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A
L E T T E R

T O T H E

Rev. Dr. A D A M S of Shrewsbury :

O C C A S I O N E D B Y T H E

P U B L I C A T I O N O F H I S S E R M O N ,

E N T I T L E D ,

A Test of True and False Doctrines.

By the A U T H O R of

P I E T A S O X O N I E N S I S .

If either State Oaths on the one Hand, or Church Subscriptions on the other, once come to be made light of, and Subtleties be invented to defend or palliate such gross Infincerity; we may bid farewell to Principles, and Religion will be little else but disguised Atheism.

DOCTOR WATERLAND.

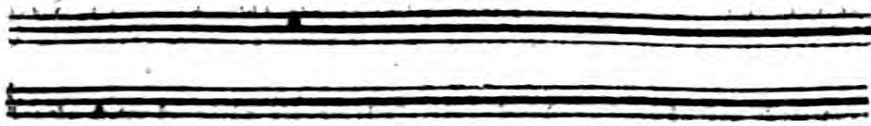
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MDCCLXX.







A

LETTER, &c.

REVEREND SIR,

AS a minister of the gospel and dignitary of the established church, you had certainly a right to caution your flock against whatever might appear to you erroneous or delusive; and as you have thought proper to send abroad into the world, what you delivered from the pulpit, every individual must be allowed an equal right of examining into the grounds of your cautions, and of delivering his sentiments with the same freedom which you yourself have done, and then it must be left to the impartial reader to judge, to which side the charges of error and delusion most properly belong.

Think not, Sir, that I would in the least depreciate your just merit; as a writer who has ably defended the outward evidences of Christianity,

you have an indubitable claim to the respect and esteem of all who are grieved to behold the sad growth of Deism and Infidelity in this day ; but how far you have acted consistently with your office and character as a divine of the church of England, either in preaching or publishing the discourse in question, what follows may perhaps determine.

As to the three or four first pages of your Sermon, the strictest regard to truth obliges me to call them nothing but meer froth and an empty flourish of words, which are plainly intended to throw dust and prejudice into the eyes of the reader at his first setting out ; but which might just as readily be brought in defence of a good cause, as of a bad one ; or of a bad one, as of a good one. As it is not therefore declamation, but argument which I would attend to, I shall pass them over in silence.

It will be necessary however before I enter upon the merits of your performance, just to observe, that it is but too usual with writers who are engaged on controversial subjects to endeavour to cast odium upon what they cannot confute, by grossly misrepresenting the doctrines of their opponents, and then charging those doctrines with consequences that have not the least connexion with them. Now however unfair this manner of proceeding may be, yet it readily goes down with the bulk of mankind, who are too apt to receive their

their opinions upon the meer *ipse dixit* of their teachers, and whilst indeed they are gulled by false glosses and appearances, cry out in astonishment, How fine!—how excellent!—how unanswerable!—How far, Sir, you have descended to this illiberal way of writing, shall be left to the impartial decision of every candid person who shall take the trouble of perusing the following pages.

You will readily agree with me, Sir, and I with you, that the only touchstone of divine truth should be the written word of God. This word I doubt not you had read and considered with attention before you entered into the ministry; and that you also firmly believed that all the fundamental truths of the scriptures were contained in the articles, homilies, and liturgy of the church of England, I cannot without a manifest breach of charity dispute; otherwise you could not surely have conscientiously subscribed and given an open solemn declaration of your HEARTY * assent to them, as being strictly agreeable to the word of God; which you must have done at least six or seven times before you could attain your present rank and preferments in the church. And this your unfeigned belief of all and every one of the thirty-nine articles, must previous to your ordination, have been testified to the bishop, under the hands of three or four clergymen; nor could you possibly have held any living, except that within

* Ex animo.

two months after your induction you had publicly read all the thirty-nine articles, and again declared your UNFEIGNED ASSENT thereto, in the church belonging to such living, and in default of such declaration, the sentence of deprivation would have been immediately incurred. Besides this the fifth canon of the church, and the statute of the 13th of Eliz. ch. 12, do adjudge all persons worthy, both of excommunication and deprivation, who shall dare to oppugn the said articles, or any part of the book of common-prayer, or maintain any doctrine contrary thereto; and such offenders shall not be restored but by the archbishop upon their repentance, and revocation of their wicked errors. Vide canon VI. 13 Eliz. ch. 12.

All these laws are farther enforced by the royal declaration prefixed to the said articles of religion, which declaration, peremptorily forbids "every preacher and minister whatever, from putting his own sense or comment upon any of the articles, or from drawing them aside any way, and enjoins them to be taken in their plain, literal, grammatical sense."

Now it is most certain that our church, by requiring all these solemn tests, subscriptions, and declarations from her ministers, and by denouncing such severe punishments on every delinquent who should be found offending against the same, did hereby suppose that she had strongly fortified herself

herself against the encroachments of all heretics and innovators whatever. Her pious reformers were well convinced that oaths and subscriptions were things of a most awful nature, and not to be trifled with by any man who believed there was a God unto whom all hearts be open, and from whom no secrets are hid. They certainly concluded that the abandoned wretch who could betray the friend of his bosom, the adulterer who should prove false to the affection of the best of wives, or even the hardened villain who could plunge his poisoned dagger into the tender mother's breast, were objects less to be dreaded, than he who through base and self-interested views, should swear to doctrines he never believed, and only intrude himself into the church in order to suck her breasts and prey upon her vitals. God grant, Sir, that such aggravated guilt may never be laid to your charge or mine.

These considerations being premised, the matter of our enquiry is not so much whether the church and the scriptures accord together, as whether the doctor and the church are of accord. For my own part, I am fully persuaded of the strict harmony there is between the sacred oracles of truth, and our articles, homilies and liturgy; and that you are as fully persuaded of this harmony every man must necessarily conclude, who has been witness to your own solemn and repeated declarations that the book of common-prayer,

prayer, and the thirty-nine articles were entirely agreeable to the word of God. But whatever harmony there may or may not be between the scriptures and the church of England, I fear there will not be found any great harmony between your professions and your conduct. And if this be the case we may well say with the famous Dr. *South*, "That to be impugned from without, and betrayed from within, is certainly the worst condition that a church can fall into."

You have made a very ingenuous confession, Sir, that the sermon which the reverend Mr. *Romaine* preached at St. *Chadd's* church in the month of *September* last, gave rise to your discourse, which it appears by the date was delivered the Sunday fortnight: And as you tell us in your preface that you forbear to mention the particular tenets and the rash unguarded expressions at which you were offended, I will as ingenuously inform you, that what ever other excuses may have been given for your dislike to that gentleman's sermon, I doubt not but it was chiefly owing to his so strenuously maintaining and defending the Divinity and Godhead of our blessed Saviour, that you were so much disgusted at it, my reasons for this assertion are,

Ist, That as soon as ever you came into the vestry after sermon, you told Mr. *Romaine* with a discomposure of spirit, (which to say the least, ill became the house of God,) "That your congregation

gregation was not used to such doctrine, and you hoped would never hear such again," and you must do Mr. *Romaine* the justice to acknowledge that for his part he received the rebuke with the greatest meekness and good manners, and only observed, "That it was neither a proper time nor place for disputes."

