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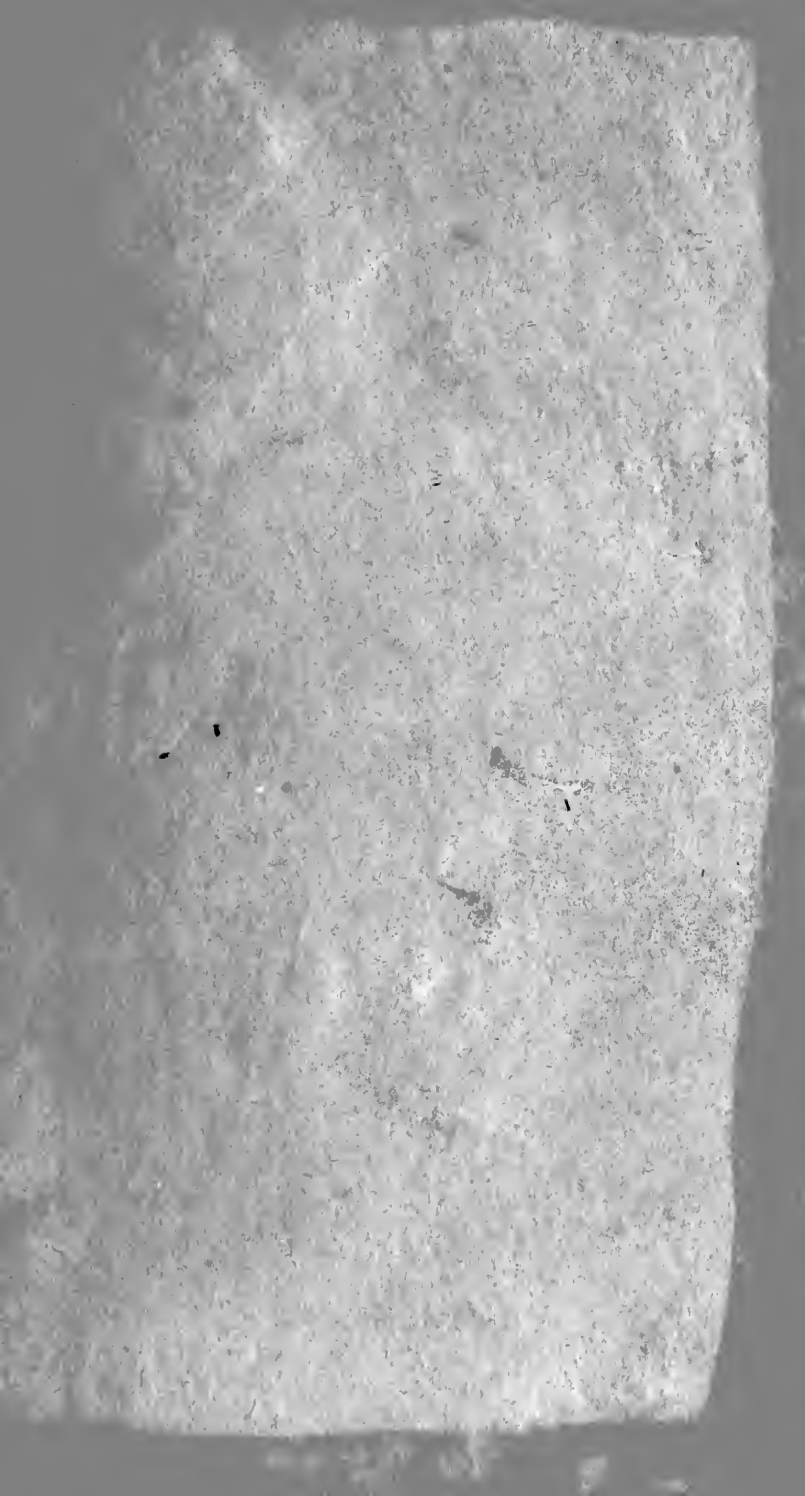
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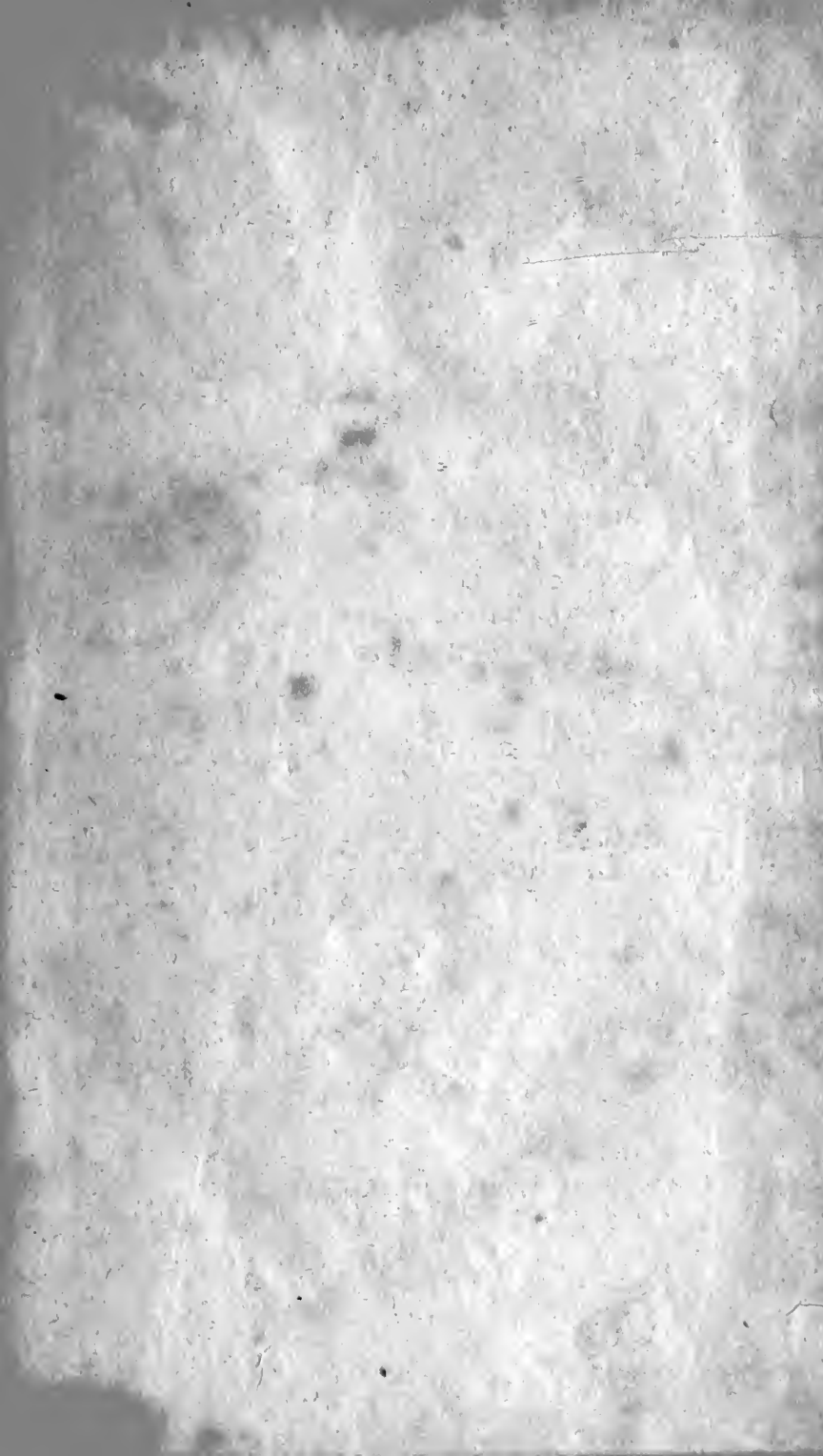
Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

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The open Address of New Testament Evidence;

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72
THREE PLAIN MONUMENTS

Authenticating THREE FACTS, on which the
Divinity of our Holy Religion has its Support.

Humbly proposed to PUBLIC CONSIDERATION,
in an unthinking Age,

By CALEB FLEMING, D. D.

—At the Mouth of three Witnesses shall the Matter be established.
DEUT. XIX. 15.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. TOWERS, at No. 111, in Fore-Street,
near Cripplegate; and sold also by J. BUCKLAND,
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(Price One Shilling and Six-pence.)

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C. P.

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A Primary motive to this publication, was, the placing of three christian institutions in a light of evidence, which I apprehend will be new to the generality of christians.—A sincere aim is had at reviving a lost spirit of devotion, and at promoting the real interests of genuine christianity.

I presume to have formed much the same ideas of the gospel dispensation with two ancient prophets ; one of whom foretold,—“ that
“ the way of holiness should be so very plain,
“ that the way-faring man, though a fool,
“ [i. e. of small abilities] should not err
“ therein.” And the other said,—“ they
“ shall no more teach every man his neighbour,
“ and every man his brother, saying,
“ KNOW THE LORD, for they all shall know
“ me, from the least of them, unto the greatest
“ of them, saith the Lord.”

N. B. The views which, as a Pædobaptist, I have taken of the infant right to baptism, in the second discourse, is not with the least

ADVERTISEMENT.

design to revive, or ever more engage in that controversy.

Should the interpretation, here given, of these monuments meet with a favourable reception, and my life be continued, it may be followed with an arrangement of thoughts upon another threefold testimony; and in as short a compass.

Hoxton Square,
Feb. 18, 1771.

C. F.



On the Reason and End of the Christian Sabbath.

IN discoursing on the three institutions, which I understand do give testimony to the truth of the Christian system, shall chuse to begin with the Christian Sabbath; and distinctly treat on the subject, from that text, Mar. ii. 27, 28. "And he (i. e. Jesus) said unto them, The sabbath was made for man; and not man for the sabbath: Therefore, (or, so that) the Son of man is Lord, even of the sabbath."

Both St. Matthew and St. Mark mention the fact of our Lord's disciples plucking the ears of corn, as they went through the fields on the sabbath-day. They report this as giving great offence to the captious chief Pharisees, who considered it as a violation of the sabbatic-law; which occasioned that defence of them, here made by their divine master. Indeed these two evangelists do record different parts of his reasoning. St. Matthew has made his master's plea to support upon what God said by Hosea, of the superiority which the moral has to the ritual: viz. "God will have mercy rather than sacrifice." "Hence," says Jesus, "had you known what that maxim of the divine government meaneth, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." St. Mark has omitted this in his narrative; but then he has noticed what St. Matthew has not, viz. "the sabbath was made for man; not man for the sabbath."—

Nevertheless, they are consistent; inasmuch, as we may reasonably conclude, our Lord's defence

would contain in it, the reasons mentioned by both historians. Probably, his discourse upon a subject so very important, and so little understood, would be very distinguishing and copious.

Among other things which this serves to illustrate, it shews that those learned men * were mistaken, who have been of opinion, “ that St. Mark “ only copied St. Matthew’s gospel ;”—at the same time it well accounts for the other variations that are found of our Lord’s teachings, in the narrative given by the four historians ; since we have no reason to suppose that any one of them has recorded the whole of his discourses to the people. It is therefore enough, that the sundry variations found in their several narratives, are no way discordant.

Further, when we consider with what a degree of superstition the Pharisees had perverted the law of the sabbath, and of how much use and importance that law originally was, we may reasonably conclude the blessed Jesus would not omit one view of the reason of a capital law, that was apt to inform, or to convince, and so remove prejudice from that people.

According to St. Mark, he first refers them to an instance fully in point, of a freedom, which David and the men with him took, far greater than that of his disciples ; “ for they went into the house “ of God and took the shew-bread, which was “ only lawful for the priests to eat :” which freedom, says he, your own rabbis do justify.—Nay more, your very priests themselves do much more servile work every sabbath in the temple service, than my disciples have now done ; and yet those
priests

* Mr. Whiston, and others. Against which consult Dr. Lardner’s Supplement, Vol. I. ch. v. sect. v. Cred. Vol. III. p. 403.

priests are blameless. Indeed, Lightfoot observes, that some of their most learned doctors say,—“there is no sabbatism at all in the temple.”—Thus much premised,

In treating on the subject before us, our business will then be, to inquire,

First, into the original law of the sabbath.

Secondly, into the reason, design, and end of the institution.

Thirdly, in what sense the Son of man is Lord, even of the sabbath.

If we carefully examine into the original law of the sabbath, we shall be persuaded, from the pen of Moses, that the Creator of this solar system, did separate and sanctify a seventh part of time, for the religious observance of man, from the beginning—and though the Hebrew historian makes no mention of a weekly celebration in the antediluvian world, yet we may reasonably conjecture, he would have it taken for granted, that this creation-law did operate, and must have been a standing rule throughout its ages; and also to Noah and his descendents after the flood.

Mr. Bedford, the scripture chronologist, was of opinion, that the Hebrew sabbath was thrown one day backward from the original weekly sabbath; and was thus changed, to be a monument of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage*. This sanctification

* His words are these. “As the beginning of the year was altered from one season to another, so the day of the sabbath

tification of the sabbath, was to be marked out by a cessation from every kind of civil and secular labour; and from all those recreations and loose gratifications which are not compatible with such a religious separation: for whatever God sanctifies or separates, must appear to be, in its own nature, distinguished from what is common; i. e. from what has upon it no mark of holiness.—Look into the fourth commandment in the decalogue, and you will find it to run thus: “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; (or, to the Lord thy God) in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.”

Thus evident is it, that the original law of the sabbath is expressive of a rest from all secular, servile, bodily labour; and from every of those amusements and recreations, which are inconsistent with a keeping holy the seventh, or sabbath day.

N. B. I have mentioned those amusements and recreations which are not consistent with the original

“was also altered from one day of the week to another. That which was the seventh day from the creation, was the first day of Adam’s life; and so it was the first day of the week, according to their computation: but now it is altered to the seventh day of the week; to be observed by the Israelites as a sabbath, in commemoration of their deliverance out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.” Bedford’s Script. Chronol. p. 298.

nal law of the sabbath: And for this I will cite supreme authority.—The great God says, by his prophet Isaiah, when he makes a promise of favouring a people; “if thou turn away thy foot from
“doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the
“sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honour-
“able, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own
“ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speak-
“ing thine own words; then shalt thou delight in
“the Lord.” *Is. lviii. 13, 14.*

On the contrary, “every one that defileth the
“sabbath shall surely be put to death; for whoso-
“ever shall do any work therein, that soul shall be
“cut off from among his people. Six days may
“work be done, but in the seventh is the sabbath
“of holiness to the Lord; whosoever doeth any
“work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to
“death.” *Exod. xxxi. 14, 15.*

Such is the original law of the sabbath, that a violation thereof was a capital crime, and to be punished with death; as that law operated under the Mosaic dispensation. So it is, that when God, by Ezekiel, describes the enormous depravity of a people, he mentions this impiety, “thou hast pro-
“phaned my sabbaths.” *Ch. xxii. 8.* Hence it is observable, that it ever has been essential to moral virtue, and to an establishment in righteousness, that man “remembered to keep holy the sabbath
“day.” The law of the sabbath essentially belongs to the system of the divine moral: and tho’ we call it a law of the first table, yet, on our observance of it, greatly depends the regard we pay to the duties we owe both to God and man: for if we express the highest reverence of God, and suffer not any debasing ideas of him, either by images or pictures, and supremely venerate the authority of his

his name, we then shall sanctify his sabbaths; for this will, all of it, be implied in that sabbath sanctification. So respecting the relation in which we stand to mankind, we shall honour our parents; not dare to injure any human life; neither by fraud nor force alienate the properties of others; not dare to violate the chastity of any body, nor stab their reputation; and finally, we shall not suffer the illicit desire of another's property to have place in our breasts.

But, on the contrary, if we make no conscience of hallowing God's sabbaths, we shall neither pay him homage, nor regard the rights of our fellow men: whereas, in fact, a contemplation, a serious renewed attention to the system of moral obligation, is the proper employment of a weekly sabbath; and the way in which it is to be sanctified.

So much may suffice for a plain and easy stating of the original sabbatic law itself, which required a religious weekly recess from all civil and secular labour.

We are, secondly, to inquire into the reason, design, and end of the institution. "The sabbath was made for man; not man for the sabbath." The sense of which divine declaration appears, to me, to be this, viz. that the real benefit, and best advantage of man, gave the reason and end of the institution, as it is adapted to keep alive the sense, both of his dependence upon, and obligation to his Maker. If, therefore, that law should be understood in a sense that is injurious to this his piety, it must be a very mistaken interpretation. But inasmuch as the sabbath was made for man, it is thence evident that "man was not made for the sabbath;" because the sabbath institution being but a means to
an

an end, it cannot possibly be, at the same time, both the means and the end. It follows, that to make the law of the sabbath, in fact, incommodious, disgustful, injurious, or prejudicial to man, exposing him thereby to sundry evils, as the superstitious Pharisees were wont to do, would be in effect to affirm, that "man was made for the sabbath." Man is not therefore to deny himself thereon what relates to the necessaries of life; he is not to forego any of those refreshments which heaven has designed him; he is not to sacrifice either his health or his safety, because of the law of the sabbath. The reason of which is manifest, since the institution was to be wholly for his benefit, or in his favour, as a creature whom God has made for the pure and sublime pleasures of religion! Whatever, therefore, would depress his spirits, or indispose him for the rational, chearful, delightful services of admiration, thanksgiving, and praise, must be carefully avoided, as far as in his power, on that holy day.

Let us now attempt to enter yet more fully into the reason and end of the institution: and here we must again advert to the Mosaic history. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them; and the seventh day God ended his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which he created to make." Gen. ii. 1, 2, 3. But if Deity may be said to have rested from creating, and to have taken, as it were, a retrospect of his own works on that day, as they were designed by him to display his own perfections; it is but reasonable that man should be taught to employ himself in those acts of religious contemplation, which are most proper to solace,
delight,

delight, and improve the mind in a knowledge of the Creator, and in a devotedness to all his will.

And, indeed, if we are his creatures, and have a necessary incessant dependence on him, if the rectitude and improvement of our faculties and powers do require a religious attention to his divine teachings, and a stated thankful recognition of the infinite debt we are under to his adorable goodness! assuredly, no institution could have been more apt, none better suited for the purpose of keeping alive the spirit of devotion, than the law of a weekly sabbath.

No one, who thinks at all, can mistake the reason and end of sanctifying one seventh part of time. Were we to imagine that when the Creator had formed man in his own image, and made him capable of discerning the traces of his infinite, his absolute perfections, as they are conspicuous all around us; and yet, that he should leave him quite undirected to any stated times of paying his social homage to his Maker, this would argue a most indeterminate, disordered, lawless, state of man: whereas a weekly sabbath, sanctified for a religious recess from all secular labour, and to the purpose of attaining to an improved acquaintance with the Author of our beings, and the preserver of our lives; has, upon the very face of it, all the marks and tokens of adorable wisdom, and of divine care and fatherly benevolence.

There truly is in it an amazing tenderness and compassion, even when abstractedly viewed, as only a weekly rest or recess from the toils and bodily labours of man, in his civil and secular pursuits. Mercy is therein shewn to a creature destined to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow: busied, immersed

mersed in the cares of this precarious mortal life. Nay, the very beasts of burden are compassionately allowed the benefit of a weekly rest from their labours.

Whichever way we contemplate the original law of the sabbath, we see a design and end worthy the Creator of the world—whereas to suppose man without such a law of recess from secular labour, and from all the amusements or the pleasures of a sensitive indulgence, would be to suppose his Maker indifferent to, and unconcerned about the well-being of his own intelligent, rational workmanship:—and which would infer a flagrant solecism in the government of God.

As the divine appointment now stands, no objection can possibly arise either because of a too near, or a too remote distance of the days of religious rest. Six days are an interval sufficient for all our secular bodily labours, and for every laudable attention to the more common businesses of humanity.—But a longer interval, would be apt to wear off the serious impressions, made by our solemn and devout sabbath engagements.

Again, more than one day in seven, God has not sanctified, nor separated for social, public, solemn worship. “Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do”—*q. d.* One in seven thou shalt keep holy.—Men therefore, who presume to make other days holy, do daringly counteract his express command, who said—“Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work*.”

I would

* Look into the church calendar of saint-days, and other holidays, and despise the authority.

I would further observe, were we only intended for these sensitive scenes, and had no concern with a future state of being, I do not see how the institution of a weekly rest could answer to more than for the relief and the refreshment it gives from the fatigue of merely bodily labour. The idea of a religious rest, of our sanctifying the sabbath, or keeping it holy, would then have but an unsatisfactory meaning, as the apprehensions of our concern with God must be so transient and precarious; and, at longest, but of a momentary short continuance.

On the other hand, a sanctifying of the sabbath has, in the most corrupt times, given the distinguishing characteristic of God's people. So Malachi represents—"Then they who feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought on his name. And they shall be mine, said the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son that serves him. Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not." Chap. iii. 16. I cannot but be of opinion, that here must be a reference to men who kept his sabbath, since his name is upon that institution, and there is no greater external evidence of men's fearing the Lord, than that of their religiously observing a day he has sanctified, and separated for the purposes of recommending to one another a supreme reverence of his name. By sanctifying and prophaning his sabbaths, a distinction was ever made between "him who serveth God,"
 "and

“and him who serveth him not.”* Even an apostle exhorts Christians, “not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, as was the manner of some.” Heb. x. 25. And in the same epistle he mentions the rest of a seventh-day sabbath, as emblematical of that rest which remains for the people of God. Chap. iv.

Assured we may be, the Deity would never have divulged a creation-law, relative to the religious rest of man from his secular labours, and enforced the observance by capital sanctions; he would never have erected such a monument of his uncontrovertible claim of supreme homage, if he, in his unerring wisdom, had not seen it calculated to keep alive an universal sense of his supreme dominion, and of that unrivalled right of sovereignty which he has in his moral kingdom.

Having thus shewn the reasons, design, and end of the institution, shall, thirdly, enquire in what sense “the Son of man is Lord even † of the sabbath.” Some have been inclined to understand “Son of man,” here, as applicable in common to the human species. I am persuaded, it is and can only be applicable to Jesus Christ; since the phrase is never once used by him on any other occasion, but to denote himself; nor is it supposable, that a creation-law should be abolished, by the man Christ Jesus’s declaring himself “Lord even of the sabbath.” He came not to destroy or
relax

* Associations at coffee-houses and taverns, or at the Royal-Exchange, or in public walks, do not seem to have upon them the air and spirit of sanctifying the sabbath.

† I should think *καί*, to be here an expletive, that makes the phrase more emphatical, and not a copulative, and so read it *even*, rather than *also*.

relax any part of the creation-law, or the prophets; his professed business was to revive and restore the lost moral among the people. Among whose degeneracies we find the law of the sabbath had been sadly violated. See II. lviii. 13, 14. Lam. i. 7. Ezek. xx. 13, 16, 24. Amos viii. 5.

So our Lord came to fulfil, or give energy to the law and the prophets, and to give a sanction to the law of the sabbath. "That he is Lord even of the sabbath," appears from many reasons that are conclusive. In the first place, his authority as the supreme head of a new creation, took place upon his resurrection, which was on the first day of the week; and as the last dispensation of God's truth and grace introduced and opened by him, was to be distinguished from all other dispensations, so it was fit and reasonable, that the weekly rest should be changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, in demonstration of that great event, viz. his resurrection.

If the opinion I mentioned of Mr. Bedford's be right, as to the original sabbath having been moved one day back, when the Hebrew covenant was made at Sinai, it would then follow, that by the change from the seventh to the first day of the week, our Lord restored the sabbath to its primitive state, under the gospel covenant.

However this was, it is reasonable to conclude, that he, whom God has made head over all things to his church, should so adapt the model of Christian worship, as would render his authority more conspicuous to all who examine into the constitution of his church and kingdom. "If any man be in Christ, (says an apostle) he is in a new creation; old things are passed away, and behold

“ behold all things are become new.”—Light-foot comments thus upon it: “ A new church, the Jews that were unbelieving cast off, the Gentiles taken in ; new ordinances in his church, ceremonious worship taken down, and spiritual set up ; new sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s supper—a new covenant, a new and living way into the most holy — a new creature — and in a word, all things new. So that in this case, a new manner of worship, new ordinances, new sacraments to be committed to the old sabbath, would have been improper, and a new sabbath must have been for these, as well as they themselves are new.” Besides, he, the Christian’s Lord, lay in the grave all the old sabbath ; but he rose on the new sabbath.

It must be confessed, after all, we have no explicit canon, no commandment from Christ, that expresses the change of the sabbath ; but yet we may account for our not having it from his lips, who was made under the law, since his death was to dissolve the Hebrew covenant, Eph. ii. 14, 15, 16. Col. ii. 14, 15, 16. On the other hand, if we are allowed to consider it as the original sabbath ; or when we compare this declaration with the Lord’s appearance to his disciples, convened religiously on the first day of the week ; with St. Luke’s account of the Christians meeting together at Troas, to break bread on the first day of the week, Acts xx. 7. with the orders given to the church at Corinth, to make their charitable collections on that day, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. and again, compare these things with the testimony of the earliest Christian writers, we shall find the evidence quite satisfactory, full, and convincing.

Justin Martyr, in his Apology, who flourished in the year 140, says, "That on the day, called " the day of the Sun, all the Christian inhabitants, " both of city and country, met together, where " the LECTOR read some portions of the holy scriptures; and the bishop preached unto them, and " administered the eucharist*". And Tertullian, who flourished in the year 200, says in his Apology, " That because of their religious observance of " Sunday, they were accused by the heathens of " reverencing and adoring the sun†." These are very early and authentic testimonies.

Moreover, as this Son of Man did most perfectly understand the divine constitutions, and was able to determine with certainty what did, and what did not belong to the law of the sabbath, he might with propriety thus affirm of himself, " that he was " Lord even of the sabbath;" and we know that, as he came not to destroy or relax the law or the prophets, but to fulfil, he must have given spirit and energy to the sabbath law. Hence he shewed the people, that that institution could not counteract the law of reason, the law of truth, and the law of nature; or that the observance of a sacred rest from secular labour would not controul or counteract any act, either of necessity or of mercy. On all these considerations, he could therefore with propriety affirm, " that the Son of Man is Lord " even of the sabbath."

SOME REFLECTIONS.

I. It appears from the sabbatic law, that man was made for the contemplation, adoration, and
4
fruition

* Lord King's Primitive Church, ch. II. part I. page 42.

† Ibid. part II. page 22.

fruition of his Maker ; for as much as the Creator sanctified a seventh part of time to be a weekly rest, in imitation of his own rest from creating. No doubt, this is said in condescension to our infirmities. The process of creation is represented in that gradual order, which might best assist the human mind in its conceptions and contemplation. But, were we to form our ideas of creative power, in a mere abstract manner, we should be inclined to conclude, Deity no sooner spake than it was done : no sooner commanded, than it stood fast : infinite wisdom and almighty power can assuredly produce instantaneously, and without labour.

Yet, should we suppose numbers of limited intelligences to have been witnesses of the production of this amazing solar system, we might then consider it as a progressive production, in six days divine operation : and from a sublime passage in the book of Job, this should seem to have been the case ; for Jehovah asks Job, “ Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth ? “ when the morning stars sung together, and when “ the sons of God shouted for joy ? ”

This renders the Mosaic account free from difficulties, and shews that the Creator did graciously adapt the energy of his creative power to the more distinct contemplation of those pre-existent intelligences. And because the Creator is represented as ceasing from his works on the seventh day, and as sanctifying that day for man’s weekly rest from his labours ; hence it appears, that God designed man should employ himself on that day in admiring, adoring, and felicitating views of his Maker.

II. The reason of thus sanctifying one day in seven, renders the law of the sabbath incapable of any limitation or abatement in its divine obligation. It is an institution that has alike consulted the weal of man, in every age of the world. To my purpose, a writer says, "Religion is as necessary to the formation and establishment of political society, as to the preservation and tranquil state of the individual. It was long ago observed by one, most intimately acquainted with the sundry workings of the human heart, that he would sooner believe a city might be built without a foundation, than a government formed and upheld without the belief of a Deity. It is the full and firm persuasion of a God, and of an equal, impartial retribution in a world to come, which is the very cement of society, that imparts life, spirit, and vigour to all its parts, and universally excites to respective engagements and duties."

"If men did not now and then retire from the anxious cares of this life, and openly profess their belief of God's continual presence with, and his watchful eye over them; the desire of requesting of him what they want, and of returning thanks for what they have, would gradually decline, and in time lose all guidance and influence over them. Hence the limitation of the seventh part of our time to rest and sacred offices, is an act of the great God, coeval with the creation of man*."

"The sabbath was made for man:" *i. e.* His piety and virtue ever did, ever will depend upon

* An Address to the People of England on the Manners of the Times, pages 5 and 9. A. D. 1767.

humiliation and distress. The sabbath was made for the highest benefit of man, and therefore not any thing should be imposed on him, that may discompose or disable him from the chearful services of thanksgiving, admiration, and praise*.

“ Man is not made for the sabbath.” Hence he is not allowed to take such freedoms with the law, as would load the observance with any thing fanciful or superstitious. He may neither refuse his food, deny himself of the refreshment, which nature requires, nor make the services of the day such as would too much fatigue and exhaust his spirits, or hazard and injure his health, by the rules of observance.

IV. Since “ the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath,” we may well be satisfied, that he had an undoubted right to change the seventh-day rest to that of the first day of the week. The reason of the change seems very obvious ; since it is thus made a divine monument, on which is recorded and signified to all future ages, that the fact was real, of “ Christ’s resurrection from the dead.” An event, in its own nature and consequences, the most astonishing! An event, that has given spirit, power, and life to this last dispensation. An event, on which so much depends, that apostles do reckon that without it, all our faith, and all our hope, and all their preaching too, would have been vain. 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17, 19.

You have found us assigning many reasons for the change of the sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week, which, when duly considered, have in them a weight sufficient to justify an

* Yet, what grimace, what affected solemn airs do some enthusiasts put on, in their Sunday’s Services!

an observance of it, in honour of our Lord's resurrection. For, by the means of his resurrection, St. Peter tells us, "we are begotten again
" to the lively hope of an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,
" reserved in the heavens for us." 1 Peter i. 3, 4.

V. How astonishing is it, that Christians, in our day, should take such very licentious freedoms, as they do, in sabbath-prophanations! Do you say, the times are enormously corrupt and degenerate, that impiety and profligacy do give the spirit and complexion of the present age? That its debaucheries and vices are almost, if not altogether, unexampled? Be it so: what then? Why, do but carefully and critically investigate the cause, and you must be obliged to attribute and ascribe the source of this shocking malignity to sabbath-prophanation. For, verily, just as it is with individuals, so will it ever be with any great community, the more illicit freedoms are taken with our weekly sabbath, the greater will be the progress of impiety and vice. For if a man cannot be delighted with devoting one day in seven to a religious recess from secular labours, to a devout contemplation, and to acts of thanksgiving and praise; he will never be found to make religion his business; nor will an acquaintance with his maker ever be his study, or attainment.

We might add, those men who call themselves Christians will be utterly unable to reap the least advantage from the resurrection of Christ, if they cannot take a divine pleasure in the stated weekly recognition of that event. So that in truth, if there be not a great reformation, by some means wrought upon us, as a nation, we may expect that some-

thing like what God denounced on idolatrous Israel by his prophet Hosea, must soon be our public condition, viz. "I will cause her mirth, her feast-days, and her sabbaths to CEASE."

Would to God our youth would consider how very much depends upon hallowing the sabbath. It would promise them the very best security against the deadly infection of the times—for how extremely 'perilous is their present condition! How shockingly faulty is our police! How shamefully little regard is shewn, even by our magistrates, to the religious observance of the weekly sabbath! "All avenues to vice are set open, both within and all around this great city." The great, the rich, the noble, the princely, are themselves exhibiting the most shocking spectacles of sabbath-prophanation, in open contempt of law, both human and divine. Nay, even card-tables are said to be common in the houses of families of rank and title; and what is more astonishing, in some card-parties, the Cleric is found! The consecrated priest thus defecrates and disgraces his function. In fact, the day which God has sanctified for a religious rest men impiously convert into a day of pleasure, or of loose gratification: a day of travelling, of banquetting, routs, of revelling, and debauchery.

Every where the common people are closely copying such enormous impieties; spending these holy days, in all the dissipations and wantonnesses of pleasurable amusement, and in every depraving indulgence.

How ungrateful! how shockingly disingenuous such behaviour towards that infinite, almighty, eternal

eternal Spirit, who made all, who preserves all, who incessantly refreshes, and so bountifully accommodates his immense creation!

And how offensive is it to the Son of Man, “who is Lord even of the sabbath!” No divine protection for Britain, profligate Britain, can surely be expected from this Lord, the prince of the kings of the earth! who has a name given him above every name! But assuredly every individual, who dares to despise God’s sabbath, shall find himself cut off from his favour, who is the inexhaustible fountain both of light and of life.

VI. Whoever enters with care and precision into the doctrine of the sabbath, as delivered by the divine Jesus, must be persuaded, that the change of it from the seventh to the first day of the week, was intended to be a perpetual monument of the fact of his own resurrection from the dead; and which must remain a conclusive evidence of that fact: for it will be very difficult for any to shew, either from the New Testament records, or from ecclesiastical history, how the Christians came to sanctify the first rather than the seventh day of the week, but upon the fact of his having risen from the dead on that day.

Nor could those Jews, who remained infidel, blame the Christians for this change of the sabbath, since it seems highly probable, that Moses changed the creation-sabbath, in order the better to accommodate it to the deliverance of the people from Egyptian bondage. For so Moses ordained, “That they should eat seven days of unleavened bread; and in the seventh day there should be an holy convocation to them, no manner of work should

“ should be done thereon—for in this self-same
“ day have I brought your armies out of the land
“ of Egypt; therefore shall ye observe this day
“ in your generations, by an ordinance for ever.”
Exod. xii. 15, 16, 17. But if God by Moses could
make this a reason for their observing the seventh
day sabbath, (chap. xx. 2 and 8.) it is but rea-
sonable to conclude, that the resurrection of Christ,
on the first day of the week, shall restore the sab-
bath to its original appointment, and give a de-
monstration to all succeeding ages of the truth of
that his resurrection. “ Thus the Son of Man is
“ Lord even of the sabbath.”

On the Reason and End of Christian Baptism.

AS the author's practice has been to baptize infants, he hopes to be allowed the liberty of stating more fully the ideas he has formed of such application of baptism; he keeps in his eye an injunction laid down by St. Peter, 1 Ep. ch. iii. v. 15.

What he fixes upon as a theme for the following discourse, is, 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22. "The like figure
" whereunto, even baptism, does now save us (not
" the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the
" answer of a good conscience towards God) by
" the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into
" heaven, and is at the right hand of God; angels,
" authorities, and powers being made subject to
" him."

The doctrine of Baptism has been much controverted among Christians, both as to the subjects, time, and mode of baptizing. It has been affirmed by some, that it was an initiating rite applied to proselytes to Judaism. I was once of that opinion; but am now persuaded that the writings of Moses do give it no countenance, but rather the reverse; since "one ordinance, one law, and one manner
" shall," he says, "be for you, and for the
" stranger that sojourns with you." Exod. xii. 48, 49. Lev. xxiv. 22. Numb. ix. 14. ch. xv. 15, 16.* And whatever learned men have said of
the

* N. B. The late excellent Dr. Lardner first convinced me of the mistake I had made about proselyte baptism.

the Talmuds, and Talmudical writers, they have no credit, because the Jerusalem Talmud was not finished till about A. D. 300; and the Babylonish not till about 200 years after,* and we know the rooted enmity the Jews had always to Christianity. I am fully convinced, that baptism is a divine institution, originally designed to distinguish the religion of Jesus from all other religious professions in the world: and that accordingly his harbinger was ordered to come baptizing with water.—As to the question put by Pharisees to John, “why baptizest thou, if thou be not that Christ, neither Elias, neither that Prophet?” It does not infer any such usage having antecedently obtained. His declaring that “the kingdom of heaven was at hand;” that he himself “was sent before to prepare the way;” were ground enough for an enquiry. And inasmuch as the baptism of repentance, preached by John, was an apt means of disposing the people for the reception of the Messiah; so likewise was the baptism applied by the disciples of Jesus, during his personal ministry. They baptized into the belief of the kingdom of heaven’s being at hand, since its foundations were now actually laying by their divine master. But Jesus having been invested with sovereign power after his resurrection, he then commanded his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; i. e. with the fullest possible divine authority.

Having premised thus much about the origin of baptism, we may proceed to give a more direct attention to the theme chosen.

But

* See Dr. Lardner’s Jewish and Heathen Testimonies. Vol. 1. ch. v. p. 177. 178.

But here we should observe, the design of this epistle is, to encourage Christians to steadfastness in their profession, though exposed to the rage of the persecutor. He is extremely solicitous that none of them should suffer as evil doers, and would have them think it a matter of glorying, if they endured suffering only because of their religion; since it would be to imitate Christ in his sufferings; nay, he asks "who could do them any real harm, if they were but followers of that which is good?" And he affirms, "it would be much better for them, if the will of God were so, that they suffered for well-doing—for Christ hath also once suffered for sins, the just by the hands of the unjust, that he might bring us to God: being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; even by that same divine Spirit which preached to the Spirits in prison; i. e. preached to the old World whilst under sentence of condemnation; whilst God waited in the days of Noah with much long suffering, all the time the Ark was preparing, wherein few, i. e. only eight souls were saved by water." Thus the words of my text are found in connexion,—“the like figure,” &c. We are,

First, to shew how our being saved by baptism may be considered as an antitype* to that of Noah's salvation by water.

Secondly, what baptism, nevertheless, does not do for us: and,

Thirdly, what it does, and what is the reason of the ritual.

Under the first head, we are to observe, that the

* An antitype, is that which is shadowed by the type.

manifest intention of baptism is, that of its being the monument of a fact, viz. "Christ's exaltation to the right hand of power." This appears from the institution of baptism, wherein men are authorized to baptize "in his name." Matth. xxviii. 18, 19. From St. Peter's first sermon after the ascension, Acts, ii. 36, 38. and from the words of my text. The baptized were to be taught to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them.

As to the symbol, water; the prophets of old used it metaphorically, to describe the purifying and refreshing influences of the gospel times. "The thirsty lands shall become springs of water." Is. xxxv. 7. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come to the waters." Ch. lv. 1. "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Ch. xii. 3. A very pleasing image in hot countries, where water was so extremely refreshing. We shall thus be prepared for seeing how our being saved by baptism, may be considered as an antitype of Noah's salvation. If I do at all understand the type, it was Noah's salvation by water; the antitype must then be water-baptism, which is said to save us. Now there was no saving causality, either in the type or antitype, but only an instrumentality. Water was what separated righteous Noah, and those with him, from a wicked world, destined to destruction: So baptismal-water separates the baptized from a wicked world, by initiating into a constitution that is holy: baptismal-water does not save, as applied to the body, but as it requires the answer of a good conscience towards God. Nevertheless, this does by no means exclude the idea of an antitype in the baptismal-water.*

We

* The Greek text I should translate, "which antitype, baptism,"

We then conceive of it thus ; as all those taken into the Ark with Noah were preserved from the general destruction, by the Ark's being buoyant on the flood ; so that which was made the instrument of destruction to a wicked world, was made salutary to Noah and his family ; in resemblance of which, baptismal-water now saves, as it separates the baptised from a world that lies in wickedness, and puts under the protection and guidance of the Saviour of mankind. Apostles will tell us, that the condition of the converted Pagan, was as different from his former state, as light is from darkness, and as life is from death.

Again, the similitude runs high between Jesus and Noah ; for as Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the old world, and for 40 years the long suffering goodness of God urged their repentance ; so Jesus was a preacher of righteousness to the Jewish nation, and foretold their destruction if they remained impenitent ; which destruction actually took place, as it had done with the old world, within the 40 years.

Those Jews who became Christians, were temporally saved from the destruction by Titus Vespasian ; “ for after the Romans, under Cestius Gallus, “ had made their first advance towards Jerusalem, “ and then, very unaccountably, withdrew on a “ sudden ; thereby was the signal given to the “ Christians, who all retired, some to Pella, others “ to

“ baptism, even now saves us.” Mill has in his note ὁ ἀποκρινόμενος ἢ ἡμᾶς σώζει, and not εἰ. Beza reads, “ the which corresponding exemplar of baptism alio now saves us.” His words are, “ cui nunc correspondens exemplar baptismi nos quoque servat.” And it is observed in the notes of the New Version of 1729, p. 893. that the Alexandrian and several of our best manuscripts have ὁ ἄλλος.

“ to mount Libanus, or to the mountains of Perea.” *

Though this could not be St. Peter’s primary idea of salvation by baptism, yet, we may allow him to have foreseen the destruction of his own nation, as nearly approaching, and also how the Christians would be delivered; since he wrote this epistle in the year 64. †

But he has a much more universal and exalted sense of salvation, as appears from his exhorting Christians to rejoice, even in their martyrdom, since the spirit of God and of glory did rest upon them; or, as St. Paul has expressed himself about the safe condition of Christians, “ Their very lives “ are hid with Christ in God.” Col. iii. 3. And thus, in a spiritual and divinely moral sense, the similitude will lie between baptism’s now saving the Christian as emphatically, as men were saved with righteous Noah in the ark, when a whole world was deluged.

Thus much for the agreement between the type and antitype.

Secondly, we are to notice, what baptism does not do for us.

And it ordinarily cannot secure the baptized from temporal evil. In its first application, it more directly exposed to the hand of persecution; for St. Paul asks, What they shall do, who are baptized for the dead? 1 Cor. xv. 29. alluding to the soldiery, accustomed to raise new levies, to supply the numbers slain in the field of battle—just so a supply

* Josephus’s Wars of the Jews, B. 11. ch. xix. sect. 6. note. Whiston’s translation.

† Dr. Lardner’s Supplement, Vol. III. p. 253.

supply was made of those who fell by the hand of the persecutor. Neither can I suppose, that the application of baptismal water can communicate any real virtue, or saving grace to the mind of the baptized. It is not then “an outward sign of an inward and spiritual benefit received thereby,” since many receive baptism, without any such good effect. Indeed, baptismal water can reach no further than the surface of the body: it cannot purify the mind. It only initiates into a divine polity, a kingdom of truth and holiness, and is an open recognition of the lordship of Jesus.

Neither can water-baptism secure us of any saving benefit, by our being thus initiated into the Christian church; that must wholly depend upon our subsequent behaviour—and yet, there are great numbers called Christians, who, when administering the baptismal rite, do solemnly supplicate, “that God would sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin; and grant that the person now to be baptised may receive the fulness of his grace, and ever remain in the number of his faithful and elect children, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Also instantly after baptism, they do declare the baptized “to be now regenerate, and give thanks to Almighty God for the benefit;” and likewise they pray, “that being now born again, and made heirs of eternal salvation through Jesus Christ, they may continue his servants, and attain his promises.”

But, assuredly, the application of water, by whatever priestly hand, can have no renovating, no regenerating effect. It is a groundless idea, that

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baptism

baptism can work a moral change in the baptized. Thus we have shewn what baptism can not do.

