

WORKS

THE LATE REV. JOHN PAUL, D.D.,

OF CARRICKFERGUS:

COMPRISING

- I. A REFUTATION OF ARIANISM,
- II. CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS DEFENDED,
- III. REVIEW OF DR. MONTGOMERY'S SPEECH.

WITH

A MEMOIR AND INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR,

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INTRODUCTION.

It does not comport with the plan of this publication, to enlarge the volume by an extended introduction. Yet, it seems only a dutiful mark of respect to the public that has called for these writings, to supply a few recollections of their esteemed author; and, in doing so, it can scarcely be out of place to take a hasty glance at one or two aspects of the great controversy to which these pages are chiefly devoted. The fact, that so numerous a body of subscribers, including a large proportion of ministers, have united in expressing the desire that these works should be reprinted, more than thirty years after the first of them issued from the press, supplies a testimony to their value that cannot fail to be gratifying to the surviving friends of the author, and to many others who admired him while living, as an able defender of orthodoxy, and of civil and religious liberty.

The late Dr. Paul was a minister connected with that portion of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland, known by the name of the Eastern Synod. His birth-place was in the neighbourhood of Antrim, in the North of Ireland. Few of his school companions, or class-mates at college, survive, from whom fragments of his early history could be collected. Nor is this of any material importance. Seven years have elapsed since he rested from his labours; and, while in

one sense his works do follow him, there is another in which they remain to bear testimony to the talents and attainments by which it pleased the Lord to distinguish him.

He was accustomed to speak of Mr. Matthews, his classical teacher, with lively interest, as a man in whom goodness of heart, and a considerable vein of humour, were combined with respectable literary attainments. There can be no doubt, however, that he was more indebted for the formation of his character and his principles, to the excellent family-training he was privileged to enjoy, than to any single means besides. His parents were attached members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and were happy to consecrate their only son to the service of Christ, in the office of the ministry. Of his mother he was accustomed to speak with great veneration, as a woman of strong mind, and remarkable familiarity with the Scriptures. He studied at the Glasgow University, and was not without honours there. But the chief honours of his youth were, eminent purity of life, strict conscientiousness, and a vehement thirst for knowledge.

As an early indication of his cast of mind, and of his power of fixed and resolute attention, it may be mentioned, that he studied English grammar wholly without a master, and at intervals of leisure from his stated school exercises. The singular clearness and force of his own style, and the acuteness with which he detects any looseness of thought, or faulty construction in that of his opponents, combine to show how

successful he was in mastering the grammar of his native language.

But themes of greater difficulty, and of far higher importance, began soon to engage his youthful powers. The general and grievous defection from sound doctrine, which characterized the latter part of the last century, had spread like a leprosy over the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as well as the Church of Scotland. As a natural result, the ministers who continued steadfast in their attachment to the ancient faith were led to discuss, with unusual frequency and earnestness, those great principles, which were so generally neglected or opposed. It was in mercy vouchsafed to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, to be kept altogether free from the prevailing Arminian and Pelagian errors. The discourses delivered from her pulpits, the discussions held in the stated fellowship meetings, and the books found in the dwellings of her people, were all fitted to establish them in the knowledge and belief of those doctrines usually described as Calvinistic.

The system of Calvinism, however, it is well known, embraces many topics not less distinguished by their sublimity and difficulty, than by their great importance. In this field of thought, Milton finds topics more than sufficient to task angelic powers:—

“Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate—
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.”

Mr. Paul had received from his early instructors the doctrines of Calvinism, as in accordance with the teachings of Scripture. But his mind was not of a cast to entertain opinions by an *implicit* faith. When he began to investigate the grounds and evidences of his belief, he became greatly perplexed. A most serious conflict arose between his theology and his philosophy. How to reconcile the *Divine equity* with the Calvinistic view of *human inability*, was a problem too hard for him. The Scriptures appeared to be clearly for the Calvinist ; but, on this head, his reason appeared equally decided for the Arminian. At the same time, he was well assured, that between sound theology, and true philosophy, there could be no opposition. How long he remained in this state of perplexity is not known ; and had he not found a solution of the difficulty, it is hard to say where he might have found a landing-place—whether “in *doubting-castle*,” or in “*the slough of despond*.”

He was probably only one of a thousand who have debated this matter with themselves somewhat in the same strain :—“Are we not expressly commanded in Scripture to repent of our sins—to believe in the Saviour—to put off the old man with his deeds—and even to make us a *new heart* and a *new spirit* ;” and how could such commands be addressed to us, were we destitute of ability to comply with them ? To deny that we possess such ability would be, in effect, to impeach the equity of the Most High. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?”

The reasoning does certainly seem, at first sight, to be conclusive. Yet, other portions of the Word of God appear startling when the same principle of interpretation is applied to them. We are commanded to keep the law of God, and threatened with destruction if we fail in one point; to love God with the whole heart, and soul, and mind; to be holy as God is holy; to abstain from every appearance of evil; to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. Commands of similar import, and quite as peremptory, occur everywhere in the Scriptures; and the pretence, that they are modified or withdrawn under the Gospel, is altogether gratuitous and unfounded. On the principle of the preceding argument, it would follow, that we *have ability* for this also—to keep the whole law perfectly, to work out a spotless righteousness, to live without sin in thought, word, or deed. For how could such commands be issued, did we not possess ability to comply with them?

Yet the *inference* is against the common sense of mankind, as plainly as it is contradicted in Scripture. Men feel, universally, that perfect holiness is beyond their reach; that there is a law in their members tending to the commission of sin; that the ever-blessed God is not enthroned in their hearts as He should be; that if He should enter into judgment, no living man can be justified in His sight. And the testimony of Scripture is not less explicit, that human nature is corrupt—man's heart deceitful and depraved; that "the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of

God, neither indeed *can be*." The Arminian inference, therefore, entirely fails. The argument, that inasmuch as such commands are addressed to us in the Word of God, we must have power or ability to perform them, proves quite untenable.

In ruminating on these topics our young reasoner found himself "in wandering mazes lost." The question of Nicodemus was continually upon his lips, "How can these things be?" To his unspeakable joy, however, he was directed to an interpreter qualified to solve this hard problem—the celebrated American divine, President Edwards; and, to the last year of his life, he was forward to acknowledge his obligations to the man whom he ranked among the profoundest of philosophers, and the most accomplished of divines. The subsequent volume will suffice to show, what admirable use he made of the key supplied by Edwards, for tracing the wards, and opening the bolts, of the strongest lock of the citadel of Arminianism.

He found that in this case, as in a multitude of others, the chief difficulty arose from an ambiguity in the meaning of the terms employed; that the terms *ability* and *inability*, when applied to *moral* subjects, have a meaning quite distinct and peculiar; and that to confound *moral* inability with *natural* or *physical* inability, as is done by Arminians almost universally, leads to inextricable confusion, and tends to make the Bible a mass of contradiction. No man can be justly *blamed* or *punished* for not doing what he is *naturally* unable to accomplish—for not walking on the water, or flying on

the wings of the wind. But in respect to *moral* inability, the case is altogether different. This has its seat in the *will* or *inclinations* of the mind; and the want of *will*, or of a *right disposition*, can excuse no man for the non-performance of duty. To admit that it does excuse—that it dissolves moral obligation, would lead to infinite absurdity. It would tend to subvert all law, and all government, human and divine. In that case, no criminal could be punished by any judge or ruler, when the crime was committed under the impulse of a perverse will, or an evil disposition. If there could be crime at all, it could exist only in cases where it was committed in opposition to a *good will*, and a *right disposition*. On the hypothesis stated, *moral inability* would excuse the offender. But moral inability is, in fact, identical with *depravity*. It consists in the corruption of the heart, the perverseness of the will, and the force of depraved inclination and passion. Could these be allowed as a justification of sin, no man could be justly condemned by any earthly judge, nor by the Supreme Judge at the last day.

Why, then, it will be said, retain the *terms* which are so liable to be misunderstood? Because, in fact, they are necessary to express the ideas which it is wished to convey by them. The *inability* is not the less *real* because it is moral. It may be as complete as a physical impossibility. Judas could not forbear from *sleeping*, and he could not forbear from *coveting*. The former was a *natural* inability, and not blameworthy; the latter was *moral*, and therefore criminal. Yet the one inability

may have been as complete as the other. The inspired writers sanction the use of such a mode of expression. "How *can ye*, being evil, speak good things; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." "A corrupt tree *cannot* bring forth good fruit." "Who *can* bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" "No man *can* come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, NEITHER INDEED CAN BE."

Yet the uniform language of Scripture proves, that man's depravity neither excuses nor extenuates his crimes. On the contrary, it is itself criminal, and the very fountain of sin. "He receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither *can* he know them." Yet this is his *condemnation*, that light has come to him, and he *loves* the darkness rather than the light. He receiveth not *the love* of the truth that he may be saved, therefore he is given up to strong delusion to believe a lie. The guilt of his impenitence and unbelief lies on him, not diminished, but aggravated by the depravity which prevents his repenting and believing. "Except *ye repent*, ye shall all perish." "He that *believeth not* shall be damned."

It is farther important to observe, that, while exhortations or commands employed to induce a man to perform what he has no *natural* ability or fitness for, must be, in all cases, useless and impertinent, it is quite

otherwise in respect to moral inability. Commands or exhortations could not have the slightest efficacy towards enabling a man to walk on the water, or to mount up with the eagle to the clouds. But moral inability, having its seat in the will and inclinations, is susceptible of influence by such appliances. It is a moral malady; and exhortations, commands, and arguments are *moral means* of cure. In the former case, the use of such means would be quite inept and preposterous; in the latter, it is most fit and legitimate. It is the state of the mind that requires to be altered; and motives and persuasives are, in their nature, suited to effect such a change. When a man is persuaded to perform the duty he was disinclined to, his *inability* is, in that instance, *removed*. David was *unable* to restrain his resentment against Nabal, for his ingratitude and insolence; but the prudent and eloquent address of Abigail subdued his passion, and he became *able* to pass by the insult without seeking revenge.

It is, therefore, obvious that the objection raised by superficial thinkers, and vehement opposers of Calvinism, against the propriety of exhortations and commands, as addressed to persons *morally impotent*, are altogether inapplicable, and without force. The objection, it is admitted, has not, in all cases, been adequately repelled by Calvinists. It has been said that, "Although man has lost his ability to obey, God has not thereby lost His right to command." And this is undoubtedly true; but it does not fully meet the case. It has also been said, that it is for the honour of God, that His

righteous claims upon His rational offspring should be clearly exhibited and enforced. But neither is this satisfactory. The exhortations and commands of Scripture are evidently employed in the way of recalling to duty, and constraining to obedience. The Arminian asks, "Of what utility can such commands be, if all ability to comply with them is lost? Would you command the sailor to steer the ship, who has lost both his eyes, and punish him should he fail to do it properly? Even on the supposition that he lost his eyes by his own fault, the renewal of such a command, and the repetition of punishment, would contradict all our ideas both of equity and humanity." But the illustration entirely fails. There is no proper analogy between the cases. If the sailor's inability lies wholly in the *moral state of his mind*—in slothfulness, perverseness, rooted hatred against his captain, and obstinate resistance of authority, what could be more appropriate than to reason with him, to exhort and command him, and even to enforce these commands by other discipline, when the case required it. No valid objection could lie against such procedure. On the contrary, the more skilfully such moral means were employed in recalling the offender to his duty, the more would the equity and the humanity of such a commander be evinced.

And, in this connexion, we are naturally reminded of the amazing fulness, and variety, and constraining power, of the moral means employed in the Scriptures for reclaiming apostate men. He who alone fully understands our malady—the depth and virulence of our

moral distemper—has exhibited His Divinely-perfect wisdom and goodness in the remedy He has provided. And when we speak of the moral means of recovery, we have in view not only the whole range of argument and exhortation, of expostulation and entreaty, contained in the Scriptures, but also the moral influence of the atonement—the constraining power of the Cross.¹

To prevent our being misunderstood, it may be necessary to subjoin two observations.

When we exalt the influence of the atonement, as a moral instrument adapted with infinite skill to man's ruined condition, we would not be understood, for a moment, as intimating that this was the only, or even the principal design of the sufferings and death of our blessed Redeemer. Christ came to give His life a ransom for many. He came to redeem His people by His blood. He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He made our peace by the blood of His Cross.

It is farther necessary to observe, that when we speak of man's inability to good as a *moral* inability, and of the exquisite adaptation of *the means of recovery*, we are anxious that it should never be forgotten that *Divine power* must accompany the means, or they will most certainly fail. The very idea of an *instrument* suggests that of an *agent* who employs it. In the case before us the means are adapted to the end with infinite skill; but Divine power alone can impart the requisite energy to the means. If the heart of Lydia is opened,

¹ Gal. vi. 14.

it is the Lord who opens her heart.¹ If the Church is enlarged or edified by the instrumentality of the apostles, it is the result of Divine power. "Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase."² The treasure is in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the *power* may be of God.³ If the sinner is made a *new* creature, it is the workmanship of God; he is "created in Christ Jesus unto good works."⁴ He is born of the Spirit.⁵ If he believes in Christ, his faith is a *fruit* of the Spirit.⁶ On behalf of Christ "it is given to him to believe."⁷ His faith is the gift of God.⁸ If the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, is raised to life, it is God who hath quickened him.⁹ If he is delivered from the natural enmity of his heart against God, and made free from the law of sin and death, it is to the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus he is indebted for his release, and for the diffusion of the love of God in his heart.¹⁰ It would, perhaps, be no extravagance to affirm, that God is less jealous of the honour of having created the heavens and the earth than He is of the honour of this *new creation*—that for a sinner to claim that he has repented of himself, has believed of himself, has quickened himself into life, has regenerated himself, is an offence against God, not less provoking than that he should claim to be his own

¹ Acts xvi. 14.

² 1 Cor. iii. 7.

³ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

⁴ Eph. ii. 10.

⁵ John iii. 5, 6.

⁶ Gal. v. 22.

⁷ Phil. i. 29.

⁸ Eph. ii. 8.

⁹ Eph. ii. 4, 5.

¹⁰ Rom. viii. 2-7; .v. 5.

creator—the author of his own existence. Certain it is that such a claim is not less opposed to the whole tenor and current of Scripture testimony.

It is believed that the unprejudiced and intelligent reader will find in this volume sufficient proof of the following important positions:—

1. That all the most plausible and imposing objections made against Calvinism arise from a misapprehension of its doctrines, and are directed against views and opinions which the Calvinist disowns and condemns.

2. That the difficulties which present themselves as actually attending the system, when properly stated, are such as arise from the nature of the subjects themselves, and are inseparable from investigations concerning the attributes, the counsels, and the operations of the Most High. Even the inspired apostle, when treating of such themes, stood appalled, as on the brink of a fathomless abyss, “Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out.”

3. That the efforts made by the advocates of “*free will*,” some of them being men of the highest order of intellect, to escape from these difficulties, by denying the decrees of God, the sovereignty of His choice in election, and the absolute necessity of the Spirit’s agency in order to faith and repentance, prove utterly vain and fruitless; that the difficulties are not thus removed, nor even in the slightest degree diminished, but must be encountered in all their magnitude at the very next step in the chain of reasoning, while the

scheme adopted with the view of escaping them is encompassed with new difficulties exclusively its own, and is, at the same time, so plainly opposed to the declarations of Scripture, that no ingenuity can ever reconcile them. Eternal decrees are no more incompatible with man's free agency than eternal foreknowledge. The eternal election by sovereign grace, of those who are eventually saved through the redemption of Christ, is no more inconsistent with *equity* than the *limited application* of redemption in time. And the doctrine of particular redemption may be defended by the very same arguments that justify the limited intercession of Christ,¹ and the limited range of the operations of the Holy Spirit.

It has been quaintly said, by an ancient Scottish divine, that the difference of opinion on certain doctrines may appear in its origin "as fine as the edge of a razor; yet, on the one side, you have *God's truth*, and on the other, the *devil's lie*." In the case of certain rivers which enter the ocean, hundreds or thousands of miles apart from each other, it is found that their head-streams almost intermingle, or interlap one another on the summit of some lofty mountain range. We have here glanced at some of the points of divergence, from which different streams of theology take their spring. But, instead of expatiating on topics which are discussed with admirable force and clearness in the volume itself, we proceed to present to the reader a few notices of the

¹ John xvii. 9, compared with verses 20, 21.

author, most of which were published in the *Scottish Presbyterian Magazine*, for June, 1848. It is, perhaps, more appropriate that any delineation of the character or writings of the author should be from other hands than from those of the Editor.

Dr. Paul had taken a warm interest in the meetings of the Evangelical Alliance. Both at Liverpool and London, he was one of a few white-headed patriarchs who exulted in this remarkable movement—who expressed the hope that, although it might not for the present effect a reunion of churches, it might lead the sounder portions of many churches to a better understanding with each other; that although it might not terminate controversy, it might powerfully tend to clear it from the animosity and rancour by which it had been so often embittered. And this was one of the subjects that dwelt much on his mind in his last illness. He often expressed his regret that more had not been done in the North of Ireland, and that he had not exerted himself so much as he should have done, in furtherance of that cause. A few days before his death, he was made aware that a meeting of the Executive Council of the British Organization was to be held in London on the following week; and it was remarked to him, that if his illness were made known, the assembled brethren would not fail to present special and earnest prayer on his behalf. His reply was, that he would account it a very high privilege to be so remembered. It so happened, that on the evening of Wednesday, the fifteenth,¹

¹ 15th March, 1848.

while the Council was sitting, a friend had opportunity of expressing his wish in this matter, when intercessory prayer was presented for him by two brethren, with great fervour and affection. One of these brethren was the Rev. Edward Bickersteth, of the simplicity and unction of whose prayers Dr. Paul had often spoken with much admiration. He could not have foreseen that these prayers should ascend on his behalf in the time of his greatest need. No more were these brethren aware, when rendering this tribute of Christian sympathy, that he for whom they were pleading that "the eternal God might be his refuge, and underneath the everlasting arms," was just entering on his final struggle with the king of terrors. In the course of the ensuing day, he ascended to that place where prayer is exchanged for praise, and suffering for everlasting joy.

We may be excused for recording here a pleasing coincidence, communicated in a letter to a member of Dr. Paul's family, since his death. The minister to whom it refers, who died several years ago, had once been the intimate friend of Dr. Paul; subsequently, however, they were on opposite sides in a controversy, which issued in ecclesiastical separation. But, although their fellowship was broken off, their mutual esteem and regard continued unimpaired. The incident is communicated by the son of that minister, in a letter, from which we make the following extract—the excellent spirit of which will be evident to our readers:—

"I can, in some measure, estimate," he says, "the poignancy of your grief, by the loss I myself sustained,

eleven years ago, in the removal, by death, of a kind and estimable father—of one who, in his day, had been instrumental in adding members to the Church of Christ—who most devoutly loved the Redeemer, His cause, and people on earth, and, in the agonies of dissolving nature, and with his last breath, committed his spirit into that Redeemer's hands. Your departed father was not less estimable, while, as a public advocate of the Redeemer's cause and Divine character, he was more generally and widely known. But, however much I might otherwise feel in reference to the removal of Dr. Paul, the sensibilities of my heart kindle into love towards you, while I relate the following incident. My father's last illness was of short duration, as he was only ten or twelve days confined; and he died on a Sabbath evening. On that evening, Dr. Paul was preaching in Dr. Alexander's church, in Belfast, and received information, during the service, I think, of my father's illness, and that there was little or no hope entertained of his recovery. He took occasion, therefore, at the close of the service, to mention the fact to the congregation, and, in the prayer which succeeded, most feelingly and affectionately commended him, in his affliction and bodily sufferings, to the tender care and sympathy of a covenant-keeping God and exalted Redeemer. On being informed of these particulars, I found that during the time that Dr. Paul had been engaged in prayer, my father's spirit had taken its flight to the heavenly rest; and, I can assure you, that oftentimes since, when I have reflected on this remark-

able coincidence, I have said, I could not have wished him to depart under other circumstances. We can herein sensibly realise the communion of saints. One is on his death-bed, suffering the agonies of dissolution; the other, separated from him by space, is standing at the altar on his behalf, pleading at a throne of grace, and presenting also the prayers of a worshipping and believing congregation. How closely must they now be united in glory!—where all minor differences have been removed—where together they admire and adore a God of redeeming love, and sing together the song of Moses and of the Lamb! For they who be wise, or are *teachers*, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they who turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.”