Idly, I am led to suppose that the divinity of Jesus Christ was the great stone of offence at which you stumbled, from the discourse on this subject which passed between you and certain gentlemen in going from *St. Chad's* church to your own house, as well as from what passed in your own parlour afterwards, when being pressed hard by the articles, and liturgy, and particularly with that expression in our excellent communion service, to be used on the feast of Trinity, "That which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality," you could no otherwise evade the force of the testimonies brought against you, but by saying, "That the compilers of the articles and liturgy were only fallible men, and that divinity was much better understood now than at the time of the reformation." You may remember that hereupon the honesty of your confession was much commended, and had you in consequence of your disapprobation of the doctrines of the church of England immediately resigned all the rich pre-

ferments which you hold by your subscriptions to those very doctrines, in that very church, the whole kingdom must have echoed with encomiums, upon your honest, upright, and disinterested behaviour.

IIIIdly, I cannot help believing that you have a settled dislike to the Trinitarian doctrines, not only because (as I am credibly informed) the divinity of Jesus Christ, has no place in any of your sermons, but because the Athanasian creed is never read in your church, no not even at those times when it is positively enjoined by the rubric to be read, by which means you have found a very easy method of accomplishing the well known wish of renowned Tillotson, without the formality of an act of parliament, or of convocation.

But as you have not thought proper to introduce this point into your sermon, nor ranked it as one of the distinguishing tenets of Methodism (any otherways than by insinuations that you have concealed the most exceptionable part of Mr. *Romaine's* sermon, which insinuations I now call upon you to explain, and not to stab in the dark) I shall dwell no longer on the subject, but dismiss it with this observation; " That though our legislators have in their wisdom and care for tender consciences, given an indulgence by the act of toleration to Protestant Dissenters of every denomination, yet they have absolutely refused this
indulgence

indulgence to all who deny the doctrine of a trinity in unity, or that any of the three persons in this trinity are not very and eternal God. And as a proof that they looked upon such a denial to be the highest pitch of blasphemy and prophaneness, it is enacted by the 9th and 10th of William III. which is expressly intitled an act for preventing the horrible crimes of blasphemy and prophaneness. That “Whosoever shall deny any one of the three persons in the trinity to be God, or shall deny in preaching or writing the doctrines of the blessed trinity as set forth in the thirty-nine articles, he shall be incapable of holding any ecclesiastical office.”

I now pass on to a more particular examination of what you are pleased to advance, concerning the means whereby true and false doctrines are to be discovered.

And here I must observe that you set out with a fundamental mistake, in supposing, that man wants no assistance but the exercise of his own reason to find out the nature and attributes of God.—Now if this were the case, what need of that important question in the book of Job, canst thou by searching find out the Almighty? or to what purpose hath an apostle left it on record, that the world by wisdom knew not God? whilst our Lord affirms, that no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. Nay, if it were a truth

Reason

that man by the exercise of his reasoning faculties could attain any knowledge of the nature and attributes of God, then God must not only be divested of his essential nature, but be without one of his most distinguishing attributes, viz. ^{comprehension} his incomprehensibility. It is therefore a most presumptuous assertion, to affirm that we ought to form our ideas of God from our *own notions* of his nature and attributes, and then to interpret his word agreeable to those notions. On the contrary, we ought to form our ideas of God, wholly and intirely from what is revealed of him by his own unerring Spirit in his own written word, and howsoever this word may at any time speak contrary to what would be the natural conceptions of our reason, here reason must stoop to the word, and not the word to reason.

And truly what an unsafe guide reason is in matters divine and spiritual, and consequently of the nature and attributes of God, (for God is a spirit), must be very evident to all who will submit to the apostle's determination, that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But thus to set up reason in the throne, is absolutely to deny the fall of man, and to make the illumination of the eternal Spirit utterly needless; and therefore we shall generally find that those gentlemen who are advocates for the reasoning powers of man in
the

the discernment of spiritual things, do for the most part cordially embrace the whole Pelagian system, and by making no manner of distinction between reason since the fall, and reason in the state of innocence, do thereby supersede the necessity of all divine light to remove the natural darkness of the understanding, and too often treat the whole doctrine of the Holy Spirit's influence and inspiration, as nothing else but the fancy of a deluded sect, or the effect of a distempered brain.

I may yet farther add, that by making reason the supreme judge of divine truths, we in a manner make void the very end of all revelation whatever; for if we are determined to receive nothing upon God's own authority, till we have tried it at the bar of this great Diana, then notwithstanding the manifestations he hath given of himself, with the bible in our hands, and with all our reason in our heads, we are not likely to have any clearer knowledge of him than what the philosophy of Greece and Rome could furnish us with. And in fact, we find that all the fundamental truths of the gospel, are either totally exploded, or else explained into nothing by persons of this reasoning character.—Yet how incapable unenlightened reason is to form any judgment of the nature and attributes of God, or to decide what is fit and meet for *him* to do, whose ways are not as our ways, and whose thoughts, are not as our thoughts, may be farther gathered from some
plain

plain instances taken out of the scriptures of truth, where if reason had been left to determine the matter, she would immediately have given her vote and verdict in direct opposition to what the infinite wisdom of God hath thought fit to appoint, and to leave upon record as his dealings with the children of men.—For example,—Would reason ever have confined the knowledge of the true God for so many hundred years to so small a spot of the globe as the land of Judea?—Would reason ever have thought it a command worthy of God that the Israelites should destroy whole nations before them, sparing neither aged nor suckling, and that before they came out of Egypt they should borrow the jewels and riches of their neighbours to carry them off as spoil and booty*?—Would reason ever have concluded that the judge of all the earth did right to harden Pharaoh's heart that he would not let the people go, and then to pour out all his plagues upon him for detaining them, yea and to declare that he had raised him up for this very purpose, that he might shew his power in him and that his name might be declared throughout the earth†?—Would reason ever have esteemed it matter of equity that Jacob should inherit the blessing instead of his elder brother Esau, especially if reason be left to judge of the means by which he obtained it‡?—Would reason

* Exod. xii. 35, 36. † Exod. ix. 12. Rom. ix. 17.
‡ Gen. xvii. 6, 7, 8, &c.

ever have thought that the royal line and holy seed should have been continued through the adulterous commerce of David with Bathsheba *?—Would reason have smote Uzzah for his honest intention of supporting the tottering ark †?—Would reason have destroyed the man of God for returning to eat bread and drink water at the house of the prophet in Bethel, when he thought he was simply obeying the voice of the Lord by so doing ‡?—Would reason ever have conceived, that it was consistent with the nature and attributes of an all-merciful God, to send out a lion to slay the man, who (only from a principle of tenderness, so far as it appears) refused to smite one of the sons of the prophets ||?—Would reason ever have justified Elisha for cursing little children in the name of the Lord only for saying unto him go up thou baldhead, go up thou baldhead? Or would reason have justified the Lord himself for sending two bears out of the wood to tear forty-two of them in pieces §?