III. We are to shew what it can do. Here we may observe, that the original institution, Matth. xxviii. 19. where men are ordered to baptize "in his name," seems to be generally mistaken. Hence some would read, baptizing *into* his name, as if it referred to the baptized: whereas, to me, it appears evidently to intend that authority, *in* or *by* which the apostles were to baptize: an authority the most expressive, viz. of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, i. e. of the Father, who had given all power to the Son, and also confirmed his divine mission by miracles. In this amplitude of authority are the apostles to baptize all whom they disciple, and to teach them to do whatever their Lord has commanded, who promises to be always with them, even to the end of the gospel-age. "*In* the name," here, does therefore signify the authority, by which they baptized, not into which men were baptized.

Baptism does consequently save, as it initiates into a divine constitution; at the head of which the Saviour of the World presides. And every way fit it was, that when the convert was entering into a new creation, he and his household should have that same ritual applied, which is the monument of Christ's exaltation to the right hand of power. In truth, under all divine dispensations where God has graciously covenanted with man, the parent and family were always included together in the covenant or promise. So St. Peter says of the gospel dispensation, "the promise is to you and "to your children."

My text is very express in this matter, and shews how baptism does save, viz. "by the answer of a
" good

“ good conscience towards God.” In this apostle’s idea; the baptized must be considered as pilgrims and strangers, ch. ii. 11. or, as St. Paul; he is to “ have his conversation only as becomes the “ gospel; adorning the doctrine of God and of his “ Saviour in all things: in simplicity and godly “ sincerity, he must have his conversation in the “ world.”

Infants are as capable of this as their parents; when they grow up to the age of judgment and consent; for the answer of a good conscience is what follows baptism. I might shew, that not only the New Testament history of baptism, but that all antiquity is for the baptizing of infants*.

By applying baptism to infants; the parents recognize the lordship of Jesus, and bind themselves to consider and treat them as the subjects of his kingdom, and under his protection.

There is a further idea of baptism’s saving us; and that is by “ the resurrection of Christ, who is “ gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of “ God, angels, authorities, and powers being “ made subject to him.” We are not to wonder that St. Paul should speak of this as a new creation; and of Jesus, as the visible image of the invisible God; the first-born, or most excellent of every creature, *by*, or *for* whom all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in earth; whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: and that he is the head of the body of the church;

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who

* See L. King’s Enquiry into the constitution, &c. of the Primitive Church. Part 2. ch. 3. sec. 1. Bingham’s Antiq; Vol. I. B. 1. ch. iv. sec. 7. & 9.

who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead ; that among all he might have the pre-eminence ; and also, that in him dwells the fulness of the god-head bodily : i. e. the fulness of the display made of Deity in his moral government, in every part and age of his church, which is his body ; and said to be the fulness of him who filleth all in all.

Thus baptism puts the baptized into a constitution, or renders him a member of a body, over which the presiding head has a superiority given him to all other orders of beings, that can any way affect either the safety or the weal of man ; for he even has the keys of hades and of death ; and therefore he is to him the resurrection and life, and final judge.—If the ends of baptism are thus religiously kept in view, we become not only related, but united to him, and are joint-heirs with him of eternal life. We can have no reasonable ground of fear, that our condition towards God will either be unsafe or uncomfortable ; nay, we may be assured of its being everlastingly joyous and happy ! we may, when we religiously attend to his high appointments, and to the plenitude of his power and influence in God's church and kingdom.—N. B. He is not represented by apostles, as thus dignified and exalted, only for his own fruitions ; but as the vital, as well as governing head of the church, in order that the faith and hope of men, in his administration, may be strengthened and invigorated, in fixing on an object that is able to save to the uttermost, all who come to God by him ! We are, if real Christians, interested in all his advancement.—He himself saw it in this very light, when he said, “ I will that
 “ those whom thou, Father, hast given me, be with
 “ me where I am, to behold the glory which thou
 “ hast given me.” And so St. Paul, “ If we
 “ receive abundance of grace, and the gift of
 righteousness,

“righteousness, we shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.” And again, “This is a faithful saying, if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

Here we may make some observations concerning the reason of the ritual. We cannot but discern the fitness of some monument's being erected in the Christian church, which should perpetually recognize a fact of so high and important a nature, as that of the exaltation of Jesus to the seat of sovereign power! whom his nation had put to death as a criminal, and treated as an *anathema*; though God had borne witness to him by prophecy, by signs, wonders, and divers miracles. It is not less than reasonable we should conclude, that upon his being made both Lord and Christ, anointed with honours above all other orders of beings, some open memorial would be appointed. But what could have been a more apt and expressive symbol of his acknowledged sovereignty, than a rite which initiates into his church and kingdom, and is the profession of homage we so gladly pay the one Lord.

There is, we know, a monument to recognize his sufferings and death, which is to remain till the ages finish; and there is also another which recognizes his resurrection from the dead; both which were intended for a weekly celebration; but, by a parity of reasoning it must be supposed, that an event of the utmost importance, which crowns the whole of our Lord's ministrations and sufferings, and is the reward of all his humiliation, should have a very significative, a very expressive monument; and is no other than that baptismal rite which initiates into his kingdom, and recognizes his authority as the one Lord.

All religions have ever had some rite of initiation; but that of the Son of God being of a nature far superior to all others, it was meet the initiating symbol should be understood as intended to confess his sovereignty, and to own him Lord, to the praise and glory of God the Father. In truth, we own, that Christians have had differing opinions, both of the nature of baptism, and of its use and application.—Some wholly disuse it, others have it applied with great indifference; and great numbers entertain very abusive notions of its original design or intention: Nay, it is to be feared but very few will see or understand its divine reason and end. The religion of Christian baptism, in the professing world, seems to be almost lost and gone; but where it is applied to the purpose of recognizing the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of power, and as a rite of admission into God's kingdom, under the administration of the one Lord; and as binding the baptized to an observance of all that Jesus has commanded; it must be owned to be an appointment every way worthy of him, who is made unto us, of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

There is a substantial reason for the ritual, which arises out of its original intention, viz. its being a monument which attests the fact of the man Christ Jesus having such an amazing exaltation, as is every where reported of him in the writings of evangelists and apostles—a fact which none can dispute with any shadow of evidence, who are attentive to the scripture doctrine of baptism, and give credit to ecclesiastical history, as reporting the ritual to have been in use among the generality of Christians, from the age of the apostles until this very day.

Had it not been a fact, that Jesus was so exalted, the ritual must long since have gone out of use, or have been exposed to universal contempt, from the abusive ideas originally affixed to the institution. But such has been the care of Providence, that as the fact is real, and of such exceedingly high importance, so the monument should remain to the end of ages.—Further,

Every good civil government requires, in its subjects, some recognition of its supreme authority, as well as gives the infant members of the state or community, privileges and immunities, as born under a wise and well regulated constitution. There is cognizance taken of * them as native members of the public system, or body; and proper provisions made for them. But the infant offspring of Christians are to be considered as God's creatures, that are made for him, and therefore should be devoted to him; hence infant-children were ever included in the covenants God made with his people. See Gen. xvii. 23. Josh. viii. 35. 2 Chron. xx. 13. Ezr. viii. 21.—“If children, then heirs.” Rom. viii. 17.

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So

* The law takes notice of the power of parents over their children, the reciprocal interest in each others estate. Wood's Institute, &c. p. 63.

An infant in the mother's womb, may be supposed to be born to many purposes. Ib. p. 11. An infant that is born after the death of his father, who was a senator, shall be esteemed a senator's son, if his father kept his dignity till his death. Puffendorf, B. iv. ch. xii. sec. 10.

In the succession to intestates, by the guidance of reason, and by the consent of all the known kingdoms, children have the preference to all others, even of parents themselves. A father discharges his duty as he ought, when he makes his son his heir. Puffendorf's Law of Nature, B. iv. ch. xi. p. 427 Barbeyrac's note.

So we are informed that the ancient Greeks had a rite of dedication, by which they devoted the newborn infant to the protection of their household gods.*

Indeed, when we consider that the blessed Jesus looked upon infants as proper subjects of his blessing, Mar. x. 16. we cannot reasonably suppose they would be excluded the initiating rite; and especially when they were to be trained and educated as actually under his sceptre. The application of this rite to our infant-children, is therefore a recognition we make of his authority, who is constituted of God, the one Lord, and law-giver to his church, in whose hands the everlasting interests of all his people are secure.

Will any now ask, whether the baptismal rite has any signification? Will any one doubt of its having had a divine establishment?

If I have not mistaken its original design and end, it must demand a religious observance so long as God has a church in the world, under the government and protection of Jesus; or, until the Son himself shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, when God shall be all in all.

This doctrinal view of Christian baptism will enable us to make some reflections.

1. The three great facts by which the founder of our religion is distinguished from all others of the human family, by their important instruction and beneficial influence, are,—his crucifixion,—resurrection,—and exaltation. And because of their universally interesting meaning, three distinct monuments

* See Potter's Greek Antiq. Vol. II. p. 328.

ments have been instituted, as so many conclusive visible evidences of their truth, in order to keep alive the credibility of these facts, and to urge their moral and salutary influence and impresson.—Why we have reserved the monument of the crucifixion for our last discourse, will be shewn hereafter.

At present, we may plainly perceive the wisdom and goodness of God, as illustrious in these appointments; since they serve, in every age of the church, as so many undoubted testimonies of the facts which they commemorate. Any one, not blinded with prejudice, may see that a religion intended for all future ages in the world, would require some perpetual monuments of its divine original: but these give their testimony as conclusively in the more future, as they did in the first age of Christianity. I wonder more notice has not been taken of this conclusive evidence, by writers professedly engaged to prove the divine original of our holy religion.

II. We ought carefully to guard against all superstitious, as well as against absurd and contemptuous opinions of baptism: they are extremes, into which mankind are very apt to run. Such who will have the application of baptismal-water, by an *opus operatum* to produce a real change in the moral complexion of the baptized, must surely be chargeable with a very abusive idea of the ritual. Or, they who reckon that the ordinance of baptism does receive a divine virtue from the hand that administers the rite, are guilty of a gross superstition. Yet, hence it was that some Christian professors at Corinth split into parties, and rendered baptism the source of bitter animosities, and fiery contentions; as if Paul, Apollos, or Cephas, had baptized in their own names: for which reason it was, that St. Paul did thank God he had baptized so few of that church.

church. All ideas of a consecrated hand, or of consecrated water used in baptism, must be the very quintessence of absurdity.

As to the difference of time in applying the baptismal rite, viz. whether in infancy, or adult age, this ought to be the result of a full conviction, from an honest, careful examination into the teachings of the sacred canon. Yet, in my humble opinion, this difference should not destroy that brotherly love which gives the spirit of all genuine Christians, nor suffer them to unchurch, or unchristianize one another. I freely own myself persuaded, that the infant children of all Christian parents, have a right to baptism: for "if the root be holy, so also should the branches be." And if either parent desires their child may be baptized, the other has no right to hinder. But though I am convinced of this being the New Testament, or apostolical doctrine of baptism, yet I would not sit in judgment, and condemn the anti-pædo-baptist, though I think him mistaken.

It is a matter of greater astonishment, that such vast numbers of Christian professors have thought very superficially, and with much indifference, about the nature, design, and end of baptism. How carelessly do many celebrate the ritual? and with what a fanciful and ridiculous formality do others? Nay, there are not a few who speak with an open contempt of the institution! We verily have a Sect among us, who, in many other respects, do appear a sensible, regular, orderly people, yet absolutely reject two of these institutions, though they are monuments of the facts of Christ's humiliation and exaltation: at the same time they celebrate the memorial of his resurrection. We should

should then carefully guard against all extremes, and preserve a religious regard to baptism.

III. We ought not to forget that the efficacious saving influence of baptism, is what follows the administration, viz. “the answer of a good conscience towards God”. So the original institution runs, “Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them, and then teaching them to observe all things I have commanded.” But although the saving efficacy is subsequent to baptism, yet this throws no insignificancy upon the rite; for if we have justly understood the New Testament doctrine of baptism, it must ever remain an appointment worthy our observance; and if we can credit church-history, it has been in universal practice ever since the age of apostles: for, as lord King has observed, in his Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church, “that not only Origen, Ireneus, and Cyprian make mention of the use Christians made of water-baptism”; but he also tells us, “that in an African synod held anno Dom. 254, whereat were present sixty-six bishops; the matter of debate concerning a scruple of bishop Fidus, was, whether infants might be baptized before the second or third day after their birth, or before the eighth?”* So early a testimony as that of Justin Martyr’s in the middle of the second century, compared with this in the middle of the third, will incline one to conclude, that the practice of baptizing was, from the beginning, universally observed by Christians. Now we have no reason to think it would have been so, had they not clearly seen it was an institution of Jesus, intended for the observance of Christians in every age of the church.

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* An Enquiry, Part ii. p. 46.

However, we must own it is not the application of baptismal-water to a body, that has the saving effect; for it will not be sufficient, either that we ourselves have been so baptized, or that we have thus solemnly recognized the exaltation of Jesus, in applying the ritual to our children; but it is requisite that both we and they discover the answer of a good conscience towards God, by doing all those things, which Jesus has commanded. Thus it is that baptism saves by his resurrection from the dead, who is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers, being made subject to him.

IV. We may pertinently observe, that all power in heaven and earth was not given to Jesus till after his resurrection, and his having a name given him above every name, was that recompence of reward set before him, by virtue of which he endured the cross, and despised the shame; or, as it is elsewhere expressed, it was given him because he had been obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; for therefore did God highly exalt him—and it was with this view, that every tongue should confess him Lord, to the praise and glory of God the Father. Surely such a capital view of the divine proceedings, as does crown the public ministrations of Jesus, should have some public monument, which shall recognize the great event of the man Christ Jesus being placed on the throne of an universal dominion!

Whichever way we contemplate the baptismal rite, we discern adorable wisdom, tenderness, and compassion in the appointment. There is an aptitude in it to keep alive, in the church of God, a reverence and veneration, which is ever due to that grace of God, which brings salvation to all
men.

men. And as there is no other monument appointed to recognize that man's being raised to the summit of power, who died as a malefactor, by the consent of his nation, there would have been an apparent defect in the gospel system, had it not been provided with the baptismal institution.

That it is a rite of initiation is also evident, because there is no other; and that this is its intention, must appear from its admitting of no repetition. But because it initiates, it will be difficult to suppose it applicable to persons long trained and educated in the principles of the Christian religion. If, therefore, it be not so applicable to those who have been trained under gospel teachings, it, with me, appears to be with the greatest propriety applied to infants: for the reason, that I cannot conceive, how a rite of initiation should be applied to persons, who have long avowed the authority and rule of the one Lord. In the case of the first converts to Christianity, we are assured, they were entitled to baptism upon the very first conviction they had of the divine testimony.

V. They who object to a rite, which initiates into the Christian covenant, might as well object to a rite, which did initiate into the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenant: nay, the two other monuments, which recognize the death and resurrection of Christ, would admit of as forcible an objection. Many of these men affect to think and speak contemptibly of all instrumental religion; but however sublimated and refined, or however abstracted their ideas, however philosophic their conceptions, they ought to consider, the religion of Jesus is calculated for the whole of mankind, and that by far the greater part are of less elevated conceptions; but yet these are, by much, the best disposed to receive

receive truth, and to live upon it. Hence it is said, "that to the poor the gospel is preached." It is to the industrious part of mankind, that it makes the most efficacious address; and they, not being accustomed to abstract reasoning, stand in need of some sensible symbols, or expressive monuments, that may excite their attention, confirm their faith, and help their devotions.

Artful priests, perceiving this to be the natural tendency of these appointed monuments, for the purpose of exercising a dominion over the people, have presumed to devise a numerous pompous ritual, of a ceremonious complexion; and under a pretence of improving the divine monuments. To what unjustifiable lengths have churchmen gone, in disguising both baptism and the eucharist? But we have reason of admiration and praise, that we can celebrate these ordinances in their original simplicity; and free from the gaudy dress put upon them, discern their divine significance.

On the other hand, how very depraved, how deplorably deformed are those minds, who are wholly occupied in the formalities of an amusing, unmeaning profession; who live a lie, and are the deceivers both of themselves and others. Such do dreadfully dishonour that holy name, by which they are called; and, alas! must be upon the worst terms with the Lord of Life, the universal Judge, whose mission was to remove from his disciples the painful burthen of a devised system of carnal ordinances, and a superstitious ritual. Notwithstanding the Son has thus set men free from all sublunary authority, in the province of religion; yet such is the pride of life, where it becomes principle, as to use every artifice and stratagem, to decoy and cheat the professor

fessor out of his liberty, and to render him an easy prey of priestly delusion.

Upon the whole, we might reasonably ask, whether the shocking impiety and debauchery, which is so prevalent in this kingdom, be not manifestly owing to a flagrant disregard to the lordship of Jesus, whom the great God has exalted to the seat of sovereignty, and made prince of the kings of the earth! and likewise to a deplorable neglect of parents, who are under an indispensable engagement to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Of one truth, however, we may be well assured, that though we have the effrontery of daring to refuse the homage we owe the one Lord, we shall, every one of us, anon see him, and be witnesses of his majesty, who is gone into heaven, and is at the right hand of God, angels, authorities, and powers being made subject to him.

On the Reason and End of the Lord's Supper.

THE design and end of the following discourse is, to investigate the reason and end of that Christian institution, which is called the Eucharist, or Lord's supper.

The theme chosen for this purpose is, 1 Cor. xi. 26. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

I have made choice of this passage, rather than of any one from the gospels, for the reason that St. Paul was, emphatically, "the apostle of the gentiles," and declares in this context, that he, in his apostolic mission, received the account that he gives of the memorial supper, immediately from the mouth of the ascended Jesus, which must have been, at least, twenty years after our Lord's resurrection. By the way, this compared with the evangelical history, will determine its being intended for the observance, not only of the Jewish, but also of the Gentile converts, and of all Christians, in every succeeding age of the church.

Should it here be asked, Why, in the order of these discourses, a monument, which recognizes a primary fact, should have the last consideration in our plan? I would answer, for this obvious reason,

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son, viz. because the celebration of the two other institutions are properly pre-requisites, or preparatory to the Christian's celebrating the memorials of his Lord's humiliation, or sufferings and death.

But to proceed; our apostle remarks upon the abuses, which were made in the celebration of this rite by the church at Corinth, that they had changed the memorial supper into a revel—or they had paganized in the observance of this religious festival; for it should seem, that the more opulent Corinthian Christians were wont to take an antepast, or an indulgent meal, before they took the memorial bread and wine; and thereby did cast contempt on the poor, and gave them the blush, who could make no such provisions.—Hence, says St. Paul, “What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame the poor among you?” Which reproof shews most evidently, that the antepast, or love-feast, was very mistakenly connected with the memorial supper*, and at the same time proves, that that divine ritual, the eucharist, was intended for a public church service, and for a Christian fellowship and communion. They would act with far more decency and propriety, did they but celebrate the ritual agreeably to its original institution.

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* For though the divine Jesus instituted this ritual, after the celebration of the passover; yet it had no connection with, nor dependance on, that ritual; but, in fact, appears to have abrogated the celebration of the passover, that having been a monument, commemorative only of the deliverance of a single nation or people from Egyptian slavery, and was an annual festival: whereas the eucharist is a monument, in commemoration of the deliverance of all mankind from spiritual slavery, and the dominion of death, and which had originally a weekly celebration.

In order to their having a more perfect knowledge of its reason, nature and end, he makes a report of the institution as he had received it of the Lord, and had aforetime delivered it unto the Corinthians. Nay, the more effectually to guard them against any irregularities in the celebration, he assures them, “that whoever shall eat this memorial bread, or drink this memorial cup unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*,” or, in other words, shall be chargeable with prophaning and perverting the manifest design and end of the institution; for, to riot upon, or over these memorials, would disgrace and dishonour the divine ordinance, and be a kind of guilt, of like malignity with that of spilling the life-blood of Jesus.

Without any further notice of the context, I shall proceed to enquire into the apostle’s meaning, when he says, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew, or shew ye, the Lord’s death till he come.” This inference St. Paul draws immediately from the above report he has made of the institution; as he had received it from the mouth of the exalted Jesus; and we may find in it great instruction.

Inasmuch as my professed business is to enter, as far as I am able, into the reason, nature, and end of this memorial rite, I would begin with observing, that the time of its original institution was, “the night in which Jesus was betrayed, when he took bread and brake it, after he had given thanks, and bid his disciples take and eat that symbol of his body, which was to be broken;” and

* Comp. Heb. vi. 6

“ and to take the cup, as what was to be the symbol of the New Testament in his blood, very soon to be shed, in order to seal the doctrine of remission of sin.”—We should here observe, our Lord speaks of his crucifixion, in the same manner as one would speak of a fact, which had already taken place; and would thus denote its absolute certainty. By the doctrine here given of what the ritual is to recognize, it surely cannot be an institution of small significance, or of little importance; since the blood, which it symbolically represents, is what seals, ratifies, or confirms that new covenant.

We may thus conceive of its being a divine appointment, viz. as the deformity and malignity of sin are represented in the sufferings and death of Christ, with all the possible aggravations of guilt and crime in those, who cruelly put him to the torture of a crucifixion! and because when risen from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of power, pardon and life were offered, in his name, to his murderers: thence it is, that the doctrine of divine mercy is rendered so very illustrious! His death was, no doubt, intended to convince mankind of the evil of sin and worldliness, since all the divine testimonies, which were so openly and amply given to his heavenly character and mission, were not of weight enough to secure him from the rage of mens lusts. For though he had most wonderfully appeared “in the form of God,” throughout his public ministry, with all the lustre and glory of divine wisdom and knowledge in his doctrinal teachings, and with all the majesty of divine power and goodness in his miracles; yet men would not reverence this well-beloved, this only begotten Son of God! Thus it is that his sufferings and death do make manifest the insatiating influence of

worldliness; and give demonstration of its fixed enmity to truth and righteousness. For this reason also it is, that apostles do lay so much emphasis on the death of Christ, because of its reflecting so strongly the opposition which there is between a love of the world and a love of God.

It was therefore the tendency which our Lord's death would have to convince mankind of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and to recover them to an abhorrence of all iniquity, that furnished a prepollent motive to the laying down of his life, or, to the giving himself a ransom for us, that he might deliver us from the evil of this present world, by condemning sin in the flesh. In this mirror we see the virulent, destructive, deadly poison which there is in all worldly lustings, that enslave the mind by depraving its faculties, and debasing its powers. Nor can we fail of the most efficacious conviction, if we are but at the pains to take a close, critical, and impartial survey of a character, the most divinely amiable and excellent that ever pen described, or human eye beheld! Say what men will, the gospel-history exhibits a character that is truly matchless, in all the written records of ages; a character drawn without any one signature of art; illustrious in all the spirit and temper, in all the air, mien, and life of action and address! a character that not only commands the admiration, the reverence and love, the delight and joy of man; but, with full evidence is declared, by the heavenly oracle, to be the well-beloved of the Father! which character, well examined, will throw before our eyes, the unheard of aggravation of guilt and crime, in the hands that wickedly conspired, and cruelly compassed, his sufferings and death.

The argument is thus urged home to every thinking mind that would reason to any good purpose on the astonishing event! How horrid the worldly spirit! how inexpressibly poisonous and deadly the influence of lust, that could despise, deride, mock, and insult the very brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image, or character, of his person! Mankind could never have once thought of treating with disrespect, much less with rude embittered rage and cruelty, the most venerable, amiable, and beneficent Son of man the earth ever bore; were it not that the lustings of worldliness had deplorably blinded their minds, and hardened their hearts. The devout contemplation of which, furnishes a divine reason for an appointment of the memorial rite; and, at the same time, proclaims the propriety, fitness, and usefulness of the celebration to every sincere professing Christian.

Thus the great doctrinal lines of the institution do open upon us.

And who can dispute the reasonableness of an appointment which has so graciously condescended, by external *sensible symbols*, to lead us to recollect and calculate the weight of deformity and malignity that there is in sin; which is, as it were, placed before our eyes in the memorial of our Lord's crucifixion.

My reader must, by this time, be persuaded, that the event of the death of Christ could be no other than of a very extraordinary nature; which indeed might be easily inferred from the teachings both of prophets and apostles, as well as from our Lord's own declarations concerning his sufferings and death; for he speaks "of giving his flesh for

“ the life of the world ; *—and of laying down his
 “ life for the sheep.” †—And moreover says, “ my
 “ Father loveth me because I lay down my life,
 “ that I might take it again.” § And St. John says,
 “ herein perceive we the love of God, because
 “ Jesus laid down his life for us.” ¶—Like-
 wife St. Paul expresses himself with the utmost
 force of language, when he speaks of the death of
 Christ; for he tells the Corinthians, that in his
 preaching to them, “ he was determined not to
 “ know any thing among them, save Jesus Christ,
 “ and him crucified.” † And to the Galatians he
 thus writes, “ God forbid that I should glory, save
 “ in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom
 “ the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the
 “ world.” ||

If, therefore, Jesus Christ and his apostles did understand the crucifixion to be of such vast importance, we are constrained to own, that the life, the real spiritual life of men, does absolutely depend upon the conformity which they express to its moral instruction; which in the express words of St. Paul, you see, is no other than, “ our being crucified unto the world, and the world unto us.”—This, I presume, gives the plain doctrinal meaning of the memorial rite.

What renders the institution yet further engaging, and so worthy of our religious observance, is, the appointed symbols are, in their own nature, so very expressive, as to be the ordinary stated supports and refreshments of this temporary life of man; even bread and wine, provisions which the
 bountiful

* Joh. vi. 51.

† Ch. x. 15.

§ Ch. x. 17.

¶ 1 Ep. iii. 16. comp. ch. iv. 9.

‡ 1 Cor. ii. 2.

|| Gal. vi. 14.

bountiful hand of nature has furnished for our sustenance; and fitted to exhilarate and revive our spirits when depressed, or exhausted by any of the labours and fatigues, or sinking under the infirmities, of this bodily system. One cannot imagine more apt and familiar symbols of Christ's body broken, and his blood shed for us; when we are led thereby to recollect and recognize those advantages of information, conviction, and edification, which the doctrine of his death affords us—when the health and life of our souls do absolutely depend upon the right improvement we make of his sufferings and death, “who was wounded by the transgressions of men; bruised by their iniquities; when the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and when by this his stripe we are healed.”

Very fitly, it must be owned, is Jesus called both the light and the life of men.

To us he actually becomes the resurrection and the life, as we are prevailed upon, by his pathetic instruction, to be mortified to the world, to die to sin, and to rise to newness of life. And well did he express himself, and in language applicable to none else, when he said, “my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” Such is the inestimable importance of the teachings of Jesus, that we are said to feed upon his labour and endurances*, when we are thereby prevailed upon to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

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* Compare 1 Chron. xi. 18, 19.

We have abundant evidence that Jesus can be a Saviour to none but to those whom his teachings set free from their worldliness, and render holy and heavenly in all their desires and affections. He saves none *in* their sins, but *from* their sins; and because his own sufferings and death give the fullest demonstration of the deformity and malignity of sin; he, in compassion to mankind, under their deplorable depravity, instituted for the benefit of his church, this most apt and significant memorial rite.

As to the *times* of celebration, our blessed Lord has not expressly said how often we are to celebrate these memorials of his death; but he well knew, as he had not the Spirit by measure, or by limitation, as the prophets had, that his apostles who should settle and establish the rule of Christian worship, and the constitutions of his church and kingdom, would give all the needful instructions. And although St. Paul does not expressly say how often, yet it should seem to have been an essential part of the Christian public worship, on the first day of the week. I cannot but be of opinion, that, in the time between the resurrection and ascension, St. Luke's report of the first Christians, "that they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, even in breaking of bread, and in prayer," Act. ii. 42. the eucharist must be there intended. Neither is it any objection, that at v. 46. they are said to break bread at their own houses, at a time they were not yet provided with other places of worship. This, probably, must have been the custom of converts during the infancy of Christianity, in any place. Compare ch. xii. 12. and xx. 7, 8. in which last place, this same historian also speaks of their public worship on the first day of the
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the week, under the discriminating action of breaking bread. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread."

I might here subjoin that known testimony of Pliny in the reign of Trajan, who informs the emperor, that the Christians "did reassemble on a stated day, to eat, in common, an harmless meal—after they had addressed themselves, in a form of prayer, to Christ, as to some God."—Doubtless Pliny means the Eucharist, by the *harmless meal*.

As to the *persons qualified* to celebrate the ritual.

I own, I am far from thinking that the administration of this ordinance was to all those who heard the scriptures read, joined the public prayers, and heard the solemn exhortation; and so far am I from justifying the practice, in a darker age, of giving the eucharist to infants, that I cannot even suppose catechumen, or young converts, qualified, till well informed of the nature, design, and end of the memorial rite; for our apostle lays down this express canon, "let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."—Whence it is plain, that persons incapable of self-examination, are incapable of such celebration. And, methinks, Pliny's account of the Christians *REASSEMBLING to eat an harmless meal*, would lead one to conclude, that the young, and the less-informed, were first withdrawn from the more open parts of public worship, and then the ritual was solemnized.

We should next inquire, *how long* the obligation to celebrate the ritual is in force?

This

This apostolic injunction "shew the Lord's death till he come" should denote the perpetuity of the obligation, and here we cannot suppose any coming of Christ can be meant, nearer than the death of the observer of this injunction. And therefore I thus argue, If it was fit for the Christian's observance to the end of his natural life, in the first age of the church; the same fitness will continue throughout all succeeding ages of the church: and as it is a monument of the fact of Christ's humiliation, the reason of the observance will increase, and not diminish, the greater distance there is between the time and age of the fact of the crucifixion, and the time and age of the celebration. And, forasmuch as a stigma of reproach was fixed upon Christ by his ignominious and cruel death, "so that it actually became to the Jews a "stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness;" it was therefore no less than a demonstration of divine wisdom to appoint a *thanksgiving* memorial rite, for the purpose of keeping alive the credibility of the crucifixion; because of the complete victory which this great minister of truth gained over the world, even on his cross.

"Perhaps some may be inclined to think it was solely calculated for the observance of Christians, in an age of persecution."

But, unless it could be shewn that a state of prosperity is less dangerous to the innocence and virtue of the human mind, than a state of adversity; this opinion cannot be supported. So long, therefore, as the Christian church shall have any existence in the running ages of the world, surrounded with temptation, so long Christians will be obliged to celebrate this ritual, since its divine tendency is to
balance

balance the mind against the lures and terrors of the world, and to preserve it from the most malignant infection.

No one, surely, would wish the abolition of this ritual, who has ever found the benefit of so eating memorial bread, and so drinking memorial wine, as to discern the Lord's body, i. e. so as to experience its divine influence in regulating his own temper, spirit, and life. Assuredly, if we have a just idea of the reason, nature, design, and end of the ritual, we must be convinced it could neither be a temporary nor a local institution.

A yet more powerful motive than that of the propriety and fitness of the celebration, is, its grateful, pleasing, joyous effects on the mind of the Christian: for verily, the ritual excites and animates all the springs of gratitude, ingenuity, admiration, love, and praise in the breast of man: it does this by exemplifying the love of God, in the assurance which it gives of his pardoning mercy and saving grace to every convinced, penitent sinner. By the celebration, we also bring to our eyes the greatness of our Lord's behaviour under his sufferings; the compleat victory he had over all the powers of darkness; the security which we ourselves may have of becoming more than conquerors, through him who loved us, and thus gave himself for us. In truth, a crucified Jesus gives us proof that the greatest possible sufferings from the world's hatred, are every way consistent with the most exalted piety and extensive virtue: and thus it is we are reconciled to all the painful endurances of this probationary state, in the person of a crucified Jesus.

This

This will appear in a very convincing light, inasmuch as no reason can operate, that would justify my murmuring, or becoming impatient and fretful under any afflictive or painful visitation, when I call to mind, that the most excellent, most divine man, the well-beloved of God, underwent the greatest possible abuse, insult, and cruel usage from the world. Thus the wisdom, the justice, and equity, nay, the goodness of God too, become illustrious, in the palpable dark and gloomy dispensations of his providence; and we see enough in a crucified Jesus to quiet our breasts, under whatever painful endurances heaven allots us.

Such a full solution of every *arcanum* in the plan of divine providence, is an abundant reason of gratitude, and of the most animated thanksgiving and praise.

Farther, we can never enough admire the divine benevolence of the blessed Jesus, in thus voluntarily becoming a *sin-offering* for us, who himself knew no sin; * that we might be made the righteousness of God in him!—And, who but he, holding the memorial cup in his hand, the symbol of his own blood, quickly to be spilt, or shed, for our remission, could have consecrated that very cup, by a thanksgiving to God, who had appointed him to bear the excruciating bloody testimony to his own truth and mercy! Should we enter into the reason and end of the memorial institution, it will excite and actuate all the powers of love and praise!

With the first Christians, under the merciless hand of persecution, we can, even at this distance,
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* N. B. A *sin-offering* under the law, was not only the sacrifice of an innocent creature, incapable of guilt, but of a most useful one. See Lev. iv. 3.

both see and feel its divine influence and manifest tendency to calm and compose their minds, to inspire with courage, fortitude, and resolution; nay more, give them joy, and enable them to rejoice under the fiery trial! But then, this would be in consequence of their quitting all views of worldliness, and becoming cordially devoted to the service of their heavenly Master and Lord. On this principle, the due celebration of the memorial rite will give, in any age of the church, a refined and exalted pleasure to the Christian, and fill him with such ideas of the love of God and Jesus, as are truly joyous and transporting.

Once more, the celebration is expressive of a realizing spiritual union with God and Jesus, and a fellowship and communion with the whole mystical body of Christ—which idea of the supper our apostle has suggested, when he says, “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? for we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.” In this idea of the ritual, we greatly felicitate ourselves, because of its being the earnest and foretaste of our blissful fruitions in the everlasting association of the spirits of just men made perfect, and who breathe nothing but pure, unadulterated, fervent love and praise.

Thus I have attempted to point out the reason and end of the memorial rite—and shall now make

R E F L E C T I O N S.

I. The measures of divine Providence, from the beginning, have graciously given man some sensible
sign

sign or token of that mercy promised, or of God's gracious covenant. So the bowe in the cioud is a token of the original covenant, which God established between himself and all flesh, viz. that there shall no more be an universal deluge, Gen. ix. 14, 15. In like manner the seventh-day sabbath, whilst observed by Israel, was to be a sign between God and that people throughout their generations, Exod. xxxi. 14. And likewise, the passover-feast must be a memorial throughout their generations, ch. xii. 14. The preservation of their first-born is to be joyously recognized. And because the river Jordan did miraculously divide for them, when they went to possess the promised land, they are to raise twelve pillars, for a memorial for ever, unto the children of Israel, Josh. iv. 5 and 8, compared.

Mankind, in truth, were ever the same sensible, social creatures, who could not unite together, or agree in a religious acknowledgment of any past interposition of Providence, without some expressive, sensible symbol, that should be as an index to direct the recognition. We cannot therefore but see, that the three monuments appointed in the church of Christ, are in perfect harmony with the divine treatment of man under former dispensations.

Here I might pertinently observe, that there is no other ritual appointed under the gospel, no other sign, no other symbol, but these three monuments, by which three of the most significant facts or events, which concern the benefit of mankind, are recognized—whereas all other church-festivals are of no higher original, than that of mere human appointment, and serve no better purposes, than to countenance the vanity and pride of man.

IIIdly, We might now appeal to the modern deist, i. e. to the unbeliever in revelation, and defy his ability of confuting the three-fold testimony given to the divinity of the gospel-dispensation, since these monuments, within the church, have had their existence ever since the facts had place of our Lord's humiliation, resurrection, and exaltation. Jesus, the night in which he was betrayed, instituted the memorial of his crucifixion. When risen from the dead (after he had continued in *hades* the seventh-day sabbath) by his resurrection he consecrates the weekly festival of the first-day of the week-sabbath: a day universally observed by Christians, in abrogation of the Jewish sabbath. And because Deity has exalted him to the right hand of power, and made him head over all things to the church of God, he has instituted baptism to recognize his lordship, and to initiate into his kingdom; which monument remains in high preservation until this day.

Pray what sort of evidence will convince of the divinity of the gospel-system, if this will not? If these witnesses, which answer to the spirit, the water, and the blood, will not persuade, neither would miracle make the least impression on the infidel.

IIIIdly. No man who reads the gospel-history, under the idea of a divine revelation, but must own, that the teachings of JESUS do far excel all other informations mankind have ever had of the truth and grace of God.—His distinguished character, his divine office, his superior appointments, are what determine him to be the Saviour of the world. The testimony of both prophecy and miracle, conclude him to be the light and the life of men!

men! And we do very reasonably infer, the manifest propriety of these three instituted monuments, from their being an open, perpetual, standing evidence of the credibility of the facts, which they recognize! in all of which we are interested, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ of eternal life.

And however we may look upon the rest of mankind as made for happiness, and furnished with the adequate means of attainment; yet we are constrained to acknowledge, that God has “abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence” under the gospel-dispensation: for, by the teachings of Jesus, he has made the clearest and fullest manifestation of himself!—Hence it is, that apostles lay so much stress upon the weight of guilt, which men contract, who are found either to despise or neglect this great salvation. They ask, “How shall such escape”!

Neither should any one be astonished at finding, that the religion of Jesus is not the universal religion of mankind. He will not, if he once considers how very soon, and how very far, men have corrupted and perverted this heavenly institution.—Do but cast your eyes on the papal church, and tell me whether paganism had not a much better aspect? — At the same time, shed a tear over the protestant perversions! for even they have brought the world into an alliance with the church, and do greatly solace themselves in that very whimsical and wicked connection.

Where, O where, will you find the religion of Jesus in its native, pristine spirit and purity! If you now ask, “Where are the churches, which are edified in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort
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“ of the holy Spirit, and are multiplying?” — who shall tell you? — If St. John was to visit our churches, would he say to us what he said to the elect lady? viz. “ I rejoice greatly to find thy children walking in the truth, as we received a commandment from the Father.” — Would he not rather say with St. Paul, “ I have found many walking in craftiness, and handling the word of God deceitfully, and that verily our gospel I see is hid; for the god of this world has blinded the minds of men.” None but the man, who rejects all revelation, can deny the excellence of the New Testament teachings; but he, indeed, who does, will laugh at all instrumental religion: nevertheless, we are not to forget, such is the present frail state of man, that he stands in need of some sensitive address. — For,

IVthly, If the view we have taken of the memorial rite be just, we can well account for its use and importance; assuredly, not any institution could have more consulted the weaknesses and wants, the frailties and infirmities, of the human mind, during its probation. The dangers, which arise from these sensitive scenes, do borrow their degree of malignant influence from a faulty love of the world. This is a capital evil, or it is “ the evil one,*” which constantly addresses mankind. To be delivered from its hurtful influence, and to be raised to an heavenly disposition, is the great design of that grace of God, which bringeth salvation.

“ Do some say, they are enabled to arrive at this divine attainment, without making use of the eucharist? and therefore see no need they have of celebrating the memorials of Christ's death?”

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* Τοῦ πονηροῦ, Matt. vi. 13.

Not further to debate the matter with them, I would only ask, Do they profess themselves Christians? Are they persuaded, that Jesus Christ did institute this memorial rite for the use and benefit of his church in all ages? Admitting this, they convict themselves of neglect, in not celebrating the memorial rite, and they virtually presume to charge the Lord of God's church with a needless institution. I own, I am of opinion, the same reason that would infer the non-necessity of the institution, would dispute the reason, use, and end of the death of Christ. But then, is not this to be wiser than God? or than Jesus, his representative?

As to the evasive manner, in which the QUAKER declines the celebration, by making it "a merely
" mystical and spiritual communion and partici-
" pation of the body and blood of Christ"—this has no support in any of the New-Testament teachings; for all these do expressly mention the actual eating of memorial bread, and drinking memorial wine, upon having first separated the elements by a solemn thanksgiving; and as an act of public, and not of private worship. — "What, have ye
" not houses to eat and drink in?" says our apostle. With him agrees the evangelical historians; and Pliny's early testimony corroborates the fact of a solemn celebration of the ritual among the first Christians.

It is not at all probable, that an event of so interesting a nature, and of so universal an importance to mankind, as is the death of Christ, could be unprovided with some monument, that should preserve the remembrance thereof, and put the credibility of the fact beyond all reasonable doubt. For I thus argue, either the event of Christ's death

does universally concern mankind, or else apostles are all of them mistaken in their representations; since a singular emphasis is laid upon it in the New Testament written records.

Vthly, No one can mistake the doctrine of the memorial rite, who sees it is calculated to expose the turpitude and malignity of worldliness; but if it is so evidently adapted to the correction and cure of the mind, to the preservation of it from all deadly pollutions, the wisdom and goodness of the institution must confessedly be illustrious.— At the same time, a clear discernment of this its divine tendency, will qualify any Christian professor for the celebration: forasmuch as it is evident, that no one can eat or drink *unworthily*, who, in this religious observance, inculcates upon his own spirit an abhorrence of all worldly lustings.

It is true, in the light we have viewed the eucharist, there manifestly is a great simplicity: the whole doctrine of it seems to center in unity. One single idea is what comprehends the reason and end of the institution. But then I ask, Is not this a sure mark of truth? — I know, indeed, it will militate much with all mystical representations of the Lord's supper: it will divest the artful priest of all his magic power; it will render extremely ridiculous all his great exploits, and wonderful achievements, with the consecrated wafer or bread! His pretence of transubstantiating the elements, by an *hocus pocus*, into the very body and blood of Christ, will appear extremely contemptible, and excite one's just indignation! Even the giving these elements to the sick and dying, as a passport to heaven, must heighten one's astonishment at the offensive, flagrant absurdity! A dying man, if

sensible, has enough to inform him, and stands in no need of this ritual, to enable him to see the turpitude and deformity of worldliness.

Vithly, Christians will not be justified in a neglect of the memorial rite, because they see many eat and drink at the Lord's table, who nevertheless do deplorably remain under the dominion of worldliness, and are the manifest slaves of lust. Neither is it a sufficient excuse, that many have loaded the observance with much superstition, and rendered an admission to the table, harsh, stupid, and offensive,—Or, because they see the ordinance brought into reproach, shockingly profaned for the vile purpose of being made a civil test, or a qualification for places of profit, power, trust, or honour. This prostitution is an evil of so malignant a nature, that, from the enormity of its guilt, our land mourns! And anon Britain must feel the weight of his displeasure, who cannot but vindicate the honour of his own institutions. In a word, we are unable to conceive of a greater affront, or of a more flagrant contumacy, that could be offered to the one Lord, than such a senatorial outrage committed on the sacred memorials of his death, originally intended to convince men of the malignity of worldliness; but audaciously perverted to the purpose of being made a test of qualification for gratifying the worldly spirit.

Should the *infidel* object to the above discourses,
 “ That however the first Christians might be led
 “ to distinguish themselves from the Jews or Gen-
 “ tiles, in their religious profession, by these dis-
 “ criminating observances of the sabbath, baptism,
 “ and the eucharist; yet they do not appear, con-
 “ vincingly to him, to be the monuments of such
 “ facts; nor does he understand that they have
 “ been

“ been viewed in this light, generally, by the
 “ Christians, in any age of the Christian church.”

