magog ; when the day of judgment shall come on, of which there is an account in the latter part of this chapter. “ And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it : And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them : And they were judged every man according to their works.” “ But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” The *rest of the dead*, are all the dead which have no part in the first resurrection ; that is, are not holy, and partakers of spiritual life. This includes all the wicked who shall have lived, and shall die before the Millennium, the last of which will be slain, and swept off the earth previous to the Millennium, and in order to introduce it, of which there is a representation in the words immediately preceding the passage under consideration. “ And *the rest* were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.” In our translation, it is *the remnant*. It is the same word in the original, ‘Οι λοιποί, which is translated *the rest*, in the words transcribed above ; and the latter seem to have reference to the former. The rest of the dead, are the wicked dead, in opposition to the righteous, who lived again in their successors, who take possession of the earth and reign ; and in the revival and prosperity of their cause, and the kingdom of which they are members. During this thousand years, the rest of the dead, all the antichristian party, and the wicked enemies of Christ, who lived and died in the cause of satan, do not live again : They will have no successors on earth, who shall rise in their spirit, and espouse and promote their cause ; but this will be wholly run down and lost, till the thousand years shall be ended : And then they shall live again a short time in their successors, Gog and Magog, who shall arise in their spirit and cause, and increase and prevail, while satan is loosed again for a little season. This is implied in the words, “ But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished.” It is supposed that they will live again then, which must be during the time in which satan shall be loosed ; for the general resurrection of the bodies will not be till this is ended. These dead will live then,
just

Just as the souls of the martyrs, and all the faithful followers of Christ, who had died, will live in the Millennium.*

That this prophecy respects all nations, and the whole of mankind who shall live in the world in that thousand years, is evident, in that the binding of satan respects them all. "That he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled." And this answers to a prophecy in Isaiah. "And he will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over *all people*, and the vail that is spread over *all nations*."† All nations, the world of mankind therefore, who shall then live on the earth, will have part in the first resurrection. And this warrants the application of all the prophecies which have been mentioned in the preceding section, and others of the same tenor, to this time. And there is good reason to believe, that this prophecy, in the first six verses of the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, is expressed in language best suited to answer the end of it, if it be understood as it has been now explained. The meaning is as obvious and plain, as is desirable and proper that of prophecy should be, when compared with other prophecies. And it is in the best manner suited to support and comfort the followers of Christ, who live before that time; and to animate them to faithfulness, constancy and patience, under all their sufferings in this cause, while the wicked prosper and triumph, and satan reigns in the world, which is one special end of this revelation. Here they are taught, that an end is to come to the afflictions of the church, and to the triumph of all her enemies. That satan's kingdom on earth shall come to an end, and the church shall rise and spread, and fill the world; that the cause in which they labour and suffer shall be virtuous, and that all who suffer in this cause, and who are faithful to Christ, shall live to see this happy, glorious day, and have a large share in it, in proportion to the degree and length of their sufferings,

* "It is very agreeable to the design and connection of this prophecy, to understand the rest of the dead, who lived not again till the thousand years were finished, of the rest or remnant, viz. of those who were slain with the sword of him that sat on the horse. Thus the dead church raised to life, and living and reigning for a thousand years, and the enemies of the church remaining dead, and not living again till the thousand years were finished, will exactly agree in the same figurative meaning. This will be a sense consistent with the resurrection of the antichristian party again, for a little season, after the thousand years shall be finished." Mr. Lowman's Note on Rev. xx. 5.

† Isaiah xlv. 7.

ings, labours, and persevering patience and fidelity, in the cause of Christ and his church.

THE way is now prepared, to consider and show more particularly, in what the happiness and glory of the Millennium will consist; and what particular circumstances will attend the church at that day: What is revealed concerning this by express prophecies, and what is implied in them, or may be deduced as consequences from what is expressly declared. It will be no wonder if some mistakes should be made on this point; but it is hoped if there should be any, they will not be very hurtful: And it is apprehended that the greatest error will be in falling short, and not coming up to the reality, in the description of the happiness and glory of that day; for doubtless, our ideas of these, when raised to the highest of which we are at present capable, fall vastly short of the truth. There is good reason to conclude, however, that the church, and christians, will not be perfectly holy in that day; but that every one will be attended with a degree of sinful imperfection, while in the body, however great may be his attainments and advantages in knowledge and holiness. Doubtless the inspired declarations, that "There is no man which sinneth not—There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not—That if any who professes to be a christian, say he hath no sin, he deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him," will remain true to the end of the world, even in the Millennium; and there will be no perfection on this side heaven. The apostacy which will take place at the end of the Millennium, can be better accounted for, on the supposition that the saints will not be perfect in that time, and seems to suppose it. Though they may, and doubtless will, have vastly higher degrees of light and holiness, than any shall have before that time; yet they will be far from being wholly without sin.

It is most probable, that every individual person who shall then live will be a real christian; and all will doubtless be members of the church, in that day. That is the time when "all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest." God says to his church, speaking of that day, "Thy people also shall be all righteous."† "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: For henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."†

The

* *Isai. lx. 21.*

† *Isai. lli. 1.*

The following things will take place in the Millennium in an eminent degree, as they never did before ; which may be mentioned as generals, including many particulars, some of which will be afterwards suggested.

I. THAT will be a time of eminent holiness, when it shall be acted out by all, in a high degree, in all the branches of it, so as to appear in its true beauty, and the happy effects of it. This will be the peculiar glory, and the source of the happiness of the Millennium. The Prophet Zechariah, speaking of that day, says, “ In that day, shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD ; and the pots of the Lord’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah, shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts.”*—In these metaphorical expressions, is declared the eminent degree of holiness of that day, which will consecrate every thing, even all the utensils and the common business and enjoyments of life, unto the Lord.

Holiness consists in love to God, and to man, with every affection and exercise implied in this, which being expressed and acted out, appears in the exercise of piety towards God, in every branch of it ; and of righteousness and goodness, or disinterested benevolence towards man, including ourselves. This, so far as it shall take place, will banish all the evils which have existed and prevailed in the world ; and becoming universal, and rising to a high and eminent degree, will introduce a state of enjoyment and happiness, which never was known before on earth ; and render it a resemblance of heaven in a high degree.

This will be effected by the abundant influences of the Holy Spirit, poured down on men more universally, and in more constant and plentiful effusions, than ever before ; for all holiness in man, is the effect of the Holy Spirit. That day will be, in a peculiar sense, *the dispensation of the Holy Spirit*, when he will appear as the author of all holiness, by whose influence alone divine revealed truth, and all religious institutions and means, become efficacious and salutary ; by which he will have peculiar honour, in the holiness and salvation which shall then take place. The prophecies of scripture which respect the Millennium, represent it in this light. God, speaking by Isaiah of that time, says, “ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground : I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.

offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grafs, as willows by the water courfes.” And the fame time and event is mentioned as the effect of the Holy Spirit, poured out upon the church. “Neither will I hide my face any more from them : *For I have poured out my Spirit upon the houfe of Israel*, faith the Lord God.”* The fame event is predicted by the Prophet Joel. “And it shall come to pafs afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flefh. And alfo upon the fervants, and upon the handmaids in thefe days, will I pour out my Spirit.”† The Apoftle Peter, applies this paffage in Joel, to the pouring out of the Spirit, on the Apoftles and others on the day of Pentecoft.‡ But this prophecy was fulfilled only in a fmall degree then. This was but the beginning, the firft fruits, which will iffue in that which is unfpeakably greater, more extenfive and glorious in the days of the Millennium, to which this prediction has chief refpect, and when it will have the full and moft complete accomplifhment.

II. THERE will be a great increafe of light and knowledge to a degree vaftly beyond what has been before. This is indeed implied in the great degree of holinefs, which has been mentioned. For knowledge, mental light, and holinefs, are infeparably connected ; and are, in fome refpects, the fame. Holinefs is true light and difcerning; fo far as it depends upon a right tafte, and confifts in it ; and it is a thirft after every kind and degree of ufeul knowledge ; and this defire and thirft for knowledge, will be great and ftrong, in proportion to the degree of holinefs exercifed : And forms the mind to conftant attention, and to make fwift advances in underftanding and knowledge ; and becomes a ftrong guard againft miftakes, error and delufion. Therefore, a time of eminent holinefs, muft be a time of proportionably great light and knowledge. This is the representation which the fcripture gives of that time. The end of binding fatan, and cafting him into the bottomlefs pit, is faid to be, “That he fhould deceive the nations no more, till the thoufand years fhould be fulfilled.” This will put an end to the darknefs, and multiplicity of ftrong delufions, which do prevail, and will prevail, till that time, by which fatan fupports and promotes his intereft and kingdom among men.—Then “The face of the covering caft over all people, and the vail fpread over all nations, fhall be taken away and destroyed :”§

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“And

* Ezek. xxxix. 29.

† Joel ii. 28, 29.

‡ Acts ii. 16, &c.

§ Ifai. xxv. 7.

“And the eyes of them that see, shall not be dim ; and the ears of them that hear, shall hearken. The heart also of the rash, shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly.”* The superior light and knowledge of that day, is metaphorically represented in the following words: “Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven fold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.”† In that day, “The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”‡

The holy scriptures will then be attended to by all, and studied with care, meekness, humility and uprightness of heart, earnestly desiring to understand them, and know the truth ; and the truths they contain will be received with a high relish and delight : And the Bible will be much better understood, than ever before. Many things expressed or implied in the scripture, which are now overlooked and disregarded, will then be discovered, and appear important and excellent ; and those things which now appear intricate and unintelligible, will then appear plain and easy. Then public teachers will be eminently burning and shining lights ; apt to teach ; scribes well instructed into the things of the kingdom of heaven, who will bring out of their treasures, things new and old : And the hearers will be all attention, and receive the truth in the love of it, into honest and good hearts ; and light and knowledge will constantly increase. The conversation of friends and neighbours, when they meet, will be full of instruction, and they will assist each other in their inquiries after the truth, and in pursuit of knowledge. Parents will be able and disposed to instruct their children, as soon as they are capable of learning ; and they will early understand what are the great and leading truths which are revealed in the Bible, and the duties and institutions there prescribed. And from their childhood they will know and understand the holy scriptures, by which they will grow in understanding and wisdom ; and will soon know more than the greatest and best divines have known in ages before. And a happy foundation will be laid for great advances in knowledge and usefulness to the end of life. Agreeable to this, the scripture, speaking of that day, says, “There shall be no more thence (i. e. in the church) an infant

* *Isai.* xxxii. 3, 4.† *Isai.* xxx. 26.‡ *Isai.* xi. 9.

fant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days ; for the child shall die an hundred years old.”* “An infant of days,” is an *old infant*. That is, an old man who is an infant in knowledge, understanding and discretion. Many such aged infants have been, and still are to be found. In that day all shall make advances in true knowledge, discretion and wisdom, in some proportion to their years. “Nor an old man that hath not filled his days.” That is, an old man who has not improved in knowledge and usefulness and every good attainment, according to his age. “For a child shall die an hundred years old.” That is, children in years shall then make such early progress in knowledge, and in religion, and in all excellent and useful attainments, that they shall equal, if not surpass, the highest attainments in these things, of the oldest men who have lived in former ages.

They will then have every desirable advantage and opportunity to get knowledge. They will all be engaged in the same pursuit, and give all the aid and assistance to each other, in their power.— They will all have sufficient leisure to pursue and acquire learning of every kind, that will be beneficial to themselves and to society ; especially knowledge of divinity. And great advances will be made in all arts and sciences, and in every useful branch of knowledge, which tends to promote the spiritual and eternal good of men, or their convenience and comfort in this life.

III. It will be a time of universal peace, love and general and cordial-friendship. War and all strife and contention shall then cease, and be succeeded by mutual love, friendship and beneficence. Those lusts of men, which originate in self love, or selfishness, which produce all the wars and strifes among men, shall be subdued and mortified, and yield to that disinterested benevolence, that heavenly wisdom, which is peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated. This will effectually put an end to war, as the scripture teaches. “And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people : And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks : Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”† The whole world of mankind will be united as one family, wisely seeking the good of

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each

* Isai. lxx. 29,

† Isai. ii. 4. xxxii. 13.

each other, in the exercise of the most sweet love and friendship, founded upon the best and everlasting principles. "The meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." This change, which shall then take place, in which men, who were in ages before, like savage beasts, injurious, cruel, revengeful and destructive to each other, shall lay aside all this, and become harmless, humble and benevolent, is set in a striking, beautiful light in prophecies, representing it by the most fierce and cruel beasts of prey, changing their nature, and living quietly with those creatures which they used to destroy ; and so tame and pliable that a little child might lead them ; and by the most venomous creatures and insects becoming harmless, so that a child might play with them without any danger of being hurt. Isaiah, speaking of that day, says, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together : And the lion shall eat straw, like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den."* Then "They shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid."†

IV. IN that day, men will not only be united in peace and love, as brethren ; but will agree in sentiments, respecting the doctrines and truth contained in the Bible, and the religious institutions and practice, which are there prescribed.

Professing christians have been from the beginning of christianity to this day, greatly divided, and have opposed each other in their religious sentiments and practices ; and are now divided into various parties, sects and denominations, while all appeal to divine revelation, and profess to take their sentiments and practices from that.

It has been often said by some professing christians, and is a sentiment which appears to be spreading at this day, That difference in religious sentiments, and in attendance on the institutions of the gospel, and modes of worship, is attended with no inconvenience, but is rather desirable, and advantageous ; and by this variety, christianity is rendered more agreeable and beautiful.

That

* *Isai. xi. 6, 7, 8.*

† *Mic. iv. 4.*

That it is impossible that all men, whose capacities and genius are so different and various, and their minds, and way of thinking and conception are naturally so far from being alike, should ever be brought to think alike, and embrace the same religious sentiments. That this difference in man's belief and sentiment cannot be criminal; for men are no more obliged to think alike, than they are to look alike, and have the same bodily features and stature. All the union that is required, or that can take place, is that of kind affection, love and charity.

But such sentiments as these are not agreeable to reason or scripture. Error in judgment and sentiment, especially in things of a moral nature, is always wrong; and does not consist or originate merely in any defect of the moral faculties of the mind; but is of a moral nature, in which the taste, affection, or inclination of the heart is concerned; and therefore is always, in every degree of it, morally wrong, and more or less criminal. Were the moral faculties of the mind, were the heart, perfectly right, man would not be capable of error, or of judging wrong, or making any mistake, especially in things of religion. The natural faculties of the mind, of perception and understanding or reason, considered as separate from the inclination or will, do not lead, and have no tendency in themselves, to judge wrong, or contrary to the truth of things. To do so, is to judge without evidence, and contrary to it, which the mind never would or could do, were not the inclination or heart concerned in it, so as to have influence, which must be a wrong inclination, and contrary to the truth, and to evidence; and therefore is morally wrong, or criminal.

Therefore, all the mistakes and wrong opinions which men entertain, respecting the doctrines, institutions and duties revealed in the Bible, are criminal, and of a bad tendency. They must be so, as they are contrary to man's obligation and duty to believe all revealed truth; and are wholly owing to a wrong bias or inclination, or the depravity and corruption of the heart. What God has revealed in his word, he has declared to man, to be received by him, and believed to be the truth; of which he has given sufficient evidence. And the man who does not believe what God has clearly revealed, and of which he has given sufficient evidence, even all that can be reasonably desired, does abuse and pervert his own understanding, and shuts his eyes against the truth, and refuses to receive the testimony which God has given. And who will say there is no crime in this!

Since

Since therefore, all mistakes and errors, contrary to the truths made known in the Bible, are criminal, and owing to the corruption of the heart of man, then perfect holiness will exclude all error, and there neither is, nor can be, any wrong judgment in heaven; and in the Millennium, which will be a greater image of heaven than ever was before on earth, holiness, light and knowledge, will rise so high, that the former errors in principle and practice will subside, and there will be a great and general union in the belief and practice of the truth, contained in divine revelation.

As there is but "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism," so in that day men will be united in the belief and profession of this one faith, in the system of doctrines revealed in the Bible, which then will appear plain, and with the clearest evidence to all. And they will have one common Lord, will understand, and obey all the commands of Christ; and they will know what are the institutions and ordinances which Christ has appointed, which are all implied in baptism: They will understand what is the import of this, and implied in it, and be united in sentiments and practice, so as to form a beautiful, happy union and harmony; which will put an end to the variety and opposition of opinions, and practices, which now divide professing christians into so many sects, parties and denominations. The whole church, with all the members of it, which will fill the earth, and include all mankind then living, will in that day, come to that to which the gospel tends, and is designed to bring it: It will "Come in *the unity of the faith*, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That they shall be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and the cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive: But speaking the truth in love, shall grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."* Then, agreeable to the wish and injunction of the Apostle Paul, christians will "all speak the same thing, and there will be no divisions among them; but will be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment."† Then the inventions and prescriptions of men, both in doctrines and modes of worship, and in christian practice, will be abolished and cease. The Bible will be then understood, and be found a
sufficient

* Eph. iv. 13, 14, 15.

† 1 Cor. i. 10.

sufficient and perfect rule of faith and practice, in which all will agree, and will join “with one mind, and one mouth, to worship and glorify God.”* Then the weapons of the gospel, the truths of divine revelation, being preached, understood and received, will cast down the imaginations of men, and every high thing, introduced by the pride of man, which now exalts itself against the knowledge of God; and will bring into captivity every thought, to the obedience of Christ.”† “And the Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.”‡ All shall agree in their view and acknowledgment of the divine character, and consequently in all the revealed truths and dictates contained in the Bible. Christ will then come to his temple, his church, “and he will be like a refiner’s fire, and like fuller’s soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.”§ The question will be asked now, as it was then, “But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth?” What sect or denomination of christians will abide the trial of that day, and be established?

Answer.—Nothing but the truth, or that which is conformable to it, will abide the trial of that day. “The lip of truth shall be established forever.”|| “The righteous nation which *keepeth the truth* shall enter in,” and be established in that day.¶ Those of every denomination will doubtless expect, that the doctrines they hold, and their mode of worship and discipline, and practice, with respect to the institutions and ordinances of Christ, will be then established as agreeable to the truth; and all others will be given up; and all men will freely conform to them. But the most, and perhaps all, will be much disappointed in this expectation; especially with regard to the different modes of worship, and practices relating to discipline, and the ordinances of the gospel. When the church comes to be built up in that day, and put on her beautiful garments, it will doubtless be different from any thing which now takes place; and what church and particular denomination is now nearest the truth, and the church which will exist at that time, must be left to be decided by the event. It is certain, that all doctrines and practices which are not agreeable to the truth, will

* Rom. xv. 6.

† 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

‡ Zech. xiv. 9.

§ Mal. iii. 1, 2, 3.

|| Prov. xii. 19.

¶ Isai. xxvi. 21.

will at that day, as wood, hay, and stubble, be burnt up. Therefore, it now highly concerns all, honestly to seek and find, love and practise, truth and peace.

It is agreeable to human nature, and seems to be essential to rational creatures, to be most pleased with those who think as they do, and are of the same sentiments with themselves, in those things in which they feel themselves chiefly interested and concerned. And this agreement in sentiment, cements and increases their union and friendship. But this is true, in a peculiar sense and degree, in the case before us. There can be no proper, cordial, religious union among professing christians, who wholly differ and oppose each other in their opinion, respecting the truths and doctrines of the gospel. And agreement in sentiment, and in the knowledge and belief of the truth, is essential to the most happy christian union and friendship. To him who loves the truth, error in others is disagreeable and hateful, and that in proportion to the degree of his love of the truth, and pleasure in it. Therefore, christians love one another *in the truth*, as the Apostles and primitive christians did. "The Elder, unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth."* Where there is no agreement and union in sentiment, and belief of the truth, there is no foundation for christian love and friendship. Love, without any regard to truth, is not christian love. In this sense, the knowledge and belief of the truth, and christian love, cannot be separated: And where there is no knowledge and belief of the truths of the gospel, and agreement in sentiment, there can be no union of heart, and true christian love and friendship.†

As

* 3 John, verse 1.

† They who talk of christian union, love and charity, where there is no agreement in sentiment, respecting the truths and doctrines of the gospel, but a great difference and opposition; and think that doctrinal sentiments are of no importance in christianity; and that their having no belief of particular doctrines, and no creed; or differing in their religious sentiments ever so much, is no impediment to the greatest union and christian friendship, seem not to know, what real christian union, love and friendship is. It is certain they do not love one another *in the truth*, and *for the truth's sake*, which dwelleth in them, as christians did in the Apostles days, 2 John 1, 2. The catholicism and love for which they plead, appears to be a *political* love and union, which may in some measure unite civil worldly societies; but has nothing of the nature of real christianity, and that union and love by which the followers of Christ are one.