What can reason think of the bloody rite of circumcision, the offering of Isaac, and all the various types and institutions of the ceremonial law? Why, we see that reason rejects them as ridiculous and unworthy of God, and hence so many wise free-thinkers, or free-inquirers as they now call themselves.

* 2 Sam. xii. 24. † 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. ‡ 1 Kings xiii. 24.
 ¶ 1 Kings xx. 35, 36. § 2 Kings ii. 23, 24.

But

But this is not all.—Reason cannot see how three eternal, coequal persons can subsist in one divine essence,—hence so many Arians.—Reason cannot see how guilt and corruption should be derived from our first parent Adam,—hence so many Pelagians.—Reason cannot see how God should become incarnate and make atonement for sin,—hence so many Socinians.—Reason cannot see why free-grace should have all the glory, and man's free-will have nothing to do in the work of salvation,—hence so many Arminians. Yet each of these must have their sting at the articles of our excellent church; each must have Christianity disembarassed from what they cannot reconcile to their own preconceived opinions, and nothing must pass for RATIONAL RELIGION, except what their wisdom pronounces fit and right for God to do. But if we remove the objections of all these wise reasoning gentlemen, I fear that we poor credulous enthusiasts, who profess to believe every jot of God's word, simply upon the authority of its infallible author, shall have a very small portion of scripture left for the exercise of our faith; and I am sure the apostle Paul might have saved himself the trouble of declaring that "Who-so-ever will be wise, must become a fool," (i. e. in man's account.) Nor could our Saviour himself with any propriety have said, "I thank thee O Father, lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and

and hath revealed them unto babes*.” I shall only add that however the plain declarations of God may be cavilled at as mysterious by some, and full of absurdities by others, yet these very mysteries and absurdities (as they are deemed) are to the true Christian an incontestible proof of the divine original of the scriptures; for had human reason and wisdom undertaken to have imposed upon the world in framing a religion, they would have freed it from all those cloggs and impediments which now cause it to be a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to so many great and learned ones of the earth.

The very same rectitude which you suppose to be in the understanding or reasoning powers of man, you conclude to be in the will and affections; the former of which throughout your whole discourse you suppose to be in a state of absolute freedom as to the choice of good or evil: and the latter to be at least as inclinable to exercise themselves in the love and pursuit of heavenly, as of earthly objects. Nay, you even propound the question with a sort of triumphant challenge, “Is the love of God and our neighbour unnatural to the mind of man †?”

Now I beseech you, Sir, to tell me from your own views of these leading faculties of the soul, the understanding, will, and affections, where is the difference between man before, and man after

* Matt. xi. 25. † Page 254

the fall of Adam? Why truly none at all. His reason is as capable of discerning spiritual things, his will as free to chuse them, and his affections as much set upon the love of them, as Adam's were in the state of paradise †.

This

† That the doctor believes neither spiritual or eternal death to have been the effect of Adam's sin is most clear, by his affirming that "ONLY by the first man's disobedience all men became mortal." But if this were so, then the sentence which God pronounced was never inflicted, for God saith, "IN THE DAY thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Whereas Adam lived above nine hundred years after the words were spoken. But Satan said, "Thou shalt not surely die." i. e. In the day thou eatest thereof; (otherwise it is no answer to what God had said before,) so that if we admit the doctor's reasoning concerning the death here mentioned, being only the death of the body, then Satan must have told the truth, and God himself have been found a liar.—The case then stands thus. God saith, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Satan saith, "Thou shalt not surely die," (*in that day*) but IN THE DAY ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, *knowing good and evil*. Whether the doctor speaks the language of God or of Satan in this point let his own sermon determine.—I close this note with observing that Dr. Adams's explanation of the important passage. "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners," (which from Dr. Taylor, he interprets, were made mortal, or made sufferers) is as contrary to common sense as it is to scripture, for the Greek word for sinners (*αμαρτωλοί*) is the very same here, as in the epistle of Paul to Tim. where it is said that Jesus Christ came into the world to

² Gen. ii. 17.

This then is the system of Doctor *Adams* as a man of reason; but how agrees it with the plain declarations of God's word, viz. That man is dead in trespasses and sins *. That there is none righteous, no not one †.—That all the imaginations of man's heart are only evil continually, and that in him dwelleth no good thing. That his understanding is darkened, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart ‡.—That it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, that the heirs of promise are not born of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God's, who of his own will beget them with the word of truth **, and worketh in them both to will and to do, having predestinated them by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will ††. That the Son quickeneth whom he will ‡‡. That we have not chosen Christ, but he hath chosen us. That no man can come unto Christ except the Father draw him †††. That of ourselves we are without save sinners. Now suppose that according to the doctor's strained sense of the passage in Rom. v. 19. we were to read "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that *Jesus Christ, came into the world to save sufferers, or all men that became mortal,*" what egregious nonsense should we make of it, and yet we may as well make the text in 1 Tim. i. 15. speak this language, as that in Rom. v. 19.

* Eph. ii. 1. † Rom. iii. 10. &c. ‡ Eph. iv. 18.
 || Rom. ix. 16. § John i. 13. ** James i. 18. †† Phil. iii. 13.
 Eph. i. 5. †† John v. 21. ††† John xv. 16. John vi. 44.

strength* and can do nothing, no not so much as think a good thought†.

Now what torturing, twisting, and wire drawing must these scriptures undergo, before they can be brought to harmonize with your notions of man's natural excellencies and free will? And if we examine the sentiments of the church of England in these points, we shall immediately find that she bears her testimony as much against you, as the word of God does. In her ninth article, intituled the article of *original or birth sin*, she expressly declares, that "Man is very far † gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." Her tenth article, intituled the article of *Free will* as peremptorily affirms that "The condition of man after the fall of Adam, is such, that he *cannot* turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength, and good works, to faith and calling upon God: wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." Her liturgy and collects from beginning to end speak the same lan-

* Rom. v. 6. † John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5.

† *Quam longissime.* As far as possible.

guage. In them we acknowledge that ALL HOLY DESIRES as well as all just works proceed from God.—That through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do NO GOOD THING. That we have NO POWER of ourselves to help ourselves.—That we cannot do ANY THING that is good, and therefore lean only on the hope of heavenly grace.—The homilies of our church are, if possible, stronger on these points than the articles and liturgy, but to avoid prolixity I decline making any quotations from them; and conclude this head with observing, that though our reformers denied the freedom of the will in spiritual things, they did not on that account make man a meer machine, but whilst they gave all the glory of his salvation to God alone, they supposed that there was no violence at all offered to the will, which still acted freely under the renewing influences of the holy spirit, both chusing and refusing according to the objects set before it*.