To such I would reply, that the conclusiveness of their argument, so understood, does appear to me, to admit of no reasonable objection. For admitting they were, by the original written canon, to be so understood, it is no sort of proof of their inconclusiveness, that Christians soon disguised and corrupted, or perverted their original intention; for so truly they did pervert some of the plainest doctrinal truths in all the gospel teachings; and they must have had a divine origination, or else they could never have universally obtained, as we have sufficient historical evidence they did from the beginning.

For example, as to the change of the *sabbath* from the seventh to the first day of the week, the observance of the unbelieving Jews to this day, does every where demonstrate, that change so made by the Christians. And that it was in the apostolic age thus discriminating, is not only evident from the New Testament record, but from the earliest church history; for Ignatius “ bids the Magne-
 “ sians not to *sabbatize* with the Jews, but to lead
 “ a life agreeable to the Lord's day, on which our
 “ life was raised from the dead. And Tertullian,
 “ when he writes only to the Christians, commonly
 “ useth the name of the Lord's day, and especially
 “ when he would distinguish it from the Jewish
 “ sabbath. And to the same purpose, Origen, to
 “ distinguish the first-day sabbath from the Jewish,
 “ says, that Manna was first rained down from
 “ heaven on the Lord's day, and not on the sab-
 “ bath.”*—Herein figuratively referring to the
 teachings of Christ and his ministrations being
 “ that true bread which came down from heaven.”

From

* Bingham's Antiq. of the Christian Church, B. xx. ch. ii. p. 285, 286.

From these testimonies I reason thus: Had not the fact of the resurrection of Christ been notorious, and of vast consequence to mankind, no monument could ever have been erected as in perpetual evidence; neither could any rational account be given of this weekly festival, had it not been of divine institution; forasmuch as the first observers of this change of the sabbath, were such as had been educated in the religious observance of the Mosaic sabbath, and could only have been reconciled to this change, by an assurance that it was authorized by the fact of the Lord's resurrection; a fact which gives a ground of confidence of his being the very man whom God has ordained to judge the world in righteousness. It is not at all probable, that an event of so interesting a nature, as that of the resurrection of Christ, should be without some apt and expressive memorial. Neither is there the least reason to suppose, that such memorial could have been instituted or originated in any age after that of the apostles: forasmuch as no universal and perpetual agreement among Christians, could ever have taken place upon a merely human invention, I conclude, therefore, that no objection can possibly weaken the testimony given to the resurrection by this monument.

A like reasoning will hold with respect to the fact of Christ's exaltation to the right hand of power. It is not to be supposed, that baptismal water should ever have been applied in his name, as so exalted, and by which all the first converts were initiated into God's church and kingdom, had it been the contrivance or project of human invention; on the contrary, apostles must have been well assured, that so to baptize, did originate in the express order of their Lord and Master; thereby acknowledging or recognizing his sovereignty, who has all power given to him, both in heaven and in earth.—It will

will be of no weight for any to tell us, that the Christians soon perverted the plain doctrine, and entertained a thousand strange notions about the reason and end of baptism.

And as to the fact of our Lord's sufferings and death, we have the strongest reason to conclude, that because of the divine instruction which this gives mankind, as in the fullest possible manner it does make manifest the malignity that there is in worldliness; such a picturesque view of the *evil* there is in a love of the world, is what renders the memorial rite eucharistical. But to remove all possible objection to the divine original of this institution of the supper, for universal and perpetual observance, and to establish the celebration of this ritual upon an immoveable foundation, we have assurance from the apostle of the Gentiles, that he personally received the most express instructions concerning it from the ascended Jesus.

Now this same apostle, in almost all his epistles, takes pains to convince the Christians that the whole of his instructions were truly of divine original, for that he had not the least ability of forming any one part of the gospel canon. Nor is he afraid of making his appeal to the reason and understanding of mankind, in all his apostolical addresses.—And when it is moreover considered, that these three observances have, from the beginning, been the discriminating marks of the Christian profession, and what render obvious its divine origination to every unprejudiced, impartial, judicious eye, we may take the utmost satisfaction in embracing the religion of Jesus.

Yet, after all, however plain, however full and determinate the divine evidence of its divinity, as it is found in the New Testament canon; yet neither
our

our Lord nor his apostles did ever expect that a cordial reception should be given to the *Gospel-message* by any, but such only who religiously make its teachings a rule of life, from a firm persuasion that they shall be the rule of the final judgment. So that till the infidel has made this experiment of the divinity of gospel teachings, he may well look upon himself as an incompetent judge of its evidence.

To conclude, the general neglect of celebrating this ritual is a convincing proof, either of the little acquaintance Christians have with the teachings of Jesus, or else of their little reverence for his institutions. My worthy predecessor, Dr. JAMES FOSTER, I well remember, observed to me, with much concern, the general disregard shewn to the communion table! on which account he said, he looked upon his church, "but as a rope of sand"—his very expression.

Melancholy it is to find no more professing Christians do celebrate the memorial rite. In an age so full of temptation, what need have our YOUTH of such a divine balance against its poisonous, deadly influence? Would you, who are young, overcome the world? celebrate religiously the memorials of Christ's death. This is your Lord's advice: he assuredly had it in view when he instituted the supper.

Thus I have finished the survey I proposed of the three institutions, viz. Of the Christian sabbath; of baptism; and of the eucharist; and have, with integrity, and I hope with evidence, pleaded the cause of truth and religion. Do me the favour of an impartial, serious, and close re-consideration,—and do yourselves the justice of a faithful and efficacious application.



CHRIST'S *Temptation in the Wilderness,*

A

P R O O F

OF A

DIVINE MISSION.



CHRIST'S *Temptation in the Wilderness,*

A

P R O O F

OF A

DIVINE MISSION:

WITH A

PREVIOUS DISSERTATION

UPON THE

P R O S O P O P E I A ;

O R

PERSONALIZING-FIGURE.

By CALEB FLEMING.

—He has destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. And has delivered them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.

L O N D O N :

Printed for C. HENDERSON, under the *Royal Exchange* ;
and T. BECKET and P. A. de HONDT, in the *Strand*.

MDCCLXIV.

P R O

DIVINE MISSION

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R E A S O N S

Assigned for this Publication.

WHEN the dissertation on the Propopoeia is attended to, it will be natural for some to ask, “ What possible motive could the author have for controverting the current established opinion of mankind, in the article of an evil Being, the great seducer of human spirits? Was it for the sake of meeting opposition from inveterate prejudice?”

The answer honestly given is this, He does not know, or he is not aware of any other motive, than a conviction of the
infinite

infinite importance of truth ; and of the direct tendency which this dissertation has, in his idea, to remove difficulties in reading the holy scriptures ; more particularly, as it throws light upon the history of our Lord's wilderness-temptations.

But it will again be asked, “ Might not the author have been well excused the trouble of publishing that discourse, when An Enquiry into those Temptations, has been already made by the Reverend Mr Hugh Farmer ; published so lately as the year 1761, and which has very deservedly met with great approbation ? ”

In reply to this, Let it be observed, that the general plan of the following discourse on the temptations, was publicly delivered at Pinner's-Hall, London, previous to any knowledge of that Inquiry ; and was drawn up

up at the request of a gentleman, who found difficulties on the face of this part of gospel-history. And though in the articles of our Lord's being led by the Spirit of God into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; and in the varied scenery of temptation being visionary, I had the pleasure of finding in that inquiry an agreement with mine own interpretation; yet, forasmuch as, in some other things, I may differ from my ingenious friend, and much esteemed brother, this publication, I am perswaded, can, by no means, give him offence. For I will assure him, of having no pretensions to share the laurels; except in this, I would, with him, be sincerely endeavouring to promote the spread of truth, and the interests of virtue, according to that degree of ability and opportunity which God has given me.

And

And I have this farther to add, that since this discourse on the temptations does professedly aim at shewing, that they are in proof of our Lord's divine mission ; neither his Inquiry, nor any other publication upon the subject, that I know of, in the world, can be able to place it in the invidious light of a competition.



E R R A T A.

- Page 10, Line 5, from bottom, read *to and fro*.
 Page 20, Line 9, for *keen*, read *been*.
 Page 27, Line 1, for *has*, read *have*.
 Page 31, Line 6, from bottom, for *abscess*, read *obsess*.
 Page 40, Line 16, for *this*, read *it*.
 Page 59, Line 4, dele *possible*.
 Page 61, Line 15, for *oracles*, read *oracle*.




A

DISSERTATION

UPON THE

PROSOPOPEIA.

*The Extravagancies of an ideal Tempter vulgarly
personalized.*

§ I.  HE opinion of an invisible evil being, as the common Seducer of mankind, has even among us assumed a claim to *orthodoxy*;—a being, who is supposed to be “ constantly whispering at the ear of every man, and, by a kind of omniscience, to be acquainted with the most secret thoughts and intents of the human heart; incessantly solliciting its depravity.” —which idea of an evil invisible Spirit, however familiar to mankind, appears to me, to be no other than an abuse of a personalizing figure, common to all languages, and to all ages of the world. And yet to controvert this opinion,

B nion,

nion, has been treated as a mark of heretical pravity: so that some, ridiculously enough, have imagined it a species of *atheism*! But what wonder, when they have attributed to their busy malignant adversary, a sort of omnipresence and omniscience! when they have even conceived of this being, of their own creating, as every where counter-acting and overturning the plan of divine purposes and proceedings with mankind!

An extravagance which has never been exceeded by the most ignorant Pagan idolaters; though it has been observed, “that the history of the most ancient heathens is wrapped up in such a fabulous dress, that we are but just able to discover the traces and footsteps of *truth*, even in their theology.”—*Strabo*, to this purpose, tells us, that fable and poetry were long in repute before history and philosophy.—And that it was the taste of the ancients to mix fable with every thing. A story in those rude ages was not worth the telling, if it did not strike the imagination with surprise and wonder. Their histories were dressed like *Homer’s* account of the siege of *Troy*, blended with fable, to give them the more grateful relish with the people, accustomed to fiction. Poetry and fable not only made up their learning, but their very religion: fables to conceal the doctrines, and poetry to convey the fables (*a*).

From

(*a*) *Dr. Young’s History of Idolatrous Corruptions, Vol. I. page 81.*

From this account of the ancient pagan theology, we cannot think it strange that the idea of temptation from the address of sensitive good, should have been usually expressed under some personalizing figure. Nay, it seems almost impossible that it should not have been thus universally spoken of. And yet, it will not, perhaps, be easily shewn, that they did ascribe omniscience and omnipresence to the evil being, as many of our moderns seem to have done.

But the great and important use of the personalizing figure in all languages, may be further discoverable from the following citation; for the elegant and ingenious HARRIS, in his *Hermes*, whilst making the distinction between the severe and logical style, and the ornamental and rhetorical, says, “ When we speak
“ of words, naturally devoid of sex, as *neuters*,
“ we speak of them *as they are*, and as becomes
“ a logical enquiry. When we give them a *sex*,
“ by making them masculine or feminine, they
“ are from thenceforth personified; are a kind
“ of *intelligent beings*, and become, as such, the
“ proper ornaments either of rhetoric or of
“ poetry.”

One illustration is given from four lines of MILTON.

- “ At his command th’uprooted hills retir’d
- “ Each to his place : they heard his voice, and went
- “ Obsequious : Heav’n *his* wonted face renew’d
- “ And with fresh flourets Hill and Valley smil’d.”

4 *A DISSERTATION upon the Prosopopeia.*

Here all things are personified ; the hills *bear*, and the valleys *smile*, and the *face* of heaven is renewed. Suppose, then, that the poet had been necessitated by the laws of his language to have said :—each hill retired to *its* place—
“ Heaven renewed *its* wonted face.—How pro-
“ saic, and lifeless would these neuters have
“ appeared? How detrimental to the *prosopo-*
“ *peia*, which he was aiming to establish?
“ In this therefore he was happy, that the
“ language in which he wrote imposed no
“ such necessity ; and he was too wise a wri-
“ ter to impose it upon himself (*b*).”

Of the Origin of a Devil.

§ 2. A superb genius thus accounts for the *origin* of a devil: he says, (*c*) “ That as the most
“ uncivilized part of mankind, have some way
“ or other climbed up into the conception of
“ a God, or supreme power ; so they have
“ seldom forgot to provide their fears with
“ certain ghastly notions, which, instead of
“ better, have served them pretty tolerably for
“ a *devil*. And this proceeding seems to be
“ natural enough ; for it is with men, whose
“ imaginations are lifted up very high, after
“ the same rate as it is with those whose bo-
“ dies are so, that as they are delighted with
“ the advantages of a nearer contemplation
“ upwards, so they are equally terrified with
“ the

(*b*) *Hermes*, p 58—60. Notes.

(*c*) *Tale of a Tub*, p. 108. 7th Edition.

“ the dismal prospect of the precipice below.
 “ Thus in the choice of a *devil*, it has been the
 “ usual method of mankind to single out some
 “ being, either in act or in vision, which was
 “ in most antipathy to the god they had
 “ formed.”—Philosophers have a mysterious
 and theological language, distinct from that
 of the vulgar, and we must *not* suffer ourselves
 to be deceived by their pompous words, as to
 make a venerable *mystery* of a mere *allegory* (d).

Besides this, a most learned and grave
 writer has observed of the poetical licence,
 that it has contributed not a little to the
 fixing and establishing of popular opinion ;
 for, says he, “ Though in the matter of his-
 “ tory, *poets* usually follow their own humour,
 “ and stretch out, by the force of imagination,
 “ a matter which shrinks of itself to a short
 “ and simple narration ; yet in a matter of
 “ opinion they commonly follow the humour
 “ of the times, and take liberty to express
 “ freely the manners and thoughts of the age
 “ in which they live (e).”

Moreover, a fine writer remarks,—“ That
 “ the high *figurative manner* which fits a lan-
 “ guage so peculiarly for the use of the poet,
 “ had not with us in *Queen Elizabeth's* time,
 “ been yet controuled by the prosaic genius
 “ of philosophy and logic.—It had its rise
 “ from religion.—The pagan religion, of all
 “ others, was the properest to introduce and
 encourage

B 3

(d) *Platonism* unveiled, Chap. vi.

(e) *Spencer* on Prodigies, p. 174.

6 A DISSERTATION upon the *Prosopopeia*.

“ encourage a spirit of allegory and moral
“ fiction. Hence we easily account for the
“ allegoric cast of the old *dramas*, which hold
“ very much of the nature of our ancient mo-
“ ralities.—Thus *necessity* is brought in as a
“ person of the drama in one of *Æschylus’s*
“ plays; and *death* in one of *Euripides*: to say
“ nothing of many shadowy persons in the
“ comedies of *Aristophanes*. The truth is, the
“ pagan religion deified every thing, and de-
“ livered these deities into the hands of their
“ painters, sculptors, and poets. In like man-
“ ner Christian superstition, or if you will, mo-
“ dern barbarism, impersonated every thing.”

Agreeable to this, a learned divine of the church of *England* says,—“ That the ancient
“ poets were a generation audacious and law-
“ less: who shew truth in disguise and mas-
“ querade; and that *Virgil* does grossly philo-
“ sophize (*f*).” We have nevertheless reason
to conclude, they have had at all times and in
all places, a first influence on the minds of
the vulgar.

To prevent the spreading of superstition
among the *Hebrew* people, Dr. *Spencer* was of
opinion, “ that many of the critical rites and
“ usages appointed the Jewish nation; will be
“ found to resolve into the divine purpose to
“ cross and thwart, by his command, the rites
“ of the *Labii*, the *Egyptians*, and other neigh-
“ bouring nations, which had the *devil*, (*i. e.*
superstition)

(*f*) Dr. *T. Burnet’s* State of departed Souls, p. 319. *Dennis’s*
Translation.

“superstition) for the great master of their
 “ceremonies (g).” —So I understand *Spencer’s*
 devil; and presume it could be no other: since
 he presently tells us, “that the religion of the
 “world did generally consist of *little rites, weak*
 “*observances, bodily postures*, which the religion
 “of Christ did oppose, by being plain, simple,
 “rational, vital, spiritual; it being the main
 “design of Christianity to employ and per-
 “fect the mind and spirit of man.” —Supersti-
 tion must therefore have been the great master
 of the ceremonies in the world’s religion, which
 the *Doctor* calls, the *devil*. And indeed the
 word rendered *devil* and *devils*, in the Old
 Testament writings, will shew, that the idea
 was derived from idolatry. See *Leviticus* xvii.
 7. and *Deuteronomy* xxxii. 17. where the original
 terms have been shewn, by learned men, to in-
 tend no other than the *goats* which were wor-
 shipped (b).

*In what Manner the personalizing Figure describes
 Temptation.*

§ 3. Were we not to admit of the figurative
 manner, we could have no just idea of the
 Old Testament history of temptation: for in
 the Mosaic account of the first lapse, many
 puzzling questions would otherwise start up,
 at the very mention of a *speaking serpent*.

B 4

Whereas,

(g) *Dr. Spencer* on Prodigies, p. 23.

(b) *Young’s* Idolatries, Vol. I. p. 15. *Bishop Clogher’s* Ori-
 gin of Hieroglyphics, p. 10.

Whereas, when understood of the appetite, of animal desire, controverting a divine prohibition, the whole is easy and intelligible. And the very sentence on the serpent, to *go on his belly and eat dust*, is a fine allegoric representation of a man's proneness to earth, and having nothing better than *dust* to feed upon, whilst he is governed by his animal desires and inclinations. This proneness of the *serpent*, denoting the reptile groveling state of the passions, might be illustrated from the sentence on the woman, *and thy desire shall be to thine husband, and he shall rule over thee*; i. e. thou shalt always find the conjugal felicity to arise, from observing that law of subordination which nature has established. In like manner, the sentence on the serpent will be found to import the subduing of the appetite; its being kept under the controul of reason: without which man will become sordid, he will feed on dust; his deportment will not rise higher than that of the reptile. Thus the doctrinal instruction of this Eastern allegory appears to my understanding.

In all after-instances of *Satanic* temptations, we shall be obliged to recur to the personifying figure. So in the case mentioned 1 *Chronicles* xxi. i. "When *Satan* stood up against *Israel*, and provoked *David* to number the people." It cannot, in fair construction, intend any other than the pride and vanity of his own heart; which would gratify itself

in a boasting confidence of the vast number of his fighting men ; for, from his own confession, this must have been the real state of the case. See 2 *Samuel* xxiv. 10. “ I beseech thee, “ O Lord ! take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly.”—Here is no hint of any charge of guilt lying on any other than himself. And the *adversary* may well be supposed to have been within his own breast ; since an apostle will describe a combat between flesh and spirit in one and the same man, *Gal.* v. 17. and elsewhere.

It would not be impertinent to ask, how it comes about, that the *devil*, or *Satan*, is never mentioned till now in all the Old Testament history from the first lapse, though so many great occasions did intervene? Why not when *Cain* slew his brother?—I would answer, Because *Cain* himself was *that wicked One*. Nor do we find, by the history, he had any other prompter than his own passions.—But to quit this excursion, proceed we to the next passage where the word *Satan* is mentioned ; and that is *Psalms* cix. 6. “ Set thou a wicked man over “ him ; and let *Satan* stand at his right hand.” Which the margin reads *an adversary*. The word *Satan* is then in this place *exegetical* ; and the verse will read thus : “ Set thou a wicked “ man over him ; let even Satan, *an adversary*, “ stand at his right hand.”

A *third* passage is found in *Zecchariah* iii. 1, 2. “ And he shewed me (*i. e.* in vision) *Joshua* the high
high

“ high priest standing before the angel of the
 “ Lord, and *Satan* standing at his right hand
 “ to resist him.” But what can so well explain this as the book of *Ezra* does? there we find that *Rehum* the chancellor, and *Shimshai* the scribe, who wrote a letter to *Artaxerxes* the king, at *Jerusalem*, may be clearly understood as the Adversary; for these men had opposed *Zerubbabel* and *Joshua*, whom the prophet foresaw in the vision.

I have omitted the book of *Job*; but, in that book, what can be more evident than that *Satan* is only an ideal dramatic person? He is never once mentioned as attempting to seduce *Job* by any address, or subtle suggestions to corrupt his mind: he only solicits leave of *JEHOVAH* to inflict painful diseases upon his body. And after this, he is never once more introduced in the drama. Whatever seducing or Satanic suggestions are mentioned, are those only of his wife, who would advise him to destroy himself; or of his friends, who accuse him of hidden crimes, under his heaviest calamities. And I should conclude, that no other than the *spirit of censoriousness* must be meant, chap. ii. 2. where *Satan*, when asked *from whence he came?* gives this account of himself, *from going and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* What else can be meant by it, I cannot understand.

And in the New Testament writings, the personalizing figure for temptation, is used by
 our

our Lord himself, when he calls *Peter, Satan*; because of his endeavour to dissuade him from submitting to those sufferings which were appointed him to undergo; and no other sense can be affixed to the words *Satan* and *devil*, when he applies them to *Judas*, because of his covetousness and treachery.—Indeed it has been observed, that the word *Shaitan*, in Arabic, which answers to the Hebrew *Satan*, ever was in use for an adversary (*i*).—Every man is, in fact, a *Satan* or a *devil* to another, who either endeavours to corrupt his mind, or otherwise to abuse, injure, or oppress him. And we know that *Solomon* did represent all allurements under the stratagems of a strange woman.—On the other hand, as to the terrifying and dismaying address, *St. Peter* does expressly mention the persecutor under the term *devil*, “the adversary that went about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he might devour,” 1 Epistle v. 8. The persecuting spirit is diabolical, whether in *Nero*, or in *Lewis XIV.* *St. Paul* has also mentioned the powers on earth which did oppose the spread of the gospel, as *spiritual wickednesses in high places!* and, most probably, he intends, the established pagan and Jewish *clergy*; or those men who assumed the character of ministers of religion, whose superstitious rage has been the most malignant and merciless.

The

(i) *Ockley's History of the Saracens*, Vol. I. p. 57.

The personalizing Figure, is found very extensive in the sacred Writings.

§ 4. As a farther argument in illustration of the personalizing figure, we are able to prove its *extensive* use familiar to the sacred writings. I might have discovered almost numberless instances; but shall rather refer to the poetical and prophetical books. *Job, Psalms, Proverbs,* and *Ecclesiastes*, do abound with this figure; and none need be told, that *wisdom* and *folly* have a personal appearance and address given them. Nay, even the wisdom and power of God, in their various manifestations, are spoken of under the personalizing figure, both in the *Old* and in the *New Testament*. So that *word of the Lord*, by which the heavens were made; is said to have come to the prophets, which very *word* did tabernacle with the man Christ Jesus, “When men beheld his glory, as that of the only begotten Son of God.” The only Son of the promise, that had been prophesied of from the beginning.—So the instructive *word* of Jesus is personalized; and is the same with the witnessing Spirit. Compare *John* xii. 48. with *Romans* viii. 16. And, in like manner, the creative power of God, is also called *the Holy Ghost*, because of that supernatural formation of the *Messiah*, mentioned *Luke* i. 35. And when the communications of knowledge, wisdom, and power, are to be

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so plentifully made to apostles, in evidence of our Lord's exaltation to sovereignty, they are foretold by him under the name of *Comforter*, John xvi. 7. which *gifts* are also imaged by *rivers of living water*, that flow from the disciples, John vii. 38, 39. This very personalizing figure, applied to the *charismata*, men fond of mystery have affected to realize. Hence the astonishing opinion, of *more persons than one in the godhead*, has arisen! an opinion, which verily has given so much advantage to the *Mahometan*, that in the letters written by the *Caliphs* to the Christian emperors at Constantinople, and on other occasions, their style has been, *The servants of the one God who has no partner*.—And they call Christians *idolaters and enemies of God* (k).—Again, to what has the infidelity of the Jew been more owing, than to the Christians making a god of *the seed of Abraham*, and *the son of David*? They were always taught to expect that the Messiah should be a man. The applying to Jesus Christ an *eternal generation*, and a divine essence, has most efficaciously obstructed the credit of the Jew to the popular Christian system.

We might then reasonably ask, who could possibly mistake the personalizing figure when applied to the Spirit of God, that should be *poured out upon all flesh*? the divine source of those supernatural abilities so diversified in St. Paul's writings? It is not easy to suppose a distinct

(k) Consult *Ockley's History of the Saracens*, Vol. I. p. 34. 37, 38, 78, 116, *et alibi*.

stinct personality, when this apostle assures us, “that though there are diversities of operations, yet it is the same God which worketh all in all.” 1 Cor. xii. 6.

But besides the figure applied to extraordinary communications from the deity, the apostles make use of the same form of speech, when they would speak of the operations of the human faculties and powers.—So it is, that we find *faith*, *charity*, *sin*, *death*, and *hell*, have personal properties and operations ascribed to them.—For example, *faith* is said to be an agent, *Galatians* v. 6. *Ephesians* vi. 6. In one place, it works by love: in the other, it handles the shield.—Once it is said to be shipwrecked, 1 *Timothy* i. 19. And at another time, it is represented as overcoming all difficulties. See *Hebrews* xi.—In like manner *charity* has a varied personal description, full of energy. See 1 *Corinthians* xiii. And not only *faith* and *charity*, but *sin* is put under the personalizing figure, *Romans* sixth and seventh chapters. Nay, it has weapons that are mortal in their impressions. We farther observe the same figure used for *death*; it has a sting, and it has also a victory, or dominion. Compare 1 *Corinthians* xv. with 2 *Timothy* i. 10. And moreover, *death* and *hell* are said conjointly to make a surrender of their prisoners, *Apocalypse* xx. 13.

Here we might call in evidence the usages of the princes of poets, viz. *Homer* among the ancients, and *Milton* among the the moderns. They personify *death*, as a fine pen remarks,

—“It

—“ It is well known that *sleep* and *death* are
“ made brothers by *Homer*. It was to this
“ old *Gorgias* elegantly alluded, when at the
“ extremity of a long life he lay slumbering on
“ his death-bed. A friend asked him, *how he*
“ *did?* Sleep (replied the old man) is just de-
“ livering me over to the care of his bro-
“ ther (l).”—*Farther*, this writer pronounces of
Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, “ that he did
“ well not only to adopt *death* as a person,
“ but consider him as masculine: in which
“ he was so far from introducing a phantom
“ of his own, or from giving it a *gender not*
“ *supported by custom*, that perhaps he has as
“ much the sanction of national opinion for
“ his masculine death, as the ancient poets
“ had for any of their deities (m).”

After all, there are two or three passages in the New Testament, where the terms *Satan* and *devil*, may be thought to import a malignant evil being, or spirit; and which do not seem so well to bear the *Profopopeia*. One is *Matth. xxv. 41. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. N. B.* We are under no necessity of saying, that there are no apostate spirits of any other order of beings but man. This, we would not be understood to affirm, or even to insinuate; most probably there are. But by no means can we suppose it probable that such beings are allowed

(l) *Harris's Hermes*, p. 52.

(m) *Ibid.* p. 51. Note.

allowed to sport and gratify themselves, in promoting the defection and delinquency of other orders of intelligence. And it might as well be imagined, that some superior beings to those apostate spirits, did urge and occasion their apostacy, and so on *ad infinitum*, as that we should once suppose these superior beings allowed to urge and occasion man's apostacy. But even here St. *Jude* will aid us in these speculations; for he says, *That the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, be hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgement of the great day*, verse 6. Assuredly then, we are not under any the least danger of any embarrass, or delusion from these miscreants, thus chained under darkness.

Another passage is, *Heb. ii. 14.* where *he that hath the power of death*, is said to be *the devil*. I am not ashamed nor afraid to say, that I understand this of an accusing guilty conscience. I know not of any thing else, that has the power of death (*n*): for St. *Paul* has assured me, *that the sting of death is sin*; and *that there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*. And although God is said to be a consuming fire, he can only be so to the impenitent sinner, *for God is love*, 1 John iv. 8, 16.—A farther instance is all I recollect, and that is in *Luke x. 18.* *I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven*. Here I should understand by *Satan*, that adversary which lay against the truth in the national prejudices,

(*n*) Consult 1 John iii. 19, 21. and other parallel texts.

prejudices which gave way, with great celerity, upon the seventy executing their commifion ; and that our Lord foresaw would do fo much more extenfively, upon the publication of his gospel to the *gentile* world. Compare verfe 19. *Behold I give, or will give unto you power to tread on ferpents and fcorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, &c.*

The Confequences of dropping the Figure, fatal.

§ 5. When we attentively confider the infinite injury that would be done to mankind, by changing the *Profopopeia* into real character, we fhall fee abundant reason to retain it : for verily not to do it, would open a deplorable fcenery of evil upon us.—The effects which have been afcribed to the devil, are beyond meafure aftonifhing ! they are fuch as would confound all our ideas of God's moral government and providence ; and would either lead us, with the fceptic and infidel, to deny any divine interpofition at all ; or elfe, with the idolatrous Eafterns, to pay homage to an imaginary *devil*, in order to keep him in the better temper towards us.—The idea of *demonifm* had actually enflaved the whole world, and the power of the priefts became enormous, under the fpread of this conception. For, verily, from this resource, the *Pagan*, *Jewish*, and *Chriftian magicians* have been fo plentifully fupplied, with the horrid ability of practifing
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their incantations and forceries with so much success. Which we thus account for, as all imposture implies the putting on a semblance of reality; so it was that idolatry did ascribe perfections which do really belong to the one God, to other beings who have not those perfections. In like manner, as the *Deity* had, in all the earlier ages of the world, made known his will to mankind, and did execute many of his purposes by the ministrations of his good angels, *who are mighty in strength, who do his commands, and hearken to the voice of his word*; hence the depraved imaginations of mankind have invented evil angels, and spirits, employed in a thousand silly services; and by apparitions and uncommon impressions disturbing the quiet of persons, haunting their houses, and impertinently intruding into their most hidden retreats. Stories of such apparitions, have had their support, upon the credit given to an hierarchy of evil spirits, or of invisible beings. And young minds have been early terrified with the mischievous opinion, so that their prejudices have not been removed by any argument or reasoning, from the most able and venerable opposers of superstition.

Necromancy, “the art, or the act of communicating with devils, and by that means of calling up the dead, and conversing with them, by putting questions, and receiving answers;” owes all its extravagance to this very source. And so far has the enchantment
 been

been efficacious, as to gain credit from men of exemplary piety and great learning, in some later ages of the world. At least, they have been persuaded of the truth of those fanciful reports, of the dead appearing either to their friends, or to strangers, and revealing to them some very hidden things.—So very early was this depravity of the human mind as the time of SAUL, who consulted the *witch* of *Endor*, in order to receive instruction from *Samuel*; and by which forcery he was so infatuated, as to fancy he saw the prophet come from the dead.

But how amazing is it, that *witchcraft* and *necromancy* should have obtained any credit, where the gospel-revelation had once spread its informing rays! which has assured us, that there is, there can be no communication open between the living and the dead. See *Matt.* xvi, 26, —*end.* None can be admitted to come from the dead; no, not on that most important errand, of *persuading the wicked to reform*. But the better to account for the arts of *magic* and *forcery* being retained in the professing Christian world, besides the amazing force of imagination, which few have justly calculated; it shall be shewn, that the same pagan policy still operates; which will appear by a citation which I shall make from a lively popish pen, well disposed to rally the craft of the priest.—The paragraph will be found to cut deep into the metaphysical *abscess*, and to lay open the bloated

ed fiction.—“ Among the number of things
 “ alledged against LUTHER, it was said by se-
 “ veral, by way of irony, that he, who had
 “ taken the devil’s advice in overthrowing *mass*,
 “ shewed his gratitude to him, by abolishing
 “ the practice of exorcising, and aimed at level-
 “ ing all the bulwarks which had been raised
 “ to keep out the enemy of mankind. It has
 “ been remarked since, that in all those coun-
 “ tries where *exorcism* has been laid aside, they
 “ have no longer heard of witchcrafts, or of
 “ persons possessed by the devil ; and it has been
 “ said both in word and writing, that the devils
 “ knew little of their own interest, in taking
 “ refuge among the catholics, who alone have
 “ the power of commanding them. It has also
 “ been observed, that there is a prodigious
 “ number of magicians, and possessed people,
 “ in the Romish communion, to this day.—
 “ However, this is too serious a subject to divert
 “ one’s self withal ; for it was certainly a very
 “ melancholy affair, that proved the ruin of
 “ so many families, and the punishment of a
 “ number of unfortunate wretches ; as it is a
 “ great happiness to mankind, that *the courts*
 “ *of justice* in the more enlightened countries
 “ no longer give ear to idle stories of fascina-
 “ tion and magic. Those of the reformed re-
 “ ligion removed this stumbling-block above
 “ *two hundred* years before the catholics, for
 “ which they were accused of striking at the
 “ foundation of the Christian religion ; and
 it

“ it was objected to them, that possessions by
 “ demons and witchcrafts, are generally ad-
 “ mitted by the holy scriptures (o).”

Perhaps there was no degree of strength in the objection ; for the sacred scriptures do not appear, upon careful examination, to teach any such doctrine of demonism, as the Reverend Dr. *Lardner* has shewn, with great energy of reason and argument. His piece has hitherto had no confutation ; and it does not seem that it ever will (p).”

There is yet behind a much more formidable objection to our dropping the personalizing figure ; and that is, the shocking influence which it has upon the morals of mankind, wherever they are supposing a malignant evil being, that is incessantly seducing and betraying them into sin. The very idea of a devil having been too subtle and cunning for us, is a plausible subterfuge for the sinner. He thus makes an apology for himself, *I should not have committed the foul crime, if the devil had not been in me ; or, an overmatch for me.*—But in truth and fact, it is no other than of the nature of delusion for the sinner to say, *the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* In a more just and rational conception of ourselves, we can impeach no being whatsoever of the guilt of our own inattentions, inconsiderations, and irresolutions. For whenever we are tempted so as to commit sin, we

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(o) *Voltaire's Works*, English Edition, 12mo, Vol. IV. p. 63, 64.

(p) See *his Case of Demoniacs*. Compare *Platonism unveiled*, P. 1. Chapter VI.

are then drawn away of our own lusts, and enticed. The serpent that seduced, was verily *within us*, however the object of the appetite or passion was *without us*. That beguiling serpent was no other than the lusting of the passion, or the false playings of imagination.

Any one may plainly perceive, that the idea of a being much *superior* to us in knowledge, sagacity, and penetration, and also invisible, must greatly have the advantage of us ; which cannot be any way consistent with these adorable apprehensions of God, that are inculcated by all the teachings of nature, reason, and revelation. Nor could we know, in any circumstance of crime or folly, how to fix the guilt upon ourselves, so as to urge the repentance with efficacy ; for it will yet remain doubtful with us, whether we shall not be as easy a prey to the next stratagem, played off upon us by the grand deceiver. In a word, the vulgar idea of a *devil*, as a kind of omnipresent being, ever upon the watch, and with abilities superior to our own, and who has an open easy access to the imagination, is what manifestly placeth man upon an *unequal* foot of trial ; and, in spite of all his endeavours, there will be some abatements made to the aggravations of crime, in any relenting sinner.

To ascribe the wickedness of men, to the agency or influence of an invisible evil being, is, evidently in some measure, to alleviate the guilt, and soften the demerit of the criminal. When therefore,

therefore, in any *court of judicature*, we hear the prisoner arraigned, as *not having the fear of God before his eyes, and being moved by the instigation of the devil* to cast off that fear, it is impossible we should do other than consider it, as, in some degree, extenuating the guilt; and forbidding the rigour of the sentence of condemnation.—And especially, where the *culprit* has been educated in a deplorable ignorance of his duty, both towards God and man.

On the contrary, when the temptation is conceived of under the figurative idea of *Satan* or the *devil*, which will literally intend an accusing guilty conscience, we shall be able to discern, with precision, the object of a virtuous care and watchfulness; and shall discover it to be within our own power to guard against the malignant impression. We are only to see to it, that the appetite, passion, and imagination be regular, and reasonable in all their operations. It thence follows, by a fair deduction, that in the moral system, the consequences of dropping the figure would be fatal. And this might be demonstrated by innumerable facts from history, where men have adopted the notion of *two* unoriginated evil principles, the one good, the other evil, and have divided between them the government of the world: or rather, have made them two hostile warring powers, in eternal enmity towards each other.

Popular prejudice has, every where, been industriously cultivated.

§ 6. However the fiction may have been exposed, or the superstitious system ridiculed, there has been unwearied immense pains taken to preserve the prejudice, and to spread the thick cloud of ignorance over the understanding of the vulgar. The scheme of depraving the minds of men, has been shockingly ancient and universal. The most celebrated *pagan* philosophers have said all they could in defence of the priestly and political depraving measure. Witness even a *Cicero*, of whose opinion concerning the *religion of his country*, it is thus affirmed, by a very capable pen:—" He could
 " not possibly harbour a thought of the truth
 " or divinity of so absurd a worship: and the
 " liberty which not only he, but all the *old*
 " writers take, in ridiculing the character of
 " their gods, and the fictions of their infernal
 " torments, shews, that there was not a man
 " of liberal education who did not consider it
 " as *an engine of state, or political system*, contriv-
 " ed for the uses of government, and to keep
 " the people in order: in this light *Cicero* al-
 " ways commends it as a wise institution, sin-
 " gularly adapted to the genius of *Rome*, and
 " constantly inculcates an adherence to its
 " rites, as the duty of all good citizens."
 " *Polybius* also thought the superstitions a
 " wise contrivance for the giddy multitude,
 " who

“ who are agitated by illicit desires, wild
 “ resentments, and violent passions; so that
 “ he thought no way was left of restraining
 “ them, but by the help of secret terrors, and
 “ tragical fictions.—Though such a scheme
 “ would not be necessary, if a society could be
 “ formed of wise men only (q).”

But we are not to wonder at such defence
 of superstition; “ since religious founders have
 “ ever adapted their doctrine to the notions
 “ already received in their respective coun-
 “ tries. *Zoroaster*, in an happy climate, direct-
 “ ed his chief adoration to the sun, and to fire,
 “ his image upon earth.—The *Egyptians*, fed
 “ by the *Nile*, to moisture and the power of
 “ vegetation.—*Zamobris*, under a frozen sky,
 “ connected his rites with the joys of wine,
 “ and promised to his *Scythians*, like a Saxon
 “ *Odin*, an eternal revel with himself in a noble
 “ hall, as a reward of their piety and virtue.
 “ —So *Numa* adopted the *Sabine* and *Tuf-*
 “ *can* gods, the ancient deities of *Italy*, and
 “ only added some *new* divinities, and such a
 “ form of worship as the exigencies of his new
 “ founded city seemed to require (r).”

“ Even a *Plato*, (called divine) fearing the
 “ fate of *Socrates*, veiled the greatest truths
 “ under a cloud of *fictions* and *enigmas*, which
 “ proved a snare to his disciples: and not
 “ having courage enough to oppose common
 “ error, made of three properties of the creator
 “ so

(q) Dr. Middleton's Life of *M. T. Cicero*, Vol. III. p. 345.

(r) *Blackwell's Court of Augustus*, p. 30.

“ (s) so many gods, or divine persons ; com-
 “ plying with the theology of that age, wherein
 “ powers, passions, properties, &c. fortune,
 “ fate, justice, love, virtue, honour, safety,
 “ concord, &c. were not otherwise conceived
 “ of than under the idea of so many deities ;
 “ so much was the plurality of gods the philo-
 “ sophy *a-la-mode*, even among the wisest.”

“ It is difficult,” said *Plato*, “ to find the
 “ father of this universe ; and when you have
 “ found him, it is not permitted to speak of
 “ him to the people.” So *Clemens Alexandrinus*
 has observed.

And *Minutius Felix* made the same observa-
 tion after *Clemens*.—“ *Plato*, says he, spake more
 “ clearly of God than any other philosopher,
 “ and his doctrine would be perfectly divine,
 “ if he had not spoiled it by a mixture of the
 “ religion established by the laws of his country.
 “ For, according to *Plato* in *Timæus*, God is
 “ father of the world, even by his being God.
 “ He is creator of the soul, and of all things,
 “ as well celestial as terrestrial : but that philo-
 “ sopher does previously advertise, that it is
 “ difficult to find him, because of his infinite
 “ power ; and that when he is found, it is im-
 “ possible to explain one’s self concerning him
 “ to the common people.” —“ Why impossible?
 “ Because dangerous (t).”

Civil tyranny, the pride of power in princes,
 and governors, who have had no reverence of
 the

(s) Viz. *Wisdom, Power, and Goodness.*

(t) See *Platonism unveiled*, P. I. Chap. VII.

the majesty of the people, has always had the homage of the mind within their claims, as we are informed from those very ancient books of *Esther* and *Daniel*. Lessons of better policy might have been learned from those invaluable monuments by all princes ; and have convinced them, “ that the rights of conscience, are much too sacred for the sway of any civil sceptre.”

The vulgar prejudices, the delusions of the people, have not only been industriously propagated in ancient times ; but a *divine* of the English establishment, speaking of modern times, has a remarkable observation ; for having quoted Lord *Shaftsbury*, as saying, “ It is not “ *principle* but *taste* which governs mankind ;” —has to this purpose expressly said, that “ In “ most countries religion deserves no other “ name, than that of *absurdity made sacred* (u).”

Should we critically examine into the most plausible arguments ever made use of in defence of those measures which propagate and support *superstition*, we shall find them to have every where closely copied the *pagan* policy. The methods at all times taken to confirm the absurd opinion and to countenance the glaring fiction, have been extremely similar ; and this, to the open insult, and inexpressible injury of a plain, simple, rational, and divine system ! But, it must be owned, at the same time, the device has been greatly to the emolument of priestly power, and of a civil tyranny exercised over the people.

Much


(u) Dr. *Brown*, in his Essay upon Ridicule.

Much to our purpose also is that remark made by Dr. *T. Burnet*. — “Popery, says he, descends too much to the capacities of the people, not only accommodating itself to their ignorance, but to their superstitious affections. Whereas we ought rather to exalt human nature as high as possible, and so to bring the people to truth, and to a sound understanding (*x*).” And again, he says, “Pious frauds prejudice discerning men about religion (*y*).”

The same observations hold equally good against all Protestants, who propagate or encourage absurd opinions and superstitious observances. They are not a whit less affected by the argument than the papist can be; since such measures sadly deprave the minds of the the vulgar, indulge their ignorance, countenance their folly, and hinder the spread of truth in the world. Strange it is, men should take it into their heads, that they *are wiser than God!* and can improve greatly upon the *rules* he has given, to guide and govern the faith, model the worship and spirit, or attemper the manners of mankind! But when *the Sons of Demetrius* are able thus to harangue one another, — “*Sirs, you know that by this craft we have our wealth;*” it may be confidently expected, that no reasoning, nor evidence, however conclusive, can avail to produce a reformation in the church system.

CHRIST’S

(*x*) *State of departed Souls*, p. 172.(*y*) *Ibidem*.



CHRIST'S *Temptation in the Wilderness, a Proof of a divine Mission.*

AMONG the many wonderful narratives given by *Evangelists*, in their history of the life of Christ, that which respects his temptation in the wilderness, is, perhaps, one of the most useful, important, universally instructive, and interesting: since it contains those first principles which inform the understanding, and give the passions of the human heart all their ability, or power of resistance.