As light and knowledge will be greatly increased in the Millennium, and the great truths and doctrines contained in divine revelation will then be more clearly discerned, and appear in their true connection, excellence and importance, they will be understood and cordially embraced by all; and they will be united together in the same mind, and the same judgment; and by this be formed to a high degree of happy christian union, love and friendship, loving one another in the truth, with a pure heart fervently. Thus were the primitive christians united in knowing and obeying the truth, whom the Apostle Peter thus addresses: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in *obeying the truth* through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."* In that day the promise and prophecy spoken by Jeremiah, will be accomplished, to a greater extent and degree than it ever was before. "And I will give them one heart, and *one way*, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them."†

V. THE Millennium will be a time of great enjoyment, happiness and universal joy.

This is often mentioned in prophecy, as what will take place in that day, in a peculiar manner and high degree. "For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Be you glad, and rejoice forever in that which I create; for I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy."‡ The enjoyments of that day are represented by a rich and plentiful feast for all people, consisting in provision of the most agreeable and delicious kind. "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."§ The enjoyments and happiness of the Millennium, are compared to a marriage supper. "Let us rejoice and give honour to him: For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."|| And there will be a great increase of happiness and joy in heaven, at the introduction of that day, and during the continuance of it."¶

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* 1 Pet. i. 22.

† Jer. xxxii. 39.

‡ Isai. lv. 12. lxx. 13.

§ Isai. xxv. 6.

|| Rev. xix. 7, 9.

¶ Rev. xviii. 20. xix. 1—7.

“There shall be joy in heaven, and there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth.”*

And this great increase of happiness and joy on earth will be the natural and even necessary consequence, of the great degree and universality of knowledge and holiness, which all will then profess. The knowledge of God, and the Redeemer, and love to him, will be the source of unspeakable pleasure and joy in his character, government and kingdom. And the more the great truths of divine revelation are opened and come into view, and the wisdom and grace of God in the work of redemption, are seen; the more they are contemplated and relished, the greater will be their enjoyment and happiness; and great will be their evidence and assurance of the love and favour of God, and that they shall enjoy him, and all the blessings and glory of his kingdom forever.—Then, as it is predicted of that time, “The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.”† Then the eminent degree of righteousness or holiness, to which all shall arrive, will be attended with great enjoyment and happiness, which is often meant by *peace* in scripture. And the effect and consequence of this high degree of holiness, and happiness, in seeing and loving God and divine truths, shall be, that they shall have a steady, quiet assurance of the love of God, and of his favour forever, which will greatly add to their happiness.‡

They will have unspeakable satisfaction and delight in worshipping God in secret, and in social worship, whether more private or public. And their meditations and study on divine things will be sweet. The word of God will be to them sweeter than honey or the honey comb; and they will rejoice in the truths there revealed,

* Luke xv. 7, 10.

† Isai. xxxii. 17.

‡ Note. Assurance of the love of God, and of enjoying his favour forever, is here said to be the *effect* of the exercise of holiness, and that peace of soul and enjoyment which attends it: So that persons must *first* be holy, and love God, *before* they can have any assurance or evidence that God loves them, and that they shall be saved; the latter being the effect, and not the cause of the former. They therefore turn things upside down, and contradict this passage, and the whole of divine revelation, and even all reason and common sense, who hold that persons must *first* have assurance, or at least believe, that God loves them, with an everlasting love, *before* they can love God, or exercise any degree of true holiness: And that the latter is the effect of the former †

revealed, more than the men of the world ever did, or can do in all riches. In public assemblies, while the heart and lips of the preacher will glow with heavenly truth, and he pours light and instruction on a numerous congregation, they will all hang upon his lips, and drink in the divine sentiments which are communicated, with a high relish and delight. And in such entertainments there will be enjoyed unspeakably more real pleasure and happiness, than all the men of the world ever found in the most gay, brilliant company, with the most agreeable festivity and mirth, music and dancing, that is possible. The latter is not worthy to be compared with the former.

Then religious enjoyment, whether in company or alone, will appear to be a reality, and of the highest and most noble kind; and every one will be a witness and instance of it. There will then be no briar and thorns to molest enjoyment, or render company disagreeable; but all will be amiable, happy and full of love, and render themselves agreeable to every one. Every one will behave with decency and propriety towards all, agreeable to his station and connections. The law of kindness will be on the tongues of all; and true friendship, of which there is so little among men now, will then be common and universal, even christian love and friendship, which is the most excellent kind of friendship, and is indeed the only real, happy, lasting friendship. And this will lay a foundation for a peculiar, happy intimacy and friendship, in the nearest relations and connections: By which conjugal and domestic duties will be faithfully performed; and the happiness of those relations will be very great; and the end of the institutions of marriage, and families, be answered in a much greater degree, than ever before, and they will have their proper effect, in promoting the enjoyment of individuals, and the good of society.

Then the happiness and joy each one will have in the welfare of others, and the blessings bestowed on them, will be very great. Now the few christians who exercise disinterested benevolence, have, as the Apostle Paul had, great heaviness, and continual sorrow in their hearts, while they behold so many miserable objects: And are surrounded with those who are unhappy in this world, and appear to be going to everlasting destruction, by their folly and obstinacy in sin. They have great comfort and joy, indeed, in the few who appear to be christians, and heirs of eternal life.—When they see persons who appear to understand and love the

doctrines of the gospel, and to have imbibed the amiable, excellent spirit of christianity, and to be the blessed favourites of heaven, they greatly rejoice with them in their happiness, and can say, as Paul did, "What thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy wherewith we rejoice *for your sakes* before our God!"* But in the Millennium, the happiness and joy of each one, will be unspeakably greater, in the character and happiness of all. The benevolence of every one will be gratified and pleased to a very high degree, by all whom he beholds, all with whom he converses, and of whom he thinks; and in their amiable character, and great happiness, he will have pleasure and joy, in proportion to the degree of his benevolence, which will vastly surpass that degree of it, which the best christians now exercise. There will then be no such infinitely miserable objects, which are now every where to be seen, to excite painful grief and sorrow; and the character of christians will then be much more beautiful and excellent, than that of real christians is now, as they will abound so much more in all holy exercise and practice; and their present enjoyment, and future happiness in heaven, will be more evident and realized by each one, which will give pleasure and joy to every one, in the amiable character and happiness of others, even beyond all our present conceptions. "There shall be no more a pricking briar unto the church, or particular christians, nor any grieving thorn, of all that are round about them."† But all will live in pleasing harmony and friendship; and every one will consider himself as surrounded with amiable friends, though he may have no particular connection or acquaintance with them, and all he will see or meet as he passes in the public streets, or elsewhere, will give him a peculiar pleasure, as he will have good reason to consider them to be friends to Christ, and to him, and as professing the peculiarly amiable character of christians: And this pleasure will be mutual between those who have no particular knowledge of each other. But this enjoyment and pleasure will rise much higher between those who are particularly acquainted with each others character, exercises and circumstances; and especially those who are in a more near connection with each other, and whose circumstances and opportunities, lead them to form and cultivate a peculiar intimacy and friendship.

But it is not to be supposed that we are now able to give a proper and full description, or to form an adequate idea of the happiness,

* 1 Thess. iii. 9.

† Ezek. xxviii. 24.

pineness, joy and glory of that day ; but all that is attempted, and our most enlarged and pleasing conceptions, fall much short of the truth, which cannot be fully known, till that happy time shall come. They who now have the best and highest taste for divine truth, and the greatest religious enjoyment, who abound most in christian love, and have the most experience of the happiness of christian friendship, and attend most to the Bible, and study the predictions of that day, will doubtless have the clearest view of it, and most agreeable to the truth, and the highest satisfaction and pleasure, in the prospect of it.

THERE are many other things and circumstances which will take place in that day, which are implied in what has now been observed, or may be inferred from it, and from the scripture, by which the advantages, happiness and glory of the Millennium will be promoted ; some of which will be mentioned in the following particulars :

I. All outward worldly circumstances will then be agreeable and prosperous, and there will be for all, a sufficiency and fulness of every thing needed for the body, and for the comfort and convenience of every one.

This may be inferred from many passages of scripture, which refer to that day ; among which are the following : “ Then shall the earth yield her increase ; and God, even our own God, shall bless us.”* “ Then shall he give the rain of thy seed ; that thou shalt sow the ground withal, and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous : In that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. The oxen likewise, and the young asses that ear the ground, shall eat clear provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan. And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat : For as the days of a tree, are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble : For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.”† “ They shall sit every man under his vine, and

* Psalms lxxvii. 6.

† Isai. xxx. 23, 24, xxxiii. 24, lxxv. 21, 22, 23. Ezek. xxxiv. 23—27.

and under his fig tree, and none shall make him afraid.”* “The seed shall be prosperous, the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.”†

This plenty, and fulness of the things of this life, and worldly prosperity, by which all will be in easy, comfortable circumstances, as to outward conveniences, and temporal enjoyment, will be owing to the following things :

1. To the kindness and peculiar blessing of God in his providence. When all the inhabitants of the world shall become eminently pious, and devote all they have or can enjoy in this world, to God, to the reigning Saviour, he will smile upon men in his providence, and bless them in the city, and in the field, in the fruit of the ground, in the increase of their herds, and of their flocks, in their basket and in their store, as he promised he would bless the children of Israel, if they would be obedient to him.‡ There will be no more unsuitable seasons or calamitous events, to prevent or destroy the fruits of the earth; but every circumstance with regard to rains and the shining of the sun, heat and cold, will be so ordered, as to render the earth fertile, and succeed the labour of man in cultivating it: And there will be nothing to devour and destroy the fruit of the field.

2. To the great degree of benevolence, virtue and wisdom, which all will then have and exercise, with respect to the affairs of this world. There will then be no war to impoverish, lay waste and destroy. This has been a vast expense and scourge to mankind in all ages, by which poverty and distress have been spread among all nations; and the fruits of the earth, produced and stored by the hard labour of man, have been devoured, and worse than lost. Then there will be no unrighteous persons, who shall be disposed to invade the rights and property of others, or deprive them of what justly belongs to them; but every one shall securely sit under his own vine, and fig tree; and there shall be none to make him afraid. Then there will be no law suits, which now, in civilized nations, are so vexatious and very expensive of time and money. Then, by the temperance in all things, which will be practised, and the prudent and wise care of the body, and by the smiles of heaven, there will be no expensive, distressing, de-

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* Mich. iv. 4.

† Zech. viii. 12.

‡ Deut. xxviii. 1—8.

solating pestilence and sickness; but general health will be enjoyed; by which much expense of time and money will be prevented.

The intemperance, excess, extravagance and waste, in food and raiment, and the use of the things of life, which were before practised, will be discarded and cease, in that day. By these, a great part of the productions of the earth, which are for the comfort and convenience of man, are now wasted and worse than lost, as they are, in innumerable instances, the cause of debility of body, sickness and death. But every thing of this kind will be used with great prudence and economy; and in that way, measure and degree, which will best answer the ends of food, drink and clothing, and all other furniture, so as to be most comfortable, decent and convenient, and in the best manner furnish persons for their proper business and duty. Nothing will be sought or used to gratify pride inordinate, sensual appetite or lust: So that there will be no waste of the things of life: Nothing will be lost.

And at that time, the art of husbandry will be greatly advanced, and men will have skill to cultivate and manure the earth, in a much better and more easy way, than ever before; so that the same land will then produce much more than it does now, twenty, thirty, sixty, and perhaps an hundred fold more. And that which is now esteemed barren, and not capable of producing any thing, by cultivation, will then yield much more, for the sustenance of man and beast, than that which is most productive now: So that a very little spot will then produce more of the necessaries and comforts of life, than large tracts of land do now. And in this way, the curse which has hitherto been upon the ground, for the rebellion of man, will be in a great measure removed.

There will also doubtless, be great improvement and advances made in all those mechanic arts, by which the earth will be subdued and cultivated, and all the necessary and convenient articles of life, such as all utensils, clothing, buildings, &c. will be formed and made, in a better manner, and with much less labour, than they now are. There may be inventions and arts of this kind, which are beyond our present conception. And if they could be now known by any one, and he could tell what they will be, they would be thought by most, to be utterly incredible and impossible; as those inventions and arts, which are now known and familiar to us, would have appeared to those who lived before they were found out and took place.

It is not impossible, but very probable, that ways will yet be found out by men, to cut rocks and stones into any shape they please; and to remove them from place to place, with as little labour, as that with which they now cut and remove the softest and lightest wood, in order to build houses, fences, bridges, paving roads, &c. And those huge rocks and stones, which now appear to be useless, and even a nuisance, may then be found to be made, and reserved by him who is infinitely wise and good, for great usefulness, and important purposes. Perhaps there is good reason not to doubt of this. And can he doubt of it, who considers what inventions and arts have taken place in latter ages, which are as much an advance beyond what was known or thought of in ages before, as such an art would be, beyond what is now known and practised? The art by which they removed great stones, and raised them to a vast height, by which they built the pyramids in Egypt; and that by which huge stones were cut and put into the temple of Jerusalem, is now lost, and it cannot be conceived how this was done. This art may be revived in the Millennium; and there may be other inventions and arts, to us, inconceivably greater and more useful than that. Then, in a literal sense, The vallies shall be filled, and the mountains and hills shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth, to render travelling more convenient and easy, and the earth more productive and fertile.

When all these things are considered, which have now been suggested, and others which will naturally occur to them who attend to this subject, it will appear evident, that in the days of the Millennium, there will be a fulness and plenty of all the necessaries and conveniences of life, to render all much more easy and comfortable, in their worldly circumstances and enjoyments, than ever before, and with much less labour and toil: And that it will not be then necessary for any men or women to spend all, or the greatest part of their time in labour, in order to procure a living, and enjoy all the comforts and desirable conveniences of life. It will not be necessary for each one, to labour more than two or three hours in a day, and not more than will conduce to the health and vigour of the body. And the rest of their time they will be disposed to spend in reading and conversation, and in all those exercises which are necessary and proper, in order to improve their minds, and make progress in knowledge; especially in the know-
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ledge of divinity : And in studying the scriptures, and in private and social and public worship, and attending on public instruction, &c. When the earth shall be all subdued, and prepared in the best manner for cultivation, and houses and inclosures, and other necessary and convenient buildings shall be erected, and completely finished, consisting of the most durable materials, the labour will not be hard, and will require but a small portion of their time, in order to supply every one with all the necessaries and conveniences of life : And the rest of their time will not be spent in dissipation or idleness, but in business, more entertaining and important, which has been now mentioned.

And there will be then such benevolence and fervent charity in every heart, that if any one shall be reduced to a state of want by some casualty, or by inability to provide for himself, he will have all the relief and assistance that he could desire ; and there will be such a mutual care and assistance of each other, that all worldly things will be in a great degree, and in the best manner common ; so as not to be withheld from any who may want them ; and they will take great delight in ministering to others and serving them, whenever, and in whatever ways, there shall be opportunity to do it.

2. In that day, mankind will greatly multiply and and increase in number, till the earth shall be filled with them.

When God first made mankind, he said to them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish, (or fill) the earth, and subdue it."* And he renewed this command to Noah and his sons, after the flood, and in them to mankind in general. "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."† This command has never yet been obeyed by mankind ; they have yet done but little, compared with what they ought to have done, in subduing and filling the earth. Instead of this, they have spent great part of their time and strength in subduing and destroying each other ; and in that impiety, intemperance, folly and wickedness, which have brought the divine judgments upon them ; and they have been reduced and destroyed in all ages by famine, pestilence and poverty, and innumerable calamities and evil occurrences ; so that by far the greatest part of the earth remains yet unsubdued, and lies waste without inhabitants. And where it has been most subdued and cultivated

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* Gen, i. 28.

† Gen. ix. i.

and populous, it has been, and still is, far from being filled with inhabitants, so that it could support no more, except in a very few instances, if in any. An exact calculation cannot be made; but it is presumed that every man, who considers the things which have been mentioned above, will be sensible that this earth may be made capable of sustaining thousands to one of mankind who now inhabit it; so that if each one were multiplied to many thousands, the earth would not be more than filled, and all might have ample provision for their sustenance, convenience and comfort.— This will not take place, so long as the world of mankind continue to exercise so much selfishness, unrighteousness and impiety as they do now, and always have done: But there is reason to think they will be greatly diminished, by their destroying themselves, and one another, and by remarkable divine judgments, which will be particularly considered in a following section.

But when the Millennium shall begin, the inhabitants which shall then be on the earth, will be disposed to obey the divine command, to subdue the earth, and multiply, until they have filled it; and they will have skill, and be under all desirable advantages to do it; and the earth will be soon replenished with inhabitants, and be brought to a state of high cultivation and improvement, in every part of it, and will bring forth abundantly for the full supply of all; and there will be many thousand times more people than ever existed before at once in the world. Then the following prophecy, which relates to that day, shall be fulfilled: “A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation. I the Lord will hasten it in his time.”* And there is reason to think the earth will be then, in some degree, enlarged in more ways than can now be mentioned, or thought of. In many thousands, hundred of thousands, yea, millions of instances, large tracts now covered with water, coves and arms of the sea, may be drained, or the water shut out by banks and walls; so that hundreds of millions of persons may live on those places, and be sustained by the produce of them, which are now overflowed with water.— Who can doubt of this, who recollects how many millions of people now inhabit Holland and the Low Countries, the greatest part of which was once covered with the sea, or thought not to be capable of improvement? Other instances might be mentioned.

Though there will be so many millions of millions of people on the earth at the same time, this will not be the least inconveni-

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ence to any ; but the contrary ; for each one will be fully supplied with all he wants, and they will all be united in love, as brethren of one family, and will be mutual helps and blessings to each other. They will die, or rather fall asleep, and pass into the invisible world ; and others will come on the stage in their room. But death then will not be attended with the same calamitous and terrible circumstances as it has been, and is now ; and will not be considered as an evil. It will not be brought on with long and painful sickness, or be accompanied with any great distress of body or mind. They will be in all respects ready for it, and welcome it with the greatest comfort and joy. Every one will die at the time, and in the manner which will be best for him, and all with whom he is connected : And death will not bring distress on surviving relatives and friends ; and they will rather rejoice than mourn, while they have a lively sense of the wisdom and goodness of the will of God, and of the greater happiness of the invisible world, to which their beloved friends are gone ; and where they expect soon to arrive. So that in that day, death will in a great measure loose his sting, and have the appearance of a friend, and be welcomed by all as such.

3. In the Millennium, all will probably speak *one language* : So that one language shall be known and understood all over the world, when it shall be filled with inhabitants innumerable.

The whole earth was once, and originally of one language, and of one speech.* And the folly and rebellion of men was the occasion of their being confounded in speaking and understanding this one language, and the introduction of a variety of languages. This was considered as in itself a great calamity, and was ordered as such : And it can be considered in no other light. Had men been disposed to improve the advantages of all speaking and understanding one language, to wise and good purposes, this diversity never would have taken place. And when men shall become universally pious, virtuous and benevolent, and be disposed to use such an advantage and blessing as having one speech and language will be, for the glory of God and the general good, it will doubtless be restored to them again. This may easily and soon be done, without a miracle, when mankind and the state of the world shall be ripe for it. When they shall all become as one family in affection, and discerning and wisdom shall preside and govern in all

their affairs, they will soon be sensible of the great disadvantage of being divided into so many different tongues, which will greatly impede that universal free intercourse which will be very desirable ; and of the advantage of all speaking and using one language. And God may so order things in his providence that it will then be easy for the most learned and wise to determine which is the best language to be adopted, to be universally taught and spoken.— And when this shall be once determined, and published through the world, by those who are acknowledged to be the wisest men, and best able to fix upon a language that shall be universal, and have a right to do it, all will freely consent to the proposal. And that language will be taught in all schools, and used in public writings, and books that shall be printed ; and in a few years will become the common language, understood and spoken by all ; and all or most of the different languages now in the world will be forgotten and lost. All the learning and knowledge of former ages, contained in books, in different languages, worth preserving, will be introduced and published in the universal language, and communicated to all. This will in a great measure, supersede and render useless the great expense of time, toil and money, which is now bestowed on teaching and studying what are called the *learned languages*. Many thousands if not millions of youths are now consuming years in learning these languages, at great expense of money : And thousands of teachers are spending their lives in attending to them. It is thought by many now, that this is a useless and imprudent waste of time and money, in most instances, at least : It will appear to be much more so, when there shall be one universal language, which shall be understood and spoken by all ; and when the books written in that language shall contain all the useful learning and knowledge in the world ; and all farther improvements will be communicated to the world in that language.

And when this language shall be established, and become universal, all the learning and wisdom in the world, will tend and serve to improve it, and render it more and more perfect. And there can be no doubt that such improvements will be made that persons will be able to communicate their ideas with more ease and precision, and with less ambiguity and danger of being misunderstood, than could be done before.

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And ways will be invented to learn children to read this language with propriety, and to spell and write it with correctness, with more ease, and in much less time, than it is now done, and with little labour and cost. And ways may be invented, perhaps something like the short hands, which are now used by many, by which they will be able to communicate their ideas, and hold intercourse and correspondence with each other, who live in different parts of the world, with much less expense of time and labour, perhaps an hundred times less, than that with which men now correspond.

This will also greatly facilitate the spreading useful knowledge, and all kinds of intelligence, which may be a benefit to mankind, to all parts of the world; and render books very cheap, and easy to be obtained by all. There will then be no need of translations into other languages, and numerous new impressions, in order to have the most useful books read by all. Many hundreds of thousands of copies may be cast off by one impression, and spread over all the earth. And the Bible, one of which, at least, every person will have, by printing such a vast number of them at one impression, may be afforded much cheaper than it can be now; even though it should be supposed that no improvement will be made in the art of printing, and making paper, which cannot be reasonably supposed; but the contrary is much more probable, viz. that both these will then be performed, in a better manner, and with much less labour and expense, than they are now executed. None can doubt of this, who consider what improvements have been made in these arts, since they were first invented.