* To explain this by a familiar illustration.—Let it be supposed that Dr. *Adams* had the offer of a bishopric. Now although there would be no compulsion made use of to force him to accept this bishopric, nevertheless the desire of saving souls, or some other motive, would no doubt weigh so powerfully with the doctor, that he might easily be persuaded to submit to the ceremony of installation: yet all this while there would be no infringement of the freedom of his will, which would be compleatly won over by the sweetly attractive power of the bishopric, and the hopes of guarding the diocess from the poisonous doctrines of enthusiastic teachers.

PASS

PASS we on now to a more particular consideration of what you have advanced (p. 15.) where in laying down your test of true and false doctrines you say, "If we are told that the law of God is so pure and perfect, that we cannot with our best endeavours equal it in practice, but must in very many instances fall short of it? and at the same time that nothing but universal and unremitting obedience will be accepted at his hands; that the least sins of the least of his creatures, are of infinite guilt in his sight; that no amends can be made, or pardon obtained for any sins that are past, by repentance and a better obedience for the future; that God has no mercy but in consequence of the mediation and intercession of Christ: this is plainly representing God as an hard task master, &c. &c."

And are these, Sir, your real sentiments concerning the law of God; that law which is holy, just and good; that law which is the transcript of the divine will and perfections, and is as unchangeable as its glorious author, can you really think that this law will stoop to the weakness and infirmity of a poor corrupted creature, and accept a sincere obedience instead of a perfect one? If this were the case, then surely among a whole world of beings to whom you believe the love of God and of our neighbour to be so natural, some, yea many might be found, who could put in their claim to eternal life upon the terms of the law,
and

and consequently would stand in no need at all of a redeemer. And that this is plainly your belief, may be seen from those EXCEPTIONABLE passages (as you stile them) in Mr. *Romaine's* sermon, which I shall quote in your own words. “*God hath no mercy but through Christ the redeemer.*”—“*God hath no mercy but in consequence of the mediation and intercession of Christ.*”—Now for a minister of Jesus Christ, a protestant divine, a doctor of divinity of the church of England, to cull these expressions out of a sermon, on purpose to declare his abhorrence of the doctrine they contain, astonishes me to such a degree, that though your book now lays open before me, I can hardly credit my own eyes.—What, Sir, do you really call it strange doctrine, exceptionable doctrine, “*That God can shew no mercy but through Christ the redeemer?*”—So saith Doctor *Adams*, but what saith the scripture?—There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved but ONLY that of Jesus Christ*.—Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ†.—Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins‡.

Again, what saith the church of England? These are her own words. Art. 18. The title of which is, “*Of obtaining eternal salvation ONLY by the name of Christ.*” “*They also are to be had accursed who presume to say, that every*

* Acts iv. 12. † 1 Cor. iii. 11. ‡ Heb. ix. 22.

man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth; so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature; for holy scripture doth set out unto us ONLY the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

Since then in direct opposition to scripture and the church of England, you have so fully given it as an article of your faith, that God can shew mercy to sinners without the mediation and intercession of Christ, I am the less surprized to find you joining hands with the church of Rome in establishing that long exploded doctrine among all sound Protestants, (viz.) the distinction between great and little, venial and mortal sins. When the redemption of Christ is made so light of, it is the most prudent way to make as light of sin as we can; and therefore I don't so much wonder that Mr. *Romaine's* assertion that "there are no *little sins*," should have given you so much offence. Not that Mr. *Romaine* meant to alledge that some sins were not more heinous or aggravated than other sins; or that there were not degrees of punishment in another world for those who had run greater lengths in wickedness than others, and died in their impenitency: but that no sin could be called *little* before the infinite holiness of God, all and every sin being a transgression of that law whose language

guage is, “*the wages of sin is death.*”—He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, he is guilty of all.—“Curfed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” Now, Sir, can that be called a *little* matter which not only deserves, but actually incurs the eternal curse of God upon body and soul for ever? Surely to think or call any sin *little* in this sense, must indeed argue that we have *little* thoughts of God, and that we esteem him even such an one as ourselves. Besides which there cannot be a more effectual way to open the floodgates of licentiousness than by talking of *little sins*: For where is the man that will not immediately rank his own bosom idols among those *little sins*, and when he has indulged himself in them as he judges convenient, will make no doubt but a merciful God will readily overlook such trifling infirmities*.

But

* Our divine poet *Milton*, seems of opinion that it was by a stratagem of this sort that the serpent deceived Eve, and therefore he introduces him as thus accosting her,

“ Will God incense his ire,
For such a petty trespass ? ”

And it was well observed by a very learned and pious writer of our church, that there can be no better proof that any doctrine is of divine original than when it debases man, exalts Christ, and promotes holiness.—Consequently that

But as you have been so much offended at the expression that "God has no mercy but through Christ the redeemer." Be pleased to tell us in what other way he *can* or will shew mercy to sinners. If it be not through the gospel it must be through the law; and if by the law then Christ is dead in vain.—It is certain there were never from all eternity to this moment any other dispensations than these two. It must therefore be either of faith or of works. And yet (I am sorry to say it) you have so jumbled and confused these together, sometimes ascribing salvation wholly to the works of the law, and talking of our being able to make God amends and obtain pardon for past sins by repentance and better obedience; at other times making some mention of the merits of Christ, (and once using the word *atonement*,) that it is very difficult to pursue you through all the various windings of your labyrinth, or even to guess what plan you mean to adopt. You say and unsay, advance and contradict; and not unfrequently amuse yourself in

doctrine which exalts man, debases Christ, and does not promote holiness, must have its rise from another source, even out of *the bottomless pit*. Now whether the doctor by exalting so highly the natural powers of man; speaking so very lowly of Christ, as to abhor the thought of there being no mercy but through his intercession; and by being so zealous to establish the notion of little sins; has proved that his doctrine is from above or *ab infra* must be left to others to judge.

pelting

pelting at men of straw, whom your dexterity hath set up.*

But

* Among the various examples of this sort in the doctor's sermon, I mention only the following, p. 31, " Confining all without distinction, young and old, infant and suckling to the punishments of the next world, for no other crime but that of being born in this."—This is an artful evasion of the doctrine of original sin, and contains a most notorious slander into the bargain.—It is certainly the doctrine of our church that all men are conceived and born in sin, and are by nature children of wrath, and that this corruption of nature deserveth God's wrath and damnation, and this the doctor has confessed again and again, not only when he subscribed the articles, but whenever he baptized an infant. But that any persons are or can be guilty of any crime only for being born into the world, or that this was ever asserted by those called methodists, is utterly without foundation, and for my own part, I have ever maintained that all children baptized or unbaptized, who die before the commission of actual sin, are undoubtedly saved through Christ."

Again, The doctor says, p. 37. " By decrying the use and necessity of good works, making the obedience of Christ stand for the obedience of Christians, and placing religion in faith and opinion, they relax the obligations of duty, flatter the sinner with false hopes of pardon, without reforming and amending his life, put a mask into the hands of hypocrisy, and open a door to licentiousness."

