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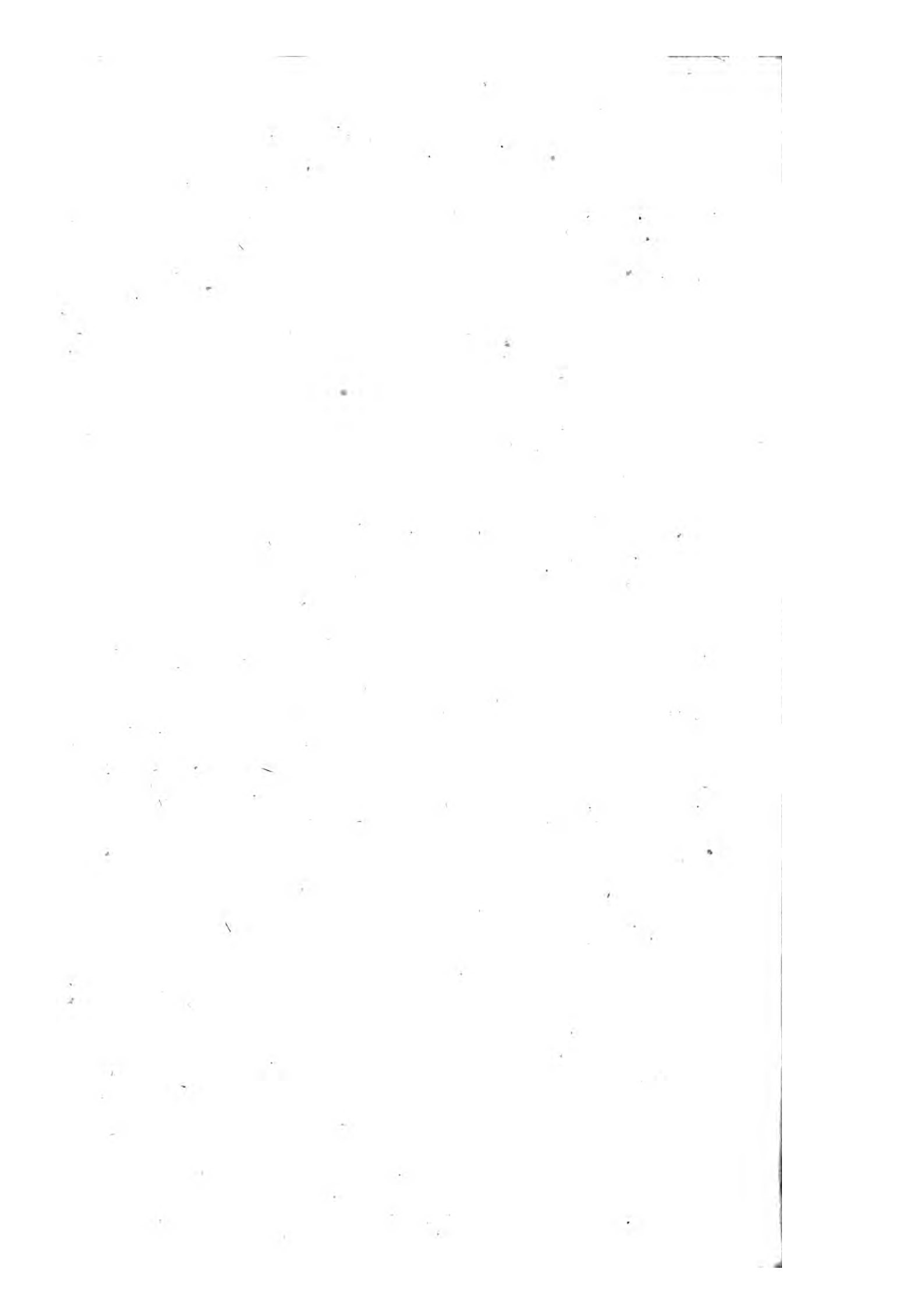
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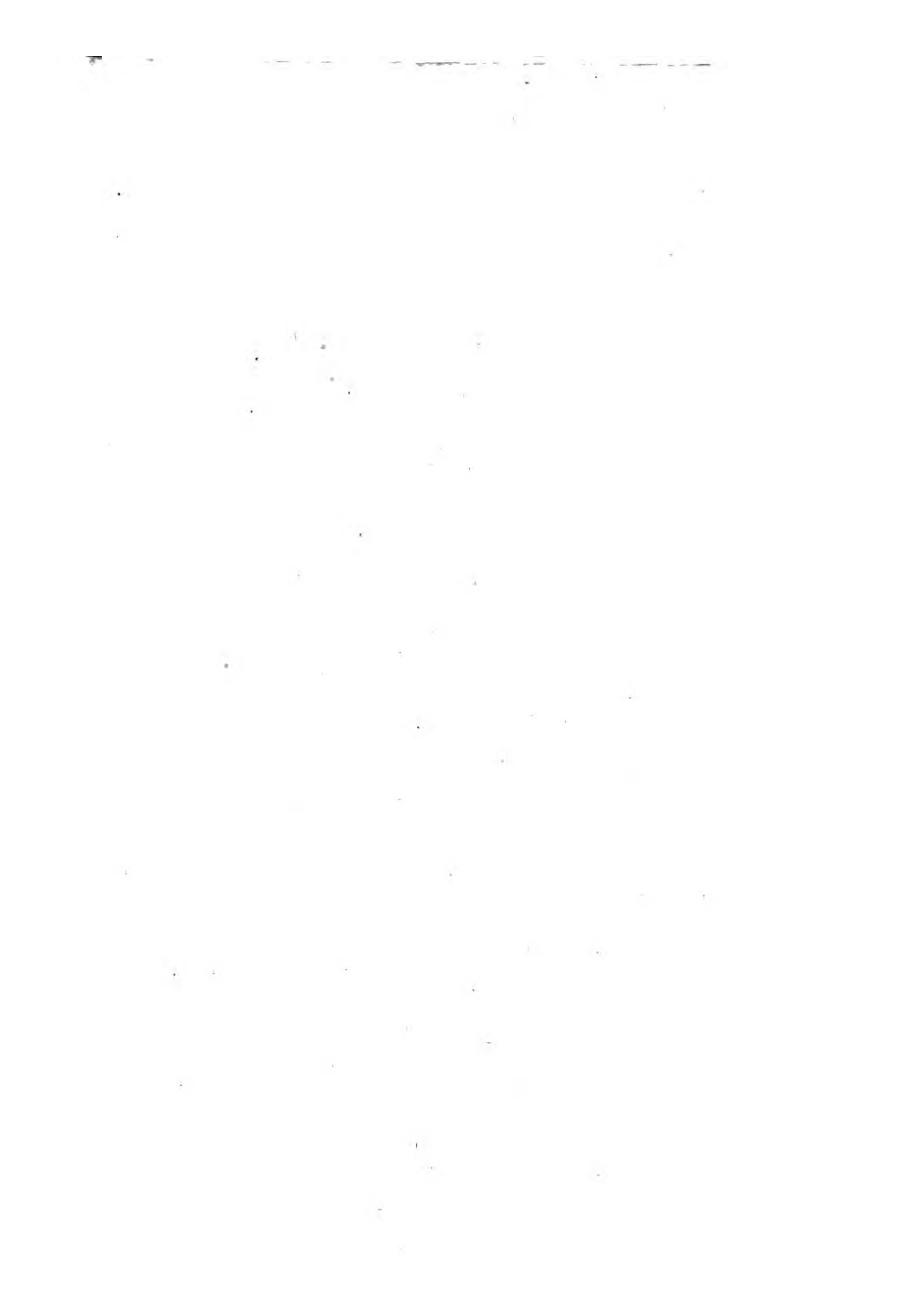


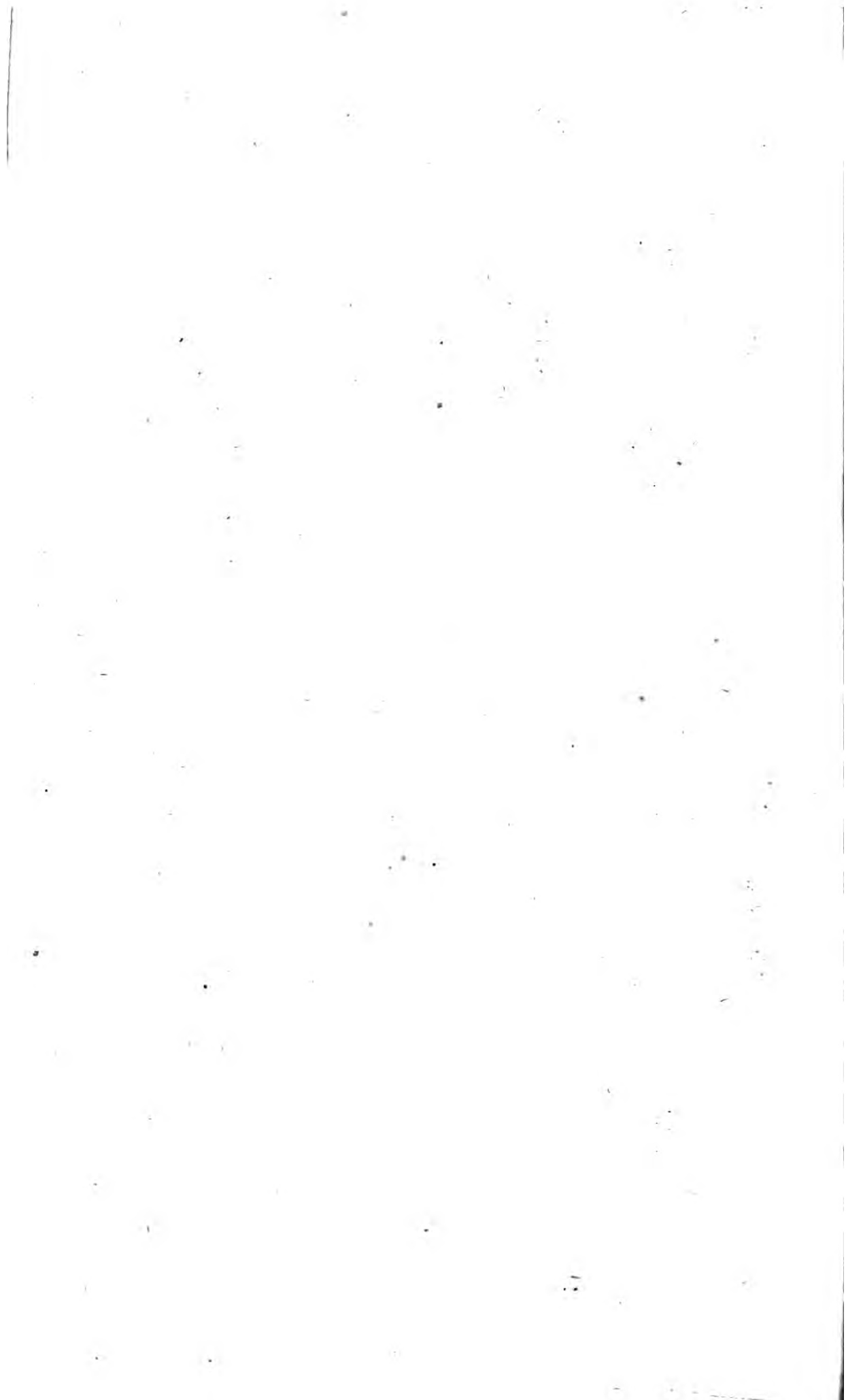
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T H E
THEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY;

CONSISTING OF
ORIGINAL ESSAYS, HINTS,
QUERIES, &c.

CALCULATED TO PROMOTE
RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE.

V O L. III.

Παύλα δονημαζέτε.

PAUL.

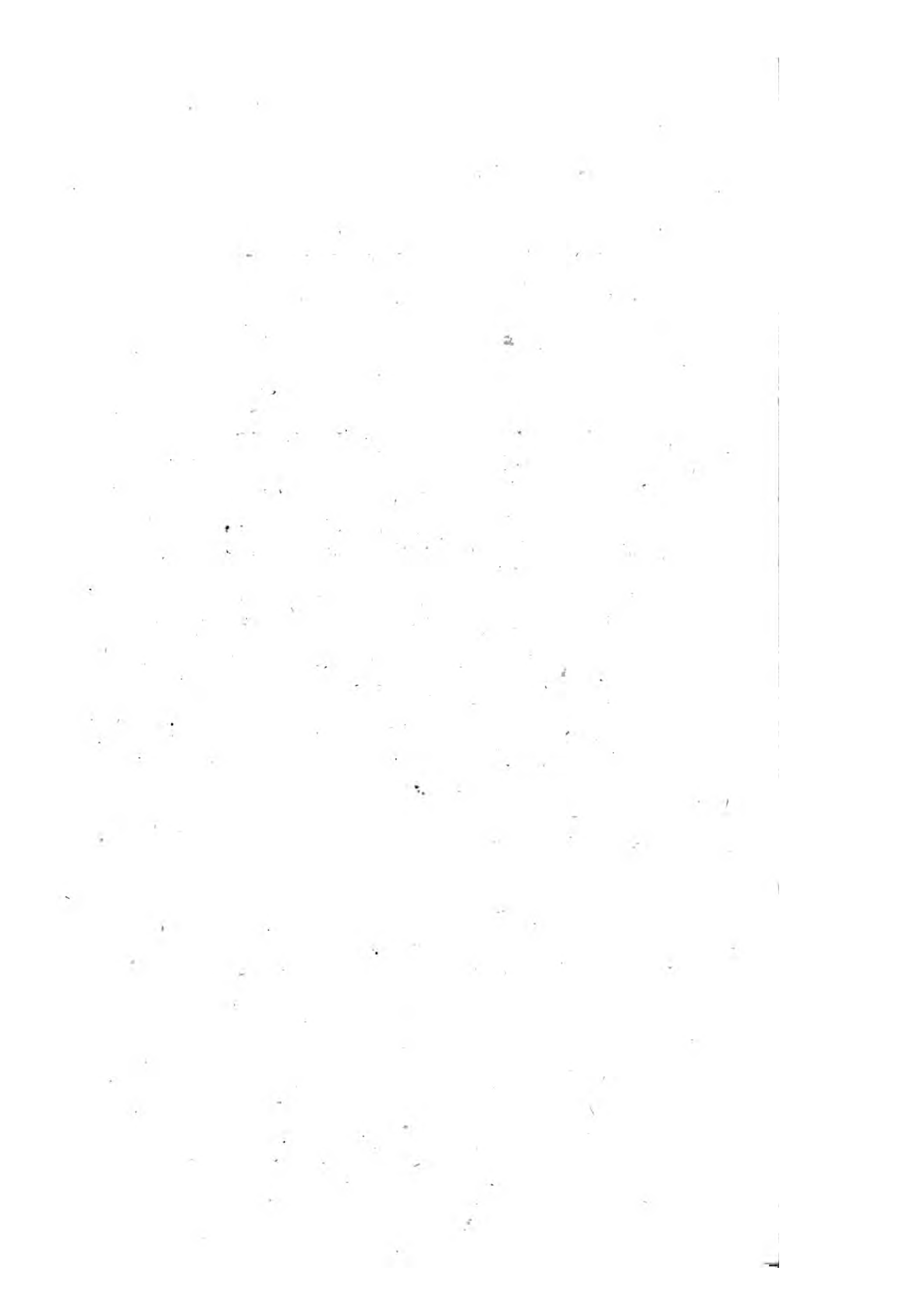
— *Si quid novisti festius istis,*
Candidus imperti. —

HORACE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. JOHNSON, N^o 72, St. Paul's
Church-Yard. M. DDC. LXXI.





T H E
Theological Repository.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

If the inclosed essay suit your purpose, it is much at your service. It is hoped, that those of your readers who are of a philosophical turn of mind will not think it too *abstruse*, or that there is too much *refinement* in it. If it stand clear of these objections, it will be found to contain a presumptive argument in favour of the scheme of revelation, which I have not seen illustrated by any writer, whose works have fallen into my hands. It is acknowledged not to be sufficient to produce conviction in the minds of unbelievers; but it is hoped, that it may give some additional satisfaction to those who are already the lovers and friends of revealed religion. I am, Gentlemen,

Yours, &c.

CLEMENS.

An essay on the analogy there is between the methods by which the perfection and happiness of men are promoted, according to the dispensations of natural and revealed religion.

THE perfection of intelligent beings consists in *comprehension of mind*, or that principle whereby ideas of the past and the future mix with those of the present, and excite one common sensation; in which the good and evil so perfectly coalesce, and are so intimately united, that the *medium* only is perceived. Consequently, if happiness be apprehended to prevail, in that portion of time of which we have this perfect comprehension, and every part of which may be said to be *present* to us, we are conscious of pleasure only in the contemplation of it, the pain being lost, and absorbed, together with so much pleasure as was equivalent to it. By this means happiness comes to be of a more stable nature; and it is less in the power of single accidents to produce a sense of misery.

If we have any reason to think that our existence will, upon the whole, be comfortable and happy; since (man being immortal) our happiness must be infinite upon the whole, though it be limited and finite at any particular time, the thought is so great and so glorious, that the full apprehension of it must contribute still more to overpower the sense of any present evils, and give such an intenseness to all pleasurable feelings, as cannot fail to make our present state unspeakably more eligible than it could otherwise have been.

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Such is the constitution of human nature, and such are the influences to which we are exposed in this world, that this comprehension of mind must necessarily be enlarged with the experience of every day. Infants are sensible of nothing but what passes in the present moment. The instant that the impression of actual pain is removed, they are perfectly easy in mind, not being disturbed either with the remembrance of the past, or the apprehension of the future. By degrees, ideas, which have frequently been present to the perceptive power at the same time, begin to be associated; so that one of them cannot occur without introducing the other, and so making the perception complex. By this means *expectation* begins to awake in the infant mind; but still, from the moment that, by the intervention of an associated circumstance, the idea of any pleasure is conceived, the child is impatient till it be enjoyed. Indeed it is generally several months before children show the least sign of patience in waiting for any thing. The most evident signs of preparing to give them food serve only to quicken their appetite, and their impatience to get it satisfied; nor are they easy, till the meat be actually in their mouths.

In this state, therefore, or at our entrance upon life, we are influenced almost wholly by sensation, or the actual impression of external objects upon our senses. But when traces of these impressions, i. e. *ideas* are left in the sensorium, which may be excited by other ideas associated with them, so that notices of things may be had without the presence of real objects,

we are capable of being influenced by them, as well as by the objects themselves. And since the stock of our ideas increases without limits, and is accumulating through the whole course of our lives, we must be continually more and more actuated by them; and there will be less occasion for the presence of external objects, either to rouse us to action, or to give us the sense of pleasure or pain; that is, we grow more intellectual, and less sensual every day.

When our stock of ideas is become considerable, and, consequently, their mutual associations are pretty extensive and intimate; if the circumstances that have always been found to precede any gratification be perceived, the gratification itself is immediately anticipated; we look upon it as certain, and have a real enjoyment of it, though it be not present. In this case, when the gratification actually comes, it makes but little alteration in what we feel, and is but a small addition to our previous happiness; which now depends chiefly upon ideas, which are continually encreasing, and to which external sensations bear, every day, a less and less proportion.

The probable expectation of happiness hath a similar effect; and hence the great power of mere *hope* to lessen the evils of life, and make us bear up under great difficulties and trials. If any pleasure hath been absolutely depended upon, for a long space of time, the happiness we have experienced in the frequent contemplation of it, may far exceed that of the enjoyment, which is single and momentary, and, moreover, accompanied with the disagreeable
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idea of its being so. For the same reason, the fear of evil may, in time, be far more distressing and grievous than the evil itself. The man who loses a limb by a sudden accident is to be envied, in comparison of him who hath been sentenced to that loss, as a punishment, some months before the operation. In like manner, if two persons be confined in prison, and one of them be released without any previous expectation of so agreeable an event, while the other knew that he was to be confined only for the same limited time; the former will feel more tumultuous joy upon the occasion, but the latter will have had the idea of it present to his mind, during the whole time of his confinement, sweetning all the bitterness of it, and will never have known the distress of uncertainty, or the agony of despair.

When ideas only are concerned, and not both ideas and sensations, the influence of hope and fear is much more distinctly perceived, and the nature of this comprehension of mind will be better understood by it. Instead, then, of putting a case in which we ourselves are concerned, let us put the case of a wife, a child, or any other near relation, or friend, with whom we can truly sympathize, taking part in all their joys and sorrows. If we see them in prison, and, after apprehending that their confinement would be for life, have private information that they will be released, and placed in very agreeable circumstances in a few days, weeks, or months; we can see them in the mean time, even though we are not allowed to communicate our intelligence to them, with joy almost

almost unmixed ; because the future is realised, and the agreeableness of it heightened in our ideas by its contrast with the present ; which, being temporary, is overlooked by us, as nothing, and has not power to damp our satisfaction.

If my child be peevish and obstinate, and I be sensible that pain and mortification will do him good, I can, without the help of much anger, have a kind of satisfaction in inflicting it, and have little or no sympathy with what he suffers ; though, for a time, he be in an agony of distress, and think very unkindly of me. On the other hand, If I foresaw that he would lose a limb in a few days, weeks, or months, I should look upon him in the mean time with a most painful compassion, notwithstanding he himself should be ever so happy, and enjoy himself ever so much ; nay, the want of apprehension and feeling in him, would sharpen their painful effects in me.

The effect is nearly the same if, with respect to ourselves, impressions from the external senses be left out of the question, and a case be put that is purely intellectual. Suppose, for instance, my character be unjustly traduced, and, for a time, I be reckoned a most infamous scoundrel ; yet, if I be certain, that in a few days my innocence will be effectually cleared, so that no person whatever will entertain the least doubt of it, shall I, in the mean time, be affected and mortified, with the sense of my disgrace ? No, I shall hardly feel it at all ; but shall rather secretly exult in the future triumph
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of my innocence, and shall show an unabashed and chearful countenance, till the present load of infamy be removed. It must be owned, however, that the sense of infamy, in this case, will be felt more or less, according to the degree of comprehension of mind to which we are arrived, and also that we shall be able to bear unjust scandal for a longer or shorter space of time in the same proportion. The same observation may also be made with respect to all the cases mentioned above. Thus it is that, by this power of comprehension, we are able to balance one idea or sensation with another, whether they be of the same, or of different kinds. With this resource, a good man, conscious of his own integrity, grows every day less sensible to the censures of men, consoling himself with the approbation of his own mind, and the persuasion that he enjoys the favour of his maker; till, after sufficient experience, this just sense of things will make him almost wholly indifferent, on his own account, to every thing that the world can think or say of him.

A certain degree of this comprehension of mind, employed about proper objects, is sufficient to make a man virtuous through the whole course of his life. To arrive at this, nothing is wanting, but a distinct and ready apprehension of all the ill consequences of vice, and of all the good effects of virtue. For, as soon as, by this extended power of association, we perceive vice, with all that accompanies and follows it, as *one undivided thing*, and the virtues, with all their train, as one undivided thing likewise,

wise, the superiority of the latter, upon the whole, is so great, that no man could hesitate a moment which to prefer. It is only by partial views of things that we are imposed upon, are bewildered, and confounded in our choice. When, in consequence of acting for some time with this clear and steady view of things, virtuous conduct is become habitual, the pains and difficulties of a virtuous course absolutely vanish, and are absorbed in the sense of the infinitely greater good we hereby insure to ourselves. In this case, even the pleasures of vice would be shunned with abhorrence, because we could never separate from them the idea of the infinitely greater pains, with which they are closely connected.

In matters which we are much accustomed to, this comprehension of mind, and coalescence of ideas, is remarkably ready and complete. A person who has been much conversant in business and accounts, and who every day meets with gains or losses, is affected just as the balance of the profits would have affected him, if he had never heard of the particulars. A person who is less conversant in these things would feel his mind, as it were, vibrate between both, and would longer perceive their separate effects.

The power of habit, in promoting a perfect coalescence of associated ideas, is most remarkable in cases where the external senses are concerned. The moon, when near the horizon, seems to be considerably larger than it does when it is near the meridian; but this can be owing to nothing but the effect of habit, in consequence
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of having frequently compared its apparent magnitude with those of the intermediate objects: for its picture upon the retina is well known to be of the same dimensions, and therefore a child, or a person wholly without experience, could not imagine any difference in them. Nay it is evident, from the laws of optics, that originally all objects appear to be in the same plane, and that it is from experience, or habit, that we first get the idea of distance, or of any dimension besides length and breadth.

Again, it is probable, that all objects appear double to every person, till by experience we find the mistake, and then learn to conceive of impressions, made upon two corresponding points of the retina, as referring but to one object. However, so absolutely fixed is our *judgment* (for such only it evidently is originally) that the moon is larger near the horizon, and that the appearance of two objects is, in reality, no more than that of one, that we are now even puzzled to account for the fact. Perhaps like observations might be made concerning our other senses.

All these cases are remarkable instances of the power of association, and demonstrate a possibility, not only that an *idea*, but even a *sensation* may cease to appear to be what it originally was; yea, that it may be so intimately connected with, and absolutely lost in associated ideas only, as to be no longer capable of being resolved back again into its former state.

Another thing worthy of our notice in these facts is, that this amazing effect is accomplished in a limited time, even pretty early in life: for

no person can remember the time when objects appeared to him otherwise than they do now.

Do not these plain, but striking facts, teach us to conceive, how possible it is, that any ideas whatever may so entirely coalesce by association, that the component parts of the whole image shall absolutely disappear, and never more be seen in the same light in which they were originally viewed. Thus all ideas of pain may, at length, perfectly unite with those of the pleasures which they have accompanied, or to which they have been subservient; and when once the general association, founded on the connection of good and evil, pleasure and pain, observed through all nature, is firmly established (like the fixing of the corresponding points in the retina) not even the most sudden appearance of evil will be able to affect the mind with the idea of any thing but what is right and desirable upon the whole, any more than two images, one in each eye, though ever so unexpectedly impressed, are not able, even for a moment, or by surprize, to give us the idea of two objects; though this was always the case in our infancy, and would be so still without association of ideas. If ever our minds should arrive at the perfect state here hinted at, all the works of God, and all the events of divine providence will constantly appear to us as they do to the divine being himself, *i. e.* perfectly and infinitely good, without the least perceivable mixture of evil.

In what time it is even possible to effect all this, cannot, with the least certainty, be so much as conjectured: for though we cannot remember
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ber objects appearing to us in any other manner than they now do; yet as these associations of visible ideas must have been impressed every time we opened our eyes, from the time that we began to take any notice of things; we must conclude, that this operation cannot but require a very long and steady application of mind. Temporary pains and evils of all kinds, must be very clearly and satisfactorily seen to be, in all cases, productive of happiness in the issue, under the government of an infinitely good God; and the conviction must be repeated and *felt* again and again, before the ideas will entirely, universally, and readily coalesce; so that, by reason of the necessary avocation of mind, and the unsteady and imperfect views of things we can gain in this state, little can be done towards it here, and it must be referred to the attainments of a better world.

The above mentioned facts, however, shew, in the strongest light, what is the natural progress and effect of association of ideas in the human mind. We see the course that things are evidently in, and it doth not appear, that any bounds can be set to it. We must, therefore, in favourable circumstances (such as we shall, no doubt, find ourselves in in a future world) approximate to this perfection of comprehension with the experience of every day; and in this way, time only is requisite, to make a mere man arrive at a pitch of excellence and happiness, of which we are able, at present, to form but very imperfect conceptions. With these lights, though, as yet, we are able to apply them but
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very imperfectly, how may we stand amazed in the contemplation of our future selves !

By the help of these considerations, we may form some idea wherein consists the superiority of beings of higher orders, whose intellectual powers exceed ours. The association of their ideas may be more extensive, and associated ideas may unite and coalesce more readily, and perfectly in their minds, than they do in ours ; the consequence of which will be, that ideas collected from a greater space, both before and after the present moment, will be coexistent in their minds ; which will make the influence of ideas still greater, and that of sensation (or what may be in them analogous to sensation in us) still less than it is with us ; so that their natures will be more purely intellectual than ours.

Hence, also, if we may presume to indulge a conjecture on such a subject, may we form a faint idea of the incomprehensible greatness and perfection of the Divine Being. For since there is a real connection of all things, in the whole system of nature, how distant soever the parts of it may be, in point of time or place ; this connection may at once be so completely seen by him who planned, and who directs the whole, that it may be said, there is nothing past or future in his ideas ; but that to him, the whole compass of duration is, to every real purpose, without distinction, present. To him, therefore, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day ; the two extremes, being so perfectly united, and so equally present,

sent, that the intervals, how different soever, vanish alike in both cases.

We see, then, the course which the Divine Being has pointed out for the improvement of intelligent beings, whereby we may make approaches to the excellence and happiness of the divine nature. We are to be influenced less by sensation, and more by associated ideas perpetually. The association of all connected ideas is to grow more perfect, and more extensive continually, till things past, present, and to come shall, to greater and greater distances, become the subject of our contemplation, and the source of our happiness. Provision is made for the continuance of this progress, in the structure of our minds, and in all the influences to which we are exposed. All the objects about which we are conversant, and all the events to which we are liable, are contrived to favour it.

Let us now consider whether any thing similar to this may be observed in the scheme of revelation; and since both the ordinary and extraordinary course of divine providence have the same object with respect to us, both being designed and calculated to raise, improve, and bless the human race; let us consider whether they be conducted in a manner analogous to one another; so that we may trace the same hand in both, and hence derive a presumptive argument in favour of revelation.

To me, I own, there seems to be, in this respect, a very great analogy between both these dispensations of God to mankind, and the argu-
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ment that may thence be deduced in favour of revelation strikes me very much. For in those extraordinary dispensations of God to mankind, of which we are informed in the books of scripture, we see a most glorious apparatus for accomplishing this great end, for enlarging the comprehension of the human mind, and raising us to the highest pitch of perfection and excellence.

To have the mind impressed with the idea of its being in a state of moral government, and that our actions have great and distant consequences, is of admirable use in this respect; and this, we find, was the situation of Adam presently after he came from the hands of his maker. He was permitted the free use of all the trees in the garden of Eden except one, which he was forbidden to meddle with under severe penalties. In these circumstances he was under a necessity of looking before him, and attending to the distant consequences of what he was doing. He saw (as is generally understood) an immortal existence before him in case of obedience, and of prudence and regularity in the gratification of his appetites; and death (of the meaning of which he was, no doubt, informed) in case of disobedience and irregular indulgence.

If we consider the importance of having enlarged views, and of the attention being engaged upon objects, beyond the present moment, we must see how vastly superior this situation was, with respect to the improvement of his faculties, to a state in which he should have been left to
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the random indulgence of his appetites, without any intimation of the consequence, except what he could learn by slow experience. The more we think upon this subject, the greater will this advantage appear to be. Mankind might, for ages, have been little more than brutes, without some provision and assistance of this kind.

If the object of this trial, viz. the abstaining from the fruit of a tree, appear trifling, we should consider the infantile state of the first man, and the only dangerous excesses that, in his situation, he could be guilty of; and we may see the greatest propriety in this very circumstance. Would it not have been much more absurd to have forbidden him to steal, to commit adultery, or, indeed, to have enjoined him the observance of any of the ten commandments of the moral law. What is more natural or common with ourselves, than to forbid children to eat of certain kinds of food, or to meddle with things that are most in their way, by which they are liable to do harm to themselves or others. They are not capable of offending in any other respects, or of understanding any higher precepts. We are not made acquainted with all the restrictions under which our first parents were laid; but it cannot be doubted, but that they must have been of a salutary nature, whether they themselves might be aware of it or not. We do not always give our children the reason of the restrictions we lay them under, because they are not always capable of understanding them. The prohibition

to eat of a particular fruit is the only one that is mentioned by Moses, because that was the case in which Adam transgressed; but, for any thing we know, he might have been as expressly forbidden to jump from a precipice, or to plunge into a pit of water; and the forbidden fruit might have been as naturally hurtful to him as either of them.

It is by no means improbable, but that something of *fable* may have mixed with so antient a history as that of the *Fall*; and the present condition of man was, no doubt, both *foreseen* and *intended* by our all-wise creator, as the best for us upon the whole; but I think we cannot reasonably object to the leading circumstances in Moses's account of the manner in which we came into it. And as it represents man as entering upon existence under a sense of *moral government*, it is far more agreeable to the ideas we conceive of the wisdom and goodness of God, more favourable to the human race, and more consonant to the natural provision he has made for enlarging the comprehension of the human mind, and thereby perfecting our natures, and advancing our happiness; and therefore far superior to the condition in which Lucretius, and the rest of the Epicureans, represent the introduction of man into the world, *i. e.* with no greater advantage for looking before him, enlarging his views, and increasing his happiness, than the lowest of the animal creation.

In the sentence passed upon man after the fall, we see an opportunity is taken of carrying the
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the views of the human mind to objects still more remote ; and encouraging, though obscure views are opened to him, in the promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.

In the patriarchal ages, the intercourse between the Divine Being and the human race is continued ; but without his assuming a higher character than men in those times were capable of having intercourse with. Consequently, their apprehensions of moral government would be growing more clear and determinate, and their ideas of duty and obligation (together with their expectation of consequences corresponding to their actions) more definite and certain ; so as to induce them to be less influenced by prospects of immediate pleasure or gain than before.

The fate of men's children and posterity is always an interesting object to them, and must have been peculiarly so in the early ages of the world, when the whole earth was before them, and every man had the chance of being the founder of great and mighty nations. These, therefore, were the views with which the Divine Being thought proper, at that time, to engage the attention of the patriarchs, and enforce the obligation of virtue. Abraham had the promise of becoming the *father of many nations*, and that *in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed*. With these prospects, we find his mind so much enlarged, and his faith in futurity so strong, that he leaves his native land ; content and happy in being a sojourner in the country which his posterity were to possess.

In the whole course of the Jewish history, repeated miracles and prophecies would constantly tend to keep up the views of that people to great and remote objects. And this, together with the *distinct ideas* they had of the origin of the world, and the early history of it, their knowledge of the rise of their own nation, and of the frequent interpositions of the Divine Being in their favour, would give a dignity to their conceptions, and a grandeur to their prospects, to which the heathen nations must have been strangers. There was a majesty and dignity in the Jewish ritual, in their temple and the service of it, which far exceeded any thing in the heathen world; and being accompanied with just and sublime ideas of the one true God, it must have given a sublimity to their sentiments, and a warmth and fervour to their religious impressions, to which other nations could not have attained. Accordingly, in all the compositions of the heathen poets, in honour of their gods, there are no traces of any thing like that spirit of manly devotion, which animates the Psalms of David.

In the frequent relapses of the Jews into idolatry, the prophets are continually sent of God to remind them of the allegiance they owed to their maker, to hold out to them the expectation of his favour or resentment, and thereby preserve upon their minds the influence of great and remote objects.

When they were effectually cured of their proneness to idolatry, by the Babylonish captivity, and therefore such frequent interpositions of the
Divine

Divine Being were less necessary, their minds were prepared for that long interruption of miracles which ensued, by the remarkably distinct prophecies of Isaiah, Daniel, and Malachi, concerning future and glorious times under the Messiah. The very year of his appearance was fixed by Daniel, and though it was not done in such a manner as to enable them to make it out with perfect exactness, yet it was sufficient to keep up their attention to it; and, in fact, they were not so far out in their calculations, but that, at the time of our Saviour, and not long before, we find a general and most ardent expectation raised in the whole body of the Jewish nation of some approaching deliverer.

In this interval, therefore, between the captivity and the birth of Christ, far greater views and prospects were present to the mind of a Jew, than people of other nations could have any idea of. So great was the actual influence of these ideas, that, in the time of the Maccabees, they shewed a heroism and magnanimity in the defence of their religion, and in suffering for it, which must have astonished their heathen persecutors. And our Saviour found among them such notions of a future state, and of a resurrection as (however they came by them, and how imperfect and obscure soever they were) could not fail to make numbers of them to think and act in a manner far superior to the most admired of the Greek and Roman philosophers.

If the attention of the Jews was kept awake to great and distant objects, how much more is this the case with christians, to whom life and

immortality are brought to light by the gospel. Christianity is the last dispensation of God to mankind, and it doth not seem possible, that more ample provision should be made to enlarge the views and comprehension of the human mind, in order to fix its attention upon great and remote objects, and raise it above the influence of present and temporary things.

A true christian, like his great master, is *not of this world*, but a citizen of heaven. He considers himself as a *stranger and pilgrim here below, and lives by faith and not by sight*. Let him be ever so poor and despised here, he looks upon himself as an heir of immortal glory and felicity, of an *inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him*. He may see his body decaying with old age, wasting with a disorder, or mangled with torture, and every way at the mercy of his enraged persecutors; but he rejoices in the firm belief and expectation of its rising again *incorruptible at the last day; and that when Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, shall appear, he also shall appear with him in glory*.

What an elevation of thought and sentiment is here! How must this faith make us *overcome the world*, and render us superior to its allurements or its threats. With this enlarged comprehension of mind, which brings the future consequences of his actions into immediate prospect, it is impossible that a sincere christian should live addicted to vicious gratifications and pursuits, which he must see to be destructive of these his animating hopes; and he must necessarily

rily grow more in love with that temper and conduct which is, with the greatest propriety, called *christian*, and which ensures to him these glorious expectations. *As he who has called him to these great privileges is holy, so will he also be holy in all manner of conversation.* It will be his daily endeavour to *cultivate that holiness of heart and life, without which, he is sensible, no man can see the Lord.* With this hope set before him, all the afflictions of this present life will seem light, trifling, and not worthy to be named with, but will be absolutely lost in, the consideration of that *eternal weight of glory* which awaits his patient continuance in well doing.

This superiority to present and temporary things, which is attained by truly christian principles, is of the most rational nature, being of the same kind with that which is acquired by experience, and which necessarily results from the structure of our minds, and the circumstances in which divine providence has placed us in this world: for it is only perfecting the association of those ideas which have a real connection, and uniting in our minds the several parts of one whole, and things which nothing but time separates. If it be compared with that kind of superiority which might be acquired by other principles, those of the *Stoics*, for instance, its advantage will appear to be exceeding great.

The Stoic affects to despise pain, because, according to his arbitrary definition of things, it cannot be called an *evil*, and does not depend upon himself. Having imagined, though without any ground, that every man's happiness must,

must, in any case, arise from himself (in exclusion even of the Divine Being) he thinks it absurd to complain of any thing which he could not help. Complaint implies a sense of unhappiness; and this, according to his hypothesis, can never take place without his own consent. If his wife or child be in the most dreadful agonies, he looks, or affects to look on their condition with the greatest tranquility, and the most unfeeling indifference; satisfied that sickness and pain are not in his catalogue of *things within his power*, and that the sufferers themselves are not unhappy, since misfortunes are unavoidable, and he knew that his wife or child were not naturally exempt from them. When he dies, he expects that his soul, being a particle detached from the Universal Mind, will be absorbed in it again, and that his separate consciousness will be lost for ever.

These are the great outlines of the famous philosophical system of Zeno, which is said to have made so many great men; but it has certainly no foundation in nature. The principles of it can never have been really felt, and all the boasted effects of it must have arisen from conceit and obstinacy.

How differently, and how much more naturally does the christian think and act in the cases above-mentioned! He does not pretend to deny the evidence of his senses, nor has recourse to whimsical distinctions; and not having maintained that *pain is no evil*, he finds himself under no necessity of behaving as if he was unaffected by it. He owns that present sufferings are *not*
joyous,

joyous, but grievous; but he still thinks them nothing in comparison with *the glory that shall be revealed*, and therefore he *endures patiently* for righteousness sake, in a firm belief of being more than recompensed for them *at the resurrection of the just*. If his friends be in distress, he has no principles that lead him to check, but, on the other hand, such as encourage him freely to indulge his natural sympathy with them; and these feelings will certainly prompt him to exert himself to the utmost in their favour. At the same time he will not fail to exhort his friends to the duties of christian patience and fortitude; inculcating the great christian doctrine of the transitoriness of this world, and its subserviency to another. When he dies, he indulges no extravagant, but really uncomfortable conceit, about being absorbed in the Divine Mind; but believes that he shall, in his own person, rise again from the dead, when he shall resume, and retain his own separate consciousness, live again under the government of that God whose goodness he has experienced, and whose friendship he has secured, know all his virtuous friends once more, and rejoice with them through all eternity.

If we consider the *principles of morals* in the heathen world, we shall see the manifest advantage there is over it in the plan of revelation. The views of the Heathens upon this subject were exceedingly confined; and did not require that comprehension of mind, which is necessary to the practice of those duties that were enjoined both in the Jewish and christian systems. The
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great duties of piety, consisting in the fear and love of God, and a chearful reliance on his providence, were, in a manner, unknown in ancient times beyond the boundaries of Judea. And what can more evidently tend to enlarge the comprehension and faculties of the human mind, than the regards which are due to the maker and governor of the world ?

While the attention of the Heathens was wholly engrossed by sensible things, those who were favoured with divine revelation, even in its most imperfect state, were engaged in the contemplation of their invisible author. They considered the enjoyments of life as the effects of his bounty, and all the events of it as taking place according to the wise appointment of his providence. Thus was the power of association enabled to present to their minds the ideas of great and remote objects, by which their sentiments were influenced, and their conduct directed. By this means, limited as were the views of the ancient patriarchs, their conceptions were far more enlarged, and consequently their minds more intellectual than those of the Gentile world.

It is true, that all the Heathens were prone to superstition, and that a great number of their actions were influenced by regards to invisible agents ; but (not to say, what is very probable, that their religion was, in this respect, a corruption of the patriarchal) all the gods they had any idea of, at least all with whom they maintained any intercourse, were *local* and *territorial* divinities, liable to the influence of low and vulgar

gar passions, and limited in their powers and operations. It was not possible, therefore, that their theology should suggest such sublime ideas, as must have been conceived by the Jews, from the perusal of the books of Moses; in which we find the idea of one God, the Creator and Lord of Heaven and Earth, who established, and who controuls the laws of nature, and who superintends the affairs of the whole world, giving the kingdoms of it to whomsoever he pleases; a being of unspotted purity, and a friend and protector of all good men. So far were the notions which the Gentiles entertained of their gods below the conceptions of the Jews, concerning their Jehovah, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, *who brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, destroying their enemies in the Red Sea, and feeding them with bread from heaven for the space of forty years; that they could hardly have had any ideas to some of the finest expressions which occur in the sacred books of the Jews; as, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and many others, which express sentiments of the most pure and exalted devotion.*

If any people have exalted and sublime ideas, they are sure to be found in their poetry; but how poor and low is the sacred poetry of the Heathens in comparison with the psalms of David! The poems of Homer, of Hesiod, or of Callimachus, in honour of the Grecian gods, can hardly be read without laughter; but the book of Psalms (the greatest part of which were written long before the works of any of those

those Grecian poets, and by persons who had travelled and seen far less than they had done) cannot be read without the greatest seriousness, and are still capable of exciting sentiments of the warmest and most exalted, and yet the most perfectly rational devotion. They give us the most sublime ideas of the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of God. This difference between the poetry of the Jews and the Greeks, in favour of the former, is so great, that I think it cannot be accounted for without the supposition of divine communications. In point of genius, the Greeks seem to have been evidently superior, and they were certainly possessed of the art of composition in much greater perfection. Whence, then, could arise so manifest an inferiority in this respect? It must have been because the Jewish theology gave that nation ideas of a being infinitely superior to themselves, the contemplation of which, with that of his works, and of his providence, would tend to improve and exalt their faculties; whereas the heathen theology gave them no ideas of beings much superior to the race of man. In general the gods of the Greeks and Romans were supposed to have been mere men, beings of the same rank and condition with themselves; and though their powers were supposed to be enlarged upon their deification, their passions and morals were not at all improved, but continued just the same as before; so that their greater powers were employed about the gratification of the lowest appetites. This theology, therefore, could not infuse that noble enthusiasm,

thusiasm, which was inspired by the Jewish religion, but must rather have tended to debase their faculties.

That extensive and perfect *benevolence*, which is so strongly inculcated in the New Testament, implies more enlarged sentiments, and greater perfection of the intellectual faculties, than that more limited benevolence, which is treated of by the heathen moralists, which was hardly ever thought to extend farther than to a love of one's own countrymen, and which admitted slaves to none of the privileges of men, but considered them as no other than the property of their masters. But, in the eye of a Christian, Jew and Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, are all equal. The boasted attachments of private friendship are not more endearing than that mutual love which Christ recommends to his disciples. But, whereas, private friendship was, with the Greeks and Romans, the perfection, and almost the end of all virtue, the *brotherly love* of christians is only considered as a branch of a more extensive benevolence, and leads to the love of all the human race.

It is evident, that the duties of contentment, trust in divine providence, meekness, patience, forbearance, and forgiveness of injuries, are more insisted on by Christ and his apostles, than by any of the heathen philosophers; and these virtues certainly require a greater comprehension of mind than any other social duties. Children are quick in their resentments, their anger is presently excited, and they are unable to conceal what little malice or revenge they
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are capable of; but, in proportion as men advance in age, in experience, and, consequently, in intellect, they are able to overlook affronts, and to suspend, or wholly to stifle their resentments; because they are able to take in more distant consequences of passions and actions; and the sentiments which are suggested by these extensive views, moderate and overpower those which are prompted by their present sensations.

Christianity, therefore, by extending these duties, supposes, and thereby favours and promotes a still greater advance in intellectual perfection. To act like a christian, a man must be possessed of true greatness of mind, a self-command, fortitude, or magnanimity, which is infinitely more superior to the disguised revenge of which some are capable, and which they can brood over for years, than this is superior to the quick resentments of children. It requires a more than proportionably and just knowledge of things, more experience, and more foresight.

Thus does the christian scheme appear to be perfectly consonant to nature. It supposes a series of dispensations, in which the human mind is operated upon, and its improvement promoted in a manner analogous to that in which it is actually operated upon, and its improvement promoted every day. As the one, therefore, is conducted according to the ordinary providence of the Divine Being, the other is what might be expected from his extraordinary dispensations. Both these schemes have the same great object in view, and in both of them
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the same end is gained by the same methods. For, in fact, the only instrument employed is that great and extensive principle of *association of ideas*, which is so conspicuous in the human mind, and which, according to the admirable theory of Dr. Hartley, furnishes the *stamina* for all its other properties, and is the source of all our faculties.

It is by this principle of *association*, that our views are enlarged to take in distant objects, but objects that have a real connection with those that are present. And it is an habitual attention to these associated circumstances of our actions, that gives them an influence as if they were present. As virtue, with all its consequences in this life, is eligible upon the whole, we are led, by this principle of association, to chuse and practice it, without any other guide than nature and common providence; but as virtue, with all those more extensive consequences, which revelation informs us of, is infinitely more eligible; we are led, by the same principle of association, to love it with more ardour, and to practice it with more constancy; because, by the help of those lights, which are furnished by the extraordinary providence of Almighty God, in the revelation of his will to mankind, we see it to be a thing in which we are more deeply interested, than we could otherwise have known ourselves to be.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

I can no way so properly signify my entire approbation of your plan, as by contributing my best endeavours to its support and utility. My present mite is the first fruit, which I cheerfully put into your hands, to be received or rejected according to your better judgment.

An Essay on the history and character of Judas.

AMONG the multitude of criticisms and commentaries on the sacred writings, it is a little extraordinary, that the history and character of Judas should have escaped all particular notice, whether of the friend or the enemy of revelation. Less important parts have excited the favourable attention of the former, and less exceptionable parts the reprehension of the latter, yet I do not know ever to have met with any thing interesting on the subject.* There would not, indeed, be any thing extraordinary in this silence of the criticks, if the history of Judas contained nothing interesting to the cause of christianity; but, it has long appeared to me, that the general acceptation of this history includes some considerable difficulties, and which every sincere friend to so excellent a cause, would wish to see removed. It is the business of this Essay to point out these difficulties, and the solu-

* This article was written a considerable time before the publication of another, on the same subject, in a preceding number of this work, and which contains some of the same thoughts that occur in this.

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tion they have received in the author's own mind. Let us, first of all, collect into one view the few materials which compose the history of this false disciple.

It is not easy to say, from what motives our Lord made choice of his disciples, but it is probable, that an inclination to their Lord first manifested itself on their part; and as a temporal messiah was the favourite hope of the whole Jewish nation, and for a long time obstinately possessed the minds of the apostles themselves, it will not be wondered that such an one as Judas, stimulated by no other than a worldly motive, should insinuate himself into an office, for which he was certainly unfitted, and most probably had never any real inclination. Chosen he was, however, did attend upon, and assist our Lord in his ministry, and appears to have been admitted to equal familiarity and confidence with the rest of the twelve. He is enumerated among the twelve, whom Jesus chose out of his more numerous disciples, and whom himself distinguished by the name of apostles. He is again expressly named, when Jesus sent them forth to preach the gospel, and endowed them with extraordinary powers, as the credentials of their divine commission. It is some time before our Saviour discovers a suspicion of the fidelity of any of his disciples, not according to the testimony of John, who gives the first intimations of it, until the doctrines and miracles of Jesus had spread his fame throughout all Judea, excited the attention of the people, and stirred up the envy and malice

of the rulers. In one of his public discourses, when through a misapprehension of his meaning, many of his followers, offended at the seeming harshness of his doctrine, turned their back, and followed him no more; Jesus, addressing himself to the twelve, said, *Will ye also leave me?* He receives the vows of their unshaken fidelity, but replies, *Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* This the historian illustrates by observing, that he spake of Judas Iscariot, for it was he that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

In one respect, this disciple was distinguished by a particular office or trust, not, perhaps, ill-suited to the turn of his mind; the little wealth which belonged to this little society being committed to his charge, and the disbursements for their common wants or charitable benefactions issuing through his hands. This, at least, appears to be what is meant by his bearing the bag or purse, and the same apostle, who has acquainted us with this circumstance, testifies that this charge had not been very faithfully executed by him; for the sister of Lazarus, in the overflow of her grateful affection, having, according to the custom of the ancients, anointed the feet of Jesus with some very costly perfumes, Judas rebukes the action from a pretence of compassionate providence for the poor, but, says the Evangelist, *it was, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag.* The historian, therefore, directly charges him with the betraying of his trust, and infers from thence, that he lusted after the purchase of this valuable

breast. The guilty wretch retires from the penetrating eye of his master, and stimulated, perhaps, by this discovery of his traitorous intentions, hastens the execution of them; he quits, for ever, the society, into which he ought never to have entered, receives from the chief priests a band of soldiers, and returns to the well-known retirement of his Lord, delivers him, under the security of night, into the hands of his malicious enemies. While these are carrying on the mock-appearance of a trial, and every thing is hastening to the death of the victim; the conscience of the traitor resumes its suspended empire of his mind, repentance of the accursed part which he had acted turns upon him, he hurries into the presence of the chief priests, avows the innocence of his Lord, proclaims his own baseness; but meeting with no sympathetic compunctions in those more hardened monsters, he casts down, with indignation before them, the fordid hire of his wickedness, and, flying from them, makes a vain effort to fly from himself. In the desperate agony of his mind, he takes the last step of insupportable guilt, by laying violent hands upon his life.

Such is the history of Judas, his unhappy life, and unhappy end, as recorded by his fellow-apostles. Let us now take a critical view of it, and see whether the enemy or the friend of christianity may most avail himself of it.

It is generally presumed, that the treachery of Judas is one of those facts in the life of Christ, which, being foreknown by God, was revealed to the Jewish nation, amongst the other discoveries

discoveries of the promised messiah; and this opinion is founded upon supposed predictions of the traitor, long before the important scene of human redemption was displayed, as well as on the knowledge which Jesus Christ himself discovered of this afflicting circumstance, after he had commenced his ministry, and while this betrayer was numbered amongst his select disciples, and was certainly supposed to be equally faithful and attached to him with any of the twelve. Supposing this opinion, therefore, to be justly founded, it may be asked by the enemies of revelation, if the character of God be herein represented, agreeably to his wisdom and to his goodness? Was it fitting the divine wisdom, to design the admission of so unworthy an associate, in so good a cause? Does the part of Judas appear to be any way necessary to the scheme of human redemption; and, if necessary, did the foreknowledge of God influence the heart, and determine the conduct of this unhappy man? Must the integrity, the life, the happiness here, and perhaps hereafter, of one amongst the reasonable and moral creatures of God, be sacrificed, by his all-controuling power, to the cause in which his son was engaged? These are questions of some importance, and which, if no satisfactory answer can be given thereto, may be thought to reflect, not on the moral character of providence, for this is supposed to be without spot or blemish, but on the pretensions of the christian religion, which deriving itself immediately from God, can yet represent God in a view so opposite to the truth and perfection of

his character. But the whole force of them rests on the supposition, that the part which Judas would act, was predicted before Judas or his master made their appearance on this stage of human life, and, therefore, must have been foreseen in all its circumstances by that Being, from whom the prediction proceeded. This is generally supposed, and I confess myself to have been possessed with the same notion, before I had examined the evidences, which alone can authorize the opinion. But, on consulting the sacred prophecies, I find nothing which carries a sufficient appearance of this supposed prediction.

St. Peter, in his speech to his fellow-apostles, recommending the choice of a successor to Judas, refers to two passages in the book of Psalms, as applicable to the fate of that false disciple; but they have no more application to him, than most of the warm and angry imprecations of David against his enemies have. They are simply as follows, *Let their habitation, viz. that of his enemies, be desolate, and let another take his place*; a description so exceedingly imperfect and indefinite, that no one can suppose St. Peter to have meant any more, than in the words of David to speak his sentiments concerning Judas, and the vacancy which his crime had made in the number of the apostles.

The reference which the evangelist Matthew makes to a passage in the prophecies of Zechariah, will, perhaps, be thought something more to the purpose. When Judas, in the agony of repentance had thrown back to his vile

vile employers the purchase of his treachery; the tender-hearted priests, considering that it was the hire of blood, would not return the thirty pieces of silver into the treasury of the temple, but bought therewith the potter's field, as a place of burial for strangers. On which fact the Evangelist remarks, *Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet*, but it should have been wrote *Zechariah*, for in the 11th chapter of that prophet are the words alluded to. The passage is thus quoted by Matthew, *And they, viz. the chief priests, took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.* But the words differ considerably in the original; Zechariah, speaking of himself, says, *I said unto them, viz. to the people of Israel, If ye think good, give me my price, and if not forbear; so they weighed for me thirty pieces of silver, and the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them; and I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.* Now here is no mention of the field, or of any purchase at all being made with the money, nor are they the rulers of Israel who make application of it, but the prophet himself.

Moreover, in the whole chapter, of which these words are a part, it is difficult to make out any strict allusion to the person or history of Jesus Christ, but only a representation of the ingratitude of the Jewish nation to their best benefactors, and of those miseries, which this ingratitude

gratitude would entail upon them as its deserved punishment. After having represented their desolate estate, the prophet is ordered by God to feed the flock of the slaughter, when alluding to the hire of a shepherd, he demands the price which they were willing to give for his services; but so paltry a sum as thirty pieces being given, the Lord, as resenting their mean and ungrateful parsimony, bids him throw back the goodly price at which he was prized of them.

This seems to be all that can fairly be collected from the passage, while, if it had really been intended as a prediction of that event which followed the repentance of Judas, and by the prophet Zechariah, in the character of a shepherd, we must understand the great shepherd Jesus Christ, and by throwing the silver to the potter, the purchase of the potter's field, yet we must confess that the indignant return of the money should not have been represented as the act of the prophet himself, much less the application of the money for the purchase of the potter's field, as his act, but the act of those from whom it had been received, and to whom it was returned.

In fine, there is nothing applicable in the passage, to the fact of which it is the supposed prediction, unless that the precise sum of thirty pieces of silver, and the word potter are spoken of in both. But, saving the co-incidence of these two circumstances, no explication of the prophet's words can render them at all descriptive of the transaction in Matthew. In the former, there is no traitor exhibited, no hire of
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of any villainy received or returned, but the inadequate reward of a most virtuous and benevolent service, and there is an utter confusion of persons in the prefiguration of the history and the history itself. He, therefore, who, from a too scrupulous regard to what he thinks the sentiment of the apostle, will still insist upon the prophetic application of the passage, may, I think, with almost equal ease and propriety, deduce a prophecy of any fact from any page of any author. But it is more candid (and surely candour is due in the interpretation of every well-meaning author) to suppose, that St. Matthew meant to consider the words of Zechariah, only as bearing some allusion to the fact which he was then reciting; at least, if he intended to apply them in a more important view, it will not be easy to excuse the evangelist the liberty he has taken in so greatly altering the words and purport of the supposed prophecy. Nor in this construction am I without the countenance of the most sensible and liberal commentators, who generally agree that many applications of the language of the Old Testament to the events of the New, are thus to be understood.

I can find but one instance where our Saviour himself refers to the language of the Old Testament, as illustrated by the treachery of Judas. In his last conversation with his disciples, he abruptly diverts from the stile of instruction, and says, *I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen; but, that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me.* Now it cannot, methinks, be imagined by any one, that our Lord intended

intended any thing farther by this reference, than to observe, that the same afflicting circumstance which happened to David, and which he bemoans in the passage alluded to, was ready to be verified in him. At least I am sure, that the original has as little of the air and manner of a prophecy, as the lamentation of the treachery of a friend in any author whatever can have.

This, now, is all that can be made out of any allusion to the history of Judas, throughout the whole of what are generally esteemed to be the prophetic writers; and this very little, in that passage which, at first view, is the most striking, alludes to no interesting part of his history; while it might have been expected that his treachery would have been prefigured, rather than the unimportant circumstance of the use which the Jewish rulers made of the hire of his villainy. There is, therefore, no sufficient reason to conclude, that the character of Judas was at all predicted, nor have we authority from scripture to say, that the part which he acted in the last scene of our Saviour's life, was pre-known, or pre-determined by God.

What the prescience of the deity may include is not easy to say, but perhaps we generally ascribe more to it than is consistent with the character of moral and accountable agents. But this is a question which belongs more to natural than revealed religion; it is sufficient to our present purpose, that the scripture has not supposed the necessity of such a character as that of Judas, by the pre-discovery of that character, and that the difficulty which we mentioned

oned as springing out of this supposition, falls to the ground with the supposition itself. There is now no more difficulty in accounting for the existence of this traitor; that one so unfit should be joined as an associate in so good and moral a cause, than for the thousand examples of treachery, corruption and villainy which we continually meet with in the history of mankind. In this view the objection is removed from christianity, and carried, if any where, to the throne of the Almighty himself, which it is as incumbent on the enemies as the friends of our religion to answer, and therefore does not properly introduce itself in our present subject.

But it will be urged, that Jesus Christ is represented as knowing who the traitor should be. Why, therefore, did he admit him into the number of his apostles, or if admitted before the knowledge was imparted to him, why did he not instantly expel him, as soon as the disaffection of his heart, and inclination to the perfidious part which he acted, was revealed? But may not this question be answered in the same manner as the preceding; for is it so very clear and established a point, that our Saviour was acquainted with the future character of Judas at the time that he elected or admitted him into the number of his constant followers and disciples, or that at any period he was acquainted with the individual person of the traitor before he actually pointed him out? This does not appear from any testimony of our Saviour's concerning him, nor are we therefore authorised to suppose, that he purposely selected a villain, a deter-

determined and devoted villain, not with the benevolent hope of touching his heart, and gaining him over to the cause of integrity, of truth and of virtue, but—for what! That he himself might be betrayed by him.

The universal prescience of our Lord is a doctrine which many have taken up, and confidently talk of, but upon what authority I profess myself to be utterly ignorant, unless it be as a consequence of the still larger supposition, that he is, indeed, the very God himself. Our Saviour does, indeed, on some occasions, appear to be possessed of the more than human faculty of knowing the secret thoughts of men, and of being acquainted with many important events in futurity, but he speaks also of his knowledge being communicated to him from the Most High, and we have his own testimony, that there were some things relative to his own kingdom, which the Father had not revealed even unto him.

So far, therefore, as was conducive to the great work in which he was engaged, we have reason to suppose, that many special communications from the Father of Lights were repeatedly made to him; and what things our Lord actually appeared to have known, these we are authorised to say he did know, but not farther. Among these communications of the divine intelligence, might be the impending treachery of Judas: God, who saw the ripened baseness of that traitor's heart, perhaps the traiterous design already meditated in his mind, might, before the sacrifice of the innocent victim, impart to him the knowledge of this addition to his approaching sufferings,

ferings, how near the betrayer was to his bosom; how deep, undeserved, and unexpected a stab he should receive from the hand of a friend. At least, it is certain, that our Saviour discovers no apprehension of this treachery, till some time after the number of his disciples had been completed, nor does he himself intimate, that he had been acquainted with it before-hand.

John, indeed, on the first suspicion that our Lord imparted to his disciples of the fidelity of some of them, adds this remark of his own; *for Jesus Christ knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him;* but neither John, nor any other of the Evangelists, have produced a single assertion of their master's to this purpose. In fine, we are not obliged to suppose, that John was instructed to bear this testimony to his master's knowledge. He appears to be offering only his own opinion, and collected from the same circumstance in our Saviour's history, which lie open to our judgment also. As the apostles have freely transmitted their own judgment of this matter, it is absurd to suppose, that they would not have authenticated their judgment, by the more important evidence of their master, if they had ever heard him make such a declaration, and therefore it is clear to me that he never did do so.

It does not appear, therefore, that our Lord, knowing the future infidelity and treachery of Judas, elected him into the number of the twelve; that we have a sufficient authority, from scripture, to admit this supposition, much less to receive it as a matter of undoubted certainty,
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and subject ourselves to the difficulty of answering the objections, which spring out of this supposition. This principal difficulty being removed, therefore, the question why our Lord did not openly detect, and instantly expel from his chosen attendants, so unworthy an associate, as soon as the knowledge of him was revealed, is answered from that very wisdom of our Saviour, which the question would impeach. How would such a treatment have appeared to the world, or even to his disciples themselves, to condemn for a crime, the evidence of which existed only in his own mind. This would have been to assume, not only the knowledge, but the judicial authority of God himself, nay, rather more than God himself does exercise towards delinquents in this world; and would have so reflected on the wisdom, justice, and mildness of his character, as must have afforded the strongest grounds of triumph to the determined enemies of his doctrine in his own day, and to those in every day, who have vainly been endeavouring to find specks and blemishes in his wise and blameless conduct.

Such is the solution which the preceding difficulties have received in my own mind, upon a free and honest examination of all the evidence which the scripture affords. I have purposely avoided the enquiring, how far the designation of such a character as that of Judas, must be supposed from the universal fore-knowledge of the deity, because it is purely a question of natural religion, which revelation has no proper concern with. It is sufficient, if the scriptures shall
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be found not to have asserted the designation of Judas to the office he held, and the part he acted; and, therefore, have not made themselves accountable for the fitness of such an appointment.

Though I do not think that it would be any difficult matter for natural religion to reply to this question, if she were allowed to suppose such an idea of the divine prescience, as being consistent with all the natural perfections of God, seems necessary to the character of his moral and accountable subjects. But christianity stands opposed to Deists, not to Atheists; and in whatever manner any sincere believer in God can account for the existence of moral evil, for the admission of the worst of agents in the best of causes, in the same manner may he account for the existence of Judas, for the admission of such an associate in that benevolent and moral work on which Jesus Christ was sent into the world.

But perhaps a tenaciousness of opinions already received, or a concern for what they may think to affect the honour of God and of his son, may make some offended with this account; but ere they take the resolution of not changing their opinions, let them seriously and freely examine upon what foundation their opinions do stand, and what that necessity is, which their opinions plead for, to the maintaining the honour of God and of Jesus Christ. Let them first be able to say to themselves and to the public, for what wise and moral purposes God could design, and his son could elect into an office, a wretch devoted to act in the greatest possible
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opposition to the spirit and intention of that office. For my own part, I honestly confess that I can say nothing to such a question; and I do therefore truly rejoice, that neither revelation nor reason, when fairly consulted, do put me to such a difficulty.

Let us attend to some other reflections, which the history of Judas excites.

I have often wondered to what purpose was the treachery of Judas; of what necessity, what advantage to the Jewish rulers, was the part this disciple acted, in order to the facilitating their purposes against the life of Jesus Christ. Judas appears to have done nothing more than barely conduct their officers into his presence, a matter surely of little consequence to those who thirsted after the life of this innocent person, and without which, it may well be supposed, that they could equally have perpetrated all their malice against him.

Jesus Christ was not like a malefactor, flying from the terrors of justice, and hiding his guilty head in dark and unknown retreats; in which case, the officious hand, that conducted his pursuers to his lurking place, might be the very thing that was wanting to bring him to punishment. He had never practised any concealment; he appeared every day in the face of the public, in their streets, and in their temples, assiduously carrying on the work, for which he had come into the world, and which alone provoked all the vengeance of his enemies. He stood exposed to their arrest at any time, whenever they should resolve upon it; nor even, if they should think

think it more convenient to seize him at night, is it credible, that the places of his retirement could be any mystery, where no mystery appears to have been intended, and perhaps impossible to have been effected. The number of his disciples, who generally, if not constantly attended him, was too great to be concealed, and his regular appearance in public, during the day, must have rendered it a very easy matter, to trace him to his abode, during the night.

It is further a very material circumstance, that his nightly retreat appears to have been generally the same; for it is expressly mentioned, that the place to which Judas conducted the band, who seized his master, was that of his usual resort by night with his disciples, and that it was the very circumstance which led Judas to seek him there; it could hardly, therefore, have been unknown to many in Jerusalem, at least there could have been no difficulty in discovering it to those who were interested in making the discovery. It does not appear, therefore, that the single part which Judas took in the iniquity of his master's enemies, had any sufficient, any important, any necessary end in view. May we not then conclude, that this traitor was designed by his employers, to have acted a still further part, and had himself intended to have appeared a more considerable actor, in the transactions of the succeeding day, if his sudden, and unexpected repentance, had not defeated the design.

It would have been a great point gained, in order to support the appearance of disinterested
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justice, and turn the popular prejudice against him, if one of his own disciples should stand forth his accuser, and give testimony to the supposed crimes, which they meant to alledge against him.

The chief priests and elders, accused him to the Jewish nation, of a design against their religion, a design to overturn it from the foundation, and even to destroy that sacred temple, in which they believed, all the majesty and distinction of their nation to be lodged, a crime of the highest magnitude to a bigotted and superstitious Jew.

To the Romans they accused him of aspiring and ambitious designs, to attack the sovereignty of the empire of the world, and raise himself to a throne, as soon as he had sufficiently secured the affections and confidence of the people. He might carry himself, indeed, with decency, with sanctity, with humility, and moderation, but this might be urged as only a more deep and subtle hypocrisy, while the general expectation of the people, the flattering title of king which they had conferred upon him, being sufficient to alarm the Roman jealousy, if thereto should be added the testimony of one of his chosen disciples and confidants, who might be supposed to be acquainted with his most secret views, and this testimony affected to be given from a detestation of his criminal designs; then might they hope, and not without reason, to justify their prosecution to Rome and to their country, that every one would give credit to the charge, and join issue in the sentence which
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should be pronounced against him; while themselves, instead of being detested as the ministers of injustice and oppression, of a low, corrupted and revengeful malice, should be applauded as doing a public service to the civil and religious interests of their nation.