This universality of language will tend to cement the world of mankind so as to make them *one*, in a higher degree, and to greater advantage, than otherwise could be. This will absorb the distinctions that are now kept up between nations speaking different languages, and promote a general, free communication. It is observed, when there was but one language in the world, that the people were *one*.* And this will greatly facilitate their united exertions, to effect whatever may be for the public good.

Therefore, since there will be so many and great advantages, in having one universal language, understood and used by all mankind, and it will answer so many good purposes, when men shall be disposed to make a right improvement of it; and since it may be so easily effected, when men shall be united in piety and benevolence,

olence, and wisdom shall reign among them; there is reason to think that God will so order things in his providence, and so influence and turn the hearts of mankind, as in the most agreeable manner to introduce the best language, to be adopted and used by all, in that day, in which great and peculiar favour and blessings will be granted to the world, far beyond those which had been given in preceding ages. And this is agreeable to the scripture, which speaks of that day, as distinguished and remarkable for the union and happiness of mankind, when they shall have *one heart, and one way*. And this seems to be expressly predicted: When speaking of that time it is said, "Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent."* These words have been understood in another sense; but the most natural and consistent meaning seems to be, That the people shall not then have a mixed language, speaking with different tongues, which would naturally separate them into different parties, and render them barbarians to each other in their worship: But God will so order things at that time, that one language shall be introduced and spoken by all; and which shall be more perfect, elegant and pure, free from those defects, inconsistencies, and that jargon, which before attended all, or most languages; that they may all, even all mankind, call upon the name of the Lord, with one voice, and in one language, to serve him with one consent; by which they shall be united in worship, and divine service, not only in heart, but in lip, as mankind never were before.

4. The church of Christ will then be formed and regulated, according to his laws and institutions, in the most beautiful and pleasing order.

This is implied in what has been said; but is worthy of a more particular attention. There will then be but one universal, catholic church, comprehending all the inhabitants of the world, formed into numerous particular societies and congregations, as shall be most convenient, to attend on public worship, and the institutions of Christ. There will be no schisms in the church then: Christians will not be divided into various sects and denominations; but there will be a beautiful and happy union in sentiment, respecting the doctrines, worship and institutions of Christ; and all will be of one heart, and one way, and serve Christ with one consent. The ordinances of baptism and the

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Lord's supper, and all the institutions of Christ, will be attended in due order, with solemnity and decency; and being accompanied with divine efficacy, will have their proper and saving effect. All the children will be members of the church, having the initiating seal applied to them, and being solemnly devoted to Christ in baptism; and they will be faithfully brought up for him; and early discover their love to Christ, not only in words, but by obeying him, and attending upon all his institutions. The discipline which Christ has instituted, will be faithfully practised, so far as there shall be any occasion; and christians, by watching over each other in love, and exhorting and admonishing one another, will prevent, or immediately heal all offences. In those respects, and in others not here mentioned, and perhaps not thought of, the church of Christ will then be the best regulated, most beautiful and happy society that ever existed, or can be formed on earth. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, the church, he shall appear in his glory." Then, what is predicted in the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah, and many other prophecies of the same event, shall be fulfilled. God says to his church, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations. I will make the place of my feet glorious. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."*

5. Then

* It has been a question, Whether in the Millennium, when the church shall be thus universal, and be brought to such a well regulated, holy and happy state, there will be any need of civil rulers, to preside and govern in temporal matters? It is said, that every thing which will be necessary of this kind, will be regulated and ordered by particular churches, and civil officers will not be needed, and will have nothing to do.

But when it is considered, that the church of Christ is not a worldly society, and has no concern with temporal matters, and the concerns of the world, considered merely as such, or any farther than they are included in obedience to the laws of Christ: And that there will be need of regulations and laws or orders, with respect to the temporal concerns of mankind; it will appear proper and convenient, if not necessary, that there should be wise men chosen and appointed to superintend, and direct in worldly affairs, whose business it shall be to consult the temporal interest of men, and dictate those regulations from time to time, which shall promote the public good, and the temporal interest of individuals.

5. Then christianity will appear in its true beauty and excellence, and the nature and genuine effects of it will be more manifest than ever before, and the truth and amiableness of it be exhibited in a clear and striking light.

Christianity has hitherto been generally abused and perverted by those who have enjoyed the gospel; and but little of the genuine spirit and power of it has appeared among those who have been called christians. They have, the most of them, disobeyed the laws of Christ, and misrepresented and perverted the doctrines and institutions of the gospel, to accommodate it to the gratification of their selfishness, pride and worldly spirit; and have hated and persecuted one another unto death. They have divided into innumerable sects and parties, and have not been agreed in the doctrines and institutions of the gospel; but have embraced various and contrary opinions concerning them; and contended about them with wrath and bitterness. And the greatest part of the christian world have been as openly vicious, as the heathen nations, if not more so. And as the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles by the wicked lives of the Jews,* so the name of Christ has been blasphemed by infidels and others, through the various kinds of wickedness of those who have been called christians. By reason of whom, the way of truth has been evil spoken of.† But few in the christian world, in comparison with the rest, have honoured Christ, by entering into the true meaning and spirit of the gospel, loving it, and living agreeable to it: And those few have been generally hidden and overlooked by the multitude of merely nominal christians. And genuine christianity is not to be found in the faith and lives of those in general who assume the name of christians; but in the Bible only, since the most who profess to know Christ, by their doctrines and works do deny him.

But in the Millennium the scene will be changed, and christianity will be understood and acted out, in the true spirit and power of it, and have its genuine effect, in the lives and conduct of all. And when it comes to be thus reduced to practice by all, it will appear from fact and experience, to have a divine stamp; and that the gospel is indeed the wisdom of God, and the power of God, forming all who cordially embrace it to a truly amiable and excellent character, and is suited to make men happy in this world,

* Rom. ii. 24.

† 2 Pet. ii. 2.

world, and that which is to come: Then all the disgrace and reproach, which has come upon Christ, his true followers, and upon christianity, by the wickedness and enmity of men, and the abuse of the gospel, shall be wiped off. This is foretold in the following words: "Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee, and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out, and I will get them praise and fame in every land, where they have been put to shame. I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth."* After the various schemes of false religion and infidelity have been tried by men, and the evil nature and bad effects of them discovered, real christianity, as it is stated in divine revelation, when it shall be understood by all, and appear in universal practice, will shine with peculiar lustre and glory; and the beauty and excellence of it, and the happiness it produces, will be more apparent and affecting, and be more admired, by the contrast, than if no such delusion and false religion had taken place. This is represented in the last words of David the Prophet. "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."†—When the sun rises in a clear morning, after a dark, stormy night, and the tender grass springs up fresh and lively, it is much more pleasant and refreshing, than if it had not been preceded by such a night.

6. The time of the Millennium will be in a peculiar and eminent sense and degree, *The day of salvation*, in which the Bible, and all the doctrines, commands and institutions contained in it, will have their proper and designed issue and effect; and that which precedes that day is preparatory to it, and suited in the best manner to introduce it, and render it eminently the gospel day.

The Spirit of God will then be poured out in his glorious fullness, and fill the world with holiness, and salvation, as floods upon the dry ground. All the preceding influences of the Holy Spirit, in converting and saving men, are but the first fruits, which precede the harvest, which will take place in that latter day. This was typified in the Mosaic institutions. The most remarkable festivals were the Passover, the feast of the first fruits, and the feast of Tabernacles, upon which all the males in Israel were commanded to attend at Jerusalem. The Passover typified the death

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* Zeph. xix. 29.

† 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

of Christ, and he was crucified at the time of that feast. The feast of the first fruits, or Pentecost, as it is called in the New Testament, typified the first fruits of the death of Christ, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the conversion of men, when the gospel was first preached, which took place at the time of this feast.* The feast of Tabernacles, which was "the feast of *ingathering*, which was in the end of the year ;"† was a type of the Millennium, which will be in the latter end of the world, when the great and chief ingathering of souls to Christ and his church, shall take place. This is the time when Christ will see the fruit of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied. To this day most of the prophecies of Christ, and salvation, and of the good things which were coming to the church, have their principal reference, and they will have their chief fulfilment then. This is the day which our Lord said Abraham saw with gladness and joy. "Your father Abraham rejoiced (or leaped forward) to see my day : And he saw it, and was glad."‡ He saw the day of Christ in the promise made to him, That in his seed all nations should be blessed ; which will be accomplished in the Millennium, and not before. This is the day of Christ, the day of his great success and glory. This is the gospel day, in comparison with which all that precedes it, is night and darkness.

Then the chief end of divine revelation will be answered. It has been given with a chief reference to that time, and it will then be the mean of producing unspeakably greater good, than in all ages before. It will then be no longer misunderstood, and perverted and abused, to support error and wickedness ; but be universally prized more than all riches, and improved to the best purposes, as the fountain of knowledge and wisdom. And all the institutions and ordinances appointed by Christ, will then have their chief effect. They will then be understood and take place in due order, and be attended in a proper manner ; and the wisdom and goodness of Christ in ordaining them, will be seen and experienced by all. Then the gospel will be preached, as it never was before, since the days of inspiration ; in which the ministers of the gospel will be eminently burning and shining lights, exhibiting the important, affecting, glorious truths of the gospel, in a clear and striking light, and in a manner most agreeable and entertaining ; which will fall into honest and good hearts, and

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* Acts ii. 1.

† Exod. xxxiv. 22.

‡ John viii. 56.

be received with the highest relish and pleasure, and bring forth fruit abundantly. The Sabbath will be a most pleasant and profitable day, and improved to the best and most noble purposes. And the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, according to divine institution, will greatly conduce to the edification of the church, and appear in their true importance and usefulness, as they never did before; these and all other institutions of Christ, being appointed with special reference to that day, when they will have their chief use, and answer the end of their appointment.

As the winter in the natural world is preparatory to the spring and summer; and the rain and snow, the shining of the sun, the wind and frost, issue in the order, beauty and fruitfulness of the vegetable world; and have their proper effect in these; and the end of winter is answered chiefly in what takes place in the spring and summer, and the former is necessary to introduce the latter, and in the best manner to prepare for it: So in the moral world, or the church of Christ, what precedes the Millennium is as the winter, while the way is preparing for the summer, and all that takes place has reference to that happy season, and is suited to introduce it in the best manner and most proper time, when the gospel, so far as it respects the church in this world, and all the institutions and ordinances of it, will have their genuine and chief effect, in the order, beauty, felicity and fruitfulness of the church.



S E C T I O N III.

In which is considered which thousand years of the world will be the Millennium, and when it will begin.

ALL who attend to the subject of the Millennium, will naturally inquire, When this happy time will take place; and how long it will be before it shall be introduced? And some who have undertaken to find from scripture, and to tell the precise time and the year when it will begin, have been evidently mis-

taken, because the time on which they fixed for this, is passed, and the event has not taken place. From this, some have concluded, that it is uncertain whether there will ever be such a time ; and others have exploded all attempts to find from scripture when this time will be.

Though there be good reason to conclude that the exact time, the particular day or year, of the beginning of the Millennium cannot be known, and that it will be introduced gradually, by different successive great and remarkable events, the precise time of which cannot be known before they take place ; and that the prophecies respecting it, are so formed on design, that no man can certainly know when the event predicted shall be accomplished, within a year, or a number of years, until it is manifest by the accomplishment, as such knowledge would answer no good end, but the contrary : Yet there is no reason to suppose that this is left wholly in the dark, and that it is impossible to know, within a thousand, or hundreds of years, when this glorious day shall commence, which is so much the subject of prophecy, in which the glory which is to follow the sufferings of Christ, and the afflictions of his church, will chiefly consist, so far as it relates to the transactions of time.

Though it may be evident from scripture, that the seventh thousand years of the world, will be the time of the prosperity of the church of Christ, on earth ; yet this event may come on by degrees, and be in a measure introduced years before that time ; and the church may not be brought to the most complete and happy state of that day, but still have farther advances to make, after this seventh thousand years begin, and continue some years after they are ended : So that the particular year of the beginning or end of this time, cannot be known, before it actually takes place.

It is thought that there is reason to conclude from divine revelation, that the seventh millenary of the world, will be the time in which the church of Christ will enjoy a sabbath of rest, and be brought to its highest and chief prosperity in this world, which is so much the subject of scripture prophecy ; and that the end of the world, and the day of general judgment, will take place soon after this Millennium is over. The following observations are designed to point out some of the evidence of this.

It has been already observed, That the creation of the natural world in six days, and the seventh being appointed to be a day of rest, does afford an argument that the moral world, or the church and kingdom of Christ, of which the natural world is a designed type, in many respects, will be six thousand years in forming, in order to be brought to such a state, as in the best manner to enjoy a thousand years of rest, peace and prosperity ; a day in the natural world, in this instance, representing a thousand years in the moral world : And that time being thus divided into *sevens*, to have a perpetual rotation to the end of it, denotes that the world is to stand but seven thousand years, as “ One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” And that this has been handed down as the opinion of many ancients, both Jews and Christians.* It is acknowledged, that this argument is not sufficient to establish this point, considered by itself alone ; but it is thought to have some weight, when joined with other arguments from scripture which coincide with this, and serve to strengthen it.

It is observable, that the number *seven* is the most noted number mentioned in scripture, in many respects, and is a *sacred number* above all others. And in the Mosaic ritual, which contained many typical institutions, the Israelites were commanded, not only to observe every seventh day, as a day of rest ; but every seventh year as a Sabbath, and year of rest. And the seventh month in every year, was a festival and sacred month, above all other months of the year. In this month was the feast of Tabernacles, which was to be observed seven days with great joy. On the first day of this month was the feast of trumpets, when the trumpets were to be blown through all the land, which was a type of the extraordinary preaching of the gospel which will introduce the Millennium. And on the tenth day was their annual and most solemn fast, on which they were to confess their sins and afflict their souls, and atonement was made for them. Which was a figure of the repentance and extraordinary humiliation, to which the inhabitants of the world will be brought, by the preaching of the gospel, attended with the dispensations of divine providence suited to promote this, previous to their being raised up to the prosperity and joy of that day. And then the joyful feast of ingathering, in the end of the year, came on, on the fifteenth day of the same month.

* See Sect. I. Page 36, 37. with the note there.

month. This was a type of the happy, joyful Millennium in the seventh and last thousand years of the world, in which vast multitudes, even most of the redeemed, will be gathered into the church and kingdom of Christ; in comparison with whom, all who shall have been saved before this time, are but the first fruits of the purchase of Christ.

It is evident that this feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month, was a designed type of the Millennium, from what has been now observed, and what has been said on the three most remarkable feasts appointed in the law of Moses, in the preceding section; but this evidence is strengthened, and made certain, by what is said by the Prophet Zechariah. When he is speaking of the Millennium, and predicting that happy day, he says, "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles."* By the feast of Tabernacles are meant the enjoyments and blessings of the Millennium, of which all nations shall then partake, and which were typified by that feast.

All these things seem to point out the seventh thousand years of the world to be the time of the Millennium. But there is yet greater evidence of this, which will serve to strengthen what has been observed, and shew that it is not mere conjecture.

The prophecies in the book of Daniel, of the rise and continuance of the little horn, and of the time in which the church shall be in a state of affliction; and those in the Revelation, of the continuance of the beast, who is the same with the horn; and of the duration of the afflicted state of the church during that time, when examined, and compared, will lead to fix on the seventh thousand years of the world to be the time of the Millennium.

In the Revelation, the time of the continuance of the beast, after his deadly wound was healed, is said to be forty and two months.† And the time in which the church should be trodden down, afflicted and oppressed, is said to be forty and two months, a thousand two hundred and sixty days, and a time, and times, and half a time.‡ The same term of time is denoted by each of these expressions. A year was then reckoned to contain three hundred and sixty days; and a month consisted of thirty days. In forty and two months were a thousand two hundred and sixty days.

* Zech. xiv. 16. † Chap. xiii. 5. ‡ Chap. xi. 2, 3. xii. 6, 14.

days. And a time, and times, and half a time, are three years and a half, which contain forty and two months, and a thousand two hundred and sixty days. So long the beast, the idolatrous persecuting power, exercised by the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, is to continue; during which time, the church of Christ is to be oppressed, afflicted and opposed, represented by the holy city being trodden under foot by the Gentiles; the two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth; and a woman persecuted and flying into the wilderness, to hide herself from her enemies, where she is fed and protected during the reign of the beast, which is to continue a thousand two hundred and sixty years, a prophetic day being a year. At the end of those years, the Pope and the church of Rome, of which he is the head, will be destroyed. And according to the representation in the Revelation, the kingdom of the devil in the world, will fall at the same time, and the kingdom of Christ be set up on the ruins of it, and the Millennium will take place.

If it were known when the Bishop of Rome first became what is designed to be denoted by the beast, the time of his fall, and of the end of the church of Rome, and of satan's kingdom in the world, when the Millennium will commence, could be ascertained to a year. But as this beast rose gradually from step to step, till he became a beast, in the highest and most proper sense, this involves the subject in some degree of uncertainty, and renders it more difficult to determine, at which considerable increase and advance of the Bishop of Rome in power and influence, the thousand two hundred and sixty years began. He had great influence, not only in the church, in ecclesiastical matters, but in the temporal affairs of the Roman empire, and of the kingdoms which were erected in it, by the invasion of the northern nations, before he was publicly acknowledged and declared to be Universal Bishop; which was done in the year of Christ, 606. This greatly increased his influence and power in the christian world; and the church was now become exceeding corrupt. If the 1260 years be reckoned from this time, they will end in the year 1866, seventy four years from this time, viz. 1792. But the Pope did not become a temporal prince, and publicly assume civil jurisdiction, till the year 756, when Pepin, the king of France, then the most powerful prince in christendom, made him prince over a large dominion, and he assumed civil authority, and upon this he subdued three kings or kingdoms, and they

they fell before him, according to the prediction of him in the prophecy of Daniel.* And he soon had such power over the nations, as to set up an emperor in Germany, to be his tool, by whom to raise himself to universal empire, reserving to himself and claiming power over the emperor, and over all kings in the christian world, to set them up and crown them, or depose them when he pleased.

This is the most remarkable epoch; when the Pope became a beast, in the most proper sense, from whence his reign is to be dated. Twelve hundred and sixty years from this date, 756, will end near the beginning of the seventh thousandth years of the world. But as he rose to this height gradually, and was a beast in a lower sense long before this, it is reasonable to suppose that he will fall by degrees, until his usurped power is wholly taken from him, and the false church of Rome, the great whore, utterly destroyed; and that he has been falling many years; and that as the time of his reign draws nearer to a close, more remarkable events, by which he and that church will come to total ruin, will take place in a more rapid succession. But this will be more particularly considered in the next section.

Therefore, these prophecies of the rise and fall of Antichrist, or the beast, and the time of his reign, and of the afflicted state of the church of Christ, fix the end of these, and of the reign of satan in the world of mankind, near the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world; when the Millennium will be introduced; though many things will take place before that time, by which the Pope and his interest will gradually decline and sink, and in favour of the church and kingdom of Christ, to prepare the way for the introduction of the Millennium.

In the book of Daniel, the same idolatrous, persecuting power, and the time of the continuance of it, and of the oppressed state of the church, are predicted: And the time is fixed, and expressed by a time, and times, and an half, or the dividing of time; † which is the same mentioned by St. John, in the Revelation, and is 1260 prophetic days; that is, so many years, as has been observed above. There it is said by him who interpreted to Daniel the vision of the four beasts, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be divers from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and tread it down and break it in pieces." This is the Roman empire. "And the ten horns out

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* Chap. vii. 8, 20, 24.

† Dan. vii. 25. xii. 7.

of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise. And another shall arise after them, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws : And they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and time, and the dividing of time.”* This last horn, king or ruling power, is evidently the same with the little horn mentioned in the eighth chapter ; and is the same with the beast when he was recovered to life, after he had been wounded unto death, which St. John saw, that is, the Pope of Rome, in whom the power and idolatry of this empire is revived and continued. The character given of each, is the same in substance ; and the time of their continuance is the same, which much end, according to every probable calculation, at or about the end of the sixth thousand years of the world, or about two thousand years after the incarnation of Christ.† And at the end of this time, this power and kingdom is to be destroyed, and a total end put to the Roman empire, represented by the beast : And the kingdom of Christ, in its fulness and glory, shall then take place, in the universal prevalence and reign of his church and people, which is expressed in the following words :— “ But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it to the end. And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”‡

In the eighth chapter of Daniel, we have a different representation of this same kingdom, power or empire, by a little horn which came forth out of one of the four horns, into which the Grecian empire founded by Alexander the great, was divided, some time after his death. This is the Roman or fourth and last empire, upon the destruction of which the kingdom of Christ is to prevail, and fill the world. Daniel describes this little horn, as it appeared to him in the vision, in the following words : “ And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeded great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land. And it waxed great, even to the host of heaven, and it cast down some of the host, and of the stars, to the ground, and stamped

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* Dan. vii. 23, 24, 25.
the Prophecies.