Now this is begging the question, and is nothing better than meer brutum fulmen.—But before you lay these tenets at the door of any man whatever, you ought to have some proof of your charge.—Be it therefore known unto you, Sir, that the necessity of reformation and of good works, is not decryed as you insinuate: on the contrary (though it would be the highest arrogance to give them any place in procuring

But surely, Sir, if you had duly considered the nature, extent, and spirituality of the law, we should never have heard your proposing repentance and future obedience (however necessary in their proper place) by way of making amends for sins that are past. For we are all debtors to fulfil the law of God, and therefore the question is not, how far we have kept it, but whether we have answered all its demands. Not *how many* breaches of it we have been guilty of, or whether we repent of those breaches, but whether we have broken it at all. The law cannot abate of its demands, however we have lost our power to fulfil it, and if instead of flying to him who hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*, we think to make God amends by repentance and better obedience for the future,

acceptance with God) they are firmly established upon the only sure foundation, namely, faith in Christ, and love to God.

Again, p. 39. "Whatever doctrines dispense with the practice, or may be applied to evade the force of the gospel precepts; whatever doctrines loosen the obligations of duty, speak peace to the sinner, or flatter him in his sins, these cannot be of God."

Agreed.—Let us then beware of that doctrine which calls any sin *little*, or supposes that God can dispense with the demands of his own law. Since such principles must inevitably lead us into downright Antinomianism: and being destructive of all our notions of the nature and attributes of God, cannot according to your own rules of discerning between truth and falsehood, be admitted as agreeable to his holy word.

* Gal. 5. 13.

the law like a merciless creditor will shew us no favour; the former transgressions of it still stand out against us; we are liable to be arrested by the justice of God, and to be cast into the prison of outer darkness, from whence we can in no wise be released till we have paid the uttermost mite.

Let another familiar example illustrate this.— Suppose that the parishioners of *Cund* and *St. Chad's* were to withhold from *Dr. Adams* only one year's dues of those livings, and when the doctor demanded the money, they were to answer, “ It is true, doctor, we are in your debt, but it is only for one single year; we are sincerely sorry we should be in arrears, but we promise *to make you amends* by a punctual payment for the future.” Now would not the doctor with great reason think that this was no amends at all? Nay, would he not think himself highly injured by such treatment? and would not the parishioners of *St. Chad's* and *Cund* be every day liable to be arrested and imprisoned for non-payment of that one year's dues, however exactly they might pay for the time to come? Examine the case, and the analogy will be palpable.

PROCEED we now to examine another of those strange doctrines, as you are pleased to esteem it, “ That the works of the best men are stained with sin.”

Every cavil, which can be raised against a truth so humbling to human pride as this is, proceeds from
from

from one and the same root, ignorance of the law of God, its nature, extent, and spirituality: For the law being infinitely perfect, can admit of nothing less than an infinitely perfect obedience, and whatever falls short of this obedience, is sin, and consequently a transgression of the law*. Now there never was nor ever can be an action, even of the most holy man that ever lived since the fall, (the man Christ Jesus only excepted,) which came up to the full demands of the law, and which was not on that account chargeable with sin, and therefore under the Mosaic institution there was a sacrifice appointed for the iniquity of the holy things of the children of Israel; and for the same reason do we find those holy men of old, Isaiah, Daniel, David, Hezekiah, &c. making such humbling confessions of their sinfulness. Nevertheless though we affirm with the scriptures and our own church that the best actions of the best of men, *cannot endure the severity of God's judgments*, and by coming short of what the law requires, are tainted with sin; yet we firmly believe that "They are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, inasmuch that by them a lively faith, may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by its fruit."—Art. 13.

* 1 John iii. 4.

Having now gone through the tests you have given us of true and false doctrines; and having taken a survey of your REAL CREED as a man of reason, and of your CONVENIENT CREED, as rector of St. Chad's and Cund, we will beg leave to draw a contrast between the two, and see whether Dr. Adams, or the rector of St. Chad's and Cund, has the best end of the staff.

THE REAL CREED OF
the reverend Dr.
Adams as a man
of reason.

I utterly reject the doctrine of the Trinity, and absolutely deny that in the Unity of the Godhead, there be three persons of one substance, power, and eternity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

I account it heresy to maintain that we stand in need of a REDEEMER OF INFINITE DIGNITY TO

THE CONVENIENT CREED OF
the reverend Dr. *Adams*
as rector of St. Chad's
and Cund.

I heartily and unfeignedly believe the doctrine of the holy Trinity. And I am fully persuaded in my own conscience that though there be but one true God, yet in Unity of this Godhead there be three persons of one substance, power and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.—Art. 1.

Where are now those Arians which deny Christ to have been perfect God, of equal substance with the Father.
Homily of the Nativity.

atone

REAL CREED.

atone for our sins, and in his own person to suffer the punishment due to them. P. 28 of the *sermon*.

I utterly reject the creed of St. *Atbanasius*, as being full of gross absurdities, contrary to reason, and to my own interpretation of scripture, and therefore I never read it, or suffer it to be read in my church.

CONVENIENT CREED.

The creed of St. *Atbanasius* ought THOROUGHLY to be received and believed. For it may be proved by most certain warrant of holy scripture.—Art. 8.

That which I believe of the glory of the Father, the same I believe of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality. *Communion service for the feast of Trinity.*

I pray publicly every Trinity Sunday in the collect for that day to be kept in the faith of a Trinity in Unity, and return God thanks for having brought me and my congregation to the acknowledgment of that doctrine.

I be-

REAL CREED.

I believe that there are in every man's nature principles of virtue and good tendency; and that the love of God, and of our neighbour are natural to the mind of man.—P. 25,

CONVENIENT CREED.

I believe that every man born into the world is of his own nature inclined to evil.
Art. 9.

Man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, without ANY SPARK OF GOODNESS in him, without any virtuous or godly motion, ONLY given to evil thoughts, and wicked deeds.—*First part of the Homily on Whitsunday.*

We be of ourselves of such earth as we can but bring forth weeds, nettles, brambles, briars, &c.—*Second part of the Hom. on the misery of man.*

All men of their evilness and natural proneness be universally given to sin.—*Ibid.*

In ourselves as of ourselves we find nothing whereby we may be delivered from this miserable captivity into which we are cast through the envy of the devil by

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break-

REAL CREED.

By ascribing all that is good in men to the overruling and irresistible power of God they destroy the possibility of virtue, the idea of a state of trial and probation, &c.—P. 37.

To all their other strange doctrines “They have added yet THIS ABOVE ALL, to entail the guilt of *Adam’s* sin upon all his posterity.”—P. 31.

CONVENIENT CREED.

breaking God’s commandment in our first parent *Adam*.—*Ibid.*

As for the works of the Spirit, the fruits of faith, charitable and godly motions, if man hath any at all in him, they proceed ONLY OF THE HOLY GHOST, who is the ONLY worker of our sanctification, and maketh us new men in Christ Jesus. *Homily on Whitsunday.*

Original sin is the fault and corruption of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of *Adam* Art. 9.

When *Adam* had broken God’s commandment in paradise, he purchased thereby not only to himself, but also TO HIS POSTERITY for ever, the just wrath and indignation of God.—*Second Homily of the Passion.*

St.