All this they might hope to derive from the testimony of so material an evidence; their scheme was then well concerted, and the wretched disciple himself, if a traitor, would not be so to no end, but acquire, at least, with his employers, no inconsiderable merit from his valuable services. But the heart of Judas, bad as it was, failed him ere the completion of his treachery; and the rulers being now engaged in the eye of the public to support their charge against this extraordinary personage, who had so much excited the attention of the whole nation, were obliged to carry it through as well as they could; and being disappointed in this important evidence, they suborned others to bear the same testimony, which Judas, with more baseness, indeed, but with more credit, was designed to have given.

Nor is it a sufficient objection to this supposition, that the writers of the sacred history have given no intimation of this further purpose in the treachery of Judas; since, if they had really been acquainted therewith, yet it is nothing wonderful that they should omit to mention a circumstance, which existed only in intention, and, therefore, contributed nothing to the condemnation and death of their Lord. I say it is nothing wonderful, that they should omit to men-

tion such a circumstance in an history, which they have confessedly wrote in a very concise and summary way. But it is not necessary to suppose, nor, I will venture to add, very probable, that they were acquainted with the truth of this further intended treachery on the part of Judas, though, not improbable that they might have the same ideas of the nature of his perfidy that we have suggested. Whatever Judas was designed to act in the betraying of his master, it was a private contract between him and the chief of the Jews, which these iniquitous rulers had a manifest interest in concealing from the public knowledge.

This conjecture will, therefore, be allowed to carry a great probability with it, and obviate any objections which may be inferred from the insignificance of Judas's treachery. Had the repentance of Judas not succeeded to the first act of his treachery, it would have been difficult to have accounted for the introduction of so useless a villain; but the prosecution of what such a villain might further intend, being cut off by the unlooked-for revolt of his own mind, no one is authorised to question the integrity of the sacred historian upon the supposition that the whole of this false disciple's perfidy is represented in the single act of conducting the enemies of his master into his presence. The narration of the historian has all the marks of inapprehensive veracity, not of a fiction, betraying itself by its own inconsistencies. The Evangelist faithfully narrates what Judas did perform; he seems to apprehend no difficulty in his account,

count, nor to have meditated any answer to what objections might be urged, but the sequel of his history provides the answer; for it is left to candour to suppose, what such a beginning of treachery might have produced, if conscience had suffered the traitor to proceed.

But barely to find no insuperable difficulty in the history of Judas is not sufficient: the whole character of this traitor is no inconsiderable testimony to the innocence and uprightness of Jesus Christ, and to the truth of the christian religion. Judas had no prejudice in favour of the cause in which his excellent master was engaged; but most probably would have rejoiced, and continued to have been his adherent, if he had found it to be the cause of an impostor, that is, of one who, under the appearance of public spirit, of a zeal for religion and for virtue, aimed only to attract the public notice, to play the part of an artful hypocrite, to flatter the universal prejudice which the Jewish nation had entertained of a temporal deliverer, and on the sanguine hopes and wishes and affections of the people, raise himself to the height of worldly greatness.

Then, also, this unworthy disciple might have hoped to succeed in the ambitious views which first drew him to join the followers of Jesus Christ; but he found himself deceived: the whole conversation, instruction, and manners of his master discovered no worldly design, but the most positive renunciation of it; he prophesied nothing of himself at the hands of men, but contempt, persecution and death; he promised no-

thing to his disciples but to bear the same cross, to drink of the same bitter cup; the whole breathed the spirit of humility, resignation, and a mind mortified to the views and pleasures of this world, by being wholly occupied with a regard to the sublimer interests of that world which is to come. The sordid earth-born spirit of Judas was shocked with such a discovery, he renounced the cause in which his ambition could find no ground to rest upon, and, like a low-minded villain, endeavoured to derive an advantage from his renunciation, to make a merit and a gain of betraying the master, of whose uprightness he was sorry to be convinced, into the hands of his malicious enemies.

This appears to be the plain and only account which can be given of the views, wherewith Judas first attached himself to Jesus Christ, continued for a while to appear as his follower, and of the motives which at length determined him to renounce a cause, which he had totally mistaken. Nor was he the only disciple who mistook the design of the moral redeemer of the world. The writers of his life plainly enough testify of themselves and of all their fellow-disciples, that they had the same low worldly expectations from their leader; but a pure disinterested affection to their master, founded on his wisdom, the virtues of his character, the amiableness of his temper, and a conviction that the favour and power of God was with him, grew up at length in their hearts, and however shocked at his repeated declarations that his kingdom had no view to this world, but

but that he should die the death of a criminal, yet were they too firmly attached to his person to desert him; and this veneration, this affection for their Lord, gradually prepared their minds to entertain a veneration for those real interests which he had in view, and at length to succeed their master in the same religious and moral work for which he lived and for which he died.

To say, then, that Judas had no other than an ambitious and worldly view in his attachment to Jesus Christ, is saying little more of him than what we are authorised to say of the whole body of the disciples: but their minds were capable of being enlightened with nobler views, that of Judas was not; they renounced the world, he renounced the cause, and endeavoured, in the way of treachery, to gratify some of those sordid views to which his whole soul was devoted. The desertion of such a disciple from such motives, and who, in the very act of his desertion, discovered so base and sordid a spirit, is, to me at least, a very strong attestation of the upright and good intentions wherewith Jesus Christ shewed himself to the world, of that pure and honest regard which alone he professed to have for the glory of God, and for the souls of men. I lament the fall of Judas, I am truly grieved that a traitor should have been found in so small a band of friends and confidants, but I rejoice to see it clearly proved thereby that an hypocrite, a low-born, mercenary, ambitious spirit, could find no encouragement to continue the friend and confidant of my lord and master Jesus Christ.

But

But it is not only by the desertion, by the betraying of his master, that Judas convinces us of the goodness of that cause which he forsook, but in the sequel, he gives direct and express testimony to the innocence of his betrayed Lord. He gives this testimony in that affecting state of mind which cannot lie, and he sets a fatal, but indisputable seal to the truth of his testimony. The worldly views which had possessed the minds of the other disciples, were subdued by the incomparable virtues of their master; the heart of Judas needed the reflexion of the blackest crime, to bring it to any sense of right; he feels not any veneration for his Lord, till, like an assassin, he has stabbed him; a moment he views the irrevocable deed, and conscience flings the injustice, the ingratitude of it in his face; the world and all its vile temptations are extinguished within him; violated truth, injured innocence, stand in awful majesty before him; driven by a black repentance, he hurries into the presence of his detested employers, confesses the horrid part which he had acted, proclaims his master's innocence and worth, indignantly throws back the hire of his villainy, and desperately cuts himself off from a world, the love of which had cut him off from all goodness, and from all happiness.

This is such a testimony, and so confirmed, as methinks is fitted to speak with power to the most prejudiced mind. Assuredly, the repentant wretch, uttered in that bitter moment, what he felt at his heart, and what he felt he knew; he had seen his master in private, as well as in public,

public, he had enjoyed his confidence, he was well acquainted with his whole designs; alas! he had found nothing therein but what frowned upon the baseness of his own designs. This disciple, this friend, this confidant of Jesus Christ, whom only the virtues of Jesus Christ had driven to desert and to betray him, proclaims before the rulers of the Jews, *I have sinned; I have betrayed innocent blood*; and however abandoned to wickedness he may seem in the general view of his character, conscience is at length so awakened in him, that he confirms his testimony, beyond the possibility of doubt, by the desperate evidence of self-murder.

How wisely ordered is the constitution of the human mind, even when viewed in its worst examples! How wonderfully does the providence of God produce good out of the greatest evils, and compel villains to give testimony to that very cause of truth and goodness, which, from the corruptness of their hearts, they have been endeavouring to destroy.

Let us, however, rejoice in a cause, rejoice in a master, whose truth and uprightness triumphed at length even over such a mind as that of Judas; and though the miserable fate of this lost man may excite that pity which is natural to the human heart, yet let us rejoice, that even from him we have an evidence to confirm us in the faith of that divine teacher, whom Judas betrayed.

ERASTUS.

To

Further thoughts concerning the person of Christ, occasioned by the postscript to the remarks on Dr. Lardner's letter on the Logos. See Theological Repository, Vol. I. p. 442, 443.

THAT man was designed by his maker to be the head of this lower world, is evident, not only from the express declarations of scripture (Gen. i. 26, 28.—ix. 1, 2. Psalm ix. 5. 8.) but from the superior power and faculties with which he is endowed: And it, doubtless, becomes him to have such a sense of the dignity and prerogatives of his rational nature, as may induce him to act a wise and manly part, and thus to answer the end of his creation. But it would argue great ignorance, or great arrogance in him, to suppose, that all nature was framed, and is sustained, only or chiefly, for his use; and that he, in a manner, engrosses the care of the common Father and Lord of all. Such an imagination must appear peculiarly absurd to those who have formed any just ideas of the amazing extent of the universe, and of the vast number and variety, magnitude and distances of the heavenly bodies; especially considering how little reason there is to doubt, but that, amidst this immensity of the divine works, there are numberless habitable worlds, some of which may contain creatures of a rank and order far superior to the human race; to say nothing of what may be conjectured concerning

cerning the world of spirits, or how, and by what beings, the illimitable ethereal regions may be peopled.

But if this world and its inhabitants are so mean and inconsiderable, compared with the whole universe of beings, corporeal and intellectual; can we conceive it in any degree probable, that the first and greatest of all spirits, next to the one supreme, should be sent by his heavenly father, not only to take up his abode for some considerable time amongst us, but to assume our nature, to lead a life of labour and sorrow, and to die a most ignominious and excruciating death, for the redemption of our sinful race; whether it should, or should not be supposed, that other worlds have been redeemed at the like expensive rate?

This difficulty has been urged by some of our modern Deists, as an insuperable objection against the great gospel doctrine of man's redemption by Christ the son of God. (See particularly a short article in the Gentleman's Magazine for May 1760, where the objection was stated, and an answer desired; though I cannot say that any, deserving the name, was returned.) But it should be remembered, that it affects that doctrine only on the supposition that Jesus Christ, in his own proper nature and person, was before his incarnation a super-angelic spirit, and had naturally existed in a state of inconceivable glory, with the Father, before the creation of the world. On every other hypothesis, whether the strict Trinitarian, Sabellian, or Socinian, it was the man Christ Jesus alone,
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who voluntarily submitted to undergo such labours, indignities, and sufferings on our behalf. For, however intimately united he might be with the in-dwelling Deity, and whatever dignity and efficacy his mediatorial undertaking might derive from this union, it is allowed, on all hands, that the Deity himself is immutable and impassible: And though the meanest of his creatures are in no danger of being overlooked, or disregarded by him, but are always the object of his condescending notice, and tender care; yet, in every view in which he can be considered by us, he must appear absolutely incapable of any real abasement or suffering.

The objection, indeed, is acknowledged to have its weight, by some ingenious and valuable authors, who have been advocates for that notion concerning the person of Christ, on which it is mainly grounded: Particularly by Dr. Clarke, in his sermons at Boyle's Lectures, p. 348. 353. and by Dr. Taylor in his *Key to St. Paul's epistles*, p. 131. 133. But the former, in what he has offered, by way of answer, has rather increased, than lessened the difficulty, by supposing that the Divine Logos (which became the human soul of Christ) may be sent to other parts of the universe, for the like purposes with that which occasioned his descent into our world: And the latter, in order to remove the objection, has carried the notion of the dignity of human nature, and the merit of human virtue, to a seemingly unwarrantable and extravagant height.

The writer of the *Remarks on Dr. Lardner's Letter*, in his postscript, introduces an objection
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against his favourite scheme, as saying, “ Consider that this world is but a point in comparison of the immensity of the divine works ; and who can imagine that so great a being as you represent our blessed Lord, should be so deeply abased on account of it ? ” To which he thinks a sufficient answer had been suggested before, perhaps under the 8th article of his Remarks, relating to the reward of our Saviour’s voluntary degradation and sufferings. Without repeating here the animadversions that were made on those Remarks, as they came under consideration, I shall only further observe, that whatever additional happiness so great and illustrious a being might be supposed to receive on the completion of our redemption ; our minds must surely recoil at the thought of his being frequently subjected to such humbling and painful undertakings, as often as the disordered state of other habitable worlds might need a like remedy. Yet, as there is no reason to suppose, that amongst a countless multitude of such worlds, this of ours should be the only one where sin has gained an entrance ; so we can imagine nothing so peculiar in our nature, character, situation and circumstances, as to require an interposition of the most glorious of all derived beings in our behalf, more than others.

To those who may think the difficulty not satisfactorily removed by what was before offered, the Remarker proposes another scheme, which he styles *a Novel Opinion*, as “ giving the only solution that can be conceived, consistent with reason and scripture,” viz. “ that our Lord
“ Christ

“ Christ is the next being to the Supreme, with whom the inhabitants of this globe, or perhaps of the solar system, have any connection or concern.” This scheme, it must be confessed, would greatly lessen, though not entirely remove the objection that lies against the notion of our Lord’s pre-existence: And if the texts which are supposed to favour that notion, could not admit of a different interpretation, I should readily embrace it, as preferable, in that respect, at least, to the Arian hypothesis.

In point of evidence, indeed, this writer thinks it not comparable to his own scheme, though far more defensible than that which he opposes; having probably in his view those texts which speak of *all things*, without exception, as *made by the Word*; of *God’s making the worlds by his Son*, and, *creating all things by Jesus Christ*; of *all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, as created by him and for him*; who is accordingly declared to be *the first born of every creature, before all things, and him by whom all things consist*. (John i. 3—10. iii. 31. 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 15—17. Heb. i. 2, 3.) However, supposing these texts are to be understood of a proper creation, what the extent of that creation was, might be justly questioned; since it is very common with the sacred writers to use such universal terms, when they must needs be taken with great restrictions; and it seems to be quite foreign to the design of a divine revelation, calculated for making us wise unto salvation, to acquaint us with what has no relation to the highest

highest interests and concerns of mankind. The expression, it must be confessed, is peculiarly strong, John i. 3. But the question is, what we are there to understand by the Divine Word? Whether it denotes the person of Christ, or the wisdom, power or spirit of God himself, that afterwards dwelt in the man Christ Jesus. (See Lardner's Lett. p. 24, 25.

As to the texts above referred to in the epistles of St. Paul, if with Grotius, Locke and others, we understand them in a figurative sense, of the new creation, spiritual formation, or renovation of things according to the gospel constitution, or of that great change of affairs that was introduced by Christ with respect to religion, when the believing Gentiles were admitted into the church or kingdom of God under him as their head, and even the angelic hierarchies were made subject unto him. 1 Pet. iii. 22. (And it is certain that St. Paul, elsewhere, speaks of the work of redemption under the name and notion of a creation, as 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15. Eph. ii. 10, 15, &c.) This will entirely set aside the arguments drawn from thence in favour of the pre-existent scheme in general, as well as take away the pretended advantage of the Arian hypothesis above the novel scheme, in point of evidence. (See Lardner's Lett. p. 64. 72. Locke on 1 Cor. viii. 6. and Eph. iii. 9. Calvin on Eph. iii. 9. Grotius on Col. i. 15, &c. and Heb. i. 2. See also Dawson's Sermons at Lady Moyers's Lectures, p. 186. 201.)

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It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that nothing can furnish us with so astonishing an instance of humiliation and condescension, or give us such an amazing view of God's love to mankind, as the Arian scheme carried to its utmost height. But we may be allowed to consider, whether it does not shoot beyond the mark; whether it does not rather confound the mind, than affect it with just and proper sentiments; and whether it is not more suited to the now generally exploded notion of God's requiring a kind of infinite satisfaction to his injured justice, before he could shew mercy to sinful men, than to any scriptural representations of the nature and method of our redemption. (See Lardner's Lett. p. 40. 47.) It is surely no recommendation of any doctrine to an intelligent enquirer, that it is strange, and hard to be conceived. And it may well be questioned, whether a mind, unbiaſſed by prejudice, could easily take up with the notion of an inferior god employed by the supreme, in creating the whole universe—a second proper object of religious worship—adored by angels as their lord in a pre-existent state, and yet becoming, for a while, no more than a mere mortal man;—the most exalted of all spirits, next the one infinite and independent being, “to whom all divine powers are attributed, excepting absolute independence and supremacy,” leaving the joys and glories of heaven to dwell in this world, imprisoned in a fleshly tabernacle, subject to all human frailties and infirmities; which, separate from the agonies of crucifixion “must (accord-

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“ing to Bishop Clayton) be, literally speaking, “to such a being, an hell upon earth;”—and all this for the benefit of so inconsiderable a part of the creation as the human race, who might (so far as we can apprehend) have received the same advantages by a fellow man, divinely taught, commissioned, impowered, and advanced, as he was;—whilst, in all probability, many other worlds, inhabited by beings no more indefectible than we, might no less need a like interposition in their behalf.

It is true, unlikely as this scheme may appear in itself, and unable as we may be to solve the difficulties attending it, there is no such direct absurdity in it, as would warrant us to reject it, were it clearly and fully asserted in the gospel revelation; the positive evidences of which are so strong, as not to be shaken by any mere difficulties or improbabilities. But though there are, indeed, several texts in the gospel of St. John, and in some of St. Paul’s epistles, that, in their more obvious and literal acceptation, seem to favour the scheme, or, at least, the notion of Christ’s pre-existence; yet it is a very observable circumstance, that in the other three gospels, the book of Acts, and the epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude, there is no hint that could lead those, for whose use they were written, to entertain such an opinion. This makes it highly probable, that the language in those texts is strongly figurative, as it certainly is in a great part of both the Old and New Testament; and may help to justify those interpretations of them which some are apt to condemn as forced

and unnatural, but which are, perhaps, the real result of *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*, after the apostle's example, as Grotius and Mr. Locke, in their interpretations of scripture, most eminently did.

Few, if any of these texts, are passed by unnoticed by the venerable author of the Letter of 1730. How far his short glosses on them may be sufficient to invalidate the arguments that have been drawn from them by others, every reader must judge for himself. The ingenious writer of these remarks seems to estimate their value at a low rate; but many who were formerly in a different way of thinking, have entertained a better opinion of this work; and have found something in it that has induced them first to question the truth of their old notions, and afterwards to give them up as untenable. I have often thought it very remarkable, that the Trinitarians, who have been used to oppose every attempt to revive or support the Arian cause, with all the bitterness of zeal, should have been so silent on the publication of this Letter, Mr. Lowman's three Tracts, and some later pieces, wherein the Unitarian scheme, most properly so called, has been maintained with a manly freedom, but guarded, indeed, from all appearances of a design to lessen the authority of the sacred records, or betray the interests of our common christianity. Possibly this scheme may be esteemed by them less obnoxious than the Arian, as it perhaps should be. And it may be reasonably expected, that the more a taste for simplicity in religion prevails, and the passion for what is astonishing and incredible
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subsides, the nearer we shall approach again to the truth as it is in Jesus, from whence we had, by degrees, most strangely deviated.

These writings appear to me well adapted to reconcile or calm the angry disputes and contentions that have so long divided the christian world, on the subjects they relate to. Here, on the one hand, is no pretension to any real and proper distinction of *persons* in the divine nature (a term unscriptural, and inexplicable as used in this controversy) but that great and leading article of religion, the unity and supremacy of God the universal father, is no less strenuously, and, I think, more consistently, asserted and defended, than by the Arians themselves; without the embarrassment of the difficulties above-mentioned, attending their doctrine of the glorious pre-existent spirit of our Lord, having all its exalted powers reduced to the state and compass of a mere human infant. On the other hand, the Logos, the word or wisdom of God, which dwelt in Christ, and that spirit of power and grace, which was communicated to him by his heavenly Father, without measure, whereby he was abundantly qualified for the whole of his mediatorial undertaking; are allowed, on this scheme, to be as truly divine in the highest sense, as the most zealous Trinitarian can pretend; though without the absurdity of supposing three proper divine persons, *i. e.* intelligent agents or beings, to subsist in the unity of the divine nature. Here, indeed, is room for such a distinction of names, characters and offices, as the scriptures point out, and the Sabellians

plead for, under the appellation of *persons*. But then, as there is no necessity or reason for following them in so vague and improper an application of this term; so neither need we call that union of Christ with the indwelling Deity, so often spoken of in the New Testament, a personal or hypostatic union, as they do: Nor is it the *Divine Word* only, (whatever may be particularly meant by that name or distinction) but God himself, even under the character of *the Father*, that is represented in several places as in some very peculiar manner united to the man Christ Jesus, and working in and by him; whilst in others the wonderful knowledge and wisdom he possessed, and the power he exerted, are ascribed to *the spirit of God*, (John v. 19—27 36—38. viii. 18, 28, 29. x. 28—30, 38. xiv. 7—11, 20. xvi. 32. xvii. 11, 20—23. Acts ii. 22. Col. i. 19. ii. 3, 9. Matt. iii. 16. John i. 32—34. iii. 34, 35. Compare Isa. xi. 1—3. xlii. 1—4. lxi. 1—3. Matt. xii. 17. Luke iv. 18, 19. Acts x. 38.)

After all, however, that has hitherto been advanced in the controversy concerning the person of Christ, it can scarcely be pretended, that the subject is yet cleared of all doubts and difficulties, to whatever scheme we may give the preference; nor is it likely that the controversy will soon be ended. But instead of being greatly solicitous, to ascertain what seems to be not fully determined in scripture, on this head, we shall do well to turn our chief attention to those points, which are confessedly more certain, and more important. Whether our blessed Lord had any real
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and personal existence, and if so, in what manner he existed, before his Virgin mother conceived him, has been, and may still be a matter of doubtful disputation: But the sacred writers have left us no room at all to doubt of his miraculous and divine conception; of the high and important commission with which he was charged, and of his abundant qualifications for the execution of it, by “the communication of the spirit to him without measure, or the indwelling of his Father’s fulness.” And not only in these respects, was he gloriously distinguished from all other men, but also by the peerless dignity and rectitude of his character and conduct on earth; by the several extraordinary testimonies that were given him of his heavenly Father’s most peculiar regards; and also, by the high honours conferred upon him, as the reward of his perfect obedience, and voluntary sufferings, in his speedy resurrection from the dead, to die no more, in his visible ascension to heaven, and in his consequent exaltation to a state of regal dominion, and judicial authority over angels as well as men, so that *he is able even to subdue all things unto himself, and to save them to the uttermost, who come unto God by him.* And if we are fully convinced of these truths, on which our Lord himself and his apostles appear to have laid the greatest stress, and beyond which the earliest creeds assert nothing concerning him, we cannot want sufficient reasons and motives, to excite us to all that veneration, love and gratitude, obedience, imitation and trust, which

are due to him as the beloved son of God, the teacher and pattern, the friend and saviour, the prince and judge of men.

CHARISTES.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

Amidst the distractions of party and politics, and the ravages of dissipation, pleasure and vanity, upon every thing serious, it seems, that you, Gentlemen, do not yet despair of the commonwealth of sacred literature. I honour you for your courage; and as I doubt not that the characters and principles of your readers do you great honour, so I hope their numbers and communications will sufficiently support your design. If you judge the annexed paper likely to prove acceptable to any of them, it is submitted to your disposal, by

Your humble servant,

EUSEBIUS.

Some observations on St. Paul's discourse at Athens.

Acts, ch. xvii.

THE late Reverend and Learned Dr. Lardner, in the third volume of his collection of Jewish and Heathen testimonies, p. 20. quotes the following remarkable passage, concerning *Epimenides* from *Diogenes Laertius*. "At this time the fame of *Epimenides* was very great among all the Greeks, and he was supposed
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“ to be in great favour with the gods. The
“ Athenians being afflicted with a pestilence,
“ were directed by the Pythian oracle to get
“ their city purified by expiation. They,
“ therefore, sent Nicias, son of Niceratus, in a
“ ship to Crete, inviting Epimenides to come
“ to them. He coming thither in the forty-
“ sixth olympiad, purified their city, and de-
“ livered them from the pestilence in this man-
“ ner. Taking several sheep, some black,
“ others white, he had them up to the Areo-
“ pagus; and thence let them go where they
“ would, and gave orders to those who followed
“ them, wherever any one of them should lie
“ down, to sacrifice it to the god, to whom it
“ belonged; and so the plague ceased. Hence
“ it has come to pass, that to this present time
“ may be found in the boroughs of the Athe-
“ nians, *anonymous altars*, a memorial of the ex-
“ piation then made.”

It ought to be observed, that Epimenides flourished almost six hundred years before Christ, and Diogenes Laertius, who witnesses that anonymous altars, a memorial of the expiation made by Epimenides, remained in the boroughs (*κατα τας δημους*) of the Athenians, wrote about the beginning of the third century after Christ, consequently these altars must have been there when Paul was at Athens; and it seems highly probable, that one of them was that which the apostle had observed, and takes notice of in the beginning of his discourse.

The Doctor produces the testimony of Chryso-
stom, and Isidore of Pelusium, to confirm the apo-
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stle's representation of the inscription, *To the unknown God*. Theophylact and Oecumenius also read it in the singular number; only Jerome reads it in the plural, and thereupon grounds one of those conceits, of which he and others of the venerable antients seem to have been too fond. However, these three last mentioned writers say, that the whole inscription on the altars was thus: *To the Gods of Asia, and Europe, and Lybia, to the unknown and strange God*. Or as Jerome reads, *unknown and strange Gods*.

But it appears to me, that this could not possibly be the inscription on the altars, which were erected in consequence of Epimenides's directions for expiating the plague; because it seems plain from the whole of Laertius's account, that the *Theosophist* himself was quite uncertain what god had inflicted the pestilence, and consequently was to be appeased; whether *celestial, terrestrial, or infernal*. But, as some of the gods were supposed to be best pleased with white victims, others with black ones, therefore he ordered a number of sheep, some white, some black, to be turned loose from Areopagus, and wherever each of them lay down it was to be sacrificed on that spot, τῷ ὑποστυκνῶντι θεῷ, *to the god to whom it belonged*; such a general inscription, therefore, as that given above, could by no means suit to altars erected on such an occasion as this; nor indeed any inscription, but that which the apostle mentions; *To the unknown God*. When afterwards, either the public, or any particular person, might think proper to erect an altar to all the gods whom the laws of the state allowed,
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the inscription on such altars might very properly be, *To the Gods of Europe, and Asia, and Africa, and to the unknown and strange God, i. e.* the God, whoever he be, to whom, by Epimenides's direction, altars were erected for purifying the city, and whoever afterwards was one of the lawful deities. After such a transaction as that recorded concerning Epimenides, no wonder that the *unknown God*, became much celebrated and venerated at Athens, and that he should often be honoured by the religious ceremonies of its inhabitants for a long time; not improbably, Theophylact, &c. might mistake one of these latter altars for that more antient one to which Paul refers. Dr. Prescott, the learned master of Catherine-hall, in Cambridge, in a dissertation published the beginning of this year, intitled *Paul at Athens*, observes, that Pausanias and Philostratus, speak of several altars at Athens, with the plural number inscription, *θεοις αγνωστοις*; but he gives us not the passages; which, however, Lardner supplies, p. 27.

‘ Having mentioned an altar of Jupiter Olympius, Pausanias adds, “ and nigh unto it is “ *an altar of unknown gods.*” He does not say ‘ *the altar*, but *an altar*. Therefore there may ‘ have been several such altars, as Laertius says. ‘ And when he says *an altar of unknown gods*, he ‘ need not be understood to mean, that the in- ‘ scription was in the plural number; it may ‘ have been, and probably was in the singular.’

‘ In another place, Pausanias speaks of *altars of ‘ gods called unknown, and of heroes, and of the sons ‘ of Theseus at Phalerus.* The inscription of these ‘ altars

‘ altars likewise may have been in the singular
 ‘ number. But as there were several altars at
 ‘ Athens, or near it, inscribed *To the unknown*
 ‘ *God*, it was natural enough for some writers
 ‘ to call them *altars of unknown Gods*: So says
 ‘ Grotius. When Pausanias says, that there were
 ‘ at Athens *altars of unknown Gods*, he means,
 ‘ that there were many altars with such an in-
 ‘ scription, *To the unknown God*; though possibly
 ‘ there were some with an inscription in the plural
 ‘ number, whilst others were in the singular.’

I beg leave to add, that perhaps Pausanias
 (who wrote about the latter end of the second
 century, and, consequently, almost eight hundred
 years after the erection of the altars of Epime-
 nides) seeing that there were several altars in
 Athens, and the neighbourhood, inscribed to
 the unknown god, and not having learned suffi-
 ciently their origin and history, might imagine
 them dedicated to so many different unknown
 gods, and, thereby, be led to speak of them in
 the plural number. The same ignorance and
 mistake might possibly occasion plural inscrip-
 tions in the latter ages of Athens. However,
 Dr. Lardner thinks that we have no proof or
 evidence, that there were any altars at Athens
 inscribed to *unknown gods*, in the plural number.

‘ Philostratus records it, as an observation of
 ‘ Apollonius Tyanæus, “ that we are never to
 ‘ speak disrespectfully of any of the gods; in-
 ‘ timating also, at the same time, that there was
 ‘ some special reason to be upon the guard in
 ‘ that respect at Athens, where are altars to un-
 ‘ known demons.” The same observations will
 ‘ suit with this passage as with the preceding,
 ‘ from

‘ from Pausanias: We are also hereby led to
‘ think, that inscriptions *To the unknown god*, were
‘ peculiar to the Athenians.’

It cannot reasonably be objected, that in the passage quoted above, Laertius only calls them *anonymous altars*, but does not say that they were inscribed *to the unknown god*. By *anonymous* we are only to understand, that they were not inscribed with the name of any *particular* deity; not that they had no inscription at all. Every altar must be inscribed with the name of the divinity to whom it was dedicated, if that name was known; but if it was apprehended that some divinity was concerned whose name was not known (as appears, from the whole story, to have been the case on this solemn occasion of the purification of the city) then the proper inscription of an altar, dedicated to such divinity, could only be *to the unknown god*, and this would be, in the proper sense of the word, an *anonymous* altar.

On the whole, it seems highly probable, that the altar to which St. Paul refers, was one of those which had been erected, almost six hundred years before, in consequence of the directions given by Epimenides for expiating or purifying the city in a time of the pestilence, which, as the historian adds, *ceased* thereupon.

This passage of Diogenes Laertius, Dr. Lardner thinks, will mightily illustrate the introductory part of the apostle's discourse to the Athenians; I beg leave to add, and even the whole discourse itself.

When the apostle happened to cast his eye on an altar with so uncommon an inscription, it would be very natural for him (unless his own
extensive

extensive acquaintance with the Greek writers and history had already informed him) to enquire into the reason and history of its erection ; and having learned it, he would not fail to be much affected with it, and perceive the improvement which might be made of it. When, therefore, he was brought before the supreme court of Areopagus, and examined, *What this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.* The apostle very prudently and properly takes the exordium of his speech from a reference to a well-known fact in the history of their state, and a constitution of their antient laws. *As I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown god.* Upon his mentioning this inscription, all his auditors would immediately recollect the altars which had been antiently raised for the purification of the city from a pestilence by the direction of Epimenides, and would not doubt that he meant one of them. To what a height, then, must their attention and curiosity be raised, when Paul added, *Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.* With what eagerness would they listen to one who professed to instruct them, *who and what* that divinity was, by whose power and goodness so important a benefit had formerly been conferred on their state (of which these altars remained as memorials) but whom even *Epimenides*, their counsellor, did not know, and succeeding generations had still continued ignorant of.

Paul

St. Paul's Discourse at Athens. 77

Paul then proceeds to explain to them the doctrine concerning the one true God,* the Maker and Lord of heaven and earth, and all things in them; unlimited, omnipresent, all-sufficient, the giver of all good to all his creatures,

* I can by no means concur in Dr. Prescott's opinion, that the Athenians worshipped the Supreme Deity under the character and title of *the maker of heaven and earth*, and that the altars bearing the inscription *To the unknown God*, were meant to be dedicated to him. He thinks that the apostle's words in the beginning of his discourse, *God that made the world, &c.* lead to this opinion, as setting out with a title and character of God which the Athenians admitted. But they appear to me rather to prove the contrary; for after he had formally professed to declare unto them an *unknown God whom they ignorantly worshipped*, had he begun that declaration with ascribing to him, a title and character they universally admitted, and under which they worshipped the Supreme God of the universe, they must immediately have laughed at him as impertinent and absurd.

Neither can I assent to his conjecture, that such altars were intended in honour of the God of the Jews; for though the Athenians might adopt some of the civil institutions of the Hebrew law into their code, it by no means follows that they would, in any degree, admit their religion, which, if they conceived any true notions of it, they could not but perceive that it was utterly incompatible with the whole system of their theology and religious ceremonies, and that it would be very unpolitic to put the people upon inquiries after this god and his religion, by introducing into the state, either his name or any ceremonies in honour of him. Should it be suggested, that some wise man, or philosopher, might have erected an altar to the Supreme God with this obscure inscription; let it be remembered, that the laws of Athens did not allow private persons to introduce new deities or ceremonies unapproved of by the state, and that it was an universally received maxim among the philosophers, which modern moderation also hath adopted, *to think with the wise, but to worship as the laws direct.*

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the father and benefactor of all nations of men, who disposeth of them and regulateth all events concerning them by his powerful and all-governing providence, with a view that, by these evidences of his interpositions in their affairs, men might be led to enquire after, discover and acknowledge the ever present deity, in whom they live and move, and have their beings. Evidences which had, in fact, led the most thoughtful of them to embrace and profess such maxims as would have afforded a just foundation, whereon to raise more noble and refined sentiments of him, than had hitherto been entertained, and to perceive the absurdity of the idolatry which had hitherto prevailed.

But I will enter no further into the particulars. An attentive reader, who considers the apostle's discourse in the light mentioned above, will, I think, perceive new beauty and force in each part of it; and what strong convictions it must impress on the minds of his auditors, that the great Being, of whom these doctrines are true, must undoubtedly have interposed, as in all others, so in those important events whereof the altars in question were authentic memorials.

I shall but just hint the two following reflections.

1. That it is strictly true, that Paul did declare to the Athenians that unknown God, whom they had before ignorantly worshipped. Even him by whose providence the pestilence was removed.

2. We have here a remarkable example of the all-governing wisdom of him *who determineth the times*

St. Paul's Discourse at Athens. 79

times before appointed, in causing such a preparation to be made, so long beforehand, for the more advantageous and effectual publication, at Athens, of the true doctrine concerning himself, and of the gospel of his son Jesus, in due season.

Christ's apostles, a rule to christians, how to think and speak of him.

I Have often thought that the manner in which our Lord's apostles spoke of and preached their divine master and his gospel to the world, was a safe and proper directory for others, his followers, how to think and speak of him.

St. Luke, in his second treatise, improperly stiled the Acts of the Apostles, has preserved to us a history of the first preaching of the gospel, to Jews and Gentiles, by the apostles, and apostolic men, after our Lord's resurrection from the dead, and the sending of the Holy Ghost to qualify them for that great work.

Out of this book of St. Luke's, I have here made a collection of all those passages in which the Lord Jesus is expressly named; that by considering and comparing them all together, it may the more easily be seen, what sentiments the apostles themselves entertained, and what they taught others concerning the divine founder of our faith.

Not that we are to be determined by what is delivered in this single book, but in all the inspired writings together, which speak of Christ, and which hold the same uniform language concerning

cerning him; which must be consistent, otherwise it could not be true.

Acts, chap. i. St. Luke, in his introduction, continues the history of the same Jesus, of whose miraculous birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, he had spoken in his former treatise, with the addition of some further particulars of his abode upon earth till he was taken up into heaven, and his commanding them, v. 4. *That they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which (saith he) ye have heard of me.*

Chap. ii. *Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, pours forth upon his apostles the gift of the Holy Spirit, or sanctifying power of God, to qualify them for their great undertaking, of enlightening and reforming a dark and abandoned world. N. B. The same Holy Spirit had before, in like manner, been bestowed upon the Lord Jesus, at his baptism.*

Peter, in his first sermon to his countrymen—v. 22, &c. *Ye men of Israel, bear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and signs which God did by him in the midst of you—him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain—This Jesus, of the seed of David, hath God raised up; whereof we are witnesses.—v. 36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Chap. iii. A lame man restored by Peter, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, or by virtue of that
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that power which he had received from God to communicate to his apostles.

Peter's second sermon, like the former, with this addition, that, at v. 22. he speaks of the Lord Jesus as a prophet like unto Moses, and v. 25. as being of the seed of Abraham.

Chap. iv. Peter, convened before the Jewish council, boldly declares, that the cure wrought upon the lame man above-mentioned, was by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead; and that there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved.

V. 24, &c. The prayer of the apostles is decisive, that the Holy Jesus, was the child or servant of that God who made the world.

Chap. v. ver. 30. Jesus, whom the Jews had slain and crucified, raised from the dead and exalted to be a prince and a saviour. V. 42. Jesus, the Christ, the great prophet foretold and promised.

Chap. vii. v. 52. Stephen accuses his countrymen of betraying and murdering that righteous person foretold by the prophets. V. 55. 59. Stephen sees the Lord Jesus, in his exalted state, at the right hand of God, and recommends himself, at his death, to his care and protection.

Chap. viii. v. 35. Philip preaches Jesus from Isaiah liii. to the Ethiopian eunuch.

Chap. x. Peter, in his discourse with Cornelius, informs him of the holy character of Jesus of Nazareth; of the divine powers given to him by Almighty God; of his raising him from the

dead, and ordaining him to be the judge of quick and dead.

Chap. xiii. Paul's speech to the Jews at Antioch, the same as Peter's, chap. ii. to the Jews at Jerusalem.

Chap. xvii. Paul's method of preaching in the synagogues, v. 3. *He reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alledging, That Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Christ.* [The like xviii. 5. 28.]

V. 23. Paul's sermon to the Athenians, teaches them the true God, the Maker of all things, and v. 30, 31, that *He now commandeth all men, every where, to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man, whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Chap. xx. v. 28. Paul exhorteth the elders of Ephesus, *To feed the church of the Lord, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

Chap. xxii. v. 8. Our Lord, speaking from heaven to Paul, calls himself Jesus of Nazareth.

Chap. xxvi. Paul before Agrippa, v. 22, 23. *Having, therefore, obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead.*

COROLLARIES.

1. THEODORET, in his commentary on Rom. i. 4. remarketh, “ That the Lord Christ, before his cross and suffering, was never reputed to be God, not only not by the Jews, but even not by his own apostles.”

I would remark and infer from the above summary of the way in which the gospel was first preached and propagated, that even after our Lord’s resurrection and ascension into heaven, and sending of the Holy Ghost, his apostles still looked upon him and spoke of him, invariably, as really and properly a man—but a man endowed with extraordinary divine communications of wisdom and power—a *man approved of God* for his eminent virtue and holiness, and voluntary sufferings for the truth and for the salvation of others, ii. 22. x. 38; and, therefore, exalted, as most worthy, to the highest dominion and honour, ii. 36. v. 31. x. 42.

2. The apostles never, in their preaching, dropped any intimations, as though the Lord Jesus had existed in some prior state, before his birth in this world; unless it is to be understood and taken for granted, that all other men also have existed in some antecedent state. For they uniformly speak of him, both to Jews and Gentiles, as of a man, a Jew, of a particular family, the family of David, and of the stock of Abraham, ii. 30. xiii. 23. As a prophet, foretold of God, one of their brethren, like unto Moses, and, therefore, a man like him, iii. 22. vii. 37.

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3. The apostles appear to be entire strangers to that theological figment of two natures in Christ, with which a false philosophy has adulterated the plainness and simplicity of the gospel; a device which can solve every thing, and solves nothing: Nor, do they ever betray the least trace of their having believed their great master to have been some mighty angel, the chief of created spirits, by whom, as his deputy, God made the world, and who condescended to leave that his glorious station to inform a human body, and save mankind. Although others have collected this and more from our Lord's sayings concerning himself, recorded by the sacred Evangelists, it appears, from these discourses of his apostles about him, to both Jews and Gentiles, that they did not so understand their master; but believed him and spoke of him, as a man born and living amongst men, raised up by Almighty God for the greatest purposes, which having fulfilled, he was as greatly rewarded.

4. The unbelieving Jews, vi. 14, and other adversaries since their time, have scornfully upbraided christians with enlisting themselves under such a name and leader, as *Jesus of Nazareth*, i. e. a man of low condition, and in poor circumstances, and an inhabitant of the obscure town of Nazareth in Galilee.

But the heavenly messenger, Mark xvi. 6. did not suppose there was any thing degrading in the name. Nor were his apostles ashamed of it, after his ascension into heaven, but the contrary, ii. 22. Nor does our great Lord
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disdain so to call himself, in his present most exalted state at the right hand of God. xxii. 8.

It were earnestly to be wished, that we his followers, out of a mistaken, but well-meant intention to do him honour, had not ascribed to our Saviour Christ such a nature and imaginary perfections as his apostles, who were best acquainted with him, never ascribed to him, to the danger of defeating, unwittingly, the great end of his dying and rising again, and of depriving ourselves, in a great measure, of the benefit of his holy and virtuous example and sufferings. Happy would it have been for themselves and all others, if christians had honoured the Lord Jesus more by obeying his commands, and had made this the test of love and reverence for him, John xiv. 15. instead of attributing to him titles and a character which he never assumed, and which add nothing to his real dignity, and making these additions and inventions of their own the sole badge of true believers, to the fatal neglect of that better criterion, which he so warmly recommended to his disciples himself, and almost with his dying words, John xiii. 35. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

PATROBAS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

WITH your leave I shall continue my remarks on the reasoning of St. Paul, without taking notice, at present, of what W. W. has replied, in answer to those that I have already sent you. In the mean time, I shall think myself happy if so good a critic, and so candid a writer, will continue his animadversions. When I have finished my observations, I shall take notice of all his remarks at once, frankly acknowledging whenever he has convinced me of any mistake. And as I have not the least doubt, but that he will be as ingenuous on his side, I hope that, together, we shall be able to set some very difficult parts of the sacred writings in a clearer point of light. If the reasoning of the authors appear to be, in any case, hasty and inconclusive, we shall discharge christianity of a real incumbrance. On the other hand, if it be only difficult and hard to be understood, the instances of it may perhaps be, in some measure, disentangled; so that *truth* and *christianity* cannot fail to be gainers, and nothing will be lost on the side of *candour*.

Not, however, to be always on the objecting side, I shall endeavour, in my turn, to free the apostle's reasoning from any difficulties with which my own mind has been pressed, and with respect to which I have already received satisfaction, either from my own reflections,

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or by the assistance of my acquaintance among men of learning; when the cases are such, that there is room to apprehend that others may possibly have stumbled at them as much as myself.

For some time it appeared to me, that St. Paul had, though without design, given an injurious representation of the law of Moses, or rather of the whole Jewish dispensation of religion, out of his great zeal for the gospel of Christ; asserting that it contains no provision for the pardon of sin; as when he says, Gal. ii. 21. *If righteousness had been by the law, then is Christ dead in vain.* And many other expressions might be quoted to the same purpose. I am convinced, however, that I was under a mistake with respect to this subject; and I hope that the following observations, suggested by a learned friend, now deceased, and which removed my doubts with respect to it, will also remove those of others, who may have been pressed with the same difficulties as myself.

The Jews, in the times of our Saviour and the apostles, set so high a value upon their law (that is, the ceremonial law) that they imagined this alone to be sufficient for salvation, especially if a person was free from all gross immoralities. Nay, they seem to have thought, that by sacrifices, purifications, and other external performances, they could expiate the guilt of the most heinous sins. And thus they set aside all regard to the mercy of God, as the ground of their hopes of pardon and justification, substituting this righteousness of their own in the
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room of it. They seem to have thought that such an obedience to the law superseded the necessity of repentance, and that they did hereby, in a sense, make a claim to the divine favour and future rewards.

That this was the prevailing notion among them, appears from the character given in the gospel, of the Pharisees, who were the most popular and orthodox sect. Hence it was, that both John the Baptist and our Saviour began their ministry with a call to *repentance*, which was, in a manner, a new doctrine to them. And this is agreeable to the whole strain of the apostle's reasoning in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians; in which he labours to prove the necessity of a regard to the mercy of God, however revealed, for the pardon of sin, or for justification.

Now his argument is, not that there were no declarations of mercy, nor any provision made for taking away sin, under the former dispensation (which he is so far from denying, that he, again and again, asserts it very strongly; saying, that Abraham was justified before the law, by faith, and mentioning David as celebrating the happiness of the man whose sins are pardoned). But he asserts that the law of Moses, even including the moral precepts of it, could never justify them before God, as they fondly imagined. To prove this, he begins with showing that they, as well as the Gentiles, had grossly corrupted themselves; that all were sinners, in having failed of a complete obedience to their respective laws, and were become liable
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to the penalties of them, and therefore could no otherwise be justified than by an act of grace, or some promise of mercy to those who repented of their sins. He, therefore, infers from hence the necessity of removing that dependence, which they were ready to take up on their own righteousness, or the righteousness of the law; (that is, their obedience to it) and casting themselves wholly upon the mercy and grace of God, as manifested in the gospel of Christ. And to induce them to this, he shews that this was no new doctrine, being the very same that was preached to Abraham and David, and upon which good men, under the Old Testament, founded all their hopes.

It is not true, therefore, that the apostle disparages the law unjustly, in order to enhance the merit of the gospel. He only endeavours to take off the Jews from their extravagant prejudice in favour of the Mosaic law, and their applying it to purposes for which it was never designed; that is, to justify them in the sight of God, or to stand in the place of repentance and the mercy of God.

Neither does he represent the Jewish religion, in general, as defective, and not providing for the pardon of sin (as might be supposed) for he expressly says, the gospel, that is, the promises of pardon, was preached to them under the law. Those pious Jews, who, at the same time that they conformed to the ceremonial law, trusted in the mercy of God, and his promises, for pardon, had that very temper, which the apostle was labouring to promote in the minds
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of his converts. And, if they had mistaken his meaning, as if he had been vilifying the Jewish religion, and had, in answer to him, urged the promises, both in the Mosaic writings and the prophets, of the mercy of God, &c. He would readily have joined issue with them, and have said, “ I know that very sufficient
 “ provision was made to satisfy the mind concerning the mercy of God, and his readiness
 “ to pardon, by the prophets and even by Moses ; and, therefore, I say, that the doctrine
 “ of the mercy of God, without a perfect obedience, is no new doctrine, but was taught
 “ our fathers. But what I am labouring, is to
 “ shew these judaizing christians the necessity
 “ of repentance, and having recourse to the
 “ fuller discovery, which is now made of the
 “ mercy of God by Jesus Christ for the pardon
 “ of sin ; and to convince them of the insufficiency of these ceremonial performances and
 “ external privileges on which they place so
 “ much dependence.”

It appears to me, that what he has more immediately in view, both in *Romans* and *Galatians*, is to rectify those false notions which the Jews entertained even of their own religion, as if the excellency of it lay in the ceremonial law ; while they, in a great measure, disregarded the more spiritual part of it, and particularly the representations of the evil nature of sin, the necessity of sincere repentance, and the need which all stand in of the pardoning mercy and grace of God. These were points common to the Old and New Testament, and did, indeed, contain
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the essence of all true religion ; nor could it be supposed that any religion which came from heaven could fail to teach them. But these were things which the generality of the Jews, at the time of our Saviour's coming, had but very low notions of. Their religion was a poor, low, ceremonial thing, consisting chiefly of external services, while the spiritual part of it was, in a great measure, neglected and overlooked.

The apostle, therefore, at the same time that he represents it as the great excellence of the gospel, that it contained such a full discovery of the mercy of God, and by the death of Christ, made such abundant provision for taking away sin, endeavours to lead them into more just and enlarged views of the nature of their own religion ; shewing them, that in all ages, the same doctrine had been preached, and that good men had, under all dispensations, the same hopes and views.

Though, however, it be true, the promises of pardon were published together with the law of Moses, yet, they did not properly make a part of the law, much less of the ceremonial law, which certainly made no provision for moral offences. It is not proper to say the King's pardon is the sentence of the law, or that a person, upon pleading it, is justified by law. If a person who had broken a law is yet forgiven, he cannot be said to be *justified by works*; it is surely an *act of grace*.—But, after all, this is little more than a dispute about a word ; for, in one sense, a man may be said to be *justified by works*, as without good works or an holy temper he can-

not be accepted, and on the other hand all must allow, that it is *an act of favour* and mercy in God to forgive sin, even upon repentance. As to the apostle James, it is plain, he considers faith merely as an assent to the gospel; whereas Paul makes it a practical principle, productive of obedience.

Faith in Christ is the principle of obedience and repentance, and, when put alone, supposes and includes them; but still it is a distinct act of the mind. The lowest sense of it, is the belief of christianity, which was necessary as the introduction to the rest; but it also signifies, an humble trust in, and reliance upon the promises of pardon and mercy, made in the gospel, through Christ, which are the foundation of the sinner's hope, and of his return to God.

When the apostle says, *By the works of the law no flesh can be justified*, he means, either by observing the ceremonial law, on which the Jews at that time laid so great a stress, or even the moral law; because he had shewn, that mankind in general had broken that law, and consequently stood in need of some act of grace, or some other provision than the law itself made; that is, some promise of pardon, which, whether it was made under the Mosaic dispensation or not, was still a distinct thing from the law, and was in a great measure neglected and overlooked by the Jews at that time. As to faith, as distinguished from works, or obedience to the moral law, it meant (as observed above) an humble trust in the mercy of God for pardon, however, that mercy was revealed, whether by
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a general promise, as to Abraham, and other of the Old Testament saints, or through a mediator, as under the gospel. The principle, or temper of mind, was still the same, consisting, in a deep sense, of the sinner's guilt and unworthiness, and of his sole dependence on divine mercy.

As to the case of Abraham—the substance of the apostle's reasoning is this. First, in opposition to the stress laid upon circumcision, and an observance of the Mosaic law, Abraham is represented as justified before he was circumcised, and therefore is the father of the uncircumcised as well as others. And, secondly, his faith in the divine promise was accepted of God, instead of that complete and perfect obedience in which *he* had failed, as well as others. And though it is true, that his faith was a moral disposition and therefore might be called, in a sense, a good work; yet that, on account of this, his sins should be forgiven, and his imperfect obedience accepted, was an act of grace and favour, and therefore similar to what the apostle was insisting upon as the ground of our justification before God; which is not our complete obedience, but the mercy of God in the gospel, to which our faith entitles us. The apostle's argument is taken from the particular manner of expression used by the historian, namely, that this act of faith in Abraham, was accounted to him for righteousness.

The quotations from the Psalms are certainly much to the apostle's purpose, because they represent the blessedness of those who had obtained

tained the pardon of sin; which certainly implies, that it was to an act of divine grace and favour they were indebted for it, and not to any works of their own. And though it is true that in the same Psalm it is added, that in such persons there was *no guile*, yet this does not affect the apostle's argument; because such expressions by no means imply that their obedience was so perfect as to supersede the necessity of pardon, that is, an act of grace. On the contrary, it is plain, that when it is said, "God was pleased not to impute iniquity to them," it is supposed he might have done so, if he had dealt with them according to the rules of strict justice, and, consequently, that their acceptance was of grace, not of works.

Though I am satisfied that the apostle's views in what he writes upon this subject be just, and his reasoning be generally satisfactory, I still cannot help thinking that some of his arguments from the Old Testament make little or nothing to his purpose. If the passages he refers to be intended to support a piece of strict reasoning, it appears to me that he argues inconclusively; and if they be only quoted by way of accommodation, their original sense is so foreign to his application of them, that I think the quotations could have no effect whatever; but that they rather tend to authorize such freedoms with the scriptures, as appears to me to be of very dangerous example.

In Rom. x. 3—13. St. Paul introduces Moses as describing the different properties of the law and of the gospel, *For they being ignorant of*
God's

God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man that doth these things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh in this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven; that is, to bring Christ down from above? Or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead? But, what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart. This is the word of faith which we preach, That if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

I cannot help thinking that Moses was speaking concerning any other than his own law in the place referred to; which, for the satisfaction of the reader, I shall transcribe intire, in its proper connection.

Deut. xxx. 10—14. *If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments, and his statutes, which are written in this book of the law; and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. For the commandment which I command thee this day, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say,*
Who

Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it? But the word is nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.

The only circumstance that suggested to St. Paul this application of the passage, appears to me to be the mere mention of *ascending up into heaven*, and *going down into the deep*; but that so forced an accommodation of the passage can answer any good purpose in writing, is beyond my comprehension.

St. Paul appears to me to have been equally hasty in appealing to the prophet Habakkuk, in favour of the doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to works, in the following passage, Gal. iii. 11, 12. *That no man is justified by works in the sight of God is evident; for, The just shall live by faith; and the law is not of faith; but, The man that doth them shall live in them.*

The whole passage in the original stands connected, as follows.

Hab. ii. 3, 4. *For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but in the end it shall speak, and not lye: though it tarry, wait for it: because it surely will come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul that is lift up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.*

But it is evident, that, if the word, in the original, ought to have been translated *Faith*, at all, in this place, it must mean *faith in the accomplishment of the divine predictions*, and of this here referred to in particular; and, upon this natural supposition, the word *live* cannot, with any propriety, be rendered *justified*, for the sense of

of the whole clause will then be, simply, this, that the just must continue waiting for the accomplishment of the prophecy; and this very sense the apostle gives of this text, when he quotes it, upon another occasion. Heb. x. 36—39. *For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise: For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*

But I rather think, that the word in the Hebrew באמונתו ought not to have been rendered *faith* at all; for it properly signifies *faithfulness, integrity, uprightness*. And in this sense, it will better answer to the first clause of the verse, *His soul which is lift up is not upright in him*: And still better if, supposing a small error to have crept into our Hebrew copies, we admit the reading of the Seventy, which is authorised by St. Paul in other quotations. The whole verse will then run thus; *If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him; but the just shall live by his uprightness.*

If this be admitted to be the true sense of the prophet Habakkuk, (and both the original Hebrew, and the connection favour this construction) he is so far from contradicting the tenor of the law [*The man that doth them shall live in them*] that his assertion amounts to the same thing, only expressed in other words.

In the epistle to the Hebrews, the apostle argues very justly against the efficacy of the sacrifices under the law to take away sin; but I cannot think that, in the following passage from the Psalms, the sacrifice of Christ was, as he seems to suppose, referred to, as more efficacious for that purpose; admitting what, I believe, the author really meant, viz. that Christ died a sacrifice in no other than a figurative sense, his death being subservient to the taking away of sin, or being a necessary part of a scheme, the great object of which was the reformation of a sinful world; which is a point of resemblance abundantly sufficient to justify the application of the term.

Heb. x. 5—10. *Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt-offering, and sacrifice for sin, thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. Above, when he said, Sacrifice, and offering, and burnt-offering, and offering for sin, thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein (which are offered by the law) then said he, Lo I come, to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second: By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

That the unprejudiced reader may be the better judge of the solidity of this piece of reasoning, I shall transcribe the passage the apostle founds his argument upon intire, exactly as it stands in the book of Psalms.

Psalms

Pfalm xl. 6—11. Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation. Lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest: I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart: I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth from the great congregation. Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O Lord, let thy loving-kindness, and thy truth, continually preserve me.

Here is nothing said concerning, *a body prepared for any person*; which is the chief circumstance in the Psalm that makes it look as if it had any reference to Christ. This is only an error in the version of the Seventy, which St. Paul copied, and, seemingly, rested his argument upon. Leaving out this clause, then, there is nothing in the Psalm, according to the Hebrew, and our translation, that is not quite applicable to David himself.

Pfalm li. 11—17. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise: For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it:

Thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Had St. Paul but had recourse to this Psalm, in which there is no false interpretation in the Seventy to mislead him, he could have had no pretence for supposing, that David ever thought of setting up the sacrifice of the death of Christ in opposition to the sacrifices which were under the law. The efficacy of the sacrifices under the law is, indeed, denied by him; and they are opposed to others, which are emblematical sacrifices: but it is not the sacrifice of the body of Christ, but the sacrifice of a broken spirit, and of a broken and a contrite heart; exactly agreeable to the sentiment and manner of David, throughout the whole book of Psalms, and of all the Old Testament prophets; for instances of which, consult Isaiah i. 11—20. Hosea vi. 6. Amos v. 21—27. Micah vi. 6—8. It is agreeable likewise to the sentiments of the most intelligent Jews in our Saviour's time, approved by himself; see Mark xii. 33.

As the sentiments and even the expression of the latter Psalm are so much the same with those in the former, and the occasion of them seems to have been similar, if not the same; is it not reasonable, to explain the former, which is more obscure, by the latter, which is plainer and more determinate?

I am perfectly satisfied that the apostle had the greatest reason to be alarmed at the disposition to *judaize* which the Gentile converts discovered; and it is with great propriety that he
terms

terms the law, in the sense in which they admired and conformed to it, *beggarly elements, carnal ordinances, &c.* yet I cannot help thinking, that, in some cases, he begins with this proper and justifiable use of these terms, and afterwards slides insensibly into another that is more obnoxious, and hardly justifiable. Is not his use of the term *flesh* in the following passages an example of this?

To the Galatians, who had begun to apostatize to Judaism he says, Gal. iii. 3. *Are ye so foolish, having begun in the spirit [the gospel] are ye now made perfect by the flesh? [the law.]* Then comparing the seed of Abraham by Hagar to the law, and his seed by Sarah to the gospel, he saith, Gal. iv. 29. *But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now.* Afterwards, keeping to the same terms, he goes on, Gal. v. 16—25. *This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these two are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye are led by the spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, peace, long-suffering, gentleness,*
G 3
goodness,

goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit.

Another instance of the same kind, we find in the 8th chapter of Romans, from the 1st to the 15th verse. There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. For the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit; if so be the spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness. But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;
but

but if ye, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage [the law] again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption [the gospel] whereby we cry Abba, Father.

The same ambiguous terms, *flesh* and *spirit*, occur here, that were made use of in the passage I quoted from the epistle to the Galatians, and the manner of varying and interchanging the sense of them hath the same tendency to throw an odium upon the law; with this only difference, that, in this passage, the frequent transitions from one sense to another are more imperceptible and dubious, which renders the whole more obscure.

St. Paul himself seems to have been aware of this objection to his doctrine of faith and grace, as encouraging licentiousness. He anticipates it, and in a formal manner replies to it. His apology we find in the 6th chapter of the epistle to the Romans. The objection is twice put, and the answer is, accordingly, twofold. The objection is stated as follows, and evidently levelled against nothing but the doctrine of justification by faith or grace, without works.

Rom. vi. 1. *What shall we say then? shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid!* And afterwards, v. 16. *What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid!* This objection is of the utmost consequence, and his introduction to a reply is proportionally spirited and solemn. Let us now see, of what it consists.

“ Our

“ Our baptism,” saith he, “ teacheth us
 “ the contrary.” If we ask, in what manner?
 he replies, that, “ Baptism by water, whereby
 “ we are initiated into the christian church,
 “ represents, or figures to us the death and
 “ resurrection of Christ. Now, *he died unto sin,*
 “ and *lives, or rises again, unto God.*” We
 ought, therefore, to die unto sin, and live unto
 God. His own words are as follows.

Rom. vi. 2—12. *How shall we that are dead
 to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not, that
 so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ,
 were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are
 buried with him, by baptism, unto death; that,
 like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the
 glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in
 newness of life. For if we have been planted toge-
 ther in the likeness of his death, we shall be also
 in the likeness of his resurrection. Knowing this,
 that our old man is crucified with him; that the
 body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we
 should not serve sin: for he that is dead is freed from
 sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe
 that we shall also live with him. Knowing, that
 Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more;
 death shall have no more dominion over him. For,
 in that he died, he died unto sin once; but, in that
 he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye
 yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God,
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin, there-
 fore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey
 it in the lusts thereof.*

This, I am apprehensive, will appear to be
 but little satisfactory to any one that wisheth

to see christianity effectually cleared from a charge of licentiousness. At best, it is disappointing his reader, whose expectations he had raised so high by the spirited manner in which he resented the imputation, and begun his answer; by putting him off with a mere allusion, instead of a solid argument. But even the allusion seems to be faulty. It is both arbitrary, and defective. For, in the first place, what natural analogy can there be betwixt baptism, and the death or crucifixion of Christ. Baptism is the instituted manner of our taking upon us the christian profession. But this is quite a general idea, and hath no more relation to the death, or crucifixion of Christ, than it hath to any part of his life.

But the allusion is likewise very defective: for it depends upon a double ambiguity, one in each of the phrases [τη αμαρτια] and [τω θεω] which makes the antithesis, in both its parts, merely verbal. And, accordingly, it intirely disappears, when we attend to the ideas: For we neither *die unto sin* nor *live unto God* (admitting the propriety of these terms to express a change of life and character) in the same sense in which Christ died unto sin, and lived or rose again unto God. For Christ had no sin of his own to die unto, or to cease from; *He died, only, on account, or in consequence, of our sins*; whereas *we*, by dying unto sin, really *cease to sin*. Again, by Christ's living unto God, is meant *his rising again by the power of God his Father*; whereas our living unto God must be understood in a different manner, viz. *our living according to the will of God*.

Remarks

Remarks on the Objections of BARUMENSIS to the Socinian Hypothesis, Vol. II. pag. 441.

BARUMENSIS sets out with large professions of christian charity and toleration of dissenting brethren, but soon forgets his generous professions. For there is a certain bundle of opinions, upon which, for reasons known and good, he takes care to bestow the name Socinian most plentifully, and to which he can allow no quarter.

He professes, indeed, in one place, to use the phrase by way of distinction only. But it is too apparent, that it is by way of odious distinction.

If a writer produces arguments from the holy scriptures for what he advances, without borrowing or professing to borrow from others, why should he be listed under any sect who may happen to have supported the same sentiment, by the like arguments?

And yet, for all the popular cry against it; there seems nothing to be ashamed of in the name of Socinian, any more than of Lutheran, Calvinist, or Zuinglian. High, most deservedly high, as those great reformers stand, Luther, Zuinglius and Calvin, in the book of fame, Faustus, Socinus, will be found to rank as high in the book of life, which is of more consequence; who, for the sake of Christ and his gospel, left his noble family, fortunes, and expectancies,

in Italy, and lived a stranger upon earth, in a strange country, irreproachable in his morals, indefatigable in his labours, for the cause of God's revealed truth, and persecuted to the last.

But, say you, "he was the author of many pernicious errors and heresies." So says the Papist also, of you and all your Protestant reformers. All is not error or heresy, that is called such by an angry adversary. Socinus was persuaded, that the word of God was to be interpreted as he interpreted it; and time and impartial enquiry, the discoverers of truth, have given a sanction to his interpretations, more solid and weighty than many imagine. Grotius confirms that sentiment of Socinus, that our Lord had not dwelt in a pre-existent state, with far stronger arguments of holy writ, than the other had done; since whose time it has been daily gaining ground. The late Dr. Lardner, in his "Letter, &c. concerning the Logos, 1759," seems to many unanswerable; and the author of "The true doctrine of the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ in 1767," has still farther illustrated the subject.

But names of men, and their authority, are nothing. "What saith the scripture;" that is the Christian and the Protestant rule. Did the Lord Jesus assert his pre-existent state in glory before all ages? Or, did all his words and actions uniformly speak the contrary? How did his apostles esteem of him, whilst he abode with them upon earth? How did they speak of him, after his ascension into heaven?

But

But from this tribunal of the word of God, Barumenfis, very inconsistently with some of his own declarations, would appeal, *to the Fathers, Martyrs, and Confessors of the church!* pag. 450, and in a very pathetic declamation mourns over our departure from the venerable universal sentiment of all ages concerning the atonement and pre-existence of Christ.

If we have the scripture for us, it matters little that Fathers, &c. are against us. And, with the leave of the objector, two or three Italians in the seventeenth century had as much right to search the holy scriptures upon any point, and communicate their researches to the world, as two or three men of any other country, or at any other period.

But the sentiment concerning the Lord Jesus not having lived in a pre-existent state, is not a mere novelty of these later ages, as Barumenfis would affect to represent it. After the apostles, it continued to be the belief of that respectable body of our Lord's disciples, the Nazarene Christians, *i. e.* Jewish Believers, for several ages. These churches of Judea were broken up by the persecution under the Emperor Adrian, and driven into the East, where they subsisted, though much diminished, till near the year of our Lord 400. And they were hardly treated and shunned by other churches of christians, for continuing the observance of the law of Moses, although they did not require it of the Gentile Christians. This unbrotherly behaviour of other Christians to these Nazarenes, has been much lamented by some of later times, who have been far
from

from espousing their sentiments. It may also be observed, that the apostolic Fathers, favour the no pre-existence of Christ, in all their writings, which we can depend upon as genuine and not interpolated.

The doctrine of the pre-existence was first brought in by Justin Martyr, a heathen philosopher and convert, who flourished about 40 years after the death of the apostle St. John; and it was afterwards wrought up more into a system and improved, by the Platonic Fathers of the famous Alexandrian school in Egypt, Clement, Origen, &c. &c. But the antient Nazarene Christian faith was still adhered to by many, Sabellius, Noetus, Paul of Samosata, and their followers; and maintained by Marcellus of Ancyra, and Photinus, about the time of the council of Nice. And the general belief of all other Christians, at that time, *i. e.* before the council of Nice, for the first 300 years after Christ, was that which was charged upon Arius, and for which he was condemned, namely, that the Son was created before all ages by Almighty God, and was afterwards his instrument in the creation of all other things.

It was then, in the 4th century, under Constantine, that the present orthodoxy concerning the Lord Jesus, received its form, and became established by imperial authority; and, [except during the short inter-regnum of the Arian Emperors, who were persecutors in their turns] from that time to this, during a course of 1400 years, it has been made penal in all Christian countries.

countries, and capital in many of them, to be known to differ from the received orthodoxy in this point of the pre-existence of our Saviour; and in our own country, so late as the reign of that bigot James I. Bartholomew Legate, and Edward Wightman, were burnt to death for Arianism, as it was then called; though it appears from Fuller's particular account of the opinions of the former, that he was rather what Barumenfis styles a Socinian. But there will be a re-hearing before another judge. Fuller says, he was learned, especially in the holy scriptures; and what is far more, that he was of life unblamable.

I reckon the grand apostacy and corruption of Christ's religion, to be the *man of sin*, or human authority, *sitting in the temple of God*, 2 Theff. ii. 3, 4. and dictating in the things concerning Christ. In the degree that this shall be removed, the purity of his religious, and love and peace amongst his followers, will be promoted and restored.

Professed Protestants should leave to the Papists the honour of maintaining that the religion of Christ is made doubtful, or in danger of coming to nothing, by the variety of opinions of those who profess it. The religion of Christ is, *keeping his commandments*. John xiv. 15. *To keep from evil—not to be of the world, as he was not of the world—to be sanctified through the truth*. John xvii. 15, 16, 17. And, *This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent; i. e. thine apostle, thy messenger; vested with authority from thee*.
The

The new motives to an holy obedience for Christians, are the love of God manifested by his only begotten son, and the promise of everlasting life by him. John iii. 16. and also *the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge—who hath washed us from our sins in his own blood,—hath laid down his life for us.* Eph. iii. 19. Rev. i. 5. 1 John iii. 16.

These things are plain; every thing necessary for faith and practice in the scriptures, are intelligible to the meanest capacity; the *way-faring man cannot err therein*, nor be under the least uncertainty what he *must do* to be saved, to obtain eternal life, unless he put himself into the hands of a guide, who will put into his creed the doctrines of *atonement, vicarious sacrifice, pre-existence, &c. &c.* articles these which very happily were left out of the apostles creed, and which certainly cannot be necessary to salvation, unless for those who find them in the holy scriptures themselves, but which can give them no right to impose them upon others.