The theme chosen to be discoursed upon, is in *Matth. iv. 1.*—*Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.*

The varied scenery of trial, into which this Text does usher us, is, what gave to the man Christ Jesus that finished idea of human probation, which qualified him for his public ministry. Both *St. Mark* and *Luke* do mention the fact; but *St. Mark* enters not into the scenical address with any precision: he only says, *Jesus was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan: and was with the wild beasts, and that angels ministered to him.* They all agree in placing the event immediately after our Lord's receiving the spirit at his baptism. And here an emphasis should be laid; for the *Hebrew* gospel, read by the *Nazarenes*, has it, *the whole fountain of the Holy Ghost descended, and rested upon him (x),*
which

(x) *Jones's Canon, Vol. I. p. 345.*

30 *Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness*

which very appositely accords with the language of ancient prophecy, *viz.* that of *pouring out the Spirit.* *Prov.* i. 23. *Isa.* xlv. 3. *Joel* ii. 28, 29. *Zech.* xii. 10. *Mal.* iii. 10.

It also agrees with the *Harbinger's* testimony, that God did not give him the spirit by measure, *John* iii. 34. Indeed *St. Luke* expressly says, that as *Jesus* had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him, *Luke* iii. 21, 22. Whatever might be the visible symbol, the communication was such as did divinely impress his mind; insomuch that he found himself urged to retire into the wilderness. Now it would be very unnatural to suppose this urgency any other than a divine impulse: it certainly must have been the result of that plentiful *pouring out* of the spirit upon him; for, the additional powers now given him, are found to be much superior to any of his former abilities.

The text farther says, that the end of his being thus led by the spirit into the wilderness, was, that he might be tempted of the devil; i. e. he is, in this desert retirement, to explore the whole nature, extent, and energy of the alluring temptation. In those picturesque scenes, he would discern, from the form and manner of address, what kind and degree of influence the most specious sensitive good has on the appetite, passion, and imagination of man. And in order to a balance against the fruitful resources of the enchanting lures, he has the most ample display

display of light and truth that can possibly be in aid of an human mind, in the most urgent and perilous trial (*a*). Divine wisdom saw it meet, that he, who was to deliver mankind from the evil of this present world, should be made familiarly acquainted with the most insinuating address of the sensitive good; in order to qualify him for giving the best possible cautionary instructions in the methods of resistance; even by an exhibition of those principles and maxims which effectually guard the soul from the malignity of evil.

N. B. The spirit, or divine communication of ability, did not urge him to go into the wilderness, in order to *incline* him to comply with temptation. In this sense, *God tempteth no man*; but the design was, to give him the opportunity of approving his piety and devotion, by a diversified scenery of allurements from the sensitive good.

To *proceed*, the personalizing of the temptation, by calling it *the devil*, methinks should not be looked upon as any thing strange, new, or uncommon; for vulgar conception and opinion had long before this ascribed to evil spirits a power both to abscess the minds and possess the bodies of men. *Plutarch* tells us, “ That the
“ method of cure was by the repetition of the
“ Ephesian names, which were only a few barbarous unmeaning words: such as *aski*, *kata*
“ *taski*, *aix*, *tetrax*, &c. and these devils, which
they

(*a*) Consult *Letter writ*, &c. 1730. Section 3d, of the first Postscript.

“ they cast out, had different names, according
 “ to the different symptoms of the persons sup-
 “ posed to be possessed. So that if the pos-
 “ sessed made a noise like an horse, the devil
 “ in him was *Neptune*; if they imitated a goat,
 “ it was the *mother of the gods*; if they kicked
 “ and foamed, it was *Mars*; if they spoke
 “ feebly, it was *Apollo Nomius* (b).” Assuredly,
 demonism had a wide spread, and prevailed all
 over the East; and allegory, from the very
 first, had been familiar to the Jewish people (c).
 This appears from their venerable historian,
Moses, who in the beginning of his history,
 has described lust under the hieroglyphic of a
 serpent, *Gen. iii. 14*. And not only *Moses*, but
 the prophets, have dealt much in allegory. They
 were wont to accommodate themselves, in their
 teachings, to the idioms of universal language.
 The same thing may be likewise affirmed of
 the teachings of our Lord and of his apostles.—
 Thus much may suffice for the personalizing of
 temptation (d).

Before we proceed to examine into the scenery, we should shew some reasons why our Lord was to remain in the wilderness *forty days* without food.

And may we not consider it as perfectly agreeable to the majesty of the divine presence, that when and whilst the plan of God's purposes of grace and mercy was delivering and contemplating, he should sustain and support the
 animal

(b) See *Weston's* Heathen Rejection of Miracles considered, p. 233.

(c) See *Dr. Lardner's* Case of Demoniacs.

(d) The Reader will recollect the *previous Dissertation*.

animal system of that his minister, who, as a saviour, was to proclaim the divine scheme to the world? The case of our Lord's fasting, would essentially differ from all preternatural instances of *extacies* and *catalepsies*; as, in the former case, the mind has some sort of visionary scenes, originated from a disordered imagination: and as in the latter case, there does not appear to have been, during the impression, any train of mental perceptions; none that are recoverable by the disordered person. Some instances of these diseased have been very remarkable for their having taken no food of a long season. But they essentially differ from the case before us, where the faculties of the mind were engaged in an incessant, regular, and divinely beneficial attention.

Again, the forty days fasting, as it must be miraculous, so it would give to our Lord a demonstration of the principles of being and life, as they are absolutely independent on this material system.

And *again*, it must be an accomplishment of prophecy, as it would prove him to have a resemblance to *Moses*, who had foretold, that God would raise up to his people *a prophet like to himself*; who, we are told, did neither eat nor drink for forty days, when he received the law at *Sinai*.

We may now take a distinct, orderly, or methodical view of the successive sceneries of temptation: and they have long appeared to

me as altogether visionary: Like to many of which we read, that did concern *Isaiab*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and others of the prophets. I shall only mention one or two of *Ezekiel's* visions: chap. iii. 14. *So the spirit lift me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness.* Chap. viii. 3. *And the spirit lift me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem.* Chap. xi. 1. *The spirit lift me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the Lord's house.*

Very learned and judicious commentators are wont to understand all these scenes as visionary; and not as local, real removals of the prophet. In one text it is expressly said, that the prophet was carried, *in the visions of God*, to *Jerusalem*. In like manner, from the face of gospel-history, it does not appear, that the man Christ Jesus ever changed his wilderness retreat, during the temptations: for, at the instant they are said to finish, he is found in the wilderness, by angels, who come to minister unto him.

Upon the whole, *the temptations of the devil*, are figuratively so called; and in the narrative before us, could import no more than that variety of exciting objects, which are perceived through the medium of sense, else are painted upon the fancy or imagination. But then, they are what have, in their very nature, a repugnancy to truth and reason. Those allurements which address our Lord in the desert,
will

will be found to have the following arrangement.

At the end of forty days Jesus is an hungred, verse 2.

Thence the temptation has this soothing language to the keen appetite:—*If thou be a son of God, create thyself bread.*—If thou be a son of God; this did not, could not intimate his being any other than a man, forasmuch as the humanity plainly appears by the answer, *Man lives not by bread alone.* The same idea is preserved throughout the several refutations. So ver. 7. *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*—Ver. 10. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.*—Even a VOLTAIRE could observe, that *son of God* signified no more with the Hebrews, than a good and virtuous man; as *son of Belial*, or of *Satan*, signified a wicked man (e). And here one might observe, that the terms, *only begotten son of God*; and the *first begotten from the dead*, are peculiar to the man Christ Jesus, as he was the *only* son of prophecy and promise, *in whom all nations should be blessed!* And as God raised him up from the dead to an *universal dominion*. For to no other being has the father ever thus said, *Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.*—The *first-begotten*, i. e. the chief of those raised from the dead. The temptation says, *If thou be the son of God*, thou hast then an ability of creating thyself bread. Nor is there any reason can be given why so great a favourite of heaven should want bread. It surely

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(e) *Voltaire's Works*, 12mo, Vol. IV. p. 102. English Edition.

must be consistent with the voice of reason and nature, that thou shouldst, not only now, but on any future occasion, employ those powers which heaven has conferred upon thee, for the purpose of supplying thine own natural wants, or animal cravings.—Thus plausible and urgent is the temptation.

How is it repulsed and overcome? From this kind of reasoning: *q. d.* “ The extraordinary divine power communicated to me, I do plainly perceive, is not intended to be so exercised: it is only to be exerted and applied in evidence of my heavenly mission, before proper witnesses and on proper occasions. I shall always therefore conform myself to the will of God, in making use thereof: for he has shewn me, *that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God does man live.*”

The temptation thus appears to have had to do with that first natural principle in man, *viz.* a love of life; and is here put in its fullest vigour and strength, by the immediate excitement, as we may well conclude, from the health of our Lord's bodily constitution, its perfect freedom from distemper and excess, added to the supernatural power vouchsafed him. We likewise, in his after-history, discover the pious principle to be very active and illustrious in him, whilst he is under a reverse scenery of trial, even when he can say of the bitter cup presented to him, *not my will, but thine be done.* Though at the same time he
well

well knew, that no man had power to take away his life, but by his own consent.—This fundamental principle of piety and devotion, preserved in its vigour, will indeed secure in any other mind whatsoever, all the decencies and decorums of humanity, during the painful or perilous impression of any kind of physical evil.

Nevertheless, it must be owned, that the animal cravings of hunger and thirst, in an healthy body, are ordinarily very active and intense: the energies, when heightened, are extremely urgent and impetuous. This is nature.—But where the *stimulus* is gone, else become weak and languid, there is an indication of disorder and distemperature in the animal frame. As, *on the other hand*, when the healthy appetite returns regularly with the seasons of taking refreshment, the high relish given to our food is deemed one of our most sensible fruitions. Moreover, the being seasonably furnished with the means of commodiously gratifying the healthy appetite, we at all times reckon matter of thankfulness and praise! yea, of supreme delight in the munificent fatherly hand, *which satisfieth the desires of every living thing!*

All this while, we are obliged to own; that the animal life is not, in a moral sense, the first principle either of man's existence or his fruition; for the moral, spiritual, vital principle in him, is of a quite different nature, and in-

tends the eager, intense desire after rectitude. —It verily imports, an habitual solicitude of standing upon good terms with God and ourselves. The intellectual food, the heavenly *manna*, which feeds this divine principle, is incessantly and universally given; and may be as constantly and universally gathered, by such who hunger and thirst after righteousness. —What a learned and excellent writer therefore said of the other state of the good man, may as well be applied to this: —“The eternal truth, “the intellectual light, is diffused throughout “the universe, but is received only according “to the measure of the receiver: and souls, “according to the largeness of their knowledge, “and the purity of their affections, become “more capacious of the deity, and take larger draughts of celestial rays and celestial “inspirations (f).”

This gives the condition of all the truly pious, with the just stating of his faculties, powers, and passions; and it is the healthy spiritual principle, which is durable, immutable, and immortal. A most significant sense of that divine aphorism, *Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God does man live.*

Thus have we acquired an idea of the first temptation: and also of the way in which our Lord did resist and overcome the allurements.

II. The next scenery which opens upon us, should seem yet farther to try *his* humility and devotion,

(f) Dr. T. Burnet's *State of departed Souls*, p. 325.

devotion, who so lately has been invested with a most amazing energy of divine power, *i. e.* it would prove whether he will avoid all ostentatious vanity, during the exercise thereof. The *visionary* scene which the text presents us with, is that of the *temple*, himself placed on a wing of the wonderful fabric, taking a survey of the holy city :—“ It is very probable,” says *L'Enfant*, “ that his situation, or the wing on “ which he stood, was the *king's gallery*, which, “ according to *Josephus*, was of such a prodigious height, that no one could look down “ from the top of it, without making himself giddy.” *Antiq. B. XV. Chap. 14. (g)* The same historian also tells us, that the altitude of the temple was 120 cubits.

Some writers have strangely supposed our Lord was locally removed from the wilderness to the *Temple*, at the time of its being crowded with people. But, besides the great improbability of this being the time of any public festival, there seems undoubted evidence of the scene being only *visionary*; a piece of city-perspective was presented before him, when, and whilst he was alone in the desert. —Nevertheless, I am humbly of opinion, that this city-perspective was much heightened with a surrounding crowd about the temple, as at a passover. And my reasons are these, were it only to have tried the ability he had of confiding in divine providence, without any other excitement in the trial, any precipice in the

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wilderness

(g) See *L'Enfant's Note* on Ver. 5.

wilderness might as well have served such an intention: but inasmuch as the *Temple* is chosen, there must have been some obvious reasons for such representation: and it is natural for us to suppose, such surrounding circumstance would be the most expressive and striking. This idea seems natural, when it is considered, that these several visionary scenes, were manifestly intended, proleptically, to instruct our Lord in the whole plan of operation, and application of that divine spirit, or power, which was communicated to him at his baptism; and also to point out to him, what sort or kind of exertions were to be avoided.

But with what great propriety is this representation made, when we consider this, as the national *rendezvous* of the people, where he was to divulge his heavenly message and mission; and where his historians do report of him, that he did, in a most astonishing manner, once and again, shew his *authority* at their high festivals! Hence, I should conclude, that it is but natural to conceive of this scenery, so circumstanced, as full of instruction.

Some indeed have so far indulged to their imaginations, as to suppose, by the opening of the Temple-scene, "That a real *devil* was wanting to have a solution of his doubts; which solution he would have had, if, in making the experiment, *Jesus* had dashed himself in pieces (g);" *i. e.* by casting himself down from the battlements, in compliance with the temptation.

(g) See Dr. Macknight's Harmony, p. 27. 1st Edit.

temptation. But what wonder at this absurdity, when the same writer does not scruple to tell us, “ That all the time Jesus was in the
 “ wilderness, *the CHIEF of the evil spirits*, as
 “ being best qualified for the undertaking, be-
 “ set him with a multitude of temptations, in
 “ order, if possible, to discover who he was (*b*).”

By the view taken of the subject, I am constrained to say, that not any thing could appear more groundless and fanciful than that of imagining a *chief devil* so employed.—And how such an hypothesis can ever conciliate the credit of mankind to the gospel-history, is not of very easy conception.

The design of the temptation undoubtedly was, “ That of our Lord’s shewing a confi-
 “ dence in the divine care, by an open disre-
 “ gard to the laws of nature, or that of central
 “ gravitation,—*if thou be the son of God, cast thy-
 “ self down.*” It is an observation I was favour-
 ed with, from a learned and venerable friend,
 “ That Dr. S. CLARKE has mistaken the sense
 “ of the temptation, in his paraphrase on *Luke*
 “ iv. 9. where he makes it say,—*If you be
 “ the son of God, give an evident proof of YOUR
 “ POWER, and throw yourself down from this high
 “ place* : which cannot be the meaning ; since
 “ our Lord’s safety is put as solely depending
 “ upon the protection of divine providence.”

“ Whereas, the temptation would rather
 “ say, *if you be the son of God, give an evi-
 “ dent proof of your absolute dependence on
 “ divine*

(*b*) See Dr. Macknight’s Harmony, p. 35, 36. Note.

“divine providence and care, by throwing
“yourself down from this high place.”

The visionary temptation seems to suggest what sort of excitement our Lord should have, in the course of his ministry, to render himself popular, and to raise an universal admiration of him.—It speaks this very language; “Should you take such a measure, at the time
“of the public festivals, you may do it with
“the utmost safety and success; you need not
“doubt of the aid of the invisible ministring
“spirits, who will preserve you from all
“possible harm; forasmuch as a promise is
“made of such divine protection, and none
“surely have so much reason of reliance, as
“the *Messiah*.” Verses 3d and 4th.

I have thus understood the temptation, as reflecting light and instruction on the after-conduct of our Lord; or, as prophetically shewing him what would be the strongest excitements to the exertion of that power, which was to attest the divinity of his mission, in the course of his public ministrations. And verily, this seems, to me, to give the design of every of the visionary scenes. *For example*; the *former* would shew the impropriety of his miraculously creating bread for his own private gratification, or amusement; though he should once and again perform similar acts of power, in multiplying or magnifying bread. So he did, when *he fed thousands with a few loaves*.—And as to the *second* visionary scene, though he

he must not perform feats of flying through the air, to surprize and entertain the multitudes; yet he may walk on the sea in the night, when it shall be proper so to confirm the faith of his disciples.—However, such exertions of power, such acts of sovereignty over the elements, *bushing the storm by a word*, were not proper for more public exhibitions.—And if we farther cast our eyes on the *next* scenery, we shall find it extremely proper to guard his mind against a desire of swaying a civil sceptre, however the people should be desirous of making him their king.

We may now proceed to a more distinct examination of the divine ratio of this scenical exhibition.—And the *Temple*, I should presume, is proposed rather than any other building, because of its having been the *shechinah*, or ancient residence of the glory; where the divine presence had been understood as more *special* in its manifestation. On the holiness of which place he is excited to have the greater regard, it being, of all others, the most convenient for an extensive display of the sacred character he sustained.—However specious this suggestion, it is thus rejected, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*; i. e. Thou shalt neither presumptuously put thy life in peril, for the sake of exciting popular admiration; nor ostentatiously, to shew thy *singular* claim to divine protection.

It could not at all consist with the design of our Lord's mission, that he should *cast himself down* from a wing of the temple; forasmuch as in his thus controuling the laws of nature, the people would no longer have considered him as a *man*; but, as of a *superior* order of beings. So that it would weaken and confound, and not conciliate or confirm their faith in him, as the promised *Messiah*. Instead of leading the spectators to court a familiar converse and connexion, they would have looked upon him with consternation, and too much amazement!

The measure, moreover, must have tended to countenance *superstition*. For his enemies would have ascribed the wondrous atchievement, or strange preservation, to an occult virtue, wholly derived from their temple. We may therefore be abundantly assured, that miraculous power is not to operate for any vain or wanton purposes of enchanting *magical* appearances. Men must be able to discern, or infer, the meaning of such divine operations.

A *third* visionary scene, presented to the mind of Jesus, is what would excite the lustings of every passion, as it proposes a plentiful provision for every sensitive, every animal indulgence. — Which is thus done, *viz.* “ From
 “ an *exceeding high mountain* he has a draught
 “ of all the empires of the world, with every
 “ appendage of riches, power, magnificence,
 “ elegance, and luxury. — He sees the homage
 “ paid

“ paid to princes and potentates ! He explores
“ their vast dominion ! At the same time, the
“ power communicated to him, is shewn to
“ be equal to an universal conquest ; and that
“ if he will but fall down and do homage at
“ the feet of AMBITION, his claim to univer-
“ sal sovereignty shall be incontestible.” Ver.
8, 9.

It is exceedingly strange, that any reader should once doubt of this scene being *visionary*, when, in the nature of the thing, it could not be otherwise : for such is the spherical figure of our globe, that it was impossible he should have a more extensive, natural perspective than the sensible horizon would afford. Allowing him to have been *a man, made like to his brethren*, his prospect could not have been more extensive. And, *on the contrary*, if we ascribe to him the essential faculties and powers of an infinite understanding, there was no need at all that he should be shewn these alluring scenes ; or that any being whatever should make him a tender of all earthly kingdoms, since there could not have been in the proposal any thing like the shadow of a temptation. Nay, had his nature been *superior* to the human, even one of the angelic, or celestial order ; it is not at all probable, that such an alluring offer should affect the desire, or endanger the depravity of a spirit, already honoured with a stated attendance on the presence of the glory.

But

But whilst we consider him as *man*, we can trace the temptation ; and see how at present, as well as in prophetic vision, it did afterwards accost him, when the Jews do so eagerly solicit, that he would take the sceptre. This was an effort, really, and in fact, made upon him, which had only been before represented in vision ; and, in our calculation of its energy, we are persuaded that that divine communication of power, was what left the man Christ Jesus *free* in all his agencies and volitions : for he tells his disciples, “ that, if “ he chose to do it, *he could pray the father, and “ he would give him more than twelve legions of an- “ gels.*” How sure then must have been his universal conquests, with such a superiority to all human force !—His *freedom*, moreover, appears in each and every of the miracles which he wrought ; for in the application of that power, he invariably discovered a most exemplary benevolence.

N. B. If I am not mistaken, in the wilderness sceneries of allurements, the communicated power is not so properly in *aid* of our Lord's repelling and vanquishing temptation, as in giving vigour and energy to that address. We do not perhaps enter at all into the spirit of this narrative, if we leave out that *singular* degree of trial which it was to the man Christ Jesus, to preserve a dignity and decorum of behaviour, whilst wearing *the form of God!* or whilst distinguished from all mankind,

kind, by his having *the spirit without measure!*

How then did our Lord repel, so as to overcome, in this last scenery?—Thus:—In the divine directory, he saw this to be a first, capital precept, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*—Upon which we may suppose him reasoning in some such manner,—“ The unlimited power committed
“ to me, and to be exercised by me, is not for
“ the purpose of *seeking mine own glory*; but it
“ is incumbent on me to *seek the glory of him*
“ *that sent me*, in all the exertions of it. For
“ verily, all beings whatsoever do constant-
“ ly owe supreme homage to the one God: and
“ it cannot consist with my character or mis-
“ sion, to do any thing discordant with the
“ first principle of all religion. And although
“ I now plainly perceive, the idea, in the po-
“ pular conception and expectation of the *Mes-*
“ *siah*, to be that of a temporal prince, who
“ shall sway an universal sceptre! Yet, this is
“ not conformable to the plan of my almighty
“ father; nor does it at all correspond with the
“ nature of that kingdom I am going to erect,
“ *which is not of this world.*—The professed end
“ therefore of all my ministrations must be, to
“ take off the affections of mankind from earth-
“ ly, and to raise them to heavenly things.”

This seems to be the spirit of the victory which our Lord gained over this allurements; and does provide us with an interpretation of
that

that capital precept, which is full of divine instruction.

Temptation not finding any thing to fasten upon in the breast of Jesus, the historian adds, *Then the devil leaveth him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto him, Ver. 11.* St. Luke has it, *When the devil had ended all his temptations, he departed from him for a season.* Accordingly we find, that the next remarkable scenery of trial, was when he began his humiliations, or when his sufferings were near approaching; of which he said, *This is their hour, and the power of darkness,* i. e. the hour in which his enemies would be gratified. We read of no other urgent attacks during the time *that he appeared in the form of God.* For his wisdom and sagacity were manifestly an over-match for the craft and cunning of those who sought to ensnare him. And such was the presence of *God with him,* they could not lay a single hand upon him, *till his hour was come.* But when once the divine power was suspended or withdrawn, the gloomy, painful, and agonizing endurances took place. Which, we find, he sustained with a greatness of mind worthy the *beloved son of God.*

Thus I have understood the doctrinal instruction of these trying visionary scenes. Should it be asked, "How the disciples became acquainted with the above solitary address of temptation?"

We

We might give a satisfactory solution, by saying, that after our Lord's resurrection, during his forty days converse with his disciples, *he spoke to them of the things which pertain to the kingdom of God*, Acts i. 3.—Doubtless he would not fail to explain and illustrate those grand events, which did most significantly relate to his own divine mission, and to its plenary evidence. Among others, the preparatory temptations in the wilderness could not be omitted.

Some observations that are useful may be made, from the above view now taken.

Obs. I. Our Lord's retreat from human society, was never intended to encourage the *monkish, ascetic, or hermetic* life. The end of his wilderness-retirement was of a very extraordinary nature, and peculiar to himself. It cannot therefore, with any reason, be interpreted as an example for the imitation of his disciples. His forty days fasting had a miraculous support; and it did demonstrate to him, that, in fact, he was the very *Messiah* prophesied of, who was to be the *light and life* of mankind. And yet, in the ignorant and dark ages of the church, among other gross superstitions, *Lent-fastings* were instituted, and so much merit too ascribed to those ridiculous observances, as to make them, in the eye of the vulgar, important and necessary. Herein men, called *Christians*, have exceeded the *Jew* him-

self in their superstitions. For though his law-giver did fast forty days on the mount, we never read of that people once dreaming of such fasting as exemplary: for, as stupid as they ever were, they plainly saw it was no other than a supernatural support given to *Moses*, in proof of his divine mission. And, with respect to our Lord's retreat from human society for forty days, it was apparently in order to qualify him for the most beneficial public ministrations; so that the *monk* and *hermit* have nothing which they can find in the wilderness-retreat, to countenance their unnatural and useless withdrawments from the social and civil life. Such nests of drones, have, of a truth, ever been *nuisances*, a reproach and disgrace to humanity!

Obj. II. The compass which is here given to temptation, is proportionate to those singular great abilities which were divinely communicated to our Lord. For they comprehend in them all the address that can possibly be made to the heart of man, from the earthly and sensible good; and yet, they had no malignant effect on the spirit of this great prophet: for he so armed himself with truth, as to escape all its malignancy. No lustings were excited in him, with any effect: no wildness, wantonness, nor irregularity in his imagination: neither would he admit the allurements to fasten in the least upon him. This he
would

would not do, though in the address there was every thing that could deprave the passion, or gratify the animal inclination in man. There was in it all the possible excitement that could arise from the world; and which an apostle would call, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; which is all that is of the world; and is not of the father.*

Even that most artful veil or *covering* of lust, I mean the factitious, delusive mask of religion, which is properly denominated, SUPERSTITION, lay lurking within the scenery of trial; inasmuch as our Lord is plausibly urged to presume on the *holiness of the place*, from whence he was to cast himself down, in order to engage the reverence, and feed the admiration of the people. How very instructive then is this scenery? And how proportionate to his divine ability? Not any thing ever has been, or yet is, found more prevalent among the superstitious, than to place a dependence upon consecrated persons, garments, buildings, elements, and utensils. What efficacious operation is ascribed to indelible character! and to consecrated inclosures!—*The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we.*—But in this scenery, all ostentatious, unreasonable, and inflamed devotions, that would disregard the established laws of nature, are expressly condemned. Every motive and measure that is calculated to seize violently on the passions of the vulgar, are shown to be unjustifiable,

tifiable.—*Seeking honour one of another*, under the guiſe of religion, would ſuit the character of an insolent *proud Pharisee* infinitely better than that of the humble, modeſt Chriſtian.—In a word, it is internal piety, the practical, regular effects of devotion, the eſta bliſhing di- vine moral, which alone can render the mind of man an overmatch for temptation. For verily, *ſuperſtition* is no ſecurity from, but it is a pregnant ſource of evil. Whereas *religion* is a rational, ſpiritual, heavenly profeſſion, which will not countenance any thing in us that is cynical, unſocial, or immoral.

Religion is what will not ſuffer us to take one meaſure that preſumes even on miracle for our ſafety.—The *ſons of piety* indeed know, that the angels of God do encamp about them that fear him; and that they are commiſſioned to do many kind offices for them: but then, this is only whiſt they are found in the way of their duty; *i. e.* in a virtuous uſe and application of all their faculties, powers, and abilities.—Not when they allow the imagination to wax vain and wanton; not when they ſuffer their paſſions to become fooliſh and extravagant.—Since therefore the plan of religion is ſo very plain, that he who runs may read, we are not to expect a licence to ſport ourſelves with miracle. Nay, verily, that divine teſti- mony, at firſt given to the goſpel-ſyſtem, or rather, to the publiſhers of it, will not, in after- ages, admit of any repetition: of which we
may

may be assured, from the heavenly instruction being so perfectly clear and full, as to comprehend in it every possible circumstance of allurement from these sensitive scenes ; and also every method of repelling and overcoming their most urgent impressions.

Obs. III. The history of our Lord's temptation, serves to prove his proper humanity. The varied address supposes a being of similar passions with our own ; and the manner in which he repelled the allurements, is, to us, the most instructive and exemplary. Hence it is, that the apostle, when writing to the Hebrew Christians in *Palestine*, says, *In all things it behoved him to be made like to his brethren.* And again, *that he was in all points tempted as we.* And when writing to the *Galatians*, he says, *that Christ was MADE of a woman, made under the law.* These things could not have been affirmed of him, nor could he, in fact, have been of the *seed of Abraham*, and *family of David*, had he not been specifically, really, and truly man.—His being formed by the immediate power of God, and born of a virgin, can no more be a negative upon his proper humanity, than the creation of the first man and woman was upon theirs.—Nay, so far from being a reason of objection, it seemed necessary that he should be thus distinguished in his mother's conception of him, who had been thus expressly described in pro-

54 *Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness,*
phesy, and who was at that time the *desire of*
all nations!

On the contrary, could we appropriate to him the nature or essence of God, it would be impossible that he should either be man, or that God should be said *to be with him*; unless we may be allowed to cherish absurdities. *Besides,* deity can neither be tempted, nor be liable to delusion. But if, as some have affected to say, *he was God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, for ever*; he must then have been incapable either of temptation or of suffering; because the personal union would absolutely forbid the impression. *Moreover,* there does not appear any compound idea more unnatural and confounding to the human mind, than that of *creator and creature constituting one person*. The preposterous image or idea, has never been exceeded by the grossest pagan idolatry!

For example, we may thus reason upon his painful endurances,—What is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, must be a pure, uncompounded spirit, without parts or passions. And, as a venerable pen has observed, “ The divine
“ nature is compassionate; but not for this
“ reason, because tempted or grieved with mi-
“ sery.—No: it was only the *man Christ Jesus*
“ suffered; and consequently feels a sympathy
“ from hence with his distressed servants.—
“ And it is most certain, that if he sympathizes
“ with

“ with them in their troubles, he must then
“ know them in that nature which only has a
“ fellow-feeling of them: for none can sym-
“ pathize with the miseries of others, which
“ he knows not of. So that they who deny
“ Christ’s humanity in the knowledge of our
“ miseries, do, in effect, deny him to be that
“ compassionate advocate which the scriptures
“ represent him (i) ”—Nay more, he says, that
to attribute deity to Christ, would be to teach
a man to say his creed backward,—“ Since
“ the *apostles creed* takes notice of nothing to be
“ believed concerning Christ, but what belongs
“ to his manhood, (which is strange, if there
“ were any articles relating to his deity, which
“ must be most important) one may venture
“ to deny them all, with this secret unexpress-
“ ed reserve, *viz.* meaning it of the divine
“ nature to which they belong not (k).”

These observations must be allowed to be made with great judgment; and they conclude, that Jesus Christ could be truly, properly, or specifically no other than *a man*. Any different idea could not be conceived from *prophecy*; nor from *gospel-history*; nor from the reports made of him in the *epistles*, by apostles. No one apprehension can we form, from nature or reason, of the deity, but that of a pure,

(i) *Emlyn's Tracts*, Vol. III p. 115.

(k) *Ibidem*, p. 103.

uncompounded, infinite spirit, incapable of any mechanical impression from the created system; for as those perfections we ascribe to him are absolute, he must be immutable and impassible. What then can be more absurd than to suppose the almighty creator and supporter of the universe, in a state of infancy, infirmity, or weakness, or under any painful endurance? A prophet of ancient times would teach us much better, when he says, *Hast thou not heard, the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary!* *Is.* xl. 28.

Take we the judgment of one or two early Christian writers.—*Justin Martyr*, in his Dialogue with *Tryphon*, says, “ Nobody, unless he
“ be out of his wits, will dare to advance, that
“ the *father* and author of all things did quit
“ the heavens, to cause himself to be seen in
“ a small part of the earth.”

And *Tertullian* against *Praxeas*, says, “ That
“ he would not believe that the sovereign God
“ descended into the womb of a woman,
“ though even the scripture itself should say
“ it; he being persuaded, by reason and phi-
“ losophy, that the supreme God is immense,
“ immutable, and invisible (*i*).”

If therefore, under any satanic delusion, we should ascribe proper deity to the person of the man Christ Jesus, whom we are assured was the subject of trial, and who felt the painful sense of hunger, thirst, and weariness; it would be the very same thing as to ascribe to God
weakness,

(i) See *Platonism unveiled*, P. 1. Chap. I.

weakness, infirmity, and mutability! a most unworthy and dishonourable conception of that adorable being, *who knows no variation, nor the shadow of change; and who is from everlasting to everlasting God.*—But would we think religiously of him, we must think rationally; which will not suffer us to admit the monstrous idea, of *creator and creature* constituting one person. All contradictions may as well be reconciled, as such an heterogeneous personal union be once made consistent with nature, truth, and reason.

However, there are not a few who fancy to speak of *his generation as eternal and ineffable*; only because the prophet has asked, *Who shall declare his generation (k)?* When it is evident, he is only painting the wickedness of his people, and intimating their impious, unexampled behaviour towards him, as past, or above *all* description.—We all know what *his generation* was, when we apply the terms to his formation by the immediate power of God, in the womb of his mother; but the iniquity and ingratitude of his people or country towards him, is beyond all conception!

IV. We can very rationally account for the immaculate purity and innocence of *Jesus*, which he preserved inviolate under the temptation, from the proper use he made of all his powers, in religiously attending to the divine illumination. He made a just survey of the whole scenery,

(k) Is. liii. 8.

scenery, he formed a distinct idea of the amiableness of truth, and the deformity of falsehood. He committed no mistake or error in the judgment he made of the design of his divine vouchsafements, or of the nature of his heavenly appointments.—The scheme of providence opens before him, and he explores the whole system of moral obligation. And by the varied visionary address, he is furnished with ability of pointing out to mankind the infinitude of delusion and danger! We can thus account for his spotless character, *who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* The singularity of his character should not raise in us any difficulty of conception, or of credit; since even his harbinger is spotless and irreproachable in his morals, and was held in universal reverence and admiration! Our Lord himself says of him, *he was a burning and a shining light.*—But the blessed Jesus did not, as *John* did, receive *the spirit by measure.*

All the while, we are not to consider the divine communication as of the specific nature, or personal essence of Christ, for it was what left him a man; and did neither destroy the freedom of his attentions, nor the liberty of his volitions.—*Not my will, but thine be done.—I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* Thus continuing a moral agent, in the whole of his behaviour, he became an amiable and most illustrious pattern of universal

versal imitation. How instructive, how attractive that piety, that virtue, that unyielding devotedness, which gave no way under the urgent possible trial, from the most specious and alluring appearances of sensitive good!

V. The ample proof we have of the eastern manner of *personalizing* temptation, should remove all unreasonable prejudice, which has arisen from the doctrine of a figurative *devil*, found in the gospel-history. Not any thing can be more plain, than that the language of the scriptures is accommodate to vulgar conception, and current philosophy. The imagery and figure is usually taken from popular idioms, and we are taught to judge of things spiritual and heavenly, by things corporeal and earthly. So it is that God is said to have *eyes, ears, hands, arms, feet, back-parts*, as well as *face* (1). Nay, the very energy and produce of his power is represented as a work of *labour*; and consequently, we find *rest* ascribed to him, upon a finishing of any of his works.

More than this, the proceedings of his providence are delineated to express various passions of esteem and contempt, love and hatred, delight and indignation. They are likewise made to express the munificence of his goodness, or else the fury of his resentment. And yet, the rational attentive mind most plainly perceives, that the figurative image condescends to vulgar conception, and to the ge-
nius

(1) Consult *Platonism unveiled*, P. I. Chap. IV.

nius and necessity of universal language ; for strictly and properly speaking, the infinite spirit can neither have form nor figure, parts nor passions.

None should take offence at the personalizing figure. So far from it, the sublimity and spirit which it gives to language, is a manifest cogent reason of delight and pleasure. What, for instance, can strike one more than that bold figure, used by *St. Paul*, to describe an epidemical lust, when he calls it, *The GOD of this world, that has blinded the minds of men !* 2 Cor. iv. 4. *viz.* a first desire of the perishing good.— And when he would paint that wanton imagination which gave the infectious spread to idolatry, he stiles this fiend, *the PRINCE of the power of the air, that works in the hearts of the children of disobedience,* Eph. ii. 2. How much authority is there given to the figure, when we meet with it dropping from the lips of the most distinguished divine instructor of mankind, who speaks of the subtle, and of the envious, and mischievous, by denominating them *foxes, serpents, vipers, and children of the devil?*—There is not then any thing, in the figurative stile of the New Testament writings, that will admit of ridicule ; or in the least countenance the sneer of the unbeliever. No : not when the historian says, that *Jesus was led by the spirit of God into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.* The measure we have found capable not only of defence, but also expressive of
of

of the wisdom and goodness, or the holiness of God, and as affording the greatest instruction to mankind.

Obs. VI. The history of the temptations in the wilderness, when rationally understood, is in proof of the divine mission of our Lord. They were intended to qualify him for his public ministry, as they gave him a prophetic view of what would be the compass of his trial from the sensitive allurements.—It does not appear, that during the *forty* days of his fasting, any one part of the scenery which we have considered did at all open before him. We are then to suppose him, during all that time, as under the teachings of the ORACLES;—informed in the nature and design of his office; shewn the whole plan of the divine purposes of grace and mercy to mankind; and having every assurance given him of his being that very *Messiah*, promised to the world before *Abraham* himself had any existence. Every requisite opening would be made to him, of the testimony which should be given to his mission, and of the opposition he was to meet with from the world; and doubtless, he was wholly instructed too in the scenery of his painful endurances. The plan of providence he must clearly understand, in order to his exerting those divine abilities in conformity to its constitution. And the superior honours which should be conferred on him, in reward of a perfect obedience


obedience and submission to the plan of his operations and sufferings, did require such a revelation of the deity, as would not have been made to any other man: which occasioned the evangelist to say, *That no man had seen God any time, but the only begotten son in the bosom of the father, he hath declared.* And our Lord further says, *That no man knoweth the father, but the son, and he to whom the son shall reveal him.* These revelations made to him of the father, in these forty days interview he has with him in the wilderness, would evince to Jesus himself the divinity of his mission, as it qualified him for his ministrations. And it is not reasonable to suppose, that the man Christ Jesus would have been otherwise furnished for executing his heavenly commission, and giving full proof to the world of his superior appointments, as the resurrection and the life, and the final judge. And with regard to the enchanting scenery, which is here described with so much address, as to comprehend in it the utmost compass of alluring temptation, we may challenge the *rejector* of revelation to shew us, in any known system of instruction, from the best moralists or greatest philosophers, any thing equal to its illumination. What celebrated teacher of mankind did ever propose so rational and efficacious a measure of repelling and subduing temptation? Pray, where or when did ever an human genius exist, capable of inventing a moral fable or fiction so full of expression, and with such regular features

tures of a finished divine character? Or where did mankind ever fix an eye upon an human being, to which such a narration of visionary scenes could have been applicable, besides that amiable, distinguished man, whom we call, *the Christ, or Messiah*; and to whom God gave of his spirit *not by measure*?

So far are we then from reckoning this narrative, any sort of objection to the credibility of the gospel-history, that we hold it to be full of convincing evidence of its divinity. And upon the whole, we cannot wonder, that this heavenly instructor should say, *He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, bath one that judgeth him, viz. The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day, John xii. 48.*

I chuse to finish the discourse with a Christian doxology.—“ Now to the one God the
“ father, be supreme homage! and to the man
“ Christ Jesus, whom he has constituted the
“ *one Lord*, be all due reverence, love, and obe-
“ dience. AMEN.”

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DISCOURSES

ON

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AND

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*A Caution against Infidelity: Addressed
to the rising Age.*

YOU who are in earlier life, be pleased to consider yourselves as peculiarly interested in such Caution; since it is probable that the fate of Britain will much depend upon your religious or infidel complexion. And, moreover, the attempt made to throw the light of evidence, cannot be supposed to do much service to the well-informed believer in revelation; and the numerous unbelievers will admit of no information, so thick is the veil over their minds, that however repeatedly their objections have been fully answered, they retain sceptical cavils, and fanciful distastes to the evidence. Even so confirmed are their prejudices, that they can suppose prophecy and miracle never had any existence. Their most admired publications are written with an air of unaccountable assurance.

But the more effectually to intrench themselves, and colour over a fabulous system of infidelity, they have been constrained to deny a providence, and the usefulness of prayer; by virtue of which artifice, they fancy to have gained an acquisition of liberty to relax some bonds of moral obligation. Nay, had these two articles been admitted into their system, rank absurdity would have stared them in the face; and would, with great force, have retorted upon their denial of a divine revelation, because of the manifest consistency there is between them. For we thus argue; if there be constant exertions of an active efficacious providence, a constant acknowledgment of the divine

care and goodness must be reasonable. And if there has been very signal and remarkable interposals of almighty power, in support of the honours of God's moral government, whether in succouring and comforting, or in restraining and rebuking mankind, in past ages, it is but reasonable to conclude, some authentic history of the plan should furnish information concerning the doctrinal instruction of those divine interposals; and especially if some great and interesting events, to nations and people, have been foretold by men whom God raised up to exhort, rebuke, and forewarn; there can be no manner of doubt, but some authentic record would be made for the divine end of shewing man his dependence; exciting in him admiration, gratitude and praise, and encouraging an hope and confidence in the tender care, and unwearied goodness of his supreme almighty Lord.

Allow me farther to inform you, that every mind that thinks, will be apprehensive of a first concern with God; because he is creator, preserver, governor, and judge of all. He hence will infer, an express revelation must have been; of what is his will and law concerning the behaviour of mankind towards him, towards one another, and towards themselves.

Some record must have been made, and somewhere preserved, for public use and benefit, throughout the finishing ages of the world—to which written record it should seem allusion is had, when it is said, *he has magnified his word above all his name!*

Highly reasonable it is to conclude, that the adorable displays of Deity, in past ages, affording most important, divine instruction, must have had
some

some certain conveyance from one generation to another.

But if we admit that of all God's messengers, the man Christ Jesus was the last, even he who should reveal, with fullest evidence, his truth and grace, as a determinate, decisive canon of the final judgment; it will follow, that a public record of those teachings would be necessary for the guidance of mankind, as the great, invariable standard of God's moral rule and government. And this appears yet more conclusive, since those teachings do affirm, that that last revealer of truth and grace, is ordained the visible judge of all.

Notwithstanding such plenary evidence, there is little probability of the unbeliever's attending to the believer's argument; consequently there remains no other encouragement for such a publication as this, but that only, of preventing the spread of a pestilential infection on the young, the yet innocent and undepraved mind. This you will then see to be a well-designed attempt, every way disinterested, humane, and friendly; because of the unwearied endeavours of the Infidel, to inculcate on unguarded, unfurnished minds, a contempt of the sacred scriptures,

We readily own to you, there are too many occasions given the unbeliever to blaspheme, or to cast reproach on the Christian profession, from the very absurd and ridiculous tenets of the far greater number of professors—opinions, which insult the reason of man, and highly dishonour the divine majesty of the New Testament canon—to expose which, is one design of the following discourses.

Nevertheless, in these imaginary, these cobweb subterfuges, the Infidel shelters; persuading himself, that he cannot be less secure of the divine favour, than those of so very deformed a complexion—he is thus led to pour contempt upon all religion, and no wonder; for if that can be said to be *a religion from God*, which countenanceth the rankest absurdity of idea, and the immorality both of principle and practice in its professors; it can never deserve the veneration of men, who form an estimate of its nature and tendency from so stupid and vicious a profession.