† See Bishop Newton's Dissertation on
‡ Verse 26, 27.

upon them. Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice, by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practised and prospered.* And this vision is explained by the angel interpreter in the following part of the chapter.† What is said of this horn respects the Roman kingdom and empire, from the beginning and end of it, the ruin of which shall open the way for the kingdom of Christ to flourish in the world, and the reign of the saints on the earth. And what is said of this power or kingdom here, respects the idolatry that should be supported and practised by it, and the opposition it should make to God and his people, in which it should prevail, and have power to oppress and persecute the saints; and there is special reference to the Pope and those under his influence and direction, when he should be at the head of this empire, and rule in it, who is particularly designed in the seventh chapter, denoted by the little horn, “which had eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things; which should make war with the saints, and prevail against them; and speak great words against the Most High, and wear out the saints of the Most High.”‡ This power, indeed, did oppose and destroy the mighty and holy people, and stand up against the Prince of princes, before it existed, and was exercised by antichrist, in the church of Rome. Jesus Christ the Prince of princes, was put to death by this power.—And this horn persecuted the church, especially at times, for near three hundred years after the death of Christ; all of which is included in the description of the horn or kingdom, which is the chief subject of this chapter; but there is particular and chief reference to what this power would be and do, when in the hands of antichrist, for he, above all others, has spoken great things, and opened his mouth to blaspheme God and the saints: He has introduced and promoted the grossest idolatry, and stood up against the Prince of princes; has magnified himself in his heart even to the Prince of the host, the Lord Jesus Christ; and has been the most cruel and bloody persecutor of the saints for many ages: He has cast down the truth to the ground, and practised and prospered, and has destroyed vast numbers of the holy people, or the saints. Gabriel, who was ordered to make Daniel understand the vision, said to him, “Behold, I will make thee know what shall be *in the last*

* Verse 9, 10, 11, 12.

† Verse 23—25.

‡ Verse 8, 21, 25.

last end of the indignation : For at the time appointed the end shall be.* His interpretation had chief respect to the latter end of this kingdom, under the reign of antichrist, in whose end the kingdom should be ruined, and exist no more.

The question is here asked, "How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" Bishop Newton says, "In the original there is no such word as *concerning* ; and Mr. Lowth rightly observes, that the words may be rendered more agreeably to the Hebrew thus, *For how long a time shall the vision last, the daily sacrifice be taken away, and the transgression of the desolation continue, &c.* After the same manner the question is translated by the seventy, and in the Arabic version, and in the Vulgar Latin."

The answer is, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days ; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."† These are no doubt prophetical days, a day being put for a year. The time therefore specified is two thousand and three hundred years. All the difficulty in fixing on the time of the end of these days, lies in determining at what time the reckoning begins. This is left in a degree of uncertainty, as is the beginning of the reign of antichrist, which is to continue twelve hundred and sixty years ; the reason of which doubtless is, that it should not be precisely known to a day or year, when this time will end, till it shall be actually accomplished, while it is made certain, the time of the end is fixed, and they who are willing to attend to the subject, and make use of all the light that is offered, may have sufficient evidence to determine within a few years when the time will be, and not be left in a total uncertainty about it.

The little horn, which is the chief subject of this vision, and was to do such great things against the holy people, the church, came forth out of one of the four notable horns, toward the four winds of heaven, which grew out of the goat, after the one great horn was broken, which the goat had at first ‡ The goat is the king of Grecia, or the Grecian empire, erected by Alexander the great, who was the first king, or the great horn.§ After the death of Alexander, and when his successors in his family were extinct, four kings were set up, and divided the great empire between them into four kingdoms, which division was toward, or according

* Verse 19. † Verses 13, 14. ‡ Verse 8. § Verse 21.

to the four winds, East, West, North and South. Cassander, one of the four kings, took the western part of the empire, or the western kingdom, containing Macedon, Greece, &c. Out of this horn came forth the little horn, which "waxed exceeding great, toward the South, and toward the East, and toward the pleasant land."* This horn Gabriel explains to be "A king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, who shall stand up."† The Romans are meant by this horn, who were west of Greece, and may be considered as included in the western part of the empire, which was one of the four horns, out of which they rose, and soon were conspicuous; and Prideaux says, "Their name began to grow of great note and fame among foreign nations," by their conquests in a few, not above five or six twenty years, after the above mentioned partition of the empire of the goat, into four horns or kingdoms. And they were a distinct people, and doubtless made some figure, when the four horns first existed. From this time, and this small beginning, the Romans arose by their policy, power and conquests, until they arrived to a vast and universal empire. And as they existed as a people when the Grecian empire was divided into four kingdoms or horns, and they were really included in the western horn, and soon rose out of it, and went on and grew to universal empire, their beginning may properly be reckoned from the time when the western horn or kingdom arose, in which they were included, as they soon after that, became a distinct power and kingdom, and were a little horn, and proceeded to conquer and destroy the horn, out of which they came, and to subdue all the other horns.

This partition of the Grecian empire into four kingdoms or horns, was just about three hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, or the beginning of the christian era. And as the incarnation of Christ was about the beginning of the fifth thousand years of the world, two thousand and three hundred years from the rise of the four horns will end at or near the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world. Or if the beginning of the little horn should not be reckoned from that time, but from the time when the Roman power or horn began to be conspicuous and acknowledged among the nations, two thousand three hundred years from that time, will carry them but a few years beyond the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world;

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so that this number serves to confirm what has been observed from the other numbers in Daniel, and the Revelation, viz. That the reign of antichrist, who is the last head of the Roman empire, will end about the beginning of the seventh millenary of the world, when the Millennium will begin, and the meek, the saints, shall inherit the earth, take the kingdom and reign with Christ.

In the last chapter of Daniel, "One said to the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" The answer is made in a very solemn manner, in the following words: "It shall be for a time, times, and an half. And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." He who shall scatter the power of the holy people or the saints, is the same with the horn, mentioned in the seventh chapter, who should "Wear out the saints of the Most High;" which is the same event which is here expressed in different words. And the time of his doing this, is the same which is mentioned here: "And they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time."* That is, three prophetic years and an half, in which are 1260 prophetic days, which are put for so many years. And this is the same power which is called a beast in the Revelation, who was to do the same thing mentioned here, viz. It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them! And the same time is there fixed for his doing this. "And power was given unto him to continue (or practise and make war) forty and two months," after he was recovered to life from being wounded unto death;† which is just three years and an half, and twelve hundred and sixty days.

Daniel heard, but did not understand the answer, and therefore put the following question, "Then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" The answer is, "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." Here are two different numbers or times mentioned, and neither of them agrees exactly with the foregoing answer. In that, the time of the continuance of the persecuting power, which shall scatter and wear out the saints, is limited to 1260 years. In the answer to

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* Chap. vii. 25.

† Rev. xiii. 5, 7.

Daniel's question, two different numbers of years are mentioned, when those evil things shall come to an end, and the prophana-tion of the church, and the worship and ordinances of Christ, shall cease, and the church shall be restored to due order, and be blessed and brought to a happy, glorious state, viz. 1290, and 1335 years. The first is 30 years longer than the time mentioned above, and in the Revelation, and the last exceeds it 75 years. This seeming difference may be reconciled by observing, that these answers do not respect precisely the same event. The former expresses the time of the continuance and reign of antichrist, in which he shall oppress the church of Christ: And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, he shall be destroyed. The latter looks forward to the recovery of the church of Christ, from her low, afflicted, broken state, to a state of peace and prosperity, in the proper use and enjoyment of the worship, institutions and ordinances of Christ, which had been so greatly corrupted by the false church of Rome. It may take some time to effect this, after the Pope and the church of Rome are wholly destroyed and extinct. As the corruption and perversion of the church, worship and ordinances of Christ, was brought on by degrees, and considerable advances were made in this, after antichrist arose, and the Pope became a persecuting beast; so doubtless the church will not be wholly purified when this beast shall be destroyed; but it will be some time after this, before all corruptions and errors in doctrine and practice, will be wholly extirpated, and the church appear in her true beauty, and come to a state of universal, established peace and prosperity. Within thirty years after the beast shall be slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame, or at the end of 1290 years, the church may become universal, and all nations be members of it; and it may arrive to a state of great purity and peace, and an end be put to all her troubles, and most of the wicked be swept off from the face of the earth, by some remarkable event, and sudden stroke; by which the kingdom of satan shall be nearly extinct; and his influence among mankind almost wholly cease. But the church of Christ may not arrive to the most pure and happy state which it shall enjoy, under forty or fifty years after this. For this happy period christians must wait; and they will be in a peculiar and high degree blessed, who shall come to this happy and glorious state of the church, when the first resurrection shall be universal and complete, and the Millennium
state

state established, and brought to its full stature, and proper height in holiness and happiness, which took place in a considerable degree, and might properly be said to have began a number of years before. But these events, and the precise time and manner of their taking place, will be fully known, and the prophecies by which they are foretold, will be better understood, when they shall be actually accomplished; and all the mistakes which are now made respecting them, will be rectified; until which time, they must be in some measure sealed. Nevertheless, it may be evident from divine revelation, that the end of the reign of antichrist draws near, and the time of deliverance of the church, from the dark and low state in which it has been near twelve hundred years, and of the ruin of the kingdom of satan in the world, is not far off; and that these great events will come on within two hundred years, or about that time; and that the seventh thousand years of the world, is the time fixed for the prosperity of the church of Christ, and the reign of the saints on earth. And it is hoped that what has been now observed on this point, is sufficient to convince every unprejudiced, attentive inquirer, that there is satisfactory evidence from prophecy, and other things contained in scripture, that the predicted Millennium will take place at that time.

It has been observed, that as antichrist rose gradually, from one degree of influence and power to another, till he became a complete beast, so this persecuting, idolatrous, antichristian power will fall by degrees, until it is wholly taken out of the way: And there may, and probably will be, 1260 years between the most remarkable steps by which he rose, and as great and remarkable steps, by which he is to fall, and go into perdition.*

The

* The time of the captivity of the Jews by the Babylonians, was fixed in the prophecy of Jeremiah to seventy years. But this prediction had reference to different beginnings and endings. It was just seventy years from the first captivity, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when Daniel and many other Jews were carried to Babylon, to the decree of Cyrus, giving leave to the Jews to return, and ordering that the temple and Jerusalem should be rebuilt. And it was seventy years from the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, to the publishing of the decree of Darius, by which the building of the temple was completed, and the Jews restored to their former state.

So, the 1260 years of the captivity of the church of Christ, in spiritual Babylon, will doubtless have different beginnings, and consequently different endings. As the power and tyranny of the Bishop and church of Rome

rose

The corruption and apostacy of the church had early beginnings, and the usurped, tyrannical, and worldly power of the Bishops, especially of the Bishop of Rome, soon began to take place. The Apostle Paul, speaking of the grand apostacy which has actually taken place in the church of Rome, under the influence and power of the *man of sin*, that is, the Pope, says, that the seeds of all this were then sown, and this mystery of iniquity did then begin to work with power and energy, *ἐν ἐξουσίᾳ* which was to be kept under powerful restraints for a while, but should openly appear and be acted out when these restraints should be taken off.* In the third century, "The Bishops assumed, in many places, a princely authority, particularly those who had the greatest number of churches under their inspection, and who presided over the most opulent assemblies. They appropriated to their evangelical function, the splendid ensigns of temporal majesty: A throne surrounded with ministers, exalted above his equals the servants of the meek and humble Jesus, and sumptuous garments dazzled the eyes and the minds of the multitude, into an ignorant veneration for their arrogated authority."† And about the middle of that century, STEPHEN, the Bishop of Rome, a haughty, ambitious man, aspired to a superiority and power over all the other Bishops and churches, and his preeminence in the church universal, was acknowledged. From this time, to the reformation from popery in the sixteenth century, when the Pope began to fall in a remarkable degree, and lost a great part of his power and influence, which he is never like to regain, are 1260 years. Luther, the first reformer, arose in the year of Christ, 1517. If we reckon back from that time, 1260 years will carry us to the year 257, which is the very time in which STEPHEN, Bishop of Rome, claimed and usurped the power and preeminence abovementioned, and which was, in some measure at least, granted to him.

And as this man of sin, rose higher and higher, and became more conspicuous by one remarkable step after another, in the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh centuries, until he was publicly invested with temporal dominion, about the middle of the eighth century,

rose from less beginnings to their full height; so the fall is to be gradual, till it is completed: And from each remarkable advance, there are 1260 years, to as remarkable, successive events, by which the kingdom and the power of the beast shall decline, and be utterly destroyed.

* 2 Theff. ii. 3—8.

† Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History: Third Century, Chap. II.

century, viz. in the year 756, when he became a complete beast, and assumed the greatest authority, both in civil and religious matters, in the christian world, and in fact had more power and influence over all persons and things in the church and state, than any other man; so there is good reason to conclude, he will gradually fall, by one remarkable event after another, from the time of the reformation in the sixteenth century, when his power and influence in the christian world were so greatly eclipsed, until this son of perdition shall be utterly destroyed, not far from the end of the twentieth century, or the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world. And with the fall of this son of satan, the kingdom of satan, which has been so great and strong in this world for so long a time, will come to an end, and he will be cast out of the earth, and chained down in the bottomless pit: Which event will be succeeded by the kingdom of heaven, which shall comprehend all the men then on earth, in which the saints shall reign a thousand years.

The facts and events which have taken place since that time, especially in the present century, coincide with such a conclusion, and serve to strengthen and confirm it. The Pope and the hierarchy of the church of Rome, are sinking with a rapid descent.—The kings and nations who once wandered after this beast, and joined to support and exalt this antichristian power, now pay little regard to him. They neither love nor fear him much, but are rather disposed to pull him down and strip him of his riches and power. The dissolution of the society of the Jesuits, banishing them, and confiscating their riches, who were a great support of that church and the Pope; the kings taking from the Pope the power which he claimed, as his right, to nominate and appoint all the bishops to vacant sees, and actually taking it upon themselves to do this, by which a vast stream of money which used to be poured into the coffers of the Pope, is taken from him, and falls into the hands of these kings:—The increase and spread of light, by which the tyranny, superstition and idolatry of the church of Rome and its hierarchy are more clearly discerned, and exposed to the abhorrence and contempt of men; and especially the great increase of the knowledge of the nature, reasonableness and importance of religious and civil liberty, and the rapid spread of zeal among the nations to promote these: All these are remarkable events, which, among others not mentioned, serve to

confirm the above conclusion, that the Pope is falling with increasing rapidity. And there is reason to expect from what has come to pass, and is now taking place, and from scripture prophecy, that yet greater and more remarkable events will soon take place, and come on in a swift and surprising succession, which will hasten on the utter overthrow of the beast and all his adherents : And that the time predicted will soon come, when the ten horns, or kings, who have agreed in time past, and given their kingdom unto the beast, shall change their minds, and hate the whore, and make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.*

* Rev. xvii. 16, 17.

S E C T I O N I V .

In which is considered, what events are to take place, according to Scripture Prophecy, before the beginning of the Millennium, and to prepare the way for it.

BY attending to the events predicted, which are to take place before the Millennium, and which are to introduce it, farther evidence will come into view, that it will not commence long before the beginning of the seventh thousand years of the world ; nor much latter ; and therefore, that it will be in that thousand years, and begin about two hundred years from the end of this present century.

The seven vials or cups, which contained the seven last plagues, or remarkable judgments, which are to be executed upon the beast and his adherents, and upon the world of mankind, are to be poured out during the time of the reign of the beast, and the existence of the false church of Rome ; and which will issue in the destruction of the beast, and of that church. This is evident from the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of the Revelation. The first vial respects the beast and his followers, and brought sore calamities upon them, expressed in the following words : " And there

there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them who worshipped his image.* A number of these vials must have been already poured out, as the beast has existed above a thousand years already; and therefore the effects of the last vial, which include his utter destruction, will not reach much more than two hundred years from this time; and consequently these effects will soon begin to take place, if they have not already begun in some measure. For as the pouring out or running, of the seven vials, is limited to the 1260 years of the continuance of the beast, there are not 200 years for each vial; and some may run longer, and others a shorter time of this space.

Some acquaintance with the history of the calamitous events which have taken place, answering to the prophetic description under those vials which have been poured out, is necessary in order to know how and when it has been fulfilled, and how many vials appear to have already run out, and which is now running.—Mr. Lowman has taken pains to show from many credible historians, that the remarkable calamitous events which have taken place, and which have especially affected the beast and his followers, and brought great and distressing evils upon them, have answered to the evils and events described in prophetic language, under the successive five first vials of wrath: And there appears to be satisfactory evidence that the judgments predicted under these vials, have already been executed on antichrist, and his supporters and followers: And that the reformation began by Luther, and the remarkable events attending it, was the judgment predicted by the pouring out of the fifth vial, to be inflicted on the beast and the church of Rome. This vial was to be poured out on the seat, or, as it is in the original, the throne of the beast—"And his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain."† When the protestant reformation came on, protestants had light, had discerning and wisdom, prosperity and joy: But the Pope and his followers suffered great vexation and anguish, every event turned against them, their light was turned into darkness, their policy and counsels, by which they had prospered and obtained their ends before, were now turned into foolishness; and they were baffled and confounded, and their attempts to suppress the northern heresy, as they called it, and to crush the protestants, proved abortive, and turned against themselves, in a remarkable manner.

manner. And those events proved like a lasting, painful sore to them, from which they have not recovered to this day. "And they blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." They blasphemed God, by attributing what took place in favour of truth and the cause of Christ, to the exertions and obstinacy of wicked men, and calling the truths of the gospel and holiness, espoused and propagated by the reformers, the delusions and works of satan, and treating the reformation, and the work of God, as if it were the work of the devil. They also blasphemed the God of heaven, by persisting in their gross idolatry, worshipping saints and images, in the face of the light exhibited by the reformers, which idolatry is called blasphemy in the Bible. And the famous council of Trent, which was called by the Pope at that time, and sat eighteen years, were so far from complying with the reformation, that they anathematized the persons, doctrines and practices, by which it was introduced and supported. And formed decrees in favour of the power and tyranny of the Pope, and the superstition and idolatry of the church of Rome, and in some instances went beyond any thing that had ever been decreed by any counsel before, in favour of these abominations. Thus "they repented not of their evil deeds."

This vial began to be poured out near the beginning of the sixteenth century, in the year 1517, when Luther began to oppose the wickedness of the church of Rome, and the power and evil practices of the Pope: And from that time, the influence and power, or throne, of this man of sin, has been diminishing, and he is in a great measure deposed, and has fallen almost to the ground from that high throne, and unlimited power in church and state, to which he had, before that, aspired and risen. As it is near three hundred years since the fifth vial was poured out, there is good reason to conclude, that the sixth vial began to be poured out, and has been running from the latter end of the last century, at least, i. e. for an hundred years or more; that it is near run out, and the seventh and last vial will begin to run early in the next century. Whether this be so or not, may be determined with greater and more satisfactory evidence, by attending to the prophetic description of the events which are to take place under those vials. And as the sixth vial is supposed to be now running, there is reason to pay a more particular and careful attention to the

the prophetic language, by which the events under this vial are expressed, that the meaning may be understood, and applied to the events which are pointed out, so as to be clearly discovered, and the signs of these times, be discerned by all who will properly attend to this interesting subject.

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates: And the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.” Ancient Babylon was a type of the antichristian church of Rome. By that, the church of Israel was afflicted and reduced to a state of captivity seventy years, until it was taken by Cyrus and Darius, whose kingdoms were east of Babylon. So the church of Christ has fallen under the power of this antichristian church, and power is given to the beast to make war with the saints, and to overcome them, and to continue forty two months: Therefore, the church of Rome is called Babylon in the Revelation.

The river Euphrates ran through Babylon, under the walls of the city, and a wide and deep moat, filled with water from the river, encompassed the city on the outside of the walls; so that the river was not only a defence to the city, but afforded a supply of water and fish, and other provisions, brought into it by water carriage. Cyrus, who came against Babylon with an army of Medes and Persians, took the city, by turning the water of the river from the usual channel, in which it went under the walls of the city, and ran through it, and dried up the water in that channel, by which a way was opened for his army to pass into the city under the walls, in the dried channel, where the river used to run. Accordingly the army marched in, and took the city in the night, when the inhabitants were either asleep, or intoxicated with drinking, as that was the time of a great festival. In that night the king of Babylon was slain, and Cyrus took the kingdom for his uncle Darius, the Mede.*

In this prophecy there is an allusion to this manner of taking Babylon, by Darius and Cyrus, the kings of the east. The church of Rome is the antitype of Babylon. By the kings of the east, are meant those, whoever they may be, who are, or shall be enemies to the church of Rome, and wish to reduce and destroy it, and shall be made the instruments of it; as the eastern kings took Babylon, by drying up the river Euphrates. The riches and power of the

Pope

* Dan. v.—See Prideaux's Connexion, Part I. Book II,

Pope and the church of Rome, and whatever serves as a defence and support of that church, answer to the river Euphrates in old Babylon; and the removal of those is meant by drying up the river; which will prepare the way for the enemies and opposers of this church, to take possession of it, and destroy it.

The river, in this sense of it, has been drying up for a century or more, while this sixth vial has been running; and there have been more remarkable instances of it in this century, some of which have been mentioned above, by which the riches of the church of Rome are greatly diminished, and she is stripped and becoming poor: And the power and influence of the Pope is become very small and inconsiderable, and he is but little regarded by those who once worshipped him; and the way is fast preparing, for the Pope and his church to be hated, made desolate, and burnt with fire.”*

John goes on to relate a farther vision which he had, of events which are to take place under this vial, in the following words: And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.”† This is the first time that the false prophet is mentioned: And it appears from what is said of this false prophet, in the twentieth verse of the nineteenth chapter, that he is the same with the second beast, which is described in the thirteenth chapter, by which is meant the hierarchy of the church of Rome, or the Pope and his clergy, in their ecclesiastical capacity, claiming to have the sole jurisdiction, and to be infalible dictators in every thing that relates to christian faith and practice. The beast, as distinguished from the false prophet here, is the civil power of the Roman empire, with which the Pope is invested, which he has claimed and exercised, by which he became a beast.