SOCRATES SCHOLASTICUS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

The design of your Theological Repository is admirable, and cannot fail of being useful. As you have invited and encouraged the more timorous part of mankind to propose their doubts, and to communicate such hints as may be improved upon by better hands, I take this advantage, in full assurance that some friend to scripture knowledge will help me to understand the following passages. All persons must be very sensible how much has been built upon them, and how very differently they have been explained.

THEOPHILUS.

THE true meaning of the whole first chapter to the Hebrews, depends very much upon the light in which we consider the last part of the second verse, *by whom also he made the worlds.* I agree with those who would translate the word *αιωνας*, by ages, or periods of time; for besides that the *sundry parts, and divers manners*, ver. 1. seem to require this, it is not very clear, at least, that ever the Greek word is used in the New Testament to signify the visible or material world. But still, it is difficult to conceive how these several ages were made by the Son of God, who only spake to the Jews under the last of them. The learned Grotius would read *δι ου*, that is, *for whom*, &c. instead of *δι ε*, as it is at present;

present; and, in this way, the coherence would be obvious and beautiful; but it does not appear that there are any ancient MSS. or versions to justify such an alteration of the original; and whilst we retain the preposition governing the genitive, I very much question whether the words will translate, as above, *for*, or *because of whom*, &c. No examples of this have occurred to me, and I believe that Grotius himself has not mentioned any. If you or any of your correspondents can supply that defect, to make out a very natural meaning of the whole, it would be a good service to the publick. In the meantime, till this happen, I would adventure upon an enlargement of idea to the word *ποίησεν* (made) as if the apostle intended by it, the making out, finishing, or perfecting of the ages, so as to determine the proper use or value of all that had gone before. They were, till then, even the best of them, incomplete; but by the Son, the great Messiah, the several periods or dispensations were so united, as to become one great and beautiful whole. As seen before his appearing, they were not easily, if at all, to be understood; whereas this last and best dispensation threw distinct light upon each of them, so that the ages taken together were then made. Most of the Greek Lexicons, under the word *ποιέω*, mention different senses of it, that come so near to what I would affix to it, in the present case, that it does not appear to me at all an unnatural stretch; and yet I could have wished to produce a single direct instance. But this may possibly occur to some of your readers; and it would be kind in

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them to publish any such thing in one of your numbers. Mr. Leigh, in his *Critica Sacra*, observes, that the verb comes from *ποιος*, (*qualis*) and seems to intimate, that which gives such properties or qualities to any thing, as to form or make it out. Some may think that the use of the word *αιωνας*, Heb. xi. 3. destroys the very foundation upon which all the above is built; and, I acknowledge, that, for a long while, it appeared to me an unfurmountable difficulty; nor was I relieved much, by what the learned Dr. Sykes has writ upon that passage. His reasonings are specious, but not clearly conclusive: they helped me, however, to this thought, which I likewise presume to lay before you; that the apostle's intention there, is to signify, *that through faith we understand that the ages were framed* (fitted up, compleated) *by the word, or appointment of God; so that things which are seen by us, in the history of former times, particularly that of the Elders, ver. 2, who by this principle of faith obtained a good report, were not brought about by things which do appear, things which strike upon the senses of mankind; opposed to things hoped for, things not seen, ver. 1. in confirmation whereof, the following examples from ver. 4, are adduced. If this view of the text be admitted, which does no violence to the original, it makes an easy and agreeable connexion. The principle of faith, as described by the apostle, and without which it is impossible to please God, in the manner that the Elders of the Jewish nation did, is well illustrated, from its wonderful effects. But if, by the worlds, we*
under-

understand the heavens and the earth material, with their connections, we are left at a great loss to see the meaning and propriety of ver. 3, altogether. I must repeat, that it is with great diffidence I propose these hints; but as I have no aim in studying the New Testament, except to ascertain the precise, original meaning of it, for my own benefit and that of others; I could not be easy till I embraced this providential help, by means of your Repository, either to be set right if I am wrong, or to be confirmed in my opinions if they are right. You may possibly receive some other hints from the same hand, who, by his office, is obliged to lecture frequently upon a large portion of scripture; and who, for want of such assistance as you hath lately provided us with, hath, after all the attention he could give to the best expositors, been obliged to venture, in some instances, upon interpretations different from theirs.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

PAULINUS is not satisfied with my answer to his "queries concerning St. Paul's argument, Rom. v. 12—14." He cannot help concluding, "that the death with which Adam was threatened, in case of his eating the forbidden fruit, was *mortality*, and not the actual immediate inflicting of death, because he thinks that the punishment, according to its real import, must have taken place when the threatening was so express."

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I cannot see the necessity of this, nor could I ever thoroughly satisfy myself with this interpretation of that threatening, *in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die*. All sanctions of laws must be *so express*, or they stand for nothing, and yet the supreme lawgiver has an unquestionable right and authority to remit, mitigate, or commute the punishment threatened, and this seems to me to have been plainly the case here. Gen. iii. 17—19. *And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return (of course) unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

In consequence of this sentence he is turned out of Paradise, and excluded from the tree of life, for this purpose expressly, *lest he should eat of the tree of life and live for ever*; which must, of course, expose his offspring to their natural mortality; and if he had suffered immediate death, his posterity must have been cut off with him. But under this milder sentence (not without hope even of farther favour) he is suffered to live as long as his natural robust constitution would hold out, and the common fruits of the earth would support it, even 930 years; a little eternity compared with what the common period of human life has since been reduced to.

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This first threatening was a sufficient intimation to mankind, that any disobedience to their maker deserved immediate death, whether it was always exacted or not.

“But should all this be allowed,” Paulinus thinks, “it will not at all help St. Paul’s reasoning.”

I cannot see what need St. Paul’s reasoning stands in of any help at all. His plain design is to shew, that all mankind die, or are liable to die, through Adam’s transgression alone; and that they shall all be raised to life again through the righteousness of Christ alone. The death of the whole human race, is a part of the punishment of their father Adam, for his sin; as a resurrection of them to life, is a part of the reward of Christ for his obedience. *As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that* (εφ ω, with respect to which, viz. death) *all have sinned, i. e. are involved in this consequence of that one sin of Adam (and nothing is more common in the course of God’s providence, than for children to suffer for their parents fault.) This is plainly what the apostle is arguing. For, says he, until the law, or before the law (the law of Moses, and, if you will, the law of Noah too,) sin was in the world, sin against the whole moral law. But sin is not imputed or capital where there is no law that makes it so; the sinner without such a law, though guilty of a wrong action, is not guilty of death (as the scriptures speak) nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgres-*

sion, against a law threatening death, therefore all men who are not under, and therefore cannot sin against such a law, and yet die, die for, or, in consequence of Adam's sin, not their own. *Through the offence of one, many be dead, v. 15. By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life, v. 18.*

There was, indeed, a law given to Noah which made murder capital; but the Jews, after Moses' time, had at least ten such laws; *therefore*, says the apostle, *the law, i. e. the law of Moses, entered that the offence might abound, but where sin, i. e. sin incurring death, abounded, grace did much more abound, viz. in restoring such to life through Jesus Christ.*

Paulinus observes, that "if the breach of a law, the penalty of which was the actual immediate infliction of death, was sinning after the similitude of Adam's transgression, very few under the law of Moses did so sin." Adam was threatened, indeed, *in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*; but neither the law of Noah nor that of Moses required such an immediate execution of the criminal. Death being the legal penalty of such and such crimes, was sufficient to denominate them after the similitude of Adam's transgression (it is not necessary similitudes should run upon all four) and yet there were so far from very few who thus sinned under the law of Moses, as Paulinus asserts, that perhaps there was not one individual person (very infants and our Saviour excepted) who had not so sinned, especially considering one of those laws

laws (as St. Paul observed) extended to the very inward desires of the heart, and this, notwithstanding the young man's declaration to our Saviour, *all these have I kept from my youth up*, and St. Paul's expression, *as touching the law, blameless, and he that offends in one point is guilty of all*, is as liable to suffer the penalty as if he had broken all such commandments; therefore the Jews had little reason to expect to be saved, or delivered from death, and inherit eternal life by the works of the law, as St. Paul argues elsewhere.

This is the light in which I consider this reasoning of St. Paul. I am, Gentlemen,

Your's and Paulinus's humble servant,

W. W.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN, *

IF the following sentiments and reflections are worthy of a place in your literary collection, I make no doubt they will be inserted; but if they deserve not to mix with such good company, I would yet beg the subject may be kept in view, and undertaken by some masterly pen, as, I know, it is to many highly interesting.

Prudence has frequently been stigmatized as a shabby virtue. Something, that wishes to wear its appearance, has often, indeed, been found

* The subject of this paper, though not exactly within the plan of this work, has so near a relation to it, that we shall be glad to have it discussed by our correspondents.

in the company of shabby passions. Its name has been taken in vain, and its garb put on to hide, or to set off mean and interested views. But when clear of such disgracing connections, and dwelling in an honest mind, it will always be found worthy of that cardinal rank, which it has so long possessed on the honourable scale. It will ever be found essential to success in the pastoral office. No degree of genius, knowledge, or literature, as human nature appears among us, can compensate for its want. To what degree this virtue is to be admitted in the following case, which is the case of many christian ministers, perhaps it will be difficult to determine.

Suppose a pastor, fully persuaded that various tenets, bearing the name of christian, are not such in truth, but the offspring of very different parents; and that the congregation, to which he ministers, not only believes them true and christian, but also that they are some of the essentials of Christ's religion; without which the gospel would lose much of its beauty and excellence. What is he to do, to maintain a good conscience, and not lose his usefulness? An answer to this question, so plain as to leave no doubt, would be esteemed by many, as a present of great value.

Men of open and generous principles, who can hardly conceive the various prejudices and shackles which jaundice and blind the gross of the species, will be ready to say,—“ Lay open
“ the whole counsel of God. Speak the truth
“ in God and lie not. Great is truth, and it
“ will

“ will prevail. Consequences are not in our
“ power; leave them to God. Preach ye boldly
“ the whole truths of Christ, whether men will
“ hear or forbear. You will thus approve your-
“ self a faithful servant of Christ; and, what-
“ ever men do, your reward will be on high.”

This looks well in theory. It seems dangerous to bring it into question; and probably some will think it cannot be questioned, but by men of low and fordid views. Were all professing Christians possessed of that candour and openness to truth, which is so desirable and agreeable to the gospel, this sentence would be without appeal. But, alas! how few pastors are blessed with such audiences? How very different are the bulk among the various denominations of Christians?

Now, let us consult experience, which cannot be overthrown by any theory. Experience, I judge, will declare against these maxims, and shew, that they have seldom, if ever, been successful in common congregations. I have now in my eye several instances, in which men of very considerable abilities have, in a great degree, lost both their comfort and usefulness in their ministry, by adhering to this plan, and, I presume, every man, tolerably acquainted with the state of things, in this respect, must be able to point out several more. Though once or twice in a century, a *Foster* may arise, and meeting with persons of a liberal turn, may have weight enough of artillery, openly and boldly to beat down the fortresses of error and superstition, yet this is not to be weighed against general experience.

“ Is,

“ Is, then, it may be said, a minister at liberty, in order to preserve his people’s good opinion, to preach as true what he believes false? As Christ’s gospel what he believes the spawn of error, superstition or priestcraft? If he knows he speaks falsely, even though he thinks he is speaking for the cause of God, will God approve? May he thus, at least, *“ speak evil, that good may come?”* God forbid! all these are far from my design. What then is he to do? *Hic labor hoc opus.*

Here, I presume, there is room for prudence to make her appearance. Here is a wide and noble theatre, on which she may display her salutary powers. But let her stand by a little; for “ a greater than prudence is here;” Jesus, the Lord of christians, said to his disciples, John xvi. 12, what seems nearly or directly to the point in hand. “ I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.” I will not attempt to shew a critical acumen, in dissecting this text, but take the sense as it appears plainly upon it’s face.

Abolishing the law of ceremonies, calling the Gentiles, &c. were probably here in view. But, in the present case, it is of little moment, what the particulars were. Whatever they were, Jesus saw that to preach them *then* would do no good, but hurt; and that it was proper they should lie dormant, until the disciples were farther enlightened. Prudence, then, will sometimes require that some truths, even in preaching the gospel, be not exposed to view. But this is not the only instance, in which the Saviour acted in
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this manner; for we read, Mark iv. 33. "And with many such parables spake he the word unto them *as they were able to bear it.*" Jesus, then, did not think, because things were true, that he was thereby authorized to preach them to every one, and at all times. He listened to the innocent counsels of prudence. He had regard to men's weaknesses and prejudices. He knew what would give offence and be lost, and what would have a good effect; and, by these, he regulated his public preaching. Is not this a rule, a precedent for the ministers of religion, as far as their knowledge of the state of their people, and their prudence, can direct their conduct?

"Christ only delayed their information," it will be said, "till after the descent of the Holy Ghost, when they would be both more able and willing to admit every divine truth." Be it so. But from this it appears, that there are times and circumstances, when it is not proper to declare every truth—That ministers are to have in view the weakness and prejudices of their people; and not inflame their angry passions, by too blunt declarations of what they cannot bear; and also, that they are fulfilling their office, in exhibiting light, in proportion to the strength of their eyes; and giving them such food, as their stomachs can digest. In short, that they are to consult the people's education only, and withhold whatever may obstruct that good purpose. This is done, in a thousand instances, in common life; where men's prejudices are to be combated we present things as they

they can bear them, and not at once, attack with keenness, for that would frustrate the design. It would be disrespectful to our people, to introduce, in this case, *casting pearls before swine*, nor could it, with propriety, be applied. But it is very proper to listen to the opinion of the apostle of the Gentiles, *who truly was not a whit behind the chiefest apostle*, in 1 Cor. ix. 19—23. There he expresses himself in the clearest and fullest manner, in favour of the prudential scheme. Some, I believe, have stumbled at these verses; and supposed that St. Paul did not act in that manner, but that his enemies imputed to him that artful scheme. But no mark of this is seen; and, at that rate, the meaning of a great part of these holy writings would be so vague, that we should seldom be able, with any degree of certainty, to distinguish what we should admit, and what refuse. The good apostle is only copying his master; and with such a weight of evidence on that side, we need not, I think, hesitate to range him under the standard of prudence.

It will, perhaps, be said, “By this rule, even “the priests of Rome may be vindicated; and “no reformation is ever to be expected.” Far, very far be this from my design! Yet had I renewed opportunities of preaching to a society of Papists, and were bent on their reformation, though I would never say, I believed transubstantiation, purgatory, &c. nor even hint, that they might possibly be true; yet I would not shock their prejudices, at once, but rather keep the disputed things out of sight, till the foundations

dations were well laid ; till I had gained some share in their confidence ; and, with more advantage, could sap the foundations of error, and open truth to their view.

Yet, by no means, would I leave error to reign uncontrouled ; but believe it my duty to root it up to the utmost of my power, and to plant truth wherever there is a promising soil. To this end, from the experience and observation of a considerable number of years, in a narrow sphere indeed, I am inclined to adopt and pursue the following maxims, as consonant both to prudence and the New Testament, and bidding fairest for success.

By a diligent and affectionate assiduity, in the various branches of the pastoral office, to endeavour to conciliate a share both of the people's esteem and love ; in publick preaching and private conversation, always to fix the religion of Jesus Christ upon a broad basis, and continually refer the people to the scriptures, for understanding the scheme of redemption.

Often to insist, that human authority, of whatever kind, is to have no weight in establishing scripture doctrines ; but every thing is to be taken from and founded on these sacred books only. Never professedly to canvass the points in dispute, but when they come in the way, always to use scripture language only : Thus leaving them to sleep, as may be hoped, the sleep of death. There are abundance, surely, of flowers and fruits in the garden of God, both for public and private use, without meddling with these dangerous trees of disputed knowledge.

ledge. To avoid, as much as may be, entering into disputes with persons of unopened minds, but to use every mean to make them candid: And wherever the smallest opening appears, to turn it to advantage. To catechise children and youth, not once or twice only, but many times, every year; laying in them the solid foundations of christianity; and sedulously preparing their minds, to receive every divine truth, in the love thereof, wherever it may be found.

Thus opinions, falsely stiled orthodox, will drop into the grave, with the elder set, and truth will spring up with the younger. Thus our successors in the ministry of Christ will find a more favourable soil, on which to sow and cultivate the seeds of genuine christianity. Where we leave the good cause, let them take it up, and in what they fall short, let their successors, in their turn, attempt to perfect. Thus, in time, truth may obtain its full sway; and all the truths of revelation find free admission into the minds of the meanest professors of the name of Jesus.

“ On this scheme, many may and must die, “ without conviction of error.” Allowed. But these errors, with an honest mind, will not endanger their salvation. Besides, how can this possibly be remedied? If my views of this very important subject are unjust, it will give me peculiar pleasure to have them rectified and enlarged. To enter the lists of dispute is foreign to my desire; being sensible I cannot put in a just claim to any other name or character than that of

DISCIPULUS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

IN answer to the queries of your correspondent G. H. concerning that clause of our Lord's intercessory prayer, John xvii. 9. *I pray for them; I pray not for the world; give me leave to observe,*

1. That the transactions with his disciples at the last supper, recorded chap. 13. seem intended by him to impress deep on their minds a sense of their peculiar relation to himself, together with its proper consequences. The whole succeeding conversation with them, in chap. 14, 15, 16. turns upon sentiments, duties, and promises, proper to them as believers in, and belonging to him, in contradistinction from the unbelieving world, and that distinction is frequently recurred to, and kept in view through that conversation; particularly, in the 16th chapter he prepares them for the shock they would suffer by his departure from them, and the severe trial of their steadfastness in adhering to him, which they should undergo from the persecutions of the unbelieving world. It seems then very proper, that he should conclude such a conversation, in the manner he does, with a prayer to God, with them and for them, peculiarly adapted to their case. Every sentiment and petition of this prayer appears admirably calculated to impress the subjects he had been discoursing of, indelibly on their minds, and to keep them steady in their profession of his name,

name, and the practice of the duties resulting from their relation to him. Nor, though we find in it such a clause as this in question, can we at all reasonably infer from it any thing inconsistent with the most *universal benevolence*; unless the offering up a special intercession, appropriated to a special case and particular persons, may be so understood. It imports only, that the prayer he was *then* offering was meant for his disciples, and not for the world; but this seems rather to intimate, that his ordinary practice in prayer was to intercede, according to the dictates of the most *universal benevolence*, for the whole world.

2. I would observe also, that no part of this prayer can, with any propriety, be applied to the *world*, or the unbelieving part of mankind, except consequentially, as will be noticed under the following head. The *declarations* are not true, if so applied; and the *petitions* are for blessings which the unbelieving world is not capable of enjoying, while it remains in that state. I need not enter on a detail of particulars, as they will appear very obvious on perusal. However,

3. It ought to be remarked, that, even in this special and appropriated intercession, Jesus, agreeably to his habitual and governing principle of *universal benevolence*, was not unmindful of the best interests of the *whole world* of mankind, which he came to promote by the universal propagation and salutary efficacy of his gospel; for instance, ver. 18. *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world, i. e.*

to spread among mankind in general *thy word of truth*, ver. 17, and thereby to bring many to the belief, profession, and obedience of it; in which case, they also will become proper and capable objects of all the blessings I have now requested for these my present disciples; therefore, ver. 20. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.* Ver. 21. *That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*; the natural and happy effect of which may be, *that the world, still more extensively and generally, may believe that thou hast sent me*, and thereby obtain, at length, all the blessings I request for my disciples.

These clauses, thus taken together, seem to me to exhibit a sentiment, or rather an implied petition, very similar to that which G. H. proposes; as “ more agreeable to our Saviour’s general character and conduct, and the benevolence which he himself inculcates”: and I will venture to refer it to himself, whether these clauses, taken in the connexion they manifestly bear to the whole prayer, do not express the sentiments of universal good-will to mankind more strongly and comprehensively, than what he hath proposed; and though, perhaps, they do not stand where he looked for them, they stand, I think, much more properly, viz. after the mention our Lord makes of sending his disciples into the world. I am, Gentlemen,

His and your very humble servant,

EUSEBIUS.

GAL. iii. 20.

Ο ΔΕ ΜΕΣΙΤΗΣ ΕΥΟΣ ΟΥΚ ΕΣΤΙΝ, Ο ΔΕ ΘΕΟΣ ΕΙΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ.

THIS verse has exercised the pens of the critics; and, as far as my acquaintance with them reaches, they seem not to give a true interpretation of it. Mr. Lock's criticism on the place, I believe, has met with universal approbation; but I cannot acquiesce with it, as I apprehend the Greek will not bear it; neither is there any thing in the context that favours it. He understands the apostle as discoursing of two persons covenanting and agreeing together. God standing on one side, and the Children of Israel and the Gentiles on the other. For, in his note on the place, he says, "But Moses, at the giving the law, was a mediator between the Israelites and God, the Gentiles not being present," &c. This, I apprehend, he was obliged to suppose, in order to account for *εως*. And if we take it in this sense, the expression will be very harsh and uncouth. But a mediator is not of one party, viz. the Gentiles, but God is one party. This, in plain English, is what Mr. Lock says; and his paraphrase is not one jot better. "Because a mediator is a mediator between two parties concerned, but God is but one of these concerned in the promise." I own myself incapable of comprehending his meaning, and should be glad to receive any information.

In order to throw some light on this difficult passage, it may, perhaps, be only necessary
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carefully to consider some preceding verses, which I shall attempt to paraphrase. The rude and unpolished manner in which I do it, I hope you will excuse. And I need go no farther back than to the 15th verse, "Brethren, I speak after the manner of man. No man taketh from or addeth any thing to a covenant between man and man, if it be once ratified, established, and confirmed. Now the promises or covenants were made, ratified, established and confirmed to Abraham and to his seed. Observe well, he does not say, and to his seeds, as of many, but only as concerning *one*. And to *thy seed*, which seed is *Christ*. But this I say, the covenant thus made, ratified, established and confirmed in Christ by God, could not by the law, *i. e.* the law of Moses, which was not given till four hundred and thirty years after, be annulled, or revoked, so as to set aside, or make void, the promise; for if this right of *inberitance* had been by the law, then it would not have been by promise; but God gave to Abraham this right of *inberitance* by promise."

To what intent or purpose, therefore, may one object, was the law of Moses given? I answer; The law was given, or added, upon account of transgressions, until the seed, to whom the promise was made, should come. This law being ordained, appointed, and set in order by the angels in the hand of a mediator, viz. Aaron and his sons, who were to succeed him in the office of an high priest; and who were to be considered as mediators between God and the people. This mediator, therefore, could

could not be considered as of *one*, but as of *many*, succeeding each other. But θεος η χριστος, is one mediator; or, as it is expressed in the epistle to the Hebrews, *Christ is come, an high priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec, or peace-maker.*

I can go no further. But might I be suffered to offer a bare conjecture, and I pretend to no more, having not seen, and perhaps never shall see, a manuscript; and that is, as all the Greek manuscripts are wrote in capitals and abbreviations, as I am informed, θεος might easily be mistaken for χριστος.

J. F.

ADVERTISEMENT.

OUR correspondent OXONIENSIS has sent us some very sensible observations on the duration of future punishment, and in favour of the doctrine of *universal restitution*. But his arguments are chiefly levelled against the doctrine of the *eternity of hell torments*, and are such as have frequently been urged before. If this gentleman, or any other of our correspondents, will take a little pains with a comparison of the hypothesis of *universal restitution*, with that of the *annihilation of the wicked*, we shall think ourselves obliged to him.

CANTABRIGIENSIS argues against *infant baptism*, as not once mentioned, or so much as intimated in the New Testament, and makes some just, but not new remarks upon several texts which have been thought to favour the practice. Upon the whole, he is of opinion that *infant baptism* was introduced into christianity to increase the power and opulence of the priests. We shall be obliged to any of our correspondents, who will give us any new light upon this subject.

T H E
Theological Repository.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

As you have lately inserted in your useful work, several things relating to the person of our Saviour, you are desired to submit to the judgment of your candid readers, the following remarks on some texts of scripture, which respect that subject.

I am yours, &c.

BEREANUS.

ONE of the most distinguished passages relating to this point is in Phil. ii. 6, &c. Most learned men, I suppose, are sensible, that our translation of some of the expressions, which St. Paul hath used, is far from being just. I shall, therefore, give the following literal version.

Ver. 6. " Who being in the form of God,
" did not look upon likeness to God as a thing
" to be coveted. 7. But emptied himself, and
" took the form of a servant (or slave) when
" made in the likeness of men. 8. And, being
" found in condition as a man, he humbled
" himself, becoming obedient even to death,
" the death of the cross. Wherefore, God," &c.

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This representation of our Lord hath been supposed to countenance three different schemes, each of which it is not improper briefly to consider, in order to chuse that which hath the greatest appearance of truth.

1. Some have insisted upon this passage, as a proof that our Saviour is the Supreme Being, or one equal to him. *Who being in the form of God, &c.* that is, say they, who being the infinite and eternal God, possessed of the very same degree of perfection and excellence with his heavenly father, and who, therefore, justly claimed equality with him.

This interpretation is, in my opinion, liable to several insuperable objections. It subverts the very foundation of true religion, viz. the unity of God; and contradicteth the plain declarations of holy scripture, recorded in the following places, John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. viii. 6. Eph. iv. 6.

Farther; *The form of God*, which our Lord was in, he divested himself of, *εαυτον κενωσας*, literally, he *emptied himself*, and assumed the form of a slave, was crucified, and afterwards exalted. But nothing of this nature, can be affirmed of the blessed God. His state and character are immutable. This he hath solemnly declared in his word, and reason itself assures us, that he can neither be abased nor exalted, that he is infinitely removed from the possibility of suffering pain or death, being the source of life, perfection, and happiness.

The phrase in our translation, *thought-it no robbery to be equal with God*, it must be acknowledged,

knowledge, favours this scheme. But the original will admit of, and the connection requires a different version. This hath been clearly shewn by a learned writer, in a critical enquiry into the meaning of this passage, lately published in the Repository, to which I refer.

2. Another scheme, which St. Paul hath been thought to advance in this place, represents our Saviour as enjoying dignity and glory in the celestial world, and as divesting himself of them, assuming a human body, and in consequence of this abasement, submitting to suffering and death. A short paraphrase of the apostle's words may the better enable us to judge of this scheme.

Who being in the form of God, did not look upon likeness to God as a thing to be coveted; but emptied himself, and took the form of a servant, when made in the likeness of men, and being found in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even to death, the death of the cross.

Who being in a godlike condition, in the heavenly world, was not desirous to continue in such a godlike state; but divested himself of his glory, assumed humanity in a very mean and low condition, and being thus brought into the state of a man, he humbled himself yet more, by submitting even to death, the (painful and ignominious) death of crucifixion.

This illustration seems quite natural. It offers not the least violence to any one of the expressions, which the apostle hath used, but gives to each its plain and literal meaning. I

shall not, however, insist upon this at present, but proceed to consider the third scheme, which some learned men have supposed him to teach in this place. “ These gentlemen imagine, “ that *the form of God* refers only to our Saviour’s appearing, and manner of acting in “ this world, and not to any being or existence, “ that he hath been thought to have had before his conception, and birth of the virgin. “ It means no more, than that the man Jesus “ bore a great and godlike character, or was “ invested with powers more than human, and “ that he acted like a god, in exerting his “ miraculous gifts. Agreeably to this, the “ following expressions, *he did not think likeness to God, &c.* but *emptied himself, &c.* are said to “ mean, that he was not ambitious, of exhibiting “ the honour and power which God had given “ him; that he made no ostentation of the power “ that attended him in working miracles, but, on “ the contrary, willingly made void, or emptied himself of this glory, by submitting to “ ill usage, which slaves, and even the vilest of “ the sons of men have been wont to undergo.”

What is here asserted of the humility of our Lord, in the exercise of miraculous powers, no christian will dispute. This, however, appears to me, not to have been the thing designed by St Paul. He speaks of our Lord’s being in the form of God, before he was in the mean condition of a man. *Who being in the form of God, emptied himself, and took the form of a slave, when made, or being made in the likeness of men.* Whereas the scheme just mentioned inverts this order. For if it be true, Jesus was a man, and
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in a low condition, a considerable number of years before he was in the form of God. He was descended from poor parents, and, in all probability, submitted to the drudgery of a mean occupation, from the time he was capable of it, until the commencement of his ministry.

Farther ; By *the form of God*, St. Paul appears not to have intended a power of working miracles, because he represents our Saviour as divesting himself of it. He doth not, indeed, expressly affirm what it was that he emptied himself of, but the connection obligeth us to conclude, it was the form of God, which he had just mentioned. But our Lord did not divest himself of miraculous powers. These he retained through the whole course of his ministry, and was as capable of exerting them at one time as at any, viz. whenever the great end, for which they were given, could be answered by the exercise of them. It cannot, therefore, be said, that Jesus emptied himself of the form of God, if that expression denote the miraculous powers, which were bestowed upon him when he began his ministry. It would, in other cases, be deemed a manifest violation of truth, to affirm, that a person had divested himself of any thing ; an estate, for instance ; when it was still in his own possession, and he had the same right and property in it as ever. It is not the design of this comparison, to insinuate, that our Lord had the same authority over miraculous powers, that a man hath over his civil property. They were not, strictly speaking, his own, and absolutely under his direction.

rection. They were the power of God, and exercised when divine wisdom saw fit. This Jesus himself hath declared, John v. 30. xiv. 10. *I can of my own self do nothing, &c. The Father, who dwelleth in me, he doth the works.*

This, however, makes no difference with respect to the subject under consideration. For, in whatever sense our Saviour was invested with miraculous powers, at the commencement of his ministry, in the very same sense he continued, through the whole of it, to possess them; and, consequently, could not be said, with regard to them, to have emptied himself of the form of God. The learned writer of the critical enquiry before mentioned, speaks of our Lord's *assuming* the form of God at different times. "And when at any time he took upon him the glorious or godlike form." This language is very different from that of the apostle, who giveth not the least intimation of his *taking* it upon him at all (and it is far more reasonable to believe, he was possessed of it by the mere donation of his Almighty Father, than by any act of his own) much less, of his assuming it several times. St. Paul saith, *Who being in the form of God, emptied himself, and took the form of a servant, &c.* Whereas this writer represents him, at one time, assuming the form of God, and at another, the form of a slave. Such a striking dissimilarity in their manner of expressing themselves, on this subject, renders it probable their ideas of it were not the same.

Another

Another passage of scripture, which bears a considerable resemblance to this, and deserves particular attention, is in 2 Cor. viii. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might become rich.* St. Paul, in these words, appears to me, to refer to our Lord's existence, in a state of glory and happiness in the celestial realms, before his appearance in this world. This might, with great propriety, be stiled riches, and his voluntary exchanging it for the poor and afflicted condition of humanity for our sakes, in order to enrich us with treasures, resembling those which he had possessed, discovers amazing benevolence and grace. This interpretation is not only most honourable to Jesus, but preserves us from the necessity of putting the least force upon the apostle's language. It is, in my opinion at least, obvious, easy, and natural. But can the same be said of that which represents our Saviour as rich only in the miraculous gifts, which were bestowed upon him in this world? There seems to be no propriety in saying, though he was rich in miraculous gifts, yet he became poor; since there is no connection betwixt those extraordinary endowments and wealth, nor any opposition between them and low circumstances in the present life. Miraculous powers have generally been conferred upon persons in low stations, and were never designed to raise them to external dignity and affluence.

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If the apostle mean no more than that our Lord was endowed with miraculous powers, his language might be reversed. It might, with more propriety, be said, who though he was poor, yet he became rich, since he was descended from very poor parents, and lived a considerable time exposed to the hardships of poverty, before he was invested with miraculous gifts. Such an expression would, no doubt, have a strange sound, because it requires uncommon penetration, to discover any grace in a poor man's becoming rich. It might, however, with strict truth, be applied to Jesus, if he was not rich in heavenly glory before his coming into this world.

The sacred writer, in this declaration, celebrates the grace of our Lord, who was rich in becoming poor. But where is the grace of a person's becoming poor, who is born of poor parents? In this case, poverty is the consequence of his birth, which depended upon the dispensations of divine providence, and was not, in the least degree, owing to himself. If, therefore, our Redeemer had no existence before his incarnation, there was no merit in his being poor, any more than in the poverty of any other man.

Some, perhaps, may be ready to say, our Lord might have employed his miraculous power, to have raised himself to worldly power and riches. But this, I apprehend, is a great mistake. The wisdom of God, would not have suffered his power, which wrought our Saviour's miracles, to be exercised to promote any secular ends.

ends. And had Jesus endeavoured to make this use of it, he would have found himself altogether feeble and impotent. Nay, the mere desire of employing it for such purposes, indulged in his breast, would have rendered him unworthy of his Almighty Father's protection and support.

The fickle multitude was indeed disposed, in a transient fit of admiration, to have advanced him to regal dignity. But what could the zeal of an unarmed crowd have availed, against the courage and discipline of the Roman legions? Had he yielded to their vain desires, destruction must soon have overwhelmed him, and his deluded adherents.

Far, I am sensible, was our Saviour from entertaining the least desire of temporal power and wealth. He, no doubt, beheld these things with total indifference; yet as he was born poor, and had it not in his power to enrich himself, there was no more merit or grace, merely in his being poor, if he did not exist before his incarnation, than there is in the unavoidable poverty of any other man.

Should a person resign any temporal advantages, and submit to poverty, for the good of mankind, we should admire and extol his benevolence, in becoming poor on that account. In this view, the conduct of some of our Lord's disciples, who left all and followed him, deserves our esteem. Indeed, if our Redeemer did not fill an exalted and happy station in the heavenly world, before his conception and birth, the great encomiums given his humility and grace, in
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this and the passage before explained, may be applied, in the same sense, to several of his apostles. Though they were in the form of God, yet they emptied themselves of it; they made no parade of their miraculous powers, and did not arrogate to themselves honour on their account. And when at any time they assumed this godlike form, they soon laid it aside, and took on them the form of mean poor men. Though they were rich in miraculous gifts, yet such was their grace, that they became poor, submitted to the hardships of poverty.

Such an application of these remarkable places of holy scripture, will, no doubt, appear unjustifiable to many; and yet, unless the doctrine of our Saviour's pre-existence be allowed, the propriety of it cannot be denied. For if the contrary scheme be true, I would ask, in what instances did our Lord manifest his humility and grace, in which his apostles did not discover theirs? Did he submit to contempt and reproach? They likewise were accounted the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things. Did he give up any temporal advantages? He never possessed any. Whereas some of them gave up their all, and forfeited the favour of the great and learned, which they had enjoyed. Was our Lord exposed to want, to scourging, and a painful ignominious death. And, did not they suffer *frequently*, hunger and nakedness, imprisonment and stripes, and at last expire in disgrace and torment?

The notion, that our Saviour was *rich* only in miraculous gifts, detracts greatly from the merit

rit of his character. It degrades all the expressions of his humility and grace, to a level with the displays which some of his apostles made of these virtues. Nay, might we not say, it gives them the advantage of him, since their labours were continued longer, and their sufferings more numerous than his? But the manner in which the most eminent of them speaks of our Lord's benevolence, encourageth more honourable sentiments of it, than are consistent with this notion. He is in raptures when he mentions it, and labours for words to express it. Eph. iii. 18, 19.—*may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge.* Now can it, after all, be thought, our Saviour gave no other, no stronger proof of his love, than St. Paul and other apostles gave of their love? The contrary is highly probable. Indeed, without admitting this, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to vindicate his description of our Redeemer's benevolence, and to account for the astonishment it appears to have excited in his mind.

A similar inference may be drawn from the manner in which our Saviour hath represented the love of God, in sending him into the world. John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten son, &c.* A considerable stress appears to be laid upon the terms, *only-begotten son*; and if our Lord enjoyed glory and happiness in the presence of God in heaven, and was an object of his affection and delight, it was amazing benevolence indeed, in the Supreme Being,

ing, to send him into this world, and give him up to suffering and death for our salvation, and ought to be celebrated for ever, in the warmest strains of gratitude and praise.

These, and such-like representations, of divine benevolence and our Saviour's love, suppose his pre-existence, and favour the literal interpretation of those places of scripture, which, in their plain and obvious meaning, expressly teach it. A few of which we shall briefly consider. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, i. 2. having mentioned our Lord, saith, *by whom also he, viz. God, made the worlds*, δι' ἡ καὶ τῆς αἰῶνας ἐποίησεν. The word translated *worlds*, should have been rendered *ages*, and denotes the religious dispensations, which God hath granted to mankind, the last and most excellent of which christians enjoy. These ages or dispensations, we are informed, God made or constituted by his son. He must, therefore, have existed long before his incarnation. But the original δι' ἡ, it will perhaps be said, might have been differently translated. Instead of *by whom*, it might have been rendered *with respect to whom*. Possibly there may be one example of this nature, out of some hundreds, though I do not recollect any such. Such a meaning of the Greek is at least extraordinary; and what occasion is there for recurring to it here. Doth it improve the sense of the sacred author? Just the contrary. It seems hardly credible, that God should make his dispensations with respect to one, who, upon our opponent's scheme, was but a man. For, is *one man*, an object of such vast importance in the
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the schemes of infinite wisdom, that they should be planned with a particular view to him? Had the apostle said, that a particular man was made of God, with respect to a dispensation, the sentiment would have been natural, as divine wisdom alway appoints proper means, for executing its kind designs. Whereas, on the contrary, to affirm, that God made not one dispensation merely, but dispensations (which seems to include all relating to this world) with respect to one man, is a surprising assertion, and can hardly be thought to have proceeded from a person endowed with heavenly wisdom.

Our Lord, in several places, speaks of himself as having been in heaven, and coming down from heaven, John vi. 38. *For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, &c.* The Jews understood his expressions of this kind in their literal sense, and were enraged at him, who appeared no more than a man, for pretending he had been in heaven, ver. 41, 42. *The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven.*

In the same chapter, ver. 62, he saith, *If ye shall see the son of man ascend up where he was before.* As he had been treating, in this discourse, of his coming down from heaven, it is reasonable to believe, he had that in his thoughts, when he spoke of ascending where he was before, and, consequently, that he had actually been in heaven. If he had never been there, what
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end could such an expression as this have answered? It certainly had a strong tendency to lead men into a mistake. Such a tendency, as few persons of simplicity, could, in my judgment, be supposed able to resist.

In another conversation with the Jews, John viii. 58. *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, before Abraham was, I am, or I was.* The Jews, we find, understood him to mean, he was actually in being before the patriarch existed, and he suffered them to continue in that opinion, notwithstanding it exposed him to their indignation, and endangered his life. It is difficult to account for our Saviour's using this language, if he had not existed before Abraham, since it so naturally betrayed them into an error, and increased their hatred of him. Doth it not seem reasonable to think, he would have cloathed his sentiments in language more easy to be understood, or when he found his meaning to be grossly mistaken, and his person in imminent danger, have corrected their error, and thus have prevented the dangerous effects of their resentment?

Again; Our Lord, in a solemn address to God, a little before his death, prays to be restored to the glory he had enjoyed with him in heaven, before the creation of the world, John xvii. 5. *O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* In this sense, it may be presumed, all, who are unacquainted with religious controversies, will understand him: And no words are better calculated to inform

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us, that he was possessed of glory before his incarnation. Another sense, indeed, hath been put upon them, by some learned men, who suppose our Lord prays to be exalted, not to any glory which he had with God before the world was, but to that glory which God intended he should have with him, or to the glory which he might be said to have had in the divine decree. This, it is too plain to be denied, is far from being the natural and obvious meaning of our Saviour's words. In the day of judgment he hath declared, Matt. xxv. 34. he will say to the righteous, *Inherit the kingdom, not which you had, but the kingdom PREPARED for you, from the foundation of the world.* Now, if our Lord had prayed only for happiness *designed* for him by the divine decree, how natural would it have been for him to have expressed himself in such plain and proper language, as he hath used with regard to the felicity of the righteous. They had their kingdom from the foundation of the world, in the same sense that our Lord had his glory, before the world was, if he did not exist before his incarnation. And yet how different is the language, in which he hath spoken on these subjects, and how reasonable is it to think he designed it to convey different ideas!

Upon the whole, it is not easy to conceive of any words, that would more plainly express his pre-existence, than several that he hath used. He saith, he came down from heaven, and speaks of ascending where he was before. He declares he was before Abraham, and had glory with

with his Father before the world was. Now if this language do not teach his pre-existence, what expressions would have been sufficient to have convinced men of its truth? Should it, for instance, have been said, he was happy ages before his appearance in this world. Yes, it would be replied, in the decree of God, not that he enjoyed any happiness, or had any existence before his conception. Or should this expression have been used; He existed long before his incarnation. This language, it would be said, is figurative, and means no more, than that God determined, long before his birth, that he should be brought into being. Should the sacred scripture have affirmed, he resigned the godlike station he filled, and appeared in the mean condition of a man; this would be explained to signify, that he made no ostentatious display of his miraculous powers.

The manner of interpreting scripture, to which some learned men have recourse on this subject, if it was universal, would, in my opinion, render the meaning of the sacred writers quite uncertain. It offers such violence to their language, that all the learning and eloquence of its patrons cannot make it appear just and reasonable. Nothing but absolute necessity can vindicate such straining of scriptural expressions. But there is no necessity of using it here. The doctrine which they teach, in their literal and obvious sense, is not absurd or unreasonable. Our Saviour's humiliation, upon the scheme of his pre-existence, is, no doubt, a miraculous or supernatural event; but yet not unreasonable or
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incredible. The christian dispensation itself is supernatural; and, therefore, no believer of it can, with any consistency, object to the humiliation of our Redeemer, merely because it was an event different from those which happen according to the common laws of nature.

But no end, it may be said, could be answered by such an abasement of an exalted spirit, but what might as well have been answered without it. A person, who had no existence before his conception, being endowed with miraculous powers, might, with equal success, have executed the schemes of divine mercy; and therefore it is incredible that infinite wisdom, which doth nothing in vain, should have appointed such an extraordinary humiliation.

In reply to this objection it may be observed, that several things are here taken for granted, which it is impossible to prove. It supposeth that no miraculous fact is incredible, unless we are able to discover the ends which it is adapted to answer. But such a principle hath not the least foundation in reason or scripture. The designs and ends of many particular acts of divine providence, must be concealed from the view of mankind, in the present imperfect state. And it would, certainly, betray the want of a proper deference to divine wisdom, to dispute the truth of any supernatural event, merely because the reasons of it are not discoverable by the human mind. The *conception* of Jesus, we are assured by the sacred history, was miraculous, and the reasons of it are unknown. Yet no christian will, upon this account, disbelieve

the relation given of it in the New Testament. He would, indeed, be justly thought a stranger to the humble spirit of a christian, who had the vanity to say, "Such a supernatural event could answer no valuable end. A person conceived in a natural manner, might have executed as well the scheme of divine mercy; and it is incredible that God, who is infinite in wisdom, should work a miracle without necessity."

Farther; As this objection against the humiliation of our Saviour depends upon a groundless principle, so it advances an erroneous assertion. Some valuable ends, the great event just mentioned, is manifestly well calculated to answer. It displays the humility and benevolence of our Lord in the most illustrious manner, and thus raiseth his character to the highest pitch of excellence. It cannot, with the least colour of reason, be pretended, that a man, who had no existence before he was born of poor parents, and confined to a low station in life, could exhibit an example of humility, condescension and benevolence, comparable with that which, upon the pre-existent scheme, the Son of God must have displayed. For an exalted and glorious being, happy in the presence and love of his Almighty Father, voluntarily, cheerfully to resign his glory, and leave the realms of eternal bliss, to descend to this ignorant and sinful world, to unite himself to a human body with all its infirmities, in order to suffer poverty, reproach, torment, and death, that he might form mankind to virtue, and exalt them to glory and
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bleffedness in the heavenly kingdom, demonstrates humility and grace, which it is impossible sufficiently to admire and celebrate! This must awake fervent gratitude in every ingenuous breast, and excite all considerate grateful christians to devote themselves to the honour of such an astonishing benefactor, and with pleasure to pursue the course he hath set before them to perfection and happiness.

And as the humiliation of our Saviour displays, in so remarkable a manner, his humility and benevolence, so it likewise demonstrates, in the strongest light, the compassion and mercy of his heavenly Father, who formed the scheme of our redemption, and appointed him to carry it into execution. How strong the benevolence, how tender the compassion of the Supreme Being for the sinful perishing children of men, which induced him to send his only son, his beloved son, the object of his *peculiar* affection and delight, from his bosom, and give him up to the various evils of life, and the torments of death, in order to enrich us with the treasures of righteousness in this world, and of inconceivable glory and happiness in his eternal kingdom. This gives the most amiable views of the divine goodness, and may cause every one to cry out with astonishment and gratitude, in the words of St. John, *God is love!* O may such an amazing manifestation of his benevolence engage my attention, raise my esteem, inflame my love, animate my gratitude, and excite me, with pleasure, to devote myself to his glory and service!

It cannot, then, with any colour of reason, **be** said, that our Saviour's humiliation answers **no** good end. The general view, just given, of that remarkable event, plainly sheweth the contrary. If the value of every thing in religion depend upon its tendency to promote rectitude of heart and life, certainly the belief of this event must be thought of considerable importance: For it supplieth us with the noblest examples, and addresseth more affecting motives to our hearts, than can be drawn from the contrary scheme. This, indeed, appears so plain and evident, upon the slightest consideration of it, that formal arguments to prove it are unnecessary, and might justly be deemed tedious.

The good effects of our Lord's incarnation upon mankind, are manifest, and, it is not improbable, extend to other beings. Such a remarkable display of humility and benevolence, may naturally be supposed to animate them, in the performance of the various services, which are appointed them by the Sovereign of heaven and earth. *Angels are sent forth to minister to them who will be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14.* And must not such a striking example of condescension and grace, excite their emulation, and engage them to imitate it with constancy, diligence and pleasure? The Son of God is now their Lord as well as ours, and therefore his conduct justly claims their particular regard and imitation. His humiliation, upon the pre-existent scheme, was a proper ground for his being rewarded with dominion over them, as well as over mankind.

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He gained it by distinguished merit. Greater merit cannot possibly be conceived of, than was displayed in this event; and therefore, no doubt, those benevolent beings, instead of envying him, will rejoice in the dignity to which he is advanced, and magnify divine wisdom and righteousness, in constituting him their king. Whereas, if our Saviour was but a man, his being invested with authority over these glorious spirits, would be altogether strange and unaccountable. It seems greatly disproportioned to the merit, that any man could manifest, in the labours and sufferings of a few years.

But it is said, "If Christ was the first, and only immediately derived being, by whom God made the world, how should he gain any exaltation, by receiving a bright resplendent human body, and being King and Lord of good men in this world, Judge of mankind, or being higher than the angels, since, upon this hypothesis, he was vastly superior to them before?"

This objection, it may be observed, doth not, in the least, affect the pre-existent scheme in general. It is levelled against those only, who maintain that Christ was the only being immediately derived from God, and employed by him in making the world. These particulars are not necessarily connected with our Lord's existence in heaven before his incarnation. It is very possible to believe, he had glory with God before the world was, without determining particularly the degree of it, or whether he was employed in making the world. This objection, therefore, doth not oppose any thing that

I have asserted, and so might be dismissed without farther notice. Yet even allowing, that God by him made the world, it would not necessarily follow, that he had any dominion or government over the angels, before his incarnation, though he was superior to them in perfection and happiness. And if he had not, he is now advanced higher than he was before, since he is their king now as well as ours, and so gloriously rewarded for his humiliation, labours, sufferings and death.

Most religious (and indeed other) subjects, believers themselves will acknowledge, are attended with difficulties. And it is not surprising, if our Saviour's pre-existence and humiliation are liable to some objections. Yet all of them, I think, admit of a rational solution. Several things alledged against them are founded entirely on our ignorance, or some particular circumstances which have been supposed, though unnecessarily, to be connected with them. I shall not, however, abuse your indulgence by examining these objections. It is sufficient for me, to refer to the remarks on Dr. Lardner's, &c. published in the sixth Number of the Repository, Vol. 1, which I hope will give satisfaction to most candid minds; or at least convince them that the difficulties under which this subject hath been supposed to labour, are by no means so great, as to counterbalance the plain and strong evidence of divine revelation in its favour. To conclude; I sincerely wish, that all who believe the doctrine of our Lord's pre-existence and humiliation, may experience the good effects, which

which it hath a natural tendency to produce, on their tempers and lives. As they are sensible, it demonstrates the grace of God, as well as the humility and compassion of their Saviour in the strongest light, and thus addresseth more affecting motives to the heart than the contrary notion: So I hope, they will duly regard the peculiar obligations that are upon them, and make it their prevailing concern, to distinguish themselves by fervent love and gratitude to God and their Redeemer, and by chearful, universal and persevering obedience to the divine will.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

The following Remarks are what occurred in reading over the books to which they refer. They might have been enlarged into a volume or volumes, but will, perhaps, be less tedious, if not more acceptable to some readers, in their native brevity; at least will take up less room (if worthy of any) amongst so many better things in your valuable Repository; such as they are, they are submitted to your disposal, by

Gentlemen,

Your humble servant,

W. W.

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*Cursory Remarks on Chub's Farewell to
his Readers.*

MR. Chub says, Vol. I. p. 7. in his *Remarks on the Scriptures*, that "The bible contains many things that are greatly below and unworthy of the Supreme Deity."

Suppose those proverbs, maxims, or pieces of history he here instances in, to proceed immediately and intirely from divine inspiration (which there is no necessity to suppose) yet nothing is below or unworthy of the Supreme Being that tends, in the least, to the benefit of any of his creatures. Would it have been unworthy of a Solomon, or a Sir Isaac Newton, to teach his child its A, B, C, with a fescue? Nor is what follows unworthy of him, if considered as a prophecy, or the prophet's acquiescing in a prophecy, rather than a *malevolent wish*.

The account of the travels and adventures of Naomi, &c. was no ways impertinent to introduce an account of one of our Saviour's ancestors.

A very little candor, added to the author's natural ingenuity might, one would think, have enabled him to reconcile the preceptive parts of the bible, which he refers to p. 9. and 10. The laws of Moses were the laws of a community. The rules and maxims of our Saviour are personal. And though there be a sort of natural equity in the *retaliation of injuries*, yet any community, and much more a private person, has a right, and may have very good reason for

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relaxing that punishment, and forgiving a personal injury, or for being backward to return a hasty one, and give the aggressor time to cool, to think, and repent of his rashness, rather than exasperate his present frenzy by a hasty resistance, and catch it of him. How just and beautiful is a parallel gospel precept: "Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good?" Forbearance and forgiveness are truly godlike.

The Jews, in our Saviour's time, and long before, had trumped up many traditions and traditional explanations of their law, perverse of the laws of God and reason. These are the *sayings of them of old time*, our Saviour refers to and corrects, which the scribes and Pharisees deemed themselves righteous in observing, though they thereby evaded the spirit and intention of the law. See Matt. v. 20. where he introduces these very corrections, with observing to his followers, that *their righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.*

Our Saviour's injunction about swearing, plainly appears to refer to *common conversation*, by his saying, *Let your communication be Yea, yea, and Nay, nay.* And it appears from another passage, that they had introduced into their conversation a variety of petty oaths, as, *by their head, by Jerusalem, by the temple, &c.*

I am really amazed at so sensible an author's trifling as he does through these and several following pages; particularly his interpretation of our Saviour's words, Luke xxii. 35, 36. the evident meaning of which appears to me no
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more than this, viz. “ The time of trial that is
 “ immediately approaching, is very different
 “ from that when I sent you out to preach to the
 “ lost sheep of the House of Israel, saying, *The*
 “ *kingdom of heaven is at hand.* You then met
 “ with no rude companies with swords and
 “ staves, and needed no such weapons to de-
 “ fend yourselves; but now such preparations
 “ would be of the utmost necessity, were we to
 “ stand upon our defence.” It implies no order
 to make such preparation, or to make use of what
 weapons they had. Nor that any of his fol-
 lowers should ever use such in the necessary de-
 fence of their lives, their property, or their
 country; but only represents, in a striking and
 beautiful manner, the violent assault that would
 immediately be made upon them. The draw-
 ing a couple of swords against such a multitude,
 was the likely way to perish by the sword, or if
 by a miraculous interposition, by the help of
 more than twelve legions of angels they could
 have prevailed, yet how then must the scriptures
 be fulfilled that thus it must be.

Our Saviour expected his followers should
 ever interpret his words by the rules of reason
 and common sense, and was displeased with
 them when they did not so. See Matt. xvi. 11.
How is it that ye do not understand, &c. Had
 the author observed this method, he might have
 spared many poor reflections he has made on—
Swear not at all. Lay not up for yourselves trea-
sures on earth. Take no thought for the morrow.
Call not your rich neighbours to your feasts. Love
your enemies, &c. He would have seen that our
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Saviour's view was to moderate our passions and desires after earthly things, not to extinguish them; and to recommend great benevolence, as the perfection of a christian, as it is, indeed, the perfection of God's moral character, though this author will have it to be his wisdom. Nor does *loving our enemies* imply our loving and treating enemies and friends, good and bad men *alike*, as he affects to interpret that divine precept. How hard did this author strain his invention to find absurdities in the bible, and in our Saviour's excellent documents? Call these *laws* (if you will) and our Saviour a *law-giver* (though rather a promulgator of God's laws) the real meaning of the law-giver, so far as it can be understood, is the *law*, the *spirit of the law*, though the letter of it may be liable to be misconstrued. All law is supposed to be founded in reason, and the divine law certainly is so, therefore reason is the best interpreter of it; and every man's reason must interpret for himself, only it stands him upon to do it honestly.

What follows in this part about the clergy's peculiar authority to interpret the scriptures, I have no objections to. It is easy, however, to see the source of this author's prejudices, viz. an excessive apprehension of priestcraft.

P. 54. The author expresses his contempt of infant baptism, by calling it an *insignificant ceremony*. A *ceremony* it is, but I think equally *significant* with *adult baptism*, or with the other christian ceremony, *the Lord's supper*. But I will not enter here into a discussion of those points.

points. I must not, however, omit to take notice how the author, in his note, p. 60. as well as in many other places, is carried away by an inveterate prejudice against St. Paul, representing him here as an advocate for absolute passive obedience (in the political and Sacheverel sense) to the worst of tyrants, as if St. Paul's head was as full of politics and revolutions in states as his own, when he was writing this remark. To me it seems more natural to suppose him only cautioning the Roman christians against a turbulent disposition, and recommending to them, for the credit of their religion, a peaceable behaviour under whatever government providence should fix over them. But take Mr. Locke's sense of the place, who was far from being behind this author in sound reasoning, or zeal for civil or religious liberty, and far before him in candour.

“ Above all others (says Mr. Locke) the
 “ Jews were apt to have an inward reluctance
 “ and indignation, against the power of any
 “ Heathen over them. These the apostle
 “ thought it necessary to restrain, and therefore
 “ says, in the language of the Jews, *every soul,*
 “ *i. e.* every person among you, whether Jew
 “ or Gentile, must live in subjection to the
 “ civil magistrate. We see by what St. Peter
 “ says on the like occasion, that there was great
 “ need that christians should have this duty
 “ inculcated to them, lest any among them
 “ should use their liberty for a cloak of malici-
 “ ousness, or misbehaviour. The doctrine of
 “ christianity, was a doctrine of liberty. And
 St.

“ St. Paul had taught them in this epistle,
 “ that all christians were free from the Mosaic
 “ law. Hence corrupt and mistaking men, es-
 “ pecially Jewish converts, impatient of any
 “ Heathen dominion, might be ready to infer
 “ that christians were exempt from subjection
 “ to the laws of Heathen governments.
 “ This he obviates by telling them, that all
 “ other governments derived the power they
 “ had from God, as well as that of the Jews,
 “ though they had not the whole frame of
 “ their government immediately from him.
 “ Whether we take *powers* here in the abstract,
 “ for political authority, or in the concrete, for
 “ the persons, *de facto*, exercising political power
 “ and jurisdiction, the sense will be the same,
 “ viz. that christians, by virtue of being chris-
 “ tians, are not any ways exempt from obedi-
 “ ence to the civil magistrates, nor ought by
 “ any means to resist them. Though by what
 “ is said, ver. 3. it seems that St. Paul meant
 “ here, magistrates having and exercising a law-
 “ ful power; but whether the magistrates in
 “ being were or were not such, and consequently
 “ were or were not to be obeyed, that *christia-*
 “ *nity* gave them no peculiar power to examine;
 “ they had the common rights of others, their
 “ fellow citizens, but have no distinct privi-
 “ leges as *christians*; and therefore we see, v. 7.
 “ where he enjoins the paying of tribute or cus-
 “ tom, it is in these words, *Render to all their*
 “ *due; tribute to whom tribute is due, honour*
 “ *to whom honour, &c.* but who it was, to
 “ whom any of these or any other dues or
 “ right

“ right belonged, he decides not; for that, he
 “ leaves them to be determined by the laws and
 “ constitutions of their country.” I add here a
 note of Dr. Taylor upon the place.

“ This epistle (says he) was wrote in the
 “ fourth year of the Emperor Nero, about six
 “ years after Claudius had expelled the Jews
 “ from Rome. It is not improbable that (as
 “ Suetonius relates in the life of Claudius) this
 “ was occasioned by the tumultuous disposition
 “ of the Jews; they had notions relating to go-
 “ vernment, favourable to none but their own,
 “ and it was with great reluctance they submit-
 “ ted to a foreign jurisdiction. The christians,
 “ under a notion of their being the people of
 “ God, and the subjects of his kingdom, might
 “ be in danger of being infected with these un-
 “ ruly rebellious sentiments; therefore the apos-
 “ tle shews them that they were, notwithstand-
 “ ing their honours and privileges as chris-
 “ tians, bound by the strongest obligations of
 “ conscience, to be subject to civil government.”
 “ I cannot forbear observing (adds he) the ad-
 “ mirable skill and dexterity with which the
 “ apostle has handled the subject.

“ Upon every point, his views in writing are
 “ always very comprehensive, and he takes into
 “ his thoughts and instructions, all parties that
 “ may probably reap any benefit by them. As
 “ christianity was then growing, and the powers
 “ of the world began to take notice of it; it
 “ was not unlikely this letter would fall into the
 “ hands of the Roman magistrates; and when-
 “ ever that happened, it was right not only that
 “ they

“ they should see christianity was no favourer of
“ sedition ; but likewise, that they should have
“ an opportunity of reading their own duty
“ and obligations. But they were generally too
“ insolent to be instructed in a plain *direct* way ;
“ therefore the apostle, with a masterly hand,
“ delineates and strongly inculcates the magi-
“ strate's duty while he is pleading his cause
“ with the subject, and establishing his au-
“ thority upon the most true and solid grounds.
“ He dexterously sides with the magistrate, and
“ vindicates his power against any subject who
“ might have imbibed seditious principles, or
“ might be inclined to give the government
“ any disturbance ; and under that advantage,
“ reads the magistrate a fine and close lecture
“ upon the nature and ends of government.
“ A way of conveyance so ingenious and un-
“ exceptionable, that Nero himself, had this
“ epistle fallen into his hands, could not well
“ have missed seeing his duty, and yet would
“ have met with nothing flattering on the one
“ hand, nor offensive and disgusting on the
“ other. If the reader is attentive, he must
“ be pleased to see in how small a compass,
“ and with how much dexterity, truth and gravity,
“ he affirms and explains the foundation, the
“ nature, the ends and just limits of the magi-
“ strate's authority, while he is pleading his
“ cause, and teaching the subject the duty and
“ obedience due to governors ? ”

Nor is the author's next charge against St. Paul, in this long note, at all better supported. P. 62. “ St. Paul's bold adventuring genius
(says

(says he) “ was most fully exemplified in his bold-
 “ ly extirpating Judaism by his own authority,
 “ contrary to the design of his master, as well
 “ as the sentiments of all the other apostles.”

For this author to talk of “ a *bold adven-
 “ turous genius*, in boldly extirpating what he
 “ does not like or understand,” is certainly
 spying a mote in St. Paul’s eye, with a mon-
 strous beam of the same kind in his own. But
 to the charge.

The ceremonial law was peculiarly adapted
 to the Jews while they were possessed of the
 land of Canaan, Jerusalem, and the Temple.
 It was never designed to be the religion of the
 world, but to keep them distinct from the rest of
 the world, so long as the divine providence thought
 proper, and, perhaps, to answer some other oc-
 casional temporary purposes. Our Saviour was
 to be a light to the Gentiles, to bless all nations,
 to bring in an everlasting religion, or righte-
 ousness, or terms of acceptance with God, and
 to cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. Isa.
 xlii. 6. and xlix. 6. Dan. ix. 24—27. Accord-
 ingly, though he himself in person, was not
 sent but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel,
 yet he ordered his apostles to disciple or pro-
 felite all nations; and gave hints in his life-
 time of the dissolution of the Jewish constitu-
 tion both in church and state, in his speech to
 the woman of Samaria; *The hour cometh when ye
 shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem
 worship the Father.* John iv. 21. and in his fore-
 telling the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the
 Temple. It would have been very improper
 for

for him to have been more explicit on such a subject while he was preaching to the Jews, till his public ministry to that people was finished; nor were his disciples (being Jews) prepared for such a doctrine, or able to bear it, till after our Saviour's resurrection, when the promised spirit was shed upon them. At the time our Saviour made them this promise, he observed to them, *I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now; howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth,—and he will shew you things to come.* John xvi. 12, 13. And though the spirit of God came upon the apostles suddenly at the day of Pentecost, and enabled them, unlearned as they were, to speak the various languages of persons assembled at that time from all parts to Jerusalem; it does not follow that he inspired them *at once, and at that instant*, with all necessary truth. St. Peter, who was the first who preached the gospel to the Gentiles, was forced to have his Jewish prejudices overcome by a particular vision and divine revelation. And, therefore, he and all the other apostles, as well as Paul, assembled together, gave it as their joint opinion, that the Gentile converts were not to be brought under the ceremonial law of the Jews, notwithstanding the Jewish christians, for the little while their state was to last, were not hindered from keeping up, amongst themselves, the so long established custom of their nation; a thing in itself, now that the design of it was answered, of no great consequence to *them*, who were so soon to have their whole constitution overturned, but which

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would have been far otherwise to the Gentiles, had it been entailed upon them, as some zealous Jewish christians would have had it. St. Paul, therefore, opposed this with all his might, though he prudently, and, I think, without any *culpable* compliance, circumcised Timothy, his mother being a Jewess though his father was a Gentile, and purified himself, according to the ceremonial law, with four men who had a vow, to obviate a prejudice some Jewish christians had taken up against him, which might have unhinged many of them, and caused them to fall off, a thing St. Paul would have submitted to much greater hardships than this to prevent. See 1 Cor. viii. 13. His so far becoming all things to all men that he might win some, was not at all unbecoming him, or the sincerest man upon earth; it was bearing the infirmities of the weak, which is often, and was in these cases, not only prudently and innocently, but kindly, generously and nobly done.

The moral law alone was *first* given the Jews after their deliverance out of Egypt, and in a most distinguishing awful manner; the ceremonial law *afterwards*, and perhaps (circumcision, the passover, the sabbath, and some other commemorative festivals excepted) like the indulgence in point of divorces, for the hardness of their hearts; and had never been given them but for their adictedness to the idolatry of the Egyptians, which brake out in so astonishing a manner while Moses was in the mount receiving from God the written *moral law*. See Jer. vii. 22. and vi. 20. Isa. i. 11. Amos v. 21. *For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded*

manded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice. See Ezek. xx. 11. compared with v. 24, 25.

But supposing St. Paul had been the first broacher of this doctrine, yet had he no authority? And did he, as this author boldly affirms, pretend to none but his own reasoning upon the case? Did he not avow a divine revelation? Did he not appeal to miracles wrought by him in all places for the proof of this authority? Mr. Hume, and many others I know, have worked themselves up into a persuasion of the absolute absurdity and incredibility of all miracles; as if there were no powers superior to the human, or any being that ever exerted such powers since the first creation of the world, if really then; for if any deviation from the once settled course of nature be incredible, any new creation must be so, and the whole world must either have been from all eternity uncreated, or else produced by mere accident.

P. 145, &c. The author advances a tedious, and, in my mind, a very weak argument against St. John's account of Thomas's backwardness to believe our Saviour's resurrection, and his conviction of it at last; and is for setting aside this story, "as a ridiculous forgery, added by some other hand, because it is not mentioned by any of the other evangelists;" whereas the design of St. John's writing his gospel so long after the other, which he must, no doubt, have

seen, seems to be on purpose to record some other circumstances omitted by them.

The purpose Christ's resurrection was immediately directed to, was not (as he affirms) "his qualifying his disciples, by giving them proper instructions for preaching his gospel to the world." This was to be the business of the spirit. Nor "his commissioning or authorizing them to do so," though he took this occasion to do it; but effectually to convince them of his own divine commission and authority. Nor is there really any impropriety in commissioning them first, and instructing them afterwards, nor in giving them their commission separately, or repeatedly. He was not subject to the little rules and formalities custom may have introduced amongst us.

Supposing, with the author, that the other apostles had told Thomas of their seeing the print of the nails and of the spear, he might doubt of their accurate observation in such a surprize, though not of their veracity. No report comes up to a person's own sensible ocular demonstration. Or Thomas's own surprize might make him express himself in these strong hasty terms.

One of these appearances of our Saviour's seems to have been at Jerusalem, another in Galilee. The accounts are too short for us precisely to adjust every particular. How easily might a person, who knew the whole affair, remove every shadow of inconsistency which these writers so eagerly catch at? Dr. Middleton, I remember, charges these sacred historians with much
such

such an inconsistency, in their giving something different accounts of the inscription over our Saviour's cross. *The King of the Jews.*—*This is the King of the Jews.*—*Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews, &c.* Though in each he is stiled *The King of the Jews*, which was the offensive part of the inscription. It was wrote, we are told, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. It is possible that the Greek might differ from the Latin, and the Hebrew from both, as much as all this difference comes to, and yet no co-temporary would ever have found out the inconsistency. Such minute criticism was reserved for modern triflers, who seem to expect these sacred historians should have been as scrupulously nice as an antiquarian carefully copying some antique inscription.

The author's reasoning concerning the existence and unity of the Supreme Being is very just; but his objections against the Mosaic dispensation appear to me rash and inconclusive. He thinks it represents the deity an arbitrary being, whose affections and actions are under no other direction than capricious humour and mere will; and an abettor of persecuting men on the score of religion. See p. 186. and the note p. 190. and he seems to think the God of the Jews like several gods of the other nations, an imaginary local deity, rather than the true God.

Can no way be found to justify the ways of God to man on the supposition of the divine authority of the Mosaic dispensation? These writers, however, will not be at any pains for that purpose. They have a much readier way

to get rid of any difficulties in the scripture history, by expunging it at once.

With regard to the Almighty's seeming partiality to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their descendants, in preference to all the other families of the earth, particularly the Canaanites, whom he dispossess to furnish them with a land flowing with milk and honey. Is not the whole earth the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world and all that dwell therein? And may not he do what he will with his own, either with respect to particular persons, or communities of men? He has, no doubt, wise reasons for every thing he does, though we may not always comprehend them. Where this last happens to be the case, shall we presently call it caprice, and deny him to have any hand in the event? His election of Jacob, with his posterity, and reprobation of Esau; his choice of Abraham, and rejecting, or comparatively neglecting all the other families of the earth, had no respect to the final state of particular persons, as too many of the friends, as well as enemies of divine revelation have erroneously supposed; but purely to the use God designed to make of them in this world.