REAL CREED.

The scriptures NO-WHERE suppose the guilt of *Adam's* sin to be imputed to his posterity, which cannot be believed without confounding all our ideas of justice and equity, of innocence and guilt.—
P. 32.

I believe that nothing is meant by that text—*Rom. v. 19.* (By the disobedience of one many were made sinners,) only that all men became mortal or subject to temporal death by the first man's disobedience, and this doctrine I have taken special care to in-

CONVENIENT CREED.

St. Paul IN MANY PLACES painteth us out in our colours, calling us the children of wrath when we were born.—*First part of the Homily on the misery of man.*

O what a miserable and woful state was this, that the sin of one man should condemn all men, that nothing in all the world might be looked for, but only pangs of death, and pains of hell.—
Homily on the Nativity.

The first man *Adam* having but one commandment at God's hands, namely that he should not eat of the fruit of knowledge of good and evil, did notwithstanding most unmindfully, or rather most wilfully break it in forgetting the strict charge of his maker, and giving ear to the crafty suggestion of that wicked serpent the devil. Whereby it came to pass, that as be-

REAL CREED.

still into the minds
of my parishioners.
P. 32.

CONVENIENT CREED.

fore he was blessed, so now
he was accursed; as before
he was loved, so now he was
abhorred; as before he was
most beautiful and precious,
so now he was most vile and
wretched in the sight of his
Lord and maker: instead of
the image of God, he was
now become the image of
the devil, instead of the ci-
tizen of heaven, he was now
become the bond-slave of
hell, having in himself no
one part of his former puri-
ty and cleanness, but being
altogether spotted and defil-
ed; insomuch that he now
seemed to be nothing else
but a lump of sin; and
therefore by the just judg-
ment of God was condemn-
ed to EVERLASTING DEATH.
This so great and miserable
a plague, if it had only rest-
ed on *Adam*, who first of-
fended, it had been so much
the easier, and might the
better have been borne. But
it

REAL CREED.

They are in a strange labyrinth of error who tell us that we are utterly incapable of performing any good works; or that our nature is so impaired and corrupted by the fall of our first parents, that we have no power or will to refuse the evil and chuse the good, much less to produce any acceptable fruits of righteousness.—P. 23.

CONVENIENT CREED.

it fell not only on him, BUT ON HIS POSTERITY AND CHILDREN FOR EVER. So that *the whole brood of Adam's flesh* should sustain the self-same fall and punishment which their forefather by his offence most justly had deserved.—*Homily on the Nativity.*

The condition of man after the fall of *Adam* is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God: wherefore WE HAVE NO POWER TO DO GOOD WORKS pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.—Art. 10.

Grant to us Lord the spirit to think and do always such things as be rightful; that

REAL CREED.

They are also in a labyrinth of error who tell us that the works of the best men are stained with sin.—P. 23.

CONVENIENT CREED.

that we, WHO CANNOT DO ANY THING THAT IS GOOD without thee, &c.—*Collect for the ninth Sunday after Trinity.*

O Lord who seeſt that of ourſelves we have no power to help ourſelves.—*Collect ſecond Sunday in Lent.*

Through the weakneſs of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without thee.—*Collect for the firſt Sunday after Trinity.*

Our own imperfection is ſo great through the corruption of original ſin, that all is imperfect that is within us, faith, charity, hope, dread, thoughts, words and works.—*Third part of the Homily on Salvation.*

All the good works which we can do be imperfect.—*Firſt part of the Homily on Salvation.*

Truly there be imperfections in our beſt works.

Second

REAL CREED.

By ascribing all that is good in man to the over-ruling and irresistible power of God, they destroy the possibility of virtue, the idea of a state of probation, &c.—P. 37;

In trying the spirits, judging of doctrines, and interpreting the scriptures let us consult

CONVENIENT CREED.

Second part of the Homily on the misery of man.

Yea let us not be ashamed to confess imperfection in ALL our best works.—*Ibid.*

We are of ourselves very sinful wretched and damnable.—Of ourselves and by ourselves we are NOT ABLE either to think a good thought or work a good deed.—*Ibid.*

We are sheep that run astray, but we cannot of our own power come again to the sheep-fold; so great is our imperfection and weakness.—*Ibid.*

O God from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed.—*Second collect for evening prayer.*

St. Chrysostom saith, man's human and worldly wisdom or science is not needful to the understanding of scripture, but the revelation
tion

REAL CREED.

the sentiments of nature, and the first dictates of conscience, and take the light of reason along with us.—P. 39.

You want no assistance but the exercise of your own reason.—P. 15.

It is exceptionable doctrine to affirm that God hath no mercy, but through Christ the redeemer.—P. 16.

If we are told that the law of God is so pure and perfect

CONVENIENT CREED.

tion of the Holy Ghost, who inspireth the true meaning into them, that with humility and diligence set themselves to search.—*Second Homily on reading the scriptures.*

True is the saying of *Bede*, where the Holy Ghost doth instruct and teach there is no delay at all in learning.—*First part of the Homily on Whitsunday.*

They are to be had accursed, that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For holy scripture doth set out unto us, ONLY the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.—Art. 18.

No man can fulfil the law of God, and therefore by the law all men are condemned.

REAL CREED.

that we cannot with our best endeavours equal it in practice, and that nothing but an universal obedience will be accepted, this is to make God an hard task-master.

The justification mentioned (by St. Paul,) has no respect nor can with propriety be applied to the present state of Christians.
P. 21.

If God has any mercy grace or favour for his creatures, and it is surely impious to doubt this, it must be

CONVENIENT CREED.

demned.—*Third part of the Homily on salvation.*

No man can fulfil the law according to the strict rigour of the law.—*Second part of the Homily of Salvation.*

Such was the frailty of mankind after his fall, such was his weakness and imbecillity, that he could not walk uprightly in God's commandments though he would never so fain.—
Second Homily on the Passion.

Art. 11. *Of the justification of man.*

WE are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works and deservings.

Wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the *Homily on justification.*

F

Justifi-

REAL CREED.

obedience, a right conduct, in other words, righteousness, and holiness of life, which recommends us to his favour.

CONVENIENT CREED.

Justification is the office of God only, and is not a thing which we render unto him, but which we receive of him, not which we give to him, but which we take of him by his free mercy, and by the only merits of his most dearly beloved Son our only Redeemer, Saviour, and Justifier, Jesus Christ.—*Second part of the Homily on salvation.*

We see many among them who we doubt not will be saved for their works sake.—P. 34.

This is the ordinance of God, that they which believe in Christ, should be saved without works, by faith only, freely receiving remission of their sins.—*Third part of the Homily on salvation.*

The ONLY title to favour in the subject must be obedience to the governing power. We

Saint Paul declareth NOTHING upon the behalf of man concerning his justification but ONLY a true and lively faith, which nevertheless

REAL CREED.

cannot so much as suppose any covenant between God and man, but THIS must be the condition on the part of man.—P. 20.