The dragon is the devil, who is represented as a powerful, invisible agent, having a great hand in all the wickedness in the world, and has set up and animates the beast and false prophet, making

* See Edward's Humble Attempt, &c. page 155.

† Rev. xvi. 13, 14, 16.

making them instruments to answer his ends, being the spirit who works with all his power and deceptive cunning, in these children of disobedience; and who are his children in a peculiar sense. These spirits are therefore, the numerous spirits of devils who unite in one design, working miracles, or wonders, as the word in the original is sometimes rendered, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world; that is, to all men who dwell on the earth, great and small, high and low. What is the tendency and effect of these invisible, evil spirits, what they design and do accomplish, when thus let loose, and suffered to go forth into all the world, there can be no doubt. They will corrupt the world, and promote all kinds of wickedness among men, to the utmost of their power and skill, and excite mankind to rise against God and the Redeemer, and oppose and despise all divine institutions and commands; and, at the same time, to hate and destroy each other, and attempt to gratify every hateful lust of the flesh and of the mind, without restraint.

If any distinction is to be made between those evil spirits which are united in the same design, and like frogs pervade all places and assault all men, as the frogs did the Egyptians, in their attempts to seduce and corrupt them; especially those who live in the christian world; that which comes out of the mouth of the dragon, promotes infidelity, and influences and persuades men to renounce all religion; especially that which is inculcated in the Bible. The spirit which proceeds from the mouth of the beast, inspires men with a worldly spirit, by which they are strongly attached to the things and enjoyments of this world, and eagerly pursue them; either by gratifying their fleshly appetites and lusts, in beastly uncleanness, and intemperance in eating and drinking, frolick and wantonness; or by indulging an avaricious spirit, which leads to all kinds of unrighteousness, and oppression of each other, according to their power and opportunity: Or they eagerly pursue the honours of the world, in the gratification of pride and haughtiness, striving to outshine others in dress and high living, or in distinguished posts of honour. And though some persons under the influence of the spirit of the beast, are more inclined to some one of these, and others to another; yet the same person will often pursue them all, and seek to gratify the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. And all these will prevail more and more, under the influence of the spirit of the beast;

beast ; and at the same time promote infidelity, and are promoted by that. The spirit which comes out of the mouth of the false prophet, is a spirit of false religion and delusion, by which false doctrines and gross errors in principle and practice, are imbibed and propagated.

These spirits of devils unite and are agreed in one design, to promote all kind of vice and wickedness among men, and to as great a degree as they possibly can, leading them to infidelity and impiety, and an endless train of gross errors and delusions, in matters of religion ; and hurrying them on in a greedy pursuit of the enjoyments of this world, in the indulgence of their lusts, and the gratification of their love of their own selves, and their pride, in the practice of injustice and oppression, living in malice and envy, hating and speaking evil of one another, and engaging in fierce contention, cruel and destructive war, and murder. By this the world in general, will be in arms against God, and his Son ; and they will be gathered and knit together, as one man, in open war with heaven, and all the friends of Christ on earth. This is doubtless meant by these spirits of devils, going out into the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. It is not meant, that they shall be gathered into one place on this globe, or any where else ; but that they shall be united with one heart in the same cause of sin and satan, against God, and his revealed truth and ways, in whatever part of the earth they live ; and thus take arms, and rise in open rebellion, provoking the Almighty to battle, and, in a sense, challenging him to do his worst.—Thus they will be as really gathered to the battle, as an army are gathered together to engage in battle with another army, or to besiege a city.

“ And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.” Armageddon is the mountain of Megiddo, at the foot of which the memorable battle was fought between the Canaanites, the enemies of Israel—and Barak, and the army under him, when Sisera and his host were defeated and utterly destroyed ; which was a complete overthrow of the Canaanites, and issued in the final deliverance of Israel from their yoke and power. This was a type of the total defeat and overthrow of the enemies of Christ and his church, which will issue in the peace and prosperity of the church in the Millennium state. This is intimated in the concluding words of the song of Deborah and

and Barak, in which this victory and deliverance is celebrated. "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord : But let them who love him, be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."* There is therefore an allusion to the type, in this prophecy of the event which was typified by it, viz.—the overthrow of all the combined enemies of Christ and his church, in the battle of that great day of God Almighty. It cannot be reasonably inferred from this prediction, that there will be a decisive battle between Christ and his followers, and their enemies, in any particular place. All that is signified by these words is, that as Jabin king of Canaan gathered together a great army under Sifera, to fight with the God of Israel and his people, at the foot of the mountain of Megiddo ; who were there overthrown and destroyed in battle, when "they fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sifera : " So by the agency of the spirits of devils, under the superintendence and direction of divine providence, the world of mankind in general, and especially those in Christendom, will be so corrupted and obstinately rebellious, in all kinds, and the greatest degrees of wickedness, as to be united, and, in this sense, gathered together, all armed in a spiritual war against God, his cause and people. And their iniquity being full, and they ripe for the battle, God will arise as a man of war, and in his providence contend in battle with them, till they be utterly destroyed from the face of the earth. Thus "The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs, they shall consume : Into smoke shall they consume away," and by this, way shall be made for the meek to inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.†

But this battle is to come on under the next vial, which is the seventh and last. When mankind shall be prepared and gathered together, by the great degree of all kinds of wickedness, while God has been waiting upon them, even to long suffering, in the use of very powerful, and all proper means to reclaim and reform them, he will arise to battle, and by doing terrible things in righteousness, will manifest and display his awful displeasure with them, for their great wickedness, and obstinacy in rebellion against him ; and the events will then take place which are predicted under the seventh vial.

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air : And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne,

* Judg. v. 31.

† Psal. xxxvii. 11, 20.

throne, saying, *IT IS DONE.*" This vial being poured out into the air, denotes that it should affect and destroy satan's kingdom, and his followers in the world in general, who is the prince of the power of the AIR. And the voice from heaven, saying, *It is done;* is a prediction that the events under this vial, by which the battle before mentioned is to be carried on and completed, will utterly destroy the interest and kingdom of the devil in the world, and finish the awful scene of divine judgments, on the antichristian church, and the wicked world in general. The prophecy then goes on to give a general and summary account of the battle of that great day, from the seventh verse to the end of the chapter, and the great and marvellous effects it will have upon great Babylon, i. e. the church of Rome, and upon the nations of the world in general. There will be the greatest convulsions and revolutions in the political and moral world, that have ever been, attended with awful judgments upon men; which are predicted in prophetic language, "And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."—"And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: And great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." The great city, and great Babylon, seem to be one and the same thing, the church of Rome. In the next chapter, this same false church is called "Babylon the great," and "The great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth."* What is meant by this city being divided into three parts will be better known, when the prediction shall be accomplished. It doubtless intends, that which shall break the antichristian church into pieces, and will issue in the ruin of it, the fatal blow being struck. Perhaps it intends a division and opposition among those who have been the members and supporters of that church, by which this spiritual Babylon shall fall, or which shall hasten on the ruin of it; as a kingdom divided against itself, cannot stand, but is brought to desolation. In the prophecy of this kingdom of antichrist by Daniel, in the latter end of it, he says, "The kingdom shall be *divided*; and by this it shall be partly broken.†

"And the cities of the nations fell." Divine judgments, and a peculiar measure of wrath shall fall upon the christian world, in which

* Verses 5, 18.

† Dan. ii. 41, 42.

which the antichristian kingdom has been set up ; but the rest of mankind shall share in the calamity of that day, and be punished for their wickedness, to which this expression seems to have respect. The cities of the nations of the world, are their strength, defence and pride : These shall be demolished and wholly taken away, that they shall no more be able to tyrannize over one another.— The pride and power of Mahometans and heathen nations, shall be made to cease by a series of divine judgments. “ The day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low, in that day. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity ; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.”* The same is predicted in the following words : “ I have cut off the nations, their towers are desolate ; I have made their streets waste, that none passeth by : *Their cities are destroyed*, so that there is no man, there is none inhabitant. Therefore wait upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey : For my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger ; for the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.”† These words doubtless have reference to the events which were to take place under the sixth and seventh vials, when the nations and kingdoms of the world are to be gathered, and God will rise up to battle, to the prey, and pour upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger, for their obstinate continuance in sin and rebellion against him ; and all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of his jealousy ; and thus the cities of the nations shall fall ; the nations shall be cut off ; their towers made desolate, and their cities destroyed.

The prophecy under the seventh vial goes on. “ And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent : And men blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail ; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.” There is reference in those words to the destruction of the Canaanites, in the great and terrible battle, when the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them, and they died, and there

* Isai. ii. 12, 15, 17. xiii. 11.

† Zeph. iii. 6, 8.

were more that died with hailstones, than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.* And God says to Job, "Hast thou seen the treasures of hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against *the day of battle and war*?"† Therefore, when great judgments and awful destruction of men are predicted, they are represented by storms of great hail. "Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies. The Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of devouring fire, with scattering and tempest and hailstones."‡ "Say unto them who daub with untempered mortar, that it shall fall : There shall be an overflowing shower, and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rent it. I will even rent it with a stormy wind in my fury : And there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it. And I will plead against him with pestilence, and with blood, and I will rain upon him, and his bands, and upon many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire and brimstone."§ All these passages|| will doubtless have their ultimate and most complete fulfilment, under the seventh vial, and in the same sore calamities and judgments which are predicted in the words under consideration, by the great hail which fell on men out of heaven. The hailstones are represented as weighing an hundred pounds, which is the weight of a talent, to denote the greatness of the judgments and destruction predicted, the sore and awful distresses which shall come on men : "For the plague thereof was exceeding great." These judgments will not reform the obstinate enemies of God, on whom they

* Josh. x. 11.

† Job xxxviii. 22, 23.

‡ Isai. xxviii. 2, 17. xxx. 30.

§ Ezek. xiii. 11, 13. xxxviii. 22.

|| Unless that in Ezekiel be an exception, which is a description of the punishment of Gog and Magog, by which name the multitude of wicked men are called, who shall rise up when the Millennium is ended, and will be destroyed when Christ shall come to judgment. These words may have their *ultimate* accomplishment then. But as the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel represent the wicked world which shall be destroyed before the Millennium begins, as well as those who shall rise up when it will end ; this passage has a primary, if not an ultimate reference to the destruction of the former.

they shall fall ; they will be exasperated and blaspheme God the more, until they are utterly destroyed, and swept off from the earth ; agreeably to the prophecy which may be considered as referring ultimately to this dreadful scene. “ And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry : And it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth ; and behold, trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish ; and they shall be driven into darkness.”*

This battle is more particularly described in the nineteenth chapter, from the beginning of the eleventh verse, to the end of the chapter. “ And I saw heaven opened, and beheld, a white horse ; and he who sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war.” This person is farther described, by which he appears to be the Lord Jesus Christ. “ And the armies which were in heaven, followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” This does not mean, that the inhabitants of heaven, or the saints on earth, will join in a visible army, and personally fight with the enemies of Christ and his church, and destroy them : But only that these shall join with Christ and be on his side, when he shall arise in his providence, and by his power destroy his and their enemies. In this sense, all heaven will be with him, when he shall come forth to battle in his providence, and execute his wrath upon men, in awful successive judgments, in which the angels may be used as invisible instruments of his vengeance : And he will do all this, in answer to the prayers of his church on earth, and in their cause, to vindicate and deliver them, and prepare the way for the prosperity of his church on earth. That he will be the great invisible agent in this battle, appears from the following words : And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations : And he shall rule them with a rod of iron : And he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.” This is the battle of that great day of God Almighty. This awful scene proceeds and is yet farther described : “ And I saw an angel standing in the sun ; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God ; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh

* Isaiah viii. 21, 22.

flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both small and great." This is a strong, figurative, prophetic expression of the great slaughter and terrible destruction of mankind, when God Almighty shall come forth to battle, and manifest his hot displeasure and terrible wrath, in the judgment he will inflict on them. The representation of this battle, and the issue of it goes on, and "I John saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together, to make war against him who sat on the horse, and against his army." These are the same who are mentioned, chap. xvi. 14, 16, as *gathered together* to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, the meaning of which has been explained. And in this war and battle, the beast and the false prophet were taken and destroyed, with their adherents. "And the remnant were slain with the sword of him who sat upon the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." By *the remnant*, are meant the rest of mankind, who by their sins make war with Christ, and are not included in the beast and false prophet, and their followers, who belong to the kingdom of antichrist. Their being slain by the sword which proceeded out of the mouth of Christ, does not mean their conversion, but their falling victims to his vengeance, which is expressed by the fowls being filled with their flesh.

The same battle and slaughter of men, is represented and predicted in figurative prophetic language, in the fourteenth chapter, where John describes a vision which he had of one like unto the Son of man, who sat upon a white cloud, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And it was said unto him, "Thrust in thy sickle and reap; for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle." And it was said unto him, "Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. And the wine press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine press, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs."

Upon this vision it is to be observed, that by the harvest of the earth, and the clusters of the vine of the earth, are meant the inhabitants of the earth, or mankind in general. And reaping the harvest, and gathering the clusters of the vine of the earth, signifies the slaughter and destruction of the inhabitants of the earth; not every one of them indeed; for in the harvest and vintage, some ears of corn are commonly left standing, which escape the sickle, and a few scattering grapes are left on the vine when the clusters in general are gathered: And that this slaughter and desolation, which shall be made of the inhabitants of the world, will take place in consequence of their apostacy, and obstinate continuance and increase in sin, until they are become ripe, fully ripe, for this dreadful execution and destruction, by divine vengeance: Therefore, that this reaping, and the harvest, and gathering the clusters of the vine of the earth, will not be a merciful dispensation towards the inhabitants then in the world; but the execution of divine vengeance, and an awful exercise and display of the displeasure and wrath of God, in the evils which shall fall on men, for their perseverance and increase in wickedness. This is represented and expressed in a striking manner, by the figure of casting the vintage into the great wine press of the wrath of God, and the large and amazing quantity of blood which proceeded from thence; signifying the great and general slaughter, and terrible sufferings of mankind, when this time of his wrath shall come.

From this view of the events predicted under the sixth and seventh vials, it appears, that while the sixth vial is running, the way will be preparing for the overthrow of spiritual Babylon.

One event will take place after another, which will greatly weaken and remove the power and influence of the Pope, among the nations in Christendom, by taking away his riches, by drying up the stream of wealth, and the removal of other things, by which the church of Rome has been made strong, and stood as impregnable for many ages. But this will not be attended by any general reformation of professing christians, or revival and great increase of the true church of Christ; nor will the moral state of the christian world, or of mankind in general, be reformed and grow better, but the contrary. By the evil influence which the beast and the hierarchy of the church of Rome, has had in the world, and by the power and agency of satan, the unrestrained lusts of men will hurry them on to all kinds of wickedness; so that it will rise to a
greater

greater degree, and be more universal than ever before. Infidelity, deism, and atheism, and the most open and gross impiety and profanation of every thing sacred, will prevail and abound. And false religion, and the grossest errors and delusions of all kinds, will take place and spread among those who do not discard all religion. And a worldly spirit will be very strong and prevalent, among old and young, urging them on to the gratification of their sensual inclinations and lusts, in all kinds of intemperance and lewdness; and prompting them to acts of unrighteousness, oppression and cruelty; which will promote mutual hatred, bitterness and contention, and spread confusion, and every evil work, in fierce and cruel wars, and horrid murders. It is certain, that the unclean spirits, like frogs, those spirits of devils, when they go forth to the whole world, will promote all kinds of disorder and wickedness to the greatest degree, and set mankind against God, and all his revealed truth, and against each other, and every thing good and excellent; and make this world as much an image of hell as they possibly can; by which the inhabitants on earth, in general, will be united and gathered together in arms against heaven, and become wholly ripe for destruction from the Almighty, for the battle of that great day, which will come on under the seventh vial, and will be conducted, fought and finished by Christ himself, against an ungodly world.

The prevailing, unrestrained wickedness of men, which has been now mentioned, by which they shall be gathered unto this battle, is described by the Apostle Paul, in the following words: "This know also, that in the last days, perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, covenant breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those who are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."* All these evil characters have been in every age of the world; but they will then, in these *last days*, take place to a greater degree, and more universally, than ever before.

The true church of Christ will subsist and continue in this evil time of the prevalence of the powers of darkness; but the number of real christians will be small; and many, even of them, if not the

* 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

the most, will probably be weak and low in their christian exercises, by the influences and uncommon power of those evil spirits, and in too great a degree conformed to this world. They will be hated, opposed, and trodden down, by the wicked, and be in an afflicted, suffering state in this dark and evil day. They will be in a great measure hidden and unknown, and the cause of Christ and of truth will be reproached, and appear to be almost lost; and the true followers of Christ, his sheep, will be scattered into corners in this cloudy and dark day.* Whether wicked men, and enemies to the true servants of Christ, will persecute them unto death, and renew this horrid work, of which so much has been done in former ages, in this time when iniquity will abound to such a great degree, cannot be now determined, by any thing said in scripture respecting it. It is thought by most, that since the Pope is brought so low, and his power and influence is still sinking so fast; and so much light is spreading in favour of civil and religious liberty, showing the reasonableness and importance of it, and the unreasonableness and folly of a persecuting spirit; and liberal sentiments respecting religion are propagated and increasing, persecution on account of religious sentiments or practice, is near come to an end, and never will be revived and practised again.— This may appear most probable: But though the antichristian church should never persecute the faithful followers of Christ again, and a persecuting spirit should wholly cease among professing christians of all denominations; yet infidels, who condemn all religious persecution, in every degree and form, in which it has been practised, and boast of their liberal sentiments and spirit, with respect to this; and use it as a strong and conclusive argument against christianity itself, that professed christians have, in so many instances, persecuted others; even *these infidels*, or their successors, may find true christians, their doctrines and practices, to be so disagreeable and hateful to them, and, in their view, so hurtful to society, and so contrary to all that, in which they place their own happiness, and that of mankind, that having all restraints taken off, and the power being put into their hands, they may think these men ought not to be suffered to live; and that it is for the good of society to have them extirpated, and put to death, unless they can be brought to renounce their sentiments and practices, by persuasion or punishments; and so become as determined,

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cruel

* Ezek. xxxiv. 127

cruel persecutors of christians, as any have been in past ages.— If this should take place, it will make a new, and perhaps greater and more striking discovery of the wickedness of the human heart, especially of the hearts and real character of this sort of men, than ever has been exhibited before. And they who now know what is in man, from the character given of him in scripture, and by the discovery mankind have made of their hearts, by words and deeds, and from a true acquaintance with their own hearts, must be sensible that nothing can prevent even men of this cast persecuting christians, but restraints from heaven. But, however, perhaps this discovery of what is in man, is reserved to be made after the Millennium shall be over, in the rise of Gog and Magog, when it may be exhibited, in many respects, to greater advantage, and so as to answer more important ends.

Though the true church of Christ must be in a low, dark state, in many respects, under this vial, yet there will doubtless be revivals of religion, and an increase of converts to real christianity, in many different places, and truth may be getting advantage, and more clearly distinguished from error, by those who have eyes to see; and christianity be more and more refined in doctrines and practice, from the various errors and corruptions, which have been introduced among the true followers of Christ; and every thing, and all events, will serve to bring on and introduce the Millennium, in the best manner, and in the most proper time.

The battle of that great day of God Almighty, is to come on under the seventh vial, as has been observed. When the iniquity of the world of mankind shall be full, and they shall be united in open rebellion, and, in this sense, gathered together, and armed against heaven: And after God has waited long upon them in the use of all proper means to reclaim them, especially the christian world; and they are become fully ripe for destruction, he will come forth to battle against them, and execute most fearful judgments upon them, and destroy them in a manner and degree, which shall manifest his awful displeasure with them, for their obstinacy in all kinds of wickedness. When these briars and thorns are set against God in battle, he will go through them and burn them together.* The destruction of the world of mankind by a flood, when the wickedness of man was become great, and the earth was filled with violence; and they continued obstinate

in disobedience, while the long suffering of God waited upon them in the days of Noah, was an emblem of this battle: As also was the destruction of the inhabitants of Canaan, when their iniquity was full, which prepared the way for the people of God to take possession of that land. So God punished the nation of the Jews, by destroying them, and laying waste Jerusalem, and the temple. When they had filled up the measure of their sins, wrath came upon them to the uttermost. This was a figure or type of this greater, more dreadful and general battle, under the seventh vial, when "The Lord shall come out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, and the earth shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."*

This battle, it has been observed, will not consist in the church or christians raising armies, and fighting and carrying on war with the antichristian party, or with the wicked world; or in a conflict between the former and the latter, respecting the truths and cause of Christ: But it will be commenced and carried on by Christ, while invisible in heaven, invested with all divine power in heaven and earth. in the exercise of his providence, bringing judgments upon his enemies, and a wicked world, in such remarkable ways and manner, as to be a clear and remarkable manifestation of his presence and power; of his displeasure with a wicked world, for opposing him, his church and the gospel; and an incontestible evidence of the truth of christianity, by fulfilling his predictions and promises, taking vengeance on the enemies of his people, and effectually supporting them, and their cause. He will doubtless make use of instruments in this battle.