The conductors of the public press, in the North of Ireland and elsewhere—many of them differing widely in opinion from him, both on public questions and in religious matters—concurred generally in pronouncing a warm eulogium on him, at the time of his decease. And this was all the more honourable to them, as, in the course of his controversial writings, he had, at one time or other, been opposed to the public organs of all parties; and especially when it is considered that his controversies, although remote from acrimony, were often conducted with an earnestness and impetuosity, which might have been thought to exceed the limits of courtesy, and of due consideration for the feelings of his opponents.

It seems to be admitted, however, that his warmth

was an honest warmth; and that his impetuosity arose from the force of his convictions, and not from the impulse of any unkind feeling. As a proof of this, it might be mentioned that some leading men among the Arian party, with whom he had repeated and staunch controversy, were forward to testify their respect for him when alive, and that very honourable mention was made of him after his decease, in a journal understood to be under their auspices. "He was long known," says the editor, "as the most distinguished member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a learned and able theologian, and an enlightened and powerful advocate of civil and religious liberty. Holding ecclesiastical principles which may be applied unfavourably to the rights of the people, he was, nevertheless, an ardent champion of freedom; and when some of his brethren endeavoured publicly to make such application, he smote them with the strength of an intellectual giant. He possessed a clear judgment, and a very logical mind; and his close reasoning powers were seldom if ever equalled in the many combats in which he was engaged. His manners were characterised by a winning gentleness and vivacity, and he was a downrightly honest man."—(*Belfast, March 18, 1848.*)

Another journalist writes:—"Constitutionally of an active and energetic temperament, he devoted his mental energies, with characteristic vigour, to the investigation and exposition of sacred truth. Distinguished by great force and power of intellect, he bore a marked resemblance, as it has always seemed to us, to two of

the leading minds in another denomination—we allude to Andrew Fuller and Alexander Carson—though one is an English, the other an Irish Baptist. Dr. Paul was, perhaps, not less successful than either of these illustrious dead in elucidating the grand peculiarities of the Christian faith. At the period when his earlier productions appeared, the witnesses for truth, in the North of Ireland, were comparatively few, and feeble in their testimony. The publications to which we refer exerted a mighty influence in exposing the sophistries and plausibilities of error, and in laying, broad and deep, in the minds of many the foundations of sacred truth.”

A third thus speaks of the deceased:—“We knew Dr. Paul intimately and well, and felt for his character an almost filial veneration. His powers of mind were of a highly original and vigorous order, and had been cultivated by diligent study; while the amount of his erudition, especially in metaphysical theology and biblical criticism, was accurate and extensive. He had so studied the works of Jonathan Edwards, as to have imbibed the very tone, and spirit, and entire cast of thought of the theological philosopher of New England. Still he was neither a copyist nor an imitator. . . . His first appearance as a theological writer was in defence of ‘Creeds and Confessions,’ the propriety of which had been impugned by a Unitarian minister of some note, then in connexion with the Synod of Ulster. In this publication, Dr. Paul had occasion to touch on some other topics; and the vigour of his style, the acuteness of his logical discrimination, the sustained

closeness of his argument, and especially the caustic, ironical, amusing pleasantry with which he surrounded it, when dealing with some hostile absurdity, attracted immediate attention, and convinced the adversaries of the evangelical faith, that in the Rev. John Paul they had no ordinary antagonist. . . . Dr. Paul's next was also his great work—'The Refutation of Arianism'—published in Belfast in 1826. [It was in the form of a reply to discussions and arguments in a volume of sermons by the Rev. Dr. Bruce.] From that period, his fame as a theological writer, of high eminence, became firmly established. . . . At a subsequent period, he had occasion again to employ his pen in the Unitarian controversy. At this time his logical powers were so well known, that few cared to meet him in polemic discussion, and he was left, in a great degree, unanswered. A contemptuous reference, publicly made by his antagonist, to a Mr. Paul, of Carrickfergus, provoked on his part a letter to the public journals, which, for the caustic vigour of its style, and the manly energy of thought which it evinced, excelled all his previous compositions. It possessed, in fact, all the admirable qualities of Cobbett's best manner. Had Cobbett been a religious character, it was precisely such a letter as he would have written. And its effect was in proportion to its power. There were no more sneering references from any quarter, as Mr. Paul had now given to a plurality of the Church's adversaries instructive intimations of his individuality, and of his characteristic attributes."

We cannot withhold the following tribute from the pen of a co-presbyter, who had lived on terms of close and uninterrupted friendship with Dr. Paul during the whole period of his public ministry. The extract is taken from a sermon by the late esteemed and talented Dr. Henry, for many years Reformed Presbyterian minister at Newtownards, and who, at no long interval, followed into eternity the friend whom he so warmly eulogises:—

“As a church we have recently sustained a loss of no ordinary kind, by the death of a beloved member of this Synod, whose once honoured seat is now empty. I cannot trust my own feelings—I feared to turn your attention to this subject, lest the wounds which have bled so much should bleed again; yet, who can avoid the painful remembrance—who can forget the name, the character, the works, or the worth, of the late Rev. Dr. Paul. To some of you, and to me, he has been endeared, as a beloved co-presbyter, by twenty or thirty years of uninterrupted friendship and mutual confidence. His name is associated with almost everything in this house, church, and Synod. It has a place in our records and in our hearts; it cannot be forgotten. Wherever there is a friend of civil or religious liberty—wherever there is an opponent of persecution or of slavery—wherever there is an admirer of the moral courage that knows not fear when truth requires to be defended, or of honesty of purpose that could make no compromise—there, wherever they are known, will the name and writings of Dr. Paul be held in lasting remembrance.

He possessed such an assemblage of virtues as commanded the esteem, and gained the affection of all who enjoyed his acquaintance, or could appreciate his worth. He was an honest man, a sincere Christian, a faithful friend, and an able minister of the New Testament. In him were united a powerful intellect with a tender heart; great humility with true dignity; courtesy and complaisance were associated with that uniform regard to truth that abhors flattery. His cheerfulness did not degenerate into levity, nor his zeal into bigotry. His literary attainments were of a superior kind; he had few equals as a classical and Hebrew scholar; he was an ardent admirer of talent when united with piety; hence his preference of Edwards and such authors—his regard and esteem for such men as Chalmers, Carson, and Wardlaw.

But it was when called to defend the rights of conscience, that he appeared in his peculiar character; then every nerve was braced, every faculty of soul, every power of mind, every feeling of heart, directed their united and concentrated energy to the defence of truth and righteousness. No morbid sensibility, no partial affection, no misplaced sympathy, could make him spare the doctrine or the teacher, whether friend or foe, that appeared to betray into the hands of man this province of mind that God claims as solely His own. He justly regarded the obedience of conscience to God alone as the tribute—the homage by which a moral subject recognises the supreme authority of Jehovah, and testifies his loyalty to the King of Kings and Lord of

Lords. In defending this palladium of religious liberty, he was defending the rights of God and man against the usurpations of Antichrist, and the tyranny of men. In this service his works will praise him when his earthly monument shall be among the things that were.¹"

Dr. Paul departed this life on the 16th of March, 1848, after an illness of about ten weeks' duration, in the seventy-first year of his age, and the forty-fourth of his ministry. For a few days after the approach of the paralysis of which he died, a degree of cloudiness or stupor rested upon his mind, but this was gradually dispelled, and he retained his faculties to the last hour. And, while in the matters of greatest importance the vigour of his faculties was scarcely abated, the sensibilities of his heart seemed quickened and elevated. To a friend, who, knowing the deep interest he took in the progress of public events, was giving him a brief outline of the momentous changes that had taken place on the Continent in the early part of that year, his reply was—"Well, these things are very wonderful, and very important, and I do not doubt that God will bring out of them happy results; yet they are only *temporal* things, and to a person in my situation, the things which immediately concern the soul and eternity are infinitely important. Would you now give me a brief outline of any sermon you have lately preached, which you may think most suitable to my circumstances; or of any discourse you

¹ Sermon preached at the annual meeting of the Eastern Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, by the Rev. WILLIAM HENRY, D.D., Letterkenny. Belfast, 19th July, 1848.

may have recently heard at a communion." This having been done, he proceeded to remark, "I cannot now preach to others, but I sometimes try to preach to myself; and here are the heads of a sermon on which I have been exercising my mind as I was able:—1. How is it, since Christ has paid the full penalty for all who truly believe in Him, that God, nevertheless, exercises His people with so many and so sharp afflictions? 2. What are the leading benefits which may be expected from affliction, when rightly improved? And 3 (which is to me all important). What ground have I for concluding, that I myself have realized, or am realizing these benefits?"

It was often not a little affecting to ministers and other friends, who conversed and prayed with him, to observe him overpowered with a sense of gratitude, while feeling themselves to be as much his inferiors in understanding and Christian experience as they often were in years. He was made aware by letters, that in several places in the North of Ireland companies of Christian friends were in the habit of meeting to present prayer for him in his affliction. A few weeks after, he desired letters to be sent in reply, requesting that these kind friends would not fail to offer thanksgivings also on his behalf. This circumstance having been mentioned to a friend who had come to visit him, he remarked, that it might appear assuming in him to expect that any such notice should be taken of him. "But these friends," said he, "having been pleased to testify their Christian regard by meeting to pray for me, I believed that I had expe-

rienced the benefit of their prayers, and I feared to commit sin by withholding the acknowledgment of the Lord's faithfulness in fulfilling His own promises."

Speaking on the same subject some time after, he remarked, "I have not had anything of the rapturous experience which has been the privilege of some of God's children; yet I trust I can, without enthusiasm, adopt the apostle's statement, that when our afflictions abound, our consolations much more abound;" and then he proceeded to specify some of the channels through which the special mercy of God had been vouchsafed to him from the beginning of his trouble. "I have no wish," he remarked, "to outlive my usefulness; and if it please the Lord to spare me a little, now that I can no longer engage in active service, it is, I trust, my strongest desire, that He may glorify Himself in my affliction."

A friend at some distance had written to request that notice should be sent to him once a week of Dr. Paul's state of health, as many were inquiring for him, and, among others, parties with whom he had formerly been engaged in earnest controversy. In reply to this communication, he requested his correspondent to make due acknowledgement on his behalf to those friends who so kindly interested themselves in his situation; and particularly to those to whom he had formerly stood in an ecclesiastical relation which, of late years, had been broken up. "Tell them," said he, "that I know I have passed from death to life because I love the brethren; that I have loved them, and do love them still; that no

deed of Presbytery, Synod, or Assembly, can separate them from my affection; that I shall love them during life, and hope to enjoy their fellowship throughout eternity."

There were no symptoms of any renewal of his disease; but, as he could scarcely take any nourishment, his strength gradually declined. He was lifted out of bed, and sat about two hours in his chair on the day of his death. His mind continued clear and unimpaired, although his weakness rendered him incapable of much conversation with his family on that day. He often selected the Psalms which he wished to be sung beside him. There were a few uninspired compositions also, in which he took pleasure, and wished to have repeated often to him. One of these was:—

"All hail the great Emmanuel's name,
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

Another which he often repeated himself with great fervour was the well-known hymn,

"The hour of my departure's come."

With strong emotion, and the tears flowing down his cheeks, he would repeat a second time, the lines—

"Not in mine innocence I trust,
I bow before thee in the dust;
And through my Saviour's blood alone,
I look for mercy at thy throne."

It was a mixed multitude that followed the bier.

There were the ministers of six or seven different denominations—a long line of them, wearing generally the white linen scarf, which, in the North of Ireland, is usually assigned to clergymen and medical men, at funeral processions. There were the farmers of the district, many of them on horseback. There were the shopkeepers and merchants of Carrickfergus, where he spent nearly thirty years of his life. There were the gentry of the district, the magistrates and landed proprietors, most of whom chose to walk on foot, while their carriages were in charge of their servants. There were companies of members of his own congregation, including some groups of women, who, with sorrowful countenances, kept their places close behind the hearse, the entire way. When this circumstance was noticed, as not common in other parts of the kingdom, to one who had been also an attached friend of the deceased, he replied—“ Oh yes, they do like to come, they loved him for his Master’s sake ; they were last at the cross and first at the sepulchre ; why should they not be here ? ”

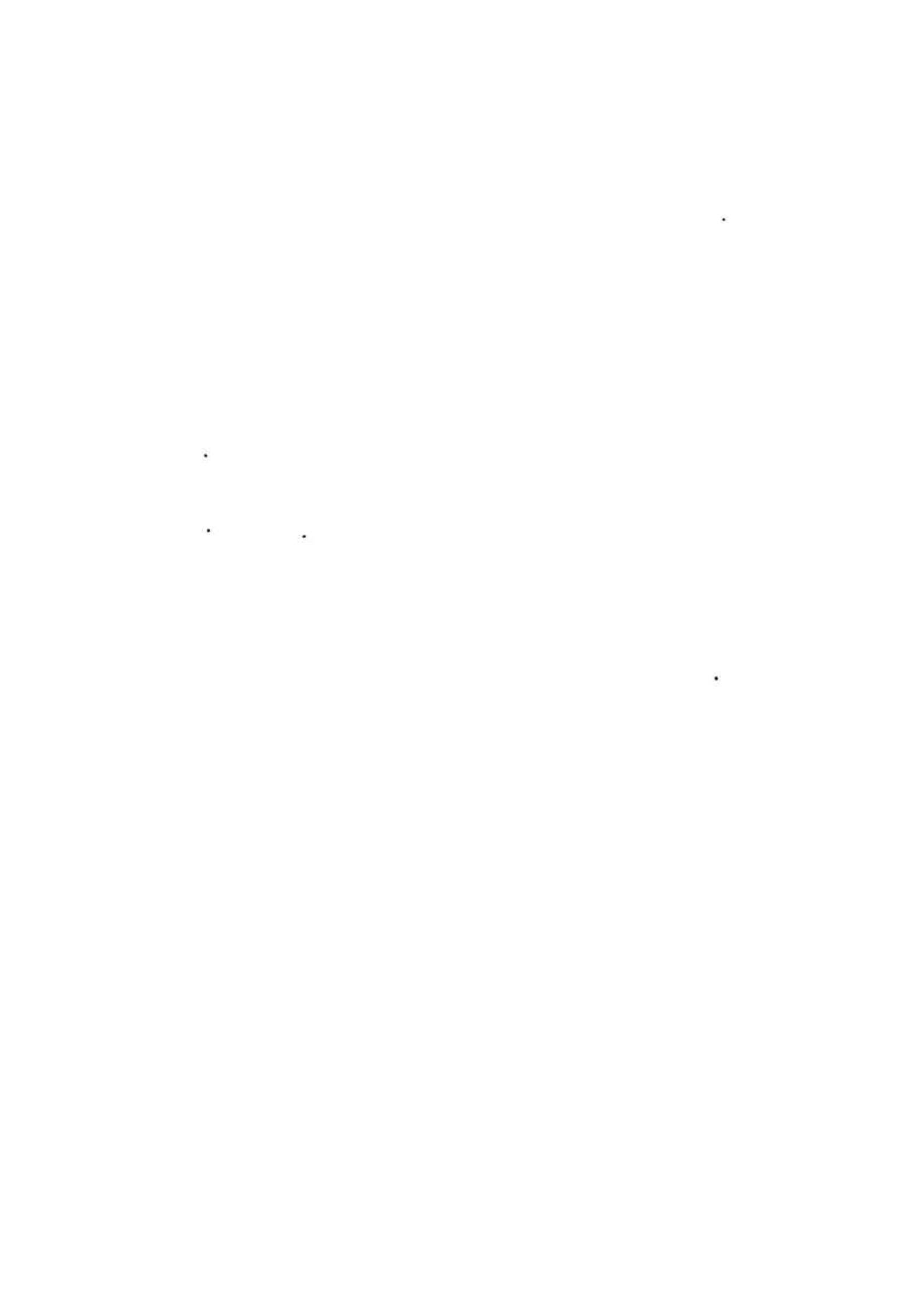
It was gratifying to the friends of Dr. Paul to see so large an assembly, spontaneously coming together, to attend his funeral. But, to the reflecting mind, there was a moral spectacle in it which ought not to pass unnoticed. It was not his wealth, nor the personal influence which arises from it, that drew together so large a multitude. It was not the extent or influence of his congregation ; for he ministered to a comparatively small and poor flock, scattered over a moorland

district. It was not the number or influence of family connexions, for his relatives were not numerous, That large assembly was an honourable tribute to sanctified talent and moral worth. It was a proof, that notwithstanding many adverse circumstances, and an obscure position, he himself was acknowledged as a burning and a shining light. It was a proof that eminent ability, great honesty of purpose, and fearless intrepidity in defending the truth, are appreciated by an enlightened public, and will receive their due honour by the candid among all parties.

He was interred in the church-yard connected with the place of worship where chiefly he had laboured for more than forty years ; and a few of his friends united in erecting a modest memorial of him, to mark the place of his interment.

“No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dark abode ;
There they alike in trembling hope repose,
The bosom of his father and his God.”

GLASGOW, 11th May, 1855.



A REFUTATION OF ARIANISM,

AND

DEFENCE OF CALVINISM.



THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

SOMEWHAT ABRIDGED.

THE readers of the following treatise will be pleased to observe that, whilst I contend against Arminianism as well as against Arianism, I do not regard the two systems as equally remote from truth. I believe that the difference between Arminians and Calvinists is frequently more in *words* than in *ideas*; I believe that multitudes who are Arminians in *head* are Calvinists in *heart*. Were the Calvinistic system fairly represented and well understood, I am confident opposition would, in a great measure, cease. The view I have given in the following Defence, is I flatter myself, agreeable to the standards of the Churches of England and Scotland—it is substantially the same, I presume, with that of the great body of Calvinists. This view I have never yet seen opposed. Anti-Calvinists, so far as I know, have never yet ventured to attack it, though it has been frequently exhibited by such writers as Edwards, Fuller, Newton, and Scott. When our opponents attack Calvinism, they attack a view of it which the Calvinists themselves do not *acknowledge*. They form a kind of medley system, composed of passages taken out of their natural order, unguarded expressions extracted from the works of

ancient divines, and large quotations from Antinomian writers—this *factitious*—this *monstrous* system, a system which nobody *ever believed*, and which nobody *defends*—they heroically attack, and triumphantly demolish. They then shout victory, and are hailed by the acclamations of the unthinking multitude, the dupes of their artifice. By such sleight of men and cunning craftiness the simple are deceived, truth is laid low, and error enjoys a temporary triumph. This disgraceful mode of warfare I am reluctantly compelled to expose in the subsequent pages. Should Arian or Arminian divines think proper to follow up their attack—and I have no objection at all to see them in the field—I shall expect them to come forward as *honourable* antagonists. I shall expect them to attack, not *a shadow*, not *a man of straw*, not *a mock Calvinism*, but the *real Calvinistic system*, as exhibited in our standards, and defended in the following sheets.

Some readers may perhaps say:—You have treated Dr. Bruce with too little ceremony. You are guilty *yourself* of the very same things which you censure in *him*. You blame him for using abusive epithets, such as *fanatics*, *enthusiasts*, and *bigots*; and yet you employ language no less severe, as *misrepresentation*, *calumny*, *forgery*, &c. Answer. I do not blame the Doctor merely for calling his opponents *fanatics*, *enthusiasts*, and *bigots*, but I blame him for using those epithets in *a licentious and wanton manner, without proof*. If I arraign a man for theft, and bring forward evidence to substantiate my charge, I may call him a *thief*; but if

without proof I apply such epithets, I expose myself to an action for defamation of character. Dr. Bruce employs opprobrious epithets without proof or shadow of evidence: it is for *this* I blame him—it is for *this* I censure him. On the contrary, I hope my readers will find that such terms as *misrepresentation, calumny, forgery; &c.*, are used by me only when the charges implied in those epithets are fully substantiated. But why use such epithets *at all*? Answer. Because I wish to call things by their proper names. I do not wish to call evil good, and good evil. I do not wish by soft names to reconcile men's minds to errors or to vices—a practice quite *fashionable* indeed, but fraught with consequences the most *baneful* and *pernicious*. Towards those learned and highly respectable divines, on whose writings I animadvert, I am conscious of no feelings but those of kindness and benevolence. Should any of my expressions appear too strong, or be regarded as personal, I shall feel much mortified; for I can assure my readers, that if I know anything of my own heart, it was *errors, not men*, I meant to attack.