The gross ignorance, idolatry, superstition and vice, apparent among nominal Christians, do infinite mischief, both in spreading and confirming infidelity. And yet we may not by any means allow, that these foul spots and blemishes in the Christian profession, are sufficient apologies for that neglect and contempt which is thrown upon the Gospel by the unbeliever—for he certainly would not allow it to be a just and fair conclusion, that because there are many inhuman, many savage minds, worse than brutalized, found in the Pagan world, that therefore the principles of natural religion are of a deformed, disgusting spirit and complexion! or that because great numbers of Jews have forfeited all claim to human confidence, that therefore the Mosaic system of laws is depraving.—And yet, no better is the conclusion drawn by the Infidel against Christianity.

Consider again, that that written Code of instruction, which lays the claim to a divine origination, ought to be judged of as it lies in the sacred volume itself, and not as misrepresented by the temper, spirit, and behaviour of many who profess to receive it as their canon. The reason of which
is

is so very plain and undeniable, that no one of the least understanding can avoid feeling the weight of the argument. But notwithstanding this is the truth of the case, or a fair exposure of the enchanted ground of infidelity, many there are who have clear heads and a good understanding in civil and political affairs, who yet, in the article of religion, do appear egregiously absurd, irrational, and stupid*. It therefore would have been very difficult to account for this contempt thrown upon a revelation well supported by *prophecy* and *miracle*, had not a solution been abundantly given, both by our Lord and his apostle St. Paul. The former affirms, “that every one who doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to it lest his deeds should be reprov’d †;” and that it is a defect in men’s *desire* of doing the will of God. His words are these, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God ‡.”—The other declares, it is because of their worldliness.—His words are,—“But if the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them §.”

All young persons should be very studious to explore the delusive ground of infidelity, and make themselves well acquainted with the infinite importance of the sacred writings; for these writings do, above all others, regulate the heart and life: they make a man wise, and understanding in what the will of the Lord is. Their usefulness is found in an uniformly beneficial, efficacious influence on

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* The great LOCKE made this observation. † Joh. iii. 20.
‡ Joh. vii. 17. § 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

the temper and behaviour of man. A faith in them derives all its saving benefit from that consistency which it gives to all the faculties, powers, and passions of the soul. Herein *youth* will avoid those idle, absurd, and mischievous definitions of faith, invented by church-men and mystics; and they will approve the judgment which they themselves make of the revelation, when they have once brought that canon to the test of reason, truth, and God.

As an encouragement to the youth's paying a religious regard to the Gospel canon, he will find that, in fact, it gives him daily improving and confirming self-satisfaction, a firm and fixed confidence and hope in God, by reason of his spirit, i. e. his word dwelling in him * : a principle that is both dignifying and immortalizing. For " he who keepeth the commandments, [that is, the commandments as they are explained by Jesus] God dwelleth in him, and he in God †."

Such an attainment, we are assured, is not within the reach of infidelity. It cannot: because the man who denies that God did ever make any express revelation of his will, has no ability of judging what are some of his perfections; what the statute-laws of his kingdom; what the terms of man's acceptance; what the purposes of his grace and mercy; because totally ignorant, either of any divine command, or of any divine promise. Neither can he, with any certainty, determine about a future state, or world. He is destitute of every of those great ideas that enrich the mind, and which are derived wholly from an intimate acquaintance with a written revelation.—And yet,
alas!

* Joh. vi. 63.

† 1 Joh. iii. 24.

alas! such is the conceit of the infidel, that he swells, and is quite bloated with his ignorance, pride, and vanity.

Did but young minds form a just conception of the unbeliever, they would see him to be an object of pity and commiseration; for truly that man's condition must be very deplorable, who, in the levity of his spirit, refuses to admit into his own breast, the most cheering, reviving, ravishing rays of divine truth, life, and love. This prayer would therefore be proper for us to put up, both for the infidel and ourselves——“ From hardness of heart, “ and contempt of thy word and commandment, “ good Lord deliver us.”

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE three following discourses were promised when I published *The open address of New-Testament evidence, or three plain monuments, &c.* Those had respect to the external, these to the internal evidence. In both I have endeavoured to state the divine testimony, with all the perspicuity which my understanding would permit, as it lies in the Gospel-canon; and with the freedom and faithfulness of a Christian, who owns no human authority on earth, in the province of religion.

✎ In my former publication, through forgetfulness, I omitted, in the discourse on the Sabbath, that argument for the change of the seventh to the first day of the week, taken, from the effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost on the first day, by Dr. *Lightfoot*, in his observations: see his works, vol. ii. p. 642, 643. Another presumptive argument might also have been adduced, from Mahomet's changing his sabbath from that both of the Jew, and of the Christian.

The supplemental discourse upon the *supernatural conception*, which follows the three internal evidences, has to do with a fact very much ridiculed by the unbeliever, and disputed, if not denied, by some who profess to be believers in the New Testament. If I have not mistaken the sense of the prophecy, that discourse must be allowed to have a place properly given it in this publication.

DISCOURSE I.

On the Unity of Gospel-Principles.

IN an age when vice and infidelity are in the height of profession, even in a christian protestant country, a careful survey of the internal evidence of the truth and divinity of the Gospel system cannot be unseasonable. An attempt shall therefore be made, in three discourses, on the unity of principles, on the original divine purity, and on the universality of the Gospel-canon. If then it shall be made manifest, that the New Testament asserts an unity of all divine principles throughout its teachings; that there is no admixture of human invention in all its system; and that the truth and grace of that new Covenant has an impartial, universal address, there will be found in it all the distinguishing, conclusive characteristics of a revelation from God.

Now it is well known, that the most shocking superstition, and the vilest imposture, have been generated by a departure from genuine Gospel teachings. For it is certain, that Mahomet availed himself of that greater degree of respect which was paid to his *Koran*, on account of his maintaining the unity of God, in opposition to the trinitarian heresy, which 'also gave popery its foundation; and has continued to be the great scandal of the christian profession, even yet more extensively.—This premised,

In the first discourse we shall investigate the unity of Gospel principles, as they are laid down by an apostle. See Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6. “ There is
“ one

“ one body and one spirit, even as ye are called
 “ in one hope of your calling;—one Lord, one
 “ faith, one baptism,—one God and father of all,
 “ who is above all, and through all, and in you
 “ all.”

St. Paul, now a prisoner at Rome, in the year of Christ 61, writes to the church at Ephesus, exhorting the Christians to walk worthy the vocation wherewith they were called, by preserving a graceful consistency in all their behaviour, even an habitual exertion of every personal and social virtue; and the more powerfully to assist them in this divine labour, he placeth before them, in one concise view, all the fundamentals of Gospel-teachings; therein he shews the unity, the harmony, or compactness of this most amiable constitution of God's moral Government, under the administration of the man Christ Jesus.—In treating the subject,

I. I shall take a distinct survey of the system,

II. Ascertain the weight of evidence.

III. Shew what amazing perversions of the unity of the Gospel plan have obtained among professing Christians.

The first article runs thus, *there is one body*. A phrase which figuratively represents the Christian church; and therefore comprehends all those who spiritually and morally stand related to their head, as truly as members of a natural body do to theirs; viz. all who have, or ever shall have received and lived upon his teachings, are thus united to Jesus in every age of the church, and do constitute and complete that one body. The metaphorical term, *body*, thus understood, will be supported by various passages

passages in the writings of this Apostle. Such as follow, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 14. "For as the body
" is one, and has many members, and all the
" members of that one body being many, are one
" body; so also Christ, i. e. the body of Christ,
" for by one spirit we are all baptized into one
" body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond
" or free—for the body is not one member but
" many."—*Again*, Ch. x. 17. "For we being ma-
" ny are one bread and one body."—Compare
Col. iii. 15. "Let the peace of God rule in your
" hearts, to which ye are also called in one body."

The *oneness* of this spiritual body does appear likewise from every member's deriving all its nourishment and vitality from one and the same head. So Col. ii. 19. "From the head all the body, by
" joints and bands having nourishment ministered
" and knit together, increaseth with the increase
" of God."—And hence it is, that in favour to the church, which is Christ's body, God has given him to be head over all things! Which church is thus denominated, "the fulness of him who filleth
" all in all." Eph. i. 22, 23. i. e. The church, considered in this union, partakes of all the fulness, both of the truth, and of the grace of God.

Again, this spiritual body, like the natural one, does consist of innumerable members, which have their distinct offices and departments, each possessing an equal claim to divine guidance and refreshing influence; and therefore cannot admit of superiority and subordinacy among themselves, or of an independence one on another: for even here we metaphorically affirm, "the eye cannot say to the
" hand, I have no need of thee: neither can the
" foot use this language. And as to the ear, it
" cannot say it is not of the body, because it is
" not

“ not the eye. For God hath set the members,
 “ every one in the body, as it hath pleased him,—
 “ and he has so disposed them, that there should be
 “ no schism or division in the body; but the mem-
 “ bers should have the same care one for another.
 “ And whether one member suffer, all the mem-
 “ bers suffer with it; or one member be honoured,
 “ all the members rejoice with that member.”
 Such are the divine sympathies, which are habi-
 tually found in the Christian church, among all its
 genuine members.

If by *the one body*, we thus understand the Chri-
 stian church, I would humbly ask, whether it is
 not distinguished from all civil church establish-
 ments, or ecclesiastical hierarchies, that ever did,
 does, or ever shall exist?—Is not the idea of such
 civil establishments incompatible with the nature
 and constitution of his spiritual body, which has
 in it no inequalities, i. e. no superiorities and sub-
 ordinacies?—None should take offence at these
 questions, when the New Testament representation
 of the church of Christ seems so expressly to forbid
 any prelatical or hierarchical powers*. The lust of
 pre-eminence was that depraved spirit in the apostles,
 which their Lord condemned†.—The common
 rights of Christians are undoubtedly of a like
 worth and importance, to each and to every indi-
 vidual; their claims are all equal, as well as with
 apostles; no legislative, no executive authority, of
 a spiritual nature, can be lodged in any member or
 members of this body; but every one is alike
 amenable to its head and Lord.

Besides

* Matth. xx. 25, 26, 27. xxiii. 4, 8. Mar. ix. 35, 36.
 Luk. ix. 46, 47. Joh. v. 44. Ch. xviii. 36.

† Math. xviii. 4. xxiii. 11. Mar. ix. 34, 35. Luk. ix. 46.
 xxii. 24.

Besides there being but one body, there is also but ONE SPIRIT.—Now this is no other than what guides, directs, animates, and invigorates that whole body, *viz.* the spirit of truth and love. There is therefore a similitude in the governing temper and taste of all true Christians. “The same mind is in them which was in Christ Jesus.” Phil. ii. 5. “God has not given us the spirit of a slavish fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” 2 Tim. i. 7. “He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.” 1 Cor. vi. 17. “By which same spirit, all true Christians have alike freedom of access to God, as a father.” Eph. ii. 18.

The spirit of benevolence which the same Gospel-teachings do inspire, is what guides, governs, and directs, the whole aim of the Christian. Hence, “if there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels of mercies, they are like-minded, having the same love, of one accord, of one mind.” And we cannot suppose it should be otherwise, when we consider that all Christians have the same divine rule, both in doctrine, precept, and example, upon which they attemper and form their own spirits; so that “by one spirit we are all baptized into one body, and have been made to drink into one spirit.” 1 Cor. xii. 13.

This will be yet more conspicuous, as we investigate the *ratio*, or ground of the oneness of body and spirit, *viz.* this, “*Even as we are called IN ONE HOPE OF OUR CALLING.*”

Here we may observe, that all foreign, irreconcilable principles and motives are wholly excluded this heavenly divine system. The Gospel calling,

calling, is an high, holy, and heavenly one, as it invites men to virtue and to glory. Thus it is that St. Paul has observed to the Theffalonians, “ God “ has, from the beginning, chosen men to salva- “ tion, through sanctification of the spirit, even a be- “ lief of the truth.”—To which he adds—“ where- “ unto he calleth you by the Gospel, to the ob- “ taining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Theff. ii. 13, 14.—In like manner says St. *Peter*, “ the God of all grace, who hath called us “ unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that “ ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, “ stablish, strengthen, settle you.” 1 Ep. v. 10.—In a word, its being an holy calling, is what makes it an heavenly one. See Heb. viii. 1. compared with 2 Tim. i. 9.

Now as but one and the same object of hope is proposed to the Christian, so there can be but one reasonable ground of exercising that hope, which must be the purifying effect which it has upon us.—We are taught by St. *John* thus to reason, when he says, “ he who hath this hope in him, purifieth “ himself, even as he is pure.” 1 Ep. iii. 3. And St. *Paul* affirms, that the salutary grace of God which has appeared to all men, teacheth all to live soberly, righteously, and godly, who would look for the blessed hope. Thus it is that the ground of hope is such as will never fail, or disappoint the Christian. Heb. vi. 8. Nay, St. *Paul* describes the Deity as the God of hope! Rom. xv. 13. From all which it appears, that there is but one hope, or one ground of hope in the Christian’s calling; and that is, a being wholly sanctified by the *truth* of God. For an Apostle “ gives thanks to the fa- “ ther, who hath made us meet to be partakers “ of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Col. i. 18. Indeed this is the great end for which the Gospel

Gospel revelation was given, *viz.* to “open blind eyes, to turn men from darkness to light, from the power of satan unto God, that they might receive the forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified.” Thus Christians *are called in one hope of their calling*; inasmuch as holiness is shewn to be their meetness or qualification for happiness.

So much may suffice for giving distinct and clear ideas of the one body, and one spirit, from the one great exciting and enlivening motive, which is, *the hope of our calling.*

We are to proceed to contemplate the governing head of this body, thus animated; to wit, the ONE LORD.

This, most evidently, is peculiar to the Christian dispensation, and opposed to the Pagan theogony; for St. *Paul* observes, “they had had Lords many.” 1 Cor. viii. 5. The heathen world had many mediators between them and their supreme deities. These the Greeks were wont to call Demons. And the Jews had learnt to ascribe to demons, all extraordinary distempers and uncommon evils, which is very apparent from the Gospel history. At the same time, I should humbly be of opinion, that the apostle may have also opposed *the one Lord*, under the Gospel, to the ministrations of Angels under the Jewish dispensation. For he speaks of the word, or law delivered by Angels, Heb. ii. 2. Also of the law being ordained by Angels, in the hand of Moses the mediator, Gal. iii. 19. St. *Stephen* likewise says, his nation received the law, by the disposition of Angels, Acts vii. 53.

The learned Mr. *James Pierce* thus writes, “The Angels, before our Saviour’s time, seem plainly to have had provinces and dominions allotted them, one presiding over one country, and another presiding over another country.” See his note on Col. ii. 15. And, in truth, we have hints given us, in the New Testament, of an undue worship having been paid to angels; Col. ii. 18. Nay, according to *Josephus*, “the Essenes, a sect among the Jews, made great account of the names of angels, and should seem to have addressed them as mediators.” It is also observed, from some passages in *Philo’s* writings, that he thought “angels were messengers who present’d men’s prayers to God. And likewise, from *Tobit*, ch. xi. 14.—xii. 5. even this should appear to have been a notion which had prevailed among the Jews*.”

It should therefore be reasonable to conclude, that the *one Lord*, under the Gospel dispensation, is opposed both to the many Lords among the idolatrous Pagans, and to the superstitious and undue homage paid to angels by the Jews; and especially to their having received the law by the ministrations of angels. Accordingly we hence see, with what great propriety the apostle reports to the Hebrew Christians, that when God had brought his first-begotten from the dead, and had advanced him to the right hand of power, he said, *let all the angels of God worship him*. This was enough to indispose the mind of a converted Jew, from ever once more directing his homage to angels.

There is a fine passage to my purpose, in 1 Cor. xii. 3. where St. Paul, having told the Corinthians that

* See Goadby’s Illustration of the New Testament, &c. on Col. ii. 18.

that they knew they themselves were Gentiles, who had been carried away to the worship of dumb idols—he adds, “wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed, or anathema.” i. e. none of them who were divinely informed, would rank Jesus with demons, or dead men, those dumb idols whom they had been wont to worship.—And farther he says, “that no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the spirit.” i. e. either by the spirit of prophecy or of miracle, or by that spirit of holiness which has separated the idea of the Lordship of Jesus, from that of all other Lords.

There is yet another kind of usurpation of power, to which the authority of the one Lord is opposed; and that is, a dominion exercised over the faith of men, by *spiritual wickednesses in high places!* Such a shocking claim of authority, in giving law to conscience, had actually obtained among the Jews! which tyranny our great prophet often censures, and openly condemns. “Their teaching, for doctrines the commandments of men, and so unlording the commandments of God;”—he remarks upon as capitally criminal, Matth. xv. 6, 9. He openly contradicts their teachings, see Math. v. 21. to the end of that sermon, and gives the true spirit and sense of every precept they had perverted. And in ch. xxiii. he very expressly forbids that his disciples should, in their religious character, acknowledge any human authority whatsoever; forasmuch as they have but *one* Lord and Master, and all they are brethren. He every where asserts the sacred rights of private judgment, and chargeth with enormous wickedness Scribes and Pharisees; denouncing a woe upon them for assuming a sovereignty over minds; the prerogative of none but God.—No other being can prescribe

to the faith and worship of man.—To inculcate this truth, was a capital design of his mission, Joh. viii. 36. In fact, both Jews and Gentiles were enslaved under the exercise of a priestly spiritual tyranny, till Jesus Christ came to preach deliverance to captives, and to set such prisoners free. “For all whom the Son makes free, they are free in deed.” And this, assuredly, is an essential part of that salvation which we have under the Gospel, *viz.* being redeemed from a slavish subjection to an assuming priesthood: in which the generality of mankind were involved at the time of the Gospel’s first address. And yet, alas! how very soon did Christians forget what are the unalienable, and most sacred and important rights of the human mind, by pretending a power to prescribe and impose articles and rules of faith and worship. And hereupon erecting an human mock-tribunal, sitting in judgment upon those who religiously differed from them, as to the sense they formed of the divine canon; and thus defeating one manifest design of Christ’s mission as a redeemer. Whatever pretence is therefore made, or by whomsoever, to give law to conscience, by requiring subscription to articles of faith, or conformity to modes of worship, it is notoriously ANTI-CHRISTIAN; because it imports an explicit and express denial of the truth of this fundamental Gospel-principle, *viz.* “that the Christian has but one Lord.”—Will the religion of Jesus ever appear in its native genuine light, so long as hierarchies, spiritual dictators, and law-givers are found within the Christian profession? Can civil-church-establishments be made to correspond with the plan of the Gospel Constitution? which consecrates and acknowledges but one Lord; and which divinely asserts the equality of Christians—*all ye are brethren.*

Do not let my reader think I am taking too much freedom, in being thus dissatisfied with civil-church-establishments; for if I do at all understand the teachings of Jesus, and of his apostles, these establishments have no countenance at all given them, but are most expressly condemned in those divine teachings. And if this be the case, they must, so long as they continue, be the reproach and scandal of the Christian profession. For, as one says, “ what are these commonly called national churches, or human establishments of Christianity, fenced in with creeds and confessions, enclosed with canons and constitutions of various kinds, authoritatively enjoined to be subscribed and observed; and fortified with the powers and sanctions of this world?—What are they, but temporary institutions of human policy, as variable as the civil government of each country where they are?—Utterly repugnant to the nature and extent of Christ’s kingdom *.”

Such a symbolizing with Pagan governments, may perfectly suit a Popish system; but must be the inevitable ruin of Protestantism.—The young among us of this day, may possibly live to see its fatal effects taking place in Britain †.

Thus much for that fundamental, *viz.*—the *one Lord*.

The next in order, is, ONE FAITH.

B 3

We

* Theological Repository, Dec. 1770, p. 456.

† See repeated advertisements of Sacred Music in the Pope’s Chapel, price 10s. 6d. and the History of the famous Preacher, Friar *Gerund* de Campazas, 2 vol. price 10s. 6d. Are not these ugly signs of the Times?

We may understand this, either of one rule of faith, or of one principle of faith, exercised on that one rule. Now, the written Gospel is, without controversy, that one rule of faith to all Christians, in all places and ages.—Nay, Faith is a term often put for the Gospel. Rom. i. 5.—x. 8.—xvi. 26. Gal. i. 23. Phil. i. 27. 1 Tim. iv. 1. 2 Ep. iv. 7. Jude, verse 3. Rev. xiv. 12.—Christians are likewise to judge for themselves of this one rule of faith, and for none but themselves. The reason is very plain; because none can ever render either the doctrine or the precept PRINCIPLE, but the man himself. It must be the efforts of his own powers, religiously to observe the rule, and imitate the example. To this purpose it will be necessary, that the Christian understands the *rule* to be fully declarative of the divine will, as revealed by his Lord and Master; and that he carefully enters into the true spirit of the instruction; else he cannot be said to have the one common faith.—On the other hand, if he believes only as such or such men say they believe; or if he interprets scripture by some church-articles, he is not a believer in Christ, but in such men, or in such a church. Hence *his* faith is not of the complexion of this one faith; because it has all its existence in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God.

Again, the one faith must accord with the reason of man. So the learned *Spencer*,—"God, I am sure," says he, "has no where required us to a faith which cannot satisfy the reason of a man, which searcheth into the grounds and reasons thereof." See his discourse on prodigies, p. 252.

Another fundamental, is, ONE BAPTISM.

The Jews had divers washings or baptisms, and were very ceremonious and exact in applying the water of purification. So had the Pagan Greeks various washings and purifications; some before they sacrificed to their celestial, and others before they sacrificed to their infernal Gods.—The Christian has only one baptism, which acknowledges the exaltation, or sovereign authority of the one Lord, and initiates into his church and kingdom.—N. B. The Romans also had an early dedicatory rite*, as well as the Pagan Greeks †.

The last fundamental article in this harmonious system, is, “*one God the father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.*”

This is the utmost which language could express of that ineffable, incomprehensible spirit; the one unchangeable, infinite, and eternal source of all being and blessedness. He has been known and worshipped, as the one living and true God, under all former dispensations; even as possessed of all possible perfection! And yet, under the Gospel, the manifestation made of him, as the God and father of Jesus Christ, has rendered him yet more glorious! For, since he who can have no limitation of presence, power, and influence, is alike the father of every sincere Christian, they are his sons and daughters. And, moreover, he is not only *above* all, but he is *through* all, and *in* us all.

This is very aptly opposed to the polytheism of the Gentile idolatrous world, who had *Gods many*. For St. Paul says, “to us Christians there is but “one God the father, of whom are all things, and

B 4

“we

* See *Hoake's Rom. Hist.* Vol. III. p. 272. Where he mentions the dedication of Cicero, on the 5th day of his birth.

† See *Potter's Greek Antiquities*, Vol. II. p. 328, &c.

“we in him.” 1 Cor. viii. 6.—He there adds, “one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”—I the rather mention this, because of the obvious distinction here made between the one God and the one Lord; the one, the un-originated source; the other, the minister by whom he preserves, succours, and governs his church.—So much for the unity of Gospel-Principles.

Secondly.—Thus we have gained a most comprehensive view of the unity and harmony of the Gospel-System, in all its fundamentals; and cannot fail discovering its divine original. No one can be at a loss how to calculate *the weight of evidence*.

For who does not see the wisdom and prudence in which God has abounded towards mankind, in the uniting idea of all the subjects of his Kingdom as one body; consisting of various members, which have but one head? The benevolent spirit, or principle of brotherly affection, must, and does operate in all genuine Christians. And with the utmost reason, because this is their discriminating characteristic mark, *viz.* their loving one another. Joh. xiii. 35. But as benevolence is the end of the Gospel institution, 1 Tim. i. 5. and as benevolence is the highest resemblance man can possibly have of his maker, Math. v. 48. hence, the evidence of this system being of God, rises to demonstration.

Again,—The *grace* of the Gospel constitution, or the Christian's being raised to the hope of eternal life, has its basis on the benevolence of his spirit, and his being formed by love. Order, harmony, agreement of spirit and principle, qualify for the blissful enjoyment of essential love! 1 Joh. iv. 8. and must render the association of kindred minds, *i. e.* minds of the same moral and divine complexion,

plexion, for ever felicitating.—Yet, inasmuch as the object of hope, ETERNAL LIFE, required, from the astonishing greatness and glory of its idea, some very convincing illustration; therefore it was, that the ministrations and endurances of Jesus Christ were appointed.—And because he has thrown so much light upon it, we are said to have the divine bestowment made by him, i. e. instrumentally.

Again, Since mankind, in every age of the world, have either had some divine medium of worship, or some fanciful mediators, it demonstrates the wisdom and goodness of God, in consecrating and appointing one mediator, with full powers to shew us the father; and virtually become, to all his disciples, the way, the truth, and the life! or, in other words, the light of the world! and the life of men! He is emphatically the one Lord, as he is the only Law-giver in the Christian church.

For this reason, Christians have but *one rule of faith*, and that is, the teachings of Jesus and his Apostles, in the New Testament writings; which every one is to interpret for himself, and apply to himself. A rule that is not only intelligible, but plain, to all who are willing to do the will of God. *Job. vii. 17.* This demonstrates the divinity of the Gospel institution.

And we are also to observe, there is but one ritual which initiates into this heavenly Kingdom, and that is, *baptism*, or the application of water; in acknowledgment of the sovereign authority of the one Lord.

But a most conclusive evidence, that this institution must be of divine original, is, “ its asserting
“ and maintaining, the unrivalled, the peerless
“ majesty of the supreme Being; the one God,
“ the

“ the father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all.”—A doctrine, on which all true religion only can have its support. And which is found to be constantly taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles, at a time when polytheism and idolatry covered and darkened all the great Empires in the habitable world! and whose capital laws had been most shockingly corrupted, or perverted, by that very people whom he had separated from the nations. For though the Jews are not chargeable with a national acknowledgment of more Gods than one, at the time when the Messiah was personally addressing them; yet they were over-run with immorality, vice, and a gross superstition. In this dark and depraved condition of the world, the Gospel revelation was, manifestly, the wisdom of God, and the power of God.

Thus we have ascertained the weight of evidence, as it is found to derive from the *unity* of Gospel-principles.

We shall proceed to shew, some of the many gross *perversions* made of this heavenly institution. And,

I. From the above idea of the one body, we shall be able to detect vulgar errors concerning the *church of Christ*. For his church is not confined to any human enclosure, or national establishment; not to any one distinguished denomination, or mode of profession. It has no mortal, i. e. no fallible head. But all men throughout the habitable earth, who acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the one Lord and Law-giver, and are cordially united to him on the principles of Gospel-truth, and in the spirit of divine love, they are members of his mystical body: and none but such who thus have their conver-
sations

tions in heaven, do properly make a part of his church. These, all of them, have one spirit, as they are called in one hope of their calling; they have one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all. Every other idea of the church of Christ, is confused, false, and erroneous; narrow, contracted, and unworthy of the Kingdom of heaven.

But from the view above taken, we are furnished with a most delightful prospect of the wide extent of the Christian church, and its spiritual, divine complexion. Nay, we infer from hence, a present fellowship, and inter-communion of minds, which shall have an everlasting happy association in the future world! And this, because of their having been alike formed and attempered upon the very same divine principles: and who, from the infinitude of moral excellencies, are called, *the fulness of him who filleth all in all.*

II. From the unity and simplicity of the Gospel system, we are led to deplore the absurdity and impiety of Christian professors, who have been employing themselves to no better purpose, than to perplex and confound all fundamental principles of the Gospel-instruction, to the great depravity of one another. I will make a citation from Dr. *Dan. Whitby*, a dignified divine of the English-church-establishment—who says, when treating on the unity of the spirit, “Hence it demonstratively follows, that no Church-Governors, jointly or severally, can be appointed by God, to be the living judges, or the infallible directors of our faith. For since, in matters of faith, we must have a judgment of certainty, we cannot own them as such, till we are certain that they belong to that church, of which Christ is the head, and to which alone the promise of the spirit does be-
“ long:

“ long: i. e. till we are certain they are sincere
 “ and upright Christians. Since, therefore, God
 “ has given us no certain rule to know this by,
 “ we may rest satisfied, that he designed no such
 “ magisterial guides should be found in his
 “ church*.”

This is saying enough, to cut off all claims to dominion over conscience. But I can go further, being assured that God has not appointed any Sub-governor in his church; nor has given authority to any to take upon them the direction of other men's faith. If I am right, the very pretension to such authority, must consequently be a full proof that they do not belong to that church of which Christ is the head; but are forcerers, cheats, or impostors. This surely is plain, forasmuch as all Christians have one and the same rule, *for trying the spirits, whether they are of God.*—It is therefore impossible, that any one or more should be invested with the power of giving law to conscience, in the province of religion. Consequently, to make creeds, and impose them, is an open invasion of the unalienable rights of Christians: for all the real or genuine members of Christ's body, have an equal relation to him, and do derive from him all needful light, aid and succour, under the trial.

III. This description of the fundamental principles of the Christian religion, encourages every honest, serious mind, to read and study the New Testament writings for themselves, as a divine canon of temper, disposition, and life. None should ever imagine it can have what is dark or doubtful, either in its doctrine, precept, or example. And as to the manner or method in which this divine book should

* His Paraphrase and Commentary, in loco.

should be consulted, we may avail ourselves of some advantage, from a rule laid down by the celebrated author of *THE SPIRIT OF LAWS*,—which is,—“ The laws should be explained by the laws; and history by history.” So, by a parity of reasoning, the New Testament canon should be considered as its own best Expositor. No commentator can throw so much light upon the sacred text, as it does upon itself, when carefully examined and compared. And every Commentator who has deserved notice, has taken this method to illustrate its divine instruction.

There is not a better key to the whole New Testament teachings, than my text provides. We must so interpret all its doctrines, as to render them consistent with this unity. But instead of so reading the New Testament, men carry along with them some education-prejudices, or some systematic-prepossessions; and they read the sacred page only to countenance and confirm, not at all to correct and remove those prejudices.

Perhaps there is not any thing more depraving of theological ideas, among professors, than the very mischievous distinction of *orthodoxy* and *heterodoxy*, which has been inculcated upon weak and vulgar minds; the standard of which is no other, than some adopted systems of opinion, that are wholly of human original. Whereas, we may be certain; no man is found in the faith, who is unsound in his morals,—and that no man is unsound in the faith, who has a soundness in his morals. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy, do lye in the sanctifying effect which the Gospel has on the temper and life of the professor;—and in the want of such influence.—I confess I know of no other criterion, either of the soundness or unsoundness of a Christian's faith. —

Every

Every honest person will therefore be encouraged to read and study his New Testament, from an assurance that he cannot run into any fatal error or mistake, so long as he reads and applies it, as a rule of life and manners, and preserves the unity and harmony of all its first principles.

IV. From this scale given of the unity and harmony of the Gospel system, we can easily account for the superstition and bigotry, copiously found among professing Christians. They, not content with its plainness and simplicity, have presumed to introduce pompous rites, and ridiculous ceremonies, into its worship, as ornaments and decorations of the mode and figure of the address. Though, as we have observed, the Gospel has delivered mankind from the burthensome ritual of Moses, and from the savage rites of the idolatrous Gentile nations. The world was in the most abject slavery, when the Gospel set the prisoner free. An advantage has nevertheless been taken of the powerful influence which sensitive objects are found to have upon the human mind; and hence the whole pomp and parade of ceremony. The eye, allured by paintings and statuary, the ear with vocal and instrumental music: the passions are thus arrested, the sentiments materialized and depraved; and thus a disability brought on the mind of ever entering into the spirit of truth in men's devotions. What a strange idea must mankind have of the Deity, who can suppose that magnificence of building, fine music, and masterly paintings, do give an acceptableness to the homage offered to a pure spirit, who has said, he will be worshipped *in spirit and in truth? for such the father seeketh to worship him.* Joh. iv. 23. A popish writer can say, "let us not offer up our treasures to God, unless we are proud of shewing that we esteem what he would have

“ have us despise.” *Spirit of Laws*, Vol. II. p. 178.

V. If the Christian has “ but one God and father of all, who is above all, through all, and in us all;” then what must be said or thought of great numbers of professors, who seem to have manifestly perverted this primary fundamental of the Gospel system? And when, upon this very *basis*, all true religion ever has, and ever must have, its support? Assuredly, the supreme homage paid to Jesus Christ, by those who contend for his being God equal with the father, does by no means consist with this capital idea, of *the one God the father of all!*—Will any presume to call in question the truth of this first principle? Will any of the Athanasians say, that the Son is the one God, the father of all, who is above all, through all, and in us all? If they are not able to say this, their affirmations about, and ascriptions unto Jesus Christ, or to the Son, as God equal with the father, are unjustifiable: and they are guilty of notoriously perverting the very first significant fundamental principle of all true religion.

It is absolutely impossible that the one Lord should be this one God, inasmuch as the one God the father is here said to be ABOVE *all*; and therefore must be above him whom he has constituted the one Lord. Nor is it any where in the New Testament once intimated, that this Lord is possessed of any one essential perfection of deity; or that any one of those perfections can be communicated to any being whatsoever. I mean, Eternity; omniscience, omnipresence, immensity, and *infinity*, no more than supremacy, are communicable attributes. None but the one God the father, can be *above, through, and in all.*—These perfections are ascribable

ascribable to none else.—Deity can have no equal, either in presence, power, or glory.—He is God, and there is no God besides him.

But because of these his adorable, incommunicable perfections, a reality, a spirit, and an energy are thereby given to the Gospel-system of principles, because of their unity and harmony. Indeed, the better any one is acquainted with the teachings of Jesus, the more he will be persuaded of the derivation and dependence of the Son, and of his subordinacy to the Father. It has been the constant labour of the divine address of the Son of God, to persuade men, that what he said, and what he did, was by virtue of that authority and power he received from the one God, his God and father *, for which there was great occasion; since he foresaw how apt mankind would be to misrepresent him, from the amplitude, sublimity, and peculiar lustre of his commission; and also from the most perfect revelation, or that wonderful manifestation he made of the father.

VI. The Sceptic and Infidel have their stupidity manifestly condemned by this very representation of the *unity* of Gospel principles; since it is impossible there should be a more conclusive evidence of the divinity of any system. There never was *unity* and integrity found in any humanly devised system of religion. Unity never yet appeared in any plan laid by the wisdom of man; for what originates therein, must necessarily have imperfection and discordancy. Even the blessed Jesus disclaims the idea of having spoken of himself. See Joh. vii. 16. xiv. 10, 24. xii. 49. Even the best laid scheme of civil policy, has ever betrayed

* Consult St. John's Gospel, *passim*.

trayed its imperfect original. But in the Gospel-Institution, there is a perfect coincidence of all its parts, and an undisturbed harmony from the *unity* and concord of all its principles.

The rejector of this divine system therefore stands condemned, because he has taken no due pains to discover the fulness or perfection of Gospel-evidence. He has fed his prejudices from the abusive representations made of it by professors. No fair judgment of that heavenly divine canon, has been made by him:—for whatever he may think of himself, the New Testament writings do most clearly display the truth and grace of God, though he may fancy to despise or neglect that revelation. — It is a fair consequence, that that man runs no small risque, who rejects this counsel of God against himself:—*i. e.* who despiseth the riches of such goodness, which has nothing less than eternal life in its address!—how would one grieve over his stupidity!

See we to it, that none of us receive the grace of God in vain, but that we hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of truth, peace and love, and so grace shall be multiplied upon us.——But otherwise, that interrogation of an Apostle will have its awful, tremendous aspect upon us,—“how shall
“ we escape if we neglect so great salvation! which
“ at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and
“ was afterwards confirmed by them that heard:
“ God also bearing them witness, both with signs,
“ wonders, divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy
“ Spirit, according to his own will.”

DISCOURSE II.

On the divine Purity of the Gospel-Canon.

HAVING, in the preceding discourse, considered the *unity* of Gospel-Principles; it will be both natural and easy in this, to make it very evident that the wisdom of man; his cunning and contrivance, had no hand at all in framing any part of that system: which done, we shall discover it to be of a purely divine original, and perfectly complete in its instruction.—Let St. Paul again guide us in this investigation; see 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. “And my speech and my preaching was not with the enticing words of man’s wisdom; but in demonstration of the spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men; but in the power of God.”

Notwithstanding this, just as it was in the apostolic age, so it continues to be to this day; mankind are ever extremely fond of the rhetorical, musical, passionate address. The flowers of oratory are sensitively grateful; and the well turned periods are mechanically striking.—Image and figure have more engaged the attention, than logical reasoning and good sense are wont to do. Our crowded *operas* and *oratorios*, are, at this day, in full proof of the truth of this observation. The melody of sounds, which delight the ear, do ravish, and feed the passion. And however serious or solemn the subject, even that wherein the most important business of man is everlastingly concerned, in the religious address, yet absurdity and mystery, rather than

the real dignity and majesty of truth, fire the admiration, and furnish the fervors of devotion. No matter how little light is thrown into the intellect; for if the passions be but vigorously excited and the imagination busily employed, the speaker soon becomes popular. Hence it was that St. Paul found the Greek eloquence so much admired in his day; and that it was with them, *the excellency of speech, and the enticing words of man's wisdom.*

So a learned writer of the last age, has exposed
“ the ignorant imaginations of those men, which
“ (like the heathens of old) look upon heat and
“ noise, words full of charms thrown out without
“ method or measure upon the sudden, and very
“ vehement affections, the symptoms of a person
“ *full of God*, and managed by some power tran-
“ scendent to natural. Whereas all these things,
“ howsoever, like meteors, they carry an heavenly
“ appearance in the eye of ignorance; we have
“ found of a more common and base extraction.
“ Nor is the mighty power they may have over
“ the spirits of others, any argument to the
“ contrary; all fluent language, feathered with
“ soft and delicate phrases, and pointed with
“ pathetic accents, being naturally fitted (as the
“ STAGE will assure us) to make deep impression
“ upon the heart. *Plutarch* speaking of the rare
“ art which those masters of language, the Grae-
“ cian Sophists discovered in composing and deli-
“ vering of their orations, tells us, that *they*
“ *raised up a kind of Bacchical Enthusiasm, and*
“ *transported their hearers with some honey words,*
“ *soft and effeminate phrases and accents, and a kind*
“ *of singing tones.* And no doubt those hearers of
“ whom he there speaks, which used to applaud
“ their orators at the end of their declamations

36 *On the divine Purity of the Gospel-Canon.*

“ with a *θειως, θεοφορητως, διμυονως, απροσιτως,*
“ *divinely, heavenly, inimitably* spoken; found
“ themselves as much stirred and moved as many
“ a man at a sermon, who yet thinks it is not the
“ art of the preacher, but the Spirit of God that
“ warms and excites him.*”—“ Whereas, this
“ same writer says, all these *phenomena* may be
“ solved by mere mechanical principles, all gene-
“ rally being but the issue of a natural pregnancy
“ and fervor of temper, exerting itself in fluent
“ words tintured with religion and scripture
“ phrases.†”

It is a proof of extreme depravity in a people, when nothing will engage their attention to divine things, but the Theatrical address of the public teacher; when men will not endure sound doctrine, but after their lusts heap up to themselves teachers, having itching ears. 2 Tim. iv. 3.

This rhetorical mechanical address, St. Paul heartily despised, and would by no means admit it could have any propriety, in declaring the wisdom of God to mankind; even that wisdom which had been till then a mystery, the hidden wisdom which had respect to idolatrous, vicious Gentiles being called, by the Gospel, unto virtue and unto glory!—The more fully to convince the Corinthians of the sovereign contempt he had of this their worldly wisdom, he was determined to know nothing among them, as an Apostle, public-teacher, or orator, but only the doctrine of a crucified Jesus—and accordingly, he was with them, in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, *i. e.*
as

* Spencer on Vulg. Prophecies, pages 77, 78.

† Ibid. p. 72.

as I understand him, the subject of his preaching had an aptitude in it to put his auditors into such a deeply humiliating state of mind ; for as much as it opened to them their deplorable ignorance, idolatry, and vice ! It set before them their very weak, deformed, guilty characters ; and exposed tremendously their perilous condition : and possibly might have some reference to the very great concern he himself had about the souls of men, and their salvation.

We find, to our purpose, that God, by his prophet Ezekiel, in ancient times, complained much of a like depraved taste in the Jewish people, —“ they come to thee, says the oracle, according to custom, and as my people they sit before thee, and they hear thy words : but they will not do them : for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goes after their covetousness. For lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that has a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument, for they hear thy words, but they do them not.”— It should seem by this, that Ezekiel had the natural powers of a fine orator, his voice melodious, and his address extremely engaging ; he was a very popular preacher. Not so St. Paul ; he had not these natural talents ; and he was far from borrowing any of the artful strokes of oratory. He delivered no truths, but just as he had them by divine inspiration. A plainness of speech run through his address, wholly unornamented by the flourishes of elocution ; hence it was in demonstration of the spirit and of power. His aim he wholly levelled at the moral state of the mind ; and his address had immediately to do with first-principles of truth and life. —

38 *On the divine Purity of the Gospel-Canon.*

This shall serve as a short commentary, on the former part of my text. And I will now proceed to consider more distinctly the divine end of St. Paul's apostolic labors, *viz.* says he,

“ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

Here, we must *first* attempt the doctrinal instruction, and then make some useful observations. —

A more general view of the doctrinal instruction, might be given in the words of an English high-church prelate—“ the Gospel of Christ, *says* *he*, at its earliest appearance had all the probabilities in the world AGAINST its success: for it was possessed scarce of any one of those advantages which do most signally recommend a new doctrine, and make it thrive. It had no complying tenets, to sooth mens appetites and passions; but was all harsh and austere.—It had no encouragement from the civil power; it had no force nor cunning to uphold it; no men of esteem and eminence to engage on its side.—The age of discovery, was more discerning and enlightened, more curious and inquisitive than any that either preceded or followed that age: and therefore the success of this doctrine could not be owing to mens ignorance, or to their supineness. Finally, the publishers delivered it not out by parcels, as is the way of cunning and designing men; but they offered the whole of it to be examined and compared.*” —

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* Dr. Atterbury Bp. of Rochester's 14 Sermons, p. 96, 97, 98.

This gives pretty justly, I apprehend, a *general* view of the doctrinal instruction; and yet, a more distinct investigation may be very proper. It will, I apprehend, convey to our minds the following truths.

First, the apostolical canon is not, cannot be of human original; because it comprehends and enforces each and every of the first principles of natural religion, separate from all the corruptions of polytheism, idolatry, superstition and vice; by which, the religion of nature had been sadly perverted among pagans. And it also delivers the religion of the Christian from the local, ceremonial, separating Mosaic ritual; and from the traditions of the elders, which had disguised the moral.—All of which might be expected; since these apostolic teachings do contain the most compleat and perfect view that was ever given of immutable, eternal truth; its obligation and motive are drawn from the known character of God, and from the most adorable ideas of his providence and government. In the whole of which teachings, there is nothing inconsistent, nothing dark or mysterious, nothing little, mean, or trifling. Upon the whole, the Gospel-Institution has all the evidence that can now be given of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. Nor is there one single conceivable idea of the divine majesty that is adorable, which is not to be found in that written-canon.