The holy angels may be made the instruments of many events which shall be full of evil to wicked men. And the true church of Christ, his witnesses in his cause, and against the delusions and wickedness of the antichristian church, and of the world, are represented as having a hand in bringing upon their enemies all the evils which will come upon them; because they will take place in answer to their prayers, in their cause, and in order effectually to avenge his own elect of their adversaries.† Therefore, it is said of them, "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not, in the days of their prophecy: And have power over waters, to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will."‡ And the wicked themselves will be instru-

* *Isai. xxvi. 21.*† *Luke xviii. 7.*‡ *Rev. xi. 6.*

ments of afflicting and destroying each other, in a very cruel and dreadful manner, by opposing and fighting with one another, and carrying on destructive and bloody wars, killing men by thousands, and laying waste whole countries and nations; by which the earth will be in a great degree depopulated; and rivers of blood will be shed by the unrestrained pride and cruel rage of man. And many will probably put an end to their own lives, and instances of suicide will be greatly multiplied.

But multitudes of mankind will be destroyed by the more immediate hand of God, by famine and pestilences, which will prevail in many countries, at different times, in an extraordinary manner, and to a degree never known before; by which vast multitudes will perish suddenly, and in circumstances very surprising and awful. And there will be earthquakes, and terrible storms of lightning and thunder, and inundations of water, by which many cities and places shall sink and be overflowed, with all the inhabitants; and multitudes will perish by these, and innumerable other evil occurrents, which will take place in an unusual manner, and in quick succession; so that the hand of God will be visibly stretched out against the inhabitants of the world, to punish and destroy them for their wickedness; and the following prediction will be fulfilled, in the full and awful extent of it. "Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear, shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit, shall be taken in the snare: For the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall, and not rise again."*

This battle will not be fought at once, so as to be soon finished; but will be carried on through a course of years, probably for more than a century and an half, in order to make a suitable and sufficiently clear display of the displeasure of God with a wicked world; and to give opportunity to men to repent and reform, when they are warned, called upon, and urged to it, by being made to suffer such a variety and long continued series of calamities, for their sins; and

* *Isai. xxiv. 17, 18, 19, 20.*

and to discover, and set in the most clear and striking light, the hardness, obstinacy and wickedness of the heart of man, while they continue disobedient and inflexible, under all these terrible dispensations of providence, suited to awaken and reform them, to teach them the evil of sin, and the awful displeasure of God with them; and to warn them to fly from the wrath to come, and unto Christ, as the only refuge; and go on to revolt yet more and more, and blaspheme the hand which inflicts these evils. By all this will be more clearly manifested, than ever before, how totally lost and infinitely miserable mankind are, and their infinite need of a Redeemer; that no means that can be used, or methods taken to reclaim and save them, will be in the least degree effectual, unless the Spirit of God be given to change and renew their hearts, and therefore, that the salvation of men depends wholly on the mere sovereign grace of God, even all that good, holiness and salvation, which shall take place in the Millennium; and it will, in this respect, prepare the way for that day of grace.

This battle and terrible slaughter and destruction of men in so many ways, and for so long a course of years, will greatly lessen the number of mankind in the world; so that in the close of this terrible scene, comparatively few will be left alive. Those will be the christians who shall be then members of the churches, and descendents from good people who have lived in former ages, and others who will then be true penitents, who will look back on the terrible scene which had taken place in the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and see, and have a clear and affecting conviction of his displeasure with mankind, for their sins and the terribleness of his wrath; and will acknowledge the righteousness of it. They will consequently see the guilty, miserable, and utterly lost state of man, and their need of a Redeemer, to make atonement for their sins, and the necessity of the Holy Spirit to renew their hearts, and form them to right, and truly christian exercises: And will be clearly convinced of the truth of all the great and important doctrines of the gospel, and cordially embrace them. And they will repent and humble themselves in the sight of the Lord, and earnestly, with united hearts, cry to heaven for the forgiveness of their sins, and for mercy on themselves, and on their children, acknowledging their infinite ill desert, and flying to Christ, and sovereign grace through him, as their only refuge and hope. And then the scene will change. The battle will be over, divine judgments

judgments will cease, and there will be no more frowns on man, in the providence of God ; but all dispensations and events will be expressions of kindness and mercy ; and the Holy Spirit will be poured out on them and their offspring, and all shall be holiness to the Lord ; and the Millennium will begin, and men will multiply and soon subdue the earth, and fill it with inhabitants.

As antichrist and the church of Rome, will have a large share in the cup of indignation and wrath which will be poured out ; so all the christian world will have a distinguished portion of it, as the inhabitants of it are much more guilty than others. There is no reason to consider the antichristian spirit and practices to be confined to that which is now called the church of Rome : The protestant churches have much of antichrist in them, and are far from being wholly reformed from the corruptions and wickedness, in doctrine and practice, which are found in that which is called **BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.** Her influence in promoting delusion and wickedness extends, in some degree, to all the inhabitants of the world, and more especially the christian world. She is the *Mother* of all the false doctrines, superstition, infidelity, and abominable practices in the protestant world. And where can the church be found, which is thoroughly purged from all these abominations ? Some churches may be more pure, and may have proceeded farther in a reformation than others ; but none are wholly clear of an antichristian spirit, and the fruits of it. There may be, and in many instances doubtless there is, much of the exercise of the spirit of antichrist, in opposing what is called antichrist, and the church of Rome ; and by running into as great extremes another way. The Apostle Paul said, this mystery of iniquity, the man of sin, which is antichrist, began already to work in the churches even in his day.* How much of this then, may it be reasonably thought, is to be found in most, if not all the churches now ? In this view, the spirit and operation of antichrist are very extensive. And how few churches, or individual christians, have so far come out from this mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth, as not to be in any degree partakers of her sins, so as not to receive of her plagues ? And while the sixth vial continues to run, it is not to be expected that the protestant churches in general will grow more pure ; but the evil spirits which are gone forth,

will

* 2 Thess. ii. 7.

will promote and spread still greater corruption in doctrine and practice, by which they will be more ripe for divine judgments, and prepared to suffer in the battle under the seventh vial. The purest churches, and real christians, will suffer much in this battle, and few will go wholly unpunished. By this the rebels, or false hearted professing christians, will be purged out from among real christians, and these shall be purified and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly.*

The Jews have suffered greatly for their peculiarly aggravated wickedness, in rejecting and crucifying the Son of God; and they are now, and have been for near two thousand years, in a state of great affliction, and under the manifest displeasure of heaven, to a great and distinguished degree. They yet continue a people, distinguished from all other nations, though scatterrd all over the world, as outcasts and vagabonds; and will continue thus a distinct people down to the Millennium. But though they have suffered so much, they yet continue as obstinate as ever in rejecting Christ, and in all their sins. And there is reason to think they will not escape the battle of the great day of Almighty God; but great and new calamities will fall upon them, by which they may be much diminished, so as to be left few in number, compared with what they have been, or are now. And the threatening denounced against that people by Moses, will then be executed on them, in the full meaning and extent of it: "And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude: Because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God."† But God will not make a full end of them, which he probably will do of some, if not of many other nations.

The revolutions which will take place in this battle, will open the way for their return to the land given to their ancestors; and they which are left will repent and return to the Lord Jesus Christ, against whom, they and their fathers have sinned, and unto their own land, and will become an eminently excellent part of the christian church, who shall multiply, and fill all that vast tract of land given to Abraham and his posterity, from the river of Egypt, to the great river Euphrates,‡ which has never yet been fully possessed by them. And their being thus received into the church of Christ, will be as life from the dead to them, and to the Gentiles.

But

* Dan. xii. 10.

† Deut. xxviii. 62.

‡ Gen. xv. 18.

But whether they will continue a distinct people from all other christians, through the whole time of the Millennium, or be so intermixed with others, as not to be distinguished from them, will be determined by the event : But the latter is most probable, as the ends of their being preserved in such a state of distinction, will then be answered ; and those circumstances and things, which have been, and still are, the means of their continuing a distinct and separate people, will then cease ; such as circumcision, and their observance of other Mosaic rites. When they shall become christians, their name by which they are now distinguished will be lost, and they will be absorbed in the christian church, the true Israel of God, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, but all are one in Christ : And then there will be one fold, and one shepherd. And then, by this event, the following prediction will be fully accomplished : “ And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen ! For the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name.”*

THAT the above representation of this battle, which will be previous to the Millennium, and will introduce it, taken from the passages in the Revelation which have been considered, is just, and agreeable to the true sense of them, farther appears, and is confirmed by other parts of holy scripture, especially by the prophecies of this same event, recorded in the Old Testament.

The destruction of the world of mankind by a flood, and the preservation of Noah and his family, who were by this brought into a new world, to be replenished by them, may be considered as a typical and prophetic representation of the great battle with the wicked world, previous to the Millennium ; by which the wicked will be swept off the earth, and the true church of Christ will be delivered and preserved, and the way opened for its prosperity, and filling the earth.

The series of judgments brought upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, for their disobedience to JEHOVAH, and oppressions of his people, and their dreadful overthrow in the Red Sea, to prepare the way for the deliverance of Israel, was also a prophetic type of this great battle. So was the destruction of the inhabitants of Canaan, in order to introduce the people of Israel, and put them in possession of that land. Therefore, reference is had to this in the representation of the battle of that great day, as has been observed.

David

David was a man of blood, carried on great wars and destroyed much people, and many nations, who were enemies to him, and the people of God ; and by his conquests prepared the way for the peaceable and glorious reign of Solomon, and the building of the temple. In this, David was a type of Christ, when he shall go forth, clothed with a vesture dipt in blood, and in righteousness make war, and destroy the nations of mankind, his enemies, to prepare the way for the Millennium. Solomon was a type of Christ reigning in the Millennium, when the church shall rise to a state of beauty and glory, of which Solomon's temple was a type, when the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The coming of Christ, in favour of his church and of the redeemed, is spoken of as a time of vengeance to his and their enemies, in which they shall be punished and destroyed, and his people shall be avenged on them. “ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, *and the day of vengeance of our God*, to comfort all that mourn. “ For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.”* “ And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them : I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.”† “ Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy Apostles, and Prophets ; for God hath avenged you on her. And I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Hallelujah ! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God : For true and righteous are his judgments ; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.”‡

Balaam, in his remarkable prophecy of Christ and his kingdom, speaking of this latter day, when the Roman empire shall come to an end, and Christ shall have the dominion, represents this event as attended with great destruction of men. “ Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth in the city. And he took up his parable, and said, “ Alas, who shall live when God doth this ! ” This expresses a great and general destruction of men, so that comparatively few of them will be left alive.§ The same is predicted in the song which God directed

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* Isai. lxi. 1, 2. lxiii. 4.

† Luke xviii. 7, 8.

‡ Rev. xviii. 20. xix. 1, 2.

§ Numb. xxiv. 17—24.

rected Moses to rehearse to the children of Israel, to be preserved by them.* “For I lift my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. If (or when) I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with their blood (and my sword shall devour flesh) and that with the blood of the slain, and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.” This prophecy is very parallel with that which has been mentioned, which relates to the great battle.† The same events are predicted in the following words of Moses: “There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: And he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone. The fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.”‡ In these words, God is represented as riding forth to thrust out and destroy the enemies of his people; and upon this the prosperity of his church, the true Israel, is introduced. This prophecy therefore coincides with the description of the battle in the Revelation, as introductory to the Millennium. The same events are predicted in the prayer or song of Hannah. “He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces: Out of heaven shall he thunder upon them. The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.”§

This battle, by which the wicked will be destroyed, and the reign of Christ and his church on earth introduced, is frequently brought into view and predicted in the book of Psalms. The following predictions of this kind, are worthy to be observed:—“Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like

* Deut. xxxii. 40, 41, 42, 43.

† Rev. xviii. 20. xix 1, 2.

‡ Deut. xxxiii. 26, 27, 28.

§ 1 Sam. ii. 9, 10.

like a potter's vessel."* There is reference to this prediction and promise in the following words of Christ: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to pieces, even as I received of my Father."† The followers of Christ are said to do what he does for them, and in their behalf in destroying their enemies, as they are engaged in the same cause, and are with him in these works of vengeance; and they who have overcome, and have arrived to heaven, will be with him in a peculiar manner, when he shall come forth to fight this great battle, and dash the nations of the world into pieces, as a potter's vessel is broken. Therefore, there is again reference to those words in the second Psalm, when Christ is represented as riding forth to the battle there described, followed by the armies in heaven, comprehending all who shall then have overcome. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: And he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."‡ This is certainly the same with the battle of that great day of Almighty God, mentioned in the sixteenth chapter, as has been shown; and is predicted in the words now quoted from the second Psalm.—

There is a prediction of the same battle described in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, in the following words: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty; with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness, and righteousness: And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee."§ In the next Psalm, the prosperity of the church is predicted, which will take place in the Millennium; and the battle by which it will be introduced and effected is also described. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of our God. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered his voice, the earth melted. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth, he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in funder, he burneth the chariot

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* Psal. ii. 8, 9.

† Rev. ii. 26, 27.

‡ Rev. xix. 14, 15.

§ Psal. xlv. 3, 4, 5.

in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God : I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth."

'The twenty first Psalm contains a prediction of Christ, and foretells the destruction of the wicked, as introducing his reign on earth, and the prosperity and joy of the church. "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger : The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men : For they intended evil against thee ; they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform. Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings, against the face of them. Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength : So shall we sing and praise thy power."*

That the wicked shall be cut off and destroyed from the earth, that the saints may inherit it, is foretold throughout the thirty seventh Psalm. "Evil doers shall be cut off : But those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be : Yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and delight themselves in the abundance of peace. Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the earth : When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it. The transgressors shall be destroyed together ; the end of the wicked shall be cut off. But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord," &c.

The same thing is brought into view in the seventy fifth, seventy sixth, and ninety seventh Psalms. "God is the judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red ; it is full of mixture, and he poureth out of the same ; but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them. All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off ; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted. In Judah, is God known, his name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle. Thou art more glorious and excellent than
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the mountains of prey. The stout hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep : And none of the men of might have found their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep. Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven ; the earth feared and was still, when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth. He shall cut off the spirit of princes : He is terrible to the kings of the earth.” “ The Lord reigneth, let the people rejoice ; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world : The earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord ; at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols.—Worship him all ye gods.” This battle is brought into view, and foretold in the 110th Psalm. “ The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion ; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath, (i. e. in the great day of battle.) He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies ; he shall wound the heads over many countries.”

In the prophecy of Isaiah, this battle, as it has been explained, is often brought into view, as connected with the prosperity of the church of Christ on earth, and introductory to it : Some instances of this will be mentioned. In the five first verses of the second chapter, there is a prophecy of the happy state of the church in the last days, that is, in the Millennium. In the four next verses is a description of the corruption, worldliness and idolatry of the visible church, and consequently of the world in general, as the reason of the displeasure with them, and his punishing them. And from the tenth verse to the end of the chapter, the manifestation of his displeasure, in his fighting against them, and punishing them, is described. “ Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud

proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low. And the idols he shall utterly abolish. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

The eleventh chapter contains a prediction of the Millennium; and of the slaughter of the wicked of the earth, which shall make way for it. "With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity, for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."* These last words are parallel with those in the Revelation, by which this battle, and the effect of it are expressed. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him who sat on the horse, which sword proceedeth out of his mouth."†

In the thirteenth chapter is a prediction of the same thing: "How! ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath, and fierce anger, to lay the earth desolate: And he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. And will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible."‡ What is said in this chapter, has reference to ancient Babylon, and the destruction of that, and of other nations, in order to the deliverance and restoration of Israel. But it evidently has chief reference to the destruction of spiritual Babylon, and all the wicked in the world, in order to the deliverance and prosperity of the true, spiritual Israel of God, and will be most completely fulfilled in the latter, of which the former are types and shadows. As those prophecies which have a primary respect to the type, do generally, if not always, look forward to the antitype; and have their full and chief accomplishment in that, and the events which relate to it.

The twenty fourth chapter is wholly on this subject, and describes the battle of that great day of God Almighty, and the slaughter of the wicked, in clear and striking language, in consequence of which, the church and people of God shall spread and prosper.

* Verse 4.

† Rev. xix. 15, 21.

‡ Verse 6—11.

prosper. "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof. The earth shall be utterly emptied; for the Lord hath spoken this word. The earth mourneth and fadeth away: The world languisheth and fadeth away: The haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth is also defiled under the inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they who dwell therein are desolate: Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. The city of confusion is broken down: Every house is shut up, that no man may remain. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction. When thus it shall be, in the midst of the earth, among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning of grapes, when the vintage is done. They shall lift up the voice, they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord," &c.

Upon this prophecy it may be observed, that it is a prediction of great calamities on the inhabitants of the world in general, as a punishment for their sins, by which the earth is defiled; they having transgressed the laws of God, changed his ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant. They have broken the covenant of grace and peace, made with Noah and his children, which, if it had been strictly observed, would have transmitted blessings, both holiness and happiness, to all mankind, to the end of the world. By violating this covenant, corruption and iniquity, and all the idolatry and abominations which have taken place, or ever will be practised among men, have been introduced. And by breaking the everlasting covenant made with Abraham, and transgressing the laws, and changing the ordinances, which have been given and published by Moses, and the Prophets, by Jesus Christ, and his Apostles, which, had they been observed, would have preserved the church uncorrupt, and spread true religion and holiness over the whole earth; by disregarding and violating all these, the world is filled with wickedness, which will continue and increase, until mankind in general shall be ripe for that punishment, which God will inflict in those calamities and judgments, which will destroy, and sweep from the earth, the greatest part of the inhabitants; so that there will be but comparatively *few men left*, like the few olives which remain on the tree, after it is shaken, and the scattering

tering grapes, which hang on the vine, after the vintage is over. Those who shall be left when the battle is over, will lift up their voice, and sing for the majesty of the Lord. They will behold the terrible works of God, in which they will see his terrible majesty, and tremble, submit, approve, and adore, and praise and pray. And then the Millennium will begin.

The prophecy goes on, and the same events, as to substance, and this battle, and the consequence of it, are described in other words: "Fear and the pit, and the snare are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be moved like a cottage, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall, and not rise again." This battle is described in the Revelation, in the same figurative language: "And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."* "And it shall come come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison; and after many days shall they be visited.† Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." This prediction respects the great men and kings of the earth, who ex-
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* Rev. xvi. 18, 20.

† What is meant by the host of the high ones, and the kings of the earth being *visited* after many days, is not so clear, at first view, and perhaps it is not now understood. God is often said in scripture to *visit* those whom he punishes, and the word here in the original is frequently translated, to punish. They who are shut up in prison, are often confined there, to be taken out after some days, and receive their punishment. When it is here said, "And after many days shall they be visited;" may not the meaning be, that those high ones, and kings of the earth shall no more appear in this world; but shall be shut up in prison until the day of judgment, when they shall be brought forth and punished? As the fallen angels are bound in chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment, so these unjust men will be reserved unto the day of judgment, to be punished. When it is said of Zedekiah, that he should be carried a captive to Babylon, it is added, "And there shall he be, until I visit him, saith the Lord." Jer. xxxii. 5. That is, until God should take him out of the world by death, and to judgment; so that he should never reign as king any more.

alt themselves in pride and wickedness, and tyrannize over men, and describes their overthrow in this battle. They shall be taken as prisoners, be punished for their pride and tyranny, and shut up that they may do no more mischief. Thus God "will cut off the spirit of princes, and be terrible to the kings of the earth."* And it is here said, that the Millennium shall follow upon this, in the reign of Christ and his church, "When the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed." That is, then there shall be such spiritual light and glory in the flourishing of the kingdom of Christ on earth, and so superiour to all the light and glory of the natural world, as that the latter shall be utterly eclipsed, and appear to be worthy of no regard, compared with the former.

The three next chapters are a continuation of prophecy of the same event, viz. the judgments which are to be inflicted on the false and degenerate professors of religion, and the world of mankind in general, previous to the prosperity of the church and kingdom of Christ in the world, which will be evident to the careful judicious reader; and that the predictions contained in them, coincide with those which have been mentioned. It is needless to transcribe any particular passage here, except the following:—"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpassed. For behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."† This must be a great and dreadful day of battle, punishment and vengeance, which shall fall on the inhabitants of the earth in general, when all the blood which has been, and shall be shed, from the beginning of the world to that day, shall be required at their hands. There is no reason to think, that this punishment has yet been inflicted; but it will doubtless be executed by the battle of that great day of God Almighty, mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation; and more particularly described, in the fourteenth and nineteenth chapters, which have been considered; and in the foregoing prophecies of Isaiah, which have been now mentioned. The words which follow those transcribed above, are, "In that day, the Lord with his

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* Psal. lxxvi. 12.