My REFUTATION is a work entirely argumentative. Against such books I know there is a prejudice—a prejudice, as I conceive, *highly unreasonable*. *Reasoning and argument* characterised the first propagation of Christianity. The founder of our religion *reasoned* and *argued*; when only twelve years of age He disputed with the doctors. During the whole period of His public ministry we find Him addressing the understandings of men—reasoning with the Pharisees and Sadducees, the

scribes and the lawyers—detecting their impostures and exposing their corruptions, refuting their errors, and putting them to silence. Imitating their Divine Master, the apostles and evangelists *reasoned* and *argued*. In the synagogues of the Jews, the Apostle Paul reasoned every Sabbath. In the school of Tyrannus he disputed daily. The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, the Jewish rabbin, and the learned counsellors of Mars-hill, he encountered by reasoning, and confounded by argument. The proto-martyr Stephen *reasoned down* the “Libertines, the Cyrenians, and Alexandrians—they were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake.” Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, and all the fathers of the Reformation, *reasoned* and *argued*. By reasoning and by argument the strongholds of the “*man of sin*” were stormed, and a spiritual emancipation gloriously effected. Nor need we anticipate a victory over the *many-headed monster* ERROR, if we refuse to wield those spiritual weapons. Impressed with this conviction, I have humbly attempted to defend by argument what I regard as the great fundamental truths of Christianity. I have addressed myself, not to the *feelings*, the *passions*, or the *prejudices*, but to the *understandings* of my readers.

In replying to the polemical sermons of the Rev. Dr. Bruce, I have endeavoured to meet every argument which I considered *material*. The only subject which I have not discussed is the eternity of punishment. The Doctor’s idea, that the wicked will be punished in hell for a certain period of time, and then annihilated,

being a completely gratuitous assumption, and having no countenance either from Scripture or reason, I considered *unworthy* of a refutation. What reason to believe that the happiness of the righteous will be *everlasting*, and the misery of the wicked only *temporary*, when in the very same passage,* *the very same word in the original* is employed to designate the duration of *both*? With regard to the wicked, our Saviour assures us, that "*their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched.*" Now, if the Doctor's idea be *correct*, the Redeemer's declaration is not *true*, for surely the worm of conscience will *die* when the subject is *annihilated*—surely the fire of misery will be *quenched*, when the unhappy victims are all *reduced to nothing*! Those who wish to see the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment conclusively established may consult "*Edwards against Chauncey,*" and President Edwards' "*Remarks.*"

Dr. Bruce, in his Preface, boasts of the progress of Arian principles, particularly in the Synod of Ulster. I am happy, however, to find that the Synod has denied the truth of the charge, and very properly repelled it by a counter-declaration. The truth is, that, in the Synod of Ulster, Arianism seems to be in the *last stage of a consumption*. When an Arian minister dies, he is almost uniformly succeeded by one of orthodox principles. Of the Synod of Munster there is no room for boasting: that body appears to be reduced to a skeleton, and Arianism to be dying a natural death. That Arian

* Matt. xxv. 46.

principles have obtained the ascendancy in Geneva, I believe is true; but the tide is turned, and the Arians are endeavouring to stem it by persecution. The attempt, however, is vain; those who have drunk the new wine of Arianism are turning from it with disgust, exclaiming, as they embrace their ancient principles, "*The old is better!*"

The reader of the following treatise will not suppose that I mean to condemn *everything* contained in the Doctor's sermons; nor that I approve of all those sentiments which I have *not opposed*. The sermons reviewed contain many things which I not only *approve* but *admire*, particularly on the intercession of Christ, and the doctrine of repentance. They also contain many things which I *disapprove*, but on which my limits would not allow me to animadvert. Should the Doctor himself, or any of his friends, think proper to stand forward in defence of his principles, I may then have an opportunity of extending my animadversions. In the meanwhile, it is my heart's desire and prayer to God, that He would render my humble exertions instrumental in arresting the progress of error, and extending the triumphs of truth. "Arise, O God, plead thine own cause."

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A REFUTATION OF ARIANISM.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

OBJECTIONS TO DR. BRUCE'S MODE OF MANAGING THE CONTROVERSY. OBJECTION I.—ABUSIVE EPITHETS APPLIED TO HIS OPPONENTS—FANATICS, ENTHUSIASTS, BIGOTS.

IN the "Controversial Sermons" of the Rev. Dr. Bruce, we would naturally expect fair, candid, and manly discussion. His reputation as a divine, and celebrity as a scholar, would lead us to conclude that he would never condescend to excite vulgar prejudice by any of those low, mean arts, which too frequently characterise inferior controversialists. In these reasonable expectations we feel ourselves not a little disappointed. The Doctor's mode of managing the controversy appears to me, in many respects, highly exceptionable. I shall state my objections in order.

OBJECTION I.

I object to those abusive epithets with which he constantly loads his opponents. Fanatics, enthusiasts, and bigots, with him are quite common appellations—appellations which, it must be confessed, are but too well calculated to foment in the minds of his hearers Pharisaic pride, to rivet upon them the chains of their prejudice, and to inspire them with hatred, animosity, and contempt.

Whilst the Doctor charges his opponents with fanaticism, enthusiasm, &c., he probably flatters himself that *he* is quite free from those odious vices. It is possible, however, that he may be mistaken. Let us examine a few of his sentiments.

In his first sermon (p. 6), he assures us that "The humblest rustic, who is in the habit of assiduously and seriously perusing his Bible, knows all that is known by the wisest man upon earth of the Divine nature. The existence, attributes, and providence of God are his daily study," &c.

Now, if all this be so, for what purpose have thousands of sermons been preached? For what purpose have thousands of treatises been written on those subjects? What becomes of Dr. Clarke's famous demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God? What becomes of Abernethy's Sermons? And, above all, what becomes of Dr. Bruce's own treatise—that treatise on the Being and Attributes, for which he expected the Aberdeen prize? Why publish volumes upon volumes on the Being and Attributes of God, when the humblest rustic knows as much of the Divine nature as the wisest man upon earth? What egregious trifling!

With regard to the same illiterate rustic, the Doctor assures us that "the scenes of nature are exhibited to his mental eye—that he is taught the benevolent uses for which they were designed; and how they demonstrate the wisdom, power, and goodness of their Creator—and what more," he asks, "does the wisest philosopher know than this? Make out an account of all his surplus knowledge, and what does it amount to?"

Of course, Ray, Derham, Paley,* and others, who wrote volumes on the wise ends and benevolent uses of the works of God, were all laborious triflers! They

* Ray's "Wisdom of God in the Works of Creation," Derham's "Astro-theology, and Physico-theology," and Paley's "Natural Theology," are the works referred to.

knew nothing more on those subjects than the humblest rustic! Why, then, should the world be pestered any longer with such useless lumber? All such treatises, according to Dr. B., are quite superfluous!

But this is not all. The Doctor's rustic is a character still more extraordinary. "He is conversant with all the authentic information which any man possesses of the conduct of Providence in the government of nations."

Indeed! And does Dr. B. mean to assert that there is no authentic history in the world but Scripture history? Does he mean to assert that the histories of Rollin, Robertson, Gibbon, Mosheim, and a thousand others, give the man of letters no advantage over the rustic, in contemplating the wisdom of God in the conduct of Divine Providence? A strange and novel assertion indeed!

Finally, the Doctor's rustic is not only on a *level* with the philosopher; he is far *above* him! "He can look forward to his end and destination with *as much substantial knowledge, and MORE confirmed assurance,* than the man of letters."

If this doctrine be true, then woe to learning! Down with all academies, colleges, and universities! Learning is no longer a *blessing*, but a *curse*! What pious parent would send his son to a college or an academy, if convinced that, in these seminaries, no substantial knowledge can be acquired; and that a liberal education, so far from being the handmaid of religion, would shake his son's assurance with regard to his prospects of endless glory?*

I acknowledge, indeed, that learning, when not

* In the subsequent paragraph, the Doctor speaks of "a view of creation, &c."—a view *dispersed*—a view *accumulated*—a view *delivered*. In order to prove his favourite point—that the Bible-reading peasant is superior to the man of letters—did he really conceive it necessary to abandon his own accuracy by making such a massacre of language?

imbued with piety, is a dangerous thing. It has been the bane of the religious world, and the source of almost all the errors and heresies with which the Church of God has been hitherto infested. Those "men who have crept into the Church unawares, bringing in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them," &c., have been, generally, men of learning, but destitute of piety—"ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

All this, however, amounts to no proof that ignorance is better than learning, and that a man "should study to become a fool—a perfect simpleton in worldly matters," as the Doctor has taught us in his second sermon. On the contrary, Solomon's proverbs still remain true, "For the soul to be without knowledge is not good. Wisdom excels folly, as far as light excels darkness."

The preference which Dr. B. gives to the illiterate rustic is not more extraordinary than his ideas respecting the acquisition of knowledge. In page 68, he assures us that "we are furnished by our Creator with an instinctive knowledge of certain necessary truths, both natural and moral;" and in page 74, he asserts, "Such knowledge of the qualities and uses of things about us, as is necessary to subsistence, is easily acquired by instinct, or a simple application of our corporeal senses; such religious truths, also, as are essential to godliness and eternal life, are readily discovered or apprehended by conscience, or learned from Scripture, by the exercise of our reason and our moral faculties."

Instinctive knowledge of truths, both natural and moral! Acquiring knowledge by *instinct*! discovering truth by *conscience*! learning truths, not only by reason, but by our *moral faculties*!—these are new things under the sun.*

* From a divine, who assumes the right to look down with contempt on so learned and so respectable a body as the Synod of Ulster (as the Doctor does in his late speech before

In his epistle dedicatory, the Doctor writes thus:—
 “For my own part, I am more afraid of singularity than ambitious of originality. I have always felt a dread of dealing out my own crude conceptions for your spiritual nourishment, and have preferred food that had been well concocted by more skilful hands,” &c.

Without waiting to inquire whether food previously concocted by other hands be most nutritive, or whether hands be the proper organs of concoction, I may venture to affirm, that the passages on which I have been animadverting were never concocted by any hands but the Doctor's. Though, in the sermons under review, there is little originality, yet the sentiments quoted above must be acknowledged to be completely original. Nobody, I presume, will be so uncharitable as to suspect that any of “*those eminent ministers, Haliday and his (Dr. B.'s) grandfather, Drennan and Brown, Mackay and Crombie,*” or that any other member of the Antrim Presbytery ever taught doctrines so *unphilosophical*, so *hostile to learning*.

Without any proof, our learned author politely stigmatises his opponents as fanatics and enthusiasts. With

the proprietors of the Belfast Academical Institution)—from a divine, who superciliously characterises the Ulster Synod as having no claims either to science or literature, we would naturally expect a more favourable specimen of literary and scientific talent than we find exhibited in the sermons under review, and particularly in the preceding quotations. What minister, what probationer, what student of the Synod of Ulster, does not know that the doctrine of innate ideas, or instinctive knowledge, is long since exploded? The veriest smatterer in metaphysics knows that the idea of acquiring knowledge by instinct is absurd. He knows that progressive improvement is utterly incompatible with instinct; he knows that conscience is a witness; he knows that conscience is a judge; and he knows, also, that whatever metaphysical account may be given of it, no metaphysician was ever so foolish as to imagine that its office is—THE DISCOVERY OF TRUTH. Finally, he knows that truths can be learned by *no moral faculty* distinct from reason.

great respect, I would entreat him to lay aside "that inordinate self-love which we indulge for ourselves,"* and to read with candour the preceding remarks; he will then, probably, be convinced that his *own* doctrines are not quite so free from fanaticism and enthusiasm as he at first imagined. He will probably see reason for being more sparing in the use of such opprobrious epithets in future. He will perceive the propriety of "casting first the beam out of his own eye, that he may see more clearly to pull the mote out of his brother's eye."

On the epithet bigot, so liberally bestowed by the Doctor, I shall now offer a few remarks. "Bigot," says an eloquent American writer, "is a brand of infamy, not less than infidel or heretic, and quite as freely applied. Serious as the subject is, one can hardly forbear smiling at the mistakes we are apt to commit in estimating our own characters. There are no more decided bigots on earth than those who are bigoted to liberality."

That these observations are perfectly appropriate, the following paragraph † (pp. 52, 53) will clearly evince. "If, then, any candid and inquisitive person be desirous of knowing what light may be obtained from the researches of learned and pious men, I do not advise him to resort to councils, nor any other assemblies of divines, because they all differ from each other, and have generally been convened for the purpose of fomenting discord, and suppressing free inquiry, or to promote some political view. Neither do I recommend commentators and controversial writers; for these are, generally, warped by their attachment to some human system of doctrine which has been engrafted on the Word of God, and are, in general, the most strenuous advocates for some favourite system, for which they wish to be distinguished as champions. For the same reason, you should

* The Doctor's own language—"Being and Attributes," p. 103.

† Sermons.

not consult any authors who are deeply involved in controversy, or bound to any human profession of faith. But there are some paraphrases which express the sense of Scripture in plainer, more intelligible, or more modern language than our translation, without enlarging on particular topics. These may be applied to with profit, if their authors be men of liberal sentiments, and not servilely devoted to any particular sect or denomination. Of this class are some of the most distinguished authors in our language, and most eminent philosophers of modern times, neither influenced by sectarian prejudices nor fettered by professional trammels. There are some men of this character in almost every church—men who, from principle, prejudice, or interest, adhere to its forms and doctrines in general, but keep themselves at liberty to exercise the right of private judgment on particular questions. These authors, though justly chargeable with some degree of insincerity by their respective churches, and of timidity by more resolute Christians, are, upon the whole, among the safest guides.”

Such is the liberality and candour of our learned author.

Solomon thought, that “in the multitude of counselors there is safety;” but Dr. B. is of a different opinion. He does not allow his hearers to consult councils, or assemblies of divines. By this means he contrives to keep out of their hands such books as the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms, larger and shorter, the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England, &c.

Again, he prohibits the perusal of authors bound to any human confession of faith. By this measure he proscribes, at once, all books written by the divines of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, or any other Church requiring subscription.*

* I have subscribed a confession of faith; my writings are, therefore, useless. Dr. B. has proscribed them. He has pro-

Once more, he proscribes another large class of books—ALL COMMENTARIES WHATEVER! None of his hearers must look into commentaries. All such works are entirely prohibited.

Still farther, he proscribes—1. “controversial writers;” and, 2. “authors deeply involved in controversy.” By the proscription of those two classes—two, I mean, according to the Doctor’s arrangement—he prudently keeps out of the hands of his hearers the works of the most eminent Independent divines. Dr. Owen, President Edwards, Fuller, Wardlaw, and many such lights, must all be extinguished. Dr. B. has condemned them to be “put under a bushel.” Why? They are either “controversial writers,” or “authors deeply involved in controversy.” Let us not, however, imagine that our author meant to prohibit the controversial writings of Arians. By no means. That he did not mean to prohibit their controversial writings, is evident from two decisive facts. 1. If he had intended to proscribe *their* writings, he would not have countenanced the republication of the controversial sermons of Price and Channing. 2. He would not have published, and put into the hands of his hearers, *his own controversial sermons*.

Magowan, in his letters to Priestly, happily blending humour with good sense, says: “I heartily concur with you in believing the Bible to be the only rule; and, to adopt your own words, sincerely wish that all persons, of all sects and parties, would study their Bibles more, and books of controversy less; yet, I shall have

hibited his hearers from reading any such books. Before this sentence of proscription is executed, I would say, “Strike, but hear.” Hear my defence of creeds and confessions before you condemn them. My defence is before the public. It has silenced *one* Antitrinitarian opponent. If Dr. B. choose to renew the attack, the field is open. If he decline entering the lists, I shall consider my reasoning in favour of confessions equal, at least, to his *ipse dixit* against them.

no objection to all people, of all sects, reading what may pass between you and me. I am ready to think, indeed, that it is usual for polemic writers to suppose that all books of controversy are hurtful, except those of which they themselves happen to be the authors."

Agreeably to these judicious remarks, it is quite evident that Dr. B. regards as hurtful, and therefore proscribes, all books of controversy, *except his own and those of his Arian brethren!* An admirable plan indeed, and well calculated to promote the Arian system!

Such are the books prohibited by our learned author :
 1. All books published by councils and general assemblies. 2. All books published by the ministers of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, or any other Church that requires subscription to a confession of faith. 3. All commentaries. 4. All controversial books, except those published by himself and his brethren. Such is the *Index Expurgatorius** of Dr. Bruce!—yes, of that Dr. Bruce who interlards his sermons with the opprobrious epithets of enthusiasts, fanatics, and *bigots!*

It must be granted, indeed, that, whilst our author prohibits commentaries, he does not prohibit all books. With certain qualifications and restrictions, he tolerates the use of paraphrases. Why he should prohibit the one class and tolerate the other is not so clear. That commentators are more warped by attachment to human systems than paraphrasts is by no means self-evident. Besides, Dr. Campbell (a divine no less eminent than Dr. B.), in his "Philosophy of Rhetoric," condemns paraphrases, as calculated to *weaken* and *dilute* the meaning of the sacred oracles; and, on that account, gives to commentaries a decided preference. But, waiving these things, it must be acknowledged that our author has

* The Index Expurgatorius was a catalogue of those books prohibited by the Church of Rome.

not prohibited *all* books; that, under certain restrictions, he has tolerated paraphrases—and paraphrases, too, written by the members of different churches; but what sort of members? Not those who conscientiously believe the principles they profess, but men who, tampering with their own consciences, burst the trammels of their profession—men who cowardly and hypocritically subscribe orthodox creeds, whilst they teach a different kind of doctrine! Is not this the plain meaning of the Doctor? If not, I should be glad to know what he means. According to Dr. B.—if I do not mistake his meaning, and I presume I do not—a cowardly hypocrite, subscribing one class of doctrines and teaching another, is, “upon the whole, among the safest guides”—a safer guide than the orthodox minister, who conscientiously believes, and sincerely teaches, the doctrines he has subscribed! Such is the liberality of that divine who so liberally bestows on his neighbours the epithet—BIGOTS!

Dr. B. censures those who “neither read nor listen to anything that is inconsistent with their distinguishing tenets, and who esteem it an abomination to read a book written by one of an opposite persuasion,” observing, “that implicit faith is no longer the peculiar characteristic of the Romish communion. It is equally prevalent among Protestants of this description, and renders them equally invulnerable to (by) reason and inaccessible to argument.” May not such characters turn round, and, with sarcastic sneer, reply, “Physician, heal thyself?” What Protestant divine, of any denomination—what priest—what Pope—ever made so bold an attempt to stop up the avenues of knowledge? to render men invulnerable by reason and inaccessible to argument? to wrap them up in the impenetrable veil of an implicit faith? and, in a word, to constitute them fanatics, enthusiasts, and bigots?

OBJECTION II.

Dr. B. meanly attempts to raise a prejudice against the orthodox, by raking together the most foolish and absurd things found in their writings during a period of three hundred years. He quotes, for instance, from the *Monthly Repository* the following absurd expressions of Luther:—"Christ became the greatest transgressor, murderer, thief, rebel, and blasphemer that ever was, or could be in the world; for He, being made a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, is not now an innocent person, and without sin." *

In an unguarded moment, did such absurd—I had almost said blasphemous—expressions drop from the pen of Luther the reformer. What, then? Are they believed? are they adopted? By no means. They are, so far as I know, universally condemned. Why do our opponents ransack the archives of antiquity, select detached sentences from musty volumes which few possess, and attack rash and unguarded sentiments which none believe? Why do they expend all their strength in attacking those weak or foolish sayings, which have been a thousand times attacked, and which nobody will defend? If they think they are able to oppose the orthodox faith, why do they not come forward and attack it as men? Why do they not attack the doctrines of the Church of England, as contained in her articles and homilies? Why do they not attack the doctrines of the Church of Scotland, as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, larger and shorter? Why are they so shy, so cautious,

* All that Luther meant was, that our blessed Redeemer stood in the room of the murderer, the thief, &c., so as to bear the penalty of their sins. The apostle says, "He was made sin for us." Luther says, "He became a sinner for us." The meaning of both is, that he became a substitutionary sin-offering. I do not, however, defend Luther's *phrasology*.

and so timid in attacking those subordinate standards? Why do they attack them so seldom and so slightly? They know that these contain the *real* sentiments of the great body of the orthodox—sentiments which thousands are willing, and able, and ready to defend.