Another truth which my text would suggest, is, there are no marks of the artful, fanciful, and conjectural; no tokens of man's inventive faculty in any New Testament doctrines, maxims, motives, or injunctions. *On the contrary*, its doctrines are all consistent, rational, moral, heavenly, and
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divine,

divine,—its rules and laws are all calculated to regulate and refine the tempers, tastes and spirits of men: to produce in them an habitual rectitude; to render them superior to the infectious, malignant influence of temptation. So all its maxims are wise, just, and benevolent: they inspire with an universal good will to mankind, and they admit of no partialities nor reserves in the Christian's morals.—Not a single motive is there in the whole, taken from this world, that would gratify either avarice, ambition, or sensuality. But every of the excitements to the desire, delight, or joy of man, are from objects which are spiritual, heavenly and divine:—Objects which have no imperfection, and can neither delude, deprave, nor disappoint the mind.—

Again, all Gospel-Injunctions are calculated to give more active life and renewed vigor to the practical scheme of labor and pursuit. Its Symbolical-Institutions are also very simple and expressive; and what manifestly do subserve the order, beauty, and benefit of the Christian profession. So it is with the Christian Sabbath, which is a constant memorial of the fact of Christ's resurrection;—just as baptism is of his exaltation;—and as the Lord's-Supper is of his sufferings and death. The first presents to our minds, the finished divine evidence given to his character and mission;—the second reports his authority as the one Lord and Law-giver, to whom we are to pay a constant subjection and obedience;—the third represents to us the malignity of worldliness; and shews the necessity there is of our being crucified to the world with all its affections and lusts. The first provides us with the season for social worship: the second gives us an admission into his church and kingdom; and the third is
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an act of fellowship with the whole body of Christians, wherein we renew our engagements to love our head, and all his members*.

Another truth suggested by this apostolic declaration, is, the full assurance it gives of the Gospel's being a purely divine canon, from its immediately addressing every individual as equally and intimately concerned in its teachings, both as a rule of life, and as the standard of the final judgment. If therefore any argument could have been produced in confutation of the divinity of this canon, it must have been notorious within the course of 1700 years. But in as much as it has stood the test of so many ages; and no other system of instruction could ever be shewn to come in competition with it, we may be perfectly well satisfied that the authenticity and authority of the New Testament is unquestionably and conclusively divine.

Nay, besides the Gospel-Address being equally interesting to every individual of mankind, to whom it is made; the nature and tendency of its instruction, is such as makes an open and direct appeal to the judgment and conscience of every man; and refers that claim which it has of a divine original, to the most satisfactory test of his own experience.—In fact, these sacred writings require no interpreter; but the man's own honest, unprejudiced attention and diligent application. And they give him proof that as he is willing and desirous to do the will of God, so he becomes capable of knowing the doctrine; and of distinguishing very clearly, that it is of God.—Now
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* See the argument at large, in *the open address of New Testament evidence, or three plain monuments, &c.*

42 *On the divine Purity of the Gospel-Canon.*

this is what no other institution could ever boast, the glory being reserved for that of the Gospel; concerning which *Jeremiah* thus prophesieth,—
“and they shall no more teach every man his
“neighbour and every man his brother, saying,
“know the Lord: for they shall all know me,
“from the least of them unto the greatest of
“them, saith the Lord.” Jer. xxxi. 34. Which
is so applied by an apostle in Heb. viii. 11.
Whereas, the unenlightened Gentiles were under
the absolute guidance of proud priests and very
artful and conceited philosophers. Nay, even the
Jews depended wholly on their priests to offer
sacrifices for them, and explain not only their
ritual, but their very code of laws delivered at
Sinai: and they depended likewise on their prophets
to inform them, what were the teachings of the
ORACLE that so frequently spake by them. While
the New Testament code, is as well understood
by the unlearned, as it can be by the most learned
of mankind.

Eternal thanks be to God, these scriptures are
yet found, by all who do cordially receive their
instructions, to be *the savour of life unto life*.
Men are transformed by them from being igno-
rant, immoral and vicious; into judicious, moral,
and virtuous characters. They are experimentally
known by thousands and ten thousands to be both
the wisdom of God, and the power of God.
This is truly the case with every sincere, every
genuine Christian.

A yet farther important truth, should seem to
be suggested by the apostolical declaration before
us, *viz.* that the original written records which
were at first delivered to the churches, have been
faithfully translated into other languages, and
transf-

transmitted down to us, unaltered in all their important interesting instruction. For notwithstanding a spurious passage has been introduced in St. *John's* first epistle concerning the witnesses, yet the interpolation has been discovered from many of the best and most ancient Greek copies*. And we might expect the purity and integrity of the canon would be preserved, since the autographs of apostles would be immediately or very soon transcribed, and then translated into different languages. Nay, the first publishers of the Gospel were qualified, by the supernatural gift of tongues, to deliver the Gospel-message in the different languages and dialects of the different people and nations, wherever they came. And as the original scriptures were held in the highest esteem by all Christians, so it was that in all controversies which arose among them, a constant appeal was made to these writings. And because in every age of the church, Christians have had different interpretations of some mere figurative passages in this sacred code, hence the eye of jealousy would be kept open, and perpetually fixed on the written record; which must have prevented any material alteration being made in that decisive divine standard. And when we add, that an *Anathema* was most solemnly denounced † on any who should attempt

* It is not in the most ancient copies of the Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, or Armenian Bibles, nor in the most ancient Latin Bibles. *Brief Hist. of Unitarians*, p. 43. "Not found in any one ancient copy in Christendom——nor in any one ancient version or translation——nor in any one ancient commentary; nor in any one citation till about the 15th Century." See the *Scripture Account of the attributes and worship of God: and of the character and offices of Jesus Christ.*—printed 1750.

† See Gal. i. 8, 9. Apoc. xxii. 18, 19.

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attempt a change of the sacred text; I should conclude, we may be infallibly certain of its purity and integrity.—

Even from Ecclesiastical testimony, so early as the beginning of the 3d century, this should appear, since *Tertullian* says, “ we lay down this
“ as a certain fundamental truth, that the
“ Evangelic scriptures (or instruments) have for
“ their authors the apostles, or apostolical-men, to
“ whom the work of publishing the Gospel was
“ committed by our Lord himself.”—And *again*,
“ if it be certain that is most genuine which is
“ most ancient, and that most ancient which is
“ from the beginning, and that from the begin-
“ ning which is from the apostles; in like manner
“ it will be also certain THAT has been delivered
“ from the apostles which is held sacred in the
“ churches of the apostles. Let us then see what
“ milk the Corinthians received from St. Paul;
“ to what rule the Galatians were reduced; what
“ the Philippians read; what the Theffalonians;
“ what the Ephesians; and likewise what the
“ Romans recite, who are near us: with whom
“ both Peter and Paul left the Gospel sealed with
“ their blood.”—And this reason he assigns for
the propriety of such authentic instruments being
preserved sacred in the churches, *viz.* “ foras-
“ much as the preaching of the disciples might
“ have been suspected as liable to the charge
“ of a desire of glory, if not supported by the
“ authority of the masters, yea of Christ who
“ made the apostles masters.” *Once more*, *Tertullian*
says, “ well, if you be willing to exercise your
“ curiosity profitably in the business of your
“ salvation, visit the apostolical churches, in
“ which the very chairs of the apostles yet preside,
“ in

“ in which their very *authentic letters* * are recited,
“ founding forth the voice, and representing the
“ countenance of each one of them — as at
“ Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus and Rome. †”

Admit the credibility of this testimony, there was no possibility of men's being deceived, as to the purity and integrity of the sacred canon, at the beginning of the 3d century: and if so, there does not appear, to me, any probability that it could be changed in any after-age of the church. If any one should doubt of this, I would ask him, whether he can conceive of a possibility there is of making a change of the Gospel record in the present age, notwithstanding the general shocking depravity of Christians?—

Thus, I trust, it must appear, with satisfactory evidence, that the faith of the Christian has no existence in the artifice, cunning, wisdom, or authority of men; but only in the wisdom and power of God. In truth, as St. Paul would hint to us, we need look no farther than into the doctrine of a crucified Jesus, in order to convince us, that the Gospel scheme could never be the result of human invention, device, or contrivance. —One might add, not any thing can be more evident, than that all former divine revelations and dispensations were *preparatory* to this last, under the Messiah's kingdom.

Thus the doctrinal instruction has been attempted: and some useful observations may now be made upon that truly divine instruction.—

I. If

* By authentic letters, he meaneth the originals themselves. See *Dr. Lardner's Credib.* vol. ii. p. 559.

† *Ibid.* p. 577, 578.

I. If I understand the apostle's reasoning throughout this context, New Testament teachings could receive no advantage in their address to mankind, from any studied rules of oratory. There is such a divine simplicity, plainness, and irresistible weight in their principles, motives, and reasoning, that the more men would affect to put on them the ornaments of a flowery rhetorical address, or the paintings of a fine imagination, the less will their native beauties be conspicuous: or the more they are covered with the artist's colourings, the less will the pure original rays of divine truth and grace display the wisdom and power of God. Hence the very best judges of their vast importance have ever proposed, that a translation of the sacred text into any language should be as *literal* as the established idioms of that language will permit. And we have ever unhappily found the *liberal* to be no better than a licentious translation. Men sadly forget themselves, when they fancy a devised imagery of their own can add a beauty and energy to the sacred text, in its native original divine dress.

It has been before observed, that it is probable St. Paul had not a very musical voice, nor the striking abilities of the fine orator. But if he had acquired them at the feet of Gamaliel, under whom he pursued his studies, he would make no use of them in his apostolic labours. The truth and grace of God stood in no need of such helps, in order to impress teachable minds. And hence it is he says, "brethren, when I came to you, I came not with excellence of speech, or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God."—In one word, divine teachings borrow no additional energy from the best speaker in the world. Musical tones and vibrations are too momentary,

mentary, mechanical, and passionate; they rather entertain, than instruct; they rather amuse, than impress. Had rhetorical address been needful, St. Paul's want of the powers of elocution would have unfitted him for the apostolate.

Idly, Human authority is not, never was, nor never may be a foundation, on which religion can support. So that the civil power can have nothing to do authoritatively in religion.—At the same time, it must be owned; there are several apostolic injunctions on Christian people, to reverence their inspired instructors. Such as, 1 Tim. v. 17. “Let the elders that *RULE* well, be “counted worthy of double honour.” And Heb. xiii. 7. “Remember them who have the *rule* over “you: who have spoken to you the word of God; “whose faith follow.”—*Again*, ver. 17. “Obey “them that have the *rule* over you, and submit “yourselves; for they watch for your souls as “those who must give an account.”—But then nothing is more plain, than that this reverence, this obedience, this submission, was wholly owing to the authority of that divine message which they delivered, and not to any personal claims of these teachers. It is therefore evident, that the demand of reverence could only be made by virtue of that message. Just so the people were required to receive the first Gospel messengers, as God's ambassadors. See 2 Cor. v. 20. Math. x. 14. And whoever did not, “they were to shake the dust off their “feet, as a testimony against them.” But in no other light were apostles objects of such reverence. For this apostle says, “not that we have “dominion over your faith.—And we preach not “ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and “ourselves your servants for Jesus sake.” 2 Cor. i. 24.—iv. 5.—They are not Christians who receive

receive honour one of another, and not the honour which comes from God only. Joh. v. 44.

When once the truth and grace of God, as revealed by Jesus Christ and his apostles, had been committed to writing, and the churches were possessed of those writings; when the apostles had thus finished their labors, no authority could then remain any where else in the Christian-church, but in those writings. And every individual Christian became equally concerned with and interested in them. Had these writings been every where religiously attended to, and at all times, none would ever have dreamed of church-governors, and church-government, exercised by fanciful fallible deputies, or frail vicars of the one Lord. But men who preside in Christian-churches, and lead the public worship upon the Gospel plan, can have no authority, nor any thing like jurisdiction.—This has been the case even with all those called BISHOPS, both in Denmark and Sweden; and for aught I know, may yet be the case with them, to this day.

It is an undoubted truth, that the most learned of the Christian world are themselves altogether as much amenable to the divine authority of the New Testament writings, as the most illiterate Christian can possibly be, and these very scriptures are equally an obligatory rule to them, as they can be to any others. Nay, I will add, these very scriptures, when read justly by a mechanic, have as much authority, as when they are read by any priest or prelate whatsoever. It cannot be otherwise, since they borrow no authority at all from man! and all true Christians are a royal priesthood! 1 Pet. ii. 9. And therefore are equally qualified to offer up Gospel sacrifices.

Heb.

Heb. xiii. 15.—This then is a just observation, *viz.* “that human authority can no where operate “ in the Christian church.”

III^{dly}, Since that *power of God*, in which the faith of the Christian has all its existence, does certainly import his truth and grace, we may clearly understand all those passages in the New Testament, which ascribe the sanctification and salvation of men to *the power of God*.—Even the Gospel itself, is, for this reason, said to be “the power of God to salvation, to all that “ believe.” Rom. i. 16. “And the preaching of “ the cross, is, to all who are saved, the power of “ God.” 1 Cor. i. 18. And so *Christ*, or his Gospel, is said to be both the power of God, and the wisdom of God, *v.* 14.—To the same purpose St. Peter speaks of Christians, “as kept by the “ power of God,” i. e. by the power of his truth and grace, through faith unto salvation. 1 epistle i. 5.

The power of God, whenever applied to the salvation of men, does therefore manifestly intend, that efficacious influence which the divine teachings of his written word, have had upon the human mind, in its renovation and sanctification. Which exactly agrees with other reports made of the great design of the Gospel. Such as that of 2 Thess. ii. 13. “Ye are chosen from the beginning, “ (i. e. of the Gospel age) through sanctification “ of the Spirit, even a belief of the truth, as “ it is in Jesus.” And *again*, Eph. iv. 24. we are said to be “created in righteousness, and in “ the truth of holiness.” Likewise men who form themselves upon Gospel-Teachings, are also said to be spiritually-minded. Rom. viii, beginning.

Thus *the salutary power of God*, when applied to human minds, denotes, that efficacious influence and effect which his truth and grace have upon them, in attempering and disposing to order and rectitude every of their elections and determinations. For whenever his will becomes ours, and we have no other governing desire but that of being approved by him, it may then be very justly said, that our faith, or that exercise of the mind, which is the habitual pious principle, does not exist in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Now, at all times, the Gospel-rule of faith is expressive of such divine power.

IVthly, This exercise of faith in the energy and efficacy of divine truth and grace, is what distinguishes and discriminates human characters. So in the context, our apostle has observed, that there is a *natural*, and there is a *spiritual* man: and that the one knows not the things of the other, i. e. the natural man has no idea of those exertions and fruitions which belong to the spiritual man. And the reason is obvious; since the natural man has no higher principle which guides and governs him, than what is sensitive, *viz.* his animal feelings and passions. Temporal, perishing good is his prime object, and he knows of nothing more desirable than to gratify these propensities. He knows not what it is to live by faith in the power of God; for he lives only by sight. He has no conception of what it can mean, “to have his affections set on things above; and not on things on the earth.” His tastes and relishes, his principles, sentiments, and spirit, are of a very reverse complexion, to those of the spiritual man; consequently, they must form very disagreeing opposite characters.

Neither

Neither can we wonder it should be so, since the one has no other final *home*, than this transitory, short-lived, bodily tenement; nor any other pleasing gratifications, but what arise from this material system. — Whereas the other is here but a *stranger*, and is looking for a more durable habitation, an house that is from heaven. All his most delightful expectancies, are, of an everlasting inheritance! — The one has all his good things in hand; the other has all his good things in hope. The one has only a creaturely-good as his portion; the other has the Creator himself for his unfailing object of fruition. — The origin and source of this difference of characters, is, the one is conversant with, and daily lives upon the truth and grace of God, as revealed in the Gospel: the other has no desire of, no taste, no relish for the New Testament teachings; but allows himself to remain deplorably ignorant of them: or, at least, never takes the pains to enter into the spirit and power of those teachings. Once more; this exercise of faith, is what distinguishes the rational Christian from the enthusiast, since it always is the result of convincing evidence, See Heb. xi. 1. For says a learned writer, “That man who can believe *without* reason, is in next capacity to believe *against* it*.”

Vthly, The abundant evidence we have of the purity and integrity of the New Testament canon, is a cogent reason of thanksgiving and praise. A general review of that evidence, I am of opinion, may be thus taken—Gospel-Teachings do contain every of the first principles of natural religion, separated from any adulteration, whether

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* Spencer's Disc. on Prodigies, p. 254.

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ther from idolatry, superstitious depraving idea, or foreign ritual. The canon has not one mark of human invention upon it; either in principle, spirit, maxims, motive, or even mode of worship. Its address is immediate to every man, as intimately and equally concerned therein, both as a rule of life, and as an universal standard of the final judgment. The New Testament in our own language, we have reason to conclude, is so faithful and just a translation, that it has the same divine authenticity with the autographs of apostles; inasmuch as it produces the same moral, benign, and salutary effects on every mind, which is formed upon its heavenly teachings. It is thus, and thus only that any can know experimentally or efficaciously, that it is both the wisdom and power of God. And because the unlearned Christian is as capable of a truly saving use of that divine canon, from the judgment he makes for himself of its teachings, as the most learned can; he may rest fully satisfied with the evidence. He will do so, as it gives him a rational, settled, self-complacency, an established serenity, and a peace of mind that passes all understanding——as it makes him a blessing to all around him——as it gives him confidence in Almighty God; and renders him superior to all temptation. In fact, therefore, the appeal which it makes to the reason, understanding, and experience of all mankind, is what throws the utmost confusion on the face of the conceited infidel: and will do no less on the immoral believer.

DISCOURSE III.

On the Universality of Gospel-Teachings.

AFTER having investigated the unity of the Gospel system; and—also the pure, unmixed, divine originality of its teachings; we are next to treat upon its UNIVERSALITY. I know not of any idea that can be formed of God's grace and mercy, that is more adorable than when under the consideration of its impartiality and universality. It is certain, that both St. Peter and St. Paul do lay a great emphasis upon the Deity's being *no respecter of persons*; i. e. upon his being no way capricious, no way arbitrary in his favours; on the contrary, we are assured, that he would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved! Nay, even an Hebrew prophet, I mean one in old time, 600 years before Christ, could represent the supreme Being as expressly declaring, "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn and live *."—

There is in truth something extremely disgustful to an humane, an ingenuous mind, in any contracted, monopolizing conceptions, or limitations of the divine goodness. The idea is only found in little, mean, systematic, contemptible spirits, who would engross the favour of God to them-

* Ezek. xviii. 32.

54 *On the Universality of Gospel-Teachings.*

felves : or, who can imagine none to be the proper objects of his love, but what are of their own ungenerous, illiberal, and depraved complexion.—

I shall therefore attempt an illustration of the *universality* of the truth and grace of God, in Gospel address, from that exordium of St. Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. first, verses first, second, and third :

“ Paul, called an apostle of Jesus Christ,
“ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our
“ brother — unto the church of God, which
“ is at Corinth,—to them that are sanctified in
“ Christ Jesus, called Saints ; with all that in
“ every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ
“ our Lord, both theirs and ours.—Grace unto
“ you and peace from God our Father, and the
“ Lord Jesus Christ.”

It may be proper to observe, “ that Corinth
“ was a populous, rich, and ancient mercantile
“ city, the chief of Achaia, or of Greece ; a
“ place of great resort for the traffic of very dif-
“ ferent remote countries.” And as to the ac-
counts transmitted of them,—“ they were a people
“ of a quick and lively genius, and had a kind
“ of university, which was supplied with orators
“ and philosophers ; and great numbers of Jews
“ dwelt there, who had a synagogue.—”

Again,—This first epistle which St. Paul sent to the Christian-church at Corinth, is supposed to have been written from Ephesus at the beginning of the year 56.—And that it was written from Ephesus, should appear from ch. xvi. 8. where
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the apostle tells them, he will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost*.

The reason why St. Paul puts *Sosthenes* along with himself in the beginning of this first epistle to that church, I should conjecture to be this; Sosthenes had been the chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue at Corinth, (who was now with him at Ephesus;) and had greatly suffered on Paul's account, having been openly beaten by the Greeks, even under the eye of Gallio, the governor of Corinth; as St. Luke informs us, Acts xviii. 17. It was therefore quite natural for him to join Sosthenes with himself, in this friendly salutation made to his fellow-citizens; thereby shewing his truly Christian-spirit; and accordingly, St. Paul affectionately calls him, THE BROTHER.—

Having premised thus much, we now proceed to consider this apostolical address; which appears to be a kind of dedication of his epistle to that church.—In treating upon it we may,

I. Notice the manner in which this apostle asserts his divine mission.

II. The universality of his message.

III. With what authority it is that he pronounceth grace and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, on all genuine Christians.

As to the manner in which this apostle asserts his divine mission—he thus expresses himself,

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“ Paul

* Consult Mr. *Locke's* Paraphrase — and Dr. *Lardner's* Suppl. vol. II. p. 170.

“ Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God.”—There are not any words or phrases, which could have been more expressive of his mission being divine; for he is well assured it was through, by, or according to the will of God, that Jesus Christ had appointed him to the office of an apostle; which office had respect to his preaching the Gospel to mankind, and to his planting the churches among Gentiles. The extraordinary manner in which he was called to the apostolate, St. Luke has related with great precision. And in St. Paul’s epistle to the Galatians, very express mention is made of that heavenly interview which he had with Christ. That same epistle, I would observe, was written three years before this to the Corinthians: in which he speaks of himself in the very same style—“ Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father,—who raised him from the dead.”—In truth and fact, he had all the evidence both of inspiration and of the power of working miracles, to enable him thus to speak of his mission. And in this epistle to the church at Corinth, ch. ix. 1. he is able to make this most open appeal, “ Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Christ Jesus our Lord?”—And in his second epistle, he mentions both the revelations with which he had been honoured, and the miracles which he had actually wrought among them, when he first planted the Christian-church at Corinth, See chap. xii. 1, and 12.—From which accounts, the divinity of his mission is unquestionable.—

Secondly,—We are next to attend to the *universality* of his address. “ Unto the church of God, which is at Corinth, to them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called Saints, with
“ all

“ all that in every place call on the name of
“ Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”

Now it is evident, that by the sanctified, or the Saints, St. Paul meant, all that were or should in any age be separated from a love of the world, by virtue of their faith in Gospel-Teachings.— Men, who are God’s peculiar people, by reason of their departure from all iniquity, by their denial of all ungodliness, by their living soberly, righteously, and godly; and by their being zealous of good works. This gives the full sense of the terms, *sanctified* and *Saints*. Though sometimes, indeed, we may find the word *Saints* used indiscriminately for all professing Christians; thus emphatically distinguishing them from an unbelieving world.

Further,—Not only does our apostle inscribe his epistle to the Christians at Corinth, “ but to ALL “ in every place who call upon the name of Jesus “ Christ our Lord:” or, in other words, all who profess his religion. And moreover, as if not satisfied with saying, that Jesus was his Lord, he adds, *both theirs and ours*. He would have the fullest emphasis laid upon the divine relation, in which all genuine Christians do equally stand to this exalted glorified man, whom the one God has constituted the one Lord, or head of his church.

Neither shall we have the least reason to call in question the universality of the written apostolic canon, when we are assured from the mouth of Jesus himself, that his divine mission was originally intended for the benefit and salvation of all mankind. “ God so loved the world, that he “ gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever “ believeth

“ believeth on him should not perish, but have
 “ eternal life.”—*Again*, he says, “ I am the light of
 “ the world.—And whosoever followeth me,
 “ shall have the light of life.”—And *once more*,
 “ I give my flesh for the life of the world.”—
 Besides these declarations, there are some yet more
 explicit, as that of *John* x. 16. “ I have other
 “ sheep 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.”
 And *Luke* xxiv. 46, 47. “ Thus it is written,
 “ and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to
 “ rise from the dead on the third day; and that
 “ repentance and remission of sins should be preach-
 “ ed in his name, AMONG ALL NATIONS, begin-
 “ ning at Jerusalem.”

Such full assurance have we that the written records of apostles were intended for the benefit both of all nations and all ages of men. And for this reason *St. John* says, “ these things are
 “ WRITTEN that ye might believe that Jesus is
 “ the Christ; and that believing ye might have
 “ life through his name.” The many references made to the writings of Moses and the Prophets, both by our Lord, and by his apostles, will not suffer us to imagine, that the teachings of the Son of God should be left to the great uncertainty of unwritten, or of oral tradition: so that we may be absolutely certain, the last revelation of the truth and grace of God, should be, by a written record, most securely transmitted from age to age for the benefit of mankind.

Again,—The universality of the teachings of the written canon, might be argued from both their primary and ultimate moral intention; *viz.* their separating all who cordially embrace them, from
 idolatry,

idolatry, superstition, worldliness and vice; from their rendring men rational, regular, holy and heavenly. From sublimating their ideas and sentiments, refining their tastes and relishes, giving them that principle and spirit, which realizes their existence, and securing them of a blissful immortality; for, in truth, men who are called into the fellowship of the son of God, are daily “enriching with knowledge, and confirming in all goodness; even so as to be found blameless in the day of Christ.” 1 Cor. i. 5, 8.

Again,—If we give credit to the Gospel-history of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, we must be firmly persuaded that these apostolic writings are intended for the universal and perpetual use and saving benefit of mankind, because of their vast moment and infinite importance. They best explain the nature of the divine constitutions; they best exhibit the plan of God’s kingdom and moral government; and are that full medium of light and life, whereby we are rendered capable of entering into the true spirit and power of religion. It is in these great respects, men are made wise unto salvation; even by exploring the divine scheme in all the ministrations of Christ Jesus, and in every of his exalted appointments. It is in them that we see, how his advancement to supreme sovereignty has the most favourable aspect on all the children of men.

Gospel-Teachings, as they lye in the written canon, do likewise shew us, with the utmost precision, how the ignorances and prejudices of the human intellect, and the depraved passions of the human heart, do operate; what abusive ideas, and disgustful sentiments men did at first discover, in opposition to Gospel address; and besides this,

this, the many corruptions, and shocking absurdities that would be found under the grand apostacy. We have likewise in this heavenly canon, all the excellence and perfection of divine teachings which respect the first principles of truth and mercy; all the purity and power of precept; all the greatness of mind and benevolence of heart which they inspire; all the simplicity and spirituality of worship; and together with this, the majesty and everlasting worth of its motive, and the great encouragement it gives to the hope and desire of man.—

Had not St. Paul known, that Gospel-Teachings are far above all others, emphatically the *wisdom* of God, and the *power* of God, in the influence and effect which they have on the human mind, he would not have so pathetically inscribed his epistle to Christians in all places, and of all future ages of the world! But in truth, he was confident that it sanctifies all sincere believers, renders them holy, and secures them both of present inconceivable benefits, and also of an everlasting blessedness! all whom Gospel-truth sanctifies, Gospel-grace saves; all whom the one sanctifies, the other glorifies.

A yet further reason may be given for the universality of the New Testament code; and that is, the appointed authorised judge has expressly affirmed, that it is the fixed decisive standard or rule of the final judgment. See Joh. xii. 48. “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” Which perfectly agrees with the doctrine our Lord taught of himself, John v. 22. “The father hath committed all judgment
“ to

“ to the son; that all men should honour the
“ son.”—But this they could not do, under
the character of judge, unless they were made
acquainted with the rule on which he will conduct
the judgment.—Now this very *rule* they expressly
have in the New Testament writings; for our
apostle tells the Christians at Rome, “ that God
“ shall judge the secrets of men according to his
“ Gospel.” Rom. ii. 16. And in his second epistle
to the Corinthians, chap. v. *ver.* 10. he says,
“ We must all appear before the judgment-seat
“ of Christ; that every one may receive the
“ things in his body, according to that he has
“ done, whether good or bad.”

Now, upon the whole, it is not at all probable,
that the great God should have constituted the
man Christ Jesus judge both of quick and dead,
having revealed both his truth and his grace by
him, and yet, not have given mankind an express
written-standard or rule of the judgment. There
would be an absurdity in the supposition. And we
are constrained to conclude, that that written rule
must be universally interesting.—But we find, in
fact, that the sacred volume gives us the very
ratio of the sentence which must pass on all good
and bad men, of every age and nation. Such as
have had but one talent, shall be answerable only
for one talent—and he who has had ten, shall be
answerable for the improvement of every one of
those numerous talents.—In the case of the one
talent,—“ as many as have sinned without law,
“ shall perish without law.” The dictates of
natural conscience, or of reason unenlightened
by revelation, will render man accountable. They
assure us, that the truly religious Gentile was an
object of the divine approbation, as in the case
of Cornelius, *Acts* x. 1—4.—So the Gentiles
“ who

“ who have not the law, yet do by nature the things contained in the law, are a law unto themselves.” Rom. ii. 14.—Such are the abilities of the human mind, that mankind are universally accountable: for God has not any where left himself without witness.—Of this, and of the extent of moral obligation, the apostolic writings do inform us, with great perspicuity and the utmost precision. *Truth* makes an open and common appeal to the reason, understanding, and conscience of man. Or, as *Puffendorf* somewhere expresses it,—“ the law of nature must be drawn from the reason of man, when the faculty is free and unbiassed by prejudices or passions.—The dictates of right reason are true principles, which agree with the nature of things well observed and examined.” In this sense the Gospel is a rule, as it teaches the *ratio* of the final judgment. But this will be yet more evident when we consider, that the teachings of Jesus do remove all obscurities which had been thrown on the law of nature, and do restore it to its original purity, spirit and power. So much for the universality.

We proposed in the next place to shew,

Thirdly, — With what authority it is, that St. Paul pronounces grace and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, on all genuine Christians? I know not whether this idea has been sufficiently attended unto, or has had much place in the minds of many professors; but here is a divine benefit derived from the apostolic-writings, which none other writings in the world could ever boast. For verily the Christian who enters into the spirit of them has, from the pen of an inspired apostle, who had every divine credential,

grace

grace and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, authoritatively pronounced upon him. The benediction he can rely upon, as having an undoubtedly divine meaning. Nay, these unspeakable blessings are absolutely insured to him. And they are not only reverfionary good things, but of what he has at present, some degree of possession. Yea, such is their comprehensive extent, that they contain in them all that is requisite to make him comfortable and happy.—Indeed, whatever can be meant by grace and peace, from their infinite source, and from the appointed medium of conveyance, is to be found in the New Testament writings. They shew us, that by *grace*, we are to understand the favour of the Almighty towards us; even his being our God and Father. For not only does he interest us in himself as the supreme and everlasting governor, whose laws we reverence and obey, whose will we would always be observing; but he is known as a tender parent who has complacency in, or who looks upon us as his dutiful children.—He has expressly declared, he does so look upon us, because we have chosen to come out from among, and are actually separated from a world which lies in wickedness. It is of his grace and favour, that we receive such plain and full information of both what he would have us do and be. And we are privileged with those great and precious promises which are *yea* and *amen* unto us, under this last dispensation: therefore there can be no possibility of our being deceived or disappointed in those hopes, which they raise and feed in our breasts. For verily, they are, like their author, immutable, and can never fail us.—So much for the GRACE which is in the benediction.—

But besides this, there is PEACE, i. e. there is enough in the Gospel-Covenant to calm, compose, and quiet the mind under whatever circumstance of the present trial. Enough to banish all disquieting, distressing fears; and enough to remove all painful apprehensions about a future-state of being.—For though we have, in many things, all of us offended and come short of the glory of God; yet, adored be his sovereign grace and goodness, we have the utmost assurance given us, that repentance and reformation do appear to be fruits meet for remission. And we can depend upon his readiness to receive us graciously and love us freely. That he will withhold from us no good things, but make all events co-operate for our final good. And as this is our safe and comfortable condition, no ruffling anxieties should have an abiding lodgment in our breasts; no present affliction however heavy or painful, should hinder the patient possession of our souls.—But then, we must give evidence, that the peace which religion bestows, is a peace of God, i. e. a most excellent peace; which passes all understanding; as it garrisons or keeps the heart through Christ Jesus.—The man who is justified by faith, he has peace with God. Rom. v. 1.

Let us next attend to the *form* of the benediction.

“ Grace unto you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.” Why the apostle mentions both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, is easy to be accounted for; since God is the origin and source of the grace and peace; and Jesus Christ, as the revealer of the Father, is the channel of conveyance, or the instrument of communication. There are no less than thirteen of St. Paul’s epistles which have this

form of benediction *, which shews, the great emphasis he had laid upon it: And which seems almost peculiar to this apostle. Nor can we wonder it should be so familiar to his address, when we consider the transporting interview he had had with the exalted Jesus, who so illustriously revealed the grace and mercy of God to him; shewing forth in him all long-suffering, as a *pattern* or type of his giving peace to all who embrace the Gospel-Teachings.—1 Tim. i. 16.—During the life of this apostle, none of the others do appear to have had so much personal intercourse with the ascended Jesus. For as to the visions of St. John, which are called the Apocalypse, these were probably about the year 95 or 96, long after the death of St. Paul.—So that in nothing was he behind the very chiefest of the apostles; for, even Peter, James, and John, who were present at their Lord's transfiguration, saw his glory and were eye-witnesses of his majesty, did not equal St. Paul's revelations.—We cannot therefore at all wonder, that a mind so much animated with Gospel-grace, should be accustomed so pathetically to announce the blessedness which is the inheritance of all true Christians: and because men may perceive him *divinely authorized* to pronounce the benediction, this assuredly gives the serious and attentive eye, a matchless pleasure in reading his epistles.

Lastly,—I shall proceed to make some useful observations. And

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I. Whereas

* Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Eph. i. 2. Gal. i. 3. Eph. i. 2. Phil. i. 2. Col. i. 2. 1 Theff. i. 1.—2 Ep. i. 2. 1 Tim. i. 2.—2 Ep. i. 2. Tit. i. 4. Philem. 3. and similar to these, is that of Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

I. Whereas St. Paul was the great apostle of the Gentiles, who had all divine attestations to his apostolic-mission, we, the descendants of idolatrous Gentiles; should be filled with thankfulness and praise to God for the inexpressible benefit of his writings! and should delightfully look upon them as intended for the saving benefit of all true believers, in every age and nation. Whenever therefore we read his Gospel-Instructions, we should regard him as writing every whit as properly to us, as to any of the primitive churches which were his immediate care and charge.—What then if he, and all the other apostles, did die within the limits of the first, and we live in the latter part of the 18th century? This makes no difference in respect to the capital doctrines and instructions, which are found in his epistles:—or, as St. *Peter* speaks, “ though all flesh is grass, and the glory of man
 “ as the flower of grass — though the grass
 “ withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away—
 “ yet the word of the Lord endureth for ever:
 “ and this is the word which by the Gospel is
 “ preached unto us.” The apostle to the Hebrews, has accordingly thus expressed the invariable truth and grace of Gospel-Teachings, “ Jesus Christ,
 “ the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.”—Nor could they be otherwise than immutable, eternal truth; because the apostles who delivered these writings to the world, “ are, on their ac-
 “ count, a sweet favour of God in them that are
 “ saved, and in them that perish. In the one,
 “ the favour of life unto life; in the other, the
 “ favour of death unto death.” — 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

It is not in the power of any of us to render their writings of less importance; for whether we will, or will not read them; or whether we read

read

read them with a cold indifference, or else with a serious and religious attention, as a divine canon, they will have their respective established effects: i. e. either to enlighten, and enliven our spirits, or else to determine our obstinate and criminal inattention to these last teachings of God. It is not in the power of any being whatsoever to prevent these consequences. And the shutting our eyes upon, or hardning our hearts against their instructions, will be no apology. In a word, they are a divine talent, in which we have infinitely more concern, than we can possibly have with any thing else in the whole world. A neglect or contempt of them must therefore be fatal! For unless we are able to prove, that they are not expressive of the truth and grace of God, or that they have no divine authority, it will be at our everlasting peril, if we are found trifling with the New Testament canon. But, on the contrary, when we consider its salutary divine intention, our gratitude should be excited, and we ought to be filled with thankfulness and praise for that system of heavenly instruction.

II. Since the manifest design and end of the apostolic writings, is to sanctify or separate men from worldliness and vice, and to enable them to keep free from the dominion of lust; the sceptic or infidel must certainly stand condemned: because he rejects the most open address that was ever made to man, of divine truth and grace. He may say or think just what he pleaseth,—these writings have all the possible intrinsic marks and evidences of the will of an all-perfect Being: for, assuredly, that which recovers the mind from ignorance, immorality, and vicious taste, to just conception, to rectitude of desire and aversion, and confirms in all the paths of piety and virtue, cannot but

have a divine original, and demand a religious reverence.

Should any object and say,—“ if these writings
 “ which you call apostolical, are of divine autho-
 “ rity, and were intended for universal use, how
 “ comes it to pass, that they are not every where
 “ received as such; and made the standard of
 “ religious idea, sentiment, and conduct to all
 “ nations ?”

The answer would be ready at hand; for this reason, they are not; *viz.* because man was originally made and ever left *free*, either to attend unto, or not; to receive, or to reject them, and by an abuse of this freedom the world, more generally, lies in wickedness. “ The God of this
 “ world, i. e. a love of the world having blinded
 “ the eyes of men, that they should not obey the
 “ truth.” Consequently, since the Gospel has no compulsive force in its address, though it is most expressive of the truth and grace of God, this will account for its non-universality. For though our blessed Lord, during his ministrations in Judea, *spoke so as never man spake*, i. e. with far more authority than any of their instructors; yet, very few did cordially receive his message, or own his divine mission: and he gives this reason of their inattention and infidelity, “ They have ears to
 “ hear, but they will not hear,—they love darkness
 “ rather than light, because their deeds are evil.
 “ Therefore they will not come to the light, lest
 “ their deeds should be reprovèd:” i. e. lest their deeds should appear to them in all their deformity and malignity. On this account it is, that they hate the light.—Nay, so very depraved were the generality of the Jewish nation, though separated from the rest of mankind by a special
 provi-

providence, that “they would not come to him, that they might have life.” John v. 40.—

And here it might be shewn, with undeniable evidence, that the Gospel is as completely fitted to become an universal standard rule, to guide mankind in the path of safety and life, as the elementary light of the sun, is, to assist the eye of man in his bodily operations, and his local movements, as well as to aid his studious attentions to sundry *written* volumes of the arts and sciences. Nay, Gospel-Teachings might be shewn, to be as well adapted to the end of becoming a moral divine standard of universal order and regularity; as the rational powers given to man are to the purpose of guiding, rectifying, and governing, his appetites and passions.—But in each of these cases, there are vast numbers of the human family, who are inattentive to the manifest design and end both of the natural and the moral luminary. e. g. How dreadfully common is it for mankind to make a perverse use both of the elementary light, and of their own intellectual faculties and powers! But does this very extensive egregious perversion prove, that either the light of the sun, or that candle of the Lord, *reason*, were not intended for universal guidance or instruction. Whatever therefore may be the parts of the habitable globe, which are not under the illumination of the Gospel, it can be no manner of objection to its being fitted for universal instruction*.—We can well account for its being refused admittance in the wide dominions of the impostor, *Mahomet*; and in those extensive regions of *popery*, where its lamp is put under a

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bushel.

* Christ is styled, emphatically, THE TEACHER, — *the chief guide and instructor: i. e. the way, the truth, and the life.*—John iii. 2. ch. viii. 12. xiv. 6. Heb. xii. 2.

busnel. Upon the whole, as well might an objection be formed against the light of nature's being divine and intended for universal benefit, as against that of the Gospel revelation being so, because of the vast numbers, who despise, abuse, or neglect the light of the one and of the other.

The infidel or the sceptic, has therefore no reasonable excuse; nor can he make any rational apology, for his rejecting the New Testament canon, because of the non-universality of its reception.—

III. All men whatsoever, stand censured and condemned, who can either speak or think contemptuously of sanctification: i. e. of a separation of the mind from all worldly lustings.—And yet, there are not a few who dare to make the appellation, SAINT, a subject of sneer and ridicule. They can play off much raillery upon this divine compellation: and use the term with mockery and derision. Whereas, there is not one single prophane character in all the world so justly respectable, as the man whom the truth and grace of God have sanctified, whatever his external circumstance or condition*. Hence the ridicule will return with great force upon the worldling, as the most debased and contemptible of the human family.

It is proper that we should reason a little closely upon this theme—Pray, what is the precise or exact idea that we should form of a *Saint*?

Why, in truth and fact, it is no other than that
“ of

* Advert to the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

“ of a rational creature habitually reverencing his “ maker.” One, whom the teachings of reason, nature, and revelation have informed and enlightened; made regular and consistent in all his powers and passions.—One that has thereby attained unto, or recovered the original rectitude of his frame; having his imagination, appetites, and passions subjected to reason and conscience: one who has no volitions, no elections, no determinations, but what are directed by the known will of the supremely adorable sovereign.

It must then be a proof of very depraved taste, when any can ridicule or despise what gives the true dignity and glory of man. But truly, it is none who do so, but the ignorant and impious, the vain and wanton, that are incapable of seeing the beauties of holiness; the charms which there are in piety and virtue.—But unhappily their carnalities, their sensualities, their debaucheries have rendered them such deplorable strangers to the sanctifying influences of TRUTH.—

I cannot forbear observing, that in the last session of parliament, some speeches made by several of our senators, borrowed phrases and passages peculiar to the sacred writings, in order to give a poignancy to their wit! at the same time, they afford no proof of the reverence which is religiously due to the truth and grace of God—but it is to be feared, are little better than the effusion of scorners;—and they would do well to remember what Jesus Christ said to Saul,—*It is hard for thee to kick against the goads!*

Further,—Pray tell us, if you can, what real excellence, or what true merit is to be found in a man, whom the truth of God has not sanctified?

—Whatever may be his present state or condition, he is one whom the divine mercy cannot save.— Let me tell you, men might, upon the same *ratio*, reproach, or speak prophanely and irreverently of the holiness of God, as of the holiness of those of his creatures whom his truth has sanctified; creatures who bear his image, and reflect his glory. The subject is therefore of much too serious and important a nature, ever to become the subject of ridicule or of raillery: it must be so, “Since *without holiness no man can see the Lord.*”—*Heb. xii. 14.*

IV. How peculiarly delightful, and beneficial must it be, for Christians to consult religiously the apostolic-writings; since they do authoritatively pronounce grace and peace, on all who give them such attention?—I have before observed, that this very form of benediction is to be found in thirteen of St. Paul’s epistles, or in all that have his name. And would now remark, that St. *Peter* has something very analogous; for he wisheth,—“That grace and peace may be multiplied on those to whom he wrote.” Such benediction is found in both his epistles.—And St. *John*’s first epistle has these reports,—*viz.* “God is light! and God is love!”—Nay, his second epistle has a very similar address—“Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, in truth and love.”——So St. *Jude* calls himself “the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the brother of James:” and at the same time, he ascribes his epistle “to them who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus, and called.”—And then announceth, “mercy unto you and peace, and love be multiplied.” And though St. *James* has not this form of address,

yet he has something equivalent, for he observes, “that every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, nor the shadow of turning.”—From all which declarations, I would here observe, that there is no such doctrine taught in the New Testament writings, as that of the distinct *personality* of the Spirit; nor the peculiar office of a sanctifier ever once assigned to such distinct person.—

On the contrary; St. *Jude* expressly says, “that men are sanctified by God the Father.” *Jude*, *ver.* 1.—Hence wherever the sanctification of the Spirit is mentioned, it cannot intend any thing else, but the truth and grace of God; for these are the Spirit of the Gospel; they are the Spirit and power of that dispensation. Agreeable to which, as hath been observed, Jesus saith, “my words they are Spirit, and they are life.” Every where, throughout Gospel-Teachings, we are led to fix our eyes on God the Father, as the fountain or infinite source of the grace, mercy and peace.