† Isai. xxvi. 20, 21.

fore great and strong sword, shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent, and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." The same event is here predicted, of which there is a prophecy in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, viz. of the dragon that old serpent, which is the devil and satan, being laid hold of, and bound and cast into the bottomless pit. And the same consequence of this with respect to the church is here foretold, as is described there, viz. the prosperity of it, by the special favour and presence of God. "In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment: Left any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." While the battle is going on, and God is punishing the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, his people will be hid as in a secret chamber; but when it is over, they will become as a flourishing, fruitful vineyard, producing abundance of red wine, in consequence of the peculiar favour and care of Jesus Christ, and the abundance of heavenly divine influences.

The thirty fourth, and thirty fifth chapters of Isaiah, contain a prophecy of the Millennium, and of the day of battle which will precede it, which will consist in the punishment of the world for their iniquity. "Come near, ye nations, to hear, and hearken, ye people: Let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies. He hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. Strengthen ye the weak hands, confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert," &c. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

In the forty first chapter of Isaiah, God, speaking to the church, and promising the good things and prosperity which were in store
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for it in the days of the Millennium, says, "Behold, all they that are incensed against thee, shall be ashamed and confounded : They shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee, shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shall not find them that contended with thee : They that war against thee, shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. Behold, I will make thee a new, sharp threshing instrument, having teeth ; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them : And thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel."

In the forty second chapter, God makes promises to his church, which are to be accomplished in their fulness, in the days of the Millennium, and speaks of the war and battle in which he will destroy his enemies, to open the way for the good thing which was to be done for the church. "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war : He shall cry, yea, roar ; he shall prevail against his enemies. I have long time holden my peace, I have been still, and refrained myself : Now will I cry like a travailing woman, I will destroy and devour at once. I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their herbs ; and I will make the rivers islands, and I will dry up the pools. And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known : I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

The fifty ninth and sixtieth chapters, are wholly on this subject of the Millennium. In the fourteen first verses of the fifty ninth chapter, the great degree of wickedness of the world of mankind is described. And then God is represented as greatly displeased, and rising to battle, to punish men for their evil deeds. "And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and he wondered that there was no intercessor : Therefore, his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmit of salvation upon his head ; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies ; to the islands he will repay recompence. So shall

they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." And to this battle, this work of judgment and vengeance, succeeds the day of light and salvation to the church : Those who are left, shall repent and humble themselves, and "fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob." It will be then said to the church, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."—The prophecy of the Millennium goes on through the sixtieth, sixty first, and sixty second chapters.

There is a parallel representation of this battle in the sixty third chapter, as executed by the same person who is exhibited in the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation, riding forth to make war in righteousness, and fighting this same battle, in which the wicked then on earth will be slain. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah ?* This who is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength ? I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him who treadeth in the wine fat ? I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me : For I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and the blood shall be sprinked upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold : Therefore, mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth."

The same thing is predicted in the sixty sixth chapter : "A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord who rendereth recompence to his enemies. And the hand of the Lord shall be known towards his servants, and his indignation

* Bozrah was in the land of Edom. The Edomites, were implacable enemies to the people of God, and are in the prophecies of Isaiah, and elsewhere, put for the enemies of God and his church in general, who shall be destroyed, as the Edomites were, of whom the Edomites, and their destruction were a type.

ignation towards his enemies. For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many." These predictions of the slaughter and destruction of the wicked, are here intermixed with promises of salvation and prosperity to the church: "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye who love her: Rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her: That ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations: That ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory. For thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb."

A passage in the tenth chapter of Jeremiah, seems to refer to the same event. The folly, idolatry, and great wickedness of the people and nations of the earth, is mentioned and described in the first part of the chapter, upon which the following prediction is uttered: But **JEHOVAH** is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King: At his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens, and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under those heavens."

In the first part of the twenty fifth chapter, there is a prophecy of the captivity of the Jews, and of other adjacent nations, by Nebuchadnezzar; and when their captivity during seventy years should be ended, Jeremiah foretells the ruin of Babylon, and the land of the Chaldeans. And the evil that was coming on the nations of the earth, which should attend the destruction of Babylon, is represented by ordering Jeremiah to take the wine cup of wrath, and cause all the nations of the earth to drink of it. And as the destruction of ancient Babylon, and the judgments which came on many other nations, was an eminent type of yet greater and more remarkable destruction of spiritual Babylon, and of all the nations of the earth, which will attend that, the prophecy is carried on beyond the type, and looks forward to the antitype, which is common in scripture prophecy; and expressions are used which cannot be applied to the former, to the type, in their full extent and

and meaning, but to the latter, the antitype, and therefore the prophecy is accomplished but in part, and in a lower degree in the former; but fully and most completely in the latter: Therefore, the Prophet goes on, and uses expressions toward the close of the prophecy, which refer chiefly to the battle in which antichrist, and the nations of the earth will fall. Such are the following: "Therefore, prophesy thou against them all those words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation, he shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth: For the Lord hath a controversy with the nations: He will plead with all flesh, he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day, from one end of the earth, even unto the other end of the earth: They shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground."* The Prophet goes on to predict the evil that should come on the shepherds, and the principal of the flock, by whom are meant the kings and great men among the nations, who are to be brought down and destroyed in the battle,† which is agreeable to the forementioned prophecy in Isaiah,‡ and to the representation of the same battle in the Revelation.§

There is another prophecy of this in the thirtieth chapter of Jeremiah. Here the deliverance of the church from her oppressors, and from all her sufferings and trouble, is promised; which shall be attended with the utter overthrow and destruction of the wicked, and all her enemies. That this prophecy looks beyond the deliverance of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, and the evil that came on their enemies then, to the greater deliverance of the church from spiritual Babylon, and the general destruction of the wicked which shall attend it, of which the former was a type, is evident, not only from a number of expressions and promises which were not fully accomplished in the former, and have respect to the latter; but from the express promise, that God will raise up David their king to reign over them, by whom must be meant

* Verse 30—33.

† Verse 34—38.

‡ Chap. xxiv. 21, 22.

§ Rev. xix. 18.

meant Jesus Christ, the Son of David, and of whom David was an eminent type. This will appear, by attending to the following passages: "Alas! For that day is great, so that none is like it: It is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be delivered out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. For I am with thee, saith the Lord, to save thee. Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee. Behold, a whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind, it shall fall with pain upon the head of the wicked. The fierce anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have done it, and until he have performed the intents of his heart: In the latter days ye shall consider it."*

In the book of Daniel, there is prophecy of the same event. "And at that time," (i. e. when antichrist is to be destroyed, which is predicted in the paragraph immediately preceding these words) "shall Michael stand up, the great Prince who standeth for the children of thy people" (that is, Jesus Christ, who will support and deliver his church) "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time," (this is the time of the battle of that great day of God Almighty) "And at that time, thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." This is the time of the deliverance of the church from the power of antichrist, and from all wicked men, her enemies, and of her entering upon the prosperous, happy state, in which the saints will reign on earth a thousand years.

The Prophet Joel speaks of the same events. From the twenty eighth verse of the second chapter of his prophecy, is a prediction of the Millennium, and the preceding evils that shall be inflicted on mankind: "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," &c. "This prophecy began to be fulfilled, when the Holy Spirit was first poured out after the ascension of Christ; but this, as has been before observed, was but the first fruits, and the prophecy will be fulfilled only in a very small part, before the harvest shall come in the days of the Millennium.

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* Verses 7, 8, 9, 11, 23, 24.

At the same time he speaks of the great evils, and terrible events which shall take place : " The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered." The Prophet goes on in the next chapter to speak more particularly on this subject : " For behold, in those days and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah, and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people, and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

Judah and Jerusalem are put for the church of Christ, being a type of that, as has been observed. The captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and their return from it, is typical of the afflicted, suffering state of the church during the reign of antichrist, and the deliverance of it from this state on the fall of antichrist, and in the Millennium. This is therefore meant, when it is said, " In those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem." When the children of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, came with a great army, combined together to destroy Judah, Jehoshaphat was directed to go forth with the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem and meet them ; and had a promise that he should have no occasion to fight with them ; but should stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, because the battle was not their's, but God's. Accordingly they went out, and stood still, and saw their enemies fall upon, and destroy each other, until they were all wasted away. Jehoshaphat and his people went out to their camp, and found great riches, silver and gold, and much spoil ; and they spent three days in gathering it ; and on the fourth day they assembled in the valley to bless and praise the Lord, which was from that called, " The valley of Berachah." This is the valley of Jehoshaphat. And to this story, these words of the Prophet Joel refer.* Moab, Ammon, and Edom, the enemies of Israel, were a type of the enemies of the church and people of God, under the gospel dispensation, among all nations. This battle and their destruction of the enemies of Judah and Jerusalem in the valley of Jehoshaphat, was a type of the overthrow of all the enemies of Christ and his church, when they shall be gathered to the battle of

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* See 2 Chron. 20th Chapter.

that great day of God Almighty. This prophecy therefore, is a prediction of the same event which is described in the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation. Here it is said, "I will gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people." That is, will punish and destroy them for their opposition to me and my church. There it is said, "The kings of the earth and of the whole world, were gathered to the battle of that great day. And he gathered them together to a place called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon." Which passage has been before explained.

The Prophet farther enlarges on this subject in the following part of this chapter : * Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles : Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears ; let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about : Thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat ; for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe ; come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision ; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord shall also roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake ; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel." Every one who attends to this passage, will observe what a striking similitude there is between this description of a battle, and that in the Revelation, which has been considered. God is here represented as fighting the battle against all the heathen, and destroying multitudes on multitudes. All the heathen, even all nations are gathered together, all armed for war, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there are cut off in this valley of decision. In the Revelation all the nations of the earth are gathered together to battle at Megiddo, typifying the same thing with the valley of Jehoshaphat, and there they are slain. God causes his mighty ones to come down. And John says, "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse :

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And

* Verse 9, &c.

And he that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and in righteousness doth he judge, and make war. And his name is called, The word of God. And the armies in heaven followed him upon white horses." Here there is a command to "put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe : Come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for the wickedness is great." Much the same representation is made of this battle in the Revelation,* which has been particularly mentioned already. The Prophet Joel goes on to the end of his prophecy describing the happy state of the church, which shall succeed this battle, which has never yet taken place, and is like other descriptions of the Millennium state, by the Prophets. "Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no stranger pass through her any more. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk. Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation."

The Prophet Micah, prophesied of Christ and his kingdom, in the extent and glory of it in the latter day ; and of the destruction of the wicked men, and the nations of the world, in favour of the church of Christ, and in order to the prosperity of his people.— All this is contained in the fifth chapter of his prophecy. "And He (i. e. Christ) shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God : And they shall abide ; for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And the remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles, in the midst of many people, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep ; who if he go through, both treadeth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lift up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off. And I will execute vengeance in anger and fury upon the heathen, such as they have not heard."†

The prophecy of Zephaniah has respect to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, and the succeeding happy and prosperous state of the church in the Millennium. It has indeed a primary respect to the evils and punishment brought upon Jerusalem and the Jews by the Chaldeans, for their apostasy and idol-

atry ;

* Chap. xiv. 14, &c.

† Verses 4, 8, 9, 15,

atry ; and to the calamities and destruction which came upon the nations at that time, and previous to the restoration of the Jews ; and to their restoration from their captivity, and return to their own land ; which were types of the much greater and more important events, in the last days, in which all nations will be more immediately concerned ; and to which the prophecy has an ultimate and chief respect. It was fulfilled but in part, and in a small degree, in the former events ; and will have the chief and complete accomplishment in the latter ; as has been before observed concerning other prophecies of the same kind. Jerusalem in her most pure state, when the statutes and ordinances which God had prescribed, were in some good degree observed, was a type of the true church of Christ. Therefore, under this name, and that of Mount Zion, and Israel, the Prophets speak of the true church in all future ages. But Jerusalem, considered in her most corrupt state of apostacy, was a type of the false church of Rome, and of all christian churches when they apostatize from the holy doctrines and precepts of the gospel. Therefore, Christ is said to be crucified in the great city, by which is meant the apostate church of Rome, and all who partake of her corruptions ; because he was crucified at Jerusalem, which was then a type of that great city, in her apostacy, and enmity against Christ, and his true church.* The nations round about the land of Israel and Judea, and all those who at times afflicted and oppressed the visible people of God, and were enemies to them ; were types of the enemies of the church of Christ, in the time of her affliction ; especially of all the idolatrous nations and wicked men, who oppose the prosperity of the church, and are to be destroyed, in order to her deliverance and salvation. With these observations in view, this prophecy may be read, and the whole of it applied to the battle and events which will take place previous to the introduction of the Millennium, predicted in the Revelation, under the seventh vial ; and to the prosperity of the church which will then commence. Then it will have its full accomplishment ; and many of the expressions in it, considered in their most natural and extensive meaning, cannot be accommodated to any events which have taken place, and are not yet fulfilled. Some of these will be now mentioned. The prophecy begins with the following words :—

“I will utterly consume all things from off the land,* saith the Lord. I will consume man and beast : I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked, and I will cut off man from off the land (the earth) saith the Lord. Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God : For the day of the Lord is at hand : For the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. The great day of the Lord is near ; it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord. The mighty men shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wâsteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord : And their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as dung. Neither their silver, nor their gold, shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord’s wrath ; but the whole land (earth) shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy : For he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land (earth.) Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment ; seek righteousness ; seek meekness : It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord’s anger. Therefore, wait upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey ; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, and all my fierce anger :—For all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.” The parallel and likeness between this prophecy, and that of the battle in the Revelation, is worthy of particular notice. This is called “The great day of the Lord : The day of the Lord’s wrath : A day of distress and desolation : The day that God will rise up to the prey, to *gather* the nations, and assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them his indignation, and fierce anger.”—In the Revelation, the whole world were gathered to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. The words, *THAT* great day of battle, seem to have reference to some day which had already

* The word in the original translated *land*, is the same which in other places in this prophecy, and in many other places in scripture, is translated *earth*, and doubtless should have been so translated here, and in some other passages which will be transcribed.

ready been made known, and undoubtedly refer to the great day of God's wrath, which is mentioned in the prophecy before us, and by the other Prophets. "And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. And the seventh angel poured out his vial (of wrath) into the air. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great. And the cities of the nations fell. And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him who sat on the horse; and the fowls were filled with their flesh." In this prophecy it is said, "The Lord hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests." In the Revelation the fowls of heaven are invited to come to the supper of the great God, to eat the flesh of kings, &c.

According to this Prophet, when the nations and kingdoms of the world have been gathered, and God has poured upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger; and all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of his jealousy, the scene is changed, and the remnant which are left in the earth, the few afflicted and poor people, shall repent and pray, and humble themselves before God, and return and put their trust in him alone: And God will return to them in a way of mercy, and build them up, and they shall be comforted, rejoice and prosper. This is represented in the last chapter, from verse ninth to the end of the prophecy: "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, even the daughters of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. I will also leave in thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord. The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: For they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid. Sing, O daughter of Zion, shout, O Israel, be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee. Thou shalt not see evil any more," &c. to the end of the prophecy.

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This is set in much the same light in the Revelation.* When the battle there described is over, the Millennium is introduced.

There is a prophecy by the Prophet Haggai to the same purpose with the foregoing: "Again the word of the Lord came unto Haggai, saying, Speak to Zerubbabel, governour of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen, and I will overthrow the chariots, and those who ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother. In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, I will take thee, O Zerubbabel my servant, and will make thee as a signet; for I have chosen thee."† Zerubbabel was a type of Christ, and what is here said of the type was not fulfilled in him; but is to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ the anti-type, when he shall reign on the earth, and his church fill the world, and "he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."‡ In order to this, the great changes are to take place, represented here by shaking the heavens and the earth, and by overthrowing the throne and strength of all the kingdoms and nations, and their being destroyed by the sword: Which is the battle represented in the Revelation, by thunders and lightnings, and a great earthquake, and the falling of the cities of the nations, &c.

The Prophet Zechariah also speaks of these things. He prophesies of the Millennium, and of the destruction of all the people and nations who oppose the interest of the church, as preceding the days of her prosperity, and introductory to it. "And in that day will I make Jerusalem (the true church of Christ) a burdensome stone for all people: All that burden themselves with it, shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day, shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem."§ "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh,

* Chapters xix, and xx.

† Hagg. ii. 20, 21, 22, 23.

‡ Isai. lii. 13.

§ Zech. xii. 3, 4, 8, 9.

cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle ; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." This is the gathering of the kingdoms and nations of the whole world, unto the battle, by the unclean spirits which go forth to corrupt the world, and arm them against God, and his people, by the practice of all kinds of wickedness, by which the best part of the church will be greatly corrupted ; and the saints will suffer very much, being besieged on all sides by very wicked men, mentioned in the Revelation,* which has been explained.

The Prophet goes on to describe the battle of that great day of God Almighty, which is mentioned in the Revelation : " Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And this shall be the plague where-with the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem : Their flesh shall consume away, while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth."†

Malachi prophesied of the Millennium, and the preceding slaughter of the wicked, in the battle of that great day of God Almighty, in the following concise and striking language : " Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings ; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves in the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked ; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."‡

FROM the above detail it appears, that the prophecy in the Revelation of the Millennium, and of the manner in which it will be introduced, is agreeable to the ancient prophecies of these same events : That previous to this, the christian world, and mankind in general, will become more corrupt in the practice of all kinds of wickedness : That God will rise out of his place, and come forth to do his work, his strange work, to punish the world for their wickedness,

* Rev. xvi. 13, 14.

† Verses 3, 12.

‡ Mal. iv. 1, 2, 3.

wickedness, and manifest his high displeasure and anger with mankind, for their perverseness and obstinacy in rebellion against him, and in opposition to his church : That this is the battle of that great day of God Almighty, in which he will, by a course of various and multiplied calamities and sore judgments, greater and more general, and continued longer than any which have taken place before, reduce and destroy mankind, so that comparatively few will be left ; an afflicted and poor people, who will repent and humble themselves before God, and trust in the mighty Saviour ; for whom he will appear in great mercy, and pour down the Holy Spirit on them and their offspring ; and they will multiply and fill the world. And thus the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, and the church will reign on earth a thousand years.

It appears reasonable and proper, that God should manifest his displeasure with the inhabitants of Christendom, and of the world, for their long continued abuse of his goodness, and of all the means used with them to reclaim them ; and their perseverance in their opposition to Christ and his people, and increasing in all kinds of wickedness, while he has been waiting upon them, even to long suffering ; by inflicting on them severe and awful judgments, and remarkably fearful punishments, to vindicate the honour of his own name ; and avenge his church and people, who have been so greatly injured, despised and trampled upon ; and that it may be made known by this, as well as in other ways, that the God of christians, the God and Saviour revealed in the Bible, is the true God. And this will give great instruction to those who shall be left, who will have a heart to perceive and understand. They will have before their eyes a lesson, suited most effectually to teach them the exceeding depravity and wickedness of man ; and how real and dreadful is the divine displeasure and anger with sinners : How undone and utterly lost forever, all men are, without a Redeemer and Sanctifier ; by whom they may be recovered from the power of sin and satan, and obtain the forgiveness of their sins, and the favour of God : How dependent they are on sovereign grace for all good, for every thing better than complete destruction ; by which alone they are distinguished from those who persevere in their sins, and perish. And all this will tend to guard them against sin, to promote their repentance and humiliation, and to lead them

them to more earnest, constant and united prayer to God for mercy, than was ever exercised before by men: And to ascribe all the favours they shall receive, which will then be much more abundant than ever before, to the free, sovereign grace of God; and to give him the praise of all.

In the beginning of this section it was suggested, that by attending to the events which are to take place, according to scripture prophecy, before the commencement of the Millennium, farther evidence would come into view, that this will not be much sooner or later, than the beginning of the seventh millenary of the world. This evidence has been now produced. The sixth vial is now running, and probably began to be poured out before the end of the last century, and will continue to run a considerable part of the next century; under which the power of antichrist is to be greatly weakened, and the way prepared for his utter overthrow: And at the same time, the christian world, and mankind in general, will be so far from reforming, that they will grow more and more corrupt in doctrine and practice, and greedily run into all manner of vice, and wickedness, until they are prepared for the battle of that great day, and ripe to be cut down and destroyed, by a series of divine judgments, which will be inflicted under the seventh vial, and will issue in the introduction of the Millennium.

The river Euphrates has been drying up, and the way has been preparing, for near a century past, for the utter ruin of the Pope and the hierarchy of the church of Rome, and the time of the utter overthrow of antichrist appears to be hastening on. But this is not accompanied with any reformation in that church, or in the Greek church, or in the protestant churches in general: But very much to the contrary appears. Ignorance, error and delusion, and open vice and wickedness abound, and are increasing; and infidelity is rapidly spreading in the christian world. The unclean spirits, like frogs, appear to have gone forth to all the kings' courts, and the great men in Christendom; and the greatest corruption and abominable vices are spread among them, and real christianity is neglected, run down and opposed. And the multitude in general, both learned and unlearned, are going the same way. Deism, and a multitude of errors which lead to it, and even to atheism, are increasing. A spirit of irreligion, selfishness, pride and worldliness, is exceeding strong and prevalent, producing

ducing all kinds of wickedness, and a strong and general opposition to true religion, and the great truths and doctrines of the gospel. And the heathen world are no more disposed to become christians, than they ever were : And the way to their conversion to christianity appears to be more obstructed ; and the few attempts that are made to christianize any of them, are generally unsuccessful. And Mahometans and Jews hate and oppose christianity as much as ever they did, if not more, and are sinking farther down in stupidity, ignorance, infidelity, worldliness, and all kinds of vice.