Esau might be as good a man as Jacob, for ought appears, and as acceptable to God; and so might many among the idolatrous nations, yea, among such nations or communities of men whom God destroyed, or caused to be destroyed, for their general wickedness. Infants, at least, among the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, and amongst those who perished by the flood. The great Governor of the world may shew his
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displeasure against the general prevailing wickedness and corruption of any country by a general calamity, or the utter extirpation of it, and yet do no injustice to individuals amongst them, who may be of very different characters, supposing but another life after this.

In judging the world at last, God will appear to be no respecter of persons; but these are his judgments of communities as communities. It is like scarifying, or even amputating a corrupt limb from the body for the benefit of the whole, to prevent the spreading of very gross and incurable corruption of morals, and to be awful warnings to other nations.

But this author supposes, that the Canaanites were ordered to be dispossessed of their country, and even put to death for their *idolatry*, and that this seems to authorize persecution for religious opinion; which is mere groundless conjecture. Idolaters they were, so were many other nations as well as they, for several hundred years before, of whom it was observed by God to Abraham, that *the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full*. Gen. xv. 16. What, may we suppose, was yet wanting fully to justify so severe a treatment? Now the sins of a community, which seem most provoking to God, and to bring remarkable judgments on any people, appear from scripture to be *violence, oppression, and unfeeling cruelty* towards their fellow creatures, especially *cruelty* practised under the notion of *religion*, as a thing acceptable to God.

The reason assigned by God himself for drowning the old world is this, *The earth was filled*

filled with violence. Gen. vi. 11, 12. It was a considerable degree of this cruel *violence*, as well as unnatural lust, which provoked him to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. The city of Nineveh, in their proclamation of a fast, seem sensible, that it was for *violence* that was in their hands that they were threatened to be overthrown. Jonah iii. 8.

The Canaanites, even in Abraham's time, were not only idolaters, but so corrupt in their morals too, that Abraham was greatly solicitous, his son might not intermarry with them. Gen. xxiv. 3. for his own relations were tinged with idolatry. But probably the Canaanites had not then learnt that inhuman refinement in religion, to offer up human sacrifices to their idols. This, however, they came to at last; and when God was about to execute his exemplary vengeance upon them, and give their land to his Israelites, he orders Moses to speak to the children of Israel, and warn them thus; *After the manner of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, ye shall not do.* Lev. xviii. 3. And among the instances of these doings, this is particularly mentioned, v. 21. *And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of God, q. d.* by representing him as pleased with such sacrifices. See chap. xx. 3. *Defile not yourselves in any of these things, for in all these the nations are defiled, therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants,* chap. xviii. 24, 25.

And though idolatry was a much more aggravated crime in the Israelites, than in any other
nation

nation under heaven, yet did not God quite **break** with them, cause their cities to be **overthrown**, their warriors slain with the sword, and **send** them into captivity for seventy years, till they fell into this most abominable part of the idolatry of the Canaanites. Jer. xxxii. 31.—*This city has been to me as a provocation of my anger—they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech. And God, by the prophet Ezekiel, enumerating the provoking sins of his people, says, Moreover, thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them (i. e. to idols) to be devoured. Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter? xvi. 20. The Psalmist says, cvi. 35—40. They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works, and they served their idols, yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons, and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood, therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against his people, and he abhorred his own inheritance, &c.*

And although their long captivity cured them of idolatry, yet was this nation afterwards dreadfully punished for their cruel murder of their promised messiah, in which shocking act all their former cruelties to their prophets were, as it were, summed up, and ripened for such exemplary national punishment.

The great design of God in separating, and so long distinguishing that people, no doubt was,

was, to keep up the knowledge of one living and true God, and a religious regard to him, in opposition to the spreading and increasing idolatry of all the other nations of the world. A design of so great importance, to the virtue and happiness of mankind, as to be highly worthy of God. For this purpose did he exercise such an extraordinary providence towards them, in delivering them out of bondage, conducting them through the Red Sea and the wilderness, putting them in possession of the Promised Land, and being their King in every respect, as well as their God, till they solicited to have a king from amongst themselves, like the other nations round about them; in which he, in some measure, yielded to their importunity, perhaps to punish them for their fickleness; however he was still their only *lawgiver*, and was it at all unreasonable, that he should make it death by law for any of them to acknowledge or worship any other god, which it could scarce be possible any of them should do, out of conscience or real opinion, but purely out of conformity to the popular fashions of the countries around them, of which they were apt to be foolishly and excessively fond.

There may seem indeed, at first sight, something plausible, but no more, I think, in what this author advances, concerning the destruction of the Amalekites, the two captains of fifty and their fifties, and the forty-two children who mocked Elisha.

With regard to the Amalekites, God Almighty may, whenever he pleases, in the course of his providence, extirpate any nation, and their
their

their posterity, root and branch; and may punish any man, or community, in their *posterity* as well as *themselves*, with regard to temporal life, or temporal affairs; and may make whom he will the instruments of his providence therein; and why not by express revelation, to his appointed conductor of his Israelites on this occasion, as well as at other times, by means of the natural passions, or wicked ambitious purposes of uninspired men?

All the sensible or sentimental part of mankind, have ever interested themselves in the continuance and prosperity, or the reverse, of their *posterity*. Innumerable instances of this appear in the scripture history. Balaam wished that he might die the death of *Jeshurim*, *i. e.* of that distinguished people whom he was called to curse, *i. e.* that he might live and prosper; and that his *latter end*, *i. e.* his *posterity*, might be like theirs, *i. e.* might last for ever. The Psalmist says, *The end of the wicked shall be cut off*. This is the meaning of God's visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation, and shewing mercy unto thousands (of generations) of them that love him, and keep his commandments. Exod. xx. 5, 6. Which last clause, I apprehend, yet holds good in favour of faithful Abraham, whose natural descendants by Hagar, Keturah, and Esau, perhaps, even now inhabit a considerable part of Asia, as well as the yet distinct remnant of Jacob's posterity, at present scattered through the world. Notwithstanding which, the future and final state of individuals, will

will undoubtedly turn upon their own real personal character. In this respect, the son shall not die for the iniquity of the father, though in the other respect he often does.

After Amalek and his people were discomfited, *The Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, because the hand of Amalek is against the throne of the Lord* (as it is in the margin) Exod. xvii. 14. That this was not done immediately, might be (as in the case of the Amorites) because the iniquity of the Amalekites, though great, was not yet full. In the second chapter of Deuteronomy, the Israelites were ordered not to hurt some of the nations, nor possess themselves of any thing that was theirs, because some of them were the children of Lot, and some of Esau, Abraham's grandson. And may not the God of heaven and earth, make these distinctions in the outward circumstances, in the name, the prosperity and posterity of persons, families or nations, without being charged with injustice? What right has any man, or nation to life, or long life, or a posterity? Balaam foretold of Amalek, that *his latter end should be, that he perish for ever.* Numb. xxiv. 20.

Elijah called for fire from heaven to consume the two captains of fifty and their fifties. Not from a spirit of resentment, like that with which our Saviour's disciples would have had him call for fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans (this is our author's innuendo) but from a spirit
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of prophecy, as appeared from God's answering his prayer; and God therein punished *Abaziab* rather than those unhappy persons who perished in his service on this occasion, who yet might themselves be too well pleased with the haughty message he employed them in. God Almighty may keep up his servants' character in what manner he pleases, as in the other case of *Elisha* cursing, in the name of the Lord, or rather prophetically denouncing the judgment of God on forty-two children, as they are stiled, who mocked him, and whom this author, the more to move his readers compassion and blacken the story, over and over stiles *little children*, who knew no better, &c. *Child* and *children* in scripture do not necessarily imply *little children*, witness the *Children of Israel*, and the apostles' address to God, that they might be enabled to work miracles *in the name of his holy child Jesus*. Acts iv. 30. and ver. 27. *against thy holy child Jesus, &c.* Very probably they were such as the scriptures stile *Children of Belial*. We know not their age, or the particular circumstances of their guilt. It was always esteemed a considerable duty of young persons to reverence the aged, and the providence of God might take occasion to make an example to that and future ages of these despisers of such, supposing (as this author does, without ground) they did not know him to be a prophet.

As to the author's suggestion that the God of the Jews was a local deity, like the God of Ekron, &c. it is certain the Jews considered him, as he really was, in a peculiar manner
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their God (their covenant God) but at the same time as the Maker and Governor of the whole universe of heaven and earth, as is plain from innumerable passages in their books. I need only mention the first verse of Genesis. He might make use of the ministry of angels; he did so, no doubt, perhaps always does so in his government of the whole world; but they must be under his most just and wise direction. Whether any one in particular of these ministering spirits had the charge of that people is not so certain, but shall we rashly charge such ministers of heaven with injustice or caprice, as if they were the ministers of some fallible, weak or wicked earthly potentates? And yet even these we may be liable to censure wrongfully, sometimes for want of proper lights.

Page 264. This author has an invidious sting at St. Paul for his unphilosophical expression of a *spiritual body*, 1 Cor. xv. 44. which only betrays his eagerness to disparage that apostle, or any passage of scripture, since nobody can mistake St. Paul's meaning, or object to that. We have another such instance in p. 267—274. The author had learned from Mr. Collins to divert himself at St. Paul's expence, with Gal. iv. 21—26. but certainly never took the pains to peruse Mr. James Pierce's Dissertation on that passage, or these eight elaborate pages of his *Farewell* had probably been spared. Mr. Pierce has clearly shewn, that the great difficulty and obscurity which has perplexed expositors in giving an account of St. Paul's argument here, have arisen from their mistaking the
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the meaning of these words, *ατινα εστιν αλληγορουμενα*; which should not have been rendered, *which things ARE AN ALLEGORY*, but *are allegorized*, *i. e.* not by St. Paul, but by the prophet Isaiiah, whose allegory St. Paul refers to, and expressly quotes in the following 27th verse; and, in my opinion, Mr. Pierce has sufficiently justified both the prophet in his allusion, and the apostle in the use he makes of it with regard to the Jews. But the Dissertation is too long for me to transcribe here, and I will not spoil it by an abridgment.

Page 275. The author seems to doubt, or really more than doubt, "Whether there be
 " any positive institutions of a divine original
 " that may be deemed acts of piety. As to
 " the institutions of Moses (he says) they seem
 " to have been treated disrespectfully by two
 " of Christ's apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul,
 " by whom they seem to be considered as below
 " and unworthy of the Supreme Deity," &c. Not at all, in my opinion. St. Paul, and, no doubt, St. Peter too, considered the Jewish nation at the time of giving them the law (and others too, perhaps) as in a state of minority, and proper to be indulged with childish things, or weak and beggarly elements, as the apostle calls them, by way of comparison. But now, under the gospel dispensation, they were to put away childish things, and be treated and instructed in a more *manly* way. And wherein is it below or unworthy of man or of God to treat creatures according to their real state or circumstances?

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“ As to the institutions of Christ (says this author) “ they do not appear to be relative “ to the Supreme God, but only to the disciples of Christ and their master.” How contrary is this suggestion to the continual express declarations of Christ himself? John xii. 49. *For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father, who sent me, he gave me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak; my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me,* chap. vii. 16. See likewise chap. xiv. 24. and 31. Thus baptism was instituted and intended not only (I will add not chiefly) “ as a mark or visible token of “ discipleship, or dedication and attachment to “ Christ;” but also to God the Father through Christ. Why else are we ordered to be baptized into the name of the Father (in the first place, too) as well as into that of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit? And the Lord’s supper seems intended, not only “ to awaken and keep “ alive upon the minds of Christ’s followers (I add, in the world and throughout all ages) “ a just and worthy sense of the beautiful character of their master;” but also, and more especially, of God the Father’s good-will to mankind, in sending him to live, and preach, and work miracles, and die, and rise again, and ensure eternal life to true believers for the promoting of virtue and rational religion in a corrupt world. “ To which” (viz. to which institutions) says this author, “ we may “ add the washing of feet, which seems to bear “ some resemblance to a positive institution.” Slyly insinuating, that there is as much reason to ob-

observe this rite or custom in the christian church, as those of baptism and the Lord's supper. But did our Saviour say, wash the feet of *all nations*, or say, do *this* as oft as ye do it for a memorial of me? or do we find such a practice take rise immediately from this, and continue amongst the apostles and first christians. I am far from looking upon these external rites, signs or ceremonies, as of equal importance with any moral duty, but as subservient to moral duty, particularly to a religious regard to God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and to his promise of eternal life, and the observing them with this view and to this purpose, is paying obeisance to God, or worshipping of him.

This author questions whether *prayer* is a part of *natural religion*, and seems to think, the begging his blessing upon our food, or any other petition to God Almighty, a groundless and impertinent, if not an absurd practice.

There is, I think, in nature, this perpetual ground for prayer, viz. our own insufficiency, for any thing without the continual, though ever so imperceptible interposition of that Great Being, in whom we live and move and have our being; and prayer to God is a very natural and becoming acknowledgement, of this our dependance upon him. If prayer to a superior being, be not natural to man, whence is it the practice of all men, in all parts and all ages of the world, when in any distresses wherein their own wisdom and abilities fail them; and the reason of the thing is the same, where we are

not driven to these extremities, though it may not be apt to act so forcibly upon us.

The author's system of divinity and of providence, seems to be, *that all events take place*, necessarily and uninterruptedly, from a series of causes, ever since the first creation of things, and that the Divine Being never interposes on any account. If this were, indeed, the certainly known state of the case, prayer to God would be a hopeless performance; but if the very reverse of this, which is the scripture system of providence, be true, prayer to God is as proper and natural, as for a child to ask bread or help, or any thing it wants of its earthly parents. In each case, wisdom and paternal goodness, must direct and govern the answer to such prayers.

[*To be continued.*]

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

PAULINUS's observations on the reasoning of St. Paul, in your last number, throughout the eighth first pages of them, appear to me very just as well as ingenious. I shall make no other remark on what follows, than to suggest in what light those passages of scripture, he refers to, appear to me.

The moral law makes no provision for repentance; it is not in the nature of law to do so. That is the business of some act of grace. Accordingly, when our first parents had broken the
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the positive law of God, and Cain the very first law of nature, God sufficiently manifested his disposition to be merciful to them, to correct them like a father, and not like an inexorable judge. He raised in them the expectation of a saviour, who should bruise their great enemy the serpent's head. He expressly assured Abraham, that *in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed*. The prophet Ezekiel solemnly declared in his name, that *the repenting, reformed sinner should live, and not die*. And the common kind providence of God was sufficient to leave the heathen world inexcusable in their impenitency and unbelief, as the apostle suggests. The good persons, upon record in the Old Testament, expected acceptance with God, and salvation, on the score of his experienced *mercy*, and (to them) well known *promises*. But, the generality of the latter Jews, in the pride and presumption of their hearts, expected it on account of their observance of the mere letter of the law; being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, submitted not to the righteousness of God.

PAULINUS seems to think (if I take him right) that Moses, in Deut. xxx. 10—14. had no reference at all to *justification by faith*, but only by his own *law*. I consider the passage thus, *If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and statutes which are written in this book of the law*. (This may, perhaps, imply perfect obedience to the law, in which case the law would, undoubtedly,

justify them; but what if they should have transgressed this law in any instances, or their children after them; this Moses evidently supposes to be the case throughout this whole chapter, and, therefore, adds) *and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and with all thy soul,* this implies repentance and faith in the mercy of God. For (says he) *the commandment which I command thee this day, viz. to repent, and reform, and trust in God's mercy, is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off; it is not a secret purpose locked up in the breast of a merciful God, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may bear it and do it; neither is it beyond the sea, revealed to some favoured nation afar off, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea to look for it, in a distant country, and bring it to us, that we may bear it and do it; but the word is nigh unto thee, in thy mouth,* [when thou readest the prophecies, the promises, or the history contained in the sacred books] *and in thy heart,* [when thou givest thyself leave to think and reason fairly on the divine attributes, which both the works and word of God preach to thee.] In the same manner as the moral law is said to be written in the heart of the heathens, the gospel may be said to be written in the heart of the Jews until the veil came upon their heart.

I cannot think St. Paul's application so forced an accommodation; or that it was in the least suggested to him by the mention of ascending up into heaven, or going down into the deep.

By

By Christ's being brought down from above, or brought up again from the dead, St. Paul means the doctrine Christ taught, and the apostles preached; as St. Paul explains both himself and Moses, when he immediately adds, *This is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

As to St. Paul's appeal to Habakkuk; render the expression, *The just by faith shall live*; and the sense of the passage will be thus, *His soul that is lift up*, (like that of the self-conceited Pharisee) *is not upright in him*; but the humble soul (who renders himself acceptable to God by a religious regard to him, and, together with his sincere persevering obedience, cries out, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, shall be justified, he) *shall live*. He shall escape the judgment threatened.

With regard to Heb. x. 5—10. I refer PAULINUS to Mr. JAMES PIERCE'S Criticism on that place; who suspected a very small alteration had crept into the Hebrew text by the mistake of some transcriber, and that both the Hebrew and the Septuagint were the same, as to that expression in the Psalm, when that epistle was wrote; or a writer to the Hebrews would scarce have quoted it to them so different from what they must read it in their own bibles. But for the solution of this, and some other difficulties, we must wait the result of Dr. Kennicot's laborious researches.

St. Paul does, indeed, sometimes make use of the terms *flesh* and *spirit* figuratively, to distinguish

tinguish betwixt the *spirit* and the *letter* of the *law*; but in the 8th chapter to the Romans throughout, and in the other passage PAULINUS quotes, Gal. v. 13. to the end of the chapter, he evidently makes use of these terms only in the literal sense, to denote the propensities of the flesh, or animal part; and the dictates of the rational part in the human composition, and why may not these terms be used in these different senses on different occasions, where common sense may sufficiently determine their true meanings, as well as the word *leaven* sometimes to signify *bread*, sometimes *false doctrine*, sometimes *immorality*? These liberties of expression were too familiar in those times and countries to build any objection upon.

St. Paul's argument against licentiousness, appears to me very just, and very strong, however he may be thought to have taken an orator's liberty in illustrating it. The whole argument is comprised in that short question, *How shall we that are dead in sin, live any longer therein?* The profession of christianity is a renouncing the allowed practice of sin, or dying to it. Christ's baptism, as well as John's, was baptism unto *repentance*. And what is this but dying unto sin that we may live unto righteousness? Our Saviour devoted himself by his *baptism* both by *water* and by *blood*, to this purpose, this great and kind design, though himself knew no sin, but (to use a scripture expression) left it off before it was meddled with. He was lifted up upon the cross that he might draw all men unto him from the paths of vice, and rose again from the
dead

dead to assure them of the pardon of past transgressions, and a resurrection to eternal life. St. Paul had as great a zeal for *morality* as any man could have, and not at all the less for his reckoning himself not under the law, (*i. e.* the curse or condemning power of the law) but under grace.

There is one passage which may serve to shew us with what latitude the sacred writers sometimes made use of the word *prophecy*, John xi. 49—51. *And one of them, Caiaphas, being the High Priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not; and this spake he, not of himself, but being High Priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, &c. i. e. in effect prophesied;* for Caiaphas had no notion of Christ's dying for that nation any otherwise, than to prevent the Romans from taking umbrage at his pretensions to be the Messiah, and making war with that nation for espousing or conniving at such pretensions; but he was influenced by a superior power to express his own wicked meaning in this remarkable manner, which might be considered as *prophetic* of the real truth, and of the gracious purpose of God in favour, not of that nation only, but of all the children of God who were scattered abroad.

These thoughts (such as they are) concerning the argument objected to, are freely submitted to your better judgment, by Gentlemen,

Your very humble Servant,

W. W.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

THE remarks I now send you on the writings of St. Paul are of a miscellaneous nature, and they comprise all that I shall think it worth while to trouble you, or the public with, upon this subject.

Several of the proofs which St. Paul brings of the dignity of Christ from the scriptures of the Old Testament, do not appear to me to be quite satisfactory. Of this number are the following, selected from many others that are more to the purpose, in the epistle to the Hebrews; where he begins with undertaking to prove the dignity of Christ from the high titles given to him, and the high things spoken of him in the scriptures.

Heb. i. 5. *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son*; which is taken either from Psal. lxxxix. 26, 27. or 1 Chron. xxii. 11. or 2 Sam. vii. 14. In all which places the words seem to relate only to David or Solomon.

Heb. i. 6. *And let all the angels of God worship him*, from Psal. xcvi. 7. likewise, Heb. i. 10—12. *And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest: And they shall all wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail*; quoted from Psal. cii. 25--27. Both these passages seem
to

to me to relate to no other than the great Jehovah, God the Father himself.

If St. Paul (or whoever else was the author of this epistle) did not mean to apply this passage to the son (which, indeed, is hardly credible, considering the many clear proofs there are of his supposing Christ to be not God, but a man *in all things* like ourselves) I cannot help thinking the application of it to be rather awkward and ill-judged. But I am very willing to receive information on this subject.

That the Gentiles were to be invited to partake of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, or to have the glad tidings of the gospel preached to them, was most certainly agreeable to the purpose of the Universal Father of the human race; and what he had frequently, and expressly signified, by his prophets of old. Many of these testimonies are, with great force and propriety, alledged by the apostles against the cavils of the Jews; who were desirous to engross to themselves all the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom. But St. Paul aims at a redundancy of argument, and the following seems to be an instance of it.

In the 10th chapter of his epistle to the Romans he is proving, that there was sufficient intimation given in the scriptures of the intended conversion of the Gentiles; and he quotes two passages to make good his assertion. One of them is from Moses, and the other from Isaiah. That from Isaiah is full to his purpose; but that from Moses is not so satisfactory.

Rom.

Rom. x. 19. *But I say, did not Israel know [that the Gentiles were to be converted and saved] First, Moses saith, I will provoke them to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

It is evident, that these words have nothing in them that, at first sight, looks like any prediction, or even an intimation, that the Gentiles were to be received into the church or family of God as well as the Jews; and when we have recourse to the original, and consider the connection in which the words stand, they appear still less to admit of such a construction. The passage is taken from a song that Moses composed, on purpose to be committed to memory by the Children of Israel; and the part that St. Paul quotes from it, to all appearance, contains nothing more than a threatening from God, to punish and afflict them for their contempt of him, by means of a weak and contemptible enemy.

Deut. xxxii. 21. *They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked me anger with their vanities: And I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.*

That this wholly relates to their being delivered into the hands of their enemies, is evident from what follows presently after, v. 30. *How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight; except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?*

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If any thing in the conduct of our modern commentators could surprize me, it would be, to find them so confidently to maintain, that the Divine Being is, in this place, really threatning the Children of Israel with the call and conversion of the Gentiles, as a great affliction and calamity, that was to befall them, and a punishment for their idolatry and apostacy; when this very same thing is promised to Abraham, under the notion of a blessing. *In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* That the same event should be both a blessing, and a curse, to the same people; that, in the very same manner, God should promise to reward the obedience of Abraham, and threaten to punish the disobedience of his degenerate children, is something extraordinary.

To lay any stress, as Dr. Taylor I think doth, upon the original word in the Hebrew [קנא] as if it denoted only *jealousy on account of another's advancement to honours and privileges, that we think we alone have a right to*, is frivolous; when the primary, and genuine sense of the Hebrew is acknowledged to be nothing more than *to be inflamed, to be red hot*; and to be applied to *any warm violent affection of the mind, either for, or against any one.* See Dr. Taylor's Hebrew Concordance. And when, by the very disposition of the words, in both clauses of the sentence, *moving to jealousy, and provoking to anger*, are made perfectly synonymous.

If we look a little farther into the same epistle, we shall find, that St. Paul really laid considerable stress upon the literal interpretation of this
passage

passage in Moses; for he seems to have borrowed from it the hints he gives us of the manner in which, he apprehended, that the conversion of the Gentiles would make way for that of the Jews. This great event, he seems to think, will be brought about by the Jews being fired with jealousy and emulation, upon seeing the Gentiles in possession of the privilege of being the peculiar people of God, when themselves were cast off; which would be a stronger motive, than any that the Jews yet had, to embrace christianity.

That this is a just representation of his sentiments, and of his apprehensions of the views of Divine Providence, first, in the partial conversion of the Jews, as introductory to the general conversion of the Gentiles; and then, of this as an event introductory to the like general conversion of the Jews, the bare perusal of the following passages will prove; and the noble exclamation upon the wisdom and mystery of providence, with which he closes the argument, seems to have broken from him, upon this view of the reasons and methods of it.

Rom. xi. 7---11. What then, Israel hath not obtained what he seeketh for; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded: According as it is written, God hath given them a spirit of slumbring, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day. And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompence unto them. Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back always. I say, then, have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid! but

but rather, through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them [the Jews] to jealousy.—V. 25, 26. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part hath happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved.—V. 28. Concerning the Gentiles, they are enemies for your sake.—V. 30—33. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy, through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that, through your mercy, they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom, and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! &c.

These same views the apostle himself seems to endeavour to enter into; no doubt, from his apprehension that they were the views of providence. For one reason that he assigns, why he exerted himself so much to propagate christianity among the Gentiles, is, that the Jews, his countrymen, might thereby be provoked to jealousy, and (not to be behindhand with the Gentiles) embrace christianity themselves. But, if we consult the history of those times, we shall find, that no circumstance in the conduct of the apostles gave the Jews so great offence, and filled them with stronger prejudice against the gospel, as their preaching it to the Gentiles. See the apostle's views in the following passage:

Rom.

Rom. xi. 13, 14. *I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles; I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.*

St. Paul seems to have been a little off his guard when he said, Heb. ix. 22. *that without shedding of blood there is no remission.* For, in the Old Testament, and even in the books of Moses themselves, we frequently read of *sins being forgiven*, and even of *atonement* being made, where there was no blood shed, or required. See Repository, Vol. I. p. 201, 202.

In Psal. viii. 3—8. St. Paul meets with this passage, *When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the sun, moon and stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour: Thou madest him to have dominion over all the works of thine hands: Thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep, and oxen, yea and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea; and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*

This is an exceeding fine passage. The sentiment is perfectly natural and just, and the expression proper to it. In it the race of mankind appears in a very just and beautiful light. In one view, we see man's inferiority to the Supreme Being, to the angels, and to the sun, moon and stars, the more magnificent, and glorious works of God's hand; and, in another view, his superiority

riety to the animal creation ; consisting of beasts, birds, and fishes, which are all distinctly enumerated. I can see no foundation for interpreting this concerning Christ, but that the term *son of man* occurs in it, nor as concerning the dispensation of the gospel being committed to him, but that *all things* are here said to be put under his feet ; though what is included in *all* is particularly specified. The turn which the apostle gives to the passage is as follows :

Heb. ii. 5—9. *For unto angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one, in a certain place, testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels: Thou crownedst him with glory and honour; and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For, in that he hath put all things in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see, not yet all things put under him: But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the sufferings of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.*

In the 68th Psalm, David gives a noble, animated, and highly figurative description of the conquests of the Almighty over his own and his church's enemies. That the conqueror in the psalm is no other than the great Jehovah himself, seems to be evident from the general tenor of the psalm ; though I am not clear that some part of it doth not refer to the kingdom of the Messiah in the latter days. However I cannot

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not think, with St. Paul, that it must necessarily refer to Christ, because mention is made in it of *one that ascended*. That the reader may judge for himself, I shall first quote the words of the psalm, and then St. Paul's comment upon it.

Psal. lxxviii. 1. Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let them also that hate him flee before him. V. 4. Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: Extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him. V. 11, 12. The Lord gave the word, great was the company of those that published it. Kings of armies did flee apace, and she that tarried at home divided the spoil. V. 17—19. The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended up on high: Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation.

Eph. iv. 8—12. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first, into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up, far above all heavens; that he might fill all things. And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, &c.

St. Paul having asserted, *Heb. ii. 11. that he that sanctifieth [i. e. Christ] and they who are sanctified*

tified are all of one, quotes the following passages from the Old Testament in support of it, v. 12. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing praise unto thee*; taken from Psal. xxii. 22. which relates probably to the Psalmist himself; and v. 13. *Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me*; which is only a part of a sentence, from Isa. viii. 18. in which the prophet is speaking only of himself and his own children, whom he there saith that God made use of for signs to the Children of Israel.

St. Paul attempts to prove, that *there yet remains a rest for the people of God*, for us who believe the gospel to enter into. His final argument for this, and that which he lays the greatest stress upon is, that David, a long time after the rest given to the Children of Israel by Joshua, speaketh of a rest for the people of God. This rest, St. Paul saith, cannot yet have been entered into, but still remains to be enjoyed.

Heb. iv. 7—9. *Again he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus [Joshua] had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God.*

I shall now quote the original passage from David.

Psal. xcvi. 7—11. *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness;*

when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways; unto whom I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.

What *rest* can it be David refers to in this place, but the very *rest* that Joshua gave the Children of Israel? For he is professedly warning his own age by the example of past times.

Lastly; That the ladies are very well satisfied with the place St. Paul hath assigned them in the church, I have too high an opinion of their modesty and discretion, to dispute. But I appeal to their judgment, whether it be a sufficient reason for his peremptorily confining them to the place of hearers and learners, that Adam was first formed, and that Eve first transgressed.

1 Tim. ii. 12—14. *But I suffer not a woman to speak, or to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence: For Adam was first formed, then Eve: And Adam was not deceived; but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression.*

To the account that I have given of the reasoning of St. Paul, it may not be foreign to the purpose, to add a select number of the boldest figures, allusions, and allegories, which he hath introduced in his writings. For, since reasoning is conducted by an attention to the *real* and strict analogies of things, just as figures of speech are formed upon the most beautiful and striking, though looser analogies; with respect to which, however, rules of propriety and correctness are observed by judicious writers, and
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a negligence in the one case is generally attended with a like negligence in the other; the liberties that a man gives himself, even with respect to his figures and allusions, may contribute something towards giving us an insight into his character as a reasoner; and help to determine, whether he must be deemed a *cautious*, or a *bold*, a *clear*, or a *confused*, reasoner; according as he is observed to be *cautious* or *bold*, *clear* or *confused*, in his figures and allusions. And when, by attending to those characteristic circumstances, we are agreed in what class to rank a writer, we may better judge how far, and wherein, he may be depended upon, and in what he cannot be depended upon by us.

And this method is the more necessary to be taken with St. Paul, as it is almost peculiar to him, to have his arguments, allusions, and figures of speech slide insensibly into one another: So that, in some places, it may very well admit of a dispute, whether he really means to argue seriously, and demonstrate upon solid principles, or only to draw out a figure, and pursue an allegory, or allusion. This is exactly in the *Jewish taste*: And whether or no, St. Paul's undoubted good sense was satisfied with it, it answered his purpose the best of any method in the world. *To the Jews he became a Jew, that he might gain the Jews.*

Of this mixture of reasoning and figures, is one of the methods by which St. Paul seems to have endeavoured to bring over the Jews to the profession of christianity, when he supposes a contract of marriage to have passed between

them: For he would prevail upon them to forsake the law, by demonstrating to them, that this contract was broken, and, therefore, that they were intirely at liberty to dispose of themselves to another.

Rom. vii. 1—6. *Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law) how that the law hath dominion over a man so long as he liveth. For the woman who hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then, if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man: Wherefore, my brethren, ye now are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.*

If we ask, in what sense and manner it is, that the Jews might be said to die to the law? *What is it in them that dies?* We are told, it is that *body of sin*, from which the apostle, in the 6th and 24th verses of this chapter, mentions his being delivered. If we ask farther, *By what means we come to be delivered from this body of sin?* What is it that kills it within us? We have

have the apostle's explanation of this particular in the 4th verse, in which he saith, *We are become dead to the law, by the body of Christ*; and in the 6th verse of the preceding chapter, in which he represents *the old man* within us as *crucified with Christ*; that is, it dies in the similitude of the death of the body of Christ. And now *this body of sin being* in this manner *dead, by which*, as he saith, v. 6. that *we were held* [i. e. in contract with the law] the bond of the contract is dissolved, and though the law be supposed to be still in being, it hath no power over us, or claim upon us, and we are under no sort of obligation to it.

The struggle which St. Paul describes as subsisting within himself, in the remaining part of this chapter, which hath been the subject of so much debate among the commentators, appears to me to be an attempt to demonstrate, by an appeal to our experience and internal feelings, the real existence of this *body of sin*, by means of which the Jews were bound to the law, and which dies in the death of Christ, as something that may be considered as different, and distinct, from *ourselves*, our better mind. In this seeming weakness of St. Paul's reasoning, we may clearly discern a piece of his fine address to the Jews, in chusing to represent them as dead to the law, rather than suppose the law to be, in any sense, dead to them; which, he was sensible, would have been an insurmountable offence to those brethren of his: though, certainly, his argument would have appeared to much more advantage, upon that supposition, than as it

stands at present. But St. Paul chose rather to clog and embarrass his argument with unnecessary difficulties, than to offend the Jews in so tender a point. Besides, he was so well acquainted with the temper and disposition of the Jews, as to know, that a weak and perplexed argument, delivered in an inoffensive manner, would go farther with them, than the most clear and substantial, that the case would admit of, delivered with offence.

In the 16th chapter of the book of Genesis, we find the story of Abraham's going in to Hagar his handmaid, when he despaired of having issue by Sarah his lawful wife, according to the received custom of those times. But Hagar and her son Ishmael growing insolent, at the instances of Sarah, enforced by a divine command, they are cast out. This story St. Paul allegorizes, giving it such a turn as is rather unfavourable to the law, and in favour of the gospel. I call it an *allegory*, because St. Paul himself calls it so, and because this application of the story is so arbitrary. Notwithstanding this, however, if the connection it stands in be consulted, it will appear that St. Paul lays no small stress upon it, and that he really intended it to have some considerable weight with the Judaizing christians, to whom it is addressed.

By the child which Hagar the bond-woman bare to Abraham, St. Paul would have us to understand the covenant that was made with the Children of Israel at Mount Sinai; which answers to Jerusalem, and the Jews in their state of bondage to the law; whereas the gospel co-
venant

venant is typified by Isaac, the son of the free woman. We *christians*, therefore, are represented by the son of the *free woman*; while the *Jews* are only the children of the *bondwoman*. And thus the history is inverted by the allegory.

Gal. iv. 21—31. *Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law. For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was after the flesh, but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory. For these are the two covenants; the one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar: For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children: But Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice thou barren, that bearest not: Break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: For the desolate shall have more children than she who hath an husband. Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise. But as then, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the scriptures? Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not the children of the bondwoman, but of the free.*

St. Paul's excessive fondness for types and allegories makes him convert almost every circumstance, relating to the passage of the Children of Israel through the wilderness, into allegories,

ries. Most of them are exceeding beautiful, and are not in the least offensive to those that are conversant with his writings.

In the following passage, we have two of these circumstances allegorized. The Children of Israel, under the conduct of Moses, pass through the Red Sea, and under the cover of a supernatural cloud. This is the naked fact. Dressed in allegory, this is *baptizing them to Moses, both in the cloud, and in the sea.*

Again; Moses, we read, struck a rock, and the water gushed out, and might follow the camp for some time. But in St. Paul the water is spiritual water, and the rock becomes a *spiritual rock*. It even follows the camp, and, at last, appears to be no other than *Christ* himself.

1 Cor. x. 1—4. Moreover, brethren, I would not have you ignorant, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they all drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.

In the 34th chapter of the book of Exodus, we read, that, when Moses descended from the mount, after conversing with God, his face shone with so intense a brightness, that he was obliged to cover it with a veil; or the people could not have looked upon him to converse with him.

With St. Paul this veil is a mystical covering for the heart; and prevents the Jews from seeing
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ing to the end, and comprehending the design of their religious institution.

2 Cor. iii. 13—16. *And not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, that the Children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished; but their minds were blinded. For, until this day, remaineth the same veil untaken away, in reading the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart; nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.*

In the following passage, St. Paul appears to me to give no very clear account of the nature and efficacy of mental prayer. He represents the spirit of God as praying within us, in conjunction with our groanings; and saith, that God, who knows the mind of the spirit, receives his intercession favourably. So that it is not we that pray, but another within us, and for us.

Rom. viii. 26, 27. *Likewise the spirit, also, helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what to pray for as we ought; but the spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the spirit; for he maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God.*

To illustrate, if not to prove, that all christians are the sons of God, as our Lord Jesus Christ was; and, therefore, that they have a right to all the privileges of sons, St. Paul represents them as having *put on Christ*, in such a manner

a manner as to be intirely covered with him, as a man is covered with the clothes he puts on; so as that, to God, they appear nothing but Christ, his own individual beloved son. This, at least, is Mr. Lock's sence of the following passage.

Gal. iii. 26—28. *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; but we are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Christ and his death are represented by a great variety of figures, allusions and comparisons, in St. Paul's writings. In one place, he is *the paschal lamb*, 1 Cor. v. 7. *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.* In another place, he is *a sacrifice for sin*. Eph. v. 2. *Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour.* Presently after, we find him *the priest*, that officiates upon the occasion. Heb. ix. 11. *But Christ, being come a high-priest of good things to come.* And, last of all, which is inconsistent with his being either priest, or sacrifice, he is devoted to be *a curse*, and to die an accursed death. Gal. iii. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.*

With respect to this variety of allusions or comparisons, St. Paul can hardly be considered as intirely free from blame. He hath had too little regard to the consistency of these representations, though they are used in very distant places

places in his writings. For it is very difficult to conceive, how a number of things, so intirely different from, and even contrary to each other, as a *paschal lamb*, a *sacrifice for sin*, a *priest*, and a *curse*, should faithfully and truly represent the same person, in the same scene of his life, and at the same instant of time. This proceeding could not but tend to throw confusion into our views of the end and design of the death of Christ.

There is something just and noble, but something rather strained, in the comparison which the apostle makes between several circumstances in the life of Christ, and what is experienced by christians. Among these are the following:

Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*

——. vi. 14. *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*

Eph. ii. 5, 6. *Even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with him; and hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

Phil. iii. 10, 11. *That I might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings; being made conformable unto his death: if, by any means, I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.*

And, not only do all christians, die and rise again, in conformity to the death and resurrection of Christ; but they are obliged, likewise, to undergo a mystical *circumcision*, in allusion to the circumcision of Christ.

Col.

Coll. ii. 11—13. *In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with him in baptism; wherein, also, ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.*

Having now advanced all that I have to object to the reasoning of St. Paul, I freely submit what I have written to the test of impartial examination.

The passages I have criticised upon in St. Paul, besides that they are a very inconsiderable part of his writings, contain all that appears to me to be imperfect in his reasoning. The bulk of his epistles consist of excellent sentiments, nervous eloquence, striking figures, just, and, generally, clear reasoning. These, I should with pleasure have expatiated upon; but that it is a province which is already occupied by much abler hands.

However, as useful observations in astronomy are drawn from the pains that some people have taken to observe the spots on the face of the sun, I am not without hopes, that the pains I have taken, may not be altogether without its use.

Such is the disposition of mankind to run into extremes in their opinions, and the hurt they receive thereby; that it cannot but be highly proper, that, while some are employed in displaying the excellencies of great person-
ages

ages or writers, in order to excite our admiration, and engage our imitation; others should be endeavouring to guard us against their foibles.

When a writer is never mentioned but to his praise, nor criticised upon but with a view industriously to cover his blemishes, and display his excellencies; and when different commentators vie with each other, not which shall most effectually serve the cause of truth, but which shall most advance the reputation of their author; it is impossible but that a prejudice must be generated in his favour. And it is the nature of all prejudice to mislead us in our judgments of men and things: And there may be cases, in which a prejudice in favour of a person may be even of more dangerous consequence, with respect to truth, than any prejudice that can be raised against him. As to religion, it may have suffered pretty equally by prejudices for, and against, names. However, as it hath been so great a sufferer by both, it greatly behoves us, in all cases in which religion is concerned, as it eminently is in the character of St. Paul, carefully to guard against a prejudice of either kind.

If this attempt contribute ever so little to moderate any excessive prejudice, and to fix the balance of the public judgment of St. Paul a little nearer to the proper equipoise; should it weigh, I say, ever so little, if it be on that side, in which it will tend to bring things to a juster standard than that which passes at present; so that the cause of truth be ever so little promoted by it, all the end I have in view will be answered.

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I conceive the greater hopes, that the inquiry I have proposed into the reasoning of St. Paul, will not be unwelcome to students in divinity, as it may assist us in judging of the *inspiration* of the apostles, &c. and whether they were influenced by it as *writers*, which seems to be a great *desideratum* in theological inquiries. For a question of this nature can only be decided by such *facts* as I have proposed to our examination.

It will be a sufficient proof that a person understands nothing at all of the present argument, if he imagine that any essential point, either in religion in general, or in christianity in particular, is affected by it. The evidence of christianity rests upon numberless, well attested, astonishing, and uncontroled miracles; and there is no candid or sober-thinking person, but must perceive, that it is very possible that the apostles, being once fully instructed in the principles of christianity, might be left, in general, to take their own measures with respect to propagating it in the world; in which case they must be indulged in following the natural bent of their own minds. Consequently both in their actions and writings, we may expect to discern true human characters, attended with natural human failings, and human excesses.

Errors in the *conduct* of the wisest and best men with whom the scripture history brings us acquainted, are frequent and notorious. Why then should their inspiration be supposed to exempt them from blame, more in their *writings*, than in their *conduct*, when a mistake in the former case

case is, to say the least, as easy to fall into as a mistake in the latter? And their inspiration would not answer the only valuable end that could be proposed by it, viz. the preventing men from falling into error, unless every translator and transcriber had been inspired also. The apostles and other writers of the New Testament, were so circumstanced that they cannot be supposed to have fallen into any mistake of consequence, and we ought to be thankful that, since the reformation, we are in circumstances to discern even these small mistakes, provided we have the judgment and the courage to make use of all the lights with which we are furnished for that purpose.

I beg leave, however, to remind my reader, that I mean not to decide concerning, but only to promote an impartial enquiry into, the reasoning of St. Paul. Should I, therefore, appear to have mistaken the sense and views of the apostle, in the passages that I have remarked upon, and the suspicions I raise have no foundation in truth, I am heartily disposed to partake of the unfeigned satisfaction, which a proper and just vindication will give to all the sincere friends of this great apostle; and, if such a vindication can be procured, shall think myself amply recompensed for the trouble I have given myself to set on foot the examination.

I am very sensible, what respect is due to writings of such ancient date, to a man of St. Paul's character, sense, learning, and wisdom; and, likewise, how dubious the sense must necessarily be of letters, written upon occasions with which we are not perfectly acquainted;
and,

and, consequently, with what extreme caution, circumspection, and diffidence one should, after all, venture to pass any censure upon them. But when a person pretends not to pass a decisive sentence, but only writes with a view to have a subject more thoroughly examined into, all lovers of free enquiry will indulge him in considerable liberties. For such persons well know, that to treat every subject with the most absolute freedom, is ever the disposition of all lovers of simple truth; and that a mind over-awed, in the moment of speculation, with a slavish reverence for any name whatever, whether among the living or the dead, is not destined to shake off the shackles of prejudice from itself, or others. That must be the effort of a mind every where daring and intrepid, that turns out of its way for nothing but the irresistible force of conviction and truth.

PAULINUS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

If the following short observations on eating blood appear worthy of your attention, they are submitted to your disposal, by

Your very humble servant,

EUSEBIUS.

- I. **A**bstinence from eating blood, doth not appear to have derived its origin or obligation from the law of Moses alone, and, con-

consequently, to have been only a *ritual* of that law; but to have been required by the precept given to Noah and his posterity, Gen. ix. 4. *But flesh, with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.* It is true, that some modern Jews understand these words, as forbidding only “the eating of a living creature, or any part of “it being yet alive,” and, consequently, the flesh with the blood in it; but the antient Jews (as Grotius tells us) understood it of eating blood in any form. And that Moses understood this prohibition in the same sense, *i. e.* as requiring to separate the blood from the flesh before the latter was eaten, and not to eat the blood at all, appears from Levit. xvii. 10—14. where, among other things, he saith, *Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof:* here the same reason for the prohibition is assigned, as had been given to Noah and his sons, only more explicitly. This prohibition, therefore, seems to be binding upon all the descendants from that patriarch, as long as the reason on which it is grounded shall last, *i. e.* as long as the blood shall be the life of the flesh.

2. Let us attend also to the time when this prohibition of eating blood was first made, viz. when God made a grant of his other animated creatures to mankind for their food. At the creation God had made a grant of his vegetable works for their food, yet even then he made a reserve, or exception of one tree, Gen. i. 29. *God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth; and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree,*
 N^o. II. Vol. III. P yield-

yielding seed; to you shall it be for meat. Hence we may conclude, that the Antediluvians used only vegetable food. If they used animal food at all, they took what God had not given them, and therefore they had no right to. But after the flood God enlarged his grant, saying, Gen. ix. 3. *Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things:* but then he adds this prohibition in question, the observation whereof would serve as a constant and perpetual memorial of their obligations to the great Author and Lord of universal nature, who had supplied their wants so bountifully. Thus great princes, when they grant extensive manors, or other privileges, to any of their subjects, by charter or letters patent, do often annex clauses of restriction, or requisitions of certain inconsiderable dues or services, by way of memorial and acknowledgement of the bounty from which the valuable possession was derived. Now as the grantee, who should neglect to observe the terms of the charter under which he held, would be adjudged to have forfeited his grant; so, certainly, doth the person who violates this prohibition, forfeit his right to the use of animal food, derived from the preceding divine charter.

3. Let us attend also a little more particularly to the reason assigned for this prohibition. *Flesh, with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, &c.* or, in the words of Moses, in Leviticus, *the life of all flesh is the blood thereof.* Hence this prohibition seems designed to impress on mankind an high regard for that principle
life;

life; to inspire them with great reverence for God, as the author and disposer of life, and with great caution to preserve, and not to injure life in themselves, or other men. It was impossible that they could make use of animals for food without depriving them of life, and their frequent practice of it would have a tendency to make them careless of *life* in general, even in one another; to obviate which ill effect, they are required by the awful sanction of divine authority, wholly to abstain from using any of that part of the animals they eat, which constant and universal observation shewed them to be the vehicle or seat of *life*. And to make this impression still more sure and deep, and more forceably to deter them from cruelty and murder, it is added in the words following, v. 5, 6. *Surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.* Now though the use of blood for food may have no intrinsic moral evil in it; yet it seems to be taking away a barrier against the most horrid crimes, which was provided by the wisdom of God to preserve men from those temptations which his bounty to them might possibly occasion.

Thus, when Moses in his law forbids eating blood, he seems only to explain and enforce a more antient divine sanction. It is true he adds a new argument suitable to his own institution, Levit. xvii. 11. *For the life of the flesh is in the*

blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. It is readily allowed that this motive for abstaining from eating blood, ceased with the Jewish law and sacrifices, but that hinders not that the other and more antient obligations may still hold in force.

4. It is objected against the supposed perpetuity of the obligation of the *apostolical decree* prohibiting the eating of blood, that neither Paul, nor any other of the New Testament writers, do ever repeat it, or inculcate the obligation of this abstinence. But this seems a proof rather that the Gentile converts readily received, and universally observed this regulation. And what need was there to repeat and inculcate a rule which nobody disputed or transgressed, and which, indeed, there was then no strong temptation to transgress. But the case was far different in relation to abstaining from eating things offered in sacrifice to idols, and from fornication. The former soon became a publick test of christianity, by which the followers of the gospel were distinguished and marked out for contempt and persecution. Motives of safety, interest and honour, therefore, would powerfully incline weak and irresolute professors to symbolize with their Gentile neighbours in this instance; and common practice would concur with carnal affection to entice them to commit fornication. It was therefore highly necessary, that the apostles and other teachers of christianity should continually admonish and exhort them

them to avoid these pollutions. Constant experience shews us, how easy it is to persuade men to the most scrupulous exactness in external observances, under the notion of a religious sanction, in matters where neither interest nor passion are much concerned, but extremely difficult to keep them steady in the practice of other duties, which combat against the influence of these mighty powers, the world and the flesh.

5. If this prohibition of eating blood was intended by the apostles for a temporary regulation only, in compliance with the prepossessions of the Jewish converts, how comes it, that we not only find no hint of such intention in any part of their writings; but also no abolition or relaxation of it, when afterwards such compliance became less necessary; nor any direction under what circumstances, or in what manner to relax or abolish in future. We know that St. John (who was one of the authors of this decree) survived the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews by Titus Vespasian many years; after which event the Jews became the contempt and reproach of all nations, consequently their prejudices became much less an object of consideration to the christians; yet we do not find that John ever gave the least hint that the Gentile converts were at all released from the observance of this article of discipline. Most writers agree, that the book of the Revelation was penned some years after the destruction of Jerusalem. If then the passage in it to which some have referred, * has really a relation

* See Lardner's Remarks on Ward's Dissertations.

to this apostolic decree, Rev. ii. 24. *I will put upon you none other burden*; the exalted Redeemer intimates, that this burden was still upon them, and should continue so till he came; see the following words.

5. But that the apostles never did give to the churches any intimation that this order for abstaining from eating blood was only a temporary regulation, and, consequently, that they did not understand it so themselves, seems plain from the uniform and universal practice of both the Eastern and Western churches, not only in the apostles days, but after them for several centuries. This is confirmed by the many testimonies which Grotius hath collected in his Notes on this decree. Amongst others, Tertullian, in his Apology, at the beginning of the third century, thus vindicates the christians from the foolish charge of drinking human blood in their religious rites, “ Blush at your mistake about us
 “ christians, who do not use even the blood of
 “ animals for food; and for that reason refrain
 “ from things strangled, and that died of them-
 “ selves, lest we should be polluted with the
 “ blood lodged in their vessels. In short, among
 “ other trials of the christians, you offer them
 “ blood-puddings, as being very sure, no doubt,
 “ that that is held to be *unlawful* amongst them,
 “ by which you would make them transgress.
 “ What an absurdity then is this, that you
 “ should imagine us to be greedy of human
 “ blood, whom you certainly know to have
 “ an abhorrence of the blood of beasts.” Minucius Felix also, about the same time, says,
 “ So

“ So great a caution have we of human
“ blood, that we know not what it is to
“ use the blood of beasts in our food.”
In one of the apostolical canons (a book,
which, saith Grotius, gives the best repre-
sentation of the manners of the antient chris-
tians) is this rule, “ If any bishop, presbyter,
“ or deacon, or, in short, any of the Ecclesiastic
“ order, shall eat blood, or that which was torn
“ of beasts, or died of itself, let him be de-
“ graded; for this the law hath forbidden: but
“ if he be a layman, let him be expelled.” But
for a very plentiful attestation to the general
concurrence of the christian churches in all parts
of the world, and down till late ages, in regard-
ing the eating of blood as unlawful; see a very
learned dissertation of Curcellæus in his Theolo-
gical Works, published by Limborch.

*Observations on the evidence for a future state, on
the light of nature.*

THE gospel is to us of the greatest impor-
tance, in that it reveals to us, in the clear-
est manner, the will of God, and the best meth-
ods we can pursue to be like him, in whatever
can ennoble our natures, establish our peace,
and increase our usefulness. If it answers these
ends, surely we shall not hesitate to pronounce
it a gift of unspeakable consequence; and the
more so, if we consider the motives with which
it

it abounds, to encourage our hopes and animate our service. Its precepts are not only clear in their delivery, and beneficial in their tendency, but they are enforced by every motive that can win upon a generous heart. The promises of divine indulgence and compassion, of help and succour, are of the most soothing and engaging nature, to one encompassed with difficulties of various kinds, subject to all the infirmities of *a frail and feverish being*, and above all to those moral weaknesses and transgressions to which humanity is incident. To give us the highest relish possible of virtue and her ways, it carries our aspiring souls beyond the contracted views of this mortal state, to that exalted world of spirits, where our natures shall still be advancing in knowledge and perfection, and be rendered completely happy in the eternal enjoyment of the deity.

Unassisted reason casts a very glimmering and uncertain light on the doctrine of a future state. It no way contradicts it, to be sure; but it only renders it *barely probable*. I can see its absolute certainty no way confirmed, but by that *gospel*, which hath *brought life and immortality to light*. Without it, futurity is wrapped up in impenetrable darkness, and our hopes of an existence beyond the grave, are built on hypothesis and conjecture. The immortality of the soul cannot be absolutely inferred from its immaterial nature alone, without involving ourselves in a very great difficulty, arising from the immortality of the souls of brutes, which can be as well evinced, and by the same process of reasoning, as the immateriality of
human

human spirits. Those powers which constitute man a subject of moral government, and distinguish him from mere animal beings, are but suitable to that state of existence in which he is here, and are absolutely necessary to enable him to act that superior part on earth, which providence hath destined him. Deprive him of any of those powers, and he would be reduced to a level with the brutes, and consequently unfit to carry on the necessary designs of nature, or direct and superintend any of her operations.—I ask, Hath the Divine Being endowed men with a superfluity of powers, with any that he might as well have been without, and which, properly speaking, are unnecessary to the ends of his living in this world, supposing it to be his last state of residence! What are those powers which he might have spared, and which man, if he is not to live hereafter, may be abridged of?—Upon looking diligently into my own breast, and considering the work I have to do, I cannot discern one superfluous gift of heaven. There is an intimate connection between the powers of the mind, and that elevated employment, which man feels himself called to *in-life*. He sees that, *such a state*, in which he is placed, requires *such abilities* as heaven hath bestowed upon him, to qualify him to answer the true ends and purposes of it. Here is such a mutual dependance between mental perceptions and the objects of sense, that without the one, the other would be fruitless, and without the former, the latter would be lost.—The hopes and wishes, the capacities and pursuits of men, are governed by
springs

springs, whose powers are *indefinite*. And so they should be, for the œconomy of human life. If bounds could be fixed to them, the spirit of action would be enervated and depressed, and we know not what stagnation in human affairs might take place. 'Tis impossible that all things can be known. Therefore, as long as the mind thinks and thirsts after the knowledge of things, so far the prospects of nature will open on it, to excite pursuit, and give a keener edge to the spirit of discovery. A future state will, instead of satisfying the mind, with all the knowledge it wants and aspires after, continue to enlarge the prospect, and push on the genius of enquiry. The mind, ever learning, will never, *can never* arrive to the period it aims at, and will, through unnumbered ages, find itself as uneasy in not knowing what it wants to know, as when it first set out in the search of things; and perhaps more uneasy, if we may judge of the effects that our pursuit of knowledge in a future state will have on us by the influence it hath on us at present, and with which the observation of the *wise man* agrees, viz. *He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow*. When, therefore, the *infinity* of man's capacity, is adduced to prove his immortality in some future world, I am surprized that the gentlemen who thus argue, do not follow the soul to its final abode, and consider that, according to the *regular course* of nature, it cannot be completely satisfied there, any more than here, nor is the end it hath in view any more likely to be attained than on earth. The soul, boundless in its desires (and, according

according to its very essential constitution, it must be so as long as it hath any capacity to think, to hope, and to enjoy at all, even in the slightest degree, it is capable of increasing it) I say the soul, boundless in its desires in time, must remain unsatisfied to eternity. No given portion of enjoyment or knowledge can satisfy it for ever.

If it should be asked, Why man, who might live for ever, should not? It may be answered by proposing a similar question; Why man, who might have been higher, is so low as he is? Is it said that if man is not made for any future state of being, God hath imposed on him, by the most flattering hopes and expectations? To this it may be replied, that if that should be the case, he doth his creature no harm by it. The contrary, on the plan of non-existence after death. I have the pleasing hope of happiness hereafter, which being a guard to my virtue, establishes my truest peace. Should that hope prove groundless and delusory, it will neither pain nor shame me in the grave, where forgetfulness and insensibility ever reign. *Where, as Solomon says, neither work, nor knowledge, nor device are found.*

But it is too bold an assertion to say, that the hope of man certainly indicates future and eternal enjoyment. Perhaps, if the hope of immortality is traced through its several windings, and pursued to its original source, it may be found to proceed from prepossessed notions, infused by tradition, and nursed by those desires of the soul, which know no limits. I may hope for a
future

future state of existence, where I may still be engaged in quest of those refined pleasures and improvements to which I aspire here, but to which annihilation will fix an eternal period. But because I hope and wish for it, shall I certainly enjoy it? How do I know? What are the grounds of my persuasion?

My own internal feelings. But they may be the offspring of fancy, and utterly extravagant. Here is no certain and distinct voice that I can hear within me, assuring me, without revelation, that I shall exist for ever.

“What, not the voice of conscience (it may be asked) “that voice which alarms or relieves, “condemns or acquits when its laws are obeyed “or violated? Doth not that voice *point out an* “*hereafter, and intimate eternity to men?*” I cannot, I freely confess, hear that it certainly doth. I hear it applauding virtue and upbraiding vice. And so it should, to guard the boundaries of the one, and restrain us from approaching too near the other. Virtue is the ornament of man; his chief support and invaluable defence. With it he is happy in himself, and useful to others. It is the bond of society, and the guardian of its rights. The world smiles beneath its auspices, it flourishes in every thing, beneficial and beautiful as virtue, thrives and communicates its influence to it. Beneath the ravages of vice it mourns. It is vice that makes this most desperate attack upon the peace and interests of mankind, it turns our very pleasures into misery, it makes the world a scene of confusion and havock, and lays a foundation for all the unnum-

unnumbered evils of life. It is necessary, I feel it so, that I should have a monitor within, to warn me of it, to guard me against its fatal snares, and keep me steady in virtue's paths, which are pleasantness and peace. Conscience is not a redundant power, supposing it relates to no life but the present. It is absolutely needful to support the interest and happiness of mankind here, and we cannot infer from it, and the mode of its operation, that its influence respects a future state of being.

But there is one argument yet behind, which is commonly urged as a definite one, and I have never read a discourse on the necessity of future retribution without it, viz. "The *ine-*
" *qualities* observable in the *present* allotments of
" providence, and the equity of a future state.
" To unravel the unknown designs of God from
" all their perplexing convolutions and intrica-
" cies." That is, in other words, the God of infinite wisdom cannot be thought to act a just part by his creatures, unless he explains to them all the modes, and opens the genuine reasons of his conduct, in the government of them; I am afraid such kind of reasoning would lead us to consequences which we should tremble to think on.

The more we view the state of things in *general*, the more shall we be convinced of the goodness and wisdom of the deity in the constitution of the universe, and the exact adjustment of one thing to another, through all the ranks and orders of beings. The *whole* feels this uninterruptedly, though particulars may not perceive it, or be able to comprehend the infinite variety of measures, by which an omniscient
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and all-powerful being is perpetually promoting it. The *inequalities* of providence, so much insisted on by some, are evils merely *imaginary*, and not real. They are certainly *necessary* for the order and harmony of the particular system to which we belong, and for the universe in general. We see an uniform gradation in the orders of beings inanimate, animate, and rational.

Some are, and must be, greater than the rest. For want of attending properly to this, many are led to entertain very wrong sentiments of the conduct of providence, in its present allotments; and the arguments which they would infer from them, to evince the *necessity* of a future state, reflect the greatest dishonour on the Divine Being, who is the God of the present as well as the future. Where the nature of man is rationally considered, and compared with his situation in this life, it is certain that nothing appears to contradict his existence in an immortal state. Nay, many things appear to render it *supposable*: but I can discover no principle that leads to an undoubted conclusion of the *certainty* of it. Declamations on the hard fate of virtue, and the prosperity of vice in the present state, generally prove *too much*, and when urged to prove the necessity of a future state, in my opinion, prove nothing at all.

All things come alike to all, says Solomon. There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked. I cannot see but that the gifts of providence are *indiscriminately* divided amongst mankind. The virtuous part of the world have their shares, as
much

much as may suffice, with the rest of their fellow-creatures. And, with respect to outward calamities, the virtuous and vicious are alike exposed to them. They are not the peculiar and distinguished lot of the righteous. Nay, their characters defend them from a variety of miseries, which add to the catalogue of human evils, to which the wicked are naturally exposed. Debaucheries and licentious courses, to which the virtuous stand aloof, entail on the wicked a load of infirmities, and cause them to drag a loathsome and cumbrous carcase to the grave. Dishonest proceedings meet with deserved infamy and contempt, and such retaliations as the particular aggravations of their guilt deserve, imprisonment, exile, or death. Every vitious and erroneous character carries its own odium with it, and it will not want to be chastised. Vice is its *own* tormenter. The bad man is ever naked to that severe lash it carries with it. His reflections create constant uneasiness, feed his fear, and cast a dark shade over his soul. He recoils when he thinks of *himself*. He is ashamed of *others*, whilst conscious of his guilt. In short, as the scripture beautifully expresses the state of a mind condemned by its own reflections, *the wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, but continually cast up mire and dirt.* On the contrary, the good man is satisfied from himself. A sense of his integrity is a spring of the greatest consolation. Reflection is his relief under every pressure. He hath no evil to fear, for he hath done nothing to merit it. Just to mankind, he expects protection. Good to all, he deserves esteem.

esteem. In whatever station providence hath placed him, he endeavours to act correspondent with his duty in it; and whilst that is the case, his conduct cannot but be praised, even by those who are not so much concerned to be upright. A character supported by an uniform spirit of piety and virtue, can no more fail of gaining the general esteem and applause of mankind, than the opposite character of gaining its due reward of shame, ignominy and contempt. The weapons which providence hath put into our hands, to punish the flagitious, and which, with minds of any feeling or ingenuity, will have more influence than any corporal punishments or mulcts could possibly have without them.

It is really curious to see, how learned and sensible men will shift arguments, and turn the tables, to support a system, whose particular parts, when separately viewed, do not agree. The divine who one Sunday is preaching on *Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace*, shall bring in every witness to attest the excellence of virtue, and every colour to enhance its beauty. - He will consider its *intrinsic fitness*, and its admirable tendency to promote our temporal and spiritual interest; and its congruity when viewed and compared with our intellectual powers, and its advantages to us, considered as connected with a system of moral agents, of which virtue is the basis and support. He will contrast it with vice, to mark its superiority in point of every thing that rational creatures have cause to esteem valuable. He will declaim loudly and bitterly on the in-
trinsic

trinsic turpitude of vice, its unfitness and infamy. He will speak of the miseries it entails on its votaries here, as well as the more awful ones to which it exposes them hereafter. From all these fine arguments, our preacher will think his doctrine sufficiently proved; and if you should deny, that *virtue is its own reward*, and that *the good man is the only truly happy man*, he would tell you, that if you had the good man's heart, and knew the sincere practice of virtue, you would no longer call it in question.

So far it is very well, and quite consistent. But on the following Sunday, having chosen the words of St. Paul; *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all others most miserable*; the preacher finds it quite necessary to proceed upon a *different* plan of argument. Now virtue is changed from its sweet and easy appearance, where peace entwined its brows, and love sat smiling on her countenance; divested of every beauty to captivate the heart, and every treasure to enrich it, and reduced to a state of the most abject meanness; a disconsolate matron, insulted in her very tears, her harp hung upon the willows, muttering her complaints to the hollow winds, re-echoed by the pendant walls of some ruined temple. Vice exults in the countenance it meets with from the world. All temporal pleasures and advantages lie on its side. And all this to prove that, since (for thus it ought to stand) the virtuous character is naturally the most miserable and despised, and the vicious the most happy and respectable character on earth, it follows, that a future tribunal must

decide the real difference, and transfer the honour and happiness where it is due.—In other words, as the one had its hell and the other its heaven here, without the merit of this, or the demerit of that, only through the unequal dealings of God, it is highly necessary that, in order to vindicate the conduct of his providence, he should, in a future state, assign to each, with more impartiality, the allotments that are respectively their due.

I think I have not stated the propositions unfairly, or drawn a false inference from them. I was naturally led to these reflections (which may seem too bold and severe) by those very strange and absurd methods, that most divines take to prove the necessity of a future state from the light of nature, without revelation. I firmly believe that doctrine they so warmly defend; but a friend to free examination, and willing to explore the principles on which tenets are founded, I confess I cannot see that a future state is a doctrine dictated and confirmed by reason alone. The gospel only draws open the scenes that naturally hide futurity from our view, darts its light beyond the confines of mortality, and directs our eye to immortal objects, to the state of everlasting bliss and growing perfection, the world of peace and knowledge, purity and love to God, the cause and guide and eternal end of all; to whom may all beings pay their united homage. *Amen.*

PACIFICUS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

As you have requested your correspondents to consider the subject of Baptism, I send you some observations which have occurred to me respecting it. If you think they will throw any light upon the institution, you will, I doubt not, lay them before your readers.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your very humble servant,

LIBERIUS.

IT appears to me, that few persons in these Western parts of the world, enter sufficiently into the ideas of the Jews, and other Asiatic nations; and that some objections to infant baptism cannot be satisfactorily answered without laying aside some notions that are, in a manner, peculiar to Europeans, and especially such as have prevailed in modern times. With respect to this subject, I cannot think that writers have attended so much as they ought to have done to the power of a master of a family in the East, and particularly how far his own character and profession usually affected his wife, children, and servants, and, indeed, every thing that belonged to him. When the Ninevites repented, they made their cattle to fast, and wear sackcloth as well as themselves; not that they could consider their cattle as having any occasion to repent, but in order to express, in a stronger manner, their own

humiliation and contrition. *And the king caused it to be proclaimed, and published through Nineveh, by a decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing; let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth.* Jonah iii. 7, 8.

Agreeable to these prevailing ideas, though circumcision was a religious rite, instituted as a symbol of the covenant between God and the children of Abraham by Isaac and Jacob, yet not only was Ishmael circumcised, but all the *slaves* of Abraham, who could have no more interest in the promises made to him, than others who were blessed in his seed, and who were not to be circumcised, such were the converts to christianity. *This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised, and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in thy house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money must needs be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.* Gen. xvii. 10—14. *And Abraham was ninety years old and nine when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his*

his fore-skin. In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him. Ib. 24. to the end.

It is evident from this history of circumcision, and of the practice of Abraham in consequence of it, that the application of this rite to Ishmael, and the slaves of the household, was no more than, as it were, a necessary appendage to the circumcision of Abraham, as the master of the family. It must be considered as his own act only, and therefore the consent of Ishmael and the slaves cannot be supposed to have been, in the least degree, necessary. From the same principles we must also conclude, that circumcision, as such, could not express any interest which the subjects of it had in the things signified by it; for then Ishmael and the slaves would have had an equal interest in them.

There can be no doubt but that when the Jews, in future ages, made converts to their religion, they obliged every master of a family both to submit to this rite himself, and likewise to see that all his household, or all that depended upon him, did the same. For the same reason, whatever rite had been enjoined them, and whatever it had expressed, the same people would, no doubt, have applied it, in the same indiscriminate manner, to the master of the family and all his household. It was natural, therefore, for the apostles and other Jews, upon the institution of baptism, as a token of the profession

of christianity, without considering it as a substitute for circumcision, to apply it to infants as well as adults. According to their general ideas, and established customs, in similar cases, they could not have thought of adopting any other practice, without particular directions.