Again, why do not our opponents attack our standard works, both of the last and the present century? Why do they not attack an Edwards, a Fuller, and a Wardlaw, a Scott, and a Magee? Dr. B. never looks such champions in the face; but, with great magnanimity, he attacks a few antiquated sentiments—sentiments a thousand times attacked, and long since abandoned.

“Thrice he routed all his foes,
And thrice he slew the slain.”

I will not imitate Dr. B. I will not pollute my pages by recording the absurd and blasphemous expressions of Arius and his followers. I will not attack the *dead*, but the *living*. I will show to the world that our venerable reformers were not the only men in whose voluminous writings a few unguarded or foolish expressions may be found. I will make it appear that even Arian doctors, now in the nineteenth century, are not altogether exempted from this common frailty of our nature, and that the learned Dr. B. himself is not quite infallible. A few quotations from his works will show that, in writing silly and absurd things, he is not behind “the very *chiefest*” of our reformers.

In his treatise on the Being and Attributes (pp. 88, 89), the Doctor denominates creation, “*That superlative act of power.*” When we read a few sentences farther, we find him declaring that other “*acts may require MORE power than creation itself.*” Having thus compared these different acts of power, and having shown us that other acts may be greater than the superlative act, he gravely informs us, that it is “idle to pretend to compare things that are unknown, and to institute a

comparison between degrees of power, when they are all equally incomprehensible !”

He compares acts of power, and then tells us that it is idle to compare them ! He pronounces one to be the superlative act, and then tells us that other acts may be *greater* ! And all this confusion of ideas is exhibited in that very specimen inserted in the *Belfast News-Letter*, for the purpose of showing off and recommending the Doctor's treatise.

Passing over the two next sentences, we find him writing thus :—

“The power that could produce a single plant is a subject of wonder. Its structure and growth, the expansion of the leaves, the pencilling of the flowers, the ripening of the fruit, and, above all, the mysterious configuration of the seed, are alike inimitable and inexplicable by the most ingenious naturalist.”

In this paragraph the Doctor declares that all the circumstances mentioned are *alike* inimitable and inexplicable ; and yet, in the very same paragraph, he affirms that they are *not* alike inimitable—the configuration of the seed is *above all* !

Dr. B. commences his abstract proof of the Being and Attributes of God thus (p. 27) :—“In order to lay a firm foundation for proving the existence of God, we must carry back our thoughts beyond the period of creation, into that vast vacuity, that dark abyss, without matter or motion, where time itself stood still. The mind is swallowed up in its own idea. It feels a similar vacuum within itself, the same darkness, the same inanity, the same inactivity ; yet here we must lay the corner-stone of the universe ; here must we seek for the first cause of all things. In this unsubstantial void of metaphysical abstraction, let us look out for some fixed point on which we may rest, till we bring the world into being, and put the mighty machine in motion. This point is our own existence.”

Calvin, or any other eminent reformer, I will engage to point out ten in the same number of pages written by the learned Doctor. Are *we* accountable for all the foolish or absurd things written by any of our venerable reformers? No more accountable than modern Arians are accountable—than the Antrim Presbytery is accountable—for all the foolish and absurd things written by the ex-principal of the Belfast Academy. I come now to

OBJECTION III.

In opposing the orthodox, our author resorts to another stratagem still more despicable. He not only rakes together—or rather *retails*—the most foolish and absurd expressions found in their writings for centuries past, but he misrepresents, mis-states, and puts in their mouths sentiments which they never entertained, never uttered, never wrote. He forms a man of straw, knocks him down, and shouts victory. He forges sentiments, and triumphantly exposes them. Whilst flourishing away in this manner, his superficial reader thinks he sees orthodoxy bending under his manly blows, and crumbling under his victorious feet.

These severe and heavy charges the following quotations will fully substantiate:—

In page 86, he declaims thus: “How can men bear to hear this glorious and holy Being blasphemed, and to have their own sacred feelings insulted, by being told that mankind were created only to be plunged into the abyss of hell, to wallow in lakes of inextinguishable fire, and writhe in ever-during torments?”

But, in the name of candour and common sense, where did Dr. B. ever hear such blasphemy? **NOWHERE!** Who preaches such blasphemy? **NOBODY!** If the members of the First Presbyterian Congregation in Belfast believe such rhapsodies, they must be extremely

credulous indeed—they must regard their fellow-Christians, not as men, but as monsters.

In the same licentious strain of invective, he proceeds thus (Appendix, p. 313):—

“All these feelings may be indulged with enthusiasm, in the good sense of that word, without being shocked by cruel and unrelenting decrees, an unjust and tyrannical sacrifice, the ruin of human nature, and the eternal torments of mankind, without regard to principle or conduct.”

To say nothing of the blasphemous epithets, *cruel*, *unrelenting*, *unjust*, and *tyrannical*, applied to the decrees of God, and the atonement of His Son, who ever believed in “*the eternal torments of mankind without regard to principle or conduct?*” Who ever taught that monstrous doctrine? NOBODY. No Jew, no Heathen, no Mahometan, no Christian, of any denomination, ever taught it, or ever believed it! It is an insult on Christianity, and an outrage on common sense.

Another extraordinary specimen of invective against error which nowhere exists is exhibited in the Doctor's second sermon on the Atonement (p. 244):—

“Beside the controverted doctrines which have already passed under review, there is one detestable opinion, which has been hitherto overlooked as unworthy of discussion. There are, at this day, and in these countries, a multitude of wretched and ignorant enthusiasts, whose pernicious fanaticism engages them to delight in the prevalence of vice. Considering the conversion of every individual sinner as a miraculous and instantaneous operation of the Holy Spirit, they glory in their rapid progress towards the extremes of desperate wickedness, imagining that every step brings them nearer to the period of their conversion, and makes them fitter objects for the grace of God. The profligate votary of fanaticism rejoices in the indulgence of his most criminal passions, and in the increasing

depravity of his heart, looking forward to his involuntary, and indeed imaginary conversion. The fanatic, who has already undergone this wonderful operation, expresses his satisfaction at the depravity of his neighbour, as the surest presage of an approaching restoration, while, with respect to himself, he indulges his basest and most pernicious propensities, under a persuasion that he can never fall from his state of grace; and throws up the reins to his licentious passions, lest any attempt at moral virtue should seem to question the efficacy, or control the progress of that heavenly guide, who has condescended to undertake the government of his soul. He supplicates the pardon of God for every instance of reliance on the practice of virtue for Divine mercy or favour, of which he may have been guilty, and continues to sin that grace may abound."

But, in the name of wonder, who entertains that "*detestable opinion*" which the Doctor here describes? Who is infected with that "*dire superstition*" which he here exposes? Where is that multitude of wretched and ignorant enthusiasts which he here denounces? He assures us that these enthusiasts exist at *this day*, and in *these countries*. With great respect, I call upon him to point them out. Till this be done, I shall feel myself justified in regarding the whole as *fiction—burlesque on religion—satire on the age and country in which I live*.

From these vague, defamatory invectives, let us now turn our attention to more particular misrepresentations and calumnies.

A principal object of attack is Calvin.* That great reformer, he assures us, was a Supralapsarian. But

* "Calumny," says Diderot, "vanishes at the death of an obscure man; but at the urn of the illustrious she is eternally busy, raking his ashes with a poniard even ages after death." Never was this observation more strikingly verified than in the case of Calvin.

this is not true. That Calvin was a Sublapsarian, all his works prove. Those who doubt may consult his book on Predestination, page 978; his Institutes, book iii., chap. 23, sec. 3; and his Commentary on Rom. ix. 21: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Supralapsarians say that the lump mentioned in this text means the lump of *created existence*; but Sublapsarians maintain, that it means the lump of *fallen nature*. This is Calvin's opinion; and it proves that the Doctor's charge of Supralapsarianism is groundless.

Equally groundless is the assertion that Calvin said, "I confess that this is a horrible decree." The word "*horrible*" is a mistranslation. The Latin word "*horribile*" has various significations. One of them is—*awful*. In *this* acceptation it was used by Calvin. Is it not uncandid, is it not absurd, to suppose that Calvin used the word in a sense contrary to his own acknowledged principles? But Calvin must be made "*an offender for a word*." Every word, in which there is the slightest ambiguity, must be put to the rack, and a meaning extorted from it which the venerable reformer never contemplated.*

Another gross misrepresentation of Calvin we find in the Appendix, p. 307. It stands thus: "Calvin denies that there is any difference between preterition and reprobation. 'Quos Deus præterit reprobatur.'" Now, Calvin denies no such thing; and the English reader will be astonished to hear that the Latin quotation proves no such thing. The literal meaning of it is this: Whom God passes by He reprobates.

* Calvin's "*horribile decretum*" has met with no mercy. It has been attacked a thousand times. Bishop Tomline, Bishop Mant, Dr. Millar, Dr. Graves, and almost every writer against Calvinism, assail it. How weak must their cause be, when, in defence of it, they are obliged to wield such weapons!

Now, if Calvin's assertion, "*Whom God passes by He reprobates,*" proves that there is no difference between preterition and reprobation, then the apostle's assertion, "*Whom the Lord loves He chastens,*" equally proves that there is no difference between love and chastisement. The cases are exactly parallel. The absurdity in both is the same. The person who would draw either the one inference or the other must betray either his ignorance or dishonesty. With equal truth and justice, Dr. B. might charge the Apostle Paul with denying that there is any difference between foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. "Whom He did foreknow (Rom. viii. 29), He also did predestinate." Therefore, there is no difference between foreknowledge and predestination:— "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called." Therefore there is no difference between predestination and calling, &c. Such is Dr. B.'s logic!

If, in the preceding quotation, the Doctor has deceived the English reader, the deception is still more flagrant in his statement of the Articles of the Synod of Dort. The pretended articles given by Dr. B. (Appendix, p. 305,) occupy only half a page; the real articles would fill a dozen of pages. The real articles will be found in Scott's "Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism." They are a most interesting document, written with great caution and judgment, but too long for insertion. The articles given by Dr. B. are a most shameful misrepresentation of the Synod's doctrines. The first of them is no less than eighteen condensed into one. In reference to it, I shall here quote the following appropriate observations of Scott:—

"These eighteen articles concerning predestination are abbreviated by Dan. Tilenus, reported by Heylyn, and deliberately adopted by his lordship (Bishop Tomline), in the following single article:—

OF PREDESTINATION.

“That God, by an absolute decree, hath elected to salvation a very small number of men, without any regard to their faith and obedience whatsoever; and secluded from saving grace all the rest of mankind, and appointed them by the same decree to eternal damnation, without any regard to their infidelity and impenitency.”

“I have long been aware,” says Scott, “that there is ‘no new thing under the sun;’ and that ‘speaking all manner of evil falsely’ of the disciples of Christ is no exception to this rule; and that misrepresenting and slandering men called Calvinists has been very general ever since the term was invented; but I confess I never before met with so gross, so barefaced and inexcusable a misrepresentation as this, in all my studies of modern controversy. It can only be equalled by the false testimony borne against Jesus and his apostles, as recorded in Holy Writ. But is that cause likely to be in itself good, and of God, which needs to be supported by so unhallowed weapons?”

That Scott’s remarks are by no means too severe, the following observations will clearly show. In the forged article, on which Scott animadverts, and which is the same with that given by Dr. B., we are told “That God, by an absolute decree, hath elected to salvation *a very small* number of men.” In the genuine article it is *a certain number of men*. In the forged article we are told, that the rest are appointed to eternal damnation, without any regard to their *infidelity* and *impenitency*. In the genuine article, the divines declare “That the non-elect God hath passed by, and decreed to leave in the common misery into which they had, by *their own fault*, cast themselves; and at length, not only on account of their *unbelief*, but also of *all their*

other sins, to condemn and eternally punish, to the manifestation of His own *justice*."

The forgery says, "without any regard to their *infidelity and impenitency*." The true article says, "on account of their *unbelief*, and *all their other sins*."

The second of the spurious articles given by Dr. B. omits the following important statement of the true article: "This death of the Son of God is a single and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sins, of infinite value and price, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world."

The third spurious article given by Dr. B. is one tissue of forgery and falsehood.

It asserts, first, that, "by Adam's fall, his posterity lost their free will." The genuine article asserts no such thing. The spurious article asserts, "that Adam's posterity are put to an unavoidable necessity to do, or not to do, whatsoever they do or do not, whether it be good or evil." The genuine article asserts no such thing. The spurious article adds, "being thereunto predestinated by the eternal and effectual secret decree of God." The genuine article asserts no such thing. No Calvinistic article asserts that men are predestinated to sin by an *effectual* decree.

I might thus go over all the spurious articles, but the remarks made are sufficient to prove that they are an *infamous fabrication*.

Shameful as this forgery is, it appears that others still more injurious were published by the enemies of Calvinism. For the truth of this charge I appeal to themselves—I appeal to a late celebrated anti-Calvinistic writer, the Lord Bishop of Lincoln. His words are these: "This is the shortest, and withal the most favourable summary which I have hitherto met with, of the conclusions of this Synod; that which was drawn up by the Remonstrants in their antidotum being much more large, and comprehending many

things by way of inference, which are not positively expressed in the words themselves."

From this declaration of his lordship, it appears that the summary, or rather forgery, on which we have been animadverting, is not the *worst*; that the antidotum was *still more injurious*.

I would ask, in the words of Scott, "*Would not the very articles published by the Synod itself, being produced or commented on, have been far more like a fair and equitable conduct towards it, than any abbreviation or antidotum drawn up by its avowed opponents? I trust such would have been the conduct of most Calvinists in recording the proceedings of an anti-Calvinistic Synod; but it seems Calvinists are exceptions to all rules, and have no right to expect fair and equitable treatment from other men.*"

If Tilenus, Heylyn, and the Bishop of Lincoln deserve such censure—and no candid reader will deny that they do—how much more reprehensible is the conduct of Dr. B.? The articles recorded by the Doctor were acknowledged by Tilenus, Heylyn, and the Bishop, to be only an *abbreviation*; but Dr. B. makes no such acknowledgment. He inserts them as *the real and genuine articles of the Synod of Dort!* Scott exposed the fraud—Scott detected the forgery—and, after all, Dr. B. comes forward, and endeavours to palm it on the world as *the genuine doctrine of that celebrated Synod!*

Having witnessed the Doctor's treatment of the Synod of Dort, let us now see how he treats the Westminster Assembly. To misrepresent *their* Confession, being a book in general circulation, one would suppose somewhat hazardous. The Doctor, however, has made the experiment on the third, fourth, and fifth sections of the third chapter.

In page 172, he exhibits the following mutilated, transposed, and scandalously garbled account of them:—

“By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are foreordained to everlasting death, and others to everlasting life, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either ; or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereto.”

By thus garbling and transposing, the Doctor succeeds in creating an ambiguity. He then avails himself of the ambiguity which himself has produced, and palms upon the Westminster Divines a sentiment which they never entertained nor published. Page 174, he writes thus : “He (Christ) proclaims that whoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life ; but here we learn, that the smaller number have already been ordained to life, and the greater part to endless perdition,” without any foresight of their faith or perseverance. And again (p. 181)—“The majority of Christians are fore-ordained to everlasting death, without any foresight of faith and good works.”

In these quotations he makes the divines assert, what they have nowhere asserted, “that some men and angels are foreordained to everlasting death, without any foresight of faith or good works.” The divines were incapable of such an assertion—they were incapable of writing such nonsense—nonsense which the Doctor again and again palms upon them. They speak of the foreseen faith and good works of those who are *saved*. This is intelligible. But they never speak, nor *seem* to speak, of the foreseen faith and good works of those who *perish*—of those who never believe nor do good works. This would be SHEER NONSENSE.

To prefer so absurd a charge against the Westminster Divines—a charge, to justify which there is not in all their works *one single syllable*—is certainly a bold experiment on the credulity of the present age.

But, again, the Westminster Divines nowhere assert that the greater part of men are ordained to perdition.

They nowhere assert that the majority of Christians are foreordained to everlasting death. These are not the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, but the calumnies of Dr. Bruce.*

* Some years ago, an anonymous writer, subscribing himself "A REVEREND PRESBYTERIAN," attacked the Westminster Confession of Faith by misrepresentation. I endeavoured to defend, and to administer such chastisement as I hoped would deter others from such a mode of attack. In this hope I soon found myself sadly disappointed. Mr. M'Affee, then schoolmaster at Whiteabbey, with a hardihood seldom equalled, set to work, and wrote a pamphlet fraught with misrepresentations, misstatements, and forgeries. Of these I shall here exhibit a specimen. At the bottom of the 23d page we find the following bold and presumptuous appeal to the Westminster Confession:—"If," says Mr. M'Affee, "the doctrine contained in the third chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith be true, God has not only chosen a certain number to everlasting life, but He has also predestinated the remaining party to everlasting condemnation, *to the praise of the glory of His grace.*" What! predestinate men to condemnation, "*to the praise and glory of His grace!*" Yes, indeed!! This doctrine—this most absurd and blasphemous doctrine—is forged by Mr. M'Affee, palmed upon the Westminster Divines, recorded in different parts of his pamphlet, and the forgery stamped current by Mr. Drew, editor of the *Imperial Magazine!!!*

Again (page 25), he writes thus: "Take in plain terms the Calvinistic answer:—God, from all eternity, doomed all those who will perish at the last, without any foresight of faith or works to that end." This ridiculous calumny, being exactly the same with that of Dr. B., requires no additional exposure. I would only say in palliation, that I fondly hope these writers are not the *inventors*, but only the *retailers* of the calumny.

In reply to the question, Will all mankind be saved in the day of judgment? Mr. M'Affee makes the Calvinist absurdly reply, "No; because Christ did not die for all; He died only for the elect." How different is this *forged answer* from the following *genuine Calvinistic reply*—"All mankind will not be saved at the day of judgment; for many of them live and die unbelievers, impenitent, and wicked!"

Mr. M'Affee charges me with granting "that there is no such text in the Bible as proves that God entered into covenant

After misrepresenting the Westminster Divines and Synod of Dort—after laying to the charge of those venerable assemblies “things which they knew not,” and imputing to them doctrines the very reverse of those which they taught—after treating fellow-Christians so unjustly and injuriously—we will feel less surprise to find the learned Doctor misrepresenting Jews, Heathens, and Mahometans, preferring against them groundless accusations. “We know, too,” says the Doctor (p. 280), “that men were growing more and more depraved, and that, except through the medium of the Christian religion, *not even the faintest effort has ever yet been made to reclaim the world.*”

What! Were no efforts made under the patriarchial

with Adam, as the representative of his posterity.” I have granted NO SUCH THING.

He charges me with saying “that omniscience signifies the actual knowledge of all things that *possibly can be known.*” I have said NO SUCH THING.

He says, I “seem to triumph in asserting that Dr. Clarke denies the foreknowledge of God.” I have asserted NO SUCH THING.

He again affirms that I “assert, without any qualification, that the Doctor denies the foreknowledge of the deity.” I again affirm that I have asserted NO SUCH THING, either *with* qualification or *without* qualification.

When did I say these things? NEVER. Where have I made such assertions? NOWHERE.

These and similar misrepresentations, misstatements, and forgeries, are doubtless believed by the opponents of Calvinism. The editor of the *Imperial Magazine* has stamped them current. Were this not the case, and were it not that I am anxious to detect fraud and prevent deception, I would have suffered them to pass without notice, leaving them to sink into merited oblivion.

Mr. M‘Afee gives his pamphlet the modest title of—“A RATIONAL AND SCRIPTURAL INVESTIGATION;” and, with characteristic humility, he declares that “reason, founded on revelation, always makes a *noble attack.*” He seems, however, unfortunately, to have forgotten that misrepresentations, misstatements, and forgeries, always make a DISGRACEFUL ATTACK.

age? Were no efforts made under the legal dispensation? Did even the *heathens* make no efforts? Does not every smatterer in history know that *thousands* of efforts were made to reclaim the world? Yes, efforts were made by patriarchs, priests, and prophets, by poets and politicians, by orators and philosophers. Equally groundless and unjust is the accusation which the Doctor prefers against the man who has not read his Bible (p. 6.) “As to the conduct of Providence, and the history of mankind, he has not a notion of them beyond the period of his own existence.” So far is this accusation from being true, that many of those who never read the Bible have, nevertheless, been the authors of histories—histories of Providence, histories of mankind, histories extending backward centuries beyond the period of their existence.