CONVENIENT CREED.

less is the gift of God, &c.
Homily on salvation.

The ONLY mean and instrument of salvation required of our parts is FAITH, i. e. a sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God, whereby we persuade ourselves that God both hath and will forgive our sins, that he hath accepted us again into his favour, released us from the bonds of damnation, and received us again into the number of his elect people, not for our merits or deserts, but ONLY and SOLELY for the merits of Christ's death and passion.—*Second part of the Homily on the Passion.*

Let us imitate the life before we presume to trust in the merits of Christ.

We doubt not but works done before justification, and which spring not from faith in Christ (which the Homily on faith explains to be a sure TRUST and confidence

REAL CREED.

The reformers were bad interpreters of scripture, they have surely erred from the right way through a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, adopting opinions long since exploded, and deforming religion with doctrines highly injurious to the honour of God and subversive of all the principles of morality.—P. 36,

CONVENIENT CREED.

dence on the mercy of God through Christ) have in them the nature of sin, and are not pleasant and acceptable to God.—Art. 13.

I believe from my heart that the book of articles and of common-prayer are intirely agreeable to the word of God, and that the books of Homilies do contain godly and wholesome doctrine.—Art 35.

THE foregoing disagreement between the reverend Doctor *Adams* as a man of reason, and the rector of *St. Chad's* and *Cund* as a dignitary of the

the church of England, is not only obvious to every reader, but even to the doctor himself, who greatly laments that there should be so little harmony between persons so nearly a-kin; however if the doctor cannot come up to the church, he wishes the church may come down to him. And to effect this happy reconciliation he has two strings to his bow; the one by explaining the articles and homilies in such a manner and with such a latitude, as to give them a direct contrary interpretation from the original intent of the compilers, which is a liberty he tells us with great truth his reverend brethren in the ministry have been taking for a century past: (but which by the bye, if our judges were to take in explaining away the Magna Charta, they would not long escape with a whole skin.) The other by striking a bold stroke at once, kicking those stubborn *long exploded* things, articles, homilies and liturgy quite out of doors, and new varnishing the church upon the more polite and rational plan of modern divinity: however till this happy æra arrive, the doctor in spite of all his conscientious lamentations, is very ready to swear and subscribe, again and again, for the sake either of the church's peace or her preferments. Still however reserving this salvo, that he only subscribes to the articles and homilies, so far as he believes them to be agreeable to the word of God; a salvo so mighty
pretty

pretty and convenient, that any man in the world who makes use of it, might safely subscribe to pope Pius's creed, or to the koran of Mahomet, and any Papist or Mahometan to the whole book of common-prayer.

Well, but what are we to say to all the doctor's cautions against false prophets, since he hath borne his public testimony against the articles, homilies and common-prayer book, and hath so plainly given us to understand that he ranks her excellent reformers among these delusive teachers and BAD INTERPRETERS OF SCRIPTURE*. Why, we must at least take the liberty of saying, that Mr. *Romaine* has the satisfaction of being condemned in very good company, (viz.) with the bishops Cranmer, Latimer, Ridley, Hooper, and a glorious army of martyrs who sealed with their blood those very truths, which the doctor has so severely attacked, as highly injurious to the honour of God and subversive of all the principles of morality†.

But are not great mischiefs to be apprehended from the prevalence of those doctrines which you have written against? Will not religion be exposed to the contempt of rational men, and to the scoffs of the prophane and impious‡.

No, doctor, quite the contrary; for there never was more real piety, and practical godliness

* P. 37. † P. 36. ‡ P. 37.

in the kingdom than when the doctrines of the reformation were preached in their purity, and perhaps never less than at present. And the reason is obvious, for religion is indeed sadly *exposed and brought into contempt* by the conduct of too many of the clergy, in subscribing to what they do not believe, and submitting to the lowest and basest equivocations in order to defend proceedings, which in every other sphere of life would be condemned as contrary to all the received principles of common honesty and fair dealing amongst men*. Nor is the matter one jot mended by saying that it is *pain and grief to ingenuous minds*, to subscribe to forms which in their hearts they do not believe; since the very assertion implies no less a contradiction in terms, than if we were to talk of an honest knave, a perjured truth-teller, or an healthy invalid. Besides which, it is utterly destructive of the very design and institution of all oaths, tests and confessions of faith whatever; and therefore it is certain that when the archbishops and bishops of both provinces, together with the whole body of the clergy in convocation assembled, subscribed and approved the articles and homilies, in the year 1571, and the same were ratified by the queen's authority, they no more

* That this is the case at present, is evident from that smart piece the confessional: as also from the independent whig, before the departure from the doctrines of the church became so general and notorious.

thought that any honest ingenuous minds would call the searcher of all hearts to bear witness of their unfeigned and hearty assent to the doctrines therein contained, if they did not (*ex animo*) believe those doctrines, than they thought that perjury and piety, truth and falsehood were synonymous terms*.

It may be said, that this is speaking very feverely; but the Lord God knoweth, that it is speaking truly; and every discerning man's conscience must tell him that this is not the least exaggera-

* There is a ceremony at Naples which our English sailors call by the name of *white-washing*; it consists in making a profession of the Popish religion, and submitting to all the forms enjoined, for which if the party *white-washed*, were before an Heretic or Protestant, he receives a reward of about two sequins; and I am credibly informed that some of our British tars have frequently undergone this ceremony of *white-washing*.—Now suppose one of these sailors who had been *white-washed*, as often as Dr. Adams has subscribed to the articles, was to say “that it was pain and grief to his ingenuous mind to think that he could not obtain his two sequins without passing through the previous forms, and that he heartily wished to see his worthy brethren delivered from that burden of declaring their assent to the tenets of the church of Rome:” could any man in the world justify the conduct of this sailor,—I am sure Dr. Adams himself could not; poor Jack's conscientious exclamation of its being SUCH PAIN AND GRIEF to him to subscribe to what he did not believe for the sake of the two sequins, would only remind us of a similar exclamation of that reverend gentleman (O strange to tell) who is well known by the name of OH! GRIEF OF GRIEFS.

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tion of the case. The murderer who is convicted of murder, the felon who is convicted of theft, may with as much justice complain of being called a murderer and a felon, as they, who from the base motives of self-interest, set their hands to what their hearts detest, complain of being stigmatized as the vilest hypocrites and the most designing equivocators. Our Lord hath said, by their fruits ye shall know them, and when the holy Spirit of truth can stir up any man most solemnly to subscribe to one thing, for the sake of worldly gain, whilst he believes another in his heart, then I will acknowledge that they, who do so, are the faithful prophets of that God, who requireth truth in the inward parts, and who hath given us this distinguishing mark of the ambassadors of his gospel, that they are not DOUBLE-TONGUED, nor greedy of filthy lucre*.