Accordingly we find in the scriptures, that the gaoler, professing his faith in Christ, was baptized, *he and all his*, Acts xvi. 33. and that Lydia was baptized and *all her household*, v. 15. Now it is certain, that to a Jew these phrases would convey the idea of the children, at least, if not of the domestic slaves, having been baptized, along with the head of the family. A Roman could not have understood them to include less than all who were subject to the *patria potestas*.

It also appears to me to be very evident, from Ecclesiastical history, and the writings of the christian fathers, that infant baptism was the uniform practice of the primitive christians, and continued to be so till, among other superstitious notions, they got an idea of the efficacy of baptism, as such, to wash away sins, and consequently of the peculiar safety of dying presently after being baptised, before any fresh guilt could be contracted. It is well known that, upon this account, the Emperor Constantine, and others, deferred baptism till near the hour of death.

An argument derived from the uniform practice of the primitive christians, affects some persons very little, but with me it has great weight, as an evidence of its having been the practice of
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of the apostolical times, and having the sanction of apostolical authority. Whatever appears to have been the practice of the apostles, I would conscientiously conform to, by whatever reasons I was led to conclude that it was their practice. Even their writings are no otherwise valuable, than as they are the most authentic evidence of what they *thought* and *did*; and in other cases, where this evidence cannot be had, all christians are guided by proofs that are less direct and decisive. Thus it is from the evidence of *tradition*, deduced from the uninterrupted practice of christian churches, that we set apart, not the seventh, but the first day of the week for the purpose of public worship; and not from any authority that can be produced from the New Testament.

If we trace the progress of this affair a little farther, we shall find that when, by the prevalence of the liberal sentiments of christianity, more account was made of slaves, as beings of the same species with their masters, and equally interested with them in the privileges and promises of the gospel; and especially when, in consequence of this, they acquired more civil rites, and were allowed to act for themselves more than they had done, they were considered as having religious interests of their own. Indeed, in the times of the Romans, slaves, being of different nations, were allowed (agreeable to the genius of the Pagan system) to practice some of their peculiar religious rites; and a great many of the first christian converts were slaves, their
masters,

masters, at that time, not finding themselves or their interest, affected by it, and therefore not taking any umbrage at it.

It happened also, that the power of a father over his children, was much less in these Northern nations of Europe, than it was in the East or among the Romans, with whom also it is sensibly declined. On this account, and also because, from the very first promulgation of christianity, it could not but be manifest that persons were interested in it as *individuals*, and not as members of families, or societies, I make no doubt but that, in general, if there were adult children or slaves in a family, at the time that the master professed himself a christian, they were not baptised without their own consent; but no consideration, that can be supposed to have occurred either to Jews or Romans, could have led them to make the same exception in favour of infants.

Considering how very different are the ideas and customs of these times, and these parts of the world, from those which prevailed among the Jews, when baptism was instituted, the peculiar reasons for applying it to infants are, in a great measure, ceased. But still, as the practice is of divine authority, it appears to me, that no innovation ought to be made in it by any power on earth; but that we ought rather to preserve those ideas which originally gave a propriety to it, especially when there is nothing unnatural in them. For my own part, I endeavour to adhere to the primitive ideas above-mentioned, and therefore I consider the baptizing my children, not as directly implying that they

they have any interest in it, or in the things signified in it, but as a part of my own profession of christianity, and consequently as an obligation which, as such, I am under, to educate my children, and also to instruct my servants in the principles of the christian religion. In this view of the ordinance of baptism, infants are *indirectly* interested in it, whether they adhere to the profession of christianity, and thereby secure the blessings of it, when they become adults, so as to think and act for themselves, or not.

It is possible that, at this time, and in these parts of the world, we may not see much reason for positive institutions; but with the Jews, and indeed throughout all the East, nothing is more common than to express sentiments and purposes by appropriated actions. Now, washing with water so naturally expresses purity of heart, and is a thing so agreeable in itself, especially in hot countries, that we cannot wonder that it should be made choice of, to denote the profession of a religion, which brings men under the strictest obligations to repent and reform their lives, and particularly that John the Baptist, whose more immediate business it was to preach repentance, should be directed to enjoin it.

Whether baptism be of earlier antiquity than John the Baptist, I own, I have not been able to satisfy myself. Maimonides, and the earliest Jewish writers, speak of solemn baptism as a necessary attendant on circumcision, and also as a practice that had been immemorial among them; so that whether it was tacitly implied in the original institution of circumcision
(which,

(which, indeed, seems to require, at least, ablution, in which water was made use of) or whether it had been adopted afterwards, as naturally expressive of the new converts cleansing themselves from the impurities of their former state of Heathenism, it was probably the custom of the Jews at the time of our Saviour. If this was the case, and the Jews did universally both circumcise and baptise all who were capable of it, when families were converted to their religion, there was both the less reason for explaining the nature and use of the rite, on the first mention of it, and our Lord, if he did not disapprove of the practice, had still less occasion to describe, more particularly than he has done, who were the proper subjects of baptism; and we may rather suppose, that he would have expressly restricted it to adult persons, if he had intended that the prevailing custom should be altered. Consequently, when a master of a family was converted to christianity, he would, of course, baptise all his household, and consider himself as bound to instruct them in the principles of the religion which he professed. This is an obligation which is held peculiarly sacred over all the East, and the pains which masters of families take in consequence of it seldom fail of success. There is no point that a Mahometan is more intent upon, than making his children, and servants also, good mussulmen; but when they quit their service, they give themselves no concern about their religion.

The readiness with which the Jewish people in general conformed to the baptism of John, seems to have arisen from their easily entering
into

into the propriety of it, as expressing resolutions of repentance and greater purity of life, by way of preparation for the kingdom of the Messiah; and they seem to have expected that the Messiah, or his forerunner, had a right to expect some such compliance from them. For the Pharisees say to John, *Why baptizest thou, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet.* John i. 25. I do not see, however, that they had any reason to expect the institution of baptism, in particular, as a religious rite, under the Messiah; for though it was prophesied of him, that he should *sprinkle many nations*, Isaiah lii. 15, I do not suppose that the Jews understood the prophesy, as implying any more than that he would convert, cleanse, or purify them.

Observations on the Importance of Faith in Christ.

MANY persons have been prejudiced against christianity, on account of the stress which our Saviour and his apostles seem to lay on the mere *belief of the gospel*, which is imagined to imply, that no person can be saved, or admitted to future happiness, besides professing christians. But it appears to me that, allowing the declarations of Christ and of the apostles, no more than the same favourable interpretation that the sayings and writings of other persons, at least of the same antiquity and country, necessarily require, and especially allowing them to be their own interpreters, there will be no great difficulty in any of the passages objected to.

I can-

I cannot think that the real meaning of Christ and his apostles was, that any man will be saved on account of his *faith only*, or condemned for the mere want of it, though both of them may seem to be asserted by them, and especially by our Lord, when he said, *He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.* Mark xvi. 6.

That the former of these clauses, which contains as absolute a declaration as any that I can find to this purpose, was not intended to be considered as literally and universally true, is evident from numberless passages of the scriptures, particularly from our Lord's saying, *Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father who is in heaven.* Matt. vii. 21. As therefore, it is plain, from this passage, that we cannot infer from the form of expression, in the former of the clauses above quoted, that every believer of christianity shall be saved, so neither can we conclude from the latter clause, that every unbeliever shall be damned.

That this expression of our Lord was considered by his followers as admitting of this latitude, is evident, even from that passage in the writings of St. Paul, which has sometimes been quoted for a different purpose. *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the glorious light of the gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. From this passage, I think, we may clearly infer, that the cause of
unbelief,

unbelief, in all those who perished, was the *God of this world*, that is, the *vices of the world*, having blinded their minds, so that their case was not *mere unbelief*, but unbelief arising from vicious prejudices, and bad habits. In fact, therefore, they were condemned on account of their vicious habits, and their unbelief was considered as only a *mark* or *symptom* of their being under the power of vicious habits.

The numberless passages which express that men are condemned on account of their *vices only*, joined with those that expressly assert, that no favour will be shewn to any man on account of his *faith only*, but rather, that more is expected of him on that account, and therefore that he will incur the greater condemnation, if he do not bring forth the fruits of it, certainly authorizes us to conclude, that since it is not *faith*, but the *fruits of faith*, or *good works*, that may be called the ground of salvation, so also that *unbelief* is never, of itself, the ground or cause of any man's condemnation, but only the *vices* that have either been the cause of it, or have sprung from it.

What St. Paul says, Rom. ii. 12, concerning those who *have not the law*, and also of *faith coming by hearing*, and men not being able to *bear without a preacher*, Rom. x. 17, makes it evident that, according to his ideas, all mankind are to be judged according to the light that is afforded them; and, without his descending to any more particulars, we may fairly apply the general maxim on which he argues, to the case of persons living among christians, as well as to those who never heard of Christ, if they be so situated,

situated, that the evidences of christianity are never fairly laid before them.

It is by no means every man who lives among christians, either Papiſts or Protestants, who has an opportunity of seeing what christianity really is. That which is continually exposed to their view, may be so exceedingly adulterated, that their common sense cannot admit of it, and their circumstances and employment in life may be such, that it shall be morally impossible for them to inform themselves better concerning it; so that, with the most ingenuous dispositions, they may continue unbelievers. In this case, surely, the genuine sense and spirit of every declaration in the scriptures, authorizes and encourages the greatest candour.

Considering, however, the many powerful motives to virtue which the christian religion presents to the mind, and the evidence with which it is attended, sufficient, if it be fairly proposed, to secure the assent of all who are unprejudiced, and whose minds are not enslaved by vicious habits, the awful declarations, quoted above, against infidels are, in general, no doubt, very just, notwithstanding some unbelievers may be so peculiarly circumstanced as to find mercy. For my own part, I must acknowledge that, with respect to the generality of modern unbelievers, I have no charity for them, except good will; and their condition fills me with concern; because I cannot help thinking that a very wrong state of mind, a state of mind to which christianity holds out nothing but *a fearful looking-for of judgment*, is the cause of their unbelief; and that nothing is requisite to make them
them

them see and rejoice in the evidences of christianity, but a truly virtuous and ingenuous disposition.

It is with equal truth, and much more pleasure, that I must acknowledge that I cannot think so uncharitably of all my acquaintance among unbelievers. Some of them, I have all the reason in the world to think, are men of excellent dispositions, and want nothing but a firm belief of christianity to make them as perfect as humanity will admit. With this persuasion, I, who am a firm believer in christianity myself, am under a necessity of supposing, that, in some particular cases, there may be other prejudices, sufficient to prevent a person from embracing christianity, besides those which arise from a vicious and licentious disposition. It may be the pleasure a man takes in thinking himself free from popular prejudices, or something else of a similar, and not *very criminal* nature; but something of which he may not be sufficiently aware. *Charity hopeth all things, believeth all things.*

As it is expressly asserted, that Christ came *to bless mankind, in turning them away from their iniquities*, Acts iii. 26, I think I am authorized to consider the christian religion as a *means to an end*; and, therefore, if the great end of it, viz. the reformation and virtue of men, be, in fact, attained by any other means, the benevolent author of it will not be offended, but rejoice at it, and say, *He that is not against us is on our part*, Mark ix. 40.

CLEMENS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

By inserting the following observations upon some passages of scripture, you will oblige a well-wisher to the Repository.

A. B. C.

ST. Paul, in one place, says, that Abraham begat Isaac when he was *as good as dead*, *ταυτα νεκρωμενου*, dead as to these things, *κατα* being understood. Heb. xi. 12. In another place he says, that Abraham, *being not weak in faith, considered not his own body now dead*, *ουδεν νεκρωμενου*, Rom. iv. 19. This is said of Abraham when he was about a hundred years old, and is assigned by the apostle, as a proof that Isaac was born to him out of the course of nature. This is what St. Paul's argument, in both places, requires; for he is magnifying the faith of Abraham in believing *against hope*, that he should have a child by Sarah. It may be necessary here to observe, that though the apostle, in Heb. xi. 11, speaks of Sarah's faith, *in being delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised*; yet, in the following verse, he certainly speaks of Abraham. *Therefore sprang there even of one*, not of one woman, but *αφ' ενος*, of one man. The birth of Isaac, it is plain, is spoken of as an event beyond the common course of nature.

Now,

Now, how is this to be reconciled with Gen. xxv. at the beginning? There we are told, that after the death of Sarah, according to the present disposition of the chapters; nay, when Isaac was 40 years old, which was his age when he married Rebecca (see verse 20) and, consequently, when Abraham was 140, he had six sons by Keturah. Could he be the father of six children in the course of nature at 140, when it is expressly said, that Isaac was born to him out of the course of nature at a 100?

The apostle's words are capable of no other construction than what our version gives them; we must, therefore, consult Gen. xxv. 1. and examine whether it is justly translated. The Hebrew is, ויִסַּף אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אִשָּׁה וְשִׁמָּה קְטוּרָה, which our translators have rendered, *Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah*, that is, according to this version, he took her after the death of Sarah. But I apprehend that the true meaning of the verb יִסַּף, in this passage, is mistaken. The primary sense of the word is, *to add to, to increase, to augment, to do still more, to go on doing, to repeat an action*. A plain and simple sense, says Dr. Taylor. The Seventy have rendered it, in this place, προθεμενος, a participle of προστιθεμι, *oppono, pergo*, and, passively, *adjungor*, to be joined to. Our translators understood it here in the sense of *pergo*, to go on, or proceed, as Tremellius and Junius did; but Arias Montanus hath here rendered it *addidit*. It is true, that, *to go on, or proceed*, is a sense which this verb very frequently has; but, however, it is rather a figurative sense,
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for its strict meaning is, *to add to*, or to increase. It has the other sense, because that in increasing, we proceed, or go on. To remove this inconsistency between St. Paul and Moses, I would read this verse, "And Abraham had added to" (his other wives) and had taken a wife whose "name was Keturah." That is, he had taken her during the life of Sarah, most probably many years before her death. We are told, verse 6, that he had children by concubines, of whom Keturah was one. Hagar was a concubine, but that she was the same person with Keturah, there is no particular reason to believe. If this version of the passage be just, and I am much mistaken, if it is not quite agreeable to the Hebrew, then the inconsistency between Moses and St. Paul entirely vanishes. The former has recorded a fact out of order, as to time, because, in the foregoing chapter, he was relating what immediately concerned Isaac and his mother Sarah.*

* A farther confirmation of the ingenious writer's illustration of this passage seems to arise from verse 6, where it is said, that *Abraham gave gifts unto the sons of the concubines, whom he had, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, Eastward unto the East country.* Now, if Moses includes the sons of Keturah, whom he had named in the preceding verses, among the sons of the concubines, as is most likely (and yet Abraham did not take Keturah to wife till he was 140 years old, or near it, but died at the age of 175, verse 7) it will follow, that some of these sons must have been portioned and sent out into the world to seek settlements at a very early age; much earlier than, as seems probable, youth were, in that period of the world, thought to be qualified for such undertakings, and, consequently, than was consistent with Abraham's prudence and paternal affection.

VIGILIUS.

It

It may be observed here, for the confirmation of what we have above said, that Moses hath related nothing but what had some reference to Isaac or Sarah from the birth of Isaac, till this time. Hagar and her son Ishmael are mentioned because they were thrust out for mocking. In the close of chapter 22, we have an account of Nahor's descendants, whose granddaughter Rebekah became Isaac's wife. The affair concerning Abimelech, chapter 23, naturally arose from what is said in chapter 20. And the reason why Keturah is mentioned at all, seems to have been, because her descendants became very numerous and powerful.

HAVING never seen a satisfactory explanation of 2 Peter, i. 17—19. I beg leave, in your Repository, to give my sentiments of the apostle's meaning.

They have much reason on their side, who place a colon at the end of verse 18, as the sense of the passage is certainly much clearer in that connection. Mr. Markland and Dr. Benson have produced several undoubted testimonies to prove that *εχει βεβαιωτερον*, means, "more fully to confirm, or establish." *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount:* And (by that means) we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed. Or, perhaps, *βεβαιωτερον*, may be understood substantively, *confirmation*. As there is one manuscript which hath *των προφητικων λογων*, this may be the right construction. And we have (hereby) a confirmation of the prophetic words (*i. e.*

verse 17, taken from Isaiah xlii. 1) that passage in Isaiah, how clear soever it might be thought a prediction of Christ, was rendered much clearer when it was thus applied to him by a voice from heaven. Thus far the sense is very intelligible; but the remaining part of verse 19, is not without its difficulties, *ω καλωσ ποιειτε προσεχοντες ωσ λυχνω φαινοντι εν αυχηρω τοπω, εωσ ου ημερα διαυγαση και φωσφοροσ ανατειλη εν ταισ καρδιασ υμων.*

“Whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as
 “unto a light that shineth in a dark place, un-
 “til the day dawn and the day star ariseth in
 “your hearts.” I would observe here, that the present tense may be perfect, expressing an action just done; or imperfect, expressing something doing, but not done. *Ποιειτε*, here seems to have this imperfect signification, and, I apprehend, may be rendered, “Ye *did* well, *i. e.* in taking
 “heed.” *Διαυγαση* and *ανατειλη*, are both first aorists, and therefore may be understood in any time, for the aorists are indeterminate in their sense, and are used for any time, past, present, or future. (See instances produced by the late learned Dr. Gregory Sharpe, in his *Origin and Structure of the Greek Tongue*, page 63.) If these observations are right, we may read the whole verse thus: “And we have hereby a con-
 “firmation of the prophetical words, whereunto
 “ye did well in taking heed as unto a light
 “shining in a dark place, until the day dawned,
 “and the day star arose in your hearts;” That is, they had done well, in attending to this prophecy, which, however obscure, was better than no light at all, until Jesus the Messiah appeared,
 who

who filled men's hearts and minds, with light and knowledge. See Dr. George Benson, on this place; and Mr. Bower's Conjectural Emendations on the New Testament. London, 1763.

The following note to that part of Socrates Scholasticus's remarks, where it is said, that the doctrine of the No Pre-existence seems to be the sentiment of the apostolic Fathers, &c. came too late to be inserted in the preceding number.

I Am aware, that it will appear to some, that there are, in the writings of St. Barnabas, and St. Hermas, express assertions of the pre-existence of Christ, which are very decisive upon the subject.

But whoever considers how much these Jewish Fathers were accustomed to mystical applications of the Old Testament to Christ, and what fanciful and ungrounded applications they have actually made of particular passages to him, will not think there is much stress to be laid on their testimony, given in such a way.

Barnabas, for instance, in his catholic epistle, if it be really his (for such good judges as Basnage, and the learned Mr. J. Jones, have strongly supported the contrary opinion) says, once and again, that it was the Lord Christ, to whom God said, at the beginning of the world, *Let us make man after our own image and likeness.* Gen. i. 26.

But the same writer says, in the same epistle, and I give Archbishop Wake's translation, page

285-6. " Understand, therefore, children, these
 " things more fully, that Abraham, who was
 " the first that gave circumcision in the spirit,
 " looking forwards to Jesus, circumcised, tak-
 " ing the mystery of three letters. For the
 " scripture says, that Abraham circumcised
 " *three hundred and eighteen* men of his house.
 " But what therefore was the mystery that was
 " made known unto him? I will tell you: It
 " consists in the *eighteen*, and next in the *three*
 " *hundred*. For the numeral letters of ten and
 " eight, are I H. And these denote *Jesus*.
 " And because the cross was that by which we
 " were to find grace; therefore he adds, *three*
 " *hundred*; the note of which is T (*the figure of*
 " *his cross*.) Wherefore, by two letters he signi-
 " fied Jesus, and by one, his cross. He who
 " has put the natural gift of his doctrine within
 " us, knows, that I never shewed to any one
 " a more genuine truth: But I trust that ye
 " are worthy of it."

Surely much dependence is not to be made upon such a writer's judgment in the application of passages of the Old Testament to Christ.

Hermas's writings are all of them still more professedly, vision, parable, and similitude. Page 492, in the Archbishop's translation, he says, " Hearken, this rock and this gate are
 " the Son of God. I replied, Sir, how can that
 " be; seeing the rock is old, but the gate new?
 " Hear, said he, O foolish man! and under-
 " stand. The Son of God is indeed more an-
 " tient than any creature, insomuch that he was
 " in council with his Father at the creation of
 all

“all things.” Again, page 334, “Who is that old woman? He answered me, It is the church of God. And I said unto him; Why then does she appear old? She is, therefore, says he, an old woman, because she is the first of all the creation, and the world was made for her.”

Whoever considers the good Father’s manner of writing, will perceive that the former of these passages is no more than a high figurative expression, to signify that Almighty God made all things with respect to his Son, and to be interpreted in the same way as the latter.

And there are good authors who have thought they had cause to understand the above quoted passage of Barnabas, of the spiritual, new creation in Christ Jesus, particularly upon a comparison with the section next following, which is preserved to us as in the Greek original, whereas the other is only in a Latin translation.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

If you think the following hints on two passages of scripture worth attention, I would beg a corner for them somewhere in your Theological Collection.

VIGILIUS.

Philippians ii. 5—11.

IN this much agitated passage, the apostle seems to me to make one of his *delicate* allusions, viz.

viz. to the case of Adam and the history of the fall, and to suggest to the consideration of his readers, a contrast between the temper and behaviour of the first Adam, and of Christ, the second Adam.

The first Adam was the workmanship of the hand of God, who is said to have *created man in his own image. In the image of God created he him.* Gen. i. 27. He gave him also *dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth.* ver. 28. But when the tempter suggested that, by eating of the prohibited tree of knowledge of good and evil, they should become *as gods*, actuated by a vain ambition to become more than man, and *like unto God*, Adam, as well as his wife, disobeyed the commandment which God had given them; in consequence whereof, by the just sentence of God, they were degraded, expelled from Paradise, and condemned to labour, pain and death.

But Christ, though he was *in the form of God* in a much more perfect manner than Adam, *did not*, like him, ἀρπαγμαὶν ἠγασατο, *reckon it a prize*, and accordingly attempt to seize it by violence, without right, and against express prohibition, *to be like unto God*; but, on the contrary, with great condescension and good-will to men, *he emptied himself* of that dignity, power, and authority which God had given him, *taking the form of a servant.* (see Matt. xx. 28. Luke xxii. 27. John xiii. 12, &c.) *being in the likeness of men; and further, being found in fashion, form, or condition, as a man*, who is a weak, dependant creature,

creature, and owes entire subjection and obedience to God, *he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*; for such was the tenor of that commandment he had received from the Father; see John x. 18. So widely different were his sentiments and conduct, respecting both his brethren and his Father, from those of Adam. Accordingly, his recompence from God was widely different also. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, &c.*

To consider the passage in this view, places it, to me at least, in a striking and beautiful light, makes it perfectly conformable to St. Paul's manner of thinking and writing in many other places, and gives it great strength and cogency to enforce the preceding exhortations. What influence it may have on the controversy relative to the pre-existence, &c. I leave to the sagacity of the gentlemen concerned in it, and therefore attempt not to explain the precise import of particular words and phrases. Perhaps a too close attention to that controversy, and to those words and phrases, may have prevented the Learned from viewing the whole passage in the light in which I have now placed it.

IN the 55th Page of the preface to the second edition of *Peters's Dissertation on Job*, is a curious illustration of the word *Shiloh*, שִׁלֹה, which he takes to be a *symbolical word*, composed of the first letters of several words. The hint was given him by the Chaldee Paraphrast N^o II. Vol. III. S Onkelos

Onkelos, who thus explains the word in Chaldee, *דריליה היא מלכותא*, *whose is the kingdom*: which Mr. Peters thus turns into Hebrew, *ש יש לו המלוכה*, the first letters of which words make *Skilab*, as he contends it ought to be pronounced. I would offer the following remark on this *Note*:

I conceive that we may collect a material support to Mr. Peters's very curious and ingenious illustration of the word *Skilob*, from a much higher and more early authority than that of the Chaldee Paraphrast, even from a prophecy of Ezekiel, chap. xxi. 27. The prophet is then foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, the ruin of Zedekiah, and the subversion of the kingly government among the Jews. Ver. 26. *Remove the diadem, take off the crown, this shall not be the same*: i. e. the diadem, the crown, the kingly government shall not be continued or restored. *Exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high*: The government shall hereafter be transferred into families that are now of mean rank, and the House of David shall be reduced to a low state. Ver. 27. *I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; until he come, whose right it is, and I will give it him*; i. e. until the promised Son of David come, whose right the crown, the diadem, the kingly government is. *עד בא אשר לו המשפט*, *Whose is the judgment*. How parallel is this to *ש יש לו המלוכה*, *Whose is the kingdom*? Can one doubt whether the prophet had the word *Skilob* in his view, and meant to explain it by this periphrasis, though not to give us the very words, of the initials of which that word

is

is composed? Certainly, the words of Jacob's prophecy were in his thoughts, *עד כי יבא שילוב*, *Until Shilob come*. Gen xlix. 10. The parallel is equally clear and striking in the Seventy. Gen. xlix. 10. they translate thus, *εως αν ελθη ω αποκειλαι*: and Ezekiel xxi. 27, *εως & ελθη ω παθηκει*. It is further observable, that from the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, till about the time of the birth of Christ, the Jews were never governed by any of the family of David, or by any king wearing crown, or diadem. Quere; Might not Ezekiel's word *εως & ελθη ω παθηκει*, be substituted well enough for *עד המלכות*, in Mr. Peters's Hebrew Version of Onkelos's Chaldee?

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg the favour of your inserting in the next number of your Repository the following criticism, which I learned in conversation with an ingenious clergyman of my acquaintance; who, I am sure, can have no objection to its being generally known, though I have no authority to mention his name.

I am, Gentlemen, yours, &c.

LIBERIUS.

WHEN St. Paul says, 1 Cor. xv. 27, that all things shall be put under the feet of Christ, he adds, *δηλον οτι εκτος τε υποταξαντος αυτω τα παντα*, which we render, *It is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him*. But the

256 *A Criticism on 1 Cor. xv. 27.*

the word *εκτος*, is sometimes used in a different sense, viz. for *besides*, or *exclusive of*; and therefore the passage may be rendered, *But when he says, That all things are put under him, it is manifestly exclusive of their subjection to him that put all things under him.*

According to our translation of this passage, the observation seems to be altogether needless and impertinent; for who could not but know, that he who gave authority, and especially in the case of the Supreme Being, must be exempt from it himself; whereas it may be well worth while to remind the disciples of Christ, of what some of them, especially the Moravians, seem to have forgotten, viz. that though God has made them subject to Christ, as their master, it is not intended to exempt them from that homage and allegiance which is due to himself as supreme, and of whom Christ himself holds the authority of which he is possessed.

The word *εκτος*, is used in the same sense in the Seventy. Dan. xi. 4. *His kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others BESIDES those*; and also in Acts xxvi. 22. *Saying none other things than [*εκτος*, BESIDES] those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.*

T H E

Theological Repository.

A letter sent by Mr. Tomkins, author of a treatise intitled Jesus Christ the Mediator, to Dr. Lardner, in reply to his Letter on the Logos.

To PHILALETHES.

I Am greatly obliged to you for communicating your thoughts to me upon the important subjects treated of in your Papers, though I cannot come into your sentiments. I now send you my remarks, as you desire, without compliment, and I do assure you without resentment. I think your Papinian can find nothing that should move resentment, unless it be that suspicion, and that you should think him capable of resentment upon account of your having different notions from him. I shall give you my thoughts upon those matters with the same freedom as you have given yours.

I agree with you that we ought to insist on no more than the use of scripture expressions,

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without the addition of human explications : Yet I think it concerns every christian to get as clear notions as he can of the account the scripture gives of our Saviour, and that it is of importance to set that matter in a clear light ; especially since the common explications have, I think, manifestly done great prejudice to christianity among those who have been disaffected towards it.

You would guard against the charge of Nestorianism, but I think the account you give of the deity of Christ, doth make the supreme God and the man Jesus one person, which, I must own, seems to me a greater absurdity than that Nestorius was charged with. I may have occasion to take farther notice of this hereafter.

Your supposition of the Logos necessarily recovering its pristine vigour, power, &c. immediately upon its being dislodged from the body ; and the difficulty of conceiving him capable of exaltation, will be considered when I shall give you my notion of the incarnation.

I shall now proceed to your observations upon texts.

You observe, in the first place, that Christ is called *man*, which you think could not be just and proper, if he were such a being as we conceive the Logos to be, inhabiting flesh. I would ask you, what is the notion we have, or can have, of *man*, or what do we understand by that word, but such an organised body as ours is, animated by an intelligent mind ? Whether that mind pre-existed, or began to exist with the formation of the body what was its state or capacity,

capacity, in what rank or order of beings it was before it was united to such a body, these are things that do not at all enter into our notion of humanity, or any ways concern it. Where we see such a body as our own, animated in the same manner as we find our own to be, *i. e.* by an intelligent mind or spirit, under the same laws of union; undoubtedly we should call this being a *man*; especially, when it was known that he was born into the world, and arrived to maturity in the same manner as we do. Certainly those who supposed all *human souls* to have pre-existed, had no other notion of *humanity*. If we conceive the Logos brought into the same state as a human soul, under all the laws of such an union as we find in the constitution of *man*, this spirit, whatever were its previous state, may now, in the utmost strictness, be reckoned a *human soul*, it may, I think, very properly be said the Logos, so taking *flesh*, became a *human soul*.

We can have no demonstration that our own souls did not pre-exist, or what might be their state before they came into bodies, what sort of beings they then were; and therefore, I think we can have no other just notion of *man*, than such as I have described.

But you conceive such an humiliation of the Logos as I contend for, impossible. Where is the contradiction in supposing any being, besides the self-existent necessary being, capable of undergoing such a change? What is there in the nature of things that should make such a depression of a being impossible, any more than should

make such an advancement as your hypothesis requires, impossible? that is to say, Why may not I as well suppose it possible for a being, derived from the power and will of God, and capable, under him, of creating the world, to become a *human soul*; as you suppose it possible, that a *human soul*, such as ours is, should be raised to such a degree of perfection as to know at once all the thoughts of men and angels, to uphold all things, to be the governor of the universe, and the final judge of all? This humiliation of the Logos, is, indeed, wonderful and beyond all imagination. And, therefore, say I, the more likely to be true, *i. e.* to be the scripture notion, for the scripture represents it as such. We read of a length and breadth, a height and depth of the love of Christ, that passes knowledge.

Were the Logos, retaining its original state, only to take a human body after the manner of angels appearing in human form, such a being might, as you express it, swallow up the body, &c. But his humiliation, as I conceive it, was not the being merely united to a body (so he is now in his exalted state) but in his submitting to the same state of humanity as we are in, without sin. He was in all things to be made like to his brethren, and therefore partook of flesh and blood, *παλαπλησιως*, Heb. ii. in like manner as we do. And this may account for his not returning to his pristine vigour and power immediately upon his leaving the body. For it was not merely the having a body that interrupted that liberty and splendor. He hath all this now in
a body,

a body, but we are to conceive him submitting to a state of humiliation which was not to expire till after his resurrection. It was appointed that he should taste death for every man, and, consequently, that in the state of death he should be conformed to us as well as in the state of life in the flesh here. And if that be made to appear to carry in it an utter unconsciousness (which, indeed, is not my notion of it) I should make no scruple of supposing that the Logos was for that time in a state of unconsciousness.

It may not be improper to take notice, in this place, of what you say relating to the resurrection of Christ, at the latter end of your discourse. "What is there extraordinary, say you, according to the Arians, in the resurrection of Christ, and how doth it assure us of ours?" I answer, He being to be made like unto us in life here, and in the state of death which we were subject to; his resurrection is a pattern of ours, and having died for us, or, as the apostle expresses it, *being delivered for our offences*, his resurrection is an assurance of ours. The assurance we have of a resurrection from the resurrection of Christ, I do not apprehend to lie so much in our having thereby an evidence of the divine power in raising the dead; there had been before that, other instances sufficient for that purpose; but in the assurance that we have thereby, that we shall obtain a resurrection to eternal life if we belong to him. *He was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification. If Christ be not risen, you are yet in your sins. God*

both raised him from the dead and both given him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God. Upon this account he is the first fruits. If ye believe that Christ died and rose again. So them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

As to what you urge in another place concerning our hope of being like to Christ hereafter, I do not see that it affects the Arian notion any more than it doth yours. The glory he is now possessed of, is the same in either scheme. And as he attained to it by being obedient even unto death, so shall we attain to a likeness of glory in our measure by following his example. I suppose you do not imagine that any of the saints will come up to an equality with him.

You farther object against the Arian notion of the humiliation of the Logos, that if it were possible, it would not be reasonable, and just. But I see no difficulty in this, provided a valuable end be answered, and this excellent being do himself approve it, and consent to it, and do really receive advantage by it, which I take to be the case here; as you will see farther by and by.

I was now going to enter upon the consideration of the texts relating to the pre-existence, but I thought it would be better first to attempt the removing out of the way the difficulty you urge about Christ's temptation. I would willingly leave nothing that might be a prejudice against the scripture account of this matter, which I must own appears to me exceeding plain and clear. I do confess, the temptation of Christ
doth,

doth, at first view, seem very strange. But I apprehend this to arise, in great part, from our not attending to the state and condition he was in. We come possessed with a notion of the high perfection and glory of the Logos, whereas we should consider him as being now under all the laws of union with flesh, or, if you will allow me to use the expression, as being a human soul embodied. So that the things of sense, and of this world, made the same kind of impression upon him, and affected him just in the same manner as they do us, and so were really temptations. But you say, "Had not the Logos " in flesh a remembrance of his former state?" I make no question of it: but that remembrance was, perhaps, no more than a general knowledge of his having been in a happy glorious state; not the recovering particular ideas and sensations which he had in that state. But let me ask you, Had not your perfect man the infallible expectation of the joy that was set before him? Was he not conscious of the intimate union there was between him and the Father? Was he not, according to you, even then in the form of God? If these things do not set him above the being capable of temptation, why should the remembrance of having been happy and glorious before he came into this state of trial? This latter might be a farther advantage, but I do not see that this, in itself, is more consistent with the being actually tempted, than the other things are. Your queries about his temptations, p. 3, 4. do, as far as I can perceive, carry as great difficulty upon the supposition of what you allow

low him to be, and to know (remembering that these temptations were after the voice from heaven, and the spirit's descending upon him) as upon my supposition of his remembering what he formerly was. But to clear this matter, as well as I can, I consider that temptation lies in the impression that sensible things make upon the mind in its present state. When such impression tends to excite unlawful designs, &c. the resisting these by considerations worthy of a reasonable being is virtue; and according to the strength of the impression, whether of pleasure or pain, so is the temptation to be reckoned greater or less. I doubt I have not expressed myself so accurately as I should have done; but I suppose I have said enough to lead one of your sagacity into my notion of the matter. I suppose St. Paul, after he had been caught up into Paradise, found the evils of this present world temptations, as well as before, though the remembrance of that rapture was, undoubtedly, a great help to him in resisting. Now as Christ, in the days of his flesh, had the same kind of trials as we have, the like appetites, like passions, the same sensation of pleasure, pain, grief, fear, &c. though he be supposed to have peculiar advantages in some respects, this doth not hinder but that he may be an example to us, for he resisted and overcame in the same manner as we must do; he walked by faith, looking to the joy that was set before him, he prayed and trusted in God. St. Paul had the peculiar advantage above mentioned. We may say, that all the first christians had great advantage above us, in seeing the miracles wrought in confirmation of the hope of the gospel,

gospel, especially those of them who had themselves the gifts of the spirit; yet I think they are very justly proposed as examples to us, having, through faith and patience, inherited the promises.

Christ, the only begotten son of God, according to every received notion concerning his person, must be conceived in some respects to have peculiar advantage above what any other could have: And perhaps his trials, all things considered, were vastly superior to the trials of others. I cannot help thinking, that his agony in the garden, and his complaint upon the cross, did arise from somewhat more than the mere apprehension of what he was to suffer in the body, or from the actual pain of suffering. And 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 most liable to the impression of the things then proposed to him.

I have endeavoured to show, that the incarnation and humiliation of such a being as the Logos, is not impossible, or unreasonable, or inconsistent with the account the scripture gives us of Christ, in the days of his flesh. I shall now proceed to take notice of some texts that, in my apprehension, do plainly assert it, or evidently suppose it, or seem best to agree with this notion. I shall begin with some passages in St. John's gospel; leaving that of the Logos to be considered when I come to remark on your notion of the deity of Christ.

In the 1st chapter, there is one passage that seems to me plainly to intend the pre-existence.

No

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten son, ο υν εις τον, &c: who was in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. I think that must refer to his having been in the bosom of the Father, and seen him, before he declared him to us. Compare this with what Christ himself says to Nicodemus in the 3d chapter, which is more express; *No man hath ascended into heaven, i. e. so as to have been there, but the son of man who came down from heaven.* What can this mean, but that the son of man was there, before he came down into this world, in the same manner as a man would be there, whom you should suppose to have ascended thither. The following words, I think, determine this to be the sense, *No man hath ascended into heaven, but he who came from heaven, even the son of man, ο υν εν τω κρανω, who was in Heaven.* To say nothing of his being the bread, which God gave them from Heaven, as he had given to the Jews of old, the manna from heaven, or of his coming down from Heaven, to do the will of his Father; an expression never used, as I remember, concerning any other man sent from God, though the like is used concerning angels, who are supposed to have their residence in heaven, 1 Cor. xv. 47. *The first man is χοιμος, earthly: the second man is the Lord, εξ κρανω.* To pass these expressions, what other sense can be put upon those words, v. 62, of that 6th chapter of John. *What, and if ye shall see the son of man ascending, οτις ην το προτερον.* Jo. viii. 53, &c. seems too plain to be evaded. I have not Grotius: I have always thought most of his interpretations of the passages concerning

cerning our Saviour, where he falls in with the Socinians, to be forced and unnatural. It is evident, the Jews discourse related to a real existence; and the expression Christ uses concerning Abraham, hath the same reference, *πρὶν Ἀβραάμ γενέσθαι*. It is plain, I think, that the Jews understood in the same sense, what Christ said concerning himself; and as to the latter words, *before Abraham was, I am*, I do not see what should lead them to understand him otherwise. If that were not his meaning, it should seem that he gave them needless occasion of offence. I know a learned person who takes the proper sense of those words, *Abraham saw my day*, to be this; Abraham saw me, saw my person, as the Jews understood him; this he confirmed by another saying of Christ to his disciples; *Ye shall wish to see one of the days of the son of man, i. e. see the son of man in person present among you*. I do not insist on this. But I must say, it seems to me a very odd answer to the objection of the Jews, against what he had said, to tell them that God had a regard to him, in his purpose and decree before Abraham had a being; might not any good man say as much.

I will give you another text, where the expressions seem to me as clear, and full, and direct to the purpose, as one could wish. 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*. I desire you would read the words in the original. Is not coming forth from the Father, and coming into the world, as plainly literal, as his leaving the world and going

ing to the Father [*παλιν αφημι*] as plainly literal, as his coming again to them, after that he had been with the Father, which he often promises ?

John xvii. 5. seems no less plain and express. You imagine that, according to the Jews phraseology, that may very well be understood of the glory always designed for Christ, in the decree and purpose of God ; but I very much question, whether you can find an expression truly parallel, either in the Old Testament, or the New. That in Rev. xiii. 8, of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, is, I grant, very like, if that were the right construing of the words ; but I take the words *from the foundation of the world*, to refer, not to *slain*, but to *written*, whose names were not written from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the lamb that was slain. We cannot conclude, that the words *απο καταβολης*, must refer to *εσφαγη* ; because, that immediately precedes, as might be shown, I believe, by innumerable instances. And let any one judge, which is the more easy, natural thought. Names written in a book from the foundation of the world (whether you understand it of their being written all at once, or of their being written successively as they came into being, and lived in the world) or a lamb slain from the foundation of the world, which lamb is supposed not to have had a being, or however, is known not to have been slain till many ages after the beginning of the world. According to the sense you put upon Christ's words, one might say of all that are saved, *They had glory with the Father before, &c.* the best text I know of in the New Testament,
for

for countenancing the elect's being justified and glorified from eternity. But how different are the expressions, with relation to the happiness of the saints: *Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation. Ye are begotten to a lively hope, to an inheritance, reserved in heaven for you. Henceforth is laid up for me.*—No where, as I remember, do we meet with any expression like this, their having had glory with God before the world was. I might observe, how very proper, I might say emphatical, the several expressions are in this address of Christ to God, upon our hypothesis. *I have glorified thee on earth*—what need of saying *upon earth*, if he never had a being any where else? *Now, Father, glorify me with thyself, with the glory which I had, παρα σοι, with thee before I came down to this earth, to do the work thou gavest me to do here.* This *παρα σεαυτω* and *παρα σοι*, seem to have a particular force and beauty in this view. In short, I do not see how Christ could have expressed himself more clearly, upon this occasion, supposing that he really had glory with the Father before he lived upon earth.

But you say, “it is plain from the gospel, that
“Christ had not the glory he here prays for,
“before his nativity, this glory being the re-
“ward of his sufferings, which he had not till
“after his resurrection.” You know one who
hath spoken of the modesty of Jesus, and what
if we should take this for an instance of his mo-
desty; and so indeed I do. Having finished the
work which the Father had given him to do, he
doth not immediately demand the full reward;
all

all he asks is, the being restored to the glory he had left, when he came to do the will of his Father on earth. I am confirmed in taking it thus, by the foregoing expression, which certainly doth not take in the full extent of that power he was to be invested with; he mentions only that, which had a direct and immediate connection with his compleating the great design of his coming from heaven. As thou hast given him power *over all flesh*. That expression certainly falls vastly short of what we know he was to be advanced to, even far above all principalities and powers, &c.

I may now proceed to some expressions of the apostles, which do evince, or at least agree best with this notion.—That in the second chapter of Phillippians, appears to me direct to this purpose. And there you have, I think, an answer to the query at the bottom of p. 5. Where is the incarnation of Christ represented as a part of his humiliation? For I cannot fall in with the sense of the *form of God*, viz. that it was the power of healing, &c. If so, he must be conceived as being in the form of God, and in the form of a servant, at the same time; whereas the text plainly speaks of the one, as opposite to the other, of his laying aside the one, *ἐξήμερωσε εαυτον*, he emptied himself of that, and instead thereof, took the form of a servant; which form of a servant, as I take it, is there represented as consisting in this very thing, his becoming man; who being in the form of God, did not set such a value upon this, as to resolve to retain it, and affect to be or to appear as God, when he came
into

into this world; but was content to give up that, did actually divest himself of it; taking the form of a servant, *εν ομοιωματι ανθρωπων γενομενος*. He took the form of a servant, in his being made in the likeness of men. What follows, is a farther account of his humiliation, and a farther degree of it when in the form of a servant, being found in fashion as a man.—Those expressions, *being made in the likeness of men*, and *being found in fashion as a man*, how aptly do they suit with the notion of his having been a glorious being, before his appearing in flesh? Much better, I should think, than with the supposition of his having been nothing but a man born of a woman. I thought Mr. Pierce's account of this passage very just and clear. But I have not his paraphrase here.

Besides all this, I do not see how Christ should be represented as being in the form of God, upon account of his working miracles, or any thing that he did here on earth, however extraordinary, since he came only in the character of a messenger sent from God, and acted as such, and expressly ascribes all those extraordinary works to the power of the Father, as attesting his mission. He sometimes, indeed, speaks of his being in the Father, and the Father in him, and that he and the Father were one. John xiv.—But that the works, in themselves considered, were no direct immediate evidence of this, and that these could not constitute the form of God, appears in that he tells his disciples, that they should do greater things than he had done. I might add, he uses the like expressions, with relation to his disciples

ciples as those before mentioned with relation to himself, John xvii. 21, 23. And whenever his enemies invidiously put such an interpretation upon what he had said, as if he pretended to be equal with God, or made himself God, he disclaims such pretension and confutes them, and assumes no other character, at the highest, than that of the *Son of God, whom the Father had sent, and sanctified, and sealed*, John v. 13, &c. John x. 33.

Before we dismiss this text in Phil. it may be proper to take notice of your objection against such a pre-existent state of glory as we suppose Christ to have had, from his receiving such advancement, as is particularly mentioned in this text, as the reward of his obedience. You should think that, according to the notion we have of his former state, there could be no room for advancement or reward. I know not, indeed, whether there was any advancement with respect to what we may call the natural perfections of the being; but I can easily conceive of an advancement to higher honour and dignity. Whatever he acted before, he acted as the minister or instrument of God. If the appearances of God, spoken of in the Old Testament, were by him, as some conceive, still he was but the representative of God, and there was no honour or worship directly paid to him in person. Now he hath the government of the universe in his own hands; all the hosts of heaven, as well as all the sons of men, must pay homage to him. He is now considered, not as in a state of subjection even to the Father, but as invested with supreme

preme authority, deputed indeed, but, as it should seem, not under direction, neither is he accountable. He is absolutely intrusted with the supreme authority. Pray observe those words of the apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 28. *Then shall the son himself also be subject.* Now, however glorious the Logos was in himself before the incarnation (and the more glorious in this respect, the greater the humiliation) whatever might be the perfections of his nature, here is a vast difference in the state or condition of the person; in the former state he was considered only as the minister of God, now he is made head over all, receiving homage from the whole universe of intelligent beings.

And now you must give me leave to retort the difficulty upon your hypothesis, from this view of the exaltation of Christ. And that is, where is the congruity or propriety of such an advancement of a mere man upon account of his obedience and sufferings; I say *such advancement*; for tho' the bountiful God may vastly outdo the merits and expectation of creatures in bestowing rewards, yet, methinks, there should be some congruity, and, if the expression may be allowed, some decency in making retribution. I should think this man's being in the form of God, according to your notion, ought not to be placed to the account of his merit in submitting to death, that being a privilege conferred upon him, with a view to the qualifying him for the service he was sent about, viz. the reforming the world by his doctrine. But to pass that, let him be considered as never so highly dignified and distinguished by the special favour and pre-

fence of God; and his life and death of the greatest benefit to mankind; was it not enough that upon this account he should be set at the head of all mankind; what reason was there that a mere man, for having done this service to men, should be made head over angels too, and Lord of the whole creation? This, methinks, seems to exceed all measures of fitness. But now, when we consider this person as vastly superior to angels in the excellency and perfections of his nature, and under God their maker; that he, having in compliance with the will of God, submitted to be made, for a while, lower than the angels, and given up himself to such sufferings; that after this he should be made head of all, and angels and principalities be made subject to him, here, methinks, I see the greatest justness, the highest propriety in such a dispensation, whereas such advancement of a mere man seems unaccountable.

After what hath been said I need not ask, which hypothesis affords the more illustrious example of humiliation and condescension, and of obedience to the will of God. You seem fully sensible of this, when you object against our notion of the humiliation as being too great to be conceived possible. Nor need I add, that the same consideration doth also highly aggrandise the love of Christ towards sinners, and sets it, according to the representation of the apostle before mentioned, beyond all imagination. Nor can I see any pretence for suggesting that this tends to a lessening of the love of God, p. 15. In my apprehension it gives a much more illustrious display of it. The consent of Christ, his
vo-

voluntarily yielding himself, is supposed and allowed by you as well as by us (otherwise, indeed, this could be no instance of his love) but the proposal is allowed by us as well as by you to come from the Father, yea, he enjoined it; *This commandment, says Christ, have I received of my Father: When he cometh into the world, he saith, Lo I come, to do thy will, O God.* There was a free consent on his part, and the most generous love and pity to men (which you also allow) and this was highly pleasing to God, *Therefore doth the Father love me, because I laid down my life.* His giving himself doth not interfere with God's giving him in our hypothesis, any more than it doth in yours. And as love and pity in the person himself appears to vastly greater advantage, when we consider him in so glorious and happy state before he submitted to suffering and death; so God's giving up one so glorious in himself, so dear to him, to such humiliation and sufferings upon our account, *i. e.* (requiring him to undergo this for our salvation) gives us a view of God's love to us, far exceeding what we have in considering God only as forming a mere man, and giving him up for us.

I began to think it was time to quit this head; but there is one or two things more urged by you relating to this point, which I think I had as good taken notice of here, and then I shall have done with it. It seems strange to you, that if the case were as we represent it, this should be no more frequently and particularly insisted on in the New Testament. In the text we have last considered, Phil. ii. where the apostle is

recommending, with the greatest concern, condescension and goodness, you see this matter (according to my sense of the words) particularly drawn out, and a lively representation of it, to excite to an imitation in our sphere. That in many other places it is not so expressly taken notice of and enlarged upon, may not, perhaps, be so difficult to account for. We may conclude that such as had been for some time instructed in the religion of Jesus, knew very well the dignity of his person; and therefore it is to be supposed that this would naturally occur to their thoughts upon the mention of him; they knew very well who and what he was who did all this for them; just as when we speak of God's having done any thing for us, we do not enter into a particular description of his excellencies and perfections, which might serve to enhance our idea of his great goodness, condescension, &c. The name of God is supposed to carry these ideas; so the name of Christ among christians. But you observe, that there is no notice taken of this in the apostle's preaching Christ to Jews or Gentiles. So neither is there of his miraculous conception, or of his being the only begotten son of God. Their great business in first preaching Christ, was to convince men of his being sent from God, and with respect to the Jews particularly, of being the Messiah. For this purpose it was enough to insist on what was known and visible, as attestations of his divine mission, or the characters of the Messiah specified in the prophets. When any became christians, they were gradually to be let into a more particular knowledge of Christ,
and

and of his doctrines, growing in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour, and endeavouring to comprehend more and more of the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, and to know more of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

Whether the Jews at that time had the notion of the pre-existence of the soul of the Messiah, I cannot say. I think they have had such a notion among them in later times, and speak great things concerning it. But you can give a better account of these matters than I can do. By the disciples question, *Hath this man sinned, that he was born blind?* it seems as if the notion of all souls' pre-existence was then common among them.

I think I have taken notice of all the particulars you had to object against our account, of the pre-existent state of Christ.

I had hinted, that there are some passages, which, though they may not be reckoned evident direct proofs of this point, yet seem to intimate, that the writers had this notion. Let me give you some instances, where the expressions do seem to me to comport, better with this than with your supposition. Such is that of Paul, Rom. i. concerning his son, *τὸ γενομένον*, of the seed of David according to the flesh, declared to be the son of God according to the spirit of holiness. What need of that distinction, *according to the flesh*, which also seems to be expressed with a particular emphasis, chap. ix. *Of whom Christ came, τὸ κατὰ σὰρκα*, as to that which concerns the flesh; what need, I say, of such a distinction or limitation, as it seems to be, if he had

no being but in flesh. In the text now under consideration, Rom. i. the *κατα πνευμα αγιον*, seems to be opposed to the *κατα σαρμα*, according to the latter he was of the seed of David; according to the former (the spirit of holiness which inhabited the flesh) he was the son of God. Do we meet with such an expression concerning any other descendant of David, or of any other man? We have, I think, mention made of the seed of Abraham, according to the flesh; but that is, by way of distinction, from another kind of seed, the spiritual seed. But where there is nothing spoken of or intended, but natural descent, such an expression would seem needless and unaccountable, in the common case of men's descending from their progenitors. Of like nature is that expression, Gal. iv. *God sent forth his son, born of a woman.* What occasion for saying, *God sent him, born of a woman*, if he then received his being when he was born, and was never deemed to be any thing but a mere man? was ever such expression used concerning any other prophet or messenger, "God sent such a one, born of a woman?" But how apposite are the words, if we suppose this son of God to have had a glorious being in a former state, *εξαπεγαλε τη υιον αυτη γεγομενον εκ γυναικος.* I might give another instance to this purpose, from Col. i. 20. *By him to reconcile all things, having made peace, δια τη σωματος της σαρκος αυτη.* How apt is such an expression, after the account we have in that chapter, of his glorious existence before his incarnation, (which account we may have occasion to consider more particularly by

by and by.) The account that is given of his taking flesh, in the Epist. to the Hebrews, carries the same face; *as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, i. e. by natural constitution. He himself also, in like manner, μετεσχέ* (a different word, which seems to denote a voluntary act) *he partook of the same, that by death, &c.* He partook of flesh and blood, and so became capable of tasting death. And though *επιλαμβάνεται*, v. 16, may not intend, as our translation hath it, taking upon him the nature of angels, yet it implies a voluntary act, he takes hold of the seed of Abraham, in order to help them; and for this purpose it was requisite, that he should be made in all things like unto his brethren, *i. e.* in partaking of flesh and blood (of which before) and also in being tempted as they are tempted.

I might also refer you to chapter viii. 3. *For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, wherefore it was necessary that this high priest should have somewhat to offer, i. e. should have a body, which is more than once spoken of in this epistle, as the offering and sacrifice which he presented unto God.*

But that passage in chapter x. verse 5, seems very express. Wherefore, *ερχομενος* coming into the world, he saith, *Sacrifices and offerings thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. Lo I come, to do thy will, O God.* You will perhaps suppose this to be figurative only, and poetical. But I see no reason for departing from the literal sense, and why we should not
take

take it as a real natural representation of the fact. And that is too plain to need any comment.

Some expressions in St. John's epistle may be taken notice of, when we come to speak of the Logos.

Before I enter upon the consideration of what you offer upon the head of Christ's deity, I would take some notice of the opinion of Christ's appearing to the patriarchs, which you impute to the Pythagorism and Platonism of the Fathers. I do not know of any direct proof of this in the New Testament, but some passages there are, which may seem to refer to this, or at least, may very well agree with it, and so may be thought to give some countenance to the notion. As when St. John says, Esaias saw his glory, referring to the vision in the sixth chapter of Isaiah. His being in the form of God, may be understood in this sense. It is expressly said, that no man hath seen God, yet we read frequently in the Old Testament, of God's appearing. It is particularly said of the elders, at mount Sinai, that *they saw the God of Israel, and under his feet*. Now if we conceive, that the Logos appeared as representing God, or (if you will allow the expression) as personating God, may not this fitly be termed, *being in the form of God*. And if so, may not *απαύγασμα της δοξης* and *χαρακτηρ*, be meant of the same appearances. There is one passage in the Old Testament, which I have sometimes thought might be taken as a hint of this, it is in Psalm lxviii. *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, the Lord is among them as at mount Sinai*; then follow the words,

words, *Thou hast ascended up on high.* Is not the person to whom he addresses, *Thou hast ascended,* &c. the Lord spoken of before, who hath not there the name Jehovah, and if so is distinguished from the Lord God spoken of afterwards. This supposition seems to you inconsistent with the apostle's argument, Heb. ii. 2. But it is to be considered, the apostle is there speaking of the messenger, or of the person coming from God to deliver his word. It is certain, as to the original authority, both dispensations were equal, they were both from God. Now if the Logos appeared at mount Sinai, he came not as a messenger to deliver the law from God, but as representing God himself, who, according to Moses's account, was conceived to be present there, in a glorious sensible manner. The persons then made use of in delivering the word, were angels, here the son himself is the messenger, he comes from God to deliver the gospel; so runs the opposition, the word was then spoken by angels, this great salvation was first spoken by the Lord himself. The comparison is manifestly with respect to the dignity of the persons employed as messengers, or ministers in delivering the word of God; and the supposition of our Lord's being at mount Sinai, as the representative of God, doth not, I think, supersede the comparison; nay, rather, doth it not add weight to it, and more fully answer his purpose? He who then appeared in the form of God, when that word was spoken by angels, is himself the messenger of God in this last dispensation.

I now

I now proceed to the second point, the deity of Christ. Your second scheme mentioned under this head, and what you quote from the Chalcedonian creed, I take to be orthodox. Your explication of the beginning of St. John's gospel, doth not satisfy me. I agree with you, that in the sentence, *κ θεος ην—ο λογος* is the subject, and there is a gradation, but I can by no means take in your sense of the words, viz. that *θεος* is the same with *ο θεος* mentioned before. Why then should he not have said, *κ ο λογος ην ο θεος*, in the same manner as he says, v. 4. *κ η ζωη ην το φως*, and again, v. 8. he was not *το φως*. And I am so far from thinking, that all which follows makes for your interpretation, that it appears to me strong against it. I am sorry you did not give a sense of that passage, *ην προς τον θεον*, for I can put no sense upon it, that should make it tolerably consistent with the Logos, being *ο θεος* himself. You say, who should that be, of whom it is said, *all things were made by him*, but God the Father? I say, what need of saying, *all things were made by him*, when he had said before, that the Logos was God himself? Did the Jews need to be told, that *ο θεος* was the creator of the world? It is observable, that the evangelist, after he had said, *κ θεος ην ο λογος*, immediately repeats and inculcates what he had said before, and the same was *προς τον θεον*, as it were on purpose to obviate the misunderstanding the foregoing expression, that none might imagine him to mean that the Logos was God himself. A strange saying, the Logos was God himself, and he was with God. But now supposing the
 Logos

Logos a distinct person from God, the Jews, who knew very well that God was the maker of the world, might fitly be told, that Jesus, who appeared among them, was the Logos in flesh, that this Logos was in the beginning with God, and that God made all things by him; this they may be supposed not to have known before.

You say that God was the word, the light, the life, in short, that he is the Logos who was made flesh. If so, we must say, that the Father was incarnate, and died for us, and as was hinted above, the supreme God and a man make one person; for the evangelist plainly speaks of him, who was the life and the light, and the word, as the person who was manifested in flesh, whom their eyes had seen and their hands had handled. Compare John, first epistle, first chapter. And Christ himself says, *I am the light of the world; I am the life.*—But doth not St. John, both here and in his epistle, expressly distinguish this person, whom he calls the word, the life from God, even the Father, with whom he was before he was manifested to us. *He was with God; in him was life; he came into the world; the Logos was made flesh, and we beheld his glory; whose glory? the glory of the Logos in flesh, as the glory of the only begotten, παρα πατρος, not as the glory of the Father himself.* And again afterwards, *this only begotten was in the bosom of the Father, and hath declared him to us.* And so in the epistle, *that which we have seen with our eyes, &c. declare we unto you: for the life was manifested, and we declare unto you the eternal life which was προς τον πατερα, and was*

was manifested unto us, that ye may have fellowship with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.

Paul's discourse in the 1st chapter of Col. may farther illustrate and prove this, viz. that he who was in the beginning with God, and by whom all things were made, is one distinct from God. He is there expressly speaking of the son of God, *in whom we have redemption through his blood, who is, says he, the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature; for by him were all things created.* Why should not this be understood of the original creation, as well as that in John. The expressions are as strong; *εν αρχη*, lead you to understand it so there; *πρωτοτοκος πασης κτισεως* is, with me, of full as great weight to determine this to be the sense here. What he says afterwards of the same person, *as being the first born from the dead*, appears to me to be plainly a distinct matter, and consequential to the other; having given account of what he was originally, he farther shews what he is now particularly with reference to the church. *And he is the head of the body the church, being the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things (in this respect, as well as with respect to the matters before-mentioned) he might have the pre-eminence: Because it was the good pleasure of God, that in him all fulness should dwell.*

Now if the creation here spoken of be the original creation, I need not observe to you that it is ascribed to one who is manifestly distinguished from *θεος*, one who is the image of the invisible God, unto one who rose from the
dead,

dead, &c. And if this be the apostle's sense in this place, as well as St. John's in his gospel, I see no manner of reason why we should not understand the words, Heb. i. *By whom he made the worlds*, in the same sense (*αὐτῶν*, is used in this sense in the same Epistle, chap. xi. 3.) especially since, a few verses after, the author scruples not to apply to the same person that passage in Psal. ci. *Thou, Lord, hast laid the foundation of the earth, &c.* And certainly the person he is speaking of in this chapter is not God himself, but he by whom God speaks, &c. Upon the whole, it seems abundantly evident to me, that Christ, in his highest capacity, and under the highest titles, and particularly as the Logos in chap. i. of John's gospel, is spoken of and represented as one distinct from God.

And indeed to make God and Christ one person, or the title of God, or the like, when attributed to Christ, to intend the Father dwelling in him, is, in my apprehension, to introduce the utmost confusion into the gospel account of our Saviour. You seem to be greatly offended at the title of God being given to Christ in an inferior sense; the admitting an inferior God, is, in your apprehension, a manifest absurdity. But, I pray, is not this title given to him at the very same time that he is spoken of as having one above him, who is expressly called *his God*: *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; for God, even thy God, hath anointed thee.* We are used generally to affix to the word *God*, the notion of absolute supremacy; in that sense an inferior God is an absurdity. But the term *God* was used,

as is well known, both by Jews and Heathens, in a subordinate sense. To them certainly there could be nothing shocking in it. If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, &c. Might it not seem as strange that there should be an inferior object of worship? Yet I think nothing can be more evident (to me it is as plain as that one and one make two) that, according to the New Testament, there is a worship to Christ distinct from the worship paid to the supreme God and Father, a worship paid to him which cannot be given to the Father.

You say, "Would any Jew ascribe the creation of the World to any but God?" No; but St. John might inform them that God made the world by him who had now appeared in flesh. You ask farther, "Whose people were the Jews, were they not God's?" True; but were they not also to be the Messiah's people when he should come. Where is the impropriety in saying, *Christ came to his own* (understanding it of the Jews?) To say nothing of his being related to them, as being of the stock of Abraham, (which alone gives occasion sometimes to such sort of expressions) did not they know and acknowledge that the Messiah was to be their king. You may remember the exclamation of Nathanael, *Thou art the son of God, thou art the king of Israel.* You lay mighty stress upon Christ's declaring so frequently, that *the Father was in him, and that it was the Father who did the works, &c.* No doubt it was very proper it should be so. Christ appeared and acted as the messenger of God, and in the state of humiliation,

miliation was, perhaps, divested of the native inherent power he had before, (you will excuse the expression, I hope, and bear with the supposition.) It was by the power of the Father, and his spirit communicated to him, that the works were wrought; though, as I conceive, he had this power at his command, *i. e.* God was ready to exert it upon every occasion in which Christ should see fit to apply to him for it. *Father, I know that thou bearest me always.* I do not see any thing in this that interferes with our hypothesis; it should seem rather not so well to agree with yours. If the Father himself be the Logos that was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, and was the Christ, what occasion was there, what room could there be for Christ's addressing to his Father in heaven. Nor doth his saying, *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,* destroy our notion of the Logos. He was the most lively image and representation of the Father; in him was the clearest manifestation of God that we could, or at least that was fit for us to have in this present state. Certainly he did not mean that he himself was the Father, or that he and the Father were one and the same person. Upon the same account he might fitly be called Immanuel, because God did most eminently manifest himself, particularly his grace and love, in and by him. We read of a city whose name was to be Jehovah Shamma.

I shall now consider some particular texts which you have remarked upon. I have no commentators by me, nor Dr. Clark's *Scripture Doctrine*, nor have I a memory to retain the particular interpretations

pretations I may have met with ; so that I can only give you my own thoughts as things appear to me in reading the New Testament.

Heb. i. 2, &c. *The brightness of his glory, &c.* I rather incline to take these as belonging to the character of the son of God, before he took flesh. If there had been no account elsewhere of Christ's pre-existent state, I cannot say that I should have concluded it from hence ; but since that is plain to me from other scriptures, and, as I think, is spoken of in this epistle, the expressions seem to me most naturally to suit with that state. I have offered some reasons why I understand the words, *By whom he made the worlds,* of the original creation, I add, this seems very appositely to come in here, as intimating a fitness in his being appointed heir of all things. Now if that be meant of the original creation, the things which follow seem most naturally to belong to him in the state he was in before his coming in flesh. Indeed I do not see how it could be said of the man Christ, while he was on earth, that he upheld all things by the word of God's power. The author seems willing to give us, in one view, a summary description of this person by whom God now speaks to us. He tells us what he was in his original state, what he did for us here on earth, and what his present state is.

In ver. 5. there is no evading the title of God being given to the son as distinguished from God, *even his God who anointed him.* I will not be positive that the title of Son belongs to Christ, previously to his being born of a woman.

man. Though I own that seems to be the most natural sense of several passages, viz. to take it as belonging to him in his original state. *The only begotten Son who was in the bosom of the Father; God sent his Son into the world.* And in this chapter God hath spoken *by his son whom he appointed, by whom he made the worlds.* In these and the like passages, he seems to be represented as having that title or character in the state there spoken of, *i. e. when he was in the bosom of the Father, before his coming into the world, when God made the worlds by him.* And methinks the title is very properly given to him, according to the notion I have of his original state. For if angels are called the sons of God, and Adam is called the son of God, and he is stiled the Father of the spirits of all flesh, he who was first and immediately derived from God, who was the express image of his person or substance, may, I should think, very justly have the title or character of *the only begotten Son of God.*

I have already spoken of the name *Immanuel.* Other texts you mention may refer to God's manifesting himself in and by Christ. Nothing of this nature is inconsistent, as far as I can perceive, with my notion, concerning the person of Christ.

As to the appearing of the glory of God, distinct from the glory of Christ, I cannot be positive. Your interpretation of several passages relating to this matter may satisfy. But it is observable, that Christ speaks of the glory of the Father which shall attend him at his appearing,

as if it were as distinct from his own glory as that of the angels is, *The son of man shall come in his own glory, in the Father's glory, and in the glory of the holy angels.* Luke. And whereas God is said to have his throne in the heavens, and is characterised as *He that sitteth upon the throne*, and Christ is represented as *sitting on the right hand of the throne of God*, Heb. xii. 2, I see no absurdity in supposing a manifestation of the glory of God at the appearing of Christ. The text you mention, Titus ii. 13. runs thus; The appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

I suppose Justin Martyr would not deny that it was the supreme God who gave the law, and was the God of the Jews, &c. But he supposes that he who appeared upon all occasions was the Son. I think his discourses upon this head, and, indeed, most of the Fathers, as far as I remember, are very confused. However, I think it is undeniable, that he believed the Son to be a distinct being from the supreme God and Father. I mean the Son in his highest capacity, and as God.

Col. i. 15. *The image of the invisible God*, was so before the incarnation, and while on earth, and will always be so. Col. iii. 3—9. suit as well with my notion as with yours.

Thus I have given you my thoughts upon these matters with all freedom. If I have been tedious in some things, you must excuse it. I endeavour to find out truth for myself, but when I think I am never so clear in my own mind, I have little hope of being able to set things in
such

such a light as to convince others, who are got into another way of thinking. However, this I am satisfied of, that if there be any force in what I have said, PHILALETHES will perceive it as soon as any man, and be as ready to yield to it.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

The following version of the 139th psalm, with the remarks and paraphrase accompanying it, I received from a worthy friend, who gave me leave to communicate the whole to you for publication, if you think it may be acceptable to your readers. He is of opinion, that there are many passages in the Old Testament, besides those commonly noted, which have a real reference to the rewards and punishments of a future state, as might be made to appear, if they were exactly translated, and compared with other texts, where the like terms and phrases occur in the original. It was with a particular view of pointing out an instance or two of this kind, that he drew up what I now send you. In the version, he professes to have attended to the original with care. The remarks might have been more numerous; but he thought these sufficient for his purpose. For the free translation or paraphrase, intended to set the whole composition, in a more easy, striking and popular light, he apologises, as not having been able to please himself, and wishes it might be im-

proved; however, I have not ventured to make any material alteration.