In describing the man who has not read his Bible, our author adds, “And if he be so completely enveloped in darkness concerning this life, he must be totally destitute of any conception of a life to come.” What! All who have not read the Bible completely in darkness concerning this life! How contrary to fact is such an assertion! Again, are such characters “*totally destitute* of any conception of a life to come?” Let Socrates and Plato, let heathens in general, let Mahometans, let blind or uneducated Christians answer the question. All these will contradict *the Doctor*. With one voice they will answer—No.

These misrepresentations, I firmly believe, are not voluntary. They arise rather from confusion of ideas than from any worse principle. That this is the most correct, as well as the most charitable conclusion, the following quotations clearly prove:—

In page 6, he says, “The mind of the first (the man who has not read his Bible) is a perfect vacuum as to spiritual qualities and endowments; or, if not a vacuum, it is a chaos. Except some vague instinctive principle,

or rather feeling of moral obligation, and some hearsay notion of God, he is a stranger to morals and piety." How inconsistent is all this with what he asserts, p. 64: "The moral maxims which He (Christ) sanctioned with His authority were no new discoveries. The leading principles of Christian morality are to be found in the Old Testament and in the writings of *heathen philosophers*."

Again, pages 81 and 82, the Doctor writes thus:—
 "As soon as man was capable of reflecting on his own nature and situation, he must have perceived that there is a God—some Being superior to himself and his fellow-mortals. When he looked abroad into the world, he must have been satisfied that the magnificence, order, and beauty of the universe were the effects of consummate wisdom and power. When he surveyed the living creatures around him, and contemplated the provision made for their subsistence and comfort, he must have been sensible that this superior Being is bountiful and kind. As his experience and reflecting powers increased, his conviction of these truths would be strengthened, till he acquired the idea of an invisible power, supremely mighty, benevolent, and wise. A more comprehensive view of the creation might naturally lead to a belief, that the whole was the production of one Being, assisted, perhaps, by subordinate agents. This last idea unhappily took such strong possession of the minds of men, as to give rise to the various systems of idolatry which prevailed throughout the heathen world, and still maintains its ground over a large portion of the globe. From these errors the Jewish nation alone was exempted,* and that only by a Divine revelation. By such observations and reflections the mind of man might have attained a conception of the Divine Being,

* So far were the Jews from being exempted from the errors of idolatry, as Dr. B. erroneously states, that "God gave them up to worship the host of heaven!"

and of our relations and duties to Him, sufficiently sublime and edifying; and there are not wanting instances of men who so far availed themselves of the light of nature as, in a great degree, to fulfil these expectations."

Who sees not the inconsistency of such sentiments? The man who has never read the Bible, "except some vague instinctive principle, or rather feeling of moral obligation, is a stranger to morals;" and yet he may read "the leading principles of Christian morality in the writings of the heathen philosophers!" He has only "hearsay notions of God;" and yet, by reflecting on himself, and contemplating other creatures, he might "attain a conception of the Divine Being, and of our relation and duties to Him, sufficiently sublime and edifying!"

Such inconsistent and contradictory statements induce me to believe that the Doctor's misrepresentations frequently arise from an inadvertent and incoherent mode of thinking. This circumstance, however, does not render them harmless, and, of course, it neither supersedes my duty to point them out, nor the reader's duty to beware of them.

I shall say no more at present on this painful subject. I would only caution my readers:—Beware of *quotations!* Beware of *misrepresentations!* Beware of *forgeries!* "*Be not deceived!*"

OBJECTION IV.

I have another objection against the Doctor's mode of managing the controversy. He blends the sentiments of Antinomians and other enthusiasts with those of Calvinists. This is a piece of generalship unworthy of a learned Christian divine. The Antinomian sentiments of Crisp, Brierly, Hawker, &c., and the raptures and rhapsodies of other enthusiasts, are held in as great

abhorrence by Calvinists as by any Socinians or Arians in the world. Were I to blend the sentiments of Socinians and Arians, and confound all distinctions between them, it is probable Dr. B. would conceive himself injured. As he would that Calvinists should do unto him, the learned Doctor should do also the same.

OBJECTION V.

Dr. Bruce's attack on Calvinism is liable to another strong objection. He has not studied the system he opposes. To show that this objection is well founded, and the censure it conveys just, I shall quote only two passages, one from his "Sermons," and the other from his "Being and Attributes." In his "Sermons" (page 202) he writes thus:—

"I ask, then, in the first place, did this decree originate before or after the fall? This is a subject of controversy with Predestinarians themselves, who are accordingly divided between Sublapsarians and Supralapsarians."

In this passage, the Doctor has betrayed his ignorance of the Calvinistic system. "Did *this* decree originate before or after the fall?" What decree? No decree is mentioned in the preceding context. Without any previous notice—without any visible connexion—he leaps from original sin to the decrees of God.* From

* The instance noticed above is not the only one calculated to show that Dr. B. is a writer extremely confused and incoherent, and that, of course, it is exceedingly difficult to follow or refute him. Relatives, without antecedents, occur in almost every page. I shall here exhibit a few out of many:—Page 83, "No portion of mankind has, at any time, been wholly ignorant of *this* truth." What truth? Page 62, "*These subjects* must comprise an infinity of facts and speculations." What subjects? "The knowledge of *such truths* is peculiar to the Supreme Being." What truths? Page 69, "Yet the existence of *these qualities* in the Divine nature is of

the subsequent context, however, it appears that, by "*this decree*," the Doctor intended the decree of God, that man should fall.

When the Doctor, therefore, asks the question, Did this decree originate before or after the fall? what does he mean? He means NOTHING. The question is absurd. The import of it is this:—Did the decree, that man should fall, originate before or after he fell? On the absurdity of this question I need make no comment. Surely no Calvinist was ever so foolish as to maintain that the decree, that man should fall, originated after he had actually fallen!

But, waiving this gross absurdity, I ask, was it ever a subject of controversy with Predestinarians, whether the decree of the fall, or *any other decree*, "originated

essential importance." What qualities? "Those who cannot." Those what? Page 79, "What do all *these pretensions* avail," &c. What pretensions? Page 108, "*The word* has often *this signification*," &c. What word? What signification? Page 113, "From the poverty of language, in *this respect*," &c. In what respect? Page 127, "Now, if the word create is necessarily understood in *this sense*." What sense? "But this I do not conceive to be the apostle's meaning," &c. What is not his meaning? Page 152, "*This sympathy* with human feelings," &c. What sympathy? Page 169, "Now, if we can suppose it possible that any good end may be answered by *such injunctions*," &c. What injunctions? Page 179, "Who are little inclined to *those foolish questions, strifes of words, and perverse disputings*." What foolish questions? What strifes of words? What perverse disputings? Page 180, "That body of people, whom he *thus foreknew*," &c. How foreknew? "For *the doctrine* is founded on foreknowledge." What doctrine? Page 195, "*The word* is explained in the next clause," &c. What word? "In Hebrew, the *simple word* means to be a sinner." What simple word? "In another form of the *verb*," &c. What verb? &c. These instances, out of many, show that the Doctor thinks, and of course writes, incoherently. They show that it is easy to mistake his meaning, but difficult, if not impossible, to refute all his detached, disjointed, and erroneous sentiments.

before or after the fall?" NEVER. Were Sublapsarians and Supralapsarians divided on this subject? THEY WERE NOT. Did any Calvinist ever maintain that any decree of God originated after the fall? No Calvinist ever maintained so gross an absurdity. Were the Deity to form any purpose in time which he had not formed from eternity, he would be *mutable*, liable to change and "shadow of turning!"

Calvinists universally maintain, and have *always* maintained, that *all* the decrees of God are *eternal*. Their children, as soon as they are capable of lisping their catechism, know that the decrees of God are His "*eternal purpose*." The eternity of the Divine decrees was never controverted, either by Sublapsarians or Supralapsarians. The subject of their controversy was not the *date*, but the *object* of God's decree of predestination. The Supralapsarians maintained that the object of this decree was men considered merely as creatures; but the Sublapsarians contended that the decree of predestination contemplated men not merely as creatures, but as *fallen* creatures.

Would not Dr. B. have displayed more wisdom by *studying* the disputes between Sublapsarians and Supralapsarians, before he pretended to *explain* them? What! Explain what he did not understand!—teach what he had never learned!—oppose opinions which he had never studied!

That our author, in attacking Calvinism, is opposing a system which he has not studied, and which he does not understand, the following extracts from his "Being and Attributes" farther evince. In page 52, speaking of the free agency of the Deity, he writes thus:—

"This freedom must extend to what has been called the liberty of indifference. It is thought by some that no being can act except there be a motive for acting in one manner rather than another; and that when all modes of acting are indifferent, there can be no action.

If this were the case, the universe could never have been created; for it is impossible to imagine that there could be any reason for creating it in one part of vacant space, or at one period in eternity, rather than another. A sufficient motive for acting may therefore exist, though there be none for preferring one particular mode to every other. It is so far from being foolish, in this case, to act without a motive, that it would be unspeakable folly to suppose that the Deity would refrain from acting on such a notion. The two equal bundles of hay are a slander even on the stupidity of the ass. These, and many other notions, originate in our confounding spirit with matter, thought with motion, and motives with impulse."

After the Doctor has written about two pages more, he completely forgets all this, and writes as follows:—

"If we imagine that the existence of two perfect beings is even conceivable, a little consideration will convince us that, in fact, we are only thinking twice of the same thing. Their omnipotence is exercised in the same place, at the same time, and is directed by infallible wisdom and consummate goodness. It must, therefore, be always performing the same acts; for the perfection of wisdom will not admit of their thinking or acting differently: the wisest determination must be preferred by both. Even two men, who are perfect in any demonstrative science, cannot possibly differ. Their conclusions on that subject must infallibly correspond. This results from the perfection of their knowledge in that science; and, therefore, if two perfect beings existed, their knowledge and thoughts on every subject must be the same. For the same reason, their wills, intentions, and actions will coincide."

In the former of these extracts, our learned author strongly asserts the doctrine of *free will*; in the latter, he as firmly maintains the doctrine of *necessity*. In the former, a *liberty of indifference* is taught; in the latter,

the doctrine of *moral necessity* is asserted. In the former, *Arminianism* is taught; in the latter, the *highest Calvinism*. If the two Supreme Beings, supposed by the Doctor, are both possessed of a liberty of indifference, why must their omnipotence be exercised in the same place, and at the same time? Might not the one exert his omnipotence in *one* part of space, and at *one* period in eternity, and the other in a *different* department, and at a *different* period? If they be possessed of a liberty of indifference, why must they always think alike, and act alike? Why may they not think differently and act differently? If they cannot *think* differently, *will* differently, and *act* differently, they cannot be possessed of a liberty of indifference; they must be Necessarians. If their wills, intentions, and actions *must* coincide, then they are no longer *Libertarians*; they must be the subjects of moral necessity. Excellent divinity! Sound doctrine! Not only Calvinism, but the *highest Calvinism*!* So high, that some very judicious Calvinists have opposed it. It is one of those points on which the celebrated Wither-
 spoon opposed his illustrious predecessor, President

* From the heights of Calvinism, the Doctor descends to the depths of Socinianism. Page 24, he writes thus: "While others waste their time in disputing about the nature, person, and office of Christ, it is enough for the humble disciple to be assured that He was invested with Divine authority, and that He made known the nature and the will of God; that He pointed out the way to life eternal, and evinced the truth of that doctrine by His resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us, and whence He shall "come to judge both the living and the dead." This is a Socinian creed, and Dr. B. pronounces it quite sufficient! At one time a professed Arian—now a high Calvinist—again a Socinian—and all this in that same volume of sermons, which he modestly pronounces "consistent with itself and the Gospel!"

" ——— nil fuit unquam
 Sic impar sibi! ———"

Edwards. I am happy, however, in this instance, to find Jonathan Edwards, the Calvinist, and Dr. B., the Arian, going hand in hand in the support of truth. Dr. B. has proved clearly that the Deity himself is not possessed of a liberty of indifference. But if the Deity be not possessed of such a liberty, how can man be possessed of it? To say that God is not possessed of a liberty of indifference, but that man is possessed of it, would be blasphemy. It would be to say, that man has more liberty than his Maker!—the creature than the Creator! Such is the blasphemous conclusion to which every man must be reduced, who maintains the doctrine of a liberty of indifference. Should any continue to defend that doctrine, I would refer them to the preceding reasoning of Dr. B., which, in my opinion, is altogether unanswerable. I would say to them, read Dr. B., and become *Calvinists*.

Not only the reasoning, but even the *testimony*, of Dr. B., in favour of Calvinism, ought to have great weight and influence. It is the testimony of an enemy. It is the testimony of common sense, bursting the barriers of a hereditary creed, and forcing its way through the deep-rooted prejudices of an early education. That both God and man are possessed of a liberty of indifference, is a tenet which the Doctor had received by tradition from his fathers. It constitutes an important part of that hereditary creed, handed down by his boasted predecessors, "Halliday and his grandfather, Drennan and Brown, Mackay and Crombie." But that the Deity possesses no such liberty, and, of course, that *man* possesses no such liberty, is the dictate of the Doctor's own common sense. It is the dictate of truth, and a corner-stone of the Calvinistic system.

The extract given above proves two things:—first, it proves the truth of Calvinism; and, secondly, it proves that Dr. B. does not understand the system he has undertaken to oppose. If he really understood it

there is reason to believe that he would not oppose it. As his opposition arises from ignorance, I would fervently pray for him, and all such, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

OBJECTION VI.

Anti-Trinitarians, in their attempts to subvert what I regard as the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, first waged war with creeds and confessions, and loudly vociferated Chillingworth's maxim, "The Bible—the Bible is the religion of Protestants." But now, finding that their principles cannot be defended on the broad basis of Divine Revelation, they retreat to the citadel of the four gospels. Nor are they willing to appeal to these as the standard of doctrine, but only to a few verses which are found written in them all. The testimony of three evangelists, according to Dr. Bruce, is not sufficient to establish any important truth!* Could anything but conscious weakness account for such timidity and tergiversation?

Our learned author betrays the same weakness and timidity, by deprecating argument and verbal criticism. He criticises, and then condemns an appeal to criticism. He argues, and then condemns an appeal to argument. Is not this to sound a retreat? Is it not to abandon that field to which he had rashly challenged his opponents? The honest Quaker, when pressed with an argument which he could not answer, very piously exclaimed, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Argument! the Lord rebuke thee!"

OBJECTION VII.

Finally, I object to Dr. Bruce's sermons on the study of the Bible; because they have a chilling and

* The truth of these charges will appear in the subsequent chapter.

benumbing tendency. By sinking the greater part of the sacred volume into comparative insignificance, they have a tendency to lessen men's attachment to it, and, of course, to draw them off from the reading and perusal of it. By sinking Divine truth in our esteem, they are calculated to repress a spirit of inquiry, and to arrest the progress of religious knowledge. But on this objection I shall not insist, as the force of it will appear in the ensuing chapter, to which I now proceed.

CHAPTER II.

DR. BRUCE'S ATTACK ON THE PLENARY INSPIRATION OF
THE SCRIPTURES REPELLED.

HAVING, in the preceding chapter, stated my objections to the Doctor's mode of managing the controversy, I come now to the defence of those doctrines which, in his sermons on the study of the Bible, he has so boldly assailed. In "contending for the faith once delivered to the saints," it is sometimes necessary to defend one particular truth, and sometimes another. At present the attack is general. Our learned author, with an intrepidity altogether unparalleled, at least in this country, has attempted to raze the very foundations of the Christian system. He has attacked, not merely the doctrines of the Bible, but the BIBLE ITSELF. That this charge, though awful in the extreme, is not unjust, the following quotations too clearly prove :—

Page 60, "Respectfully and gratefully receive that variety of religious knowledge which is communicated in the Acts of the Apostles, and their epistles; but fix upon the words of Jesus as the standard of your faith," &c.

Page 49, "It is evident that we should collect the whole of the Christian doctrine from the words of Jesus, as recorded in the four gospels. For the knowledge of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the terms of acceptance, and other doctrinal points, we should depend solely on the gospels."

Page 87, "We should interpret their (the apostles) reasoning in conformity with His precepts; not His precepts by their reasoning."

Page 50, "But you are never to set up the authority of the disciples against that of their Master, nor consider their writings as the primary source of knowledge on doctrinal questions, as is too often done. On the contrary, you should form your opinions from the discourses of Christ, on every branch of His religion, and consider the writings of the apostles as comments upon them," &c.

Page 180, "If I can explain these (the 8th and 9th chapters of the Romans), it will not be necessary to occupy your time with any others. If we cannot interpret them conformably to our Saviour's doctrine, we should rather abandon them as unintelligible than prefer the lower authority to the higher, and what we cannot understand to what we do."

Page 91, "For the general purport of their writings (the sacred penmen's writings) coincides with the declarations of our Lord."

Page 123, "Is it not clear that the authority of our Lord is paramount to every other, and that if any of His apostles differ from Him, their authority must be set aside? Is it not absurd to suppose that they should, and, most of all, that any of them should, contradict their Master and one another, and even themselves."

Page 26, "Being now well grounded and settled in the genuine doctrine of Christ, as delivered by himself in the gospels, His faithful followers must take it for granted that the chosen disciples of our Lord taught nothing inconsistent with it,* and that any obscurity

* If we must take it for granted that "the chosen disciples of our Lord taught nothing inconsistent with His doctrine," what does our author mean by telling us that the *general purport* of their writings coincides with the declarations of our Lord—that if any of His apostles *differ* from Him, *their authority must be set aside*, and that we should dwell and rely on those points of edification in which the apostles and their Master coincide? I say, what does the Doctor mean? The most charitable answer is, he means—NOTHING AT ALL.

in their writings must be cleared up by referring to His own words. He will therefore expound those texts which are hard to be understood by the plain doctrine of their Master; the sincere and single-minded reader of the Bible will look to his Saviour as his polar star, and, in perusing the epistles, will dwell and rely on those points of edification in which the apostles and their Master coincide."

Page 19, "He will, however, distinguish the history from the Divine communication. He will see that it has been composed by fallible men, but under such direction and superintendence, that, though left to themselves as to peculiarities of style, the narration of ordinary facts, and the insertion of occasional reflections, they hand down the revelation itself as it was actually made."

In confirmation of these sentiments, he quotes with approbation (p. 297) the following sentence from Grotius:—"It was not necessary that the histories (in Scripture) should be dictated by the Holy Spirit; it was enough that the writers had a good memory."

Such is the humble rank to which the inspired apostles are degraded! We must not depend upon them for *any doctrine!* The **WHOLE** of Christian doctrine we must receive from our Saviour, and not from the apostles. On Him we must depend **SOLELY** for our knowledge of doctrines. The writings of the apostles are to be regarded, so far as doctrine is concerned, only as "*comments*" on the discourses of our Lord. Nay, the apostles are to be regarded, if our author's doctrine be true, not only in the humble capacity of commentators, but—shall I utter the impiety?—as **BAD COMMENTATORS!** Our learned author constantly represents the Redeemer's doctrines as *plain*, but those of the apostles as *obscure*. Of course, the apostles must be *bad commentators*, for their commentary is *more obscure than the text!* Instead of

their commentary explaining our Saviour's text, His text must explain their commentary! "We should interpret," says the Doctor, "their reasoning in conformity with His precepts, and not His precepts by their reasoning!" Now, if the reasonings of the apostles do not assist us in the interpretation of our Saviour's precepts, they must be *useless commentaries* indeed, and the apostles themselves *silly commentators!* Such is the impious but *inevitable* conclusion.

Dr. Bruce maintains that the authority of the apostles is *inferior* to that of the Redeemer—that *His* authority is *paramount*—that they were *fallible* men, &c. As *men*, the apostles were fallible, I grant; but, as *writers of the sacred volume*, they were *infallible*. The authority by which the whole Bible was written is the same—**THE AUTHORITY OF GOD.** "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." These declarations, I know, refer to the Old Testament Scriptures, but they are equally applicable to the New. Jesus Christ is the author of all the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments. It is on this account that His name is called "**THE WORD OF GOD.**" It was the Spirit of Christ which dictated the Old Testament Scriptures (1 Pet. i. 10, 11)—"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time, the **SPIRIT OF CHRIST** which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." The same Spirit of Jesus that inspired the Old Testament prophets, inspired also the New Testament writers. The Redeemer, in the days of His flesh, had "many things to say and to write," which the disciples at that period could not bear. He therefore promised His Holy Spirit to "teach them **ALL THINGS,**" and "to lead them into **ALL**

TRUTH." Dr. B. asserts that the authority of the apostles is *inferior* to that of the Redeemer; but the Apostle Paul asserts the contrary. He asserts that they are the same (Gal. i. 11, 12)—“But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” And to the Corinthians he says, “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.” The revelation of John the Divine claims the same high original. It is expressly styled the “*Revelation of Jesus Christ.*” The writer of it “was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day;” by the inspiration of that Spirit he wrote seven letters to the seven Churches in Asia, and assures us that the prophecies of Divine revelation are the “testimony of Jesus.” (Rev. xix. 10)—“For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”

Thus it appears that the Redeemer is the author of the whole sacred volume. To say, therefore, with Dr. B., that the authority of one part of Scripture is inferior to that of another, is grossly absurd; for they were all penned by the same authority. If the authority of the other parts of the sacred volume be inferior to that of the gospels, I ask, What is the difference? There can be no difference but this, that the authority of the latter is *Divine*, and that of the former *human*; or, in other words, that the gospels are *the word of God*, but the rest of the scriptures *the word of man!* If this is not Deism, it is something very like it. The Deist, indeed, rejects the *whole* of the Bible, whilst Dr. B. retains, perhaps, one-hundredth part of it!