PERMIT me now to observe that the scripture hath given one very distinguishing test of true and false doctrines, which you have entirely passed over in silence, and that is, by the effects which follow the preaching of the one and of the other, and as all real christians are *the salt of the earth, the light of the world, cities set on an hill*, consequently these effects must and will appear wherever the doctrines of truth are received into the heart, and, I st, They will make the possessor of them really and truly happy in the knowledge and experience

* 1 Tim. iii. 3.

which he has of the favour of God towards him in Christ Jesus: all tormenting sense of sin and guilt will be taken out of the conscience, he will have confidence towards God as his reconciled friend and father, in the son of his love, the Spirit itself will bear witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, enabling him to cry Abba, Father, and to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*.

Idly, In consequence of this intercourse which is opened between Christ and the soul of a believer, sin is loathed and its dominion dethroned; the path of duty becomes easy and delightful; victory is obtained over the world; afflictions and trials are borne with patience, resignation and fortitude; new affections bear sway in the heart; crosses and reproaches are welcomed for the sake of Christ; a favour of things divine and spiritual dwells upon the tongue; the glory of God is uppermost in the thoughts; death is welcomed as a disarmed enemy, and an hope full of immortality causes the soul to love and long for the appearance of the Lord Jesus.

Such are the blessings which real Christianity brings with it, blessings exactly suited to relieve the wants of every one who knows himself to be a fallen, helpless creature, and enjoyed by thousands of living witnesses, even in this day, where

* 1 Rom. viii. 15, 16. 1 Pet. i. 8.

the pure doctrines of the gospel are enforced; but I appeal to experience and matter of fact, whether these effects do ever follow the preaching of that earth-born system, where the godhead of the Saviour, the apostacy and helplessness of man, justification by faith alone, and the absolute necessity of the work of the Holy Ghost to quicken, sanctify, and comfort the soul, are kept out of sight. There may indeed be a freedom from gross offences, and a regular attendance upon external forms and duties under such circumstances, but alas! is it not apparent to the eyes of every beholder, and must not consciousness tell the heart of every one who is a stranger to the experimental possession of the above truths, that the poor dry jejune thing commonly called religion, where these blessings are wanting, leaves its highest admirers just as it finds them, without any spiritual communication between Christ and their souls; without any sense of the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, or knowledge of their being in a state of reconciliation with him; as much under the influence of worldly hopes and fears; as much ashamed of being thought more religious than is consistent with the fashion of the times, as fretful, angry, and impatient under trials, provocations and afflictions, as eager after the friendships, honours and preferments of the world, and after its follies, vanities and pleasures; as totally regardless of the glory of God and the

salvation of souls; as dead, cold, and indifferent to all holy soul-edifying discourse, as fearful or else as stupid upon the approach of death, and as far from longing after the glory which shall be revealed, as if Christ had never come into the world at all; or as if he were come to give his people no enjoyments beyond what earth and sense could furnish them with, no victory over the evils of life, and no deliverance from the terrors of death.

UPON the whole. Had the title of your sermon run thus, “An attempt to overthrow the fundamental doctrines of the reformation, and of the established church,” it would have been a very proper one for the matter it contains; but this would have sounded too gross from one, who by the most solemn and reiterated protestations had declared, that he unfeignedly believed all those doctrines to be agreeable to the word of God.

It must therefore be through the sides of that convenient stalking-horse called Methodism, that the poor church of England must be stabbed to the heart; but give me leave to say, that it might have been much more prudent for you, Sir, to have followed the advice of a certain right reverend personage, who being asked by another divine, what measures could be taken to stop the Methodists from preaching? was answered by his lordship to the following effect, “We had better
let

let them alone, for they have the church on their side."

You have indeed attempted to make matters as smooth as you could with those against whom you write, by paying them a compliment or two upon their pious and virtuous lives, and upon the zeal of their ministers. But are you not aware, Sir, that these very concessions overthrow the plan you have been labouring to establish throughout your whole discourse? for the tree is known by its fruits, and if the fruits of righteousness do appear in the life and conversation, then we may be certain that there is sound faith and right principles at the bottom; for thus saith the apostle, "Shew me thy faith by thy works."—To say that such an one is a very good man, but is of very bad principles, is a flagrant contradiction? yet into this contradiction have you been led, by attacking those you call Methodists, as Ehud did Eglon *, with a compliment in one hand, and a dagger in the other. Besides, the zeal which you commend in these ministers, instead of being a virtue, must, (if what you have advanced be true) be a most horrible crime, and greatly displeasing to God. For this zeal, like that of our first reformers †, is not according to knowledge, but for the promoting of doctrines *highly injurious to the honour of God, and subversive of all the principles of morality* ‡. Be assured

* Judges iii. 15, 15. † P. 36. ‡ P. 36.

therefore, Sir, that the congratulations you are pleased to pay yourself in your preface upon your candor, charity, and forbearance; as well as the soothing speeches with which you have honoured those against whom your sermon is directly levelled, can answer no other end than to convince every reader who has the least grain of discernment, that you thought it most prudent to make your dose as palatable as you could, in hopes that it might be the more easily swallowed; and that no officious examiner might think himself warranted to pry into the ingredients. But as I utterly disavow all connection with sects and parties; as it is not this or that man I am concerned to vindicate; but the interests of religion in general, and those of our excellent established church in particular, (whose doctrines it was indeed both PAIN AND GRIEF to me to see so vilified and mangled by one, from whom she deserved better treatment, one who eats her fat and cloaths himself with her wool*,) I say, since this is case, it will be needless to offer any apology for these remarks, or for the doctrines defended in this letter, doctrines which however rejected by you, Sir, as utterly inconsistent with the principles of virtue and morality, and *long since exploded* † as

* Ezek. xxxiv.

† Although the doctrines of free-will, justification by works, and the possibility of keeping the law, have been *exploded* by all protestant churches ever since the reformation, and although they are the distinguishing tenets of popery, yet Dr. Adams is not ashamed to avow them in the face of the sun.
repugnant

repugnant to all our notions of reason and religion, have yet been maintained and professed by the greatest and most learned men this nation ever produced, men who adorned them by their lives, and sealed the truth of them by their deaths.

I will not deny, Sir, but you have many great names to countenance you in your disaffection to the church of England; but I again repeat it, that oaths and subscriptions are not to be trifled with, they are still the same solemn things they ever were, nor is the guilt of any man less, because thousands are partakers of it.

I once thought to have annexed my name to this letter; but names as saith a late ingenious writer* being of little consequence where truth is in question, I subscribe myself

Reverend SIR,

Your sincere well-wisher,

Philalethes.

* The author of the church of England vindicated from the charge of Arminianism.

P. S.

It just occurs to me to beg you would let the public know, why you have thought proper to conceal the most exceptionable parts of Mr. *Romaine's* discourse, and to caution your hearers and readers only against what you call THE LEAST EXCEPTIONABLE PASSAGES*, since to do this, was to defeat the very design of your own sermon; and to act the part of that unfaithful physician who employed all his skill to cure his patient of a fore finger, whilst he knew that a dangerous disease was preying upon his vital parts.

N. B. I had not an opportunity of seeing your sermon till the last week, otherwise you might have had a more speedy reply.

* Pref. p. 8. P. 16. note.

F I N I S.

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