I am, gentlemen,

Your humble servant,

A. O. C.

THE 139th psalm, being a solemn address to Jehovah (composed when the author appears to have lain under the imputation of criminal actions or designs, from which he was desirous to clear himself) may admit of the following divisions. The Psalmist, 1. expresses the strongest conviction, that his own character and conduct was perfectly known to God. From whence he takes occasion, 2. to represent the knowledge, power and care of the deity, as of the most universal and unlimited extent. He then more particularly reflects, 3. on the wonderful displays of the divine wisdom, in the first contrivance and composition of his frame; 4. on the innumerable blessings with which he had been favoured, by a kind providence, through all his life; and 5. on the still greater blessings he hoped to enjoy, in the blissful presence of God for ever, from whence the wicked should be driven into utter destruction; after which he concludes, 6. with a solemn appeal and prayer, to this all-knowing God, for the trial and proof of his innocence and integrity.

1. God's perfect knowledge of the Psalmist's character and conduct, strongly asserted, v. 1. *O Lord, thou hast searched and known me.* 2. *Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising: Thou understandest*

standest my good thoughts of old. 3. *Thou compassedst my path, and my lying down, and thou closely attendest on all my ways.* 4. *For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.* 5. *Thou hast formed my future and my former state, and laid the palm of thy hand over me.* 6. *This knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.*

2. On

R E M A R K S.

Ver. 2. לרעי, *My good thoughts*, is derived from a root that signifies to associate, to be in a regular and friendly manner, united with others. It is the same word which is applied to God, ver. 17, which doubtless denotes his thoughts of love. Whereas שרעפי, the thoughts mentioned, ver. 23, are those which are divided, scattered, discomposed, or distracted about various objects; alluding to boughs torn from a tree, or to the splitting of a rock, or to the drossy mixture which must be separated from the pure metal, by the refiner.

Ibid. מרחוק, *Of old*, seems to respect the preceding part of life. In this sense it is used in Isaiah xxii. 11, and translated long ago. Compare Isaiah xxv. 1. xxxvii. 26. xlii. 10, &c.

Verse 5. אהור, *My future state*. Compare Isaiah xli. 23. xliii. 10. xliv. 6, &c. קדם, *my former state*. This word denotes the preceding time, Psalm lxviii. 33. Isaiah xxiii. 7. xlv. 21. li. 9. xlv. 6. Jer. xxx. 20. xlvi. 26. Hab. i. 20, &c. In the version of the Seventy, it is

2. On the unlimited extent of the divine knowledge, power and care. Ver. 7. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? And whither shall I flee from thy face?* 8. *If I mount aloft into heaven, thou art there: If I make Hades my couch; behold, thou art there.* 9. *Shall I take the wings of the morning? Shall I dwell in the most distant parts of the sea?* 10. *Even there thy hand shall guide me, and thy right hand shall hold me.* 11. *If I say,*

R E M A R K S.

Τὰ εσχάτα και τα αρχαία συ επλάσας. We have a sentiment similar to this in Soph. Ajax, v. 34. Where Ulysses is introduced as saying to the goddesses of wisdom,

———— παντα γαρ τα τ' ουν παρος
 Τα τ' εισεπειλα, ση κυβορνωμαι χερι.

Ver. 8. *The wings of the morning.* The latin poets assign a chariot to Aurora. Thus Virg. *Æn.* 6. 355.—*Roseis Aurora quadrigis.* And again, 7. 26, *Aurora in roseis, fulgebat lutea bigis.* Buchanan, in his elegant version, uses here the same image:

Aurora curru me volucris ut deferat,
 Ad occidentis limitem,
 Hic deprehendas me.

But the representation of the rays of the morning, under the figure of a chariot running ever so fast, seems much less beautiful and significant, than that of flight by means of wings. And it may be said in truth, what Homer feigns of the chariot of his deity, that every jump or spring was of equal extent with the world.

ſay, Surely the darkneſs ſhall cover me, even the night ſhall be light about me. 12. Yea, the darkneſs, by its denſe gloom, concealeth not from thee; but the night ſhineth as the day, darkneſs and light are juſt the ſame to thee.

3. On the wonderful diſplay of divine wiſdom, in contriving and adjusting the human frame, ver. 13. *Thou art the poſſeſſor of my reins; thou haſt covered me in my mother's womb. 14. I will praise thee, for my excellent and awfully aſtoniſhing formation. Marvellous are thy works, and of that my ſoul is truly ſenſible. 15. My body was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret; and curiouſly wrought as embroidery, in the deep receſſes of the earth. 16. Thine eyes did ſee my unformed maſs; and in thy register all the members were delineated: Day unto day they were moulded into form; and not one of them was wanting.*

4. On the bleſſings of this life, which a kind providence liberally beſtows. Ver. 17. *How precious alſo are thy thoughts of love to me, O God! How great is the ſum of them. 18. If I would count them, they are more in number than the ſand.*

5. On the future ſtate of good and bad men. Ver. 18. *When I awake I ſhall be ſtill with thee. 19. Surely, O righteous God, thou wilt ſlay the wicked, and the men of blood, by ſaying, Depart from me. 20. When they ſhall have given an account of their wickedneſs unto thee, every one of thine enemies ſhall be borne away into deſtruction.*

6. The Pſalmiſt's ſolemn appeal and prayer to the all-knowing God, for the proof of his
inno-

innocence and integrity. Ver. 21. *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.* 23. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts:* 24. *And see if there be any way of grief in me; and lead me in the everlasting way.*

R E M A R K S.

Ver. 18. *הקיצתי, I awake, or shall awake.* The preterite tense is often used for the future. That this word is frequently applied to awaking from the sleep of death, appears from 2 Kings iv. 31. *The child is not made to awake.* Psal. xvii. 15. *I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.* Compare Dan. xii. 2.

Ver. 20. *ימרוך, When they shall have given an account, or confessed unto thee.* This word is used in solemn transactions, as in Deut. xxvi. 18. *hath avouched thee.* Psal. viii. 2, &c.

Ib. *למוזמה, Abominationem, their wickedness.* The word seems to denote wickedness so ingrained as to be incurable; and exhibits to view the reprobate state.

Ib. *נשוא, Every one of thy enemies shall be borne away.* This word seems to be a regular participle singular, not an anomalous preterite plural; and admits the sense given in the translation.

Ib. *לישוא, Into destruction.* The Seventy has it, *ἀρῶνται εἰς ματαίωσιν, Shall be reduced into emptiness, or utterly destroyed.* Compare Isa. xxx. 28. *Sift the nations with a sieve of vanity.*

Ver.

Ver. 23. בִּחְנִי, *Try me.* This word properly reſpects one who makes experiments on any thing to render it better. *Proprie dicitur de eo qui experitur aliquid ut melius reddat.* Bythner. Analyſ. in Pſal. xi. 5.

Ver. 24. עֵצָב, *Way of grief.* This word denotes any thing irritating, quite offensive, troubleſome, greatly afflicting and grieving, as an idol was to thoſe who were truly pious. It is derived from a root that ſignifies tying any thing very hard. It ſeems here to denote any thing inconſiſtent with the worſhip and obedience due to Jehovah.

A free tranſlation, or paraphraſe, humbly attempted.

1. *Men's character and conduct perfectly known to God.*

O Lord, thou haſt examined, as by the narroweſt ſurvey, whatever is in me, and haſt the moſt intimate and perfect knowledge of me. Thou knoweſt my eaſe and my toil, my ſeaſons of reſt and of labour; and art thoroughly acquainted with the good principles with which my heart has been ſwayed, from the beginning of my life. The meaſures I take in the walks of public action, and the ſatiſfaction and ſolace which I enjoy, in my hours of ſecret reſoſe, are limited by thee, *are under thy direction*, and thou cloſely attendeſt to all the circumſtances of my lot. For all the expreſſions of my tongue (which is then alone my glory, when employed to thy honour, or to ſome beneficial purpoſes) are, O Lord, (even before I utter them) intirely known

known to thee. My future state, as well as the preceding, is also the subject of thine all-seeing and disposing providence; and thy invisible agency is ever conversant about me, to guide, sustain and protect me. This knowledge is too wonderful for me; of too vast an extent to come within the sphere of my comprehension; and of such height as exceeds the utmost reach of my limited capacity, and surpasses all my conceptions.

2. *The unlimited extent of the divine knowledge, power and care.*

To what place can I have recourse where thy spirit doth not penetrate? Or whither shall I take my flight to be out of thy view? Should I mount aloft to heaven, thou art there, shining *with peculiar eminence*, amidst the splendors of thy throne. Should I make Hades, *the region of departed spirits*, my couch, and thereby expect a perfect and undisturbed repose.--It is an amazing consideration! Thou art even there. Were it possible for me to perch on the wings of the morning, the rays of the rising sun; or darting swiftly from thence, to fix my residence in the furthest part of the ocean, behind the Western sea; even there thy immediate agency would be felt; and there I should still need and experience the hand of thy providence to direct and support me. Again, should I feign to myself, that surely the gross darkness would shroud me from thy sight, and keep me quite concealed.—But I check the senseless fiction. For to thy view, the night is like bright sun-shine round about me,

me. Yea the darkest gloom is no obscurity to thee; but the night is radiant as the day. Darknes and light are altogether the same to thee.

3. *Divine wisdom wonderfully displayed in the formation of man.*

Thou art, indeed, the rightful proprietor and possessor of my internal faculties; and thou didst wrap me in that cloathing with which I was arrayed in my mother's womb. I will praise thee on account of my original production; and with awful reverence and astonishment admire the power and wisdom displayed therein. Full of wonder are thy works, and my soul exceedingly aspires after the knowledge of them. My material part, in its first formation, though veiled from every other eye, was not concealed from thee, when it was curiously wrought, as a piece of the finest embroidery, in no less secrecy than if it had been in the deepest recesses of the earth. Even then thine eyes did see me, while I was a mere embryo; and in thy register were recorded all the parts of my composition, almost infinite in number, variety and use; which in successive days were gradually expanded, and regularly adjusted; and not one of them omitted, or left imperfect.

4. *The mercies of God innumerable in the present life.*

When I further reflect on the gracious dispensations of thy providence towards me, and on that spring of goodness from whence all the
comforts

comforts of my life have flowed, my soul is filled with the most ardent affection and lively gratitude towards thee, the giver of all good. For Oh, how great is the sum of those blessings which thy paternal care has provided for me, and thy bountiful hand bestowed! In attempting to recollect them, I find them more than can be numbered; for in multitude they exceed the sands on the sea-shore. But to me, this world, and its enjoyments, will soon be no more. I shall fall asleep in death.

5. *On the future state of good and bad men.*

— I awake, and shall be for ever with thee, to *behold thy face*, to *discern thy glory*, to be made *like thee*, and *satisfied with thy likeness*; enjoying complete and endless bliss in the perfect conformity of nature, to thy divine nature and law. Then, O God, as thou art essentially righteous, thou wilt put the wicked to death, and command the men of blood, all murderers, and those who hated their brethren, to depart from thee. And when thine enemies shall have given an account of their wickedness, they shall every one of them be destroyed with an utter excision.

6. *The Psalmist's solemn appeal and prayer to the searcher of hearts.*

Have I not an aversion, O Lord, to those who appear, by their impious conduct, to have an aversion to thee? Am I not greatly disgusted with those who rise up in opposition to thee? My aversion is fixed and well grounded. They are my
my

my enemies. They wound my peace, oppreſs my mind with ſorrow, and are prejudicial to truth, righteouſneſs and the happineſs of mankind; whereby thy name is diſhonoured, and they are juſtly rendered the objects of thy diſpleaſure. As to myſelf, I ſubmit to the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny. Search me, O God, and know my heart: Refine, by trial, my diſcompoſed and diſtracted thoughts: Discover to me if any of my principles, aims or motives are inconſiſtent with the honour, worſhip and obedience that are due to thee, that they may be duly rectified; and let all my thoughts and ways be ſo directed by the unchangeable rule of truth and righteouſneſs, as to iſſue in everlaſting life and bliſs.

Obſervations on ſome Incidents in the Life
of CHRIST.

I. *The Marriage at Cana in Galilee.* John ii.

THE objections to the miracle wrought on this occaſion, appear to have been ſatisfactorily obviated by ſeveral writers. The greatneſs of Chriſt's power is a reflection ſuggeſted by and common to every miracle he performed. On theſe points nothing need be obſerved. But *the manner* in which he diſplayed his power in this inſtance, merits particular notice. So miraculous a proviſion of wine on a ſeaſon of feſtivity, ſets in a pleaſing light, the goodneſs of our Maſter's mind. Notwithſtanding the infinite moment and ſolemnity of his errand into our world, he is ſo condeſcending and courteous,

as to consult for the satisfaction of a social hour ; and to afford a liberal supply, not only to necessary wants, but generously to furnish a delicious regale for the table, and a munificent provision of one of the elegant articles of entertainment. He begins his extraordinary ministry with an act that was suited to exhibit his character in an engaging, agreeable view, and to conciliate the regards of the cheerful. And I know not why we should not learn from it, to consider our Lord as a friend to our least, as well as best interest, as no enemy to the innocent gaiety of our spirits, and our acquisition of life's agreeable accommodations ; whilst his chief business was to bring us acquainted with the things of our everlasting peace. The liberality with which he furnished such excellent wine, adds lustre to his generosity and goodness ; it was a large return for the entertainment of himself and his disciples, an obliging expression of his readiness to administer to the gratification and pleasure of the bridegroom and his company ; and the remainder, after the festival, was no inconsiderable present to the new-married couple. The modesty and humility, with which Jesus acted on this occasion, should not escape our attention. It appears, that this miracle was wrought with all the privacy possible, on so publick an occasion. The bridegroom, the governor of the feast, and all the company, were strangers to it ; the servants only knew what was done : and Jesus himself speaks and says nothing about it even to them, but only orders the vessels to be filled

filled with water, and that it should be drawn, and carried to the governor of the entertainment.

Here is no parade, no ostentation to direct the attention of the guests to it; it is performed without their knowledge; our Lord makes no reflections on it, and even draws no arguments or conclusion from it, in favour of his mission. He knew it would be discovered, but does not hasten, or anticipate the discovery; and afterwards he leaves it to speak for itself, and to convince only by its own weight and evidence. This is not the manner of enthusiasts and impostors. No! It is peculiar to the son of God; who did his great works with the same ease and indifference, as other men perform the most common things in life. It was necessary his miracles should be public, in order to confirm his mission; but then they are performed in as private, as modest and silent a manner as was consistent with that end. Another thing observable in our Lord's conduct, on the present occasion, was his wisdom in improving the social banquet, for the important purpose of subserving the end of his ministry. Amidst the relaxation of the festive hour, he does not lose sight of the dignity and design of his character; and seizes the opportunity afforded him by the failure of wine, in a manner not in the least forbidding, but in a way peculiarly engaging and pleasing, to lead the company into an enquiry about his office and testimonials: He endeavours, by assisting the joys of their banquet, to excite their attention and thirst after the riches and spiritual entertainment of his kingdom. He takes care that the
social

social festival should not be lost to him or them ; but should concur, under the energy of his power and goodness, with the other more solemn seasons of his ministry, to manifest his glory, and to raise the faith of his disciples.

Once more ; this scene of our Lord's ministry, leads us to remark his great self-denial. The same power which so exuberantly furnished this feast, could as easily have always changed the repast of a common table, into the greatest delicacies. He could as easily have supplied his own wants with a continual profusion of elegant conveniences : He could as easily have provided himself daily with the dainties of a royal board. It appears from this instance, that he had no gloomy aversion, no monkish contempt for these gratifications, and that he was not indifferent to the entertainment of others. But as for himself, he never exercised his miraculous powers for self-indulgence : He suffered hunger and thirst, and endured all the severities of a poor and needy situation in life. So little did he regard the pleasures of sense ; so ardently did he seek the nobler gratifications of obedience to God and love to man ; a moderation more signal and exemplary, when compared with his ability to provide indulgences for every sense.

May I be allowed to subjoin to these remarks, one of the candid and learned Dr. Jortin :—
 “ There arose in the church, from antient
 “ times, sects of heretics, who condemned
 “ wine, and the use of animal food, and marri-
 “ age ; not only heretics, but the orthodox also,
 “ ran

“ ran into extravagant notions of the same
“ kind, crying up celibacy and a solitary life
“ beyond measure, together with rigid and un-
“ commanded austerities and macerations of the
“ body. Christ, therefore, as we may conjec-
“ ture, was present at this feast and honoured
“ it with this miracle, that it should stand in
“ the gospel as a confutation of these foolish
“ errors, and a warning to those who had ears
“ to hear, not to be deluded by such fanatics.
“ St. John, who records this miracle, lived to see
“ these false doctrines adopted and propagated.”

Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 18.

II. *The Cure of the Centurion's Servant*, Luke vii.

In common with the other miracles, which gave a divine sanction to the words of Christ, the recovery of the Centurion's servant from a dangerous sickness by the power of Jesus, was a notorious and publick action; but there are some circumstances peculiar to it, which are utterly inconsistent with the supposition of any trick, any concerted design or fraud. The modesty and distant respect with which it was solicited, the intercession of the most considerable persons of the city, and of many of the Centurion's friends, the reputation and weight of his name and character, and the manner in which the cure was effected, without touching, without seeing the sick person, only by a word spoken at a distance from the house, are circumstances which carry the natural air of truth, shew the impossibility of any intrigue, or deception; and unite to evince the reality and display the

greatness of this signal and merciful work. It appears from hence, that the presence of the object contributed not in the least to the successful exertion of the power of Jesus; but his word could reach and prevail for the perfect recovery of the unknown, the absent and the distant. This work proved, in a convincing manner, that the high and honourable terms, in which this Roman officer spake of the power and authority of Christ, were not the dictates of flattery's insinuating art, nor flowed from the empty hope of an enthusiastical reverence; but were the tokens of a just respect, and the fruits of a rational faith. The strongest and most inveterate disease yields to the power of his word, whilst the person afflicted by it lies far beyond the sound of his voice. This miracle was a real and visible image of the invisible, but real energy of God: and an encouraging pledge of that power and authority which Christ was, through all ages of his kingdom, to exert over all parts of his dominions, over those remote from, as well as those near to the heavenly seat of his residence. This cure was inferior to none of his mighty works in expressing his kind and amiable spirit. As performed out of respect to the Centurion's signal and eminent virtues, it gave encouragement to exemplary goodness. As it removed the pains of a sick *servant*, and turned his languor into health and cheerfulness, it was an act of great mercy and kindness to him. As it was done at the generous and humane suit of his master, it was the reward of his tenderness for his sick servant, and gave a divine sanction to that instructive example of benevolence and com-

compassion in persons of high rank to those below them, which this behaviour of the Centurion exhibits. When Peter and John would have called down fire from heaven on the Samaritans, to revenge the affront their master had received from those bigotted people, they are rebuked and silenced: but when the Centurion intercedes for his afflicted servant, he is heard, and his humane request instantly granted. The good favour takes a pleasure to indulge the emotions of pity and mercy in his own breast, and to encourage them in others. This instance may not improperly be regarded as a token, that his sentence, when he appears in the character of the final judge, shall accomplish what his kind lips declared, and his compassionate miracles exemplified, namely, that *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*

III. *Christ blesses little Children, Mark x.*

There is something peculiarly easy and agreeable in the method, by which Christ conveyed his sublime and exalted lessons. In a multitude of instances he waves that air of authority, which well became him; and without any set and laboured discourses, as was the practice of other instructors, he delivered his doctrine in a most familiar manner. The history before us is an example of this. He takes occasion, from some persons bringing their children to him to receive his blessing, to teach and inculcate humility, and to recommend docility and simplicity as essential ingredients in the character of his genuine followers. His disciples thought

children beneath his notice, and their being brought to him an interruption to his preaching. But their master, with great modesty and mildness, borrows the assistance of their presence to enforce his doctrine, and on the view of their innocent appearance, engrafts the first principles of his religion. Thus he was at once a pattern and teacher of humility. He discovered his own gentle and condescending spirit by the kind notice he took of these young children.

Such was his sympathy with the parents who brought them to him, in their concern for the happiness of their offspring: Such was his tender love of children, and his readiness to gratify the affectionate and pious desires of their friends: Such was his sensibility, the soft charms and smiles of this early and innocent period won upon him, and touched all the springs of kindness. He had a soul too great for the high and ambitious things of life, but susceptible of tender impressions from the lowest degrees of purity and goodness. In the language of prophecy, he is described as that compassionate *Shepherd, who should gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom*, Isaiah xl. 11. In the instance before us, he literally accomplished this delightful prediction; and afforded us an engaging pledge, that a bruised reed he would not break, nor quench the smoking flax. May it not be added, that this anecdote in our Saviour's history, is of importance to our comfort under some of the severest trials a tender heart feels, when it is considered in connection with his character, as the Lord of the unseen world:

world: In this view it is a pleasing intimation with what kind care he will receive them, in those regions where his power and friendship are peculiarly felt; when they are lost from the parental embrace, and are fallen asleep, arrayed with those native robes of humility and innocence, which will ever sweetly attract his love.

A. N.

Observations on Prophetic Names.

WE find in several passages of the prophets *significant names* given to persons and things, not intended to denote any thing particular and peculiar to those persons, but something of more public and general concernment. They are employed as signs, memorials and engagements, to confirm the faith of the people in the prediction or promise to which they are annexed, and are formed to express the purport of the prediction, or something conducive to its accomplishment. *E. G.*

When King Ahaz and the inhabitants of Jerusalem were in the utmost consternation and despondency, on account of the invasion of their country by the kings of Syria and Israel, the slaughter of one hundred and twenty thousand of their best troops, and the captivity of two hundred thousand women and children by the Israelites, besides a great multitude whom the Syrians carried away; (see 2 Chron. xxviii. former part) and were under the greatest apprehen-

sion for the safety of Jerusalem itself, which was in great danger. The prophet Isaiah was sent to encourage them, by foretelling the disappointment of the designs of their enemies, and the utter overthrow both of Syria and Israel near approaching. (See Isa. vii. 1—10.) And he was particularly directed to take with him his son *Shear-jashub*. The name signifies, *A remnant shall return*, and seems to have been given to the child for the purpose of confirming the promise of the return of part of the captives which we find in the last verse of the preceding chapter, and which event soon took place, 2 Chron. xxviii. 9—15. Hence appears the propriety of the direction given to the prophet to take Shear-jashub with him, as his presence and name would serve mightily to give impression and confirmation to the prediction he had in charge to deliver.

About the same time the prophet was directed, with particular circumstances of authenticity and solemnity, to register another name, *Maher-shalal-hash-baz*, and, upon the birth of another son, to give the child that name, as a signature and confirmation of this prediction. *Before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the King of Assyria.* Now the name signifies, *In making speed to the spoil he hasteneth the prey.* Certainly this was not meant to denote any thing relative to the child himself, but the irresistible rapidity of the Assyrian conquests, and the plunder and desolation which would attend them,

them, Chap. viii. 1—4. In like manner when the prophet, at the delivery of the former prediction to Ahaz, proposed to that prince to choose any sign he pleased for the confirmation of it, upon his refusing to ask for one, the prophet said, chap. vii. 14. *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 be 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 which thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.* The name *Immanuel* signifies *God with us*. But surely we are not to understand by it, that the child (whoever he was) that should bear it, should be true and very God, dwelling amongst us; but only that God, by appointing this name, engaged to manifest his own presence with his people, by protecting and blessing them, and by inflicting vengeance on their enemies and oppressors, agreeably to the prediction to which this name is annexed as a confirming sign.

St. Matthew, chap. i. 23. very properly applies the words of this prophecy to our Lord Jesus; but doth it not seem much more reasonable (and conformable to the common usage of scripture, and particularly of prophetic significant names) to understand him as referring, by the name *Immanuel*, to the wonderful displays which God made of his own power, wisdom and goodness, in and by Jesus Christ, and to that dispensation of grace, mercy and peace, which he hath established by him, and extended even to the
Gentiles,

Gentiles, agreeably to that prophecy to which St. Paul refers, and which he applies to the Gentile converts at Corinth, (2 Cor. vi. 16.) *Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* I say, doth not this seem a more reasonable and probable interpretation of the name Immanuel, as applied to Jesus Christ, than to imagine that we must understand by it, that Jesus, as the son of God, is truly, verily and properly God, of the same substance with the Father, and equal to him in all divine perfections.

Another passage containing a prophetic significant name, which divines have commonly understood to denote our Lord Jesus (though I do not recollect any passage of the New Testament, where any apostle or evangelist makes such application of it) is Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; and in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.* Now admitting that this prophecy and this name Jehovah צדקנו, *the Lord our Righteousness*, are rightly understood of our Lord Jesus, doth it not seem more reasonable to interpret it as expressive of that free pardon and justification of penitent sinners, through the riches of his own mercy and goodness, which Jehovah hath published to the world by his son, and that state of grace or favour

vour with him, into which we are received by the gospel ; or, to borrow a better illustration of the import of this name, from the words of the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them* : I say, doth not this seem a more reasonable interpretation of this name, than to suppose it to import, that the active and passive merits of Christ (or his obedience and sufferings) imputed to us, procure our justification or righteousness in the sight of God, and that Christ himself is here stiled Jehovah.

But that (whatever may become of the doctrine) this is not the meaning of the name, appears to me very plain, from chap. xxxiii. ver. 15, 16. where the same prophecy is repeated, and the same name is expressly applied to Jerusalem.—*This is the name wherewith SHE shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.* Now I presume no Protestant will think of the imputation of the merits of Jerusalem (whether we understand it of that particular city, or of the church in general) to any one for righteousness, or justification before God ; and what right have we to interpret the same name, one way in one place, and differently in another ? Whereas, in the sense given of it above, the name is very applicable both to Christ and Jerusalem, or the church of Christ.

Another passage, containing significant prophetic names or titles, is Isaiah ix. 6. *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God,*

God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and justice, from henceforth even for ever; the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. This prophecy seems to be pretty plainly alluded to, and applied to the future Jesus, by the angel in his salutation to Mary. Luke i. 32, 33. *He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.* Now upon these words I would observe, in general, that, whatever these high titles may import, they appear, in the order of the prophecy, subsequent to *the government being laid on the shoulders of the son*, and to express qualifications for executing that high office, and *for sitting on the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever*; and consequently, that this is a prediction of that authority and dominion over all things, for his church, to which Jesus was exalted after his ascension, and which he now possesseth at the right hand of God, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and where he must reign till all enemies be put under his feet. But lest, by the magnificence of these titles, men should be led to imagine, that the son held these prerogatives essentially,

ally, independent and underived, the prophecy is sufficiently guarded, not only by representing this son as *given* (*i. e.* by God) but also by concluding with these words, *The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this*, plainly shewing from whom the Son derives all these prerogatives.

I would further observe, in particular, concerning the two most lofty of these titles or names, *The mighty God, The everlasting Father*; that the former of them may be very properly given to Jesus Christ, in his state of exaltation, always remembering by whom he was exalted, and from whom he derived his divine prerogatives and power. As to the latter, I should think it must perplex the asserters of the proper divinity of the Son, to account for the application of the appropriate, and distinguishing title of the *first* person in the Trinity, to the *second*. If (with the vulgar Latin and Arabic versions) they render the original in this place, *The Father of the future age*, all appearance of proof of the proper divinity, arising from this title, vanishes.

If we lay aside a regard to the Masoretic punctuation, and read the original according to the antient manner of writing Hebrew, without the vowel points, the words אל גבר אבי ער, may be very literally and properly rendered, *The mighty God, my father for ever*; a title perfectly suitable to the Lord Jesus, and conformable to the whole doctrine of the gospel concerning him; at the same time, it well suits the purpose for which it is introduced in this prophecy, as it suggests an effectual security for the son's fulfilling

filling the purposes for which the government is placed on his shoulders, and himself set on the throne of David, &c. Let me add, that if (as seems probable) the angel, in his salutation of Mary, alluded to this passage of the prophet, he seems also to have alluded particularly to the words, אֵל גְּבוּר אָבִי עַד, understood in the sense I have just mentioned (the mighty God, my father for ever) when he says, *He shall be called the Son of the Highest.*

V I G I L I U S.

*An Attempt to explain Hebrews, Chap. i.
the 2d and following Verses.*

IT is well known, that the grand cause of that disgust which the Jews had generally conceived against the person of Jesus Christ, and of their aversion against his gospel, arose from the meanness of his personal appearance when on earth, and the ignominious death on the cross which he suffered. To remove this stumbling-block out of their way, the apostle very wisely begins this address to them, with representing him to their attentive notice in that state of glory, power and dominion to which he is exalted at the right hand of God. Having said, ver. 2, that *God hath, in these last days, spoken to us by his Son*; he immediately proceeds to present him, as it were, before them under the following description; *Whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he hath made (or formed)*
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the ages, i. e. the present dispensation of God's government over mankind, established by the gospel, the administration whereof is committed to the Son. The word *Αἰών*,* here rendered *the world*, uniformly signifies, through the whole New Testament, a period or duration of time, definite, or indefinite: but the word is no where used, as I conceive, to denote this material or visible structure of the world, or this globe on which we live. The word *Κόσμος*, is generally, if not always, used for that purpose.

Ver. 3. *Who being (i. e. now being) the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his*

* I would propose it for consideration, whether, though the word in the original here rendered *world*, properly denotes the *habitable, or inhabited world*; the apostle does not use it in a sense similar to that wherein it was commonly used at that time through all the Roman dominions, viz. *empire or government*. Thus Luke says, chap. ii. 1. *There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed*: by which can be meant only, all the provinces under the Roman dominion. In like manner, when the Jews at Thessalonica accused the apostles before the magistrates with turning the *world* upside down, their meaning seems to be, that they attempted to disturb the tranquility and subvert the authority of the Roman government; for thus they proceed in their accusation, *These all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, that there is another king, one Jesus*. May not then the apostle's meaning in this place be, When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the empire or dominion? *i. e.* to which he is now exalted. Let it be observed further, that the 97th Psalm, from whence the apostle makes this quotation, begins thus, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof, &c.* and is full of very magnificent descriptions of dominion and power, very applicable to that authority and dominion to which Christ is exalted at the right hand of God.

(God's)

(God's) person, and upholding all things by the word of his (God's) power (when he had by himself purged our sins) sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Nothing seems plainer, than that all these magnificent characters are applied to the son as he is in his state of glorification. The apostle proceeds, ver. 4. *Being made so much better than the angels, by how much he hath by inheritance a more excellent name than they.*

Ver. 5. *For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.* Observe, that in the 5th chapter, ver. 5. the apostle refers the accomplishment of these words of the Psalmist to Christ's exaltation to be high priest in the heavenly places. *And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.*

Ver. 6. *And again, when he bringeth the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.* In the Psalm it is, *Worship him all ye gods.*

Ver. 7. *And of (or concerning) the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.*

Ver. 8. *But concerning the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*

Ver. 9. *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore, God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* Could we wish a better illustration of these words of the Psalmist, than what we have in the words of St. Paul, Philip. ii. 8, 9. *He humbled*

humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, &c.

Ver. 10, 11, 12. In these verses the apostle quotes an address to the great creator and everlasting ruler of the universe. In Psalm cii. 25, 26, 27, ver. *And, thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old, as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.* He then adds,

Ver. 13. *But to which of the angels said he, (i. e. this great creator, and eternal governor of all things) at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

Ver. 14. *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

Thus it appears to me very plain, that whatever sublime titles, or magnificent expressions of authority, power and dominion, the apostle in this chapter borrows from the Psalms, and ascribes to the son, he refers only to that state to which he is now exalted at the right hand of God; but not at all to any thing which he possesses essentially, independent and underived. It would even be an affront to the attention of the reader, to suppose that he hath not observed how repeatedly and variously he hath, through
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the whole chapter, guarded against any such misconception.

Having thus led his readers to form very exalted ideas of the glorified Jesus, he very properly proceeds, in the 2d chapter, to infer the very reverent attention which ought to be paid to his gospel, far beyond what was due to the law of Moses, which was delivered by a much inferior ministry, that of angels, and attended with less authentic attestations of its divine original. V. 1--5. And having applied to Christ, in a more eminent sense, a passage (Psalm viii. 4--8.) where the Psalmist speaks of the dominion over all his works here below, wherewith God hath invested man, he proceeds, in the following part of the chapter, in the most judicious manner, to remove the great prejudice of the Jews, on account of Christ's humiliation and sufferings, by shewing, that it was by means of, and in reward for these things, that he obtained this glory and dignity. *We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, ver. 9. also that there was the utmost fitness and propriety in this measure, for effecting the glorious purposes for which he was sent into the world. It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ver. 10, &c.*

V I G I L I U S.

Remarks

*Remarks on Chubb's Farewell, continued
from p. 182.*

MR. Chubb accuses St. Paul of insincerity, fraud and untruth, "in pretending that he was persecuted of the Jews, for *preaching the resurrection from the dead, and a future state*; a doctrine which they themselves believed, and therefore could not be supposed to persecute him for; nor was he accused of this, but of polluting the temple, by bringing foreigners into it." This was, indeed, a more popular clamour to raise against him, and a more proper accusation to bring before a Roman magistrate; but their inveteracy against him, and against the rest of the apostles, really arose from their witnessing and proclaiming, every where, the resurrection of Jesus, whom the Jews had procured to be crucified. See Acts iv. 1, 2. *And as they spake unto the people, the priests and captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead.* We cannot wonder that this should be the chief and constant topic of their preaching, or that it should provoke the murderers of Jesus as it did. See chap. v. 27. *When they had brought Peter and the apostles, they set them before the council, and the high priest asked them, saying, Did not we strictly charge you, that you should not teach in this name; and behold ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. Then Peter and the other*

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apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree; Him hath God exalted with his right hand, &c. and we are his witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took council to slay them. Then stood up one of the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space, and said unto them, Ye men of Israel take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men, and let them alone: For if this council, or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. This candour of this eminent Pharisee, St. Paul's old tutor, might perhaps induce St. Paul afterwards to engage the Pharisees in his favour, when he was in danger of being torn to pieces before the council, by throwing a bone of contention among his accusers, who were part Pharisees and part Sadducees, saying, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am called in question. Acts. xxiii. 6. This being the true ground of this cruel persecution of him, some may be ready to think this a very innocent stratagem in the circumstances he was in; and yet he seems himself afterwards to acknowledge it as a weakness, chap. xxiv. 21. which shews a delicacy in point of integrity that ought rather to establish his character in that respect than otherwise. His preaching the resurrection of

Jesus

Jesus was not only the great cause of their hatred and persecution of him, but seems to have been part of their *accusation*, by Festus's account to King Agrippa, chap. xxv. 19. *But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.* Nay, did not their orator, Tertullus, hint of this even before he mentioned his going about to profane the temple. *We found, says he, this man a mover of sedition, a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarines, viz. by preaching to the Jews the resurrection of their Messiah, and thereby exasperating people's minds against their rulers, who had procured him to be condemned and crucified.*

The author has taken great pains in a note, p. 329. to misrepresent a very innocent action, at least, of this apostle, and the as innocent and prudent advice of St. James and the elders to him; which was not (as this author would have it) to deceive those many thousands of Jewish christians who were zealous of the law of Moses; but to set them right, as to his own conduct, which had been greatly misrepresented to them. They were not *Judaizing christians*, as he calls them, though zealous of the law. The *Judaizing christians* were such as were not content to observe the law of Moses themselves, but for imposing it upon all the Gentile converts. This St. Paul would never have countenanced; but neither he nor any of the apostles, being Jews, and in Judea, scrupled observing the ancient established rites and customs of their nation and national constitution, while it lasted,

and their appearing to do so, especially St. Paul's, might have proved a stumbling-block to so many thousands of their Jewish brethren. Suppose it was reported of me, that I had taught people up and down the country that it was sinful to make use of a liturgy, or any precomposed forms, in the worship of God; should I be guilty of any fraud, if, to undeceive people, I should take an opportunity to attend, with proper gravity, decency, and real devotion, with regard to the principal part of it, the public service in my parish church? I cannot help remarking here, that there is no action, no character, no historical fact, no writing whatsoever, which prejudice, helped out by a fruitful inventive genius, may not dress up, and set in an odious, or, at least, suspicious light.

Page 334. "The resurrection of Christ, (says this writer) "does not seem *wisely* directed to evince the possibility and certainty of a resurrection to life eternal. When a great and valuable end is to be obtained, the nature and propriety of the thing requires that the best and most effectual means should be used for its attainment." From whence he would infer, "that this could not be the method which an infinitely wise God would take for this purpose." I leave such gentlemen as this author to dispute, if they please, the *wisdom* of it; but the event has proved it an *effectual* method; for there is not, I believe, a person in the world, or ever was, except one or two whimsical people, once at Corinth, who really believed

believed the resurrection of Jesus, and did not believe a general resurrection and future state, whatever influence it may have had on their morals. "But our Saviour (says this author) " should have appeared as publickly after his " resurrection as he did before, and to the chief " priests and elders; how *wicked* soever they " were, he came to save that which was *lost*; " to call, not the righteous, but sinners to re- " pentance. The more wicked and unbelieving " they were, the more proof he should have " given them to convince and convert them."

And if this, his so publick appearance, was necessary to this purpose, and the wisest and most effectual way to answer it, with equal reason may it be urged, he should have appeared to all the world throughout all future ages, as well as to the Jews; and if he had really done so, I much question whether there would have been then, or ever since, one more believer on him than as it is. The chief priests were informed of his resurrection by the very persons they employed and interested to guard against any fraud. If their word was not to be taken, why were they chosen; they should have watched themselves, but it is plain they were afraid it was true, and were as solicitous as possible to conceal it, at least, as long as they could; risen or not risen they were determined not to own him for their messiah; and to prevent, as much as in them lay, others from believing on him, lest *the Romans should come and take away both their place and nation.* John xi. 48. they feared men more than God. Nor is the tale they put

the mouths of the soldiers so very unlikely a political fetch as this author would make us believe. Is it so very uncommon a thing for bad men and politicians to forge and propagate a lie on a sudden emergency, though it is not likely to live many days or hours? or were *these chief priests* incapable of such low *craft*, or poor artifice, to stop the mouths of the populace? This author allows them to be *obdurate* unbelievers, and thinks *that* a reason why Jesus should more especially have appeared to them, to convince and save them. But *obduracy* is not to be turned in the nature of the thing. His appearance to them would not have done it. In a full assembly of them met together on purpose to suppress the preachers of Christ's resurrection, who had just before wrought a miracle by the name of the risen Jesus, *they confer among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men, for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all men that dwell at Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it; but that it spread no farther among the people, let us straightly threaten them that they henceforth speak to no man in this name,* Acts iv. 14—17. If Jesus had appeared to such men, and shewn them the print of the nails in his hands, and the wound in his side, would they have believed; I mean, received him for their Messiah? I think they would not. Sinners, through ignorance, inadvertence, prejudice, or the prevalency of exorbitant lust and appetites, may be the objects of divine compassion, not *obdurate* sinners. Our Saviour, indeed, said upon the cross, *Father, forgive them, they know*

know not what they do. This might be true of many of those who clamoured to have him crucified, or were otherwise active in the affair; and perhaps many of these very persons might be of the number of those who *were pricked to the heart at St. Peter's preaching*, Acts ii. 37. There was no occasion for Christ's personal appearing to any honest minds, who heard his resurrection proclaimed and witnessed by credible eye-witnesses of it, and by miracles wrought in his name. But this author thought he should have appeared as publickly as possible, or at least resided at the house of some friend, where all persons might have access to him; in short, to live his life over again here on earth, and expose himself again (to as little purpose as before) to all the like ill usage, and to an assassination, if not a second crucifixion, if we may judge of the treatment he would, in this case, have met with, from the spirit of the chief priests, who were for putting Lazarus again to death because his resurrection had caused many of the Jews to believe on Jesus, and who appear to have been so much the more exasperated against him and his followers, by how much the more evidence they had of his resurrection and divine mission. See 3d and 4th chap. Acts. In short, this set of people had both seen and hated both Christ and his Father, as he told them in his life-time.

This author thinks it unaccountable, " that, " for the space of forty days, he should not be " seen by any persons living, except three or " four times, and by a few persons (according to

to his conception) “ about twenty or twenty-five at the utmost.” But this guess, both at the number of times and number of persons to whom he appeared is perfectly arbitrary. Tho’ the evangelists are extremely brief in their accounts, yet it is highly probable that, amongst so many followers as Christ had in his life-time, viz. four and five thousand at a time, many of them would attend the eleven disciples into Galilee, where he appointed them to meet him after his resurrection, at a proper distance from Jerusalem, the head quarters of their greatest and most inveterate enemies. St. Paul makes no scruple to assert under his hand, in an epistle to a whole church, and which must soon be, and was communicated to other churches, that he was seen after his resurrection of more than five hundred brethren *at once*, most of whom were living at the very time he so publickly asserted this, which was not above thirty years after the fact. And, no doubt, the five hundred witnesses bore their publick testimony to it as long as they lived. And the continued miracles wrought in the name of an arisen Jesus, confirmed this their testimony to all who saw them, and more especially to those who were made actual partakers of these gifts, which were not a few.

It is true, this author disputes the authority of the writers who have given us these accounts. One, it seems, is a nameless historian, and the other might as well have been nameless, for any credit he is willing to give them. And yet there are no ancient writings extant, whereof

whereof we have half the evidence of their being wrote by the authors they are ascribed to, or having been so scrupulously handed down to us, free from any wilful corruptions or material alterations. They were all written within thirty years, or a very few years, more or less, from the facts they relate, while many witnesses of these facts, and many more inhabitants of the places, and cotemporaries of the time, where, and when they were transacted, enemies as well as friends, curious and learned writers too, both Jews and Gentiles, were living to contradict them, if they thought proper.

Although we knew not who were the writers of the four evangelical histories, and the Acts of the Apostles, nor considered them as under any divine influence; there is in the writings themselves, such an appearance of a thorough acquaintance with the times they lived in, and the transactions they wrote of, or referred to, of capacity, integrity, disinterestedness, conscientiousness, and fear of God, as might gain them at least equal credit, with any history that ever was wrote. I cannot read over the history of the Acts of the Apostles, let it have been written by Luke, or by whomsoever, without some astonishment of the slight put upon it, and the suspicions raised against it by this author; and yet the introduction to it, the style and manner of it, together with the unanimous voice of antiquity, leave me not the least room to doubt of its having the same author, whose gospel bears the name of St. Luke.

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There is certainly as shrewd a judgment to be made, of the capacity and credibility of an author, by his writings, as of that of a neighbour or acquaintance, by his known character, and it is not easy for another to alter or adulterate an author, without leaving some vestiges of the fraud, but especially when innumerable copies have been early taken, and early dispersed into different and very distant countries. Most of the apostles, the appointed eye-witnesses of our Saviour's resurrection and ascension into heaven, bore witness to the truth of these facts with uncommon presence of mind, to the very faces of the greatest and fiercest of the enemies of Christ, and under threatenings, scourgings, and actual martyrdom itself; as did also innumerable others, who had received these accounts at first hand from their mouths.

Page 355—366. It is objected by this author, "That the persons Christ appeared to, after his resurrection, did not know him. He appeared in different forms. Their eyes were holden that they should not know him, and opened that they might know him," &c.

Though the author makes three distinct objections of these, and with his usual insinuations, parades about them for eleven pages together, yet they all relate to one, and the same simple fact. It is said by St. Mark xvi. 12. *He appeared to two of his disciples in another form.* By St. Luke, on the same occasion, *that their eyes were holden that they should not know him, i. e.* by the different form or appearance, either of his dress or countenance, or both, which he had thought

thought fit, for a little while, to assume, that he might have an opportunity of opening and explaining to them the ancient prophecies concerning his death which had affected them, and his resurrection which had surprised them greatly, before he gave them ocular demonstration of the latter. Having done that, he threw off the disguise, whatever it was, and appeared to their thereby opened eyes, in his own proper person, to their entire satisfaction, and appeared again and again to them afterwards, without any such previous introduction, conversing most freely with them and the other apostles, not to mention again, the more than five hundred disciples who saw him at once.

Whether St. Paul had ever seen him before his crucifixion, is uncertain, but that he saw him afterwards, we have his own word for it, who was most likely to know, and whose word, I think, may be taken. "It could not be in his way to Damascus (argues this author) because when a great light from heaven shone round about him, he was struck blind by it." But he certainly saw this light before he was struck blind by it, and if he saw the light, he might see Jesus at the same time, surrounded by it, who told him who he was; *I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest, &c.* Ananias refers to this, when he says to Paul, *The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest bear the voice of his mouth; for thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.* Acts xxii. 14, 15. What if this is a nameless historian, who

who relates this? He appears to be an honest and a sensible one, and to have been a companion of St. Paul in many of his travels, as well as St. Luke.

SECTION V.

The author's reasoning about a future state, and day of judgment, leaves the matter, after all, in as great obscurity as before, or rather more so. Upon his principles I should certainly argue with St. Paul, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.* I do not mean, nor did St. Paul mean, let us do it to excess, so as to shorten life or impair health, any more than expose ourselves to fatigue, persecution, sufferings of various kinds, and untimely death, by doing ill-received good offices to an ungrateful world. What pleasure did it give this author to think he had hit another blot in St. Paul? See p. 404.

This writer hesitates in his opinion, whether the soul is not the body modified in a peculiar manner; or, if really distinct from the body, whether it may not be as perishable as the body at death. I satisfy myself with the scripture account, which in itself is as probable as any other, viz. *That then the dust shall return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it. That our life is hid (or laid up safe) with Christ in God, and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.* To me it seems impossible for us, mortals, to know any thing satisfactorily of a resurrection from the dead and a future state, but by supernatural *revelation.* Nor can I conceive

ceive any more proper way whereby God Almighty might have revealed this to us than as he has done it in the gospel. But some men still err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God, *i. e.* not rightly understanding them.

*Remarks on Vol. II. Sect. VI. concerning
Divine Revelation.*

The author asserts, p. 5. " That we have no way to distinguish, with certainty, *divine* revelation from delusion."

How far he carries his idea of *certainty*, I know not. Our absolutely *certain* knowledge lies in a very little compass. The wisest men act, and must act and believe too, upon high degrees of probability, or they must act and believe scarce any thing. And he who, by our very constitution, has laid us under this necessity, will not suffer us to be deceived hereby to our great disadvantage. Now we certainly may distinguish, with great degrees of probability, betwixt divine revelation and delusion. If Moses, for instance, saw a bush on fire, and not consumed, and on his near approach to it, heard a voice from the midst of it, calling to him by name, and saying, *I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; I have seen the affliction of my people, and am come down to deliver them, &c.* could he avoid regarding this as a divine revelation, especially when, according to the assurances then given him, he was afterwards impowered to work so many astonishing miracles publickly

publickly before Pharaoh and all Egypt? Would not this confirm himself in this belief? And when, upon the Israelites' flight, and the Egyptians' pursuit of them, a pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night, conducted the Israelites; and when the Egyptians were upon the point of overtaking and falling upon them, removed, and placed itself betwixt the two camps, a cloud and darkness to the one, and a light by night to the other, so that the one came not near the other all the night; when, at Moses's stretching forth his rod at God's command, the sea retired, and gave the Israelites a safe passage, and returned at the like signal upon the Egyptians, and overwhelmed them; could any of the *Israelites*, any more than Moses, doubt whether the hand of God was in all this? When the solemn feast of the passover had been instituted, and was, with other festivals, annually observed by that whole people, great and small, in all their families from generation to generation, in express memory of these things; could any succeeding generation of that people ever doubt of God's appearing, as he is said to do, to Moses, and giving him commission to do what he did? When the apostles, after our Saviour's ascension, found themselves on a sudden impowered to speak a variety of different languages, and restore the use of limbs to a man, lame from his mother's womb, in consequence of their master's promise to them; could they possibly doubt of the divine influence? Or could those innumerable persons who, being assembled from distant countries of different languages, heard them
them

them speak intelligibly in all their different tongues the wonderful works of God, who saw these cures performed, and, perhaps, upon joining themselves to them, were many of them soon after made to partake of some or other of these miraculous gifts; could they possibly look upon all this as delusion? And as for the *visions* and *dreams*, this author treats with such contempt, is it impossible for God, the Father of our spirits, to make such extraordinary impressions on the human mind, either sleeping or waking, as shall effectually convince the inspired person from whence it comes? Can one man communicate any thing to another man to the satisfaction of that other person, from whom it was that he received the information; and shall we deny that power to the Almighty Mind? And when these divine revelations have been communicated to others, and repeatedly, and punctually answered by actual events foretold in this way; those other persons will have a moral certainty, *i. e.* a sufficient probability of their having been divine revelations and not delusions, and, consequently, that the person who foretold them was not deceived or a deceiver, but a true prophet.

“ But the Jewish revelation, (says this writer) “ in several of its branches will, by no means, comport with God’s moral character, “ which character must not be given up.” P. 16.

No, by no means; let God be true, and every man a liar. But what if rash and fallible men mistake this revelation, as well as the gospel revelation? Many things may *seem* foolish, unjust,

or

or unkind, which are in reality neither, but the reverse of all these. I might instance, in many events of providence, which have therefore been imputed by some men, to an evil being. I have before considered the instances that are here again produced, against the wisdom and equity of the Jewish dispensation, and cannot but think them very reconcileable to infinite wisdom, and paternal goodness; and if there were any other instances, I could not so easily reconcile, would impute it to my own ignorance of some circumstances, rather than give up all divine revelation, or even the Jewish. These very wise men, are not apt to entertain a suspicion of this kind, of themselves; as much as they affect the character of Free Thinkers, they seem to be in as narrow and contracted a way of thinking and interpreting scripture, as the most rigid Calvinists, and sometimes take up with their very interpretations on purpose to disparage the scriptures, as this author has done in several places of this his Farewell. *Who can by searching find out God, who can understand the Almighty unto perfection?* His ways, and his thoughts, are as much above ours, as the heaven is above the earth; his wisdom and his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways, many of them, at least, past finding out. The seeming irregular retrograde motions of the heavenly bodies, once puzzled the natural philosophers, as much as these scripture-difficulties do some of our moral ones. Mr. Ferguson has observed concerning one of the former. "He might, perhaps, be at
" a loss to find out the true cause of these in-
" equalities

“ equalities (the retrograde motions of the
 “ planets) especially if he were one of those
 “ who would rather (with the greatest justice)
 “ charge frail man with ignorance, than the
 “ Almighty with being the author of such con-
 “ fusion.” What confusion of *cycles* upon *cycles*
 did these philosophers once invent, to the dis-
 grace of the admirable works of nature, rather
 than appear ignorant of any thing! As later
 improvements in astronomy have given a satis-
 factory solution of these difficulties, so may fu-
 ture improvements in our divinity as satisfacto-
 rily solve the other. But these writers would
 give a check to all such improvements by re-
 presenting their own *system* as already perfect,
 and every thing which does not tally with it, as
 false, absurd, ridiculous, and unworthy of seri-
 ous examination.

How unfair this writer is, appears every
 where, in that, while he will admit of nothing
 on the opposite side, but the most absolute *cer-
 tainty*, he satisfies himself with, and palms upon
 his reader the slightest, *seeming*, presumptuous,
 fancied probability, and mere suspicion on his
 own side of the question. “ As to the signs and
 “ wonders, &c. (says he) said to have attended
 “ the people of Israel in Egypt, the Wilderness,
 “ &c. as these facts may have taken place, so
 “ the case may have been otherwise, seeing the
 “ credit of these relations rests principally, if
 “ not wholly, upon the authority of that single
 “ history. The Jews, from their settlement in
 “ Canaan, to David's time, *seem* to have been an
 “ ignorant, unactive people, and as it does not
 N^o 3. Vol. III. A a “ appear,

“ appear, nor is there the least ground for pre-
 “ suming they had copies of their history put
 “ into their hands, so the enlarging, curtail-
 “ altering, or corrupting of that history *might*
 “ easily have been done.”

That copies could not be so common as if printing had then been found out, I allow. But copies they certainly had, besides that which was laid up as a sacred treasure in the house of God at Jerusalem (which probably was the original autograph.) The Samaritans had the Pentateuch before the separation of the Ten Tribes, and there might be, and no doubt were, several other copies of the law both amongst the Samaritans and the Jews, though they might be by too much neglected and forgot, through the corruption of the times. However, their various festivals were a constant universal history of these remarkable facts, which their very children read, as it was designed they should; as appears from the very institution of the passover in particular, Exod. xii. 26. *And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, &c.*

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

PAULINUS has advanced a great number of objections, or scruples at least, concerning St. Paul's way of reasoning and quoting, or alluding to passages in the Old Testament,

ment, most of which, I apprehend, have been already answered or obviated by some or other learned advocates for divine revelation, particularly Mr. Pierce of Exeter; to whose writings I beg leave to refer him, in answer to his Remarks on Heb. i. 5, 6, and 10--12. That learned writer thought these words, *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son,* refer to a prophecy of Nathan to David, 1 Chron. xvii. 4—14. and though there be an expression to the same purpose, with a small alteration, in the 22d and 28th chapters, *He shall be my son, and I will be his father*; yet they were two distinct prophecies, delivered at a considerable distance of time the one from the other. In the former, the word of the Lord came unto Nathan. In the latter, the word of the Lord came unto David himself. In the former the Messiah is intended, for it is said to David, *And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, &c. I will be his father, and he shall be my son.* Whereas his immediate son Solomon, who is intended in the sacred prophecy, was set up in his father's lifetime. How came the Messiah to be generally stiled by the Jews, *the son of David*, but from their thus understanding this prophecy?

The same learned writer supposes the changing the foundations which God had anciently laid of the earth and the heavens, to intend his transferring the government of the world and of the church from the ministry of angels to that of Jesus Christ, who should be head over them and angels too; and why may not the whole second

Pſalm be, as he ſuppoſes, prophetic of Chriſt and his reign, though poſſibly the inſpired penman might not himſelf thoroughly underſtand the meaning of it, any more than Daniel that of ſome of his prophecies? The ancient Jews ſo underſtood it, although the later Jews interpret it otherwiſe, leſt the chriſtians ſhould avail themſelves of it. Dr. Sykes, indeed, thinks the *people* of Iſrael are here ſpoken of under the title of *God's ſon*, and yet juſtifies the apoſtle's alluſion. Mr. Pierce's account ſeems moſt ſatisfactory to me, as well as what he ſays upon thoſe words, *Let all the angels of God worſhip him*, or become ſubject to him; perhaps all theſe Pſalms from the 90th to the 100th, incluſive, might be ſongs of Moſes, the man of God, ſeveral of them, however, ſeem prophetic of the goſpel times, and of the calling of the Gentiles.

As to PAULINUS's next objection againſt St. Paul's argument, from ſome expreſſions in the ſong of Moſes, Deutr. xxxii. When I read that admirable prophetic ſong, together with the preceding chapter; with what ſolemnity it is introduced, and by the divine authority ordered to be penned, and taught to all the people and their children after them, ſo as *never* to be forgotten out of the mouths of their *ſeed*, but to be a ſtanding witneſs againſt them, when variety of evils and troubles ſhould befall them, for all their foreſeen and foretold backſlidings: I can never imagine that this awful prophecy had no farther view than to their ſucceeding wars with the Canaanites, and at laſt their captivities in Aſſyria and Chaldea, but muſt, I think, extend to the remotest remains of that people as
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a distinct people, and particularly take in their last dreadful overthrow and national extirpation by the Romans, which so remarkably answered to the 25th and 26th verses, *The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy the young man and the virgin, the suckling also, and the man of gray hairs. I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from amongst men; were it not, &c.* The Hebrews themselves, to whom this epistle was wrote, could not, I think, but see this prophecy as extending to all generations of them, and therefore could have no objection against this writer's applying some part of it to circumstances then present; nor, in this light, is there any impropriety in that pathetic exclamation, which follows in 29th and 30th verses: *O! that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end,* (which, in scripture language, signifies *their very distant generations*) *how should one chase a thousand, &c.*

I can see nothing so surprizing, nothing so incompatible, as PAULINUS represents it, in the blessing of Abraham coming upon the Gentiles, or their being taken into the same gracious covenant with him, *under the notion of a promised blessing to him,* and an acceptable event to all his believing, benevolent offspring; and yet the same event proving a *curse* and stumbling block, and being prophetically threatened as a *punishment*, to such of his degenerate posterity, as out of envy should reject, and cut themselves off from this covenant, because they disdained to partake of it in common with their heathen neighbours. Notwithstanding

this, that the generality of the Jews were disgusted, some of them, very probably, at that very time might be induced hereby, as St. Paul expected, to embrace the gospel. Nor is it at all unreasonable to expect, if the christian religion should recover its primitive purity, and be therein exhibited and universally received in the world, and the Jews so long continue a distinct people, that, struck with such an event, and wearied out with their so long fruitless expectations, they should at last embrace the christian faith, as St. Paul seems to have foretold they will.

PAULINUS seems to think " St. Paul a little off his guard when he said, Heb. ix. 22. that " without shedding of blood there is no remission; " for, in the Old Testament, and even in the " books of Moses themselves, we frequently " read of sins being forgiven, and even of atone- " ment being made where there was no blood " shed or required." See Repository, vol. I. p. 201, 202. But does not St. Paul really appear to be upon his guard, even against this very objection, by saying, *almost* all things are by the law purified with blood? and *remission* in the latter part of the sentence means the same, as *purged* or purging in the former part, and respects the very same things; a sacrifice, the shedding of blood, and taking away life, seems anciently to have been a common and very material appendage, or concomitant of a covenant betwixt God and man. The question is, How came it into this, or any other use? CLEMENS has given an ingenious and plausible account, I confess, in the

the number referred to; but, with all due deference, I would observe, that the sacrifice which righteous Abel offered to God, seems to me of too early a date to owe its original to the cause there assigned, and too expressly acceptable to God, not to have been of his own appointing, perhaps to Adam immediately after the fall, though not mentioned in the very short history we have of that time, *God made them coats of skins*, Gen. iii. 21. What skins must these be, unless of beasts? and what must these beasts be slain for, if not for some farther purpose, than merely to supply our first parents with more commodious garments than fig-leaves; might it not be, by the letting out of blood, and with it the life of these creatures, to shew them what *death* was, that immediate and violent death which they had deserved for their disobedience, to be a sign or token of that mercy he shewed to them in sparing them, perhaps of that covenant or promise he made to them and their posterity, that *the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head*, and why not to shadow out the future death and sacrifice of Christ, by which, instead of the tree of life, from which they were now excluded, they and theirs might yet obtain *eternal life* in a future world, without a divine appointment? I cannot imagine how Adam or Abel, either should think of taking away the life of a lamb, or any other innocent creature; or for what use; they could scarce think so early of feeding upon it themselves, much less, then, of it being food for God, or more acceptable to him roasted than raw, dead than alive; the Hea-
then

then sacrifices seem to me much more likely to have taken their rise from these, than these from them.

Supposing Psalm viii. 3—8, to mean no more than the dominion God gave to Adam, at the creation, over all the inferior creatures here on earth; I see no absurdity or impropriety in the apostle's taking occasion from hence, to shew that the man Christ Jesus, *who by the grace of God tasted death for every man*, is actually exalted to a larger and more honourable *dominion*, even over angels. But I leave this and PAULINUS's following remarks (at least for the present) to what has been offered on the several subjects by former writers, or what may be farther suggested by some abler hand, than that of

Gentlemen,

Your hitherto indulged humble servant,

December 3, 1771.

W. W.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

It gives me particular pleasure to find, that the subject of the Pre-existence of Christ is in the way of being fairly and candidly discussed by your correspondents. If you think the following observations will be worth the notice either of the Arians or Socinians, I shall hope to see them inserted in your Repository.

I am, &c.

LIBERIUS.

General observations *tending to prove that Christ had no existence before his incarnation, and an explanation of some of the most considerable of those texts of scripture, which have been thought to favour the contrary opinion.*

THE Socinian Hypothesis is thought to have the advantage over the Arian with respect to *arguments of a general nature*, or such as are derived from general views of the christian scheme, by persons who cannot think that it is favoured by the most obvious sense of some passages of scripture. I shall, therefore, beg leave to lay before your readers, such observations as have occurred to me, for illustrating several of those texts. But as we ought never to lose sight of general arguments, when we are considering the meaning of *particular texts*, I shall introduce them with reciting a few of such arguments, as have had the greatest weight with me in my reflections upon the subject.

The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, one of whose principal objects was to reconcile the Jews to the thoughts of a suffering Messiah, seems to make use of arguments which necessarily suppose Christ to have been a man like ourselves; as when he says, Heb. ii. 9. *We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.* In this passage, the apostle seems to consider Christ as a *man*, in direct opposition to created beings of a *superior nature*, or *angels*, under which denomination Christ himself must have been ranked, according to the phraseology of
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of scripture, if he had existed prior to his becoming man; since no other term is made use of, to denote his nature and constitution, as distinct from that of men and angels. With this view he applies to Christ, that authority and dominion which is ascribed to man, as distinguished from angels by the Psalmist, as v. 5. *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one, in a certain place, testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou visitest him. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thine hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.* As in this passage, he plainly considers the nature of man as properly characterized by his being *a little lower than the angels*, and he applies the very same expression to Christ, without giving the least hint of any distinction between them. I cannot help thinking, that in the apostle's idea, the nature of both was precisely the same.

It is also remarkable, that this same writer speaks of Christ as distinguished from angels, when he says, i. 9. *That God had anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, by which, therefore, in this connection, I do not see how we can help understanding, his *fellow men*, or *fellow prophets*.

This writer seems also to lay particular stress on Christ's having *felt* as we feel, and having been *tempted* as we are tempted; and that, for this purpose, it was necessary that he should be,

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in all respects, what we ourselves are, ii. 11, &c. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren—and children, v. 13, 14. Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same. And again, v. 17. Wherefore, in all things, it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, v. 18. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Now I cannot help thinking, from these passages, that the apostle had an idea of Christ being much more what we are, and consequently of his feeling more as we do, than he could have meant, upon the supposition of his having been of an angelic, or superangelic nature. For then, the views that he had of his sufferings, and consequently his feelings under them, must have been exceedingly dissimilar to ours. And every argument that the apostle uses, to shew the impropriety of Christ's being an angel, seems to weigh much more against his being of a nature superior to angels.

If it be supposed that, upon becoming an inhabitant of this world, Christ lost all consciousness of his former pre-existent state, I do not see of what use his superior powers could possibly have been to him; or, which comes to the same thing, what occasion there was for such a being in the business. Besides, the hypothesis of an intelligent being, thinking and acting in one state, and losing all remembrance of what he had been

been and done in another, has something in it that looks so arbitrary and unnatural, that one would not have recourse to it, but upon the most urgent necessity.

It should seem, however, that if Christ did pre-exist, it was not unknown to him in this world, since one of the strongest arguments for that hypothesis is his praying, that *his father would glorify him with the glory which he had with him before the world was.* John xvii. 5. But if Christ did retain a perfect consciousness of his former state, and consequently retained all the *powers*, and all the *knowledge* of which he was possessed, in that state, I have no idea of such an *increase in wisdom* as the evangelist Luke ascribes to him, when he says, ii. 52. *And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.* In the idea of this evangelist, Jesus certainly made such improvements in knowledge, as other well-disposed youths make; so that I think he had manifestly no other idea of him.

Similar to the abovementioned reasoning of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, is that of the apostle John, or rather that of Christ himself, John v. 27. *And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man;* for I do not see the force of this inference, unless the meaning of it be, that Christ, being a man like ourselves, having felt as we feel, and having been tempted and tried as we have, is the most unexceptionable of all judges. No man can complain of it, since it is being judged, as it were, by our *peers*, and by a person who
knows

knows how to make every proper allowance for us.

Some may possibly lay stress on its being said, by the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, in the passage abovementioned, that Christ himself *took* flesh and blood, as if it had depended upon his own choice, whether he would become a man or not, which implies a pre-existent state. But the word *μετεχω* is used for *partaking*, or *sharing in*, absolutely, without any respect to choice, and is used in that sense in two other passages of this epistle, viz. v. 13. vii. 13. The apostle speaks of *the propriety of the divine designation*, not of the motive of Christ's election. Also in other places, he is represented as *passive* with respect to the same event. Thus, in the ninth verse of the same chapter, it is said that *Jesus was made a little lower than the angels*, and not that *he made himself lower*, or condescended.

It is said, v. 16. That *Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham*. But *επιλαμβανομαι*, which is the word here used, properly signifies, and is in every other place, in the New Testament, rendered to *lay hold upon*. In this place, therefore, the meaning of it probably is, that Christ did not (after he appeared in the character of the Messiah) lay hold upon, so as to *interpose in the favour of*, or *rescue* angels, but the seed of Abraham; and then we see that the apostle infers that there was a necessity, or at least an exceeding great propriety, that a Mediator for men should be, in all respects, a man; for he immediately adds, *Therefore, in all things, it behoved him*

him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, &c.

Indeed, there appears to me to be a most evident propriety that a person who acted so important a part with respect to mankind, as Christ did, who was sent to be our instructor and example, and especially who came to ascertain the great doctrine of a resurrection from the dead, should be, with respect to his nature, the very same that we ourselves are; that he might exhibit before us a pattern of proper *human virtue*, and especially that he might die as we ourselves die, and his resurrection be the resurrection of a man like ourselves; and so the proper *first fruits from the dead*, and consequently of the very *same kind* with those of which the *general harvest* will consist, and thereby give us the greater reason to hope, that because *Christ lives we shall live also*.

It is evident, that the most intelligent of the Jews expected nothing more than a mere man for their Messiah; nor can it be said that any of the ancient prophecies give us the least hint of any thing farther. Had the prophecies not been explicit, there seems to have been the greatest reason why our Lord, or his apostles, should have expressly observed that they were so; or if they had been universally misunderstood, or perverted, we might expect that this should have been noticed by our Lord, as well as other abuses and mistakes which prevailed in his time. Or, if a discovery of so great importance would have staggered the faith; or checked the freedom of the disciples of our Lord,
when

when they were fully apprized of the transcendent greatness of the person whom they had considered as a man only like themselves, we might have expected that this great discovery would have been made to them when their minds were fully enlightened, by the descent of the Holy Ghost, or at some other time, when they were instructed in all things relating to the religion they had to teach. And whenever the revelation of a thing so highly *interesting*, and *unexpected*, as this must have been, had been made to them, their wonder and surprize must have been such, as we should have found some traces or intimations of in their writings.

Nor can it be supposed that a thing of so wonderful a nature as this, could have been announced to the body of Christians, who certainly had not, at first, the most remote idea of such a thing, without exciting an astonishment that could not have been concealed, and such speculations and debates as we must have heard of. And yet the apostles, and the whole Christian world, are supposed to have passed from a state of absolute ignorance concerning the nature of their Lord and master (regarding him in the familiar light of a friend and brother) to the full conviction of his being the most glorious of all created natures; him by whom God originally made, and constantly supported all things, without leaving any intimations by which it is possible for us to learn, in what manner so wonderful a communication was made

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to them, or of the effects that it had on their own minds, or those of others.

At whatever time it be supposed that the apostles were first apprized of the superangelic nature of their master, it might be expected, that so very material a change in their conceptions concerning him, would have been attended with a correspondent change in their language, when they spoke of him; and yet, through the whole book of Acts he has hardly any other appellation than simply that of *a man*. Thus the apostle Peter calls him, Acts ii. 22. *A man approved of God*; and the apostle Paul, Acts xvii. 31. *The man whom God ordained*. Nor when we may must certainly conclude that the apostles meant to speak of him in his *highest capacity*, do they give him any other title; as when the apostle Paul says, 1. Tim. ii. 5. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, THE MAN Christ Jesus*. Now had this Mediator between God and man been of a *middle nature* between God and man, I think one might have expected some positive declaration of it in this or some such place; and that the apostle would not have expressed himself in a manner so very unguarded, and which, without some explanation, must necessarily lead his readers into a very great mistake. It is in vain, however, that we look through the whole New Testament for any thing like such an express declaration, or explanation on the subject; and a doctrine of this extraordinary a nature is only deduced by way of inference from casual expressions.