And thus it is that we are kept from all that confusion of ideas which is found to hang on the popular schemes; and may reasonably solace ourselves in that revelation, which affords the human mind a truly divine refreshment, as it is at-tempering and forming itself upon apostolical instructions.—

We may now take a retrospect of what we have attempted: and it is, to have shewn in the first discourse, that the religion of Jesus, has in it a simplicity, harmony, and unity of principles: and that this unity is an irrefragable proof of its
divine

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divine original.—That next to its unity, is its unmixed purity, having nothing of human invention in its whole plan; which is a farther powerful argument of its divinity. And thirdly, that as it appears manifestly calculated to be the *universal* canon of heavenly instruction to mankind, it cannot fail to convince and persuade every honest mind of the completeness and conclusiveness of its internal evidence.

So true it is, that the inspired New Testament writings “are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfected, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

A
SUPPLEMENTAL DISCOURSE,
ON THE
SUPERNATURAL CONCEPTION
OF
JESUS CHRIST.

AND ORIGINAL DISCOVERY

OF THE

STERN NATURAL CONCEPTION

OF

THE CHRIST.

On the supernatural Conception of Jesus Christ.

I Presume it will not be thought impertinent, to add a discourse upon the supernatural conception of Jesus Christ; since it confirms the prophetic-testimony of his being the seed promised to Abraham, in whom all nations should be blessed; and is a full and express accomplishment of a prophecy, which *Isaiab* delivered about 700 years before his birth: the which we have *Is. vii. 13, 14.*
“ And he said, hear ye now, O house of David,
“ is it a small thing with you to weary men? but
“ will you weary my God also? Therefore the
“ Lord himself shall give you a sign,—behold a
“ virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall
“ call his name IMMANUEL.—Butter and honey
“ shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the
“ evil, and choose the good: for before the child
“ shall know to refuse the evil and choose the
“ good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be
“ forsaken of both her Kings.”

Since the prophetic-testimony must be from God, it will demand our religious attention. For so says the oracle, “ Remember the former things
“ of old, for I am God, and there is none else;
“ I am God, and there is none like me: declaring
“ the end from the beginning, and from ancient
“ times the things that are not yet done.”——
Is. xlvi. 9, 10.

Bishop

Bishop *Chandler* observes of my text, that it is one of the five which have been charged with unfaithfulness in the application of them to the Messiah. Nevertheless, St. Matthew having related the wonderful formation and birth of Christ, tells his readers of the Jewish nation, that God of old had prepared their fathers for giving credit to the great event; “All this, *says he*, was done, “that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by “the prophet, *behold a virgin shall conceive,*” &c. the *Bishop* thus remarks upon it, “the occasion “of the message by *Isaiah* was, *Ahaz* king of Judah “being in the utmost distress, at the boasted “invasion of his capital city, from the kings of “Syria and Israel. To comfort *Ahaz*, the prophet is sent to tell him, that the counsels and “attempt should prove ineffectual. And in assurance that he spake in God’s name, he offers “the king his choice of any other sign, either “in the depth, or in the height above.—It appears from the answer, that *Ahaz* was fullen, “and that he and his counsellors despised the “prophet and distrusted God.—Since *Ahaz* “refused to ask any sign which God had offered “to give him, the prophet is instructed to “declare, God will give him one without asking; “yet it should neither be in the heavens, nor “from the depth: but it should be a sign, or “token to him and his people, of the birth of “a great personage, in whom all the promises “of God should have their full accomplishment. “Accordingly the prophet says, *Hear ye now,* “*O house of David,*” * &c.

I should paraphrase the prophetic message thus,
 —“The Lord himself shall give you a sign,
 “token,

* See Bishop *Chandler*’s Defence, &c. ch. iv. sec. 11.

“ token, or earnest, that behold a virgin shall
 “ conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be
 “ called Immanuel. q. d. You are afraid lest the
 “ line of David should be extinguished, from
 “ which the promised Messiah is to descend; but
 “ it shall not. For even of a virgin of that very
 “ family shall he be born. And that you may more
 “ fully credit the prediction, God shall graciously
 “ vouchsafe to give you an unexpected national
 “ deliverance; a sign of which, the Lord himself
 “ affords you by the child which is now in mine
 “ hand, *shear-jashab*, who shall eat butter and honey,
 “ i. e. he shall partake of plenty, your land being
 “ freed from hostile invasions, even before he
 “ shall know to refuse the evil and choose the
 “ good; so that the land about which thou so
 “ much distressest * thyself, shall be rid of both
 “ the hostile kings.” — Thus, I understand, the
 prophet’s son, was to be the sign or earnest to them
 of the certainty of that future event, of a virgin’s
 having a son, who should be called Immanuel.

Should it be objected to the above interpretation
 of the prophecy, “ that a promise made of what
 “ should be done in some future age, was, by no
 “ means, an apt measure of exciting and fixing
 “ the faith and confidence of a people in the pro-
 “ mise of a near deliverance from their enemies.”

I would reply, this was not at all within the
 design of the prophetic message. Yet, the near
 accomplishment of a promise of deliverance made
 to a nation, was divinely adapted to establish their
 faith;

* N. B. The Hebrew word rendered *abhor*, is translated,
grieve, Exod. i. 12. And *distressed*, Numb. xxii. 3. Vid.
 Poli Synops. in loco.

faith, and enliven their hope in the promise of a more remote salvation.

To proceed, the prophet when speaking of the fulfilment of the promise which had respect to the everlasting covenant made with David, he useth the word ALMA, rendered virgin; which learned men have shewn, does always signify in the Hebrew scriptures, *a woman who has not known a man*. And even the Greek translators before Christ, who were not interested in the controversy, and who knew much better the signification of Hebrew words than any Jew has done since their last dispersion, do so render *Alma* in this very place*. And any one may see, that after such a pompous introduction, the prophet must have greatly mocked his hearers, had he meant no more than that *a young woman should be with child*.

Thus this remarkable prophecy, will perfectly well account for a notion prevalent among the Jews, of the supernatural birth of their Messiah, of which some specimen shall be given, by and by;—at the same time, it is not at all probable, that they could have any political purposes to serve, under such an expectation.

Thus much shall suffice as a sort of comment on the prediction. In further treating upon it, the following method may be observed;

I. I shall investigate the ground of certainty, with which the prophecy has an application to the Messiah.

II. Shew,

* *Ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένη ὃν γαστρὶ ληψεται, virgineus intactus.*

II. Shew, in what sense the word *Immanuel* is only applicable to Christ Jesus.

III. Point out the evil which there is in infidelity.

As to the ground of certainty on which such application should be made of the prophecy, we shall find the New Testament accounts of the birth of Christ, in perfect harmony. For the Evangelists Matthew and Luke, who clearly understood the meaning of the prophet Isaiah, do, both of them, expressly report the virgin Mary's conception of Jesus to have been supernatural; which they would not have done, without conclusive evidence. Accordingly the two first chapters of St. Luke's Gospel, are filled with narratives which support the credibility of the fact. e. g. The preternatural conception of the Messiah's harbinger, by his mother Elizabeth, who had been barren till her old age, much beyond the time of child-bearing, according to the course of nature. The Evangelist informing us, that Zacharias and Elizabeth were both *aged in their days* *; and that an Angel first announced the preternatural conception to Zacharias, whilst officiating in his priestly office, at the altar of incense; who himself was persuaded, that his own advanced age as well as his wife's, forbade such expectation. *Luk. i. 18.* That historian also affirms, it was the very same angel *Gabriel*, who announced to the virgin Mary her supernatural conception. *v. 31.* In both cases he is represented as foretelling, be-

F

sides

* *Και αμφοτεροι προεβηκοντες εν ταις ημεραις αυτων ησαν.*
Luc. i. 7.

sides their sex, the high offices and appointments of the two children.

Upon Mary's visit to Elizabeth, they are both so inspired, as to offer up praises to God for the honour done them, of the one being made the mother of the harbinger, and the other of his prince, the Messiah. These gratulatory songs of praise, St. Luke records, and also gives us an account of a multitude of angels who appeared to the shepherds, announcing to them the birth of the Messiah, ascribing praises to God in the highest; after which he mentions the sacrifice that was made in the temple, by which Mary's first-born was sanctified to the Lord; immediately both Simeon and Anna upon seeing the infant Jesus, utter songs of praise, under a divine impulse.

Now when these concomitants of the supernatural conception are well considered, and carefully compared with the narrative, which St. Matthew has recorded of the angelic informations to Joseph, Mary's espoused husband; we are constrained either to give full credit to the fact, or else to reject these evangelical narratives, as fabulous and incredible.

The argument might be farther urged from the congruity or agreement which this supernatural conception has with the measures God had early taken to render the line of the promise conspicuous: since it was by no other than a preternatural conception, that Isaac the son of the promise was given to Abraham, he having received him, as it were from the dead, when he was born of Sarah. See *Heb.* xi. 9. compare *Gen.* xvii. There was therefore a manifest agreement in the supernatural concep-

conception of the promised seed; and not any thing of the least difficulty, to a people well acquainted with the history of the father of their nation. Nay, even the apostle Paul has laid so great emphasis upon Abraham's faith in the preternatural conception of Isaac, that he says, it was accounted to him for righteousness. See Rom. iv. 19—22.

And as to the promise given to Abraham, *that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*: Gen. xxii. 18. neither Jew nor Christian, have with any evidence, denied that this was to be applied to the Messiah. The *son of Sirach* so understood it, who says, "because Abraham was found faithful, God assured him by an oath, that he would bless the nations in his seed." Ecclus. xlv. 21. And both St. Peter and Paul apply that promise to the Christians Lord, Acts iii. 25, 26. Gal. iii. 8. From these views of the Abrahamic covenant, the supernatural conception of Jesus opens upon us with all the evidence of certainty, as well as of congruity and propriety. Compare Luke i. 73.

Neither have we yet collected the whole of the evidence; for St. Paul is wont to speak of the man Christ Jesus, as having had a distinguished formation. So he tells the Galatians, "that in the fulness of time, he was made of a woman." Gal. iv. 4. And that in his humiliation, when he consented to be divested of the miraculous powers conferred on him, and which wrought by him throughout his public ministrations, "he was then found in fashion as a man, seized by the hands of violence." Phil. ii. 8. To the Corinthians he is represented as the second Adam, because he had no other father but God: and

because of his superiority to the first Adam, who was of the earth, earthy, he is said to be the Lord from heaven. 1 Cor. xv. 45—50.—compare *ver.* 25.

Let us now proceed to adduce the testimony of Jewish writers. And the above-mentioned Bishop *Chandler* cites three or four Rabbies who say, that the birth of the Messiah must be extraordinary. “The Messiah is the seed that shall come from another place, i. e. he shall have another principle of generation.” Others say, “the birth of Christ alone shall be without any defect; his birth shall not be like that of other creatures into the world; none shall know his father before he tells it; the Redeemer that shall come shall be without a father.” And Rabbi *Joses* says, on Pf. lxxxv. 12. “The generation of the Messiah shall be singular, and not like that of creatures generating in the world; none shall know the name of his father, till he comes to declare it*.” With which accounts the opinion of the Jews corresponds; see *John* vii. 27.

We cannot therefore wonder that several *impostors* should pretend to have been born of virgins. “It was thus that Simon Magus would have it, that his mother Rachel bore him whilst a virgin, and before she co-habited with her husband Antony. And that Domitian, the son of Vespasian, would be thought to have been the son of Minerva.” So Virgil compliments Augustus, by telling him, “That the child of which his wife was pregnant, would be the beloved son, and great offspring of Jupiter.”

What-

* Bishop Chandler's Defence, p. 337.

Whatever then may or can be said, these are open, full, undeniable evidences of the supernatural conception of Jesus; and are in satisfactory proof of his having been born of a virgin.

Should it, however, be objected; “that only two Evangelists mention the supernatural conception?”——

I would answer, perhaps there is not one of the four evangelical historians, but what has sundry narratives peculiar to his record. And we are well assured, that both St. Luke and St. John have many reports which are not found in the other Evangelists. But must we therefore reckon those reports or narratives less credible? Pray, who would part with the parable of the prodigal, because only mentioned by one Evangelist? Or, with the discourses which our Lord had with Nicodemus, and the woman of Samaria? Who would give up the sermon on the mount, because mentioned only by two? It is enough that we are satisfied these historians were divinely qualified for making their distinct written records: in this confidence, not one of them will lose a whit of their great importance with us.

Another argument might be alleged in favour of the evangelical account given of this great event of the supernatural conception, and that is, had it been omitted, the history of our Lord's entrance into being would have been less complete and perfect than that of many others; inasmuch as the historical records of several characters of old, such as that of Isaac, of Jacob, of Joseph, Samson and Samuel, were so distinguishing, as may be seen, Gen. xvii. 16, 17. ch. xxv. 21. ch. xxx. 22, 23. Judges, 13th chapter, 1 Sam. lst chap-

On the supernatural Conception

1st chapter; which five instances, were of children preternaturally given, in consequence of a promise from God made to barren women. Consequently, there would have been a less perfect account of the origination of Jesus Christ, than had been given of those distinguished characters.

Here let me notice a strange opinion of a defender of revelation, who would have it, “that
“ Jesus Christ could not be a perfect man, if
“ not begotten by an human father and mother,
“ in the usual sense of the words, *son of man*,
“ throughout the Bible.*”

We are ready to acknowledge, he was not the son of man, by ordinary generation, as other men are: but to say, that for this reason he could not be a perfect man, would be the same thing as to deny that either Adam was a perfect man, or Eve a perfect woman.—However, the same gentleman tells us, “that Jesus does so often
“ call himself *the son of man*, in order to prevent any idolatrous ideas and notions of him,
“ as it had been the wont of the pagan world to
“ deify their heroes.”

Upon which, I would thus reason; had it been notorious that our Lord was the product of an ordinary generation, he must have had much less occasion to guard the people against such idolatrous notions, than he would upon his being the offspring of a supernatural conception; since
this

* See the scripture account of the attributes and worship of God, and of the character and offices of Jesus Christ, p. 148. Printed for Noon, 1750.

this would furnish a cogent reason for his so guarding mankind against the idolatrous opinion.

Thus much for the certainty with which the application of this prophecy is made to the Messiah.

We are *secondly*, to shew in what sense the name Immanuel is applicable only to Jesus Christ.—And the word, our translators have rendered, *God with us*; but Erasmus, perhaps with as much reason, has rendered it, *God with him*. And if that should be the true sense, we may conclude St. Peter had it in his eye, when he gave this account of Jesus of Nazareth, that God anointed him with power, who went about doing good, for, *God was with him*. Acts x. 38.

We are very sure, the word of God did reside with the man Christ Jesus, as in a tabernacle: or, the presence of God was so with him, that whoever has seen him, has seen the Father; i. e. he has seen all that is to be seen of him, viz. all his truth and all his grace. And hence the name Immanuel is applicable to him, and to him only. And in fact, he has undoubtedly made the fullest and clearest revelation that ever was made of the will of God. In and by him God has made, or rather has *finished* the ages*; in other words, has compleated the plan of his providence, and in him all the promises of God are accomplishing, throughout the revolutions of time.

And moreover, as God has exalted him to the right hand of power, and made him the vital and governing head of his church; having given him

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a name

* Δι ου κ' της αιωνος εποισθεν. Heb. i. 2.

a name above every name ! by raising mankind to the hopes of eternal life under his administration ; from these high appointments we see the propriety of applying to him the name IMMANUEL.

The before-mentioned Bishop seems to me, to have widely mistaken, when he imagines that *Isaiab* would be understood to say, that a son to be born of his wife should be called by this name. For I can find in the text no son to be so called, but the son of a virgin ; which could not be the son of the prophet's wife. And I conclude, no other son of the prophet's is mentioned but *Shear-jashub*, a child already born, and now in his arms.

There is a remarkable marginal reading of this message—" Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son ; and thou, O virgin, shalt call his name Immanuel ;" which is the language of a future event, that could not relate to any son of *Isaiah's*.

We are in the *next* place, to point out the evil of Infidelity. The prophet says, " Is it a small thing for you to weary men ? but will you weary my God also ?"—Observe, the Hebrew word rendered *weary*, is translated *grieve*, Job iv. 2. and Prov. xxvi. 15 *. And there must be something extremely displeasing in the idea of a rational accountable creature obstinately rejecting divine evidence ; inasmuch as a deplorable depravity is what obstructs the mid-day light of truth. It even grieves and distresses a generous human

* Vid. Taylor's Heb. Concord. No. 923.

human breast, to see a fellow-creature wilfully shutting his eyes, and stupidly refusing the light of life; whatever may have been the motive that gave a dislike to the exercise of reason, and to the divine lead of truth and goodness.

Here we might aptly remark, there are two demonstrative evidences of a mission or message being from God, *viz.* prophecy and miracles. Under past dispensations, I should suppose, these have usually been found in connexion. The prophets of old must have had a miracle-working power, present sign or token, in order to excite attention, and secure credit to their predictions *. It seems very plain that Isaiah had such power, because he bid Ahaz ask a sign either in the depth, or in the height above. Which surely he would not have done, unless he had been empowered to gratify him. All the heralds of heaven had the badge of some divine signs, whereby unpossessed minds might easily distinguish them from impostors. *Spencer on Vulgar Proph. p. 61.*

Both prophecy and miracle do bear testimony to this great event of Christ's supernatural formation. Witness the prediction, together with the preternatural conception of the harbinger; for Zacharias foretold he should be struck dumb, as the sign given him, and upon the fulfilment he instantly recovered his speech:—compare also the inspiration of Elizabeth and Mary, with the astonishing circumstances which did attend their salutation! Now, when Deity has given such demon-

* Which seems to have been always expected from the Jewish prophets, and always performed by them. See Dr. Middleton's Examination of the Bishop of London's Discourses, &c. p. 41.

demonstration of a fact, and taken every proper measure which infinite wisdom and goodness could devise to convince and persuade of its truth; an obstinate refusal of credit must be very offensive in the eye of heaven. We conclude therefore much evil must be implied in infidelity.

But this will be yet more apparent, when it is considered, that after all the raillery which unbelievers have plentifully bestowed upon the supernatural conception, no more has yet been done than a display made thereby of prejudice, conceit, and vanity. For undoubtedly, there was in this event something worthy the interposition of Almighty power; an astonishing aptitude to convince and persuade; else it could have had no place in the divine scheme of manifestation.

Farther,

There is, in fact, nothing to oppose to the record: for not any thing more incredible can be in the supernatural formation of Christ, than there was either in the formation of the first man, or in that of the first woman; or in the several preternatural conceptions. So that we, on the other hand, discover an amazing propriety in this distinguished formation, not only in fulfilment of prophecy, but in its so identifying the person of the promised *Messiah*, as that it is rendered utterly impossible the honest enquirer should mistake his person. Nay, even the truth and faithfulness, the wisdom and goodness of God are made illustrious in that supernatural formation.—Let no one then forget how the prophet has censured the crime of infidelity.—“Is it a small thing that ye weary men? Will ye weary my God also?”

Some Reflections.

I. There is a superlative pleasure in reading the series of prophetic openings which have reference to the Messiah promised from the beginning! and yet it is deplorably fashionable, to neglect and despise the written volume of God's word. Men are accustomed to think they are not at all obliged to consult religiously the divine oracles: and even learn to persuade themselves, these sacred writings are of no importance. Various are the excuses they make, to quiet their own minds in this inattention. *Papists* they see are not allowed to consult the holy book. *Protestants* who are possessed of that privilege, do, great numbers of them, appear to be never the better for the liberty they have; many making no use of it;—and not a few perverting and abusing the manifest sense of its teachings. Nevertheless, those records of ages, which heaven has intended for the beneficial information of mankind, are of too great significance to be neglected with impunity. The oracular voice, is, “he that has ears, let him hear.”

To what, but to this contempt of the divine oracles, can we attribute the shocking impiety, and atrocious debauchery of the age! which has no taste either for knowing, or doing the will of God!

II. I might observe, from the supernatural conception of *Jesus*, that the *honour* done to his mother, was not in consequence of any personal merit; and cannot entitle her to any homage from mankind. There is no reason to doubt either

either of her innocence, or virtue; she appears to have been truly pious. But though she was the mother of Jesus, that gave her no more interest in the Gospel-salvation than any others had, who were but as careful to do the will of God as she was. This we may fairly infer from *Math. xii. 50. Whosoever shall do the will of my Father,—the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.*

III. It should appear from our Lord's supernatural formation; that he had no *prior* existence. All ancient prophecy speaks of him, as not yet having had any existence; but always as *he that was to come*. And St. Paul says, "it was in the *fulfulness of time*, that he was made of a woman.*" Some leud minds, I would here observe, have spoken with great levity on the declaration of the angel to Mary, "that the Holy Spirit should come upon her, and the power of the highest should over-shadow her."—But this angelic account of the supernatural formation of Jesus, is in perfect agreement with the Mosaic representation of the Spirit of God *moving* upon the face of the waters; and with the evangelic narration of its *hovering over* Jesus, at his baptism. The Hebrew word *rabbaph*, signifies to move, or agitate; as in *Genesis*, ch. i. 2. BUXTORF says, it alludes to the fluttering motion of the eagle's wings, when she would excite her young to fly. It evidently denotes, in St. Luke's account, a like exertion of the same creative power, that moved upon the chaotic waters. That fine definition given by St. Paul of the creation of this system;

* See the argument against the pre-existence, in *the true New Testament doctrine of Jesus Christ considered.*

system, is here applicable, viz. "The worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Just so was the origination of Jesus, in Mary's supernatural conception of him; which forbids our supposing any prior existence*.

IV. From hence we conclude his divine character and mission; and also that the message he delivered must be of the greatest importance to mankind. It is not supposable that such an apparatus of prophecy and miracle, should be without a design and end worthy of the adorable governor of universal nature, and deserving the religious attention of mankind. The revelation which he has made of the will of God, gives the reason of his being stiled *Immanuel*: for as it is the most perfect, so it must be the last revelation which shall ever be made to this world of ours. And because of this revelation, he is said to have shewn us the Father: and is also represented as the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image or character of his person.

But to prevent mistake, though he is properly stiled *Immanuel*, not only from the revelation he has made of the mind and will of God, but as being constituted head over all things to the church of God; yet we are not to conceive of him as really and truly God. This he cannot be, because God by his spirit or power formed or made him of a woman. But whatever God has made, must be a creature. Whereas the one living and true God, is not capable of the shadow of change; and the idea of his becoming an

* See more on this subject in the *Appendix*.

an infant, is, beyond measure, shocking! *Tertullian* said, “ he would not believe that the sovereign
 “ God descended into the womb of a woman,
 “ though even the scripture itself should affirm
 “ it.*” And we find our Lord; throughout his ministrations, constantly declaring, that the words he spake, and the works he wrought, were not by his own spirit or power; but by that of his father who sent him.

Lastly, we cannot but see ourselves under an indispensable obligation to reverence Jesus as the sent of God, by conforming ourselves religiously to those divine instructions which he has delivered to us in the New Testament canon.—It is allowed, that we may highly entertain ourselves, and take a refined pleasure in reading the amazing book of nature! We may take much delight in consulting the historical volume of providence. We may reap much advantage from conversing with the writings of inquisitive men, and derive considerable information from their experimental knowledge. Not a little is to be learnt from discoveries made by philosophic minds, who have, with great study and much accuracy, investigated nature’s laws, and taken a comparatively extensive view of her latent treasures.—But, after all these laborious and entertaining researches, we are constrained to own, with admiration, that there are no such riches of divine wisdom and knowledge, to be any where found, as in the teachings of Jesus. For, verily, by him, God has *abounded* towards us in all wisdom and prudence! his teachings give the light of life, of immortal life!

How

* See *Platonism unveiled* : Part 1. p. 8.

How aptly then did an apostle say, “whosoever
“ shall confess that Jesus is the son of God—
“ God dwelleth in him, and he in God—for this
“ is the record, that God hath given to us eternal
“ life, and this life is in his son. He that hath
“ the son, hath life; but he that hath not the
“ son of God, hath not life.”

APPENDIX.

"I have been thinking of you
 often, and wondering how you
 are getting on. I hope you
 are well and happy. I have
 not much news to write at
 present. I am still in the
 same way of thinking, and
 still believe in the
 same things. I am
 ever your affectionate
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 J. G.

1791

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A P P E N D I X.

A

L E T T E R

ADDRESSED TO THE

A R I A N S.

G

P E N D I X

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A R I A N S

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A P P E N D I X.

A

LETTER addressed to the ARIANS:

Occasioned by a late Publication of

Mr. MARTIN TOMKINS's Reply

T O

Dr. LARDNER's Letter on the Logos.

Fellow Christians,

I Begin with observing to you, that what Mr. Tomkins has advanced concerning the Logos, or that word of power by which God created the heavens and the earth, becoming the soul of the man Christ Jesus, appears to me to be very wide from the truth, and far from being defensible on any solid grounds. The idea of reducing an immensity of presence and power, an unquestionable divinity to the embryo-state, or to the narrow confinement of an infant human body, is, I frankly confess, beyond the utmost reach of my conceptions. Nor do I apprehend, that this idea has the least analogy or agreement, with any one image the mind of man can form, from comparing any manifestation God has made of himself, in his works, ways, or word. Indeed, it seems to stand in contradiction to truth, reason, nature, and revelation; for we are well assured, that the wise Creator has established a specific difference in the various orders of beings he has formed; and therefore cannot inform and actuate a real

human body by the spirit of an angel, any more than by the spirit of an animal of the lowest order; forasmuch as this would destroy that specific difference which he has invariably established throughout all his works.

Mr. T. observes, that “if it should be made appear that the death of Christ carries in it an utter unconsciousness, he should make no scruple of supposing, that the *Logos* was for that time in a state of unconsciousness.” Had he said no more than this, in defence of the Arian Hypothesis, my mind would have revolted; since I cannot suppose it agreeable to the divine constitutions, that God’s well-beloved son, who, throughout his ministrations, had sustained *the form of God*, and at their finishing had commended his own spirit to him, should be reduced, even in *hades*, to a state of unconsciousness. If my ideas are right, a sincere habitual conformity to the will of God, is a life-principle in man, which death cannot injure: much less could it render unconscious the sinless, the perfectly obedient soul of Jesus, the brightest image of the Father’s glory! At the same time, it would greatly increase the difficulties of the Arian Hypothesis, by its supposing the *Logos*, [an agent by which God made the worlds] reducible to a state of unconscious existence, were it but for a single moment.

As unaccountably does Mr. Tomkins speak of Christ’s agony in the garden, and complaint on the cross. — His words are these, — “It is probable that the *devil*, in the temptations recorded, took him, as I may say, at the greatest advantage, when the circumstances he was in, made him more liable to the impressions of things then proposed to him.” — This, assuredly,
is

is a very strange account of the matter. And he might have been much better informed from the mouth of Jesus, who, in the eve of his sufferings, said, *the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.* So far from taking any advantage of him, the prince of this world, whom Mr. T. calls the *devil*, when he came, could make no impression at all upon him.—Neither do I think our blessed Lord made any complaint whilst he hung on the cross. He indeed appeals to God, *as his God*, from the revilings of the chief priests, in proof of his knowing that God had not forsaken him.—*Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachtani.*

Mr. T. comments thus on Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8. “Our Lord took the form of a servant, in his being made in the likeness of man.” *Εν ὁμοιωματι ἀνθρώπων γενομένος.* This is not intelligible, for unless he made himself, and made himself too in that likeness, there is no propriety in saying, *he took upon him* that form. Whereas one may easily conceive of his being made truly man, like to his brethren; and in that true humanity, we can consider him as consenting to take upon him the form of a servant; and also as willingly submitting to be treated as a criminal, suffering the ignominious death of a Roman slave, in his crucifixion.—But then, it is not possible we should conceive of any being God ever created, as either assenting or consenting to his formation. This would be to suppose the creature’s existence prior to itself. Neither can it be any mark of humiliation, or an expression of a creature’s humility, to be made what it is. One might farther argue, that to be made in the likeness of man, is no proof of his having the form of a servant, in the humiliating sense, if we can believe either Moses, or St. Paul. Moses says, God made man in his

own image, after his own likeness, and gave him dominion. Gen. i. 26. And St. Paul says, that man is the image and glory of God! 1 Cor. xi. 7.

My surprize is not in the least abated, by that worthy man (whom I loved) thus expressing his ideas of the *exalted* Jesus,—“ he is now considered, not as in a state of subjection even to the father; but as invested with supreme authority, deputed indeed, but, as it should seem, not under direction, neither is he accountable.” If this can be justly said of the man Christ Jesus, I must own a total ignorance of all first principles which concern the law of relation; as well as of all those representations made of him by apostles.—In the reason and nature of things, by the laws of immutable eternal truth, all beings that are originated must be dependent, none can have independence but the one God, who has none besides him. Again, Christ’s investiture with supreme power from the Father, undoubtedly infers his dependence. He is only capable of performing the functions of his high office, by virtue of God’s presence with him. For it is God’s throne at the right hand of which the Father hath placed him. Heb. xii. 2.—

As to that phrase, 1 Cor. xv. 28. *Then shall the son himself also be subject*, this no way proves he is not under direction, nor accountable, during his mediatorial administration, or that he is any other than the Shechinah of God, invested with the Father’s glory, See Matth. xvi. 27. Mar. viii. 38. ———At the end of which administration, he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Or, it may perhaps be understood of the children of the kingdom being pre-

APPENDIX.

presented to the Father, as an heave-offering, after they have been with him to behold the glory which the Father hath given him. Joh. xvii. 24. But does not St. Paul say, that the name given him above every name, to which every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess him Lord, *shall be to the glory of God the Father?* And if so, is there not an *end* to which he is to conduct his government? A full proof that he is neither without direction, nor in a state of non-subjection. Indeed Mr. T. owns he is a deputy—*deputed indeed*: But who of mankind ever had an idea of a deputy, that was neither under direction, nor accountable?

I shall only notice another text, about which mode of expression Mr. T. is extremely sanguine, and is confident it clearly determines the pre-existence of Christ, and that is, John xvi. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father.* He lays much stress on the [παλιναφημι.] I have the pleasure of observing, that an ingenious writer has shewn* the word here rendered *world*, is to be considered only as a scene of business, exercise and trial; he supports this sense, by John xiv. 19. xv. 18. xviii. 9, and 18. 1 John iii. 1. I would add, John xviii. 37. “For
“ this end was I born, and for this cause *came*
“ *I into the world*; that I might bear witness to
“ the truth;” where, coming into the world, manifestly signifies, his entering on public business, as the great prophet of God, to reveal his will to mankind.

The

* Theological Repository, No. III. Vol. III. paper signed,
LIBERIUS.

The above text will then read thus, *I came forth from the Father*, i. e. I had my divine credentials from him;—and *am come into the world*; i. e. have engaged in a scenery of business, exercise and trial. — *Again I leave the world, and go to the Father.* This literally and exactly agrees with what he had said, verses 16, 17. “A little while and ye shall not see me: and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.” Accordingly, he left them and all the scenery of business when he was crucified, and went into hades for part of three days; during which little while they saw him not. And again they should see him for a little while, i. e. during the forty days he conversed with them, and more fully instructed them in things pertaining to the kingdom of God,—after which he left them a second time to go to the Father. These are the two leavings of the *world*, considered as a scene of business. And every one may see, that his *coming forth from the Father*, has the most important meaning, of his receiving his credentials from him, by which he was qualified for coming into the world, and dispatching the business of his public ministry. Here is a natural and easy sense of that declaration, but no intimation at all of his pre-existence.—At least, this is the opinion of one unattached to any system, but those of reason and revelation.

F I N I S.

A
DISSERTATION
UPON THE
UNNATURAL CRIME
OF
SELF-MURDER:

OCCASIONED BY THE
Many late Instances of Suicide in this City, &c.

TOGETHER WITH
AN APPENDIX,

That points out the Inequality of some of our Penal
Laws, which take away the Life of Man.

By CALEB FLEMING, D. D.

Nor love thyself, nor hate; but what thou liv'st
Live well: how long or short permit to heav'n.

MILTON's Paradise Lost.

The most cruel of all deaths, is Suicide.

ANONYMOUS.

L O N D O N :

Printed for EDWARD and CHARLES DILLY.

MDCCLXXIII.

[Price One Shilling.]

OLITA

OLITA

DEDICATION

TO THE

P U B L I C.

MY FELLOW CITIZENS,

THE very distressed condition into which we are fallen, is very humiliating. Levity, luxury, impiety, and enormous vice, have been the guilty cause which has brought upon us these formidable evils, *viz.* an alarming shake to public credit; a direful obstruction to trade and commerce; a deplorable want of employ for our manufactorers, and artificers; a shocking advance in the price of the necessary food of man; the industrious part of the people emigrating; our poor starving; our rich and great indulging themselves in every debauchery and extravagance. Gaming, gambling, monopolizing, give the reigning avaricious spirit of the times. The insolvent, and dissatisfied, are cruelly laying violent hands on themselves, in great numbers!

In

DEDICATION.

In which corrupt and perilous state of our nation, I have presumed to throw before you a short Dissertation upon the unnatural crime of Self-Murder; this I have done from a desire of contributing, all in my power, towards exciting a dread of so daring an insult on the divine prerogative. I call the crime *unnatural*, from its repugnancy to that first law of our natures, self-preservation.

Near forty years ago, I had the uncommon pleasure of reconciling a gentleman, racked with the stone, to a patient endurance of his painful condition; though he had set his house in order, had formed his resolution, and fixed on the time of dispatching himself. Which persuasion, the said gentleman acknowledged, in a letter to a worthy friend of mine*, was wrought in him, by a remonstrance I had drawn up against Suicidism, which was inserted in the OLD WHIG†.

Should this dissertation have any such beneficial effect; it will richly reward the labour; for in truth, the benefit of my fellow citizens is my object.

The APPENDIX, points out the *inequality* of some penal laws, which take away the life of man.

Hoxton-Square, Mar. 1. C. F.

* Dr. BENJAMIN AVERY, late treasurer to Guy's Hospital.

† A weekly paper.

A

D I S S E R T A T I O N

O N

S U I C I D E.

IN an attempt to expose the crime of Suicide, as unnatural and extremely cruel; we might begin with considering man before he entered into civil society; and, with Mr. LOCKE, take a view of him “ in a state of nature, as in a “ state of liberty, yet not in a state of licence: “ for though man in that state has an uncontrollable liberty to dispose of his person or possessions, yet he has not liberty to destroy himself, “ or so much as any creature in his possession, “ but where some nobler use, than its bare preservation, calls for it. The state of nature “ has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges “ every one: and reason, which is that law, “ teaches all mankind who will but consult it, “ that being all equal and independent, no one “ ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions. For men being all the “ workmanship of one omnipotent, and infinitely “ wise Maker; all the servants of one sovereign “ Master, sent into the world by his order, and “ about his business, they are his property, whose

B

“ work-

“ workmanship they are, made to last during his,
 “ not one another’s pleasure *.”

Thus evident is it, that if man in a state of nature had no uncontrollable liberty of taking away his own life, when he is contemplated as a member of civil or political society, he cannot possibly be permitted to have any such licence. —I shall therefore presume first to lay down, and afterwards prove the truth of this proposition, *viz.* “ That not any thing can be more unnatural, and argue a greater depravity of mind, than self-murder.” Yet here I would be understood to except such, who, by the hand of God, are deprived of the use of their reason and understanding.

That self-murder is an unnatural crime, and has in it many aggravations, may appear flagrant under the following views, which shall be taken of the impiety and inhumanity. It will so appear to those who believe there is a God, and a future state of recompence; and consequently, do own that man is an accountable being. With none but such, is it to be supposed, that any kind of reasoning on the subject can have the least efficacy.

But to those who do believe there is a God, and that man is accountable, this will be one powerful reason against the act of Suicism, *viz.* that the present mode of man’s existence is, and must be *probationary*. It should appear to be a self-evident truth, that during the term of human life, wherein man has the use of his intellectual faculties and powers continued to him, he is a probationer, and as such is appointed to conflict

* Of Civil Government, chap. x. sect. 6.

with temptation. Now every man is well informed, that the breath which is in his nostrils, is not under his own volition or command; and that what propriety he has in it, is only that of a *loan*, which affords him no manner of right to give it a dismissal at his own pleasure. The life-principle, he knows, is not his own; because it operates wholly under another's direction. In other words, he has no hand at all in that wonderful principle or power, which animates his bodily machine.

It certainly is a communicated bestowment for all the purposes of man's present perceptions, pursuits, and also sensitive fruitions. Or, it is that measure of his probationary duration, which is subject only to the decisions of infinite unerring wisdom. It is therefore the unalienable prerogative of the universal Sovereign, and is thus represented by the oracle; I KILL, AND I MAKE ALIVE! I WOUND, AND I HEAL! This character the Almighty claims and appropriates. A truth to which the Son of God bears witness, when he makes this appeal, "Which of you can, by taking thought, add one cubit to his stature, shadow, or age?"

Since therefore life is a divine communication, it behoves us to reverence and hold sacred the important gift, nor ever once resign, or consent to sacrifice it, but upon the altar of truth and God. Of so great importance is life, that an incessant care to preserve it from any apprehended peril, is a first law of our make. And although in the book of Job, it was that figurative character, called Satan, who said, "Skin after skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life:" it is nevertheless an indisputable truth. Witness the

many painful and desperate operations, to which great numbers of mankind submit, in order to preserve life. But then, even this principle, though universal, has its boundaries and exceptions: for at the same time, that, in its efficacy, it should extend to all afflictive or painful visitations, with which heaven is pleased to try the patience, submission and resignation of man; it nevertheless should, by no means, ever admit of a man's hurting his virtue, or the morality of his own mind, in order to preserve his natural life. —I am persuaded, there truly is not one supposable circumstance, which can possibly enter into the compass of human trial, where man could be justified in taking away his own life. There cannot for this very reason, *viz.* his present mode of existence, is most certainly probationary: and the God, whose gift it is, has reserved to himself the sole right of disposal of human life.

Again, as this mode of man's existence is probationary, so it is, that he is instructed both by reason and revelation, to conduct himself as becomes a candidate, who has in view a state of recompence. If therefore he is found to behave reasonably, or according to the truth, propriety, and fitness of things, he cannot but see it to be requisite, that he leave the matter wholly to the giver and Lord of life, to determine both *when* and *how* he shall finish his probation: forasmuch as it would be an expression of the most provoking insolence and arrogance, in any one creature, to assume the sole prerogative of heaven. Thus, at first view, it appears unpardonably criminal in the probationer for a world of recompence, to give himself a discharge from his duty, upon any disgust petulantly taken by him, at the circum-

stances

stances of his trial. The guilty wretch instantly and impiously plunges himself into remediless misery.

I am aware, some do imagine it to have been a mark of greatness of mind in the ancient Romans, and particularly the Utican-Cato, whose self-murder, the ingenious, the amiable ADDISON so unhappily and so mischievously too, celebrated in tragedy. Which occasioned the *Suicide Budget* to say,

“ What Cato did, and Addison approv’d,
“ Must sure be right.”——

Whereas, far better and more honourable had it been for Cato, had he waited a lawful, rather than have presumed upon a felonious dismissal of life. For, say what men will, it manifestly was the result of pride, distrust of providence, and an ungoverned passion in that Roman. And we are to observe, that in the most depraved state of pagan Rome, self-murder was very common. Even a Cassius fell on his sword; and Brutus persuaded Strato to kill him. Nay, several emperors did destroy themselves; among others, Decius, Aurelian, and Severus. But their motives were mean and ignoble, and took it not into consideration, that they were to behave as candidates for a state of recompence.

True it certainly is, no man ever can demean himself uniformly well in adverse circumstances, who does not keep in view a state of unmixed, endless, blissful fruition. It is this idea that only is large and powerful enough to give the needful support under any afflictive painful visitation; and enable the virtues of patience, faith, and fortitude to have their perfect work. One

would then ask, why the rankling chagrine in any professing Christian? Why so much fretfulness? Why such a furious agitation of mind, as to offer an open insult to the divinely animating spirit, merely because fallen under some calamities?—But, alas! among the horrible number of self-murderers, scarce any have been so presumptuous and daring, except minds conscious of some perpetrated villanies, that would not bear the canvassing eye of their fellow-men. More usually, they have been such who have brought on their distresses, either from luxury, gaming, or other extravagance, else from debauchery.

As to others of mankind who have fallen under very heavy afflictions, immediately and apparently from the hand of heaven, and are conscious that they have not brought on those their distresses by their own follies and vices; these, seeing the visitation to be no other than a fatherly chastisement; are never so presumptuous or daring. In truth, all men who live as probationers, or who act in character, learn to say with *Job*, whenever evils fall heavily upon them, “ Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?—The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”—On the contrary, peevish, fretful minds, full of discontent, are ready to arraign not only the goodness, but even the equity and justice of the adorable sovereign; and are deplorably inattentive to their own appointments; for they will not be persuaded to consider themselves as candidates for a world of recompence. But on the contrary, if heaven does not indulge them with all the present sensitive good they wish, or shall throw into their
lot

lot more evil than their pride and vanity can admit, they scruple not presently to spit in his face, and impudently quit the station he had assigned them.

We may further consider Suicifm, not only as a crime unbecoming a probationary state, and no way pardonable in a candidate for a world of recompence, but also as in itself so very shockingly *deformed*, as not to have been discriminately noticed in any of the divine prohibitions; just as if it was not supposable, that an intelligent rational creature, accountable to its Creator, could ever once admit the shocking idea, the unnatural, abhorrent image.

In the sacred history, *Cain* is recorded to have been the first murderer, and that under the anguish of his guilt he did most bitterly complain, that his punishment was greater than he could bear; because he was sentenced to live the life of a fugitive, or vagabond upon the earth: which was made necessary, as that very earth became barren to his tillage; his brother's blood crying from thence for vengeance. And he most naturally concluded himself, obnoxious to the abhorrence of every human eye.—Nevertheless, we are not informed of his ever once attempting to take away his own life, though bereft of the most desirable benefits of society. It is likewise observable, that when the Almighty gives his laws to *Noah*, the father of the new world [in that state of nature,] for the observance of all mankind, he expressly says, “Whosoever shall shed man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” And this reason is assigned for it, “because in the image of God made he man.” Here again I would observe, self-murder is not supposed to be a
crime

crime which man would commit ; forasmuch as the sanction which is here affixed to the law which forbids murder, cannot operate upon the self-murderer.

And, in fact, there does not appear to have been a record made of any Suicides in the sacred history, but those of the most abandoned characters. *Saul* and his armour-bearer, we may conclude to have been extremely wicked. So was *Ahitophel*, who first set his house in order, and then hanged himself. A very deliberate self-murderer. So was that miscreant, *Judas*, the traitor. And may we not say of all such, “ better “ they had never been born.”—For in the very last act they perform, they wilfully and impiously withdraw themselves from the animating spirit of God, and leave themselves no space for repentance. In truth, that same spirit which animates our bodies, is the only source of light and life. “ He, in whose hand is the breath of all man- “ kind, is the spirit in whom we all live, and “ move, and are.” Or as *Job* has expressed himself, “ the spirit of God hath made me, “ and the breath of the almighty hath given me “ life.” Therefore for any to dismiss wilfully this animating spirit, by the hand of violence, or by taking the deadly potion, is outrageously to thrust himself out of the reach, either of light or life.