I am quite sensible that our author sometimes speaks, not only of the gospels, but of the other scriptures, as if they were divinely inspired. His language, however, is so vague, ambiguous, and contradictory, that it is impossible to ascertain his real sentiments. With great

respect I call upon him to speak out. Either the other scriptures as well as the gospels, *are* divinely inspired, or they are *not*. If he say that they *are*, then he contradicts his favourite sentiment—that *they are of inferior authority*. If he say that they are *not* divinely inspired, *then he rejects ninety-nine hundredths of the sacred volume, and wants only one hundredth part of being a Deist!*

The truth is, that the Doctor's principles appear to me quite subversive of the Scriptures of truth. If his views are correct, I do not see that we can place any confidence whatever in any part of the sacred oracles, not even in *the four gospels*. If I believed that the sacred penmen were left to themselves, even with regard to style and language, this very circumstance would shake my confidence.* In prophecies, such as those of Ezekiel, Daniel, and John the Divine, and in other communications which were above the comprehension of the writers, it is self-evident that not only the matter, but the *language*, must have been inspired. And, even in the recording of those facts or doctrines, which were quite level to the understandings of the penmen, I do not think it at all reasonable to suppose, that they were left to the use of their own language, without any Divine superintendence. I do not think it *reasonable*, because I do not conceive that it would have been *safe*. Is it reasonable to suppose that illiterate fishermen, mechanics, &c., could *accurately* record either facts or doctrines? Would they be in no danger of blundering? of exhibiting to the world erroneous views? Even men of learning frequently fail in giving a true picture of their own ideas. Even Dr. B., whose whole life has been principally employed in the study of languages—even the learned Doctor himself sometimes fails. He fails so far as to publish doctrines which he does not

* I mean, without Divine superintendence.

believe, and to exhibit ideas which he never entertained — nay, he sometimes fails so far, that his language conveys no meaning at all. Does the Doctor believe that the whole world are saved? Does he believe that the whole world, prior to the coming of Christ, were damned? Does he believe either of these contradictory doctrines? Surely not; and yet both are taught by our author, as we have seen in the preceding chapter.

In page 82, he speaks of the attributes of God resulting from the works of creation. Here he has undoubtedly failed in communicating his ideas. He surely knows that the works of God result from His attributes, and not His attributes from His works.

That he sometimes writes without any meaning at all, is evident from his second sermon (p. 36). The principle that the kingdom of God is within us, admits, he assures us, of a rational interpretation. "*In its true sense,*" says he, "*it is the medium between a mystic and a polemic.*" Such is the Doctor's "*rational interpretation!*" Now, if so celebrated a linguist as the *quondam* principal of the Belfast Academy, through the improper use of language, teaches doctrines which he does not believe, communicates ideas which he does not entertain, and sometimes writes without any meaning at all, how much more liable to blunder would illiterate fishermen and mechanics be? To expect from such writers, if not divinely directed in their language, a correct statement either of facts or doctrines, would be weak and foolish in the extreme. On the principles of our author, where is the security that even the *four gospels* contain the true doctrines of Jesus Christ? Where is the security that they contain a true narration of facts? We are told, that all that was necessary was a good memory. But what reason have we to believe that even good memories might not fail? What security that they have not actually failed, and that the Scripture history is not really erroneous?

Once more: if the penmen of Scripture have interlarded the Bible with occasional observations, how shall such observations be distinguished from the genuine dictates of the Holy Spirit? Any controversialist, when pressed with a text of Scripture, might say, "*This is only an occasional, uninspired observation. It will not, therefore, prove your point.*" Thus a wide door would be opened for error, and scepticism might reign to the end of the world.

In a word, if the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures be denied, their perfection, as a rule of faith and manners, must be given up. If not entirely inspired by infallible wisdom, how can they be an infallible rule? Surely that which is partly Divine and partly human, partly fallible and partly infallible, can never be an unerring rule of faith and practice.

"The Bible—the Bible is the religion of Protestants," was once a celebrated maxim, the truth of which no Protestant disputed. At present, however, the case is quite different. The maxim is opposed, not only by the Church of Rome, but by many Socinian and Arian divines, particularly by Dr. B. The cry now is not, *the Bible, the Bible*, but *the Gospel, the Gospel* is our religion! According to our author, the *whole* Bible is not the standard of faith; scarcely one-hundredth part of it is entitled to that honour. We should collect, he assures us, the *whole* of the Christian doctrine from the words of Jesus. We should depend for our knowledge of doctrinal points *solely* on the gospels. Nay, in the Doctor's bold and daring enterprise of cutting down the standard of our faith, he proceeds still farther. "Hence we may deduce," says he, "not only the sufficiency of Scripture in general, but also the sufficiency of every evangelist separately, as to fundamentals."

He argues that the Gospels, either jointly or separately, are the standard of faith, because they contain "all those essential principles, without which we could

not be saved." But this reasoning is evidently absurd. It proves too much, and therefore proves nothing at all. The five books of Moses contain all that is essential to salvation, and therefore the *Pentateuch* is the standard of our faith. Peter's sermon contains all that is essential to salvation, and therefore *Peter's sermon* is the standard of our faith. Who sees not the extreme weakness and futility of such a mode of reasoning? Upon this absurd principle we might set up, not one, but a *hundred* standards of faith.

In curtailing the standard of our faith, the Doctor proceeds to a still more daring length. "From this," says he (p. 45), "another undeniable inference follows: that no principle which cannot be clearly proved from every one of the evangelists can be an essential article of faith; for, otherwise, we must suppose that some one of them has omitted an essential truth. If, then, you be in doubt, whether any doctrine be necessary to salvation, try it by this test:—look for it in the gospels, and if you do not find it plainly declared in them all, you may safely conclude that it is not essential to the plan of redemption. If any person attempt to impose a spurious tenet upon you, require him to prove it in this manner. If he fail, you may be assured that the point in question is not even an important truth. This I recommend as a sure guide to conduct you through the intricacies of controversy, and prevent you from being entangled in the nets of sophistry."

Let us try the Doctor's "sure guide." I ask, then, is the doctrine of forgiving injuries an essential article of faith? Certainly it is; our author himself will not deny it. He assures us (p. 89), that God is "forgiving to the merciful, and *inexorable* to those who withhold pardon and compassion from others." And again (p. 229), "He requires nothing to make Him merciful, but to be merciful ourselves; nothing to make Him placable, but to be meek, lowly, and *forgiving*." Accord-

ing to Dr. B., therefore, forgiveness of injuries is a most essential article of faith, and yet, according to the same Dr. B., it is *no* "essential article of faith." "It is not even *an important truth.*" Try it by the Doctor's sure guide. Is it taught in every one of the evangelists? *It is not.* It is taught, indeed, by *three* of the evangelists, and we would naturally suppose that, at the mouth of three such witnesses, every doctrine would be established. These witnesses assure us, that if we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us our trespasses. But all this is nothing. John omits it, and therefore "*it is not even an important truth!*" The same may be said of the doctrine of repentance.

Thus it appears that the Doctor's sure guide is a *false guide.* It goes upon the false principle which our author assumes, that all the essential articles of faith are contained in every one of the gospels. He particularly assures us (p. 45), that the Apostle John "committed to writing every fundamental doctrine, everything necessary towards obtaining life eternal." Now, he admits that forgiving injuries is a fundamental doctrine, and necessary towards obtaining eternal life, and yet John has *not* committed it to writing. It is not "*plainly declared*" in his gospel. Repentance is a fundamental doctrine, and yet not plainly declared in all the gospels.

I ask, now, does the Doctor's book deserve the encomiums he has passed upon it? Is it "*consistent with itself and the gospels?*" Is not his "sure guide" at variance with both?

His sure guide is not only a *false* guide, founded on false principles, and an *inconsistent* guide, inconsistent with his own acknowledged creed—it is a *dangerous and destructive guide*, an *ignis fatuus*, calculated to mislead the heaven-bound traveller, and to plunge him into the gulf of perdition.

Following this guide, men might live and die implacable and impenitent, and yet *presumptuously hope to be*

sared! They might say, "According to Dr. B.'s sure guide, neither forgiveness of injuries nor repentance is an essential doctrine—it is not even an important truth: we will neither repent nor forgive;" and thus they might go down by the sides of the pit "*with a lie in their right hand!!!*"

Finally, the Doctor's sure guide is an **IMPIOUS GUIDE**. It impiously degrades *almost the whole* of the sacred volume. According to it, no truth is important that is not plainly declared in all the gospels. Now, the sermon on the mount is not contained in all the gospels. The Lord's Prayer is not contained in all the gospels. His intercessory prayer is not contained in all the gospels. His parables are not contained in all the gospels. His long and affecting valedictory address, recorded in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of John, is not contained in all the gospels. The institution of the Lord's Supper is not contained in all the gospels. Exclude from any one of the gospels whatever is not found in all the rest—exclude, also, the writer's own "occasional observations"—exclude, again, the uninspired "*narration of ordinary facts*"—exclude all these, and then tell me how much will remain. I might venture to assert, that the whole Bible would thus be compressed into *a tract of less than ten pages!*

Addison, in his "Spectator," observes, "That if all the books in the world were reduced to their quintessence, many a bulky volume would make its appearance in a penny paper." Dr. B. has tried the experiment. He has subjected the Word of God to this reducing process. Yes, to a *penny paper* he has reduced the quintessence of the *whole sacred volume!* Having advanced so far, the transition to Deism is both short and easy. Nor would the bold and daring attack of infidelity be half so dangerous.

Dr. B. not only *excludes* the Scriptures in general from the standard of our faith, but he actually *pours contempt*

upon them. As the standard of our faith, he not only represents them as *useless*, but as positively *injurious*. "If Christians," says he (p. 58), "had drawn all their creeds from the words of Jesus Christ, their religion would have retained its primeval simplicity. If the simplicity of the Gospel had been thus preserved, uniformity would have also very generally prevailed, and Christians would have kept the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. This simplicity and uniformity would have preserved it from cavil. The pure doctrine of Christ is a subject of praise even among sceptics; and their ridicule and invective are generally directed against mysterious and metaphysical innovations, even when their object is to bring Christianity itself into disrepute. It may be reasonably supposed that, if the creeds of Christians had remained simple and pure, there would have been fewer occasions for scandal and offence. Their controversies would have been milder and fewer in number, and their conduct, it may be presumed, more peaceable and pure. They would have spoken the truth in love. That great scourge of human nature, and disgrace of the Christian church, persecution, could scarcely have found any pretext for cruelty in the words of Christ. The Christian religion would have so charmed and edified mankind, that it would, by this time, have covered the whole face of the earth. Men would have hailed it as the messenger of glad tidings. The prophecies of Christ would have received already that completion which awaits them at last. All mankind would have become one family, dutifully performing the will of their common Father, practising the instructions of their great Preceptor, and behaving to each other as brethren. Their swords would have been transformed into plough-shares, and their spears forged into pruning-hooks. Men would learn war no more, and would every day become more and more fit for translation into heaven. The Spirit of God would descend (the Doctor concludes poetically) and

rest upon their hearts, like the dove, the emblem of peace, gentleness, and love."

So then, from a creed drawn from the gospels, all blessings and happiness would flow; but from creeds drawn from the *whole Word of God*, all evils, natural and moral, have ensued! Is not this to represent the Scriptures of truth (the gospels alone excepted) as the pestilential source of every evil? In this representation is it not more than insinuated, is it not plainly implied, that these sacred oracles have been the means of destroying the primeval simplicity of religion, of fomenting divisions, and of banishing from Christians the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace?—that they have exposed Christianity to the cavil, the ridicule, and invective of sceptics, destroyed the simplicity and purity of creeds, furnished occasions for scandal and offence, increased and exasperated controversies, and ultimately destroyed purity and peace? That to *them* may be imputed persecution, cruelty and war? that to *them* may be ascribed all the Heathenism, Mahometanism, and infidelity which at present deform the face of this globe? that but for *their* baneful influence (I shudder as I write) the Christian religion would, by this time, have covered the whole earth? that by their baneful influence the completion of the prophecies is retarded, the union of mankind into one family counteracted, men prevented from doing the will of their Heavenly Father, from practising the instructions of their great Preceptor, from behaving to each other as brethren, and finally, from enjoying the pacific and beneficent influences of the blessed Spirit of God? If all these insinuations and implicit charges be just, the blasphemous conclusion would follow, *that the greater part of the Bible is not a BLESSING but a CURSE!*

The insinuations, however, are unjust, and the charges groundless. The true state of this matter is the very reverse of the Doctor's representation. The Doctor recommends a partial creed—a creed drawn from a part

of Revelation, from the gospels alone. The want of such a creed, he represents as the baneful source of all our woes. Now, the very reverse, I am convinced, is the fact. The evils complained of originate, not from creeds founded on the whole of Revelation, but from *partial creeds*, creeds drawn from particular parts of the Sacred Volume, creeds like that which we find recommended, praised, and adopted by the learned Doctor.*

The foundation of creeds, in my humble opinion, should be no narrower than that of the church of the living God. Like that sacred edifice, they should rest on the broad basis of the Scriptures. To narrow the foundation of the Christian faith, as our author has done—to circumscribe Christian doctrine—to abridge the Sacred Volume—to exclude the Old Testament, and the greater part of the New, from the creed of the Christian, is to subvert the Christian faith, and overturn the Christian system—it is an attempt to tear away the greater part of that imperishable foundation on which the Church of God is built. Vain and fruitless attempt! When the Doctor has first inverted the highest pyramid of Egypt, when he has succeeded in placing that stupendous pile of building on its apex instead of its base, then, and not till then, let him attempt to invert the Church of God by endeavouring to poise that glorious fabric on the narrow pivot of a few pages, instead of rearing it on the broad basis of "*the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone.*" †

* After all his invectives against them, it appears that the Doctor, at heart, is no enemy to creeds. No man ever extolled creeds more than he has eulogised those *partial ones*, which he would wish to be drawn from a *part* of Revelation, from the gospels alone.

† The Antrim Presbytery in their petition to the House of Commons make the following declarations :—“That your petitioners are so far from entertaining any sentiments derogatory to the Holy Scriptures, that they do believe that there, and there only, can be found the true unpolluted doctrine of Christ

Whilst degrading the other scriptures, our author exalts the gospels too high. This, to a superficial thinker, may appear impossible; but it is not. We exalt them too high when we raise them on the ruins of the other scriptures. We exalt the gospels too high when, with Dr. B., we vainly imagine that creeds drawn from them must be necessarily pure, calculated to eradicate all evil, and to introduce all good. What, I ask, is in the words of Jesus Christ which prevents *them* from being perverted as well as the other scriptures? NOTHING. Notwithstanding all the Doctor's high encomiums on the gospels—and they are worthy of encomium—have they not been *actually* perverted? THEY HAVE.

What words have been more perverted than these, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my

crucified, that they invariably appeal to the Sacred Volume for the truth of what they teach, and are at all times ready to reject any opinion that can be shown to be at variance with the Word of God.”

According to this declaration, the members of the Antrim Presbytery hold no sentiments derogatory to the Holy Scriptures. With what truth Dr. B. could sign such a declaration, let the reader of the preceding pages judge! That the sentiments on which I have been animadverting are not only derogatory, but HIGHLY derogatory, to the Holy Scriptures, no unprejudiced person can deny.

The declarations of the Antrim Presbytery, I regret to say, are ambiguous and equivocal. They declare that the doctrine of Christ crucified may be found in the Holy Scriptures. How found?—as a few grains of wheat in a bushel of chaff? This, as we have already seen, appears to be Dr. Bruce's view of the subject!

They declare again, that they appeal invariably to the Sacred Volume for the truth of what they teach. But how do they appeal to the Sacred Volume? Do they appeal to the *whole* of it, or only to the *one hundredth part* of it? Do they make the *whole* of it the standard of their faith, or only a few pages? What a pity that the Presbytery were not more explicit.

Church?" Has not the supremacy of the Pope been founded upon them?

What words have been more perverted than these, "This is my body. Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye have no life in you?" Has not the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation been founded upon them?

What words have been more perverted than these, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish?" Has not the doctrine of penance been founded upon them?

What words have been more perverted than these, "Whosoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven?" Has not the blasphemous doctrine of indulgences been founded upon them? Thus it appears that the Doctor's fine theory is contradicted by facts. Facts prove that the most monstrous and abominable creeds have actually been drawn from the *very words of our blessed Redeemer!*

After extolling the gospels too high, by raising them on the ruins of the other scriptures, he finally degrades them by admitting that "*they have produced unhappy effects on our perverse and crooked generation.*" Neither the gospels, nor any other part of the Scriptures, ever "*produced unhappy effects.*" They may be the innocent occasions, but can never be the causes of evil.*

Having examined the Doctor's "SURE GUIDE," let us now attend to his "SAFE RULE."

Page 39, he writes thus:—"But the question to which I mean chiefly to confine myself at present relates to disputed doctrines. Here, if you were asked, Understand ye what ye read? you might well reply, How can we, except some man guide us? And then

* I do not impute this to the Doctor as a designed charge upon the gospels. It is only one of those numerous instances in which he has failed in expressing what he meant. In the present case, he has unintentionally degraded the gospels, by confounding the distinction between an occasion and a cause.

the question recurs, Who shall guide us? What direction shall we look to in controversy? To whom shall we apply, when learned men and whole Churches differ? How shall the people decide, when their teachers, and other learned divines, disagree? This is an interesting question at all times, and never more so than at present, when religious controversy is so much the vogue.

“Perhaps, the shortest answer that can be given is, Let them alone. Let them differ, and do you adhere only to those points in which they all agree. Christians must necessarily coincide in opinion upon many important truths. We may, I believe, safely say, that they concur on every doctrine which can justly be called fundamental. Their agreement on these, while they differ on other points, is a strong reason for embracing them; their difference upon subordinate doctrines must excite a suspicion that they may not be true, and a belief that they are not essential. So that, if there be any tenet upon which you have not the means of attaining to a rational belief, you had better leave it among polemics and controversialists, till they agree among themselves; and, in the meantime, addict yourselves to those practical, edifying, and well-established principles in which they concur. This is the safest general rule that I can give you.”

So, then, with regard to all those doctrines which have been disputed, the safest rule Dr. B. can give, is, “LET THEM ALONE.” Now, really, if our learned author had no better rule to give than this, with great submission, I conceive it would have been infinitely better to have given *no rule at all*. I shall assign my reasons.

Taking the Doctor’s safe rule in their hands, the plain, illiterate part of his congregation might reason thus:—“Whether any day be holier than another, is a point disputed by learned divines; *we will therefore let*

the observance of the Christian Sabbath alone. It cannot be a matter of great importance whether we spend it in religious services or in business and amusement.

“*Baptism* is a disputed point: we will ‘*let it alone.*’ We will not have our children baptized, for it is of no importance whether they are baptized or not.

“*The Lord's Supper* is a disputed point: we will ‘*let it alone.*’ Whether we commemorate the dying love of Jesus or not, is a matter of no importance.

“Secret prayer, family worship, social worship, public worship, in a word, all Divine ordinances, public and private, are disputed points: according to the safe rule of our good minister, Dr. B., we will *let them alone.* We will neither worship God in public nor in private. Attendance upon such ordinances can be of no importance. Particularly, we will ‘*let the Bible alone*’; for whether the laity should read it at all has been matter of dispute, and at present it is disputed whether we should read it without note or comment. We will leave the Bible among polemics and controversialists, till they agree among themselves about the reading of it.