It is certain, that most of the evil things now mentioned, have been found among the body of mankind, in a greater or less degree, in all ages ; and the pious friends of God, and true religion, have complained of, and lamented them. And it is probable, that the representation now made, will be considered by many, only as the revival of the old complaint, by those who are of an illiberal, gloomy cast of mind, and wholly without foundation, in truth and fact. But this opinion, though it should be generally imbibed, and asserted with great confidence, will not be any evidence that the representation is not true and just ; but will rather serve to confirm it. For it is commonly, if not always, the case, that in times of great degeneracy, and the prevalence of ignorance, error and vice, they who are the greatest instances of it, and most sunk into darkness and delusion, are deluded in this also, and entertain a good opinion of themselves, and of others who join with them, being ignorant of their true character. They put darkness for light, and light for darkness, and call evil good, and good evil. And while real christianity and true virtue, founded upon principles of truth and genuine piety, are abandoned, opposed and forsaken, they perceive it not, but think all is well, and much better than before. And they may undertake to *reform christianity*, and think it is greatly reformed, when every doctrine and duty is excluded from it, which is contrary to the selfishness, pride, and worldly spirit of man, and little or nothing is left of it, but the mere name, to distinguish it from the religion of infidels or heathen ; and nothing to render it preferable to these.

An appeal must be made, in this case, from the judgment of those of this character, to those who are born of the Spirit of God ; are created in Christ Jesus unto good works ; by which they are become new creatures, and turned from the darkness of this world,

to marvellous light : Who are not conformed to this world, but have overcome it, and are transformed by the renewing of their minds, so as to know and distinguish what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God, which is revealed in the scriptures. They who are thus spiritual, judge of all things respecting the doctrines and duties of christianity, in some good measure, according to the truth. To such, especially those of them who have a general knowledge of the state of religion in the christian world, and of the deluge of ignorance, error and vice with which it is overflowed, it is presumed, the above description will not appear exaggerated, and that there are greater strides, and swifter progress made in infidelity, and irreligion, error and false religion, in vice and all kinds of wickedness, than have been ever known before ; and that all these are more common, have a wider spread, and are carried to a higher degree at this time, than in former ages ; and threaten to bear down all truth, and real christianity before them : And that the appearance of things, in this respect, is just such as might be reasonably expected when the unclean spirits like frogs, the spirits of devils, are gone forth with a license and design to spread their influence among men, and deceive and corrupt the whole world.

There is reason to conclude, from what has already taken place of this kind, and from the prophecy of these unclean spirits, that they have not yet finished their work ; but that the world, especially that part of it called christian and protestant, will yet make greater and more rapid advances, in all kinds of moral corruption, and open wickedness, till it will come to that state in which it will be fully ripe, and prepared to be cut down by the sickle of divine justice and wrath : And it may take near half a century from this time for these evil spirits to complete their work, and gather the world to this battle. But during this time, whether it be longer or shorter, and before the battle shall come on, there will probably be great and remarkable judgments, and sore, unusual and surprising calamities, in one place and another, suited to awaken and warn mankind, and lead them to fear God, repent and reform ; which being by most disregarded and abused, will become the occasion of greater hardness of heart and obstinacy, which will be a prelude and provocation to the battle of that great day, in which mankind will be destroyed in the manner, and to the degree, which has been described above. This battle, as has been before

observed, will not be fought and finished at once ; but by a series of different and increasing calamities and sore punishments, mankind will be reduced and brought down, and every high thing levelled to the ground, in which the hand of God will be remarkably visible, and his arm of power and vengeance made bare.— And it may take more than a century to effect all this, in the wisest and best manner ; so that it will not be finished till near the beginning of the seventh millenary of the world.

It has been observed, that while antichrist is coming down, and the way preparing for the utter extinction of the church of Rome, and all her appendages, the world in general, and especially the christian world, will make swift advances in delusion and all kinds of wickedness ; and infidelity will make great progress, under the influence of the spirits of devils, which are gone forth to the whole world. And it may be here observed, that the increase and spreading of this wickedness, and spirit of infidelity, will doubtless be the means of weakening and preparing the way for the overthrow of that church. The ten horns, or kings, which shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire, will do this from a selfish, worldly spirit, and under the influence of infidelity, and opposition to all kinds of religion. And the prevalence of deism and atheism in popish countries and nations, which are the natural fruit and offspring of the abominable practices and tyranny of the antichristian church, has been the means of exposing the superstition and wickedness of that church, and weakening the papal hierarchy. And deists, and other wicked men, may be made the instruments of pulling down that antichristian fabrick yet farther ; as the heathen Romans were of destroying the corrupt church of Israel. If so, the fall of the Pope will be so far from implying a revival of true religion ; that it may be attended with the contrary, viz. infidelity, immorality, and all kinds of wickedness, as the means of it, so far as it will be effected by the instrumentality of men.

WHEN John is describing the vision under the sixth vial, of the unclean spirits like frogs, going forth to the whole world to gather them to the battle, he stops before he has finished the relation, and Jesus Christ himself speaks the following words : “ Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”* By which
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* Rev. xvi. 15.

he warns those in particular, who shall live when this vial is poured out, of their danger of being seduced by those evil spirits, and those who are corrupted by them, and behaving unworthy of their christian character ; and sets before them the strongest motives to deter them from apostacy, and induce them to be faithful to him, to *watch and keep their garments* : To continue spiritually awake, and properly attentive to all those things which concern them as christians ; to their situation and state, their own exercises and conduct, to the cause of Christ, and the enemies with whom they are surrounded ; to maintain their christian profession, and act agreeable to it, in the exercise of all christian graces ; trusting in the great Captain and General, who only can save them, and his church ; and waiting for him with a patient continuance in well doing. *He comes as a thief.* The thief does not make his presence and designs known to any but those who are joined with him, being his friends, and engaged in the same design with him. So, though Christ be present with his church and people, and is in the midst of his enemies, having all men and devils in his hands ; and ordering and conducting every thing that is done by them, in this time of the greatest degeneracy, and high handed wickedness ; and knows how to answer his own ends by it and them, and to protect his people, and bring the wheel over his enemies ; yet, in this his coming and presence, he is not seen or thought of by the corrupt, wicked world : They think nothing of his presence, and see not his hand : He is seen only by his friends, who are engaged in the same cause with him, who watch and keep their garments. They see his hand in all those things, behold him present, and doing his own work ; and are protected from all evil by him, while the wicked fall into mischief, and are destroying themselves. And when he comes forth to the battle, and rises up to the prey, and to punish the world for their wickedness, the wicked will not see him, they will not know their danger, or believe he is come, or will come, till evil falls upon them, and it is too late to escape. “ For when they shall say, Peace and safety ; then sudden destruction cometh upon them ; and they shall not escape.”* And they only are safe, who watch and keep their garments, and see and adore his hand and presence, in all his works of terror and wrath. “ Be wise now therefore, O ye kings ; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

* 1 Theff. v. 3.

trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."*

It is of the greatest importance to christians, who live at this day, and those who shall live in the time when the battle shall come on, that they should attend, and discern the signs of the times, and watch and keep their garments; as this is the only way to be safe and happy. Our Lord gave the same direction and command, as to substance, when he was on earth, with reference to these same events: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."†

It will probably be suggested, that the representation of such a dark scene, and evil time, to take place before the Millennium will come, is matter of great discouragement, and tends to damp the spirits and hopes of christians, and to discourage them from attempting to promote it, or praying for it; especially as it is set so far off from our day: So that none in this or the next generation are like to see it.

To such suggestions it is easy to reply,

1. If it be true, and clearly and abundantly foretold, that such evils are to take place, before the prosperous state of the church comes on, it is proper and desirable that all should know it, and attend to it, and it cannot be of any disadvantage to any, to know the truth in this case, but the contrary. This is revealed to the church for the instruction and benefit of christians, that they may be informed and warned of what is coming, and be prepared for it, and not be disappointed in their expectations, and surprised when it shall take place; but when they see these things coming to pass, their faith may be strengthened, and they lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that the redemption, the deliverance and prosperity of the church draweth near.

2. These evils, both natural and moral, however undesirable and dreadful, in themselves, are necessary for the greatest good of the

* Psalm ii. 10, 11, 12.

† Luke xxi. 34, 35, 36.

the church of Christ, and to introduce the Millennium in the best manner, and there will be then, and forever, more holiness, joy and happiness, than if these evils had never taken place. In this view, they are kind and merciful dispensations to the church. The Apostles and Prophets, and all the inhabitants of heaven, are represented as rejoicing in the evils, the punishment and destruction of the enemies of Christ and his church.* The affliction and servitude of the children of Israel in Egypt, and the wickedness, oppression and cruelty exercised towards them by Pharaoh and the Egyptians; and the successive calamities and punishments brought on them by the hand of God, and their final overthrow and destruction in the Red Sea, were an unspeakable advantage to the former, and afforded matter of joy and praise. Therefore, christians may now not only acquiesce, but even rejoice in these events, as ordered by God for wise ends, and necessary, in order to the greatest display of his righteousness and goodness, and to promote the best good and greatest happiness of his church.

3. God revealed to Abraham the evils which were coming on his posterity in Egypt, previous to their deliverance and prosperity, and the wickedness and punishment of the Egyptians; not to discourage him, and sink his spirit, but to support and animate him, and strengthen his faith; and this did not damp his joy; but in the view of the whole, he rejoiced. And Jesus Christ foretold to his disciples the great evils which were coming on them, upon the Jews, the church and the world, not to discourage and deject them, but that they might be forewarned, and expect them, so as not to be disappointed when they came, but have their faith confirmed, and possess their souls in patience when the dark scene should come on; and that they might be encouraged and rejoice, considering these events as tokens that their deliverance was at hand. He therefore said unto them, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."† This may be applied to christians now: While you see the world gathering to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and view this battle near at hand, lift up your heads and rejoice, that the church has got so near the end of darkness and affliction; and that the happy day of her deliverance and prosperity is so near at hand.

4. As

* Rev. xviii. 20. xix. 1—6.

† Luke xxi. 28.

4. As to the distance of that happy day of salvation from this time; two hundred years, or near so many, will pass off before it will arrive, according to the calculation which has been made from scripture; so that none, now on the stage of life, will live to see and enjoy it on earth. But much may be done by christians who live in this age, to promote its coming on in the proper time, by prayer, and promoting the interest of religion, and the conversion of sinners: For that good day would not come, unless the cause of Christ be maintained to that time, and sinners be converted to keep up the church, and prevent the total extinction of it. In order to this, thousands must be converted, and there must be a succession of professing and real christians down to that day. The doctrines, institutions, and duties of christianity, must be maintained; and there will doubtless be remarkable revivals of religion in many places, and knowledge will increase among true christians, and there will be advances made in the purity of doctrines and worship, and all holy practice, by bringing all these nearer to the standard of the holy scriptures: And the churches will be formed into a greater union with each other; being more and more conformed to the divine pattern, contained in the Bible. Here then is work enough to do, by those who desire and are looking for such a day, to prepare the way for it, and it may be introduced in the proper time; and there is no want of encouragement to do it, even in this view, to be steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as they may know, that their labour will not be in vain in the Lord.*

And christians may now have a great degree of enjoyment of that day, and joy in it, though they do not expect to live on earth till it shall come. True christians are disinterested and benevolent to such a degree, that they can enjoy and rejoice in the good of others, even those who may live many ages hence, and in the good and prosperity of the church, and the advancement of the cause and kingdom of Christ in this world, though they should not live to see it. The stronger their faith is, that this good day is coming, and the clearer and more constant view they have of it, and the more desirable it appears to them, that there should be such a time; the higher enjoyment, and greater joy they will have in it, and in the prospect of it. Thus Abraham looked forward by his faith, and saw this day of Christ, when all the nations of the earth

* 1 Cor. xv. 58.

earth should be blessed in him, and derived great comfort and joy in this prospect. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad."* Christians know that it will come on in the best time, as soon as it can be introduced by infinite wisdom and goodness: That there is no delay, but "God will hasten it in his time." In this sense, Christ will come *quickly* to set up his kingdom in the whole world. He is on his way, coming as fast and as soon as he can, consistent with infinite wisdom. He is preparing the way, and ordering every thing in the best manner, so as in the most proper time, to reign with his church on earth; and no time is lost. And what christian can desire that it should be sooner, or before this time? Is it not enough that Jesus Christ has undertaken it, and will bring it on in the best manner, and the fittest time? And must not this give joy to every real christian?

It is farther to be observed, that though the christians who live at this day, will not see the Millennium come while they are in the body on earth; yet they will see and enjoy it, when it shall come, in a much higher degree than they could do, were they living on earth; or than those who will live on earth at that day. The powers, knowledge and views of the spirits of the just made perfect, are greatly enlarged in heaven, and they have a more clear and comprehensive view of the works of God, and a more particular knowledge of what is done in this world, especially of what relates to the work of redemption, the salvation of sinners, and the prosperity of the church and cause of Christ. There is joy in the presence of the angels over *one sinner* that repenteth. The spirits of the just made perfect are with the angels, and must know all that passes in their presence; and must rejoice in such an event, as much or more than they. How great must be their joy then, when whole nations, yea, all the world, become true penitents, and they see and know this, and what is implied in it, unspeakably to better advantage, and more clearly, than any can do who shall be then on earth!

The more christians labour and suffer on earth, in the cause of Christ; and the more they desire, pray for, and promote his coming and kingdom in this world, the more they will enjoy it in heaven, when it shall take place; and the greater will be their joy

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* John viii. 56.

and happiness. And it will be unspeakably more and greater in heaven, than if they were in bodies on earth. Who then can reasonably desire to live in this world, merely to see and enjoy the happy day of the Millennium.

ON the whole, it is hoped that it does appear from what has been said in this dissertation, that there will be a thousand years of prosperity of the church of Christ, in this world; that this is abundantly foretold and held up to view in the Bible; that this will be about the seventh millenary of the world; that it will be a most happy and glorious day, in which the christian dispensation shall have its proper and full effect on earth, in the salvation of men; to which all the preceding times and events are preparatory: That the degeneracy and increasing prevalence of ignorance, error and wickedness now in the world, especially in Christendom, is preparing for, and hastening on the battle of that great day of God Almighty, in which mankind will be punished, and the greatest part then on earth destroyed; and then the Millennium will be introduced:—That this is an important and pleasing subject, suited to support and comfort christians in all the dark and evil days which precede it, and to excite them to earnest, constant, united prayer for this coming of Christ, and patient waiting for him, and to constant exertions in all proper ways, to promote his interest and kingdom in the world.



AFTER the thousand years of the reign of Christ and his church on earth, "Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: The number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."* In these words there is reference to what is said of Gog and Magog, in the thirty eighth and thirty ninth chapters of Ezekiel: Which prophecy, there is reason to think, is not to be understood literally, but in a figurative sense; as no events have ever taken place answerable to this representation, if taken in a literal sense. The prophecy of Gog and Magog,

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* Rev. xx. 7, 8, 9.

may be considered as having reference to two events, which are to take place at different times, and are similar in some respects, and differ in others, viz. The great and general corruption and wickedness of mankind, and their punishment and destruction which will precede the Millennium, which has been described in this section ; and the apostacy and wickedness of mankind at the end of the Millennium, and the remarkable overthrow and destruction of them, when Christ shall come to judgment ; predicted in the words which have been now transcribed. Some things said of Gog and Magog, of their designs, doings, and their punishment, and a number of expressions in that prophecy, are more applicable to the former of these events than to the latter, and some more applicable to the latter than to the former, and the whole cannot be well applied to one, exclusive of the other ; but in both, the prophecy is completely fulfilled. Both these events respect wicked men, who have arrived to a great degree of obstinacy and wickedness ; and they are both gathered together by the agency and deception of satan, let loose for that end. And they are both gathered together to battle against Christ and his church ; and are destroyed in the battle.

This prophecy is figurative. It is not to be supposed that all this great multitude will be gathered together into one place ; or that the church will be encamped together in one spot on earth, or collected in one city : But the gathering of the wicked, means their being abandoned to infidelity, and a very great degree of wickedness, in opposition to the church of Christ, and true religion, and being disposed to extirpate these from the face of the earth. In this sense, the wicked will be gathered together to battle, before the Millennium, by the spirits of devils, or satan, who will go forth to the whole world for that end, as has been explained. The church will become small, and surrounded and assailed by the wicked on every side, and ready to be swallowed up, and totally destroyed by them.

It has been a question, from whence this multitude of people, here called Gog and Magog, should come, after the church of Christ and true religion had prevailed in the world a thousand years ? Some have supposed, that a number of people, and perhaps whole nations, would live in some corner of the earth, during

the time of the Millennium, without partaking of any of the blessings of it; but will continue in a state of heathenism and wickedness all that time, till at length they will multiply so much, as to be able to rise in opposition to the church, and destroy it, were they not prevented by the miraculous interposition of heaven. And many have supposed, that this fact is inconsistent with all the inhabitants of the world being real christians, and eminently holy in the time of the Millennium. But this supposed difficulty may be easily solved; and the general and great apostacy accounted for, consistent with the supposition, that in the Millennium all mankind will be real christians. Near the end of the thousand years, the divine influences, which produced and continued the universal and eminent holiness in the Millennium, may be in such a measure withheld, as that real christians will, in their exercises and conduct, sink much below what had taken place before, and indulge a careless and worldly spirit to a great and sinful degree, and become more and more negligent of their duty, especially with respect to their children; and be really guilty of breaking covenant with God, in this important point. In consequence of this, their children will not be regenerated and converted; but grow up in a state of sin, real enemies to God and to the truth. And as the world will be then full of people, it will in this way soon become full of wicked men, and the church will be very small. And those who will grow up under the power of sin and Satan, in the face of all that light, truth and holiness, which had taken place through the Millennium, and in opposition to it, will naturally arrive to a great and amazing degree of hardness and obstinacy in sin, and become a far more guilty and perverse generation of men, than ever existed before; and will be greater enemies to truth and righteousness, and the church of Christ. And consequently will be united and engaged to banish all these from the earth. The world will have more wicked persons in it than ever before; and all these much more sinful, and engaged in all kinds and ways of opposition to Christ and his cause and people. The church will be on the brink of ruin, just ready to sink and be swallowed up; and the appearance and coming of Christ will be less believed, expected or thought of, than at any other time. Then Christ will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God, and obey not the gospel.

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This apostacy and great wickedness of so many millions of mankind, the number of whom will be as the sand of the sea, and their consequent misery, is an awful dispensation indeed, and is, in itself, an evil infinitely beyond the comprehension of man. But there is the clearest evidence, and the greatest certainty, that this instance of evil, as well as all other evil which precedes it, and will succeed it, though it will be endless, will, by the overruling hand of God, be productive of overbalancing good; and is necessary, in order to effect the greatest possible good to the universe. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."* This event will serve to set the total depravity, and the strong propensity of man to the greatest degree of wickedness, in a more clear and striking light than it had been, or perhaps could be before. That man should apostatize, and so soon arrive to such a high degree of wickedness, after all the light and holiness, and the wonderful goodness of God to man, displayed in the Millennium; and, in opposition to all this light and grace, and in the greatest abuse of it, join in rebellion against God, and trample on his authority, truth and goodness, contrary to the admonitions and warnings from the word of God, and all faithful ministers and christians; will make a new discovery, and greater than was ever made before, of fallen human nature, and of the great and desperate evil that is in the heart of man; and that it is utterly incurable by any means that can possibly be used, short of the almighty energy of the Spirit of God, by which the heart is renewed; and consequently of the guilt and infinite ill desert of man; which discovery will be of great advantage to the church and kingdom of Christ forever, and necessary for the greatest happiness and glory of it, and the highest honour of the Redeemer.

And this will make, from fact, a new and greater discovery of the absolute dependence of man on the grace and Spirit of God, to prevent his greatest wickedness and endless destruction, and to form him to holiness and happiness; and of the great and sovereign grace of God, in converting and saving lost man, and in bringing on such a wonderful degree of holiness and happiness, and continuing it a thousand years; and that this is all to be ascribed to the sovereign power and grace of God, who has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

When

* Psalm lxxvi. 10.

When all men shall be righteous and holy from generation to generation for a thousand years, and all the children which shall be born in that time, shall appear to be pious and holy as soon as they begin to act, and persevere in this to the end of life, the appearance will be, that mankind are now grown better, and that the evil nature of man is not so great; but he is naturally inclined to obedience and holiness: The sudden and great apostacy which will take place, will take off this appearance; and show, that the heart of man is naturally as full of evil as ever it was; and that all the good and holiness of the Millennium state, was the effect of the power of the Spirit of God, and to be wholly ascribed to the infinite, sovereign grace of God. And this discovery will be remembered by the redeemed forever, and improved to the glory of God, to the praise of rich, sovereign grace, and consequently to their own eternal advantage.

EVEN so, come LORD JESUS.

AMEN.



E R R A T A.

Page 14, line 10, for *moon* read *men*

15, 14 from bot. for *by r. of Christ*
25, 17, for *foretold r. foretell*
54, 4 from bot. for *virtuous r. victorious*

Page 61, line 15, for *moral* read *natural*

66, 6, for *presets r. posses*
68, 11 from bot. for *presessing r. possessing*
87, 21, dele *not*

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