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• It is also with me a very strong presumption against the Arian hypothesis, that no *use* is made, by the writers of the New Testament, of so extraordinary a fact, as that of the union of a superangelic spirit with the body of a man. No argument or exhortation is ever grounded upon it; whereas it might have been expected, that so very wonderful a thing as this must have been alluded to, and argued from, in a great variety of respects; and especially that the first converts to christianity should have been frequently, and very distinctly informed of the high rank of their master; especially as the great popular objection to the christian scheme was the mean birth and obscurity of its author, and the disgraceful treatment he met with in the world. The very few texts in which it is thought by some that arguments are drawn from the pre-existent state of Christ, appear to me to refer to nothing more than the dignity with which he was invested as *Messiah*, after he was *sent of God*, and endued with power from on high, for the important purposes of his mission.

It weighs much with me, that if so very extraordinary a thing as the descent of a superangelic spirit, to animate a human body, had been true, it must have appeared, in the course of the history of Christ, that such an extraordinary measure was necessary; as by his acting a part which a mere man was either naturally incapable of, or in which there was an obvious impropriety for a mere man to act. But so far are we from perceiving any thing of this in the evangelical history, that nothing is exhibited to

us in it, but the appearance of *a man approved of God*, and *assisted* by him. For, though no man could have done what he is said to have done, unless God had been with him, yet, with that assistance, every thing must have been easy to him.

If our Lord had in himself, though derived originally from God, any extraordinary degree of wisdom, or peculiar ability of any other kind, for carrying on the work of man's redemption, above the measure or capacity of that nature which God has given to man, he would hardly have declared so frequently, and so expressly as he does, that *of his own self he could do nothing*, that *the words which he spake were not his own*, but *his Father's who sent him*, and that *his Father within him did the works*. This is certainly the proper language of a person who is possessed of no more natural advantage than any other man. If he had any superior powers, abstracted from what he derived from the immediate agency of God, in what do they appear?

So solicitous does the Divine Being always appear that his *rational* offspring, mankind, should understand, and approve of his proceedings respecting them, that there is hardly any measure which he has adopted, that is of much moment to us, for which some plain reason is not assigned, by one or other of the sacred writers. Indeed, this is a circumstance that cannot but contribute greatly to the efficacy of such measures. But though, I believe, every other circumstance relating to the scheme of redemption is clearly revealed to us, yet we neither find any

any reason assigned for so important a preliminary to it, as the *incarnation* of the first of all created beings, nor are we any where given to understand, that this *was* a necessary preliminary to it, though the reasons for it were such, as we could not comprehend. A conduct so exceedingly dark and mysterious as this, has no example in the whole history of the dispensations of God to mankind.

It has often been observed, and I cannot but think very justly, that the uniform scripture doctrine of the present and future dignity of Christ, being conferred as the reward of his services and sufferings on earth, is peculiarly favourable to the idea of his being a man only; and I think the Arians are obliged to strain very hard in order to make out any material difference between the pre-existent and present state of Christ; or to explain the nature of his *reward*, of which so striking an account is always given, if there be no material difference between these two states.

Lastly; How it may affect others I cannot tell, but with me it is a very great objection to the notion of the pre-existence of Christ, that it favours strongly of the oriental doctrine of the pre-existence of all human souls, which was the foundation of the Gnostic heresy, and the source of great corruption in genuine christianity. For if the soul of one man might have pre-existed, separate from the body, why might not the soul of another, or of all? Nay, analogy seems to require that the whole species be upon the same footing, in a case which so very nearly concerns the first and constituent principles of their nature. Besides, the opinion of the sepa-

rability of the thinking part of a man from his bodily frame, even after he comes into the world, is so far from being agreeable to the phenomena of human nature, that it is almost expressly contradicted by all of them. For every thing that we see of man demonstrates that his capacity for thinking depends upon the state of his brain. It is injured when this is injured; it is obstructed when this is obstructed; it is suspended in a state of sound sleep, and therefore may be fairly presumed to be more effectually suspended, and intirely to cease, when, together with the rest of the body, this most elaborate part of the system also shall be dissolved. Agreeably to this, it appears to me to have been clearly proved by Dr. Law and others, that after death there is not, upon the genuine christian scheme, any life or hope till the resurrection; and that, in the mean time, true christians *sleep in Jesus*, and that *their life is hid with Christ in God*; so that *when Christ who is their life shall appear*, and not before, *they also shall appear with him in glory*. The contrary notion has manifestly been the foundation of the doctrine of purgatory, and of other gross corruptions of the christian scheme.

Notwithstanding these, and other general arguments, it must be acknowledged that there are particular passages in the New Testament, which it is not easy for us, whose phraseology is so very different from that of the Jews, to reconcile to the Socinian hypothesis; as, indeed, there are particular texts, which it is difficult to reconcile to *any* hypothesis. A regard to these texts kept
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me a long time attached to the Arian scheme; and after that, I was still a considerable time in a state of wavering and uncertainty between the two opinions; *general arguments* inclining me to the one, and *particular texts* to the other. From a more attentive view, however, of these texts, I am now fully satisfied that I had conceived a wrong notion of their genuine sense, and that the ideas which I had always been accustomed to affix to them, were not such as a Jew or a Greek, for whose use the books of the New Testament were written, would affix to them; and if you will indulge me, as you have hitherto done, I will very freely explain to your readers what appears to me to be the genuine sense of several passages of scripture on which the Arians have laid much stress, in the controversy that has arisen upon this subject.

It is remarkable that the same texts affect different persons very differently, and even the same person, at different times, so that what appeared difficult to me may have appeared tolerably easy to others. I shall, however, endeavour to explain those which generally appeared the most unaccountable to myself; viz. those in which Christ is represented as coming into the world, and leaving it again, especially John xvi. 28. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; and, again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.*

From the first view of this passage any person would conclude, that Christ must have been with the Father before he came into this material world, as really and properly as he was with the Father after he left the world. And so I would still

understand it, using the term *world* in a sense different from that abovementioned; but sufficiently authorized by the scriptures, and even in passages exactly similar to this. It is evident that the word here used, $\kappa\omicron\sigma\mu\textcircled{\text{C}}$, does not always signify the world at large, or this part of the material system; but that it is likewise used in several restrained senses. More especially by the world is often meant the world considered only as a *scene of business, exercise, and trial*. Nay we ourselves familiarly use the same word in that sense; as when we say a man has *not seen the world*, or been *in the world*, though, in fact, he has lived a long time in it.

Also, by the *world*, in the scriptures, we are often to understand *the wicked and profligate part of mankind*, who are in it; in opposition to the virtuous and the good, who, with respect to them, are considered as *not of the world*, or not making any part of it. *The world sees me no more, but ye see me*, John xiv. 19; *The world will hate you*, xv. 18; *I pray not for the world*, xvii. 9; *The world knoweth us not*, 1 John iii. 1.

Now in these senses of the word, Christ did not come into the world till he engaged in his public ministry; and accordingly, when his ministry was ended, he may be said to have left the world, though he still continued to reside in this part of the material system. Indeed, unless we do use the word in this sense, or in some other that is similar to it, it is impossible to interpret, consistently with truth, our Lord's saying, *I am no more in the world*; for after his ascension he
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was seen, if not by Stephen, at least by Paul: and he has promised that he will be with his disciples to the end of the world. There is no doubt, therefore, but that he is still an inhabitant of the world, as much as ever he was, attending to the interests of his church, and of mankind. Besides, the notion of a *local heaven*, somewhere above the clouds, and at a great distance from the earth, is altogether fanciful, and inconsistent with reason and philosophy.

Since, therefore, Christ did not leave the *earth* at the time that he is said to have left the *world*, but was only discharged from his state of exercise and trial, there is no occasion to suppose that he existed in any other place before he is said to have been *sent into the world*. We are only to consider him as at that time entering on his state of exercise and trial.

This interpretation, also, exactly corresponds to what our Saviour says concerning his disciples. *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I, also, sent them into the world.* John xvii. 18. The apostles, therefore, are to be considered as not having been in the world, in our Saviour's sense, till he sent them into it; in the same manner as he himself was not properly in the world, till God gave him his commission to preach in it. Since the mission of Christ and his apostles are, in this place, expressly said to have been similar, there can be no reason to suppose that one of them pre-existed, more than the other.

In this manner the passage above quoted appears to me to be perfectly consistent with the
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belief that Christ had no being before he was born of the Virgin Mary, though it is very possible that, had this interpretation, which appears so satisfactory to me now, been suggested to me some years ago, I should have thought it a very unnatural one. But we should not hastily reject an interpretation of a text of scripture because it appears unnatural on the first view; since what we fancy to be contrary to *reason*, may only be contrary to a long established *prejudice* and prepossession; and I doubt not but that every person, who has studied the scriptures, can recollect several instances of his perfectly acquiescing now in such a sense of particular texts, as appeared very unnatural to him sometime ago. The Roman Catholics, no doubt, think it very unnatural to explain the words *This is my body*, in any other than in the most literal sense.

When the general strain of any discourse is manifestly figurative, it is natural to expect that the whole should be of a piece; and to interpret one part literally, and another part figuratively, is most likely to spoil the genuine sense of the whole, and especially if the passage in question be introduced as something not easy to be understood.

The discourse of our Lord with Nicodemus is throughout highly figurative. Whatever reason our Lord might have for adopting such a style on that occasion, it is plain that this Ruler of the Jews was exceedingly staggered by our Lord's saying to him, that *he must be born again*. When Nicodemus replied to all that he thought proper

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to say upon the subject, *How can these things be*, our Lord says, John iii. 10. *Art thou a Master of Israel, and knowest not these things*; and v. 12. *If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things.* After this introduction, we are naturally led to expect, that what follows should be something peculiarly difficult to understand, and so it must certainly have been to Nicodemus. It is this, v. 13. *No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven.* Now to suppose that Christ had actually been in a local heaven, at a distance from the earth, to which he was to return again, would make that part of the verse very intelligible; and the latter part, *who is in heaven*, may possibly be an explanatory clause, written first in the margin (denoting that this event had then come to pass, Christ being actually in heaven) and afterwards inserted in the text. But the whole language will be figurative, and still have a just and proper meaning, if it be understood of Christ's being peculiarly qualified to instruct mankind in things of a heavenly nature, on account of his maintaining the most intimate communion with his heavenly Father, even while he was on earth; the peculiar presence of God making a heaven in any place.

It is possible that by these words our Lord might intend, by a short allusive and elliptical mode of speaking, to remind Nicodemus of those words of Moses, Deut. xxx. 11. 14. and to intimate, that none but himself, who had received a special commission for that purpose, could reveal the
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mind and will of God. The evangelist himself seems to allude to this saying of his master, and to express the sense in which he understood it, ch: i. 18. *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son (which is in the bosom of the Father) he hath declared him.*

That long discourse of Christ's, of which we have an account in the sixth chapter of the gospel of John, is also throughout highly figurative. It was so much so, that not only a great number of the Jews, but even most of his disciples, except the twelve, were offended, and left him upon it. The multitude, to which this discourse was addressed, were those who had followed him on account of his miraculous feeding of them; and it is not improbable but that our Lord might intend by it to separate those who followed him from such sordid motives as these, from such as attended him for the sake of his instructions, and who would take pains to reflect upon, and endeavour to understand what he delivered. It is plain, however, that, in this discourse, he tried the attachment of his followers to the utmost, especially by his declaring, v. 53. *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* Perceiving that his disciples murmured at this saying, and at others of a similar nature, he says, v. 61. *Doth this offend you; what and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before.* Now, considering the figurative turn of the whole discourse, we should not expect that the conclusion of it, so introduced, would be a thing that was to be understood in its most obvious and literal sense.

sense. Taking it for granted, therefore, that there is something figurative in the expression, we may conjecture that Christ did not mean to say that he had literally been *above the clouds*, but only that he had been in the *councils of God*, which is generally supposed to be held above the clouds. And since, after the execution of this commission, he should give an account of it to him that sent him, he must again be in that peculiar presence of God, which constitutes heaven.

This language, I acknowledge, is rather harsh, but we may be the more reconciled to it, when we consider that Solomon used a similar expression, in a sense that is still more harsh, when he says, speaking of the consequence of death, Eccl. xii. 7. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it*; meaning, probably, not that the spirit should actually go to God, or even have any separate existence at all; but only that God would extinguish, or, figuratively speaking, *take away* that breath, or life, which he had given.

Perhaps the force of our Lord's expression may lie in the word *see*, *i. e.* as they had already had abundance of *rational* evidence that he came from God, so hereafter *ocular* demonstration should be exhibited to them, when they should *see* him ascend up to heaven; after which they could have no doubt of his having had communication with God, and having been sent of him.

Some

Some thoughts on the question, whether it be, in any case, supposeable, that an honest and impartial inquirer should resist the evidences of christianity.

In a letter to a friend, July 14, 1755. See Doddr. Lect. prop. 137. sect. 5 and 6.

D E A R S I R,

THOUGH there are certainly many fine strokes of satire in Dr. Young's *Centaur not fabulous*, in which he lashes, with equal justness and severity, that inordinate love of pleasure, which seems to be the characteristic of the present age; and though I doubt not but there is generally a very close connection between licentious practices, and licentious principles, as tending reciprocally to generate each other, "so that," as the Doctor observes, "whoever would reduce one, must strike at both;" yet I can hardly think they should both be attacked in the same manner; nor do I imagine, indeed, that the method he uses to make the infidel sensible of his errors, is likely to be attended with much success. "It is impossible," he says, "for a good man to reject an offered revelation, without inquiring into its title to the high character it assumes; and for a reasonable man to reject the christian revelation, if he does: consequently, he who continues a Deist, in a land enlightened by the gospel, must be wanting in goodness or reason; must be either criminal or dull." And he farther says, that "the lives of Deists cannot be good;
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“ so that they are both criminal and dull,” or, in other words, knaves and blockheads. This is, indeed, a very short and plain method of dealing with them ; but such peremptory assertions, unsupported by solid arguments, may, I should think, be justly called in question, by the friends, as well as the enemies of revelation ; and whatever kindness and charity may be the motive of his speaking thus plainly to them, I cannot have any higher opinion of his judgment and prudence, than the Reviewers themselves express in their account of this treatise, which you think so highly exceptionable. (See Month. Rev. for May 1755. p. 385, 6.)

Whether the writer of that article be well or ill affected to christianity, I shall not pretend to determine ; but for my own part I very sincerely declare, that the evidences of the christian revelation appear to me sufficiently strong and clear to be the foundation of a firm and rational belief. And though I have been often puzzled and perplexed with the objections of infidels, or with difficulties that have presented themselves to my own mind, yet seldom have I thought them of weight enough to counter-balance those positive proofs on which my faith is built. Nevertheless, as in numberless other cases, where much has been alledged on both sides of a complex and controverted subject, what appears very clear and certain to one, is seen in a quite different light by another, not less intelligent and honest ; so even here, satisfied as I am with the reasons of my own belief, I cannot take upon me to assert that they must appear equally satisfactory to every other

other person that is not either very weak or very wicked.

I am far, indeed, from esteeming the Deists a wiser generation than those good Christians whom they are very apt to despise for their credulity; and am persuaded that all freedom of thought is not ingrossed by those who are fond of distinguishing themselves by the title of Free-thinkers. Yet it must surely argue either great ignorance, or strong prejudice to deny, that several, usually ranked in this class, have been men of very considerable abilities; and it would perhaps be too rash to say, that none of them were ever sincere in their inquiries after truth. Of their moral characters I can say little or nothing, on my own knowledge, any farther than may be collected from their writings; in many of which there are but too evident marks of great unfairness, prevarication, falshood and malice. I know they are esteemed to be, in general, as loose in their morals as in their principles; nor can I help fearing, that they are mostly such as *love darkness better than light, because their deeds are evil*. Yet that all who reject the christian *revelation* must needs be bad men, and such as pay no regard to the obligations of *natural religion*, is more than I can think myself warranted to affirm.

On the contrary, when I consider the great difficulty of ascertaining the meaning and design of those O. T. prophecies, which are supposed to have been fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ; when I recollect the many lying wonders that have been palmed upon the
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world, under the notion of miracles, in every age (some of them, too, by persons of high repute for their sanctity) and how hard it is to lay down any certain criteria by which they may be distinguished from the true; when I think of those pious frauds that were impudently forged by some, and too easily received by others, even in the earliest ages of the church; of the high claims and pretensions that have been made by enthusiasts or impostors to divine inspiration and revelations, from time to time, and of the great spread of false religions, as well as of that which we esteem the true; it does not seem to me any way incredible that some wise and good minds, by attending too much to thoughts of this kind, may have imagined the external evidences of christianity to be so far invalidated thereby, as to deserve but little regard: though I really think them such as will stand the test of the closest examination and comparison.

I should, indeed, think it the likeliest and readiest way to convince a religious Deist of the truth of the gospel revelation, to begin with those internal evidences that are drawn from the purity of its morals; from the sublimity, usefulness, and efficacy of its doctrines, as conducive to our improvement in knowledge, and holiness, and to our advancement to eternal glory and felicity; from the unparalleled excellency and amiableness of our Saviour's character in every respect, and that most remarkable simplicity, and unshaken integrity, which his holy apostles manifested upon all occasions; from the admirable harmony of the several parts of
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the New Testament, and the general agreement of this last and best dispensation of religion with all the former, which are spoken of in the Old Testament, and appear to have been preparatory thereto. These are circumstances that render the religion of Jesus worthy of all acceptance; and seem strongly to point out its divine original: since it is certain that human wisdom never produced a system of religion and morality any way comparable to this; and without admitting the divine mission, instructions, and assistances of the author and publishers of christianity, there is nothing that can account for their so far excelling all the ages of antiquity, in their doctrine, precepts, and practice.

Such considerations as these should not surely be slighted by the advocates of Christianity; since they cannot fail to make strong impressions in its favour on all serious and well-disposed minds. But, indeed, it is by taking the internal and external evidences in their proper connection with each other, that they both appear to the greatest advantage; and, in this united view, they acquire such an additional force, as one would think sufficient to bear down all opposition. A religion so heavenly and divine in its nature, so advantageous and beneficial in its tendency, so suited to the state and condition, to the necessities and circumstances of mankind; was surely worthy to be introduced into the world, confirmed and propagated by some extraordinary interpositions of the deity in its behalf. And as, on the one hand, it is very certain that none could really perform such wonderful

derful works as are attributed to Christ and his apostles, unless God were with them of a truth; so on the other, it is not to be imagined, that persons of their character, who could be influenced in what they did, and taught, only by views, the most pious, benevolent, and sublime, should pretend to be furnished with supernatural gifts and powers, which they never actually possessed. Nor, indeed, is it at all supposable, that a religion so opposite to the lusts and prejudices of mankind, and which, in fact, met with the strongest opposition, very early, from the wit and learning, the power and policy of men, should gain so speedy and extensive a spread, if it had not been founded on the most undeniable facts, and confirmed by the most irresistible proofs, even by the demonstration of the spirit, and the evident exertions of a divine power, which every where accompanied the first preachers of the gospel, and gave a sufficient sanction even to its most peculiar doctrines.

On these, and such like grounds, I think, a christian's faith may very securely rest. Nevertheless, by those who consider them only in a partial and separate view, it is possible, their strength and solidity may be called in question. And it must be acknowledged, after all that has been said, concerning the reasonableness and excellency of that scheme of religion, contained in the writings of the New Testament, and of their general agreement with those of the Old, that there are abundance of difficulties to be met with in both, that have scarce ever been fully and satisfactorily solved. You are not un-

acquainted with those objections which have been made to the truth of the scriptures in general, from no inconsiderable number of apparent contradictions that are to be found therein ; and more especially to the divine authority of the Old Testament, from a variety of passages that are considered as either absurd or immoral ; and, notwithstanding all the pains that have been taken to remove them, you must own, that some of these objections are such as may still greatly perplex an inquisitive mind. And yet the vindication of these ancient records, is a matter of no small concern to the credit of the gospel, on account of their close, and, in several respects, inseparable connection therewith. Nor is the New Testament itself wholly free from objections of this nature. For though a great part of it is clear and intelligible enough, and the main tenor of its doctrines and precepts perfectly consistent with the dictates of our own understanding and conscience ; yet such is the obscurity of many passages, as seems naturally to have given rise to those numerous and mischievous controversies, which have distracted the minds of christians, and stirred up their animosity against each other in every age ; and it is well known that systems of doctrine most repugnant to reason, most dishonourable to God, and destructive to the great ends of all religion (such as could never be sufficiently warranted by any pretensions of a divine revelation, whatever credentials might be alledged for their support) have been built on a mistaken interpretation of various texts, which in their most obvious

ous sense might seem to favour them. Now though, by the labours of learned and judicious critics, many of the difficulties here hinted at have been sufficiently cleared up, and some thoughts suggested, which may, at least in a general way, account for those that still remain; and though since a more rational method of interpreting the scriptures has been introduced, they have been pretty well freed from the charge of countenancing those absurd, pernicious, and contradictory notions that have too commonly been fathered upon them; yet it is no wonder if some sincere inquirers after sacred truth, for want of being directed to the happiest method of pursuing their enquiries, have esteemed these difficulties unsurmountable, and the objections thence arising against the christian revelation, considerable enough to outweigh all the force of the opposite evidence.

My own experience of the embarrassments into which I have sometimes been plunged on this score, and the candid acknowledgements of far wiser and better men, of the strong temptations to infidelity, with which they have been assaulted (see particularly *Baxter's preface to his reasons of the Christian Religion*, and *Dr. Watts's solemn address to the Deity, on occasion of what he had written in the Trinitarian Controversy*) make me think it, at least possible, that some may have laboured under great doubts and uncertainties to the end of their lives, or even preferred religious Deism to christianity, especially in those corrupt or very imperfect forms under which it has too commonly been exhibited, and yet have

preserved so much sincerity of heart, and integrity of life, as not to forfeit their interest in the divine favour.

I confess, that were we to argue *a priori*, one might naturally conclude, that if a Divine Revelation was given to men, it would be attended with such evidence, as must certainly convince every fair and honest enquirer. But arguments of this kind will, I fear, bear no very great stress. For, by a like method of reasoning, one might be ready to conclude, that if a revelation of such truths as are of general importance and use, was made at all, it would have been universal; that its evidences would have been much stronger than they are actually found to be, or at least that it would not have been attended with so many difficulties, or liable to such strong objections, as we must be sensible of, unless we are resolved to wink very hard indeed. But, after all, we must be content to take the gospel revelation as we find it; whether it be such as, by our previous reasonings, we might be ready to expect or no. And, for my own part, I doubt not but it is altogether worthy of the Divine Wisdom, though its nature and circumstances are, in several respects, such as man's wisdom would scarcely have dictated, and may not even be able fully to account for, any more than for a variety of appearances in nature, and occurrences in providence. Nor do I doubt but it has been productive of great good to the world already, and will hereafter be of much greater, though one can scarce help wondering that its beneficial effects

fects have been hitherto no more extensive and conspicuous.

As for those words of our blessed Lord which you quote, *If any man do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* They do, indeed, plainly intimate, that the religion which he taught, was such in its nature and evidences, as was well fitted to approve itself to honest and well disposed minds; and that “the correspondence “ which a truly good man must find between “ the whole system of Christ’s doctrine, and “ his own inward experience, must be to him “ instead of a thousand speculative arguments “ in its favour.” (See *Doddr. in Loc.*) And this, likewise, when he warns men of the danger of rejecting his testimony, and persisting in unbelief; this must be acknowledged to imply, that the opposition which his gospel met with, at least upon its first publication (when, perhaps, its evidence was strongest) argued something so perverse and criminal in its opposers, as, *in the general*, to render them worthy of the condemnation he denounced against them.

These denunciations, it is true, have been sometimes objected against, as harsh and severe; but the righteousness and reasonableness of them may, I suppose, be vindicated by considering, on the one hand, how clearly the gospel was proposed, and how strongly it was attested and confirmed by the first preachers of it; and on the other, the deplorable corruptions of religion that then almost universally prevailed, amongst both Jews and Gentiles; and the little reason
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there was to hope for the repentance and reformation of those who wilfully shut their eyes against that glorious light which then broke in upon the world; and deprived themselves of the religious helps and advantages with which the gospel would have furnished them. Taking the matter in this view (as Mr. Morris, in his sermon on this subject, has argued more at large) there could be no injustice in the condemnation of such persons; their unbelief being, itself, a wilful sin, attended with great and aggravated guilt; and the punishment threatened being but the natural and unavoidable consequence of this unbelief. And if the condemnation of such unbelievers would be just and necessary, it was but an act of mercy to warn them of the danger of harbouring those sinful prejudices, and continuing in those sinful practices; which would prove so fatal in their consequences. The threatening certainly was not designed to engage them to believe, without evidence, or to profess to believe what they did not (though thus the author of *Christianity not founded on argument*, would disingenuously represent the matter;) but only to induce them fairly to attend to the truths delivered by our blessed Lord and his apostles, and to the evidences whereby they were confirmed; honestly to own the convictions of their minds, and conscientiously to practise accordingly.

However, we might perhaps go beyond the design of our Saviour in these passages, should we assert that no truly-honest and well-disposed mind could remain in unbelief, even at that time,

time, in those places where the gospel was preached and published. The case of St. Paul, before his miraculous conversion, seems to shew the contrary. Much less would I take upon me to affirm, that those declarations which he made, with respect to such as were eye and ear-witnesses to his life, doctrine and miracles, are equally applicable to us, who must take all that is related concerning him, on the credit of human testimony and tradition, which, however highly credible, must fall short of absolute infallibility; who live in an age wherein his pure and holy religion has been so much sophisticated and disguised by the corrupt glosses of men, that it is not easy to know what he taught, or to say which of the many contending parties of christians best deserves the name; who, though we hear much of christianity, see very little of its native charms in the lives of its professors; and who, even though we should pay too little regard to the authority of scripture, are furnished with much more complete systems of natural religion and morality (which may justly be considered as the grand basis of christianity itself) than the pagan world could ever boast of; and this, without the incumbrance of Jewish rites and ceremonies, which, though wisely adapted to the genius and circumstances of that people for a season, they were very apt to lay a disproportionate stress upon, to the neglect of the weightier matters of their law.

For this advantage, indeed, I doubt not but we are principally indebted to the light of the gospel. Nevertheless it seems no way unlikely that some, who are not duly sensible from whence it is
derived

derived, may make a good use of it. And I cannot but think, that a life formed upon the principles laid down in *Wollaston's Religion of Nature*, for instance, might be as acceptable to God, and as useful to men, and bid as fair for being followed by a blissful immortality; as one formed, I will not say by the documents of a Popish directory, but even, according to the institutes of a Calvin, or a Turretin. Upon the whole, though I am thoroughly satisfied that a sincere and rational christian, as such, enjoys far greater advantages than any one else, for so knowing and doing the will of God, as to be happy in his favour both here and hereafter; which advantages can never be despised without danger, or neglected without detriment; yet of this truth I am equally certain, that God is no respecter of persons, but that every one who feareth him and worketh righteousness, by whatever means he is formed to this happy disposition and conduct, is accepted of him, and shall be finally rewarded by him.

CHARISTES.

Observations on Christ's Agony in the Garden.

IT was an opinion adopted very early in the christian church, and the apostle John considers it as a dangerous one, 1 John iv. 3, that Christ did not *come in the flesh*, and, consequently, did not *feel* as other men do in similar situations. He even scruples not to declare that this opinion was of *antichrist*, favouring of that

that great corruption, which by the spirit of prophecy, he knew was to be introduced into Christianity. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, also lays great stress on the consideration of Christ's having had a perfectly *fellow feeling of our infirmities*. It must be of importance, therefore, to shew, from circumstances in the history of Christ, that, with respect both to his body and mind, he was affected exactly as other men are.

Such observations are also of importance to the internal evidence of christianity, as they shew that the descriptions of the evangelists were made from *real life*, such as we now see it to be. For had they feigned, and written from their imaginations only, they would certainly, ignorant as they were in philosophy, have made some blunders, and have advanced things which, in the present advanced state of knowledge, we should be sensible were unnatural and absurd.

One of the most extraordinary circumstances in the history of our Lord, is his *bloody sweat* in the garden, on the evening before he suffered, mentioned Luke xxii. 44. It is so extraordinary, that no person writing a fiction can be supposed to have thought of it, or, if he had thought of it, to have inserted it, it being probable that the like had never been observed before. At least, the appearance must have been very rare, and consequently must have appeared very liable to objection. That the thing, however, is possible, in a very lax or diseased state of body, will not be denied. Nay, I believe that the transudation of blood through the glands
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of the skin, is not an uncommon morbid appearance. There is an account of two remarkable cases of this nature in the *Acta Physico-Medica Norimbergæ*, Vol. 8. p. 428, one of a boy, of a lax habit of body, who often had bloody sweats, after having been subject to violent convulsive and spasmodic affections; and the other of a man of about thirty years of age, in a similar situation. But that this effect may be the consequence of great *perturbation of mind*, has not, as far as I know, been completely illustrated, by the observation of any thing similar to it in the history of human nature. I have, however, met with a case approaching pretty nearly to it, in the work quoted above, Vol. 1. p. 84.

We are there informed, that one Joachim Scacerna, of Ferrara, a person of sixty-two years of age, and in perfect health, being exceedingly affected with the accusation of a crime, of which he declared that he was perfectly innocent, was observed by a friend of his, to whom he was lamenting his misfortune, to shed tears like blood. Being thrown into prison, his tears were more bloody. This symptom was followed by a rigidity over his whole body, and this by a malignant fever, which carried him off in three days.

That some men will *sweat* with agony of mind, is a fact as well known, as that others have *shed tears* in a similar state. If, therefore, tears can be tinged with blood, when the mind is uncommonly agitated, the sweat may be so too. Supposing our Lord to have been, in all respects, a *man*, it cannot be thought improbable,

ble, that his mind should have been thrown into the greatest possible agitation on the near approach of his sufferings, of which and of all the painful and ignominious circumstances attending them, he had a distinct fore-knowledge; though at a distance he had always been able to view them with steadiness and composure. Even a momentary pain, and of trifling consequence, such as attends the drawing of a tooth, of which we have a distinct apprehension beforehand, affects the minds of some persons in a most extraordinary manner. The pain itself when it does arrive, (and the same may be said of evils of any other kind) is nothing in comparison of the feelings which have preceded it. It may be observed, however, that before the agony in the garden, and even before the last supper, our Lord's mind was much disturbed in the contemplation of his approaching death. John xii. 27. *Now is my soul troubled.*

Our Lord must have felt the more, as his situation was, in many respects, quite singular and unexampled, which was not the case with any of his followers. Besides, his mind must have suffered extremely in the conflict between the opposite ideas of his sufferings and death on the one hand, and of his immediate resurrection and the very high degree of glory and power to which he was to be exalted on the other. The expectation of suffering only, with a remote prospect of advantage, would not, perhaps, have agitated the mind so much.

The bloody sweat is certainly an argument that our Lord's whole *nervous system* was exceedingly

ingly disordered; and it is well known that no bodily indispositions are attended with such distress and horror of mind as those which are called nervous. The miraculous relief which he received was probably adapted to this circumstance of his case, without which it might have been naturally impossible for him to have gone through his approaching trial and sufferings with the requisite composure, which we see he instantly attained, and uniformly preserved. Nay, without this interposition, so violent a disorder of the whole animal system might have terminated in death; so that what our Lord says might be literally true, Matt. xxvi. 38. *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.*

The *cup* which our Lord prayed might pass from him was, most probably, this very bodily indisposition, and the distress of mind which it occasioned; as it could not be the suffering of death on the cross, with which he had always expressed the most perfect satisfaction. This, indeed, he knew to have been absolutely necessary to the great purpose of his mission, and for his acquiescence in which, chiefly, he was the object of his Father's approbation, *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life.* John x. 17, 18.

To this agony in the garden, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews probably alluded, when he says, v. 7. that *Christ, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cries and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that*
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he feared, or rather on account of his *piety* and resignation.

I cannot help thinking, however, but that it may be inferred from our Lord's exceeding great distress upon this occasion, that he was but a *man*, and had not attained to that perfect *comprehension of mind*, which a being of a superior nature, who had existed many thousand years before he came into this world, must have acquired, even though his faculties should not, originally, have been greater than ours. For then the ideas of his approaching sufferings and of his future glory, would have been intimately associated, and, the latter far over-powering the former, the state of his mind, in the expectation of them both, as one, would have been pleasing and happy upon the whole. So extraordinary a circumstance as a bloody sweat argues the most vehement perturbation of mind, even in the most delicate constitution (the historian calls it an *agony*) and though such a violent mental affection be very suitable to the nature of man, and what perhaps might be expected, in a situation so singularly alarming and critical, it can hardly be thought compatible with superangelic natures. For the illustration of this argument I must beg leave to refer your readers to some of my former observations, which you have published in the first number of this present volume.

As the man who shed the bloody tears soon died of a disease, which that circumstance preceded, it is not impossible but that our Lord might be so far weakened by this agony of his mind that, together with his severe scourgings,
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and the insults which he received before he was led to crucifixion, and in his way thither, his vital powers might be much sooner exhausted than those of the two thieves; which will account for his dying a natural death before them, at which Pilate expressed so much surprize. I own that I am extremely unwilling to suppose that Christ, who never worked any other miracle in favour of himself, exerted a miraculous power, in order to put an end to his own life, before the time in which the tortures he endured would have effected it. The *loud cry* which he uttered just before he expired, may have been the effect of the convulsions with which it is not improbable he was seized in his last moments. The rigidity with which Scacerna was seized, before his putrid fever, must also have been of a spasmodic or convulsive nature.

CLEMENS.

A Criticism on Gal. i. 10.

For do I now persuade men or God?

OUR translation of this text is evidently harsh. Some would render it *obey*, and this, no doubt, is good sense; but every Westminster scholar knows that the noun, in that case, should have been a dative. As to any other interpretations they are beneath notice. I would render it, *Do we recommend men or God?* In support of this sense, vid. *Porphyry de Abstinence*, l. 3. sect. 27. towards the end of that section.

section. "Injustice," saith he, "hath a peculiar dexterity in recommending, or to recommend herself, (ΠΕΙΘΕΙΝ ΕΑΥΤΗΝ) and to corrupt her votaries." This is not a common sense of the word, but I think it should be so translated in the just-mentioned text. If any of the learned writers in the *Repository* are of a different opinion; at least this new sense of the word ΠΕΙΘΕΙΝ may be agreeable to them as a curiosity. For I believe it is not to be found either in Stevens, or either of his Supplements: If you like better to have the whole passage, take the following free translation, viz. "Injustice hath a peculiar address in recommending, or to recommend herself (ΠΕΙΘΕΙΝ ΕΑΥΤΗΝ) and to corrupt those who are enslaved by her, because she generally attends upon and makes court to her darling with pleasure in her train."

—————r.

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T H E
Theological Repository.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

Although you have already inserted in your collection several papers, of your other correspondents, on the subject of ATONEMENT, yet the following dissertation may, perhaps, be thought not unworthy the attention of your readers, as it enters more deeply into that question, and places it in a different light. It is, however, submitted to your disposal, by your obliged humble servant,

EUSEBIUS.

IN order to form right conceptions on the subject of *atonement*, a subject which appears to be of so considerable importance both in the old and new dispensations, and which hath given so much employment to the thoughts and pens of divines; I conceive it will be a proper method to trace the several passages of scripture where it is spoken of, and consider carefully the occasions whereon, and the purposes for which atonement is required, or said to have been

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made. This I shall attempt in the following essay.

God having promised to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7, 8. *I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God; and having fulfilled that other promise, Gen. xv. 14. Also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance, by delivering the people of Israel out of Egypt, with a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm, he formed them into a national community under his own extraordinary direction and protection, and thus took them to be a peculiar people to himself above all nations that were upon the earth. Deutero. xiv. 2.*

To this end he commanded Moses, Exod. xxv. 8, 9. *Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it. And he promised, chap. xxix. 43, &c. There will I meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priests office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God, and they shall know that I am the Lord their God,*
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that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell amongst them: I am the Lord their God. Accordingly, when the tabernacle and all things belonging to it were finished, set up, disposed in their proper places, and anointed with the holy oil, we are told, chap. xl. 34. *Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, &c.*

When such a connection was established between God, as *sovereign, king and God*, and the people of Israel, as his *subjects, people and worshippers*, by a visible symbol of his glorious presence in the midst of them, residing in a royal pavilion, it became highly expedient that a certain *ritual*, containing ordinances of external services, should be appointed to regulate the intercourse of these subjects with their sovereign, of this people with their God; and that proper officers should be set apart to attend upon the royal presence, perform the services of the court, and conduct or manage the intercourse of the people with *the Lord their God*.

This ritual, we find, is very particular and precise, and an exact observance of its several injunctions is required upon very considerable and even severe penalties; in order, probably, to inspire the people with deeper reverence for the great God, their sovereign, and to make them more careful in obeying his laws.

In this ritual we find certain atonements prescribed on various occasions, and for divers purposes. Let us endeavour to reduce them under proper heads.

SECTION I.

WE find *atonements* appointed and used at the first *dedication*, or *consecration*, of things and persons to the service of God; whereby *things* were solemnly appropriated, or set apart to be solely employed in that service; and *persons* were invested with, and acknowledged to have a *right* or *privilege*, to attend upon, and perform the appointed acts of religious worship, or other services allotted to them, according to their station, office and rank, and so became in a correspondent degree *holy*. Thus,

1. At the time that Moses was directed to consecrate Aaron and his sons to the priests office, he was commanded also to make a particular atonement for the *altar*, each day during the seven days of their consecration.

Exod. xxix. 36, 37. *And thou shalt offer every day, a bullock for a sin-offering, for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it to sanctify it.*

Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it: and it shall be an altar most holy; whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.

Accordingly when Moses proceeded to this solemn transaction, we are told, Levit. viii. 11. that *he sprinkled of the anointing oil upon the altar seven times, and anointed the altar, and all its vessels—to sanctify them.* Then, ver. 14, 15. *He brought the bullock for the sin-offering—and slew it: and Moses took the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified*

purified the altar; and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it.

2. *Atonement* is mentioned also in the order which was given for the consecration of *Aaron* and *his sons* to the priests office.

Exod. xxix. 33. *And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them*—and when this order was executed, *Moses* charged them, Levit. viii. 34. *As he hath done this day, so the Lord hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you.*

3. At the dedication of the *Levites* unto their office and ministry, an order was given to make *atonement* for them.

Num. viii. 12. *And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for the Levites.* Agreeably to this order it is added, ver. 21. *And Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them.*

Lastly. After the dedication of the tabernacle and altar, with what belonged to them, and the consecration of *Aaron* and *his sons* for seven days were completed, on the next day there seems to have been a solemn sanctification of the whole people of *Israel* to the service of *God*; at least, at the first act of worship which the new high-priest performed on their account, and in their name, we are told he made *atonement* for them.

Levit. ix. 7. *And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar—and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them.* But perhaps

some may think that this case ought to have been classed under the next head : It is however not material.

SECTION II.

THEY who were thus solemnly consecrated, or devoted to the service of God, and thereby invested with a right or privilege of approaching into his presence, and performing or attending on acts of religious worship, might freely exercise and enjoy that right, not only in the stated and enjoined services of the tabernacle, whether at the daily sacrifices, or on the more solemn festival occasions, but also might present themselves, and offer free-will offerings whenever they pleased ; yet on these purely voluntary occasions, we find atonements ordered and made ; which therefore, I think, must be considered as a formal acknowledgement of the privilege they claim, and a declaration of acceptance of them in the exercise of it. Thus,

1. We find that Aaron, by the direction of Moses, the next day after his consecration was completed, offered extraordinary sacrifices, first for himself and then for the people, and made atonements for both. Levit. ix. 7. *And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar and offer thy sin-offering, and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thyself and for the people, and for thy house, and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them ; as (i. e. in the manner as) the Lord commanded.* How Aaron performed this, is very particularly described in
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the following verses, and the extraordinary manner in which God manifested his acceptance of this first act of his solemn service, by the ministry of his new high-priest is related in the close of the chapter. Under this class, I apprehend, we ought to reckon the atonements appointed for all the people, when assembled at the great festivals. Thus on the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, among other sacrifices, there is ordered, Numb. xxviii. 22. *One goat for a sin-offering to make an atonement for you.* And this, as well as the rest, was to be repeated each day of that feast. So on the day of offering the first fruits, ver. 30. *One kid of the goats, to make an atonement for you.* In like manner at the feast of trumpets, on the first day of the seventh month, chap. xxix. 5. *One kid of the goats for a sin-offering to make an atonement for you.*

2. If any person among the people thought proper to bring a burnt-sacrifice of the herd or of the flock, it was thus ordered, Levit. i. 3, 4. *He shall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.* In what manner the atonement was made, in this, and all other cases, whether by some form of words pronounced by the priest; or, rather, by the very act of sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice upon the altar, is uncertain.

SECTION III.

WHEN a visible glorious symbol of the divine presence and majesty, had thus taken a fixed residence among the people, in the holy place, the proper officers being appointed, and the order of external services regulated, by which the people might pay their attendance on, and perform acceptable service to their God and King, it became evidently fit and necessary, that the whole of this service should be conducted with great exactness, according to the best ideas of propriety and decorum, at that time received among men. Thus as it was universally acknowledged to be decent, that, when an inferior waited on his superior, he should make some present, or offering, to bespeak a favourable acceptance, so it was commanded the Israelites, *that none should appear before the Lord empty.* Exodus xxiii. 15. Hence also it was so often insisted on, that every thing which was sacrificed to the Lord should be free from blemish, and we find God thus exhorting by the prophet Malachi, i. 8. *If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of Hosts.* And, in regard to the firstlings of their flocks and herds, which were to be considered as indispensably devoted to God, be they what they would, and by no means to be exchanged, it was ordered; Deut. xv. 21. *If there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame, or blind, or have any ill*

ill blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God; thou shalt eat it within thy gates.— Hence also it was expressly ordered, Levit. xxi. 17—23, that none of the seed of Aaron should perform the services of the priesthood, but persons free from blemishes, and of comely appearances, *that he prophane not my sanctuaries.* And, in the former part of the same chapter, provision is made to preserve the priests, and especially the high-priest, from those pollutions, or other disgraceful circumstances, which would render them incapable or improper, to perform the functions of their ministry before God, or would reflect dishonour on those functions.

In like manner, circumstances must often happen to the people; which would render it very improper and indecent (according to the sentiments of mankind at that time) that they should attend upon, or perform any of the solemn services before the *august presence*, or glorious symbol of the Divine Majesty. These circumstances might arise from natural and bodily infirmities, from accidents, from providential events, from transgressions of divine injunctions, through ignorance or inadvertence, or from other instances of misbehaviour. While these circumstances continued, the persons affected by them, were excluded from attending on the tabernacle service; but when these were removed, they were permitted again to approach the presence, to offer an appointed sacrifice, and have an *atonement* made for them, which atonement seems to have been *reconciliatory* or *declarative* of their *restoration*, or re-admission to the

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the rights and privileges of attending on the public service of God's holy place, and a removal of the *incapacity* they had lain under.

But, before we enter on a particular consideration of the several cases of this kind, it will be proper to take notice of a very singular one, which may be ranked most naturally under this class, *i. e.* the case of a plague of leprosy breaking out in a house, in relation to which, very particular directions are given, (Levit. xiv. 33, and following verses) what methods the priests shall employ for removing the complaint; and, if these succeed, for cleansing the house; and, in conclusion, it is said, v. 53. *And he shall make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean; i. e.* it shall be restored to a capacity of being inhabited by the people of God.

Let us now proceed to consider the several cases wherein atonements seem to have been directed by way of *reconciliation*, or re-admission of persons, who had been under some incapacity or forfeiture, to the privileges of the tabernacle service.

1. In the case of a cured leper, besides many other ceremonies of purgation, sacrifices are appointed, in the offering up of which, various ceremonies were to be used, much resembling those which were appointed for the consecration of a priest, particularly Levit. xiv. 18, 19, 20. *And the remnant of the oil, that is in the priest's hand, he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord. And the priest shall offer the sin-offering, and make an atonement for him that*
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is to be cleansed from his uncleanness, and afterwards he shall kill the burnt-offering: And the priest shall offer the burnt-offering and the meat-offering upon the altar; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and he shall be clean. Here seems to be a triple atonement in a single case.

If the person were poor, a less expensive sacrifice was appointed for him, viz. ver. 21. *One lamb for a trespass-offering to be waved, to make an atonement for him, &c.* yet here also it is ordered, ver. 29. *And the rest of the oil that is in the priest's hand, he shall put upon the head of him that is to be cleansed, to make an atonement for him before the Lord.* Ver. 30. *And he shall offer the one of the turtle doves, or of the young pigeons, such as he can get.* Ver. 31. *Even such as he is able to get, the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, with the meat-offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him that is cleansed, before the Lord.* Here also a three-fold atonement is made in a single case.

2. Let us next see what was ordered in the case of a man who was cured of a running issue, Levit. xv. Besides other purgations during seven days, it is commanded, ver. 14. *On the eighth day he shall take to him two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, and come before the Lord, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and give them unto the priest.* Ver. 15. *And the priest shall offer them, the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord, for his issue.*

3. In

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3. In the cases of a man cured of seminal disorders, and of a woman recovered from præternatural menstruations, which had rendered them for some time unclean, and consequently unfit to come to the tabernacle, a like sacrifice is required, and ver. 30. *The priest shall make atonement for her before the Lord, for the issue of her uncleanness.*

4. In the case of a woman in child-bed it is said, Levit. xii. 2. *According to the days of her separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean.* And again, ver. 4. *She shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.* And then, ver. 6. *She shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest.* 7. *Who shall offer it before the Lord, and make an atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood.* 8. *And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.*

5. It will be proper to bring in here the case of a defiled Nazarite, as it is purely an accidental case; and yet an atonement for it is enjoined.

Num. vi. 9. *If any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration, then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it.* 10. *And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of*
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the tabernacle of the congregation. 11. *And the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day.* 12. *But the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.*

Thus far we have considered atonements enjoined to remove ceremonial incapacities, arising from natural infirmities, bodily disorders, the ordinary course of nature, and accidental events, and to restore the interrupted rights and privileges of God's people to worship him in the tabernacle. Let us now proceed,

6. To atonements appointed for sins of ignorance, *i. e.* for those who really had transgressed some of the commandments of the Lord, but, at the time, were ignorant of the command, or of its import and meaning, or were not apprized that they had violated it. When such persons came to be better informed afterwards concerning the transgression they were chargeable with, they could not consider themselves as in a proper state for coming into the presence of God, and engaging in his service acceptably; for their relief, therefore, atonements were appointed to remove the incapacity, and restore them to their former privileges. These were different, according to the quality or rank of the offender.

1. Levit. iv. 27. *If any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord, concerning things which ought not to be done, and*
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be guilty. Ver. 28. *Or if his sin which he hath sinned come to his knowledge; then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned.* When this is offered in the proper manner, ver. 31. *The priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.* Or, if he bring a lamb for a sin-offering, the same rites are required, and ver. 35. *The priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.*

Several particular cases, which seem to come under this head, are mentioned and provided for, Levit. v. particularly ver. 1. He who being examined upon oath, as evidence concerning any thing he had *seen or known, if he doth not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity.* By which seems *not* to be intended, a person who wilfully and knowingly withholds evidence of the truth in judicial cases; but one who, through want of recollection or inadvertence, fails to give a full and true evidence, and afterwards recollects that failure. The other cases with which this is coupled, lead us to this interpretation; besides, that to withhold evidence in such cases, manifestly comes within the compass of that general rule, I shall hereafter take notice of, *The soul that doth ought presumptuously, &c.* Again, ver. 2, 3. *If a person touch any unclean thing, and it be bidden from him, when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty.* Also, ver. 4. *If a person violate an engagement or vow, pronounced with an oath, and it be bid from him, when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these.* Wherefore, ver. 5. *He shall confess that he hath sinned in that*

that thing. Ver. 6. And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord, a lamb, or a kid for a sin-offering, and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin. Ver. 7. If he be not able to bring a lamb, he shall bring two turtle doves, or two young pigeons. Ver. 10. And the priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him. Ver. 11. But if he be not able to bring these, then he shall bring a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin-offering. Ver. 12. And the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar. Ver. 13. And the priest shall make atonement for him, as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him. Farther; in case of trespasses through ignorance in the holy things of the Lord; the offender must not only make full amends for the harm that was done in the holy thing according to the estimation of the priest, but add a fifth part thereto, and bring a ram for a trespass-offering, ver. 16. And the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass-offering, and it shall be forgiven him.

In short, this general rule is laid down, ver. 17. *If a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he wist it not, yet he is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. 18. And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass-offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist it not, and it shall be forgiven him. It is a trespass-*

pass-offering, he hath certainly trespassed against the Lord. That this regulation refers to things required by some positive law to be considered as devoted to religious purposes, appears from the clause *with thy estimation*, which imports that damage had accrued, which ought to be estimated and compensated.

We find a general confirmation of these laws about sins of ignorance in private persons, in Numb. xv. 27. and the following verses, *If any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she-goat of the first year for a sin-offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the Lord, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. You shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born amongst the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth amongst them.*

2. Atonements are prescribed also for sins of ignorance committed by a ruler or person of superior rank and fortune, Levit. iv. 22, &c. *When a ruler hath sinned, and done somewhat through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord his God, concerning things which should not be done, and is guilty; or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish. Ver. 26. And the priest shall make an atonement for him, as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.*

3. For sins of ignorance committed by a priest, the following regulation was prescribed. Levit. iv. 1, &c. *If a soul shall sin through ignorance,*

ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord. 2. If the priest that is anointed do sin, according to the sin of the people, then let him bring for his sin which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish, unto the Lord for a sin-offering. Then follow the rites he is to observe in sacrificing it; but it is not said, that he shall make atonement for himself, which might have been improper: however atonement and forgiveness is virtually included in his being required to perform this service, and thereby re-instated in his office and ministry before the Lord in the tabernacle, for which he was otherwise become unfit and incapable.

But not only were individuals, of every rank and order, liable to commit sins of ignorance, the whole people also might very possibly fall into like errors, and become, in consequence, unfit to appear in the presence of God, and to worship him with due decorum and acceptance. Therefore,

4. Atonements were appointed for sins of ignorance committed by the congregation. Levit. iv. 13. *If the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord, concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty. Ver. 14. When the sin which they have sinned against it, is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him to the tabernacle of the congregation. Ver. 15. And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bullock before the Lord: and the bullock shall be killed before the Lord.*

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And afterwards it is directed to be sacrificed with like ceremonies, as those appointed for a like sin in a priest; it is added, ver. 20. *And the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.* The same law is thus expressed, Numb. xv. 22, &c. *If ye have erred and not observed all these commandments, which the Lord hath spoken unto Moses. Ver. 23. Even all that the Lord hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the Lord commanded Moses, and henceforward among your generations. Ver. 24. Then it shall be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer, &c. Ver. 25. And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it is ignorance; and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord, and their sin-offering before the Lord, for their ignorance. Ver. 26. And it shall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Israel, and the stranger that sojourneth amongst them; seeing all the people were in ignorance.*

Such were the particular and exact directions for proper atonements to be made for sins of ignorance, whether committed by the whole congregation, the priest, the rulers, or private persons, but as for known and wilful transgressions, as well of the ritual and ceremonial, as of the moral precepts this rule was established, Num. xv. 30, 31. *The soul that doth ought presumptuously (whether he be born in the land, or a stranger) the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Because*
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he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off, his iniquity shall be upon him.

6. But notwithstanding these regulations for making atonement for sins of ignorance, immediately upon their being discovered and known, many incidents, unfuitable to the majesty and holiness of God, and many violations of his commandments might happen, without ever being noticed, and consequently without any atonement made for them. To remedy all such cases, and to remove all defects or disqualifications arising from them, whether from the holy place itself, its furniture and ministers, or from the people of God, and at the same time to impress upon their minds a more awful reverence of the greatness and purity of God, and a deeper humility for their own offences against him, whether known or unknown, atoned or not atoned for, through the whole year past, *a day of general and solemn atonement* was appointed, the purposes of which are thus explained in Levit. xxiii. 27, 28. *On the tenth day of the seventh month, there shall be a day of atonement, it shall be an holy convocation unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, and ye shall do no work in that same day; for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the Lord your God.* In the 16th chapter of the same book, very particular directions are given, as to the business of that day particularly.

1. The high priest was to make *atonement* for himself and his house, ver. 6. *And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering, which is*

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for himself, and make an atonement for himself and his house ; the same is repeated, ver. 11.

2. He was to make an atonement for the people with the scape-goat. Ver. 10. *But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scape-goat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness.*

3. He was to make atonement also for the sanctuary and the tabernacle, with the blood of the ram of the sin-offering. Ver. 15. *Then shall he kill the goat of the sin-offering that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil. Ver. 16. And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins ; and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them, in the midst of their uncleanness. Ver. 17. And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation, when he goeth in to make atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.*

4. He was also to make an atonement for the altar. Ver. 18. *And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the Lord, and make an atonement for it : and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. Ver. 19. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger, seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel. As for the altar of incense within the tabernacle, though there*
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are no directions about sprinkling any of the blood of the bullock or goat upon it, yet it is certain, that this was a part of the high-priest's duty on this occasion, as appears from Exod. xxx. 10. *And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year, with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements; once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations; it is most holy unto the Lord.* As for the bodies of the bullock and goat of the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, it is ordered, ver. 27. *One shall carry them forth without the camp, and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung.*

5. After the fore-mentioned atonements were performed, the high-priest was to complete the atonement for the people with the scape-goat, mentioned ver. 10. by laying both his hands on the head of the goat, and confessing over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and sending him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. See ver. 21.

Thus far the atonements of this solemn day seem to have been entirely of the *reconciliatory* kind, *i. e.* to remove any unfitnesses, or incapacities for the presence and service of God, which either the sanctuary, the tabernacle, the altar, the ministers, or the people might have contracted from any ceremonial pollutions or transgressions of the divine precepts, known or unknown, through ignorance. For let it be ob-

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served on the one hand, that these general atonements would not excuse for the omission or neglect of the appointed atonements for particular sins of ignorance, as soon as they came to be known; and on the other, that no atonements at all were appointed for those who sinned wilfully and presumptuously; they were doomed to be utterly cut off, as we have seen above.

These atonements were to be made by the high-priest, clothed in linen garments, which seem appropriated to this service. When it was finished he was to put off these garments, and wash himself all over, and put on his usual robes, in the holy place, and come forth, ver. 23, 24. Then followed another set of atonements for himself and the people, which seem to me to have been of, what I called before, the *declaratory* kind; or an acknowledgment and exercise of their right and privilege to attend on and perform the service of God in his holy place, ver. 24. *He shall offer his burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people.*

In the close of the chapter is a summary of the duties and purposes of the day of atonement in these words, ver. 29. *And this shall be a statute for ever unto you; that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you. Ver. 30. For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. Ver. 31. It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever. Ver.*

32. *And the priest, whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen cloths, even the holy garments.* 33. *And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar; and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.* Ver. 34. *And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.*

7. There were atonements appointed also, even for some cases of known and wilful transgression of the moral law. These were cases of dishonest dealing between man and man; but such as admitted compensation of damages suffered thereby. A person who had been guilty of such practices was certainly unworthy to appear in the presence, or engage in the service of the righteous and holy God, so long as the injury he had done his neighbour remained unredressed, and, consequently, he had not given the proper proof of his repentance. But if every act of dishonesty was finally and irrecoverably to exclude an offender from the privileges of serving God in the worship of the tabernacle, it was to be apprehended, from the infirmities of human nature, that the number of the excommunicated might be very great, and the consequences hurtful to the interests of religion. Wherefore provision is made for such cases, Levit. vi. 2—7. *If a soul sin and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbour*

in that which was delivered unto him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour, or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doth, sinning therein: Then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely, he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass-offering. And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock—and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord; and it shall be forgiven him, for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein.

A similar provision is made for the case of a man committing lewdness with a bond-maid, betrothed to a husband. Levit. xix. 21, 22. *He shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, even a ram for a trespass-offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him, with the ram of the trespass-offering before the Lord, for his sin which he hath done, and the sin which he hath done shall be forgiven him.*

Numb. v. 7, 8. it is provided, that in case the party who had been injured by any fraudulent practice, were not living, nor have any kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the Lord, even to the priest; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him, viz. the offender.

Thus

Thus I have collected together all the appointments of sacrificial atonements, which I find in the law of Moses, and arranged them under such classes as appeared to me most suitable to their several purposes. There are, indeed, some other passages in which these atonements are spoken of in general expressions without specifying their particular kinds or purposes. Thus when Moses reproved Eleazar and Ithamar for not having eaten the sin-offering in the holy place, he said, Levit. x. 17. *God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord.* Again, Levit. xvii. 11. it is said, *I have given it, the blood, to you, upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.* See also chap. vii. 7. xxv. 9. 1 Chron. vi. 49. 2 Chron. xxix. 24. Nehe. x. 33.

SECTION IV.

BESIDES the *sacrificial*, we find that several other kinds of atonements were appointed by the law, or actually made, in consequence of some eminent act of duty, or zeal, of particular persons, and that the purpose or effect of these was to *prevent* threatenings, or *avert* present and immediate expressions of divine displeasure from the persons who were liable thereto. Particularly,

1. We find a general law, Exod. xxx. 12. and following: *When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord when thou numberest them: that there be no plague amongst them when thou numberest them.* 15. *The rich*

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rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls. 16. And thou shalt take the atonement-money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord to make an atonement for your souls. Agreeably to this general law we are told, Num. xxxi. 49, 50. that when the officers returned from the war against Midian, they said unto Moses, *Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which are under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us. We have therefore brought an oblation for the Lord, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains and bracelets, rings, ear-rings and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the Lord.* This oblation might, probably, amount to much more than the required half shekel for each man, and was intended as an expression of gratitude, as well as an act of obedience to the law.

2. We find a stop put to an infliction of punishment already begun, and an atonement made by offering incense, Numb. xvi. 46, 47. *And Moses said, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun. And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and behold the plague was begun among the people; and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people.*

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3. Another plague was stopped, and an atonement made by the zeal of Phinehas, in inflicting exemplary punishment on Zimri and Cosbi; when God said, Numb. xxv. 11—13. *Phinehas hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel (while he was zealous for my sake among them) that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy—he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.*

In like manner, when a famine was inflicted on the land for the injustice and violence committed by Saul against the Gibeonites, David enquired of them, 2 Kings, xxi. 3. *What shall I do for you? And wherewith shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?* By which, I apprehend, he did not mean only, wherewith shall I make *you* a satisfaction, but (as appears from the then present state of things, and the constant use of the word atonement) wherewith shall I remove the present expression of divine displeasure.

4. We read also, Exod. xxxii. 30. that Moses proposed to prevent immediate infliction of punishment, and to make *atonement* for the sin of the people in the business of the golden calf, by *interceding* for them. *Ye have sinned a great sin: and now will I go unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.*

I shall take the liberty to mention here the case of Job's three friends, which, though it comes not under the law, nor belongs to the dispensation by Moses, yet it shews that the possibility of averting the expressions of divine wrath by sacrifices and prayers, offered up for offenders by
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a good man, was not unknown among the Arabian tribes, and probably was derived to them from the earliest ages. See Job xlii. 7, 8, 9. *The Lord said unto Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right like my servant Job. They did according as the Lord commanded them. The Lord also accepted Job.* This was making a proper atonement for them, according to the Mosaic sense of the word.

From this collection of cases for which atonements were appointed by the law of Moses, or in which extraordinary atonements were actually made, I think it obvious to observe as follows:

First, That a great part of the appointed atonements bore no relation at all to moral character, merit or demerit; for many of them were appointed for things altogether incapable thereof, such as the golden and brazen altars, the tabernacle, and the utensils respectively belonging to them; also leprous houses. Others, which were appointed for persons, related to circumstances of no moral quality; such as natural infirmities, diseases and accidental events. As to sins of ignorance, for which atonements were appointed, if they had in them any *evil moral character* or *demerit*, it was of the lowest kind,

kind, and consequent upon the imperfections inseparable from human nature. However, if the offence was such as admitted compensation, we find a full compensation, and with it an additional *fine*, must be paid down before an atonement could be made. As to acts of fraud, falsehood and injustice between man and man, though these are certainly criminal, yet it seems very expedient that after restitution and compensation for damages made, the offending party should be restored to the common privileges of publick worship in the house of God, not only for the reason hinted at above, but also to promote peace and reconciliation, and restore mutual intercourse in society, to which the injured and offended are commonly too backward. As for the atonement appointed for the man who had debauched a bond-maid betrothed to an husband, we ought to consider, how few civil or natural *rights* bond servants could claim, and how lightly they were esteemed of at that time, and, consequently, that this would not be reckoned a very heinous transgression in an age and country that considered concubinage with female slaves as deserving no reproach. Hence this law (which seems particularly provided against the invasions of masters on the purity and honour of the marriage-bed of their dependents) seems to be of the same kind with that which allowed divorces, of which our Lord says, *For the hardness of your heart he* (Moses) *gave you this precept*, Mark x. 5.

Secondly; I would further observe, with relation to the extraordinary atonements made by
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some eminent act of zeal and duty, or prayer, &c. of some eminent person, whereby some impending judgment was averted, or plague actually begun was stopped, *that a full pardon does not appear to have been obtained for the offenders hereby*; but only further time, and a continuance of their privileges as the people of God, whereby they might be brought to a due sense of their misconduct, and to true repentance and amendment, and in consequence thereof be restored to divine favour. It is very observable, that when Moses proposed to make an atonement for the people in the matter of the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 30. and accordingly interceded earnestly for forgiveness, the answer which he received concluded with this clause, ver. 34. *Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sins upon them.* It is added, ver. 35. *And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.* Hence arose that saying of some of the Jewish writers, that in every calamity which hath befallen their nation ever since, hath been mingled an ounce of the golden calf.

Thirdly; All the appointed atonements seem to me to relate only to the propriety and decorum of the external services of publick religious worship, in the tabernacle and temple, before the manifestation of the divine presence. This, I think, appears very plain in the atonements at the consecration of the tabernacle, altars, vessels and ministers; also in all those atonements appointed for restoring persons to the privileges of publick worship, who had for some time lain under disqualifications, on account of which (like the child-bearing woman)

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it was unlawful for them *to touch any hallowed thing, or come into the sanctuary*, till the disqualifying circumstances were removed. Hence it appears to me most reasonable to conclude, that the solemn annual atonements appointed for the day of expiation were not intended to convey a plenary forgiveness of all the sins of the children of Israel, whether national sins, or of individuals; but only a general yearly removal of all incapacities, or disqualifications for the publick worship of God, which either the nation, or individuals might have contracted during the course of the preceding year, and which had not otherwise been atoned for. Whenever, therefore, we find forgiveness connected with the priests making atonement, we must understand it only (*quoad hanc rem*) of a forgiveness of the forfeiture of the privileges of attending on publick worship, which had been incurred.

Fourthly; I observe farther, that no atonements are appointed for transgressions of the moral law, except in the two cases mentioned before; and though we allow that all the transgressions and sins of the children of Israel were atoned for on the day of expiation; yet, as was observed under the former head, this related only to the privilege of attending the publick worship of God, as appears from the purpose of the other appointments of atonement, and from those which were made at the same time for the tabernacle, altar, and vessels, *to cleanse, and to hallow them from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.*

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The Jews in after times, indeed (as commonly happens in relation to external observances and ceremonial institutions) placed an improper dependence on the appointed sacrificial atonements, expecting from them benefits they were never designed to procure, *i. e.* a plenary forgiveness of sins, and restoration to the favour, protection and blessing of God; and when they were disappointed in this hope, they murmured. Many are the admonitions and reproofs against this error, which were delivered by the whole series of the prophets, who told them, that obedience was better than sacrifice, and that repentance and amendment alone could obtain mercy for sinners, and restore them to the favour and love of God. Thus David, lamenting his sin in the matter of Uriah, says, among many other things, to this purpose, Psal. li. 16. *Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.* The law had appointed none of these things for cases like his. He adds, *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Compare the 15th Psal. Isa. i. Hof. vi. 6. Mich. vi. 6, &c.*

Hence

* It ought also to be carefully observed, that the Sacred Writers of the Old Testament did not fail frequently to admonish the Jews, that (notwithstanding the occasional and annual atonements for sin appointed by Moses, yet) *moral character* was the great indispensable requisite to a favourable acceptance of their persons, when they appeared before God in the Temple, and of the sacrifices themselves which they offered up there. See the whole 15th Psalm, 24th Psalm, 3, &c. Prov. xv. 8. xxi. 27. Isa. lxvi. 2, 3. Jer. vi. 20. vii. 21 & seq. and many other passages.

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Hence also St. Paul says to the Jews of Antioch, in Pisidia, Acts xiii. 39. *By him (Jesus) all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.* For that law made very few provisions for the forgiveness of transgressions of the moral precepts, but on the contrary denounced, Numb. xv. 30. *The soul that doth ought presumptuously (whether he be born in the land, or a stranger) the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people; because he hath despised the word of the Lord, and hath broken his commandment; that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.*

It is very true, that ample declarations are made in the writings of Moses, concerning the divine placability and readiness to forgive penitent sinners; and, besides the exhortations he gave to the people to repentance, in his lifetime, he records admonitions of the same kind for the use of succeeding ages, when they should suffer divine rebukes for their sins; assuring them, that if they returned to God by repentance, he would not fail to return to them by mercy and deliverance. But then, as our Lord said of circumcision, *That it was not of Moses,*

These seem to confirm the opinion before advanced, that the primary purpose of the atonements appointed by the law, was to preserve the intercourse between God and his people in publick worship, by removing such disqualifications as rendered them unfit to appear before the visible manifestation of his glorious presence; and, consequentially, to be stated admonitions and motives to great care to reform from sin, and maintain an obedient and virtuous conduct, as essentially necessary to secure the favour of God.

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but of the Fathers, John vii. 22. So this was not a distinguishing doctrine of the law of Moses, but a principle of religion well known to the more early patriarchs. On this principle Noah preached repentance to the old world. Also Job and his friends acknowledge and reason largely upon it.

To conclude for the present. The atonements appointed by the law of Moses did effectually answer the *purpose* of their institution, which was *to maintain a regular and becoming intercourse between God and his people, in the ordinances of publick religious worship*; but were of no avail, *by themselves*, to take away the guilt of sin, and secure the favour of God to sinners: for *this* they were not appointed; but it must be obtained only by repentance and amendment of the sinner, who believed in the placability and mercy of God.

P A R T II.

THE manner of religious worship established by Christ is very different from that which was instituted by Moses. By the gospel, no particular place, or edifice, is appropriated, or consecrated for the performance of the solemnities of the publick worship of God, to which christians are required to repair, and offer sacrifices and oblations there only. But agreeably to the prediction of the prophet Mal. i. 11. *From the rising of the sun, even to the going-down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every*

every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering. And to that also of our Lord, in his discourse with the woman of Samaria, John iv. 21, 23. *Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither on this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.— But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* Christians are indulged in a full liberty of offering unto God those sincere and spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, which are required from them by the gospel. Agreeably hereto, Paul willeth, *that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting,* 2 Tim. ii. 8.