“*We will let the moral law alone:* for whether we are obliged to keep it or not, is a matter of dispute among learned divines. It is therefore a matter of no consequence whether we study to keep the commandments of God, or live in the open violation of them—whether we study purity in heart, speech, and behaviour, or live in rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, giving ourselves up to work all uncleanness with greediness. The difference cannot be great, for some sects have maintained that good works are so far from being necessary, that they are obstacles to our salvation. According to the safe rule of our good minister, we will *let the moral law alone!*”

But I must now stop. I cannot go farther into detail. To point out all the absurdities of this “SAFE

RULE" would fill volumes. If this safe rule of the Doctor's be a good one, where are all our peculiar principles as Dissenters? All these principles were disputed principles. They were, therefore, of little importance; and yet our forefathers shed their blood in defence of them. According to the Doctor's safe rule, they "*died as a fool dies!*"

Again, if the Doctor's "*safe rule*" be a good one, what becomes of all our peculiar principles as Protestants? What becomes of all the peculiar doctrines of the Reformation—those doctrines which the martyrs sealed with their blood? They were all disputed doctrines, and, therefore, unimportant. The blood of the martyrs was shed in vain!

In one sense, indeed, the Doctor's rule must be acknowledged to be a safe one.

No rule could be safer for the Church of Rome. It would have put an extinguisher on the Reformation. With regard to the disputed doctrines, our author would have said, "*Let them alone. Leave them among the polemics and controversialists, till they agree among themselves.*" Now, as they have not yet agreed among themselves, the Reformation would not yet have commenced; Dr. B. and his hearers would have been, at this very moment, staunch Catholics, in the warm embraces of the old mother Church! My readers will forgive me if, impelled by the force of truth, I proceed still farther, and say—

NO RULE COULD BE SAFER FOR THE KINGDOM OF SATAN. If universally adopted, it would have effectually secured the perpetuity of his reign, and the integrity of his empire. With great deference, I call upon Dr. B.—I call upon all the Arians in the world—to mention, if they can, *one single truth*, which Satan and his emissaries have not disputed. Under the Old Testament dispensation, Satan's emissaries, his false prophets, opposed and disputed those truths delivered by the

prophets of the Lord. Would Dr. B. have said on this occasion, "*Let those disputed truths alone* till the prophets agree among themselves!" A safe rule indeed for Satan's kingdom! The Old Serpent himself could have invented none better.

Again, in the commencement of the Christian era, Satan's false apostles opposed and disputed the doctrines taught by the true apostles of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. xi. 13, 14, 15)—"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." When the apostles of Jesus and those of Satan were thus disputing the great doctrines of the Gospel, would our author have said, "*Let those doctrines alone.* Leave them among the polemics and controversialists till they have agreed among themselves?" No rule in the world would have contributed more effectually to the safety and prosperity of Satan's kingdom! On the principle of this rule, the Christian religion could have never been propagated.

As Satan had his false prophets under the legal dispensation, and his false apostles at the commencement of the Christian era, so in every subsequent period of the Church, at least till the time of the millennium, he has had, or will have, his false teachers. Our Saviour warned us against such seducers. (Matthew viii. 5)—"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." The Apostle Peter sounds the alarm, and puts the Church on her guard against the intrusion of men who would come in unawares, and privily introduce damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves and their followers swift destruction. The Apostles, Paul, Jude, and

John, all blow the trumpet and sound the alarm. Their injunctions to us are, "Beware! Beware! Be not deceived. Let no man beguile you. Stand fast in the faith. Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Stand fast in one spirit and one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel." With these *apostolic* injunctions the advice of Solomon is completely in unison, "*Buy the truth, and sell it not.*"

From these observations it is abundantly evident that "the devil, our adversary, is still going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour"—that he is still opposing the truths of the Gospel. The adoption of the Doctor's safe rule would be a base desertion of truth and dereliction of duty. Instead of "*resisting the devil, that he may flee from us,*" it would be a surrendering to Satan at discretion. It would be leaving his emissaries in undisturbed possession of the field. No, Doctor Bruce! The friends of the Redeemer are not so cowardly. Rallying round the standard of truth, in the name of their God they will display their banners; nor will they leave the field till they *see Satan falling like lightning from heaven to earth*, till they see truth bursting through the clouds of error, and the knowledge and glory of the Lord covering the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

If the Doctor's safe rule be adopted, what becomes of all his own principles?—his principles as a Protestant?—as a Dissenter?—as a Presbyterian?—as a member of the Antrim Presbytery? What becomes of the doctrines taught in his volume of sermons—the same doctrines which were taught previously by "*those eminent ministers, Halliday and his grandfather, Drennan and Brown, Mackay and Crombie*"—the same doctrines which were taught for a century past by the Presbytery of Antrim? These are all disputed doctrines; and this very circumstance, according to the Doctor's own acknowledgment, "*must excite a suspicion*

that they may not be true." Why then should he preach those suspicious doctrines? Why did his boasted predecessors, for a century past, preach those suspicious doctrines. Why do all the other members of the Antrim Presbytery, as well as himself and his son, continue to preach those suspicious doctrines? What! the Presbytery of Antrim preaching for a century doctrines confessedly suspicious! Tell it not in Gath! publish it not in Askelon! lest Deists should rejoice, and infidels triumph.

I have dwelt the longer on the Doctor's safe rule, as I believe it to be a rule too generally adopted, and a rule fraught with incalculable mischief. Why are so many Dissenters returning to the Church of England? Why are so many Protestants returning to the Church of Rome? I answer, our author's safe rule, and other kindred maxims, have a powerful influence in producing these effects. "No matter what we believe, if we are sincere." "Those doctrines about which good men differ cannot be important."

"For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
His car't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

These have been the prevailing, fashionable maxims of the past century—maxims as unphilosophical as they are unscriptural—maxims which separate theory and practice—maxims which confound truth and error, absurdly representing both as equally favourable to virtue! Upon the principle of such maxims it is natural to ask, Why did those graceless zealots, Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, and the rest of our reformers, fight with the Church of Rome about modes of faith? Why did they throw all Europe into flames for no purpose? "*These graceless zealots*"—may the patrons of such maxims say—"acted as fools by destroying the peace of Christendom; but we are men of pacific dispositions, and will show our superior wisdom by returning to the bosom of our mother Church." "A part of all will be

saved." "When we go to heaven it will never be asked, Are you Catholics, Churchmen, or Dissenters?" I ask any man of candour, any man capable of the slightest reflection, Have not such "*safe rules*" and *liberal maxims*, a direct tendency to stop the march of mind, to arrest the progress of Reformation, and to lead us back into darkness and Popery?

How different the sentiments of our blessed Redeemer and His apostles! "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth." "God hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth." "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God gave them over to strong delusions to believe a lie, that all might be damned who believe not the truth." "Come out from among them, my people," &c.

Nearly allied to the Doctor's sure guide, and safe rule, is the following maxim laid down in his treatise on the "Being and Attributes," (p. 12)—"It is also a law of our nature, that we cannot discredit testimony when sufficiently strong." Though this maxim, at first sight, appears quite plausible, yet, if duly examined, I humbly conceive, it will be found to subvert the foundation of the Christian system, and to lead directly to Deism, to Atheism, and to blasphemy. These assertions are strong, I acknowledge. That they are not *too* strong will appear, I am convinced, by the following syllogisms:—

"It is a law of our nature, that we cannot discredit testimony when sufficiently strong."

But the testimony in favour of the truth of Christianity has been discredited:

Therefore, the testimony in favour of the truth of Christianity was not sufficiently strong.

Does not this syllogism, founded on the Doctor's maxim, level to the dust the whole fabric of Christianity? Does it not lead directly to DEISM?

Again, "It is a law of our nature, that we cannot discredit testimony when sufficiently strong."

But the testimony which God has given in favour of the truth of His own being and attributes has been discredited :

Therefore, the testimony which God has given in favour of the truth of His own being and attributes is not sufficiently strong !

I ask again, does not this syllogism, founded on the Doctor's maxim, lead directly to ATHEISM ?

Once more, "It is a law of our nature, that we cannot discredit testimony when sufficiently strong."

But the testimony God has given of His Son, the testimony which the Son has given of the Father, and the testimony which the Holy Spirit has given of both, have been discredited :

Therefore, the testimonies of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not sufficiently strong !

Whether or not this syllogism, founded on the Doctor's maxim, leads to *blasphemy*, let the reader judge.

If testimony when sufficiently strong cannot be discredited, neither faith is a duty, nor unbelief a sin. Necessity of nature is quite incompatible with virtue and vice, praise and blame. Hence it is, I humbly presume, that the unphilosophical and unscriptural ideas of the innocence of error,* and the trivial

* Dr. B. maintains that error may not only be innocent, but *righteous and holy* ! The well-instructed Christian, he assures us, (p. 157) will see "that, while he adhered to the Gospel, he was at least safe ; that the sincere profession of a holy and righteous faith, though it were erroneous, must be pleasing to a holy and righteous God." What ! Holy and righteous erroneous faith ! What a combination of words ! "*Pious frauds*" are not more monstrous than *holy and righteous errors*. It is not more blasphemous to affirm, that the God of holiness may delight in sin, than to assert that the God of truth must be pleased with error. Need we be at all astonished that Infidels

importance of truth, have gained such currency in the present age. When testimonies or doctrines are discredited, the fault must be either in the evidence, or in the mind that perceives it. Now, with regard to the doctrines of the Bible, or the testimony in favour of the truth of Christianity, what Christian would say that the fault is in the evidence? God never requires of His rational creatures anything unreasonable—anything naturally impossible. If He requires men to believe in the truth of Christianity, He has given sufficient evidence of that truth. If he requires men to believe in the doctrines of the Gospel, He has given sufficient evidence of the truth of those doctrines. It is on this principle alone that faith is a duty, and unbelief and error, sins. The understanding is the judge, bound to give a verdict according to evidence; but the judge may be bribed. The will, the affections, the appetites and passions, blind the understanding, pervert the judgment, and influence the belief. It is almost proverbial, that what we wish we easily believe; and that—

“ A man convinced against his will
Is of the same opinion still.”

If error, unbelief, Deism, and even Atheism, arose purely from the exercises of the understanding, without any concern of the will, the affections, the heart, they would not be criminal. But the case is quite otherwise. Each of these is highly criminal; because the decision of the judgment is perverted by the influence of the will, the affections, and dispositions of the heart. It is “with the *heart* man believes;” there is “an evil *heart* of unbelief;” “the fool says in his *heart*, There is no God.” This is a subject of great delicacy and impor-

exclaim, Priestcraft! and Imposture! when we hear an *erroneous* faith not only pronounced *innocent*, but *righteous and holy*, by a learned Divine, a Doctor of Divinity?

tance. Confounding the pure acts of the understanding with those which are influenced by the will and inclination, has induced men of the greatest talents to consider error, unbelief, Deism, and even Atheism, as innocent. A remarkable instance of this we have in Brougham's Inaugural Address in Glasgow University, and in his speech in the House of Commons. In the former, he represents a man as having no control over his belief, and as no more accountable for it, than for the "hue of his skin, or height of his stature." In the latter, he declares, "that if a man were an Atheist, or an Infidel, it was his misfortune, not his fault; and that he should be viewed with pity, not with blame." All this proceeds upon the erroneous hypothesis, that our wills, inclinations, appetites, passions, and prejudices, have no influence on our belief. Were the premises true, the conclusion would be unavoidable; but the premises are false, and therefore the conclusion is erroneous. It is equally opposed to the philosophy of the human mind, and the infallible dictates of Divine Revelation. "*He that believeth not shall be damned.* And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men *love* darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." (2 Thes. ii. 10—12)—"Because they received not the *love* of the truth, that they might be saved. . . . God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

By confounding what is natural with what is moral, some orthodox divines have fallen into the same error.

MacGowan, in his letters to Priestly, speaking of those who are grossly erroneous, says: "They are certainly more properly objects of my pity, than of my resentment. With as much propriety might I be offended with a poor man who was born blind, and continues so, because he is not a judge of colours; or

with a deaf man, because he understands not the harmony of sounds." Thus the acute and penetrating MacGowan stumbles on the same ground with our great parliamentary orator. He stumbles by confounding natural with moral blindness. The cases, however, are completely distinct, and altogether different. The man born blind says, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." On the contrary, those who are morally blind *hate* the light; they *love darkness rather than light*. This is their condemnation. This is the ground of their criminality and guilt.*

By what I have written in the preceding pages, I do not mean to deny that some parts of the Sacred Volume, and that some doctrines of Divine revelation, are more important than others; but I maintain that they are *all* important. They are all necessary—necessary to complete the glorious fabric of Divine truth. We hear much of essential truths, fundamental truths, &c. It is true, indeed, that the removal of foundation stones is the speediest mode of destroying a building; but it is no less true, that a greater number of houses are ruined by the deficiency of their slates, pinnings, mortar, &c. than by the razing of their foundations. What wise man would say, when robbers are attacking his house, "Let them alone." If the foundation stones are safe, the other parts of the house are of inferior importance?

All the parts of the human body are not equally important, but they are all necessary to complete the frame. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have

* I had intended to proceed farther in the discussion of this subject; but, with much surprise and pleasure, I find myself anticipated by an able defender of the faith of the Gospel—the Rev. Dr. Wardlaw, Glasgow. This pious and learned divine has published two sermons in refutation of those very sentiments which I had previously marked out for animadversion. These sermons I would recommend as useful and important, giving at once a Scriptural and philosophical view of this difficult subject.

no need of thee; nor, again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body that seem more feeble are necessary." The same is the case with regard to the different parts of the Bible. They are not all *equally* important; but they are all necessary—necessary to complete one glorious body of divinity. The amputation of a leg, an arm, or even a finger or a toe, destroys the symmetry, and mars the beauty of the human body. Who would not contend for his feeblest members as well as for his head or his heart? On similar principles, what true Christian would wilfully suffer the body of Revelation to be maimed or mutilated? That man is not worthy of the name of a Christian, who would wilfully surrender "one hair or hoof" of truth. She was not the true mother of the child, who unfeelingly exclaimed, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it."

CHAPTER III.

THE SUPREME DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST DEFENDED.

SECTION I.

His names—particularly the names JEHOVAH and GOD.

IT is, I conceive, no contemptible proof of the doctrine I advocate, that the opponents of our Lord's Divinity feel it necessary to depreciate the sacred oracles. No man can degrade the *Son* of God till he first degrade the *Word* of God. Having, in the preceding pages, endeavoured to repel our author's attack on the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, we shall now proceed to defend the supreme Deity of our blessed Redeemer.

The reader of these pages may be anxious to know why the defenders of the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ appeal more frequently to the epistles than the gospels. The reason is this: In the epistles those doctrines are *more clearly taught*. Were the question put, Why more clearly taught by the apostles than their Master? I answer, first, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." This is a sufficient answer to all those who do not suppose their own wisdom superior to the wisdom of God. In the second place, I answer the question by asking another. Why were more souls converted by one sermon of the Apostle Peter, than by all the sermons which his Master preached during his life? Thirdly, I answer, Had the Master taught the doctrines of His divinity and atonement as clearly as those doctrines were afterwards taught by His apostles, He would have counteracted the end of

His mission. Had so much light been shed upon His character, the princes of this world would have known Him; and "had they known Him, *they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*" Does Dr. B., by wishing to confine us to the gospels, mean to reject that flood of light poured on the character of our Redeemer after His ascension? Does he wish to reduce us to that partial light under which our blessed Lord was crucified? Could he succeed in this unhallowed attempt, I have no doubt in saying, as human nature is the same in every age, multitudes would homologate the crime of the Jews, they would cry out, "Away with him, away with him;" "Crucify him, crucify him." They would "crucify afresh the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame," by degrading His person, and vilifying His blood; by denying His divinity, and rejecting His atonement.

In defending the Supreme Deity of the Son of God, I shall follow neither the Doctor's "sure guide" nor "safe rule," but the direction of our blessed Lord himself: "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of me."

Our author's attack on the Deity of our Redeemer is not very formidable. Out of his own mouth he stands condemned. To enable me to prove, that the Lord Jesus is "over all, God blessed for ever," I need ask nothing more than what the Doctor himself admits. In his *Being and Attributes* (p. 161), he says, "The self-existence of the Deity is expressed by His name **JEHOVAH.**" And, in his sermon on the *Pre-existence and Example of Christ*, he observes (p. 133), "We have every reason to believe, that the Patriarchal and Mosaical dispensations were conducted, under God, by the agency of one supereminent Being, denominated the Angel of the Covenant, the Angel of the Lord, and **JEHOVAH.**" In one volume, the Doctor grants that the name **JEHOVAH** denotes self-existence; and in the other he

admits that Jesus is JEHOVAH. Jesus, therefore, must be self-existent, and thus the self-existence of the Redeemer, and, of course, his Supreme Deity, are proved by Dr. Bruce himself. Jesus Christ is proved to be, what our author elsewhere strenuously denies—*“the underived and self-existent cause of all.”*

The name JEHOVAH is the distinguishing, appropriate, and peculiar name of the Supreme Being. This is granted by some of the most sensible anti-Trinitarians. Yates, in his reply to Wardlaw, says, “JEHOVAH, it is well known, is used in the Old Testament as the peculiar and appropriate name of the Supreme God.” And Dr. Bruce himself grants, that this peculiar and appropriate name of the Supreme God is also the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. After this, “What need of further witness? Have we not heard from his own mouth?” Is not the conclusion inevitable, *that Jesus Christ is the supreme God?* Should any person think that the Doctor has betrayed his own cause; or, should any person deny that the name JEHOVAH is the appropriate, peculiar, and incommunicable name of the Supreme God; I would refer him to the following texts. I shall quote them as they stand in the original, substituting the word JEHOVAH for LORD; for the English reader will observe, that when the word Lord is printed in capitals, the original is JEHOVAH. When God proclaimed His name to Moses (Exodus xxxiv. 5, 6), He passed by and proclaimed JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH.—(Amos v. 8), “JEHOVAH is His name.”—(Amos ix. 6), “JEHOVAH is His name.”—(Hosea xii. 5), “JEHOVAH is His memorial.”—(Neh. ix. 6), “Thou, even Thou, art JEHOVAH alone.”—(2 Sam. xxii. 32), “Who is God save JEHOVAH?”—(Psalm lxxxiii. 18), “Whose name *alone* is JEHOVAH.”—(Isaiah xlii. 8), “I am JEHOVAH, that is my name; and my glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.” From these, and a multitude of other texts, it is abundantly evident, that

JEHOVAH is that name which belongs exclusively to the Supreme Being. It is a name which He possesses in common with no other being. The glory of it He will not give to another.

In the Old Testament our blessed Redeemer is not only denominated **JEHOVAH**, but **JEHOVAH OF HOSTS**, "**HOLY, HOLY, HOLY JEHOVAH OF HOSTS: THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY.**" By an inspired commentator this sublime description is applied to our Lord Jesus Christ (John xii. 41), "*These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory and spake of Him.*"

Now, if the name **JEHOVAH**, that glorious and peculiar name of Deity, and not only the name **JEHOVAH**, but **JEHOVAH OF HOSTS**, be given to our Lord Jesus Christ, will Socinians and Arians venture to say, that our blessed Redeemer is not the Supreme God?—that He is only a *creature*, an *angel*, or a *man*? Such was the veneration with which the name **JEHOVAH** was regarded among the Jews, that they conceived it a kind of impiety to utter it. They treated it as ineffable, and substituted another in its stead. Now, this great and dreadful name of the Deity—this name, which the Supreme God claims as His exclusive prerogative, and which He declares belongs to none but Himself—is also the name of **JESUS CHRIST**. This is granted by Dr. B., and is evident, as we shall afterwards see, from a multitude of portions of Old Testament scripture. Doctor Bruce, therefore, and Socinians and Arians universally, are necessarily reduced to this dilemma—*they must either deny that the Supreme God has any peculiar name, by which He may be distinguished from His creatures; they must deny this in the face of all those texts quoted above, or they must grant that Jesus Christ is THE SUPREME GOD.**

* To evade the force of the preceding dilemma, should any allege that the Supreme God has some *other* peculiar name, and not the name **JEHOVAH**, I challenge them to the proof. Let them produce it if they can.