It is observed, by a most amiable and venerable pen, *namely*, that of St. John, “ that he who can “ so hate his brother, as to take away his life, “ can have no such thing as the principles of “ eternal life abiding in him.” And if this be so, we may be well assured, that a self-murderer cannot ; for he impiously rusheth into outer-
darkness,

darkness, and in the atrociousness of his guilt, he becomes the prey of death.—Death feeds on him.—But one would have thought, that the horrors of many a Suicide who survived the mortal thrust or draught, a few hours, should have spread universally a dread of the atrocious crime. But though it has not more effectually done this, yet the extreme deformity and malignity of Suicidism, is what should be inferred, from its not having had any distinct, discriminating idea given of it, in any of the written laws of God. Its diametrical opposition to the most powerful instinctive principles of self-preservation in the breast of every man, seems to have rendered needless any express prohibition.

Self-murder may be yet further considered, as an act of high-treason, not only against the sovereignty of the universal Lord, but against the laws of human society. It destroys the very foundation of social virtue, and of all moral obligation. for this is one of the two principles or axioms, on which all moral virtue and piety does support, *viz.* “ thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” And the above apostle says, “ if a man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” Now, if we can thus capitally abuse ourselves, as to become persuaded we may take away life at our pleasure, and so quit our appointed stations, then that fundamental principle or axiom is of little meaning, and has in it nothing useful. It has not, forasmuch as if we think we may wantonly and wickedly sport with our own most sacred personal property, how shall we be led to hold in reverence the sacred rights and properties of others?

Assuredly,

Affuredly, the man who is persuaded he may dismiss his own life, whenever he is out of humour with his circumstances, can furnish us with no good ground of dependance, either on his social virtue, or even on his humanity.

Nay, the argument against Suicism has a yet larger scope and extent; since if one man may be justified in taking away his own life, then another may.—Now, do but let the idea once spread and become infectious, a depopulation or waste would anon render our villages, ay, our very towns and cities desolate. But most assuredly, the universal verdict of mankind does condemn the licentiousness: and we are told, that the great community, as well as our families and friends, have a claim to our services, so long as heaven sees meet to preserve our capacities and abilities of service.—*Besides*, upon the supposition that we have, by our vices and extravagances, brought upon ourselves distress and wretchedness, it is but reasonable we should make the best satisfaction in our power, to an injured correspondence; by remaining ensamples to others, of the evil consequences of gaming, luxury, or debauchery: and that we also shew the sincerity of our repentance, by endeavouring to dissuade others from such vile courses. This is the best reparation men can make, who have abused the confidence of others, by their villanies, debaucheries, and extravagances.

The innocently unfortunate, who have by losses been reduced from affluence to a narrow pittance, should reconcile themselves to this change of circumstance, from the consideration, that they have now an opportunity of exercising some virtues, with which they had been unacquainted in their
their

their prosperity; and of giving evidence, that they are free from that most destructive vice, *a love of the world*; and that they can happily satisfy others, they are not under the influence of any deadly sorrow.

Should it now be asked, what are the apologies which have been made for self-murder? They have been such as follow.

There are some who have pleaded in excuse for the Suicide, " that the act is in itself a proof of insanity; and that no man ever had the use of his reason when he destroyed himself."

To such I would reply, that the same apology might be made for every wicked action which men commit; because it had place from reason being dethroned, and from appetite and passion having usurped the reins of government. But who will say, that the highway-robber and murderer, from having taken the qualifying draught of strong liquors which he found necessary for the daring enterprise, did thereby acquire less degree of demerit and guilt? Or, is it a greater apology for the self-murderer, that by a series of extravagance, or some previous act of great wickedness he qualified himself? Or even because he suffered his avarice, pride or ambition, to become outrageous? Suicidism, on the contrary, has more aggravations in it, than many capital crimes for which men are cut off by the punishing hand of justice.

There are many instances of the *Suicide* having given full proof that he was in the possession of his reason and understanding, when he perpetrated the unnatural crime, and that it was done with deliberation, and direct purpose to destroy himself: and that he was neither lunatic, nor distracted

tracted by distemper or disease. For our law makes this allowance, “ that if a person during “ the time that he is not *compos mentis*, gives him- “ self a mortal wound, though he dies thereof “ when he recovers his memory ; he is not *felo de* “ *se*, because at the time of the stroke he was “ not *compos mentis*.*” i. e. As I understand the law, the man himself then knew he was not.— But if man was not capable of perpetrating the Suicidism, except in a state of insanity, it would be no crime ; and the law would be extremely iniquitous, that supposed it criminal.

Some have been ignorant and stupid enough, to imagine, “ that inasmuch as they did not “ give any consent to be brought into being, so “ they had a right to put themselves out of “ being at their own pleasure.”

As, at the very first sight, this appears to be the quintessence of absurdity, so it borders upon atheism. But who that reasons at all, could ever think of a creature’s assent or consent, before he had any existence ? And how deplorably depraved must be the mind, that can suppose the Creator countenancing his creature in putting an end to its own existence. This is absolutely impossible ; since a rational accountable creature could not be formed with an independency on its Creator, and whatever is the sole property of another, cannot be at its own disposal. Both the design of its formation, and the circumstances of its probation, must be the prerogative of its author. There can therefore be no inherent, nor any communicated right of determining the duration of its present mode of existence.

* Jacob’s Law Dictionary.

Again, the Suicide thus argues in his own defence, “ if he who made him is a good being, “ he must give him more good than evil ; other- “ wise existence will be a *curse* to him. So that “ whenever he finds more pain than pleasure, “ more adversity than prosperity in his lot, he “ has reason sufficient to justify him, in throwing “ away the gift of life and being.”

Here we see the stupidity is altogether as great as before : since man, a probationer and candidate for a world of recompence, must acknowledge, that his Maker knows infinitely better than he either does or can know, what that mixture of ease and pain, of good or evil, should be in his trial. Nor can the widest compass of complicated adversity impeach either the equity, the goodness, or the wisdom of God : even though the exercises of patience and resignation should run through the whole of his course. And in a very strong light will this appear to those whom God has favoured with the fullest display of his truth and grace, by his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Should it in the next place be asked, “ What “ is most usually the exciting MOTIVE to an act “ of Suicidism ?”

It might be answered, that in the female it is more commonly a dread of shame, from having suffered herself to be dishonoured ; also from the love-passion having been ungovernable ; or from the infidelity and ill-usage of an husband. — Whereas in the males, it is ordinarily some cross event, which has deeply affected the man’s worldly circumstances : or, perhaps, he has had a bad run of chances in his gaming : else, by some other criminal indulgences, he has reduced his finances

to a very low condition: else he has suffered the chagrin to rise so fatally high, because of very sudden provocation. I own, I am apprehensive, there is some conscious guilt ever attends the loss or disappointment, or whatever the external evil is, that excites to Suicidism.

But let imagination have full play, and vary, as much as you possibly can, the *motives* to self-murder, their total amount can have no proportional weight; even though the rack of the stone or gout should have all its excruciating tortures: since the measure is full of guilt and crime; and has nothing in it that can promise to relieve, but must greatly aggravate the wretchedness! — Whereas the language of approved piety and exalted virtue, is recorded to have run thus, in the deepest distress, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” And the supplicatory address, this— “Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.” Even the highest, the most amiable, and perfect of all human characters, said, “NOT MY WILL; BUT THINE BE DONE.”

Far otherwise the exciting motive in the Suicide, which is a rankling, unreasonable dissatisfaction with his present situation; proceeding either from a disbelief of a wise, powerful, and good superintending mind, that intuitively and incessantly surveys the whole system of beings! else from an impious disgust at his own allotments. And it may be safely presumed, that the operating motive is always worldly. The heart had nothing better than an earthly treasure, else it would never have committed the unnatural action of a *felo de se*.

If the above reasoning be good, there is nothing more clear and convincing than the proposition
sition

fition at first laid down, *namely*, “ That there can
 “ be nothing more unnatural and cruel; or that
 “ argues a greater depravity of mind than self-
 “ murder.” I am inclined to think the savage
 and barbarous nations have it not.

And yet, some perhaps may be apt to say, there
 is another *crime* become more epidemical and in-
 fectious, which is equally detestable, and to which
 we have more commonly affixed the idea of *un-
 natural*. Concerning the deformity and demerit
 of which, an estimate is best made by the sulphu-
 rous fiery shower which fell on Sodom! The
 turpitude of that crime, I am not at all in-
 clined to debate, — but more of this in *the AP-
 PENDIX*.

There may now be sundry instructive Corolla-
 ries, or conclusions drawn from the above reason-
 ing upon the Suicide; which may well deserve the
 notice of my fellow-citizens. Such as follow.

Corol. I. The increased number of self-mur-
 ders about this great city, and in other parts, is
 an irrefragable proof of the deep depravity of the
 morals of our country. The insidious and rest-
 less enemies of Britain's welfare, have at last so
 far succeeded in disseminating *scepticism* and *infi-
 delity*; i. e. a disbelief of a providence, of a reve-
 lation, and a future state; which is what qualifies
 men for these enormities. And they have com-
 passed their end in thus depraving the people, by
 inventing every measure that could lead to diffi-
 pation, and dissoluteness of manners. It was
 never known since the reformation, that Britain
 wore so detestable a complexion as that she now
 does, in whatever department you make the sur-
 vey:

vey: for when you put to the account, the great advantages she has had above the former times of palpable darknes, under a popish system of government both in church and itate, you must fall under conviction; and be constrained to own, her condition appears to be incurable and desperate. In fact, her impieties, immoralities, and vices, are matchless. — I question whether there be a nation upon the face of this globe, which in its annals could produce so great a run of Suicides, since Christianity made its spread in the world. — It has been already observed, that when pagan Rome was in the decline of her glory, having lost all public virtue, Suicidism then became common: and those of that depraved people were reckoned *brave*, who had rather chosen to destroy themselves than become the slaves of tyrants. But our self-murderers pretend to no such specious motive. They have lived viciously, and they will die impiously. The life which God only lent them, they presume to sacrifice to their own pride and passion. And although our laws would set a brand of infamy upon them, yet the horrid impiety is concealed or covered, either through a mistaken tenderness, else by a shameful venality and bribery.

I have said, a mistaken tenderness—Yet would observe, that the inequity of our laws does seem to apologize much for that tenderness; since it appears to be a very severe “ forfeiture in *felo de*
 “ *se*, of all his goods and chattels, real and per-
 “ sonal, which he hath in his own right; and all
 “ such chattels, real and personal, which he hath
 “ jointly with his wife, or in her right, when
 “ found upon the oath of twelve men before the
 “ coroner, *super visum corporis*, that he *felo de se*
 “ hath.

“ hath. He forfeits also bonds, or things in ac-
 “ tion, belonging solely to himself, and all en-
 “ tire chattels in possession; except in the case
 “ of merchants, where a moiety only of such
 “ joint-chattels, as may be saved, is forfeit-
 “ ed*.”

This forfeiture has a manifest severity in it; and which makes the heart of humanity to revolt at the punishment falling so heavily upon the criminal's wife and children, who are innocent; and have already by the act of Suicidism suffered the loss of an husband and father, and are deprived of all further assistance and comfort from and in him.

To pretend, in justification of this forfeiture, that “ God himself is said to visit the iniquity of
 “ *fathers* upon their children unto the third and
 “ fourth generation of them who hate him;” must be impertinent; for in such visitation, man is not of competent ability to copy his unerring measures of inflicting punishment. And if I have not mistaken the divine visitation, it intends only such children as copy their fathers iniquity; such as continue to resemble him in wickedness. And so I am persuaded it must be understood, when I read the 18th chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy.

Other measures should be taken to deter men from the unnatural, shocking crime of self murder. — And I am humbly apprehensive, that a stop might be put to the spread of Suicidism, by having the naked body exposed in some public place: over which the coroner should deliver an

* Wood's Institute of the Laws of England, book iv. chap. 3.

oration on the foul impiety; and then the body, like that of the homicide, be given to the surgeons.

Corol. II. If this be the only probationary state of man, in which he can be a candidate for a world of recompence, then *life* must be his most inestimable property, as an improveable talent. An elegant writer has thrown out this idea with great expression, in the following address of an *hermit*. “ A lewd young fellow
 “ seeing an aged hermit go by him barefoot,
 “ *Father*, says he, you are in a very miserable
 “ condition if there be not another world.
 “ True, son, said the hermit; but what is thy
 “ condition if there is? Man is a creature designed for two different states of being, or rather, for two different lives. His first life is
 “ short and transient; his second permanent and
 “ lasting. The question we are all concerned
 “ in, is this, In which of these two lives is it
 “ our chief interest to make ourselves happy?
 “ or in other words, whether we should endeavour to secure to ourselves the pleasures and
 “ gratifications of a life which is uncertain and
 “ precarious, and at its utmost length of a
 “ very inconsiderable duration; or to secure
 “ ourselves the pleasures of a life which is fixed
 “ and settled, and will never end? Every man,
 “ upon the first hearing of this question, knows
 “ very well which side of it he ought to close
 “ with. But however right we are in theory,
 “ it is plain that in practice we adhere to the
 “ wrong side of the question. We make provision for this life, as though it were never
 “ to have an end; and for the other life,
 “ as

“ as though it were never to have a beginning *.”

This citation is much to the purpose of shewing, that the present life of man is probationary: and it also does honour to the pen of that polite reformer of the manners of mankind. In another paper he has observed, “ that several heathen as well as Christian writers, have represented the world as an INN, which only furnisheth accommodations for travellers. And that *Epietetus* has used another kind of beautiful allusion, wonderfully proper to incline us to be satisfied with the post in which providence has placed us.” “ We are here, says he, as in “ a theatre, where every one has a part allotted “ him. The great duty which lies upon a man, “ is to act his part in perfection. We may indeed say, that our part does not suit us, and “ that we could act another better. But this is “ not our business. All that we are concerned “ in, is to excel in the part which is given us. “ If it be an improper one, the fault is not “ in us, but in him who has cast our several parts, and is the great disposer of the “ drama †.”

These observations serve to shew, that the idea of our being probationers for a world of recompence, has had the assent of the most wise and judicious of mankind; that it is manifestly a document of reason and nature; and what will bear the most accurate and critical examination. The reasoning and argument, which has been built upon this foundation, is therefore irrefragable and conclusive. And since this is the

* Spectator, N^o 575.

† Ibid. N^o 219.

truth of the case, *Suicide* is capitally criminal.

Corol. III. Every man who gratifies an appetite or passion, which has a manifest tendency to hurt his health, or shorten his life, is [though by a less sudden assault upon the life-principle] a real self-murderer. I mean, the man who luxuriates at his table, is too free with his bottle, and thereby brings on disease or distemper; or whether his lusts lead him into an illicit and empoisoned bodily commerce. This last species of debauchery is, among us, risen shamefully high, and disgracefully become as epidemical as the plague. One would be astonished beyond measure, that men who affect so much as the name of *Christians*, whose great *charter* absolutely excludes all fornicators and adulterers from the kingdom of God, should yet rather give up all hopes of entering God's heavenly kingdom, than mortify their lusts.—They do not at all consider, that by thus defecrating and polluting their natural bodies, they render themselves utterly disqualified for possessing spiritual bodies; or, for becoming *children of the resurrection*.

Were this kind of representation to be made in our polite assemblies, and houses of pleasure; or were these pages to reach the eyes of the gay and wanton, who are the devotees of *Venus*, they would meet with every kind of disdainful ridicule. But no matter: the son of lewdness and debauchery, is, in a very capital sense, a self-murderer. Every one individual is so, that indulges the lustful appetite or passion.

Corol.

Corol. IV. The shameful crime of **DUELLING** is another prevailing vicious practice; which reflects disgrace on the understanding of the man, and proves him deplorably unacquainted with self-government. The *duellist* is an atrocious violator of the law of his make. He tramples upon and subdues the first instinctive principle, with which his Maker has endowed him, *viz.* that of self-preservation. The proud, passionate man, will rather risk his own life, in his attempt to take away the life of another, than pass by an affront. And this he most stupidly fancies to be, and is not ashamed to call it, **A PATH OF HONOUR!** for, contrary to a fundamental law of civil society, he presumes upon being his own avenger. And though the matter of offence may have been nothing more than a breach of politeness, some little fallacy of the passion, or some mark of contempt; yet the blood-thirsty wretch will not be reconciled till he has fired his pistol, or with his sword lunged at the life of his fellow-man. Not any crime evinces more absurdity and stupidity than duelling does: for whoever he is that hazards his own life with a man who gave him offence, is a fool; and the very challenge he sent, proves that he is so*.

Did the duellist reason at all, he would at once see, that he had altogether as good a claim to his opponent's whole substance or fortune, as

* There was much humour and good sense in *Quin* the comedian's treatment of a challenge, given him by a very slender little man; "Go, says he, make thyself an equal mark with my corpulency, and then I will fight thee."

he could possibly have, to his life: and must be convinced, that the comfort and peace of the man's family and friends, was too great a recompence for the insult he had received, exclusive of the life he had feloniously taken away from him.

By our own laws, " If a duel is fought, and " one fall in the rencounter, the other is deemed " guilty of murder, and so are the seconds." Nor can any one commence duellist, but he must first have stripped off all his humanity, and put on the spirit of a destructive demon. No man of substantial virtue, no truly good man, would dare to draw his sword, as a duellist, upon his fellow-man, a creature whom God has made in his own image. And, verily, it is an irrefragable proof of a very corrupt civil administration, where duelling has either any countenance, or even connivance. On the other hand, it would retrieve much of the lost glory of our nation, if a noble lord or two were once hanged for duelling.

Corol. V. The love we have of life, must never lead us to sacrifice either our innocence, or our virtue. Here it is natural to observe, that the hypocrite, or liar, must always be a coward. Deceit and falshood give proof of pusillanimity, or of a contemptible meanness of spirit. The fawning sycophant has no true courage; he has a slavish fear of man. — Accordingly, when a list of black characters are drawn in the sacred page, the FEARFUL are found classed with all liars*. In truth, none but wicked

* Apoc. xxii. 8.

men have reason of the fear that is enslaving, or tormenting.' To my purpose, in an ancient writing, called the book of *Job*, we find the *hero* of that dramatical piece, thus greatly expressing himself, "Till I die, I will not remove
 " my integrity from me. My righteousness I
 " hold fast, and will not let go; my heart shall
 " not reproach me as long as I live."

Corol. VI. The conclusion of *true* philosophy will ever speak this language: A constant reverence of that divine power, which holds our breath in our nostrils, we esteem a most apt means of securing his favourite presence with us, when this frail tabernacle shall be no longer tenable. And for this reason, *viz.* the conducting ourselves habitually upon the moral life-principle, will immortalize our natures; unite us with that infinite Spirit, whom we have habitually revered; and render us meet for the interminable fruitions of life! We may therefore safely conclude; that the very same animating divine presence *will never leave nor forsake us*; if we have but lived a life of obedience and conformity to those informations which we have had, from the infinite source of light and life.

This very interesting idea was not hid from the virtuous of mankind, in the earlier ages of the world; as appears from the sacred page. They were well assured, that when flesh failed, and heart failed, God would be the rock of their heart, and their everlasting portion! and, for this reason, their homage was directed to him, as to a being, who is *from everlasting to everlasting* God.

These

These several Corollaries seem to have a free and unforced derivation from the fundamental proposition, *namely*, " That, not any thing can be more unnatural, and argue a greater depravity of the human mind, than self-murder."

A N

AN
APPENDIX
TO THE
DISSERTATION ON SELF-MURDER:
WHICH

Points out the Inequality of some of our penal Laws,
that take away the life of Man.

The fundamental maxim in our law is this, “ Nothing is to
“ be accounted a law, that is contrary to the laws of God, or of
“ reason; no more than a tyrant can be said to be a king, or a
“ minister of the devil a minister of God.”

MILTON'S prose works, edit. 1753, Vol. I. p. 576.

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APPENDIX, &c.

“ POSITIVE human punishment, says *Puf-*
 “ *fendorf*, has nothing in it repugnant to
 “ natural equity: but on the contrary, is abso-
 “ lutely necessary to the common quiet and se-
 “ curity of mankind. For as it was requisite
 “ for the public peace of the world, to put an
 “ end to the equality of nature, by erecting civil
 “ government. So in the general looseness and
 “ corruptions of manners, and aversion to virtue,
 “ the force of government would soon be dis-
 “ solved, if bad men were not confined and
 “ frightened into obedience, by the dread of
 “ some penal evil.*”

And as the great LOCKE observes, “ besides
 “ the crime which consists in violating the law,
 “ and varying from the right rule of reason,
 “ whereby a man becomes so far degenerate,
 “ and declares himself to quit the principles of
 “ human nature, and to be a noxious creature,
 “ there is commonly injury done some person or
 “ other; some other man receives damage by
 “ his transgression, in which case, he who re-
 “ ceived any damage, has, besides the right of
 “ punishment common to him with other men,

* Law of nature and nations, book viii. ch. 3. sect. 6.

“ a par-

“ a particular right to seek reparation from him
 “ that has done it.”—

“ From these two distinct rights, the one of
 “ punishing the crime for restraint, and prevent-
 “ ing the like offence, which right of punishing
 “ is in every body; the other of taking repara-
 “ tion, which belongs only to the injured party,
 “ comes it to pass, that the magistrate, who
 “ by being magistrate, hath the common right
 “ of punishing put into his hands, can often,
 “ where the public good demands not the exe-
 “ cution of the law, remit the punishment of
 “ criminal offences by his own authority, but
 “ yet cannot remit the satisfaction due to any
 “ private man, for the damage he has received.
 “ That he who has suffered the damage has a
 “ right to demand in his own name, and he
 “ alone can remit: the damnified person has this
 “ power of appropriating to himself, the goods
 “ or service of the offender, by *right of self-pre-*
 “ *servation*, as every man has a power to punish
 “ the crime, to prevent its being committed
 “ again, by *the right he has of preserving all*
 “ *mankind*, and doing all reasonable things he
 “ can, in order to that end: and thus it is, that
 “ every man in a state of nature, has a power to
 “ kill a murderer, both to deter others from
 “ doing the like injury, which no reparation can
 “ compensate, by the example of the punish-
 “ ment that attends it from every body, and
 “ also to secure men from the attempts of a
 “ criminal, who having renounced reason, the
 “ common rule and measure, which God has
 “ given to mankind, hath, by the unjust vio-
 “ lence and slaughter he hath committed upon
 “ one, declared war against all mankind, and
 therefore

“ therefore may be destroyed as a lion or a ty-
 “ ger, one of those wild savage beasts, with
 “ which men can have no society nor security.
 “ And upon this is grounded that great law of
 “ nature, *whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall*
 “ *his blood be shed.*”—

And this masterly reasoner adds, “ each trans-
 “ gression may be punished to that degree, and
 “ with so much severity, as will suffice to make
 “ it an ill bargain to the offender, give him
 “ cause to repent, and terrify others from doing
 “ the like. Every offence that can be com-
 “ mitted in the state of nature, may in the state
 “ of nature be also punished equally, and as far
 “ forth as it may in a commonwealth.*”

I have therefore this great authority with me
 in concluding, that by the rules of sound policy,
 punishments should be proportioned to the dif-
 ferent degrees of demerit which there is in crime.
 Now, among those which are or should be deemed
 capital, we may reckon *murder, adultery, buggery,*
burglary, forgery, treasons, and several kinds of
theft, by fraud or violence.—Great complaints,
 and very sensible remonstrances have long been
 made of the *inequality* of capital punishments,
 awarded upon criminals in our courts of judica-
 ture, and very certain it is, that they are ex-
 tremely inequitable; or do observe no propor-
 tion. e. g. The stealing of a sheep, a cow, an
 horse, or a simple robbery on the highway, also
 a burglary where no corporal injury was attempt-
 ed to be done, are punished equally with a
 robbery, or burglarious plunder committed with
 every aggravation, whether of wounding, maim-

* Of civil government, ch. x. sect. 10, 11, 12.

ing, stripping and binding, and sometimes even with ravishing the female. But who does not see, that in the two different species of crime, there is unspeakably more demerit in the one, than there is in the other; and that the lesser guilt should have the lesser punishment.

Nay, there are some instances of theft, where a deplorable want of bread has occasioned *hunger to break through stone walls*. A crime, which by our laws formerly had no punishment at all*. Such was the sense of humanity in the days of *Solomon*, who says, “ men do not despise a thief, “ if he steal to the satisfying of his soul, when “ he is hungry.” Pity should be shewn to the miserable poor, if guilty of such purloining. In such thefts, there is a wide difference from the felonies of those who are able, and may have opportunity to earn their bread by honest labor, but rather choose to prey feloniously upon mankind. In truth, I do not find that in the code of judicial laws given by Moses to the Hebrew people, that simple *theft* was ever to be punished with death. A neighbouring state has wisely appointed a rasp-house, and other severe labors, as a far more equitable and efficacious punishment; and at the same time, the criminal is thereby made serviceable to the public.

In like manner, when I consider our laws cutting off the young criminal, whose mind has been totally neglected, and from his infancy been trained to pilfering and stealing: I cannot but suppose this to be a fault in our civil police. Care should be taken of all exposed deserted

* *Theft* was first made capital, with us, in the reign of Edmund the Saxon. See *Rapin*.

children of the wretched poor. They should be more carefully educated, and found some employ. The *Dutch* would teach us better. But to HANG such neglected uninformed young creatures, must give the feeling mind a painful sense of the vindictive measure. Afraid I am, we have some execrable miscreants among us, who, (like Jonathan Wylde, that infamous thief-taker) do traffic in the lives of such youths, for the sake of the reward!—

Hereupon I thus reason, if the depredations which are made upon the alienable properties of mankind, ought to have their degree of demerit determined by the degree of injury or mischief done to society; I should, upon this *ratio*, be persuaded, that an aggravated guilt is found in those slaves of lust, those sons of luxury and extravagance, who, under specious false pretences, have decoyed their correspondents into an extensive credit: and by their insolvency brought many industrious families into very great distress. Certainly, they have contracted a degree of guilt and demerit far more aggravated than that of the man who has only taken a purse upon the highway, stolen a sheep, a cow, or an horse. Such great devourers of mankind, would, methinks, make a much more decent finishing figure at Tyburn, than many of them have done by their own hands. And yet, I should not wish them to be punished with death; but rather to be disabled from being evermore entrusted in trade or commerce.—

As to all *gamesters* and *gamblers*, men, who either sport away their own fortunes, or those of others; they ought to be treated as such were treated by the old Romans, even as *mad-men*
 confined

confined for life. A milder punishment they deserve not, and a more equitable one could not well be devised. Allow me to add, though *gaming* is not made capital by our laws, there are many crimes less mischievous to society, which nevertheless lead men to pay a last visit at Tyburn.

There is a crime which our judicial laws punish with *death*, which appears to be of such a nature, that an humane tender mind cannot but revolt at the execution of it; I mean, the young girl or woman, who, from the passion of shame having overcome the natural parental storgè, has rashly destroyed her illegitimate new-born infant. The fruit of a criminal bodily commerce, into which she had been allured, by the man who dishonoured her. For I take it for granted, this must usually, if not always, have been the case with these unhappy young creatures. The fact was perpetrated instantly upon the birth, in a weak bodily condition, and under a powerful dread of disgrace; in great confusion, attended with distracting ideas of her extreme folly and infatuation, in having consented to such a criminal commerce, and to have put such an imprudent confidence in man. Those of less modesty, and of a more hardened front, are not found committing the crime: they make known their pregnancy; and they seek a seasonable succour.

But after all, if any reason can vindicate the capital punishment's being executed upon such unhappy young women, the men, by which they were deluded and dishonoured should be considered as much *accessories*, as men are judged to be in all other murders committed in company.

And

And for this reason; in the latter case, it is supposable there might be one unconsenting; and yet the law deems him an accessory. Whereas in the former case, the man who deflowered the maid must have been causal of the mischief. And, more commonly, if not always, has forsaken her, and perfidiously broken those engagements he laid himself under, when he debauched her. Consequently, one would rather conclude him a *principal*, than an accessory in the murder. Indeed by the act of 21 Jac. I. ch. 27. *concealment* is deemed an undeniable evidence that the mother murdered her bastard child. To which concealment I cannot but suppose the man privy, and in many instances countenancing the concealment. So that in whatever view we place him, whether in that of an accessory or principal, would the law once consider him, we must reasonable expect such delusions and seductions would be much less frequent, and the instances of infant-murder scarcely ever known among us.

Forgery, is another crime which our penal laws do make capital, and as it should seem, has the general approbation of the people; because of its very pernicious effects upon the credit and confidence of men in trade and commerce. But if I am rightly informed, the *Dutch* have a far better way of punishing the criminals; for they cut off the first joint of his thumb, and thus render him for ever unable to commit another forgery. At the same time, we are to keep in mind, that this very maiming is what fixes on him a perpetual mark of disgrace; and yet, leaves him opportunity of reforming himself, and of being further serviceable to society. Thus it appears,

D

that

that the sagacious provident republic are not so lavish of mens lives as we are. They do not so injudiciously cut them off—To proceed,

The following crimes either are, or I presume should be deemed capital, in any well-ordered policy ; viz. ADULTERY, BUGGERY, MURDER, and TREASON.

ADULTERY is not deemed capital, in the sense of our penal laws ; but in the reason and nature of things, it surely is to be so understood. Thus thought that celebrated writer upon the religion of nature, Mr. Woolaston. This crime he considers, not only as an act of injustice, but of cruelty: the which, he says, is plain in the case of adultery, “ when any one insnares and
 “ corrupts the wife of another ; notwithstanding
 “ the protection it gains from false notions,
 “ great examples*, and the commonness of the
 “ crime. For the adulterer denies the property
 “ a husband has in his wife, by contract, the
 “ most express and sacred that can possibly be
 “ made: he does that which tends to subvert
 “ the peace of families, confounds relation, and
 “ is altogether inconsistent with the order and
 “ tranquility of the world, and therefore with
 “ the laws of human nature: he does what no
 “ man in his wits could think reasonable, or
 “ even tolerable, were he the person wronged: ;
 “ briefly, he impudently treats a woman as his
 “ own woman, or wife, who is not his, but
 “ another’s, contrary to justice, truth, and fact.
 “ Nor is this simple injustice only, but injustice

* This is his citation; *Palam apparet, ad huc ætate divi Hieronymi, adulterium capite solere puniri; nunc magnatim lufas est.*

“ for which no reparation can be made if the
 “ injured man thinks so, as he generally does
 “ injustice accompanied with the greatest CRUEL-
 “ TY ; so complicated, as scarce any other can
 “ be. The husband is for ever robbed of all
 “ that pleasure and satisfaction, which arises
 “ from the wife’s fidelity and affection to him ;
 “ presuming upon which he took her to be not
 “ only the partner of his bed, but the com-
 “ panion of his life, and sharer in all his for-
 “ tunes : and into the room of them succeed
 “ painful and destructive passions. The poor
 “ woman herself, though she may be deluded,
 “ and not see at present her guilt, or the conse-
 “ quences of it, usually pays dear for her secu-
 “ rity and want of guard, the husband becoming
 “ cold, and averse to her, and she full of ap-
 “ prehensions and fears, with a particular dread
 “ of his farther resentment. And their affairs,
 “ in this disjointed and distracted condition, are
 “ neglected ; innocent children slighted, and left
 “ unprovided for, without so much as the com-
 “ fort of any certain relation to pity them*.”

Just in this light stands the crime of adultery,
 in the eye of reason and nature, big with evil
 effects, and as horrible as that of being under
 the knife of the truculent ruffian. We cannot
 therefore be at all surprized at finding it capital
 in the Mosaic code of penal laws, which says,
 “ the man who committeth adultery with a
 “ man’s wife, that committeth adultery with his
 “ neighbour’s wife, shall surely be put to death,”
Lev. xx. 10. And repeated, *Deut. xxii. 22.*
 thus, “ if a man be found lying with a woman

* Religion of nature delineated, p. 141, 142. 5th edit.

“ married to an husband, then shall they both
 “ of them die: the man that lay with the wo-
 “ man, and the woman. So shalt thou put
 “ away EVIL from Israel.” The crime must
 have been capital, because of no compensation
 that could be made, nor any atonement. And
 accordingly, profane history informs us, that in
 pagan Rome, adultery was made death by the
Julian law. So in England, king Edmund the
 Saxon, *Leg. Suar. cap. 4. Adulterium affici jussit
 instar homicidij*. The law in his reign ordered
 the adulterer to be treated as an homicide. Of
 this Edmund the Saxon king, who died 948,
Rapin observes, “ that some of his laws are still
 “ in being, which demonstrate how desirous he
 “ was of his people’s welfare and happiness.”—
 He saw adultery to be a violation of a first social
 right, and as such made it capital by the civil
 law, which is allowed to contain all the principles
 of natural equity.

The civil law, both under the heathen and
 Christian emperors, made this crime capital.
 As *Gothofred* shews, by various instances both
 out of the code and pandects. Vide *Gothofred*
 in *Cod. Th. Lib. ix. Tit. 36**. Ecclesiastical
 councils made the punishment penance, and
 when once it became cognizable in our ecclesiastical
 courts, and was punished with fines, pen-
 nances and divorce, they, the great clergy avail-
 ed themselves of the profits of such kinds of
 punishment; and also gratified their own pride
 of power, in the exercise of such judicial autho-
 rity. Whereas *adultery* is a crime as properly

* Bingham’s antiquities of the Christian church, Vol. II.
 book xvi. chap. xi. sect. 4.

recognizable in our civil or common law courts of judicature, as any other felony can be. I say, *felony*, “ for anciently every capital crime committed with an evil intention, was felony*.

That our laws have been *changed* with respect to the supposed demerit of this crime, and do now punish adultery only by fine, penance, and divorce, probably was owing not only to the pride and avarice, but also to the more general debauchery of the clergy. For it was not till Gregory VII. in the 11th century, the ecclesiastics were brought to admit the *celebate* as a law. The decrees of this pope were against such bishops and other ecclesiastics who endeavoured to keep their wives or concubines, without ceasing to perform their functions†. Nay, by a council he caused to be held in Germany, those who were in orders had a new celibacy enjoined themselves. This well accounts for the more gentle treatment of adultery in our penal laws, since the great as well as small clergy, must so very generally have become obnoxious to the capital punishment, in their *celebate* condition; because of their incontinence and debaucheries.

Nevertheless, as we have seen, the teachings of reason and nature are so express in determining the obligations on all mankind in civil and well governed communities, to hold the conjugal rights sacred; the defence of those rights ought to be as powerful and efficacious, as of any other of the rights of humanity. The fence set to secure the marriage-bed from the depredation

* See Jacob's Law Dictionary on the word, *felony*.

† *Du Pin's* history of the church, 3d edit. 1724. Vol. III p. 108. *ibid* p. 112.

of the lewd and impudent invader, cannot be dispensed withal; but is absolutely needful to the peace and happiness of mankind. It must therefore have been shamefully impolitic in any legislature, to have annexed a trifling sanction or punishment to a law, which has for its object, a most malignant capital crime;—a crime, that robs a man of his peace, as well as his most sacred property.

That there is an apparent egregious absurdity in a national system of penal laws, which are so unequal, as to cut off the life of man, because he has stolen a sheep, an horse, or has taken his neighbour's purse, or has clipped a piece of money; and yet punish only with a fine, &c. the man who has deprived his neighbour of the most uniting and endearing of all his social enjoyments; and which damage admits of no reparation, nor compensation. An Hebrew prince who understood mankind, perhaps, more clearly than any of his predecessors ever had done, observes, “that jealousy is the rage of a man: and that he will not spare in the day of vengeance*.” And that adultery has in it guilt and demerit, which far exceeds that of theft, may be seen by consulting those maxims of the law of nature †, undercited.

BUGGERY is a crime, which in our code of penal laws, is made capital, and which they define thus, *carnalis copula contra naturam et hoc vel per confusionem specierum.* A man or woman with a brute beast: a man with a man: a man

* See his maxims of wisdom and sound policy, Prov. vi. 34, 35.

† Ibid, verses 32 and 33, compared.

with a woman (i. e. unnaturally) a sin against God, nature, and the law. Some authors say, it was anciently punished by *burning*, others by *burying alive*. At this day, it is felony excluded the clergy. Its detestable sinfulness may be learnt from the very form of inditement in our courts of judicature, which runs thus—" That
 " A. B. did, on such a day, make an assault on
 " C. D. and then and there wickedly, devilishly,
 " feloniously, and against the order of nature
 " commit such an act, &c. not to be named
 " among Christians, to the great displeasure of
 " almighty God, and disgrace of all mankind,
 " &c."—And our law books do further inform us, " that this crime is excepted out of all our
 " acts of general pardon." It therefore appears to be of so very heinous and atrocious a nature, that it is not, on any consideration, pardonable by any human power, or authority whatsoever.

This conclusion, I am persuaded we shall be obliged to make, not only from the express language of our own laws, but from that political system of judiciary laws delivered by the Hebrew law-giver, and from whence it is probable our own law-givers may have borrowed some idea of its turpitude, and the abhorrence in which it was held, in the early age of the world;—for in those laws, it is said, " Thou
 " shalt not lie with mankind, as with woman-
 " kind: it is an ABOMINATION, *Lev. xviii. 22.*
 which law is explained, *Deut. xxiii. 17.* " There
 " shall be no *Sodomite* of the sons of Israel:" i. e. they shall all be extirminated, as were the sons of Sodom. And it is recorded of king *Asa*, that he cut them off, *1 Kings xv. 12.* Dr. *Lightfoot* thought the *Sodomites* were a remnant of the
 Canaanites

Canaanites which were left in the land, *2 Kings* xxiii. 7. These observations are what give the meaning of the word rendered *abomination*, in *Lev.* xviii. 22. as it intends, “ a detestable crime, “ condemned by the law of nature.” Or, an extremely loathsome act of wickedness, on account of which, a land is said to vomit out its inhabitants, *Lev.* xviii. 25. Also in that striking picture of pagan deformity, given by St. Paul in the beginning of his epistle to the Romans, he has this very moving stricture, “ God gave them “ up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their “ own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies “ between themselves.”—The shocking spread of this filthy, this most detestable abomination, is, a very tremendous symptom, which as a cancer, is now ulcerating the face of Britain. An accursed thing which is said to have been originally imported from Italy, that sink of uncleanness. Rot. Parl. 50th Ed. III. Num. 58.

AS TO MURDER, as it can admit of no reparation, no satisfaction or compensation, so it is determined to be capital; *i. e.* a crime which deserves death, and cannot admit of any other punishment. With Mr. LOCKE, I am fully persuaded, that the law given to *Noah*, the father of the new world, was neither local nor temporary, but intended for the observance of all mankind; *viz.* “ Whoso sheddeth man’s “ blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” *Gen.* ix. 6. An universal law, founded in reason and nature.

Profane history furnishes very remarkable instances, as well as our judicial records do, of many murders that had been long concealed; which yet, by a discovery made at a great distance

tance of time, the murderer met his deserved punishment. And it does not seem improbable, but that the wretch who escaped the punitive hand of justice, providence did some other way cut off by the hand of man. This also assuredly is another crime, which no human power whatsoever can have a right to pardon; forasmuch as the murderer, wherever known to be such, is too offensive an object for the eye of man: and such is the nature of the crime, as to render it absolutely unfit the perpetrator of it should be allowed a place in human society.—*Besides*, the guilt of blood ever haunts the murderer*.

The remaining capital crime, which shall be noticed, is, that of TREASON. Under which article, it may be observed, that where an administration of civil government is just and equitable; *i. e.* where it protects and maintains the civil and religious rights of a people, by being a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to well-doers,—there, should any refuse the homage of loyalty, should they conspire, rise in arms, or rebel against such powers which are of God, the offence must be capital:—“Tribute, to whom
“tribute; custom, to whom custom; fear, to
“whom fear; honour, to whom honour;” is the demand of reason and truth, and of the law of relation. But wherever a civil administration is arbitrary and tyrannical, the sooner a people can throw off the iron yoke, the better: since no civil government can be an ordinance of God,

* I would refer my reader back to the view taken of Cain, in the Dissertation on Self-murder, as an illustration of its malignity.

but what is for the benefit of the governed; and where it is the reverse, it is so far from being of God, that it is of the devil. It certainly is, because no other than a diabolical spirit of pride and arrogance, can render any earthly sovereign, once capable of imagining, that the power with which he is entrusted, could be ever given him, for the end of enslaving those under his scepter. Consequently, all treasons against government, are, what violate the laws of truth, reason, and righteousness.—Whereas, this being far from the case, when an administration is trampling on the just rights and equitable claims of a people: in which condition, we are obliged to say, that none but depraved, dispirited, crest-fallen creatures, will tamely submit to the tyranny.

A yet different species of treason, is that of counterfeiting, impairing, and clipping the current coin of a kingdom or state. With us, this is made capital, by 25 *Ed.* III. c. 14. and 18 *Eliz.* c. 7. It is also treason to make any stamp, dye, or mould for coining: and so is colouring metal, resembling coin of gold or silver; marking it on the edges, &c. This appears, to me, in the light of high treason against the majesty of the people; forasmuch as the injury is principally done to the community, by depraving the universal medium or measure of trade and commerce. “ For, in the words of Mr. LOCKE, “ such debasers of coin, who counterfeit the “ king’s image and superscription, commit a “ great robbery on the public. Because money is “ as necessary to trade, as food is to life; and, “ in its circulation, drives the wheels of trade: “ and is necessary between land-holder and la-
“ bourer,

of botcher, merchant, shop-keeper and consumer; and should be kept in its value steady and invariable, as all other measures are. This is a species of treason, which, at this day, is extremely detrimental to our public; and loudly calls for some punishment, more terrifying and efficacious than death. The culprit should be made some way a living monitor to all around him, and at the same time, some beneficial service should be rendered by him to that public he has injured; though under circumstances that would terrify.

It is presumed, that the above observations, made upon some of our penal laws, which take away the life of man, do prove, that they are very unequal, and undiscriminating as to the degrees of demerit, or of guilt. And we are not to wonder at this, when we consider, that the vast importance of human life, has not to this day been duly attended unto, nor well understood, by legislators. Even in our age of boasted light and liberty, it is notorious, from late applications to parliament, that we have some penal statute-laws yet in force and unrepealed, which are *confessedly* inhuman and cruel; ay, even in the sense of those senators, who refuse to remove them from a people, whose loyalty is unimpeached, and whose claims to the common rights of subjects, are inferior to none in the British dominions. But such is the depravity of the age, we have no reason to expect a reform, either of our laws, or of our manners, till the dreadful catastrophe, has fully

* Considerations on Money; see his Works, vol. ii.

taken place, “ when the people shall be so
“ hungry as to fret themselves, look upward,
“ curse their king and their God! and looking
“ to the earth, shall behold trouble, darkness,
“ and the dimness of anguish!”

O that Britain would so repent and reform!—
that her iniquities may not bring down upon her,
irremediable ruin.—

F I N I S