No cloud of glory, or other visible symbol of the presence and majesty of God, is exhibited any where, for the disciples of his son Jesus to worship before it; but they are taught, John iv. 24. *that God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth:* and are assured by their master, Matt. xviii. 20. *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* In short; God doth not now exercise the office of a *civil and political* as well *religious* ruler over christians, as he did over the people of the Jews; he hath established no where a worldly court, with its apparatus of officers, and ceremonials to be strictly observed.

Under such a spiritual and universal constitution of religion, there seems to be no propriety in, or room for ordinances relative to ceremonial

impurities, or corporeal defilements, such as those which rendered the Jews unfit to appear before the symbol of the divine presence, or in the courts of the majesty of God; nor for either stated or occasional atonements to be made for like purposes as those by which the Jews were restored to, or confirmed in the privilege and right of attending on the publick worship under the law. Agreeably to the spiritual genius and purposes of the gospel, we are taught, that spiritual impurities only, *i. e.* evil dispositions and wicked practices, render us defiled and unacceptable in the sight of God; that, as to corporeal things, *there is nothing unclean of itself*, Rom. xiv. 14. that *There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him, can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.*—*For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.* Mark vii. 15. 21, 22, 23. And with regard even to these spiritual defilements, christians are not cut off by them from their relation to God, or privilege of worshipping him; but upon a spiritual purification, *i. e.* upon repentance and amendment, and the cultivation of better dispositions, particularly of meekness, mercifulness and forgiveness of those who have injured us, we are encouraged and taught to hope for the forgiveness of our sins. Yea, our Lord teacheth us to pray thus to our Father who is in heaven; *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*; and assureth us, *If ye forgive men*

men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15. On another occasion our Lord extended his declaration concerning forgiveness of sins with an exception against one only, Matt. xii. 31. All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

Jesus having, during his ministry, delivered these and such like spiritual and gracious principles of the everlasting gospel, did, in obedience to the commandment of God, and for the confirmation of his divine mission, voluntarily submit himself to death; but God raised him from the dead, and thereby testified that he had sent him, and authenticated the truth of all that he had taught in his name. And farther, because he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow;—and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. ii. 8—11. Him hath God exalted to his right hand, to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. Acts v. 31. He raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, in the heavenly places: far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things

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under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Eph. i. 20. to the end.

By this dominion and power conferred on the exalted Jesus in reward of his obedience unto death, he was authorized and enabled to cause the gospel, which he had himself preached, to be propagated throughout the world, and to call all nations, the Jews first, and afterwards the Gentiles, to the faith in him, and to unite them into one church and kingdom, unto God, under his own administration, protection and obedience, until the end of time, when he will raise the dead, judge the world, and perfect the salvation of them that have obeyed him. Accordingly, the same day that Jesus rose from the dead, he shewed to his disciples, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. that, *Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* Before his ascension he commanded them, Mark xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature; or as Matthew writes, xxviii. 18. to the end, Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* The purport of the particular commission which he gave to Paul, when

when he sent him to the Gentiles, Acts xxvi. 18. was, *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

No wonder, then, that the writers of the New Testament should affect to dwell upon, and triumph in the death of Christ, as producing so glorious a reward to himself, and such inestimable advantages to his followers through the promulgation of the gospel in consequence thereof. Amongst many others we may notice the following passages, Rom. vi. 14. *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.* 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. *We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* Heb. xii. 2. *Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Nor is it strange, that these writers, being themselves Jews, educated in a veneration for, and having long lived in the observance of the institutions of Moses, and addressing several of their writings to Jews, should, when writing on the death of Christ and its glorious consequences, make frequent allusions to those institutions and the purposes they were designed to serve; and even borrow the terms and modes of speech
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which they found used by Moses and the prophets concerning those matters, and especially (as they wrote in the Greek language) that they should make use of the terms they found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which was at that time in common use among a considerable part of the Jews.

As for the term *atonement*, we find it once only in our version of the New Testament, Rom. v. 11. *And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.* The word which is thus rendered is *καταλλαγην*, which is elsewhere uniformly translated *reconciling* or *reconciliation*, chap. xi. 15. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. and is no where used by the Seventy in any passage relating to the legal atonements. And in this passage, I apprehend, the apostle means our admission to the privileges of the church and people of God, through the promulgation of the gospel consequent upon the death of Christ, or, as he expresseth it himself in the 2d verse, *By whom we have access (προσαγωγην,) by faith INTO THIS GRACE, wherein we stand.* But though we are already *reconciled, justified*, or brought into a more advantageous state of relation to God and favour with him, by means of the death of Christ, the promulgation of the gospel and our faith in him, yet the apostle represents our obtaining a full pardon and salvation from wrath, as an effect to be yet compleated. Ver. 9, 10. *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we SHALL BE saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son; much more*

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BEING reconciled, we SHALL BE saved by his life. Then follows the text first quoted.

But though we do not oftener find the word *atonement* in our English version of the New Testament, yet we find, in the original, that the holy writers make use of the same, or of kindred words derived from the same root, as that which the Seventy almost always use in their version of the passages where the legal atonements are spoken of (*εξιλασμομαι*) and apply them to Christ with a reference to his blood, or death.

Heb. ii. 17. *Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.* The original word is *ιλασκεισθαι*, which might have been rendered *to make atonement*. The apostle repeats and enlarges further on the same thought in the three last verses of the 4th, and the three first of the 5th chapter. Let us consider the whole together. He seems plainly to intend a parallel between Christ and the Jewish high priest, and the purpose of their respective ministries, the former in heaven, the latter in the tabernacle and temple on earth.

The Jewish high priest was *taken from among men*, and was appointed to be the minister by whom the people, when duly qualified according to the law, held communion with and worshipped God, by whom they presented their offerings to him with acceptance, and derived favour and blessings from him. But it was expedient that the person who held such an office should
himself

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himself share with his brethren in the infirmities of humanity, that he might be more ready to have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, and to afford them all the direction and assistance in his power. This circumstance would naturally encourage the people to be more frequent and chearful in their attendances on the appointed services. In like manner, it was expedient that Jesus, the son of God, our great high priest, who is passed into the heavens, should be made like unto his brethren in all things, that he might be merciful and faithful in things pertaining to God (i. e. in matters relating to the worship of God; compare chap. v. 1. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Now, what exhortation doth the apostle infer from this subject? See chap. iv. 14. *Let us hold fast our profession.* Ver. 16. *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* From this representation we gather, that the purpose of Christ's atonement and high priesthood in heaven is (like the atonements and priesthood under the law) to encourage and promote our stedfastness in the profession of the gospel, and diligence and comfort in religious worship, according to the institutions of the gospel.

The same sentiment is still further unfolded, and the proper consequence inculcated, chap. x. 19—25. *Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and*
living

living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God: Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised: And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is.

In the 13th chap. ver. 11. the apostle having observed, that *The bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burnt without the camp:* (meaning, no doubt, the bullock and goat of the sin-offering, with whose blood the high priest made the solemn atonements in the tabernacle on the day of expiation. See Levit. xvi.) *Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people (or consecrate them to God) with his own blood, suffered without the gate.* He adds, *Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.* Here also we find the apostle deducing an exhortation to steadfastness in adhering to the profession of our faith in Christ, and diligence in performing religious worship in his name, from the representation of him, as having made atonement for us with his own blood. Query; May we not collect from this passage, a hint of
a very

a very pleasing and striking point of view in which to consider the ordinance of the Lord's supper, as most happily calculated to answer the purposes suggested in this text? Does it not seem likely that the apostle might have it in contemplation when he wrote it?

This manner of representing the unrestrained liberty, which is granted to us by the gospel, to assemble together, at any time, in any place, and under any circumstances, to offer unto God the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, which alone are required from us, in the name of our great high priest, who appeareth always in the presence of God for us, was well calculated to make a deep impression on the minds and hearts of the Jews, and to recommend so gracious a constitution to their thankful acceptance. For they had felt severely the inconveniences of being confined to one place of solemn religious worship, the trouble and expence of being obliged to assemble there from all parts of the country, and even of the earth; the costliness of the sacrifices, the many circumstances which excluded them from the house of God, and the charge of the atonements required to restore them to the privilege of attending there.

With like allusion to the sacrificial atonements appointed to cleanse the people from those defilements which rendered them unfit to appear before God; to the ministrations of the high priest in the holy place for that purpose, and to the recovery and confirmation to them of the privilege of partaking in the public services of the tabernacle, St. John also expresseth the full and un-

uninterrupted liberty of holding communion, or fellowship, with the Father, the Son, and the whole church of Christ, and the removal of all incapacities, for that purpose, arising from any sins already committed, which is granted to all penitent sinners, who believe in Jesus, by the gospel which was confirmed by the death of Christ, and is now published to the world in consequence of his exaltation to glory and power in heaven. See epist. 1. chap. 1. ver. 3. *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.* Ver. 7. *If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin.* Ver. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Chap. ii. 1, 2. *If any man sin, we have an advocate (comforter, παρακλητον) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation (atonement, ιλασμος) for our sins; but not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* He repeats it in his exhortation to mutual love among christians, chap. iv. 10. *Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins; i. e. by means of his death to publish to us all the glad tidings of repentance and remission of sins, and receive us all into the same relation to, and communion with himself and his whole church.* He therefore very properly adds, ver. 11. *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.*

St. Paul (Rom. iii. 25) speaks of Christ under the strong and expressive figure of a *mercy-seat* (*ιασηριον*; the Seventy always use that word in this sense in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, and our translators have so rendered it in the only other passage of the New Testament where we find it used, Heb. ix. 5.) to shew, that as in the tabernacle the glorious manifestation of the divine presence resided upon the mercy seat, and from thence God delivered the oracles of his will, and dispensed the blessings of his favour to his people, so, under the new dispensation, the presence, authority and power of God resideth in Christ Jesus: by him God delivereth the everlasting oracles of his truth and will to mankind, dispenseth the blessings of his mercy and favour to his people, and will continue to protect and rule over his church to the end of the world. To this high character and office he was exalted in reward of his obedience unto death; and by the gospel which he hath promulgated unto all men in the execution of that office, we are taught the righteousness of God, *i. e.* the manner in which God will freely forgive and accept of penitent sinners, even by sincere faith in Jesus, particularly, in his death, and the consequences of his death; or, as the apostle speaks, ver. 21. *But now the righteousness of God is manifested without the law, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. 22. Even the righteousness of God, which is by means of faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe. 24. Being justified freely by his grace, by means of the redemption (or deliverance) which is in Jesus Christ. 25. Whom God hath set*

set forth as a mercy-seat (by means of faith in his blood) to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. 26. To declare AT THIS TIME his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Thus I have taken notice of, and endeavoured to explain all the passages of the New Testament, where I find the words *ἱλασμομαι, ἱλασμος* and *ἱλαστηριον* made use of and applied to Christ; and I apprehend, that they all relate only to the establishment and confirmation of those advantages we at present enjoy by the gospel, and particularly of a free and uninterrupted liberty of worshipping God according to the institutions of Christ, granted unto us, in consequence of his death: just as the legal atonements served (though far more imperfectly) similar purposes under that dispensation.

Let us now turn to some other passages of the New Testament, which, without referring to the legal atonements, teach us, that it was the design of Christ's death, that he should be invested with authority and power to call all men to the acknowledgement and obedience of the true God, and to the faith in him; to confer on all who believe in him forgiveness of sins, and the privileges of the people of God, with full and unrestrained liberty of access to God, in the appointed duties of religion offered up in his name, and to unite them all into one body, or church, to be edified in faith and holiness to a meetness for eternal life. Thus our Lord himself says, John x. 15, 16, 17. *I lay down my life*
for

for the sheep; and other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.

St. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, among many other things to the same purpose, says, chap. i. 9, 10. *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure; which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him. Chap. ii. 13, &c. But now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one;—that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace unto you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have an access by one spirit unto the Father, &c. to the end. And to the Colossians he writes, chap. i. 13, 14. Giving thanks unto the Father—who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son. In whom we have redemption through (or by means of) his blood, the forgiveness of sins.—Ver. 19, 20, 21, 22. For it pleased the Father—(having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself.—And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh; through (or by means of) death, to present you*
holy,

holy and unblameable and unreproueable in his sight. I might refer also to 2 Cor. v. 17, to the end. Eph. i. 5, 6, 7. and many other similar texts. In all these passages, the death of Christ is represented as the *means* by which the reconciliation, redemption, or deliverance of mankind is effected, and the forgiveness of sins *already* conferred on believers, through the free grace of God, in order to their improvement in holiness, by the influences of the example, doctrine and institutions of Christ, which are provided for the benefit of the whole community of his church. But I do not recollect any text, where the death of Christ is represented, as the *cause, reason, or motive* why God hath conferred these blessings on men.

What aspect the observations proposed in this dissertation, may bear upon certain particular doctrines, or systems of doctrines; I pretend not to determine, nor am I much concerned. I mean only to submit them to the careful consideration and judgment of the serious and candid reader, praying with the apostle, Eph. i. 9, &c. *That we all might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding: That we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God, &c.*

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

I Am always pleased with a writer, whatever be his sentiments, who discovers so dispassionate a temper as your correspondent Bereanus. I must declare at the same time, however, that there appears to me to be little weight in any of the arguments he has offered, in support of the hypothesis for which he contends. I might, indeed, think differently, were there no other texts of scripture relating to the person of Christ, but those he has produced. But he well knows that there are many other texts, which seem to some christians, to militate as strongly against the pre-existence, as those which he has quoted, seem to him to favour that doctrine. I might present your readers with a long list of such texts, and then infer after his example, because Jesus is repeatedly called, *a man, a man, in all things made like unto us, sin only excepted, &c.* it is plain, that all my opponents are under the influence of the most inveterate prejudices, and that no words nor language, however precisely determining the humanity of Christ, would be sufficient to convince them.* But I choose to take a different method. I will look to those texts, upon which Bereanus himself rests, as the everlasting pillars of his faith.

I will only previously observe, that the first notions we receive are but too apt to influence

* See Theological Repository, Vol. III. p. 148.

us as long as we live. Even the sounds of words, to which we have been early habituated to ascribe some peculiarity, venerable and awful meaning, almost always affect us in a different manner from other words of exactly the same signification. *The grace of God*, for instance, even after we know that it means no more than *the favour of God*, will continue to make a different kind of impression on us, until we recollect ourselves, from what *the favour of God* does. To some prepossession of this kind I attribute it, that Bereanus should derive the pre-existent scheme from John vi. 36, 62, after the excellent, and, I think, unanswerable observations of your correspondent Patrobas, upon these passages. He has been taught to believe, that Jesus Christ did not begin to exist when he was born or produced. There are some texts which, taken independently, and by a forced construction, may be made to express this doctrine. Upon these he has fixed; and after, it would seem to me, torturing them a little; he concludes all those to be in the dark, who do not instantly adopt his scheme. I hope, I do not misrepresent him. I would only refer any one to those few texts which he has quoted, and the only texts which he could quote, in favour of his hypothesis, and then ask, if he has not put a very forced construction upon them. To begin with Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8, which he thus renders: *Who being in the form of God, did not look upon likeness to God, as a thing to be coveted; but emptied himself, and took the form of a servant, when made in the likeness of men, and being found in condition as a man,*

he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. His paraphrase is, ‘ Who being in a godlike condition *in the heavenly world, was not desirous to continue in such a godlike state*; but divested himself of his glory, assumed humanity, in a very mean and low condition, and *being thus brought into the state of a man, he humbled himself yet more, by submitting even to death, the painful and ignominious death of crucifixion.*’ Now, when we compare the paraphrase with the text, we see that these passages ‘ *in the heavenly world, was not desirous to continue in such a godlike state, assumed humanity, and being thus brought into the state of a man, humbled himself yet more,*’ are additions to the text. Yet, this illustration, Bereanus says, seems quite natural, and gives to each expression its plain, literal meaning. What seems to have led him into this train of thinking, is the supposition that the apostle here had a gradation in his eye. But we find no necessity that I can discover for making this supposition. Why might not Christ be in the form of God, and in the form of a slave at the same time? There is no mention of different times in the text, but rather, it would appear, of the same time. *Who being, or who at the same time that he was in the form of God, took the form of a slave,* seems to be the natural meaning of the apostle, and conveys a sentiment most honourable to Jesus. The *order*, therefore, of which our author speaks, and which he apprehends to be *inverted* by this scheme is, in my opinion, merely imaginary.

But,

But, another thing which seems to have misled Bereanus, is the supposition that Jesus emptied himself of the form of God. Taking the words as he has rendered them, the connection obligeth us to conclude, that it was the likeness of God, of which Jesus divested himself. ‘ Who being in the form, *the representative or ambassador* of God, did not look upon likeness to God as a thing to be coveted, but emptied himself of *this*.’

What has been here said, may serve to remove the objections, that are started against what is called the Socinian hypothesis, from 2 Cor. viii. 9. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich.* Here the apostle does not appear to me, to refer at all to our Lord’s existence, in a state of glory and happiness in the celestial realms, before his appearance in this world, but solely to his condition in this world, and to mean that he was rich and poor at the same time. He was certainly rich, during his earthly pilgrimage, in the divine communications, being the well-beloved of the Father, having received all power from him, and enjoying the most intimate and uninterrupted communion with him. Yet, while he was thus highly honoured and beloved of God, he cheerfully submitted to all human adversity, and was the humblest of the sons of men. In this sense of the words, there is a great propriety and force in the apostle’s address, nor is there, as far as I can see, the least force

put upon them. * Neither can I perceive upon what foundation Bereanus affirms that "the contrary interpretation is most honourable to Jesus, and that, if he had no existence before his incarnation, there was no merit in his being poor, any more than in the poverty of any other man." I rather take this to be a round assertion. For, how does this writer know, but the great merit ascribed to Jesus on account of his humility, may be well grounded, though he may not be able to discover it fully, or may be mistaken as to the pre-existence. Must the matter depend upon his bare opinion? He will think, I hope, upon cool reflection, that he has here expressed himself in too positive a manner. Besides, it should be considered, that the poverty of Christ did not relate to his want of riches merely, but to his whole condition, to the reviling, hatred and abuse he met with, and to his god-like behaviour under these circumstances; and had he ever an equal, in this respect, if we consider his conduct throughout, particularly in the last scene of all? Bereanus, indeed, intimates that he had not only equals, but, if we are to carry our ideas of his humility no farther, even superiors. "If," says he, "our redeemer did not fill an exalted station in the heavenly world, before his conception and birth, the great en-

* Let it be considered what kind of riches the apostle speaks of when he says, that ye might be rich: certainly that of holiness and divine communications which they possessed already; for he says, ver. 7. *As ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us.* He must mean then that Christ was rich in a similar kind. VIGILIUS.

comiums given to his humility and grace, in this and the passage before explained, may be applied in the same sense to several of the apostles." He says again, "In what instances did our Lord discover his humility and grace, in which they did not discover theirs." And again, "Did he give up any temporal advantages? He never possessed any. Whereas some of them gave up their all, and forfeited the favour of the great and the learned, which they had enjoyed." In answer to all this, I will only propose a few queries. Did the apostles discover their humility in the same degree that he did? Which of them was uniformly humble like him? Which of them so rich as he? Farther; How did they acquire their humility? Was not he their example and guide? Did they not learn of him? Was not he the original? Were not they copyists? Does not he say, *Without me ye can do nothing? &c. Be of good cheer, I HAVE OVERCOME THE WORLD?* And, had not they the evidence of his resurrection to arm them with fortitude?

If the foregoing observations shall be found to have any weight in them, but few remarks will be necessary upon the remaining texts which this writer has quoted. I cannot help expressing my surprize that John, iii. 16. should be of the number, *God so loved the world, &c.* "A considerable stress," says B. "appears to be laid upon the terms *only-begotten Son*; and if our Lord enjoyed glory and happiness in the presence of God in heaven, and was an object of his affection and delight, it was amazing benevo-

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lence indeed in the Supreme Being to send him into this world," &c. But, surely the benevolence of God was equally amazing, supposing that his well-beloved son had no existence before his birth.

The next text, which our author produces in favour of his hypothesis, is Heb. i. 2. *By whom also he, God, made the worlds.* "The word translated *worlds,*" he says, "should have been rendered *ages,* and denotes the religious dispensations, which God hath granted to mankind, the last and most excellent of which christians enjoy." He likewise acknowledges, that the word rendered *made,* may be rendered *constituted,* or that the whole passage should run, *by whom God constituted the ages.* Yet, hence he concludes, "Jesus must, therefore, have existed long before his incarnation." How precipitate! If, indeed, the ages here manifestly signified all the ages of time, B.'s inference must have been just; for Jesus must certainly have existed during those ages, over which he had dominion. But there seems no more reason for this supposition, than for supposing that the *ages* we are speaking of signify *eternity,* and that, because the prophet Isaiah calls Christ *the Father of the ages;* it is therefore to be inferred from the text under consideration, that God made Christ the Father of eternity, or that God made Christ to be himself. It is beyond all doubt, however, that Christ had no dominion over the ages preceding his birth. For, he did not enter into his kingdom until after his resurrection. These ages, therefore, which God constituted by his
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Son, or under his Son, or which *he put in subjection to him*, according to chap. ii. 5.* are no other than the ages that commenced with his being exalted by the right hand of God, or those ages which succeeded the Jewish dispensation.

To convince B. that nothing more is intended in John viii. 58. than that Christ was greater than Abraham, it will be sufficient, I hope, to refer him again to the whole discourse, particularly the 33d, 35th, 36th, 51st, 52d, and 53d verses. It was this truth which offended the Jews at first, and it was the frequent repetition of this truth, which so violently incensed them against our Lord at last.

He first, we see, made himself greater than Abraham, by offering them freedom, who were the children of Abraham. Secondly; He claims the same pre-eminence, by promising that his followers should never see death, which was a privilege that the Jews could not pretend to have received from Abraham. He, in the next place, proves this superiority, in these words, *Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad.* To this the Jews, as they thought, made a witty reply, *Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* He had not said, we find, that he saw Abraham,

* In this text the apostle seems intentionally to explain what he means by the word *world* or *age*, in this epistle: the age or dispensation which the prophets had foretold as to come; this is the age or world of *which we speak*. Again he speaks, chap. vi. 5. *of the powers of the world to come, i. e.* the extraordinary powers which God hath granted to authenticate the christian dispensation. VIGILIUS.

but

but that Abraham saw his day. And what day could possibly be meant here, according to the common use of language, but some future day, or the time when he would make his appearance in our world? It was very usual with the prophets to express themselves after this manner, *I saw, &c.* that is, I fore-knew that such personages should appear, or that such events should come to pass, in some future period, or at such a particular future period. But, neither does our Lord say, in his answer to this reply, that he saw Abraham, but *Before Abraham was, I am*; which phrase does not so much imply, I apprehend, that he existed in the divine decree before Abraham, as that he was spoken of, and promised before Abraham. Abraham was unknown to the world, until his birth. But Christ was promised from the beginning, as the seed of the woman, who should be able to accomplish more than any other man, who must, therefore, be greater than Abraham.

The only remaining text which B. has introduced in support of his hypothesis, is John xvii. 5. *O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.* The language used Matt. xxv. 34. he says, is not parallel. Be it so. *The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,* is surely parallel language.

I need go no farther in remarking upon the foregoing texts, as the doctrine in question does not so much depend upon the phraseology of some particular passages of scripture, as upon the general character that is given us of Christ
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by all the sacred writers. All the prophets speak of him as a *man*, a man of the *same nature* with other men, their *brother* and their *fellow*. Accordingly, the evangelists and apostles teach us, that he was born of a woman like all other men, that he grew in stature and in wisdom like them, and that he was subject to thirst, and hunger, and fatigue, and pain, and sorrow, and death, as much as any other human being. He himself was not ashamed to call us brethren. Under the character of *mediator*, and the *anointed saviour*, he has no other appellation but that of *man*. *There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*. And accordingly, he is declared, to have been a partaker of flesh and blood, to have had a soul, and to have been tempted in all points like as we are, sin only excepted, and to be made in all things like unto his brethren. Now, does not this account of Christ oblige us to explain the most lofty expressions concerning him, in perfect consistency with his having had no existence before his birth? There is nothing equivocal in the term *man*, man that was *born*, that was an *infant*, that was subject to all human infirmities, not death excepted. Could as plain and positive language be produced from scripture, on the other side of the question, B. might triumph with some reason. Was it said, that Jesus was not a man, that he existed long before his incarnation, that he was happy ages before his appearance in this world, and that during the days of his flesh, he was only degraded into the mean condition of a man, having before he was born filled a godlike station
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in the heavenly world; then might we be charged with inveterate prejudices. But, until such passages of scripture can be produced as thus positively declare the pre-existence, let not the advocates for this doctrine, especially while there are such clouds of witnesses against it, lay claim to infallibility, and dogmatically assert, that no other christians are open to conviction.

RATIONALIST.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

I Beg leave, through the channel of your very useful Repository, to offer my mite towards elucidating a passage of scripture, which has involved some men of genius and learning, in the wildest reveries. I have two reasons for soliciting this favour. If I am wrong, I would thankfully receive information; and, if I am right, I would freely communicate the result of my enquiries to others.

The passage is, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. *By which also, Christ went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.* This apostle, in the preceding verse, led the attention of his converts to the glorious example of Christ, who *also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death*

death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit: It is added, by which also he went, and preached unto the spirits in prison. By which, that is, by his death and resurrection, or, as the apostle says, by his being put to death in the flesh, and quickened by the spirit, he went and preached to the spirits in prison.

We shall now inquire, who were the spirits in prison; and to this purpose, I think, we need only read a prediction of Isaiah, concerning the important consequences to all nations, of the great messiah's coming into the world; *I the Lord, says the prophet, speaking in the name of Jehovah, have called thee (Christ) in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness from the prison house.* The spirits in prison, then, were all the Gentiles, and all the Jews likewise, who sit in darkness, or who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage, that is, in short, all the children of men.* The only difficulty attending this interpretation, is, that it is afterwards said of these prisoners, that *they were sometime disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.* But this seems to be no more

* That Peter borrowed this mode of expression from Isaiah, and that the prophet used it in relation to those to whom the gospel should be preached; see also chap. lxi. 1. compared with Luke iv. 18, &c. VIGILIUS.

than

than a figurative expression, signifying not the same individuals, but prisoners of the same kind with that rebellious people, who lived before the flood, and who were shut up in the gloomy mansions of sin and death, with all the terrible judgments of God hanging over their heads. As if the apostle had said, "Our Lord went and preached to those spirits, that is, to those men who were prisoners, in the same sense, that all those children of disobedience formerly were, when the long-suffering of God waited, without any effect, for their repentance and salvation, in the days of Noah." Before the flood, very nearly the whole human race had corrupted their ways, and had so deeply immersed themselves in all iniquities, that they could have no reasonable hope of the mercies of God beyond the grave. When the flood came, they could have no other prospect, but the blackness of darkness for ever. The time was, when the day of salvation shone upon them, when they might have repented, and obtained the forgiveness of God. But, this time was now no more. They, having abused all the messages of Divine Grace, and laughed to scorn that benevolent dispensation which was calculated to save them, found at last, to their eternal confusion, that they had been sporting with their own lives, that there was a God, who judgeth in the earth, and that their destruction was inevitable. The floods, yea, the floods encompassed them, and they could find no place of refuge where they might rest their feet, or look for safety or deliverance, but despairing,

pairing, groaning, dying, sunk into the dreary prison of the grave.

In a prison of the same kind were all the children of men, when the sun of righteousness diffused the bright beams of his heavenly light upon them. The Gentiles had so astonishingly darkened the candle of the Lord within them, by their almost incredible superstitions, and enormous iniquities, that only clouds and shadows could surround them. Plato, indeed, had written so excellently upon the immortality of the soul, as to please, and in some measure to satisfy those, who thought deeply upon the subject. But few, very few, of the bulk of mankind, had leisure to examine, or strength of mind enough to perceive the force of his arguments. And of these few, some of the greatest could be no longer convinced than when they were reading his book. This was the case with Cato, who, while he was reading, both admired the wisdom of Plato, and believed that the dissolution of the body did not at all infer the death of the soul. But, no sooner did he lay down Plato's book, than all his doubts and fears returned. Nay, Socrates himself, the master and guide of Plato, and the wonder and luminary of the heathen world, though he fell a sacrifice to his noble opposition to the reigning superstitions and idolatries of his country, yet, when the last scene came to open upon him, could not help wavering and giving way to many desponding thoughts, and fearful apprehensions. But, except Socrates and a few others, the whole heathen world was buried in absolute darkness.

Their

Their prospects into futurity were founded upon mere conjectures, which, like a dream of the night, might make some transient impressions, but must shortly after leave them in a state of disconsolate suspense, or agonizing despair. Or, if they could have seen farther than they did, they were so reprobate in all their ways, and lived so universally as if there was no God in the world, that they must have rather dreaded the possibility of a future state, in which they should be called to an account, than wished to know that such a state was really intended for them. And, as to the Jews, it is well known that one sect among them absolutely denied a future state, and that all the other sects were so sensual, hypocritical, and so abominably disobedient to the laws of God, that if they at all looked beyond the grave, it must have been with bitter anguish, and with all those excruciating horrors, which the just dread of their offended Maker and Sovereign tended to raise. So that all mankind might well have been described *spirits in prison*, when the Great Messiah came to release them from their bondage, to redeem and restore them. They were not only imprisoned by the strong holds of death, which they could never break through by their own strength, but by the still more galling fetters of sin which they could never remove, from which they could devise no possible methods to extricate themselves.

We have now only to shew, in what sense it was that our Lord went, and preached to these spirits in prison. And, this we learn, from the
words

words immediately preceding the text, was by his death and resurrection. After these events, *having gone forth*, as the word *πορευθεις*, should have been rendered, that is, having ascended to heaven, he, by his apostles, and upon the foundation of his victory over the grave, published his gospel to the lame and the blind, and to those that were afar off as well as to those that were nigh. His death, in defence of that divine religion which he taught, was a proof that he himself was fully convinced of the infallible truth of all his doctrines: and, his resurrection from the dead, was a demonstration, that he was indeed the well-beloved of the Father, his authorised messenger, and that the God of Truth was the supreme, original author of that great salvation, which has sounded in our ears. By his death and resurrection, therefore, he has preached liberty to the captives, opened the prison doors which darkened and confined the old world, and called, and assisted the prisoners to come forth out of their prison house. By his death and resurrection he has ascertained to us, beyond the possibility of deception, that all the good tidings of great joy which the gospel contains are the messages of God who cannot lie, nor suffer any possible change or shadow of turning; and that all the promises and threatenings, and all the terms of acceptance proposed to us in the gospel, are likewise divine emanations from the God of all power, wisdom, mercy, and love. These were, accordingly, the grand points upon which all the apostles built the divine authority and

N^o IV. Vol. III. H h infinite

infinite importance of our holy religion.* If Christ be not risen, said they, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. But Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of those that sleep: therefore, God was with him, and all the doctrines he taught were the great truths of God; and, therefore, we also shall be raised, and shortly appear before his awful tribunal, to give an account of the deeds that we have done in the body, when the wicked shall be punished with an everlasting destruction, but all the truly penitent and reformed, crowned with everlasting salvation. And, indeed, without the death of Christ, we cannot think of any other method, by which the divinity of our religion could have been so fully confirmed to us. For had he been before his crucifixion carried up visibly into heaven, tho' the spectators might hence assuredly have concluded that he was a person in high favour with God, and also that he was the faithful messenger of God, yet to those who would otherwise have doubted the possibility of a revival from death, nothing but the real resurrection of a real man, who had been really dead, could have wrought a thorough conviction. But the death and resurrection of Christ place every thing upon a sure bottom, and prove all that we can wish them to prove. We

* Agreeably hereto the apostle adds in the 21st and 22d verses—*Baptism* (the token of our admission to the privileges of Christianity) *doth also now save us—through, or by means of the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.*

VIGILIUS.

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are sure that no being can raise from the dead, or restore life to those from whom it is once taken, but God the author of all being, or those who are sent by him, and act immediately under his authority and by his power, and we are sure that God would not give his seal to a liar. We are sure, therefore, that christianity is true, and that our Lord, by the most irresistible arguments at first preached, and is still preaching to the spirits in prison; that is, we are sure, that the gospel salvation is founded upon the most incontestible evidences, even the resurrection of Christ our Lord from the dead.

RATIONALIS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

I send you a few detached remarks, out of three different papers on the Socinian controversy. Number 1, is an answer to the two first pieces of Charistes, intituled, A defence of Dr. Lardner, Vol. II. of your Repository for 1770, N^o 1, and N^o 2, p. 65—83, occasioned by my Remarks, published Vol. I. of your Repository for 1769, p. 431. Number 2, contains remarks on the last piece of Charistes, published in Vol. III. of your Repository, for 1771, p. 58. Number 3, contains remarks on Dr. Dawson's sermons on the Logos. From number 1, accept the following extracts.

H h 2

I deny

I Deny that I ever admitted the justness of Dr. Lardner's observations on the gospel of St. John, and after certain observations thus proceed. To understand the gospel of St. John, it is necessary to know the history of the christian church about that time, and the age immediately succeeding. Some ancient sects of heretics (as they were then called) entertained very weak and extravagant notions of Almighty God, and our Lord Christ. I have no suspicion that the Socinians entertain those notions; but in the denial of his pre-existence, and, I will take the liberty to add, in the opinion that he was a mere man, both agree. It is also the opinion of the most learned in the ancient history of the church, that the preface of the apostle John's gospel, was intended, though less directly, as a protest against those errors, and a preservative from them. Now if the apostle John wrote his gospel with this view, it is a sufficient refutation of the Socinian doctrine, with those who admit his inspiration in the most moderate sense of the term. Room can hardly be allowed for the full illustration of the arguments, in support of this assertion. It is sufficient to observe, that on this supposition, the sense put upon the first chapter of St. John's gospel, is plain, easy, natural; but so far as I remember upon any other, forced and far fetched. If any one shall say, that this is only my assertion, I refer the learned reader to the ancient history of the church, and to the proofs of it (viz. of my assertion) which will arise from the comparison of the
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the apostle John's preface to his gospel, and the passages in his epistles relating to our Lord Christ, with the errors as to the nature and mode of his existence, which it is said they were intended to refute; and I believe that he will be convinced with me, that this hypothesis is the true key to the meaning of the evangelist on this subject. He will see the reason of the difference betwixt the apostle John and the rest of the evangelists. I mean, not with regard to truth and substance, but the new and very extraordinary stile and manner of writing used by the apostle John on this subject, which, on every other supposition, is altogether unaccountable, and which seems to me very extraordinary; none of the critics on the Socinian side, have so much as attempted to account for it. He will see I had observed, in the first piece, that our Lord's exaltation was unaccountable, if his pre-existence and his superior dignity in that state were denied; it is added, and his miraculous birth and conception appear to me equally unaccountable. To this subject we may, with great propriety, apply the maxim of the poet, *Nec Deus interfit, nisi dignus vindice nodus incidit*. What occasion, it may be asked (and it will not easily be answered) was there for all this parade, this waste of miracles, to bring into the world one who, in his infant state, (which according to the Socinians was his original state) was not, nor could possibly be greater than Charistes, myself, or the most considerable individual of mankind? If Charistes can account upon his principles for the miraculous conception, &c. I wish he would do it; if he would

would support the cause he defends, he must do it. If he cannot, he must deny, as others have done before him, the truth of those parts of the gospel history which relate to this subject. But then, another difficulty will meet him, in my opinion equally great, viz. the difficulty of ascertaining and fixing the criterion, by which we are to distinguish the spurious parts of the gospel history, from those that are genuine and authentic. For my part, if I believed that our Lord existed not in a state of superior dignity before his incarnation, as well as that he was born a mere human being (I take both these together) I should think it most probable, that he came into the world in the common course of nature, and that he was as much the son of Joseph as of Mary. This was, indeed, the opinion of an ancient sect who denied the pre-existence, and I really think that they were more consistent with themselves, than my good friend the Remarker, and his adherents are, or can be, if the truth of their grand distinguishing principle, viz. the non pre-existence of our Lord, is supposed.

If you think it convenient, and shall continue your excellent Repository, I will send you the account above referred to, for some future number, on the least intimation that it will be acceptable; but having thrown out this hint, I am ready to think, that some of your learned readers will do it better, and I wish they would save me the trouble.

From number 2, I can only send the following detached remarks. The chief objection
made

made by Charistes, is founded on the difficulty I had myself acknowledged and fairly stated (in the postscript to my letter of Remarks in Vol. I. of your Repository, p. 440) and which does not, that I can perceive, receive any additional strength from his representation. Many things may be offered, if not as a perfect solution, at least as great abatements of it. The notions, perhaps, of some well-meaning Arians, respecting the original dignity of our Lord, are as much too high, as those of the Socinians are too low and disparaging: Our Lord Christ is, indeed, the first being, next to the Supreme, but still far inferior, and as distant from him as finite from infinity. The creation and support of all things are ascribed to him, but only as the instrument of the Most High, and under him, and by his appointment. What sublime and magnificent spheres of action may be allotted to beings, far inferior to our Lord Christ, but yet no greater than are proportioned to the powers with which he hath invested them, who can tell? But to suppose that they may be very grand and extensive, does not at all lessen or detract from, but may rather serve to heighten our ideas of the creator and supreme Lord of all. Our notions, indeed, of these, viz. these allotted spheres of action may exceed, and be incompatible, in the very nature of things, with the condition and rank of the most glorious of all created and dependent beings. But the power and province of our Lord, great as they are, may be magnified beyond the truth, on the imaginary evidence of passages in the New Testament misunderstood,

understood, and the expressions relating to the creation and support of all things by our blessed Lord, which seem to be absolute and universal, may be confined to this system, and some of them (his original dignity alone considered) even to this globe, by an easy and common figure, at least not bolder than those, to which gentlemen of the Socinian persuasion have continual recourse.

The common and impartial Lord and Father of the universe, hath sent this great personage, viz. his beloved son, into the world, to be our redeemer and the restorer of pure and uncorrupted religion: but the benefits may redound equally to all the systems in his boundless empire, and to all the worlds of which they are composed, inhabited by intelligent natures. The proceedings of Almighty God towards us, may be held up for their admonition and instruction. The same finished example of moral virtues in the person of our Lord (although this world was the scene of them) may be exhibited to them. And since, perhaps, other intelligent beings may fall from their integrity, and be in some respects liable to sin and error, the same terms of favour and acceptance with Almighty God through our Lord Christ (though his personal ministry was confined to this world) may be proposed to them and to all. Some of these thoughts are greatly countenanced by those passages, in which God's proceedings with the fallen angels are held up, and recommended to the serious regard of mankind, and by those in which the extraordinary wisdom and grace of his dealings with men by the ministry of Christ, are represented

sent as not beneath the notice of the highest orders of beings, and as, in fact, the objects of their attention.

These proceedings of Almighty God must, therefore, have been revealed to them, and if so, why might they not to other worlds, and even to other systems? I proceed to shew at large, how, upon this state of the case, an answer may be given to all his queries or objections: and in answer to that, in N^o. 1. Vol. 3. of your Repository, page 61, line 23—28, it is observed, that the single mission of our Lord, appears to be sufficient, at least for any thing that can be shewn to the contrary on the Arian principles, whether that mission be deemed necessary or expedient. And to suppose (according to this hypothesis) that the method of God's proceeding with all intelligent creatures is the same, so far as their circumstances are the same; and that as they have all with this restriction, the same laws and rules of conduct, the terms of acceptance are the same, and that they have one and the same law-giver and redeemer; is most agreeable to the attributes of that being, with whom there is no respect of persons, as well as to the noble and beautiful simplicity so conspicuous in the frame and course of nature, in which, all is reducible to a few general laws, and according to which, we see a great and endless variety of effects, which are the result of one and the same principle, and which often flow from the single operation of one and the same cause. There is one remarkable passage in the piece of Charistes just referred to, p. 64, 65, which I must not omit. The substance of it is, that a state of imprisonment

prisonment in a fleshly tabernacle, subject to human frailties and infirmities must, to so glorious a being as the Arians represent our Lord Christ, be (as Bishop Clayton expresses it) a hell upon earth. In answer to this, my Remarker must be told, that he forgets the true state of the case, no such glorious spirit was thus imprisoned in flesh. It was the Logos, when converted into a human soul, and suited, in a great measure, like ours, to the present state and condition of human nature and life.

Nevertheless, the consciousness and remembrance which our Lord, even in that state, still retained of his former dignity, added (no doubt) to the humiliation and sufferings of his life, and seems best to account for the extremity of his agonies in death, or the scenes immediately preceding; which, on the Socinian scheme, and without taking this into our view, may be thought to sink his character below that of some other persons, who seem to have behaved with equal submission to the will of God, and with greater intrepidity and calmness. If my Remarker shall object that what I have said of the benefits of our Lord's mission redounding to all worlds, &c. are only suppositions, I must desire him to recollect, that a considerable part of his last remarks, consists chiefly of suppositions, or of arguments founded upon them, and the impartial reader must judge for himself which are the most probable.

From number 3, accept the few hints which follow.—If the Doctor (Dawson) means by his Remarks on John iii. 13, p. 78, of his book, that
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this text can admit of no literal sense but what is absurd and contradictory, it is answered, that this representation is founded upon his taking it for granted, that the words ο ων (εν τω ουρανω) signify, as in our translation, *which is in heaven*, but I assert, that they should be translated *which was*. This is manifestly the meaning of the same words ο ων John iii. 31. and if you want any further authority, take that of the Doctor himself, who acknowledges, only two or three pages before, that the words ο ων in John i. 18. may be thus rendered, and he seems even to give the preference to this translation, vid. page 75 of the Doctor's book upon the Logos. Now if this translation be admitted, there is no foundation at all for the Doctor's triumph over the advocates for a literal sense of the abovementioned text, viz. John iii. 13. Such a one occurs as is very easy and natural, at least not chargeable with any gross contradictions. I have other texts in which the expressions, *coming from God, from the Father, coming down from heaven*, refer to a local descent, or to the existence of our Lord, prior to his incarnation, and cannot be understood, according to the Doctor's notion, in a figurative sense of his receiving his doctrine from heaven. But I shall only mention some hints of remarks on John xvi. 28. We may observe on the former clauses of the text, viz. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world*: that if, according to Dr. Dawson, they mean no more than that our Lord was distinguished by extraordinary revelations from his God and Father,

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ther, and that he was commissioned to publish them to the world, the particular propriety of the words, at the time they were spoken by our Lord, does not appear, which certainly is an argument (considering how they stand connected) against taking them in this sense. And yet, on the other hand, if any one shall think there is such a propriety in them when taken in the just mentioned sense (viz. that our Lord was a divine teacher and distinguished with revelations from God) it will be no argument for it, *i. e.* no argument for this sense exclusive of any other; nor any objection at all to such a paraphrase and explication as an *Arian* would give. Because the *Arian* explication includes in it, and, of course, supposes the *Socinian* (viz. that our Lord's commission and instructions were from heaven) only it includes in it a great deal more, viz. his original and descent from God, from heaven, the place of his most glorious manifestation; and therefore, the former clauses of the text (as abovementioned) taken in the *Arian* sense, not only answer every purpose that could be served by them taken in Dr. Dawson's sense, but they are yet more strongly calculated for the encouragement of our Lord's disciples; and again we may observe, as we might on some other texts, that as the latter expressions (in it) of *leaving the world and going to the Father*, are to be literally understood, the former, which are opposed to them, must be taken in the same sense.

But this is not all; for the apostles themselves, who heard these words of our Lord, and who
might,

might, perhaps, understand him as well as Dr. Dawson himself, expressly declare, that they took his words in the plain and literal sense. For this, in my apprehension, is the meaning of what they say, John xvi. 29. *Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb.* Now if, after all the Rev. Doctor can shew that the former clauses of John xvi. 28. *viz. I came forth from the Father, and, &c.* must be taken in a figurative sense; and that, consequently, no argument can be drawn from thence for our Lord's pre-existence; I will not say with Old Tertullian, I adore the fullness of the scripture; but I admire its wonderful suppleness and difficulty. I could point out the insufficiency (to say the least) of the Doctor's arguments in other instances.

The force of a great part of them turns upon these two fancies. 1. That as our Lord was a mere man during his incarnation, he could, therefore, never have been greater in any prior state of existence. The second is, that the Arians (who assert our Lord's pre-existence) must, in order to be consistent with themselves, believe that all his miracles were wrought, as well as other articles relating to his ministry, performed by the divinity (a divinity distinct from that of the Father) resident in himself, in his state of incarnation, or that the miracles, &c. as just mentioned, were wrought, as some, I suppose, would express it, (with equal propriety) by his own divinity. Unless these fancies of the Doctor be admitted, a great part of his arguments falls to the ground.

Now I deny them both; and if the Doctor will be kind enough to prove them, I will be bold

bold to say, that, of all his pieces, this will ever be regarded as the most glorious monument of his genius.

———— r.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

TO the remarks which I have already sent you, on the Harmony of the Evangelists, please to add the following :

1. *Of the insults which Jesus received at the house of the High-Priest.*

Luke speaks of the denial of Peter, and the insults which Jesus received at the house of the High-Priest, as preceding the assembly of the chief priests to examine him, and his confession that he was the Christ. This assembly and examination, he says, were *when it was day*, xxii. 66. Matthew expressly says, that the insults were after his examination, xxvi. 67. Indeed, both Matthew, xxvii. 1. and Mark xv. 1. speak of an assembly of the chief priests when it was day; but this was after his examination, and was only for the purpose of consulting among themselves in what manner they should get their sentence put in execution; and therefore they make no mention of Jesus being brought before them at that time. The resolution which they came to at this second meeting, was to carry Jesus bound to Pilate, which they did immediately.

2. *Of*

2. *Of the circumstances attending Peter's denial of Jesus.*

There is a pretty considerable variation in the accounts which the different evangelists give of the circumstances attending Peter's denial of Christ. According to Matthew, our Lord told Peter, that before the cock crew, he should deny him thrice, xxvi. 34. And he represents him as denying him three times distinctly, before the cock crew; the two first times at the interrogation of two different women, and lastly, of those who were standing by, xxvi. 69—75.

Mark says, that our Lord told Peter, that before the cock crew twice he should deny him thrice, xiv. 13. And he represents the first cock crowing after the first denial. The two first denials, according to this evangelist, were occasioned by the interrogations of the same woman, and the third by that of the standers-by, xiv. 66—72.

Luke, like Matthew, says that Christ told Peter, that before the cock crew he should deny him thrice; xxii. 34, but he represents the first denial only as occasioned by the interrogation of a woman, and the second and third at that of two different men. He also mentions the circumstance of our Lord's *looking at Peter* after the crowing of the cock, as if that alone had not been sufficient to awaken his recollection, xxii. 25—62.

John says, that Jesus told Peter, that before the cock crew he should deny him thrice, xiii. 38. and he says that the first denial was at the interrogation

rogation of a woman who kept the door, on his entrance (for it is mentioned before the fire is spoken of) the second time at that of several persons who were warming themselves, and the third time at that of a relation of the man whose ear was cut off, and who alledged that he had seen Peter in the garden.

It seems probable that Matthew and John, who heard Jesus, and who were present when Jesus foretold the denial of Peter, have given the true account with respect to the number of cock crowings, and that the second crowing of the cock was an addition, which the jingle of *twice* and *thrice* might, perhaps, recommend to those persons from whom Mark (who was not present) had his account. Matthew and John, however, differ with respect to the persons who interrogated Peter. Matthew also mentions no interrogation till after the insults which Jesus met with; and yet having probably heard something of his being interrogated at the door, he speaks of his going to the door afterwards, and being then interrogated the second time. The account of John, who was in the house at the time, may certainly be depended upon as the most exact, especially as he had seen those of the other evangelists. John makes no mention of Christ's *looking on Peter*; and, indeed, it is not very probable, that the chief priests were assembled either in the same place where the servants were making a fire, or in any room from whence they could be seen by the servants at the common hearth.

3. *Of the circumstances which attended the resurrection of Christ.*

Much has been written by several modern divines, on the harmony of the different accounts which are given by the four evangelists, of the circumstances attending the resurrection of Christ; and I believe it may be possible to draw up a narrative, which shall comprise all the different accounts, and be consistent with itself; but to me it is evident, that if the different writers had had exactly the same ideas of the circumstances attending that event, they would not have written as they have done concerning it.

Matthew says, xxviii. 1, &c. That Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went, at the break of day, to see the sepulchre, but an angel had rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. This angel bade them tell the disciples, that Jesus was risen from the dead; and as they were making haste to deliver that message, Jesus himself appeared to them, and they fell down and held him by the feet, but he bade them go and tell his disciples to meet him in Galilee.

Mark says, xvi. 1, &c. That, at sun rise, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, going to anoint the body of Jesus, found the sepulchre open; and going in, saw a young man sitting on the right hand, who told them that Jesus was risen, and bade them tell his disciples to
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meet him in Galilee. Afterwards this evangelist informs us that Jesus, having risen early in the morning, appeared first to Mary Magdalene, who went and informed the disciples, but was not believed by them.

Luke says, xxiv. 1, &c. That many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, and others with them, going with spices, found the stone rolled away; and going into the sepulchre found not the body of Jesus; and that while they were in doubt, two men stood by them, who said that he was risen; and that they went and told the disciples, who did not believe them; but that Peter ran to the sepulchre, and seeing the grave cloaths, wondered very much.

John, who is the most circumstantial in his relation, says, xx. 1, &c. That while it was yet dark, Mary Magdalene went to the sepulchre; and upon seeing the stone taken away, ran to inform Peter and John. Upon this, these two disciples ran to the place, and finding the cloaths only, returned; but that Mary, who stood without, and wept, on looking into the sepulchre, saw two angels, sitting one at the head, and the other at the feet where the body had laid; and while she was asking them concerning the body, Jesus himself appeared to her, and bade her go and tell his disciples that he was risen.

To me it appears not very easy to suppose that these different accounts were written by persons who had precisely the same ideas of the events, and of the order of them; but the variations

riations are such, that it is not worth the while of any friend of christianity to take pains to reconcile them. After considering and comparing all these accounts, my own ideas of the affair are as follows.

The stone was rolled from the sepulchre, Jesus rose, and the guard were dispersed, some time before day-break. Presently after, the women came with their spices, intending to embalm the body; but recollecting that the stone was too large for them to remove, they were at a loss what to do, when they were surpris'd to find it already rolled away, and the body gone. Being exceedingly astonish'd at this, they dispersed themselves to different places, to inform the disciples of what they had seen; for it is not at all probable, that, in their present state of fear and consternation, they were all together. Mary Magdalene went to Peter and John, who immediately ran to the sepulchre, followed by Mary herself; who probably arriv'd there, the second time, before these two disciples had left the place; but staying longer than they did, and looking into the sepulchre, after they were gone, she saw first the two angels, and then Jesus himself.

By this time, it is probable, that most of his disciples were got together, in consequence of the news they had heard, when Mary join'd them, and inform'd them that she had seen Jesus himself, but they gave no credit to her. Some time the same day, when the disciples were separated, Jesus appear'd to Peter alone, Luke xxiv. 34. who, upon this, probably assem-

bled as many of the disciples as he could, to inform them of it; but Thomas was out of the way. After the appearance of Peter, our Lord joined the two disciples who were going to Emmaus, and discovered himself to them; upon which they immediately returned to Jerusalem, and going to the place where the disciples were assembled, were informed by them that Jesus had appeared to Peter; and while they were giving an account of the manner, in which he had made himself known to them also, Jesus himself appeared to them, and eat with them. Thomas, being informed of this, would not believe; but that day sevensnight, Jesus appeared to them when Thomas was present, and was fully satisfied. After this, all the disciples went to Galilee, where Jesus was seen by them, and the other disciples, many of whom resided in Galilee; and returning to Jerusalem, he ascended to heaven in the presence of many of them, from the Mount of Olives.

I take it for granted, that John would not have given so circumstantial an account, as he has done of the manner in which the resurrection was first notified, if it had not been for the sake of being more exact than the other evangelists had been. I have, therefore, followed his account, and think that the variations in the other evangelists, which cannot be easily reconciled with it, must be ascribed to their being misinformed, and mistaken concerning them. But they are things of no moment; so that the variations with respect to them, serve to make
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the general account of the resurrection the *more*, and not the *less* credible.

All the evangelists, except John, represent the women as having seen the vision of angels before any of them had been with the apostles, but the account which John gives, makes the discovery of the resurrection more gradual and pleasing. It is also to be observed, that the manner in which they describe this vision is remarkably different.

I almost think that Luke had no idea of Christ being seen by the disciples in Galilee; for he not only takes no notice of any message from the angels to that purpose, but, in the interview which he speaks of Jesus having with the disciples on the evening of the same day, he represents him as commanding them *to stay in the city of Jerusalem*, till they should be indued with power from on high. The same account he also gives, Acts i. 4. and then immediately proceeds to the history of the ascension from the Mount of Olives.

LIBERIUS.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

The few following thoughts on the remaining objections of Paulinus, in your last number, from page 195, are submitted to your discretion, by

Gentlemen, your very humble servant,

W. W.

PAULINUS himself is not clear, he says, that some part of the 68th Psalm does not refer to the kingdom of the Messiah in the latter days; and why, then, not the 18th verse, which he seems to object against? *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men; for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them.* Who so properly received gifts for men as Christ after his ascension? And is not he prophetically stiled by Isaiah, יְמוּנָאֵל, *God is with us*; the auxiliary verb *is* being often understood in these short significative titles given in scripture to things, altars, persons, or communities. So יהוה צדקנו, *Jehovah is our Justifier*, a name given prophetically by Jeremiah to the city Jerusalem, Jer. xxxiii. 16. and to Israel, or the people, ch. xxiii. 6. the relative לֵה in this place, as well as ו in the other, I am persuaded, refers to the nearer antecedent, and not to the remote one, *the Branch*, as it is commonly understood. Both prophecies relate to the same event, to the gospel times, and are but a repetition the one of the other. St. Paul seems plainly to allude to

to this name, Rom. viii. 33, and has even literally translated it Θεός ο δικαίων.

As to Heb. ii. 11. I neither can nor need, I think, give a better account than what Mr. Pierce has done in his paraphrase and notes on the place.

With regard to Heb. iv. 7—9. I can see no room at all for an objection. *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, says the Psalmist, harden not your hearts like your fathers, &c. unto whom God swore in his wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.* The plain meaning of which is, harden not *your* hearts, lest God likewise swear in his wrath that *you* shall not enter into his rest; which must mean a rest that then still remained for the good people among them, who had long since already entered into the earthly Canaan; as the author to the Hebrews himself observes.

As to St. Paul's argument, by which he checks the forwardness of some women at that time, in being so ready to prate ungiftedly in their publick religious assemblies, I leave it, as Paulinus has done, to the modest and discreet of that sex to judge, for I perceive no flaw in the argument.

In answer to Paulinus's objection to Rom. vii. 1—6. I refer him to what Mr. Locke and Dr. Taylor have largely offered on the place: and as to St. Paul's allegory, to Mr. Pierce upon Gal. iv. 21—31.

Page 204. "As we Christians are initiated, or signified to be initiated into Christ, as his disciples, by baptism, and confirmed such in the Lord's supper, so were the Israelites to Moses,

as their prophet and leader, by those grand miracles specified ; and the rock, whose miraculous waters followed them, might well represent Christ the fountain of living waters, and might be designed to represent him." Where, then, is the absurdity of this writer's saying, *that Rock was Christ*, any more than our Saviour's saying, *this Bread is my Body* ? Our Saviour, as well as St. Paul, often refers to a spiritual and more glorious sense of several passages in the Old Testament, as well as of his own speeches couched in the letter. *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.* He explained these things, first or last, to his disciples, but the veil remained on the heart of the obstinate unbelieving Jews, and does so to this day.

I consider Rom. viii. 26, 27. as a beautiful description of that loss a pious mind may be at what to pray for, when yet his heart is warm with inward devotion towards God ; which happy frame of mind is known to God, proceeds from him, and will be answered by him in a better manner than the devout person can express or conceive. This may often be the case of a good person in trouble or lowness of spirits, and was perhaps the case of our Saviour himself when in his agony in the garden.

As to all that follows, page 206, &c. I observe, that ever so great variety of figures, allusions, and comparisons by which the death of Christ, or the union betwixt him and his followers are represented, may each agree in some circumstance or other, and comparisons are never expected to run upon all four. The ancient
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and eastern language borders very much upon the ancient hieroglyphic way of writing (perhaps took its rise from it) and may not suit with the over-strained delicacy or nicety of modern criticism in these colder climates. The true scripture critic should, in his imagination, remove himself about 700 leagues South-East in situation, and seventeen or twenty centuries back in time.

Supposing, after all, there was not the utmost syllogistical accuracy in some of St. Paul's arguments, in the sense in which we are liable, at this distance, to take them; it would not, I apprehend, at all impeach either his inspiration, his sincerity, or his good sense; and Paulinus, I believe, thinks so too.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

If you think the following attempt to explain the meaning of 1 Peter, v. 8. worth your attention, you will be so good as to insert it in your useful work.

X. Y.

THE apostle begins this epistle with urging motives to the strangers (the converts from idolátry to christianity) to whom he addresses it, to induce them, with steadiness and an humble confidence in God, to support themselves under any persecutions they might at present suffer, or were exposed to on account of their christian profession. Then, after prescribing to them rules for their publick conduct as members

members of the civil state, and towards each other as christians, at the close of his epistle he returns to the subject with which he first set out: *Be clothed* (says he) *with humility, for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time; casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Be sober; be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But 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.*

The 8th verse, as it stands in our translation, seems to have no connection with the subject on which the apostle is evidently writing, viz. the persecutions they were exposed to, in common with their brethren in other parts of the world, on account of their faith in Christ. But a little attention to the original will, I think, easily clear up this matter. The words as they stand there are, ver. 8. *Νηψατε, γρηγορησατε, οτι ο αντιδικος υμων διαβολος, ως λεων ωρυομενος, περιπατει ζητων τινα καταπιη.* The obvious translation of which is, “Be sober or cautious, be vigilant, because the adversary, your accuser, like a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” The word *αντιδικος* may either mean in general, in this place, any persons who were, at that time, active in bringing Christians, by their accusations, before courts

courts of judicature; or, perhaps, Nero may particularly be alluded to; since the first persecution against the Christians begun (in consequence of a false accusation against them, as being concerned in burning the city) * A. D. 65. and of Nero, 11. And this epistle is supposed, by Dr. Benson, to have been written about the year 67.

Had the meaning of the apostle been what the common translation conveys to us, instead of *ο αντιδικος υμων διαβολος*, &c. the original would have been *ανιδικος υμων ο διαβολος*, &c. where the article *ο* is transferred from *αντιδικος* to *διαβολος*; but as all the manuscripts agree in placing it before *αντιδικος*, the common grammatical construction will naturally lead us to apply *υμων* to *διαβολος* instead of *αντιδικος*.

I am surprized that this interpretation has escaped the notice of all the commentators on this epistle who have fallen in my way, but particularly the learned Dr. Benson: who, tho' he evidently does not understand it in the commonly-received sense; yet does not appear to me to have entered entirely into the meaning of the apostle in this place.

* Igitur primum correpti (Christiani) qui fatebantur, deinde indicio eorum multitudo ingens, haud perinde in crimine incendii, quam odio humani generis, convicti sunt. Tac. Ann. lib. 15. par. 44. And the whole tenor of this epistle seems to indicate, that it was written either during the time, or soon after some persecution of the christians.

To the Editors of the Theological Repository.

GENTLEMEN,

TO my former observations on *Christ's agony in the garden*, tending to prove that *the bloody sweat* was a natural phenomenon, the effect of great mental agitation, please to add the following facts.

A criminal, in some part of Italy, a person in perfect health, was seized with extreme terror on being sentenced to die, and sweat blood so very profusely, that, if I recollect aright, he died before he could be got to the place of execution. A friend of mine, who mentioned this fact to me, promised to send me a particular account of it, with the proper authorities; but not arriving in time, I am obliged to mention it only in general. If the first volume of this work be reprinted, I will endeavour to procure his account.

Mr. Samuel Taylor, of Rochdale in Lancashire, a person of a fair skin, and rather delicate constitution, having been for some time in a declining way, being told by his apothecary, whom he interrogated on the subject, that he was near death, of which he had not been apprehensive, was seized with an universal tremor and terror of mind, during which he sweated most profusely, and blood was perceived to issue from three places in his forehead. A person who sat up with him and his servant, in order to satisfy themselves concerning this extraordinary circumstance, without alarming him, wiped

wiped his face with a clean white handkerchief, and examined it at their leasure. In about half an hour Mr. Taylor perfectly recovered himself, and died with great composure. This was in 1769. A relation of Mr. Taylor's, who saw the place from which the blood had issued, which, he says, were orifices of the bigness of large pins' heads, gave me this information, with leave to make it public, in confirmation of the observations in the Repository.

C L E M E N S.

T H E C O N C L U S I O N .

THREE volumes of this work being now completed, it is thought proper to make a pause in the publication. One principal reason for this, it is frankly acknowledged, is the little demand there has been for it, on which account the publisher has by no means been indemnified. It is hoped, however, that when the first volume shall be reprinted (for want of which many persons have been discouraged from purchasing the succeeding volumes) the sale will go on better, which will encourage the director to resume the publication; and therefore the friends and the chief contributors to this work are desired not to lose sight of it, or to intermit any of the studies and inquiries in which they may have been engaged with a view to it. Notice will be given in the public papers whenever the scheme is revived.

These

These three volumes must be allowed to contain many truly original, and exceedingly valuable tracts, tending to illustrate several very interesting subjects of theological inquiry, especially the controversies relating to the doctrine of atonement, the pre-existence of Christ, and the inspiration of the scriptures; and the last of these questions has been examined not so much in the way of general *argument*, as by the allegation of such *facts* relating to composition of the books of the New-Testament, as cannot but have the greatest weight in determining the controversy one way or the other. Also, exclusive of such general questions as these, it must be allowed by the most prejudiced, that these three volumes contain many ingenious and happy illustrations of several passages of scripture, which have no relation to any particular controversy.

That the work has been conducted with the utmost fairness and impartiality, with respect to those persons who have sent papers to it, the contents themselves will, in some measure, prove; and with respect to what has not appeared in public, the director may venture to assert his impartiality, without the least apprehension of its being controverted by any person whatever. That the readers of the Repository may have an opportunity of satisfying themselves in some measure on this subject (which is of the greatest consequence with respect to their confidence in him on any future occasion) he thinks proper to declare, that his own signatures have been CLEMENS, LIBERIUS and PAULINUS, and no other.

other. Now any person concerned may easily examine whether the director of this publication has availed himself of his situation, to suppress any thing that has been sent to him contrary to the sentiments advanced under those characters. He has even closed the work without taking that opportunity of making any reply to what has been advanced against his particular opinions, because those who have called them in question would not have it in their power to reply again. Indeed he has, on this account, very seldom animadverted upon any papers whatever. He thinks himself particularly obliged to W. W. for the pains he has taken to examine the papers signed PAULINUS, and acknowledges that, in several respects, he has received much satisfaction from his ingenious remarks, though he doth not think that he hath removed all the difficulties. He forbears, however, to be particular, because he could not be so without taking an unfair advantage.

Though the director of this work does not, by any means, think it incumbent upon him to answer the questions, and solve the difficulties which are proposed in the course of it, he thinks it may be of some use to close this part of the undertaking, with endeavouring to satisfy three of his correspondents, whose questions are of some consequence; and it will be the easier for him to do it, because he finds, upon examination, that they are not altogether new.

A correspondent, whose signature is Q. Vol. 2. p. 190. thinks that great service would be done to the cause of christianity, if a simple and clear
proof

proof were given, that the three former gospels, and the book of Acts, were written before the destruction of Jerusalem. Now with respect to this, it may be observed, that we have all the evidence that is ever required in similar cases, viz. the unanimous testimony of those who wrote nearest to the times, in which those books were published, and such internal characters as are not liable to any suspicion. It is highly probable, for instance, that Luke, who has given us so particular a history of the proceedings of the apostle Paul, would have given an account of his death also, if he had written so late; but the last transaction which is mentioned in the book of Acts, is St. Paul's confinement at Rome, in the reign of Nero, A. D. 62, or 63; and his gospel was evidently written before the book of Acts. Besides, none of the early advocates of christianity have ever mentioned the lateness of these publications; and it cannot be supposed that they would have omitted so obvious an argument of their want of authenticity. Can it be imagined, for instance, that the three former evangelists could have given so particular a prophecy, as they had done of the destruction of Jerusalem *after the event*, and have escaped animadversion. Luke's saying, by way of parenthesis, in his account of the signs which were to precede that catastrophe, *be that readeth let him understand*, very naturally intimates that, in his apprehension, some of those signs were taking place, at the time of his writing, and seem to imply an admonition to all christians, to give proper attention to them.

On

On the other hand, John, who confessedly wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, has not recorded any of the prophecies relating to it, they having been sufficiently mentioned by others, and being then accomplished.

Pyrrho, Vol. 2. p. 464, will probably find satisfaction with respect to his difficulty in Dr. Benson's history of the planting of christianity, Vol. 1. p. 203, second edition. He there observes, that, in the second century, Justin Martyr considered Damascus as belonging to Arabia, and therefore he thinks that, though the Romans conquered Damascus under Pompey, and there is no mention of its being restored; yet that Aretas, being still king of Arabia, of which Damascus was a part, held that city, together with the rest of his dominions, as a dependent and tributary Prince.

I would inform our correspondent, N. F. Vol. 2. p. 468, that according to Dr. Lightfoot (see his works, vol. 2. p. 400) the Jews speak of Mary as the daughter of Heli; and if so, Luke has given the proper and natural descent of Jesus; whereas Matthew has given what the Jews, who judged by appearances, would have called his pedigree. Besides, if we consider the usual stile and manner of writing genealogies among the Jews, we shall perceive that Luke did not mean to say that Joseph was the son of Heli, but that Jesus was descended from him. For Jesus, as the same Dr. Lightfoot observes, is the proper antecedent to all the terms in the pedigree, even to the last, the *son of God*. In fact, therefore, the meaning of Luke is,
N^o 4. Vol. III. K k that

that Jesus (who was the supposed son of Joseph) was descended from Heli, from Matthat, from Levi, from Melchi, &c. and from God. This is not advanced without the authority of a similar instance; for in Genesis xxxvi. 2. Aholibamah, is called *the daughter of Anak*, the *daughter of Zibeon*; whereas, in fact, Anah was the *son* of Zibeon; and consequently it is Aholibamah who is here called the daughter of Zibeon, as being descended from him. It is plain from verse 24, 25, of the same chapter, that Anah was a *man*, the father of Aholibamah.

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- Vol. III. p. 24. l. 1. *for* any, *read* every.
- 103. l. 18. *for* this, *read* the.
- 109. l. 6. *a full stop after* blameless.
- 158. l. 12. *for*, . Nor that, *read*
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- 183. l. 1. *dele* first.
- 186. l. 22. *read* dead to sin.
- 236. l. 7. *for* is sensibly, *read* insen-
sibly.
- 317. The note in this page belongs
to page 318, referring to the
word *world*, l. 20.
- 444. *for* RATIONALIST, *read*
RATIONALIS.





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