Our author asserts, that "the instances in which the title God is applied to Christ are very rare, and attended with no greater difficulty than those in which He is styled a man." To find Arians balancing such difficulties is not strange. In either of the cases mentioned by the Doctor, the difficulties, on the Arian hypothesis, are great indeed, *insuperably great*. We feel none of them. They are peculiar to the Arian system. In the Sacred Volume, Jesus Christ is declared to be a *man*, and we believe Him to be *really* a man. Jesus Christ is declared to be God, and we believe Him to be *really* God. Arians believe *neither*. The Bible affirms that the Redeemer is *God*; but Dr. B. affirms that He is a *creature*. The Bible asserts that the Redeemer is a *man*; but Dr. B. asserts that He is an *angel*. These contradictory assertions, notwithstanding the boasted simplicity of the Arian scheme, present to the mind great and insuperable difficulties. On the absurdity of Arian ideas, with regard to the humanity of Jesus Christ, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of laying before my readers the following observations—observations which characterise the logician, the philosopher, and the divine. They are extracted from the introduction prefixed to Stuart's answer to Channing:—

"Those who ascribe to Him (the Redeemer) true divinity and humanity, do so from conviction, that no other view does justice to the varied exhibitions of His character in the Scriptures. They think that even the Arian hypothesis, which has been often recommended, particularly in a late publication (Dr. B.'s Sermons), as avoiding all the difficulties of other schemes, and 'having none of its own, except such as must attach to any supernatural interposition,' is essentially defective in two respects—not only as falling short of the majesty ascribed to Him, but as opposed to the most obvious accounts of His humanity. The latter circumstance

deserves particular attention. Many do not seem to be aware that, on such a hypothesis, the humanity of the Saviour is as completely rejected as His divinity. According to this fashionable view of His person, He was not man. He had merely a human body, but not a human soul. The only intelligent principle connected with the body was a pre-existent spirit, of a distinct and superior order, who condescended to adopt it as a frame or residence, and who thus possessed only the outward form—the shell of humanity.” Now, it may be asked, What constitutes a human being? Dr. B. says, by man “we mean only a human body, inhabited by a rational soul. The origin or peculiar properties of that soul, excepting reason, do not come within our consideration.” “But, were a person of plain common sense asked, whether an angel, connected with a body like ours, was really a man, would he not feel that there was a trifling with common and obvious language in the very question? Does not the term Man primarily refer to the intelligent principle connected with the body, and to some peculiar properties of that principle, by which it is distinguishable from other orders of intellectual existences? It is surely not any rational principle connected with a human body that constitutes humanity. The general principle of reason may exist, while the laws to which it is subjected in different beings may vary so much as to form distinct orders of intelligences. To constitute a human being, therefore, requires a rational principle, having all the faculties and capacities, and all the laws of thought, that are common to the species, and form their distinguishing characteristics.” Such is the accuracy of Doctor Bruce’s definition of Man, to which, he says, “Jesus conformed in everything.” According to such a definition, could it be said of Him, that “He was in all things made like unto His brethren?” Even if this supposition were made, it would still be a

question whether it is consistent with possibility. Have we any reason to believe, that the organization of the human body could be adapted to an intelligence of a different nature from the human mind, or could be the means of awakening in it sensations, ideas, and emotions? Everything about our constitution shows that there is the nicest and most delicate adaptation of the corporeal frame to the peculiarities of the rational principle which we possess; whilst we have reason to think that a change in either would disturb the whole economy, and derange all the laws of thought. It should thus be seriously considered, whether the Arian hypothesis does not involve difficulties and mysteries as great as those which it proposes to avoid; and whether it is more consistent with the known laws of human thought, than with the plainest declarations of Scripture.

In that same page (111) on which the previous animadversions are made, we find the following assertions:—"A spirit, therefore, of superior excellence may, if it be the will of God, occupy a human body, as we are assured that angels have done."* Now, where are we assured that angels have occupied human bodies? NOWHERE. We are assured, indeed, that angels appeared in human form; but we are nowhere assured that they occupied real human bodies.

The philosophical observations quoted above prove the Doctor's opinion to be in the highest degree improbable, if not absolutely absurd. Besides, if angels occupied real human bodies, our Saviour Himself occupied one before His incarnation in the womb of the Virgin. Three angels appeared to Abraham in the form of men. One of them was the Redeemer; for

* I take it for granted, that the case of demoniacs was not contemplated by the Doctor. In that case, it was not mere bodies that were possessed, but bodies previously occupied by souls.

the patriarch styles Him JEHOVAH, and intercedes with Him in behalf of Sodom. Now, if the other two angels had real human bodies, so, also, had the Angel of the Covenant. The evidence in both cases is the same. If, then, our Saviour had a real human body in the patriarchal age, the absurd conclusion follows, *that He has had two bodies, and has been twice incarnate!* If the ideas of the Arians respecting the *human nature* of Jesus be anti-Scriptural and unphilosophical, still more untenable are their opinions respecting His *Divine nature*; they are directly opposed by almost every page of the sacred volume.

Dr. B. asserts, "that the instances in which the title God is applied to Christ are very rare." With all due deference, I assert that they are *very numerous*—almost *innumerable*. The principles laid down by our author himself will clearly evince the truth of this assertion. He lays it down as a principle—a principle in which I fully acquiesce—that, when God is represented as appearing, conversing, &c., the Lord Jesus Christ is intended. For no man hath seen God (the Father) at any time. No man hath seen Him, nor can see Him. He is the King eternal, immortal, *invisible*. It is only Jesus Christ, but not God the Father, that has ever become the object of our senses. Now, if it was the Son of God that appeared to the patriarchs and Old Testament saints—if it was He that conversed with them, and conducted the patriarchal and legal economies—if it was He that chose the Israelites, brought them out of Egypt, led them through the wilderness, drove out the Canaanites from before them, and put them in possession of the promised land—if it was He that was called the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of His Presence, the Angel of the Covenant—if it was He that was denominated Jehovah, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of Israel, the God of Bethel, &c.—if Dr. B. grant all this—and all this he

fully grants—with what consistency can he maintain, that “the instances in which the Redeemer is called God are few?” Are not God and Jehovah the *common appellations* by which that glorious Personage is designated? The attentive reader of his Bible will find that it is not in a few, but in *hundreds* of instances, that these epithets are applied to our blessed Redeemer.

In the very commencement of the Bible—in the third chapter of Genesis—our blessed Saviour is represented as conversing with our first parents, and is styled the LORD GOD, or JEHOVAH GOD, at least eight times. In the thirteenth chapter of Judges, the Lord Jesus Christ is ten times styled the Angel of the Lord—or the ANGEL JEHOVAH, according to the original; and in the 22d verse He is expressly called GOD. “And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen GOD.” That the glorious Personage who appeared to Manoah and his wife was the Redeemer, admits of no rational doubt. In conjunction with the circumstance of His appearing, the names ascribed to Him sufficiently prove it. He is not only styled GOD and JEHOVAH, but *Wonderful* (verse 18): “Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is secret.” The epithet translated *secret* should have been rendered WONDERFUL. It is so rendered by the Septuagint in this place; and by our translators themselves, in Isaiah ix. 6: “His name shall be called *Wonderful*, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace.” To point out all the instances in which our Redeemer is styled GOD and JEHOVAH, would fill a volume. The reader may consult, at his leisure, those passages where he is represented as appearing to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Moses, Joshua, the seventy elders, and other patriarchs. He will then be fully convinced, that the glorious Personage who appeared to them, and conversed with them, is, in multitudes of

instances, called God and Jehovah ; and Dr. B. himself will tell us, that the person who thus appeared was not God the Father—(for He never appeared)—but God the Son, our blessed Redeemer.

Should not our author have paused ? Should he not have read his Bible with a little more care, before he risked the bold and groundless assertion, that the instances in which the title God is applied to Christ are "*very rare !*"

The Doctor proceeds to make other assertions equally groundless. In pages 112, 113, he writes thus:—"In the Hebrew tongue there are several terms denoting, some the Supreme God, and others subordinate spirits invested with authority and power. From the poverty of language, in this respect, we are obliged to translate them all by the word *God*. The same deficiency exists in Greek, the original language of the New Testament. Hence arises the use of the word God in different senses, and the common opinion that this term always signifies the Supreme Being."

What, I ask, are those Hebrew terms—some of them denoting the Supreme God, and others subordinate spirits—which, from the poverty of our language, we are obliged to translate by the same word *God* ? Let our author produce them if he can. He will find the task difficult. Why ? There are *no such terms*. There is *no such poverty*, either in our own or in the Greek language. The Doctor's assertion is groundless, and calculated to mislead the English reader.

His next assertion is still more palpably erroneous. It is as inconsistent with fact as with grammar:—"Hence arises the use of the word God in different senses, and the common opinion that this term always signifies the Supreme Being." What ! Common opinion ! There is no such common opinion. When the Deity tells Moses, that He had made him a god unto Pharaoh, is it the common opinion that Moses was the

Supreme Being? When angels and magistrates are called gods, is it the common opinion that angels and magistrates are the Supreme Being? When the devil is styled the god of this world, is it the common opinion that Satan is the Supreme Being? With all due deference to Dr. B., I would take the liberty of asserting that, on this subject, common opinion is as correct as his own.

That our blessed Redeemer is, in Scripture, called GOD, Dr. B. and other Antitrinitarians readily admit. They cannot deny it. But they maintain that the word is used in an inferior sense, and that our Saviour is only a *delegated God*. They tell us that angels are called gods, that magistrates are called gods, that idols are called gods, and that even the devil is called a god. I know, indeed, that angels are called gods, but I know, also, that they are all commanded *to worship the Redeemer*. (Psal. xcvi. 7): "*Worship Him, all ye gods.*" (Heb. i. 6): "*When He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship Him.*" Let Dr. B., if he be able, quote one single portion of Scripture where any person is commanded to worship angels; he will find, on the contrary, the worshipping of angels condemned in that same Word of God which enjoins those spirits to worship the Redeemer. (Col. ii. 18.)

I know, again, that magistrates are called gods, but I know, also, that there is no temptation held out in the Sacred Volume to make them the objects of religious worship, or to confound them with the living and true God. I know, that in the very same portion of Scripture where they are denominated gods, they are represented as weak and dying creatures. (Psal. lxxxii. 6): "I have said ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High, but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." In speaking of the Redeemer as God, the language of Scripture is very different. (Heb. i. 8):

“Put unto the Son He saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” “Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.”

Once more:—I know well that idols are called gods, and that Satan is styled the god of this world; but I know, also, that in the very same Scripture (Psal. xcvi. 7), where all the gods are commanded to worship the Redeemer, it is likewise written, “confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols.” I know the Redeemer has bruised the serpent’s head, that He will bind Satan, thrust him down into the bottomless pit, and set a seal upon him. *I know that the idols He shall utterly abolish.*

That Jesus Christ is an inferior God, a subordinate God, a delegated God, is a doctrine which our author may have received by tradition from his fathers, but it is not taught in the sacred oracles. The Scriptures teach the very *opposite* doctrine; they teach us that Jesus Christ is not an inferior God, but the MIGHTY GOD. (Is. 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, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

The Scriptures teach us that Jesus Christ is not only the Mighty God, but the ALMIGHTY GOD. (Gen. xvii. 1): “The LORD (JEHOVAH) appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the ALMIGHTY GOD.” (Exod. vi. 2, 3): “And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am JEHOVAH, and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of GOD ALMIGHTY.” (Gen. xlviii. 3): “And Jacob said unto Joseph, GOD ALMIGHTY appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan, and blessed me.” (Gen. xxxv. 9, 11): “And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, I am GOD ALMIGHTY.” Now, who was that Great Being who

appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of **GOD ALMIGHTY**? Doctor Bruce will answer the question. He will tell us that it was our blessed Redeemer; for God the Father, he candidly grants, never appeared—never became the object of human senses. Jesus Christ, therefore, Dr. B. himself being witness, is **GOD ALMIGHTY**. He is so represented, not only in the Old Testament, but also in the New (Rev. i. 8): “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, **THE ALMIGHTY**.”

From pages 95, 97, 103, 104, 107, 110, 117, 134, 139, 144, 148, &c., it appears that **ALMIGHTY** is that very epithet which our author has selected to mark the distinction between our Lord Jesus Christ and the Supreme Being; and yet it does not mark that distinction; for, as we have seen above, not only God the Father, but Jesus Christ, His Son, is in Scripture denominated **GOD ALMIGHTY**. It is also remarkable that, in page 95, the Doctor asserts, that the **ALMIGHTY cannot** become an object of human senses, and yet we have seen that the **ALMIGHTY has** become an object of human senses; his Arianism betrays our learned author into all these errors. In opposition to the plain declarations of Scripture, and his own concessions, he takes it for granted that Jesus Christ is not **THE ALMIGHTY**.

The Scriptures teach us that Jesus Christ is not a little God, an inferior Deity, but the **GREAT GOD** (Tit. ii. 13): “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the **GREAT GOD** and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.” Dr. Bruce cannot deny that our Saviour, in this text, is **THE GREAT GOD**. He cannot deny it on two accounts:—1. He cannot deny it without a violation of Greek grammar. According to Grenville Sharpe’s rule, had great God and Saviour referred to different persons, the Greek article would have been repeated before the latter noun. 2. He cannot deny it without

denying what he formerly granted—that God the Father never appears, nor can appear. The glorious appearing of the GREAT GOD must, therefore, mean, not the appearing of the Father—for He never appears—but the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. It follows, of course, even upon the Doctor's own principles, that JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREAT GOD. Now, if Jesus Christ is the great God, as the Scriptures declare Him to be, why should Dr. Bruce, why should Socinians and Arians, persevere in their vain attempts to degrade Him to the character of a creature, to the character of man, or to that of an angel?

The Scriptures teach us, that Jesus Christ is not only the great God, but the TRUE GOD (1 John, v. 20): “And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the *true God* and eternal life.”

The Scriptures teach us, that our Lord Jesus Christ is not only the Mighty God, the Almighty God, the Great God, and the True God, but THE ONLY WISE GOD. (Jude 24, 25): “Now, unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Who will present believers before the throne of His glory? *The Redeemer*. (Ephes. v. 27): *He presents His church to Himself*, “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” (Col. i. 22): He presents her “holy, unblameable, unproveable.” It is not God the Father, but Jesus Christ, that presents the Church before the presence of His glory. Jesus Christ, therefore, “*is the only wise God, our Saviour*,” to whom belong “glory and honour, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

Finally—The Scriptures teach us that Jesus Christ

“IS GOD OVER ALL.” (Rom. ix. 5): “Whose are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is *over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*”

Angels and magistrates, in a very few instances, are called gods. But what magistrate? what angel? except the Angel of the Covenant, is styled the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? the God of Israel, the God of Bethel, JEHOVAH GOD, JEHOVAH GOD OF HOSTS,* THE MIGHTY GOD, THE ALMIGHTY GOD, THE GREAT GOD, THE MOST HIGH GOD,† THE TRUE GOD, THE ONLY WISE GOD; God over all, blessed for ever? Where are such epithets, such names and titles applied to magistrates, to idols, or to angels? NOWHERE. *No creature in heaven or in earth was ever honoured with such glorious appellations.*

Dr. B. (p. 301) censures Trinitarians and Socinians for appealing to verbal criticisms, various readings, and philological disquisitions. He pronounces the Arian scheme so consistent and rational that it requires no such support. He declares that Arians are content to take the Scriptures as they find them in our translation; and, finally, he ridicules the criticisms on Rom. ix. 5, and 1 Tim. iii. 16. Now, really, in the name of all the Trinitarians in the world, I plead innocent. I solemnly declare that we are perfectly content to take those texts as they stand in our translation. The latter text asserts, that

* In Hosea, xii. 3, 4, 5, we learn that “the Redeemer, the Man, the angel who wrestled with Jacob, was God, Jehovah God of Hosts, and that Jehovah is His memorial.”

† That the epithet, Most High, is applied to our Redeemer, is admitted by Dr. B. himself. That beautiful passage (says he, p. 96) in Deuteronomy, is also understood to relate to the angel of the Lord (that is, Jesus Christ, according to his own acknowledgment), “When the Most High divided the nations, their inheritance,” &c. In the Old Testament (Psalm lxxviii. 56) the Israelites are said to have tempted the Most High God. This in the New Testament, is applied to our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. x. 9): “Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted.”

God was manifest in the flesh, and the former assures us, that "Jesus Christ is *over all, God blessed for ever.*" Let those texts be taken as they are, and the controversy is ended. The Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ, even by the acknowledgment of Antitrinitarians themselves, is fully established. "If there were any evidence," says Mr. Yates, speaking of the last-cited text, "that this (the common) translation is correct, here would be a case in point: the words of the apostle would present a clear and valid argument for the Supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ"—p. 180.

I leave our learned author to his choice. He must either retract his vain boasting, and confess that his scheme cannot be supported without the aid of verbal criticism, or then he must abandon the Arian system, and acknowledge *that the Supreme Deity of the Redeemer is clearly established.*

Dr. B. ridicules the idea of contending whether there should be in certain parts of a sentence commas or full stops. But who sees not, that if men were at liberty to substitute full stops for commas, the Bible might soon be metamorphosed into the most erroneous, or the most nonsensical book in the world! In a parenthesis, he says ("for there are no stops, or division of words, in the ancient MSS. and neither party can produce the autograph of Paul's amanuensis)."* This parenthesis has either *no* meaning, or it absurdly supposes that, though the ancient MSS. wanted stops and divisions, yet the most ancient of them all, the autograph of Paul's amanuensis, had them!

* The Doctor's parenthesis appears, at first sight, vastly learned—MSS.! autograph, amanuensis! how the illiterate will stare! When a writer makes such a display of his learning, surely a little good sense, and good grammar, would be a very useful accompaniment.

SECTION II.

Attributes of the Deity ascribed to the Redeemer.

In the preceding section I have endeavoured to prove that Socinians and Arians must either maintain, in opposition to the plainest dictates of Scripture and reason, that the Supreme God has no peculiar name by which He may be distinguished from His creatures, or then they must abandon their system, and grant, **THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SUPREME GOD.**

In this Section I shall attempt to show, that Socinians and Arians must either give up their favourite schemes, and admit the doctrine of the Redeemer's Divinity, or be obliged to maintain the monstrous position, *that the Supreme Being has no incommunicable attribute.*

I ask, then, is *omnipotence* an incommunicable attribute of Deity? Jesus Christ is omnipotent. He is the Almighty, as we have abundantly proved in the preceding section. I ask, again: Is *omniscience* an incommunicable attribute of Deity? Jesus Christ is *omniscient*. John xvi. 30—"Now we are sure that thou knowest all things." John xxi. 17—"Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

To know the thoughts and the hearts of men, is represented in Scripture as a peculiar and incommunicable attribute of Deity. 1 Kings viii. 39—"For thou, *even thou only*, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." But Jesus Christ claims this attribute. Rev. ii. 23—"And all the churches shall know, that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works." Is *eternity* an attribute of the Supreme Being? Jesus Christ is "The EVERLASTING FATHER" (Isaiah ix. 6), or the father of eternity. He is the great I AM, "*whose*

goings forth were of old even from everlasting," (Micah v. 2), "without beginning of days or end of life" (Heb. vii. 3); the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, which is, and which was, and which is to come" (Rev. i. 8, 17). He is the same, and His years fail not (Heb. i. 12). Is *omnipresence* an attribute of Deity? Jesus Christ is omnipresent. Matt. xxviii. 20—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. xviii. 23—"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." John iii. 13—"And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." He was in heaven at the very same time he was here on earth; for He fills heaven and earth with His presence. Though the heavens now contain His human nature, yet He is always present with His church on earth. Exodus xx. 24—"In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." Is *immutability* an incommunicable attribute of Deity? Jesus is immutable. (Psalm cii. 25, &c.; Heb. i. 10; xiii. 8.) He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." According to the doctrine of Scripture, Jesus Christ is *unchangeable*; but according to the doctrine of Arians, He is the most changeable being in the universe! According to their hypothesis, He is an Angel or superangelic Being, who, in the revolution of ages, having gone through a state of progressive improvement and perfectibility, had gradually advanced to the highest dignity—a state of dignity next to that of the Supreme Being—a state of dignity so high, that He was honoured with the name God, the name Jehovah, &c.—a state of dignity so high, that He was employed in performing one of the greatest of all God's works, the creation of the world. This superangelic Being divests Himself of His dignity and glory,

dwindles down to the ignorance and weakness of infancy; from infancy, again, passes through a state of progressive change, till He arrives at manhood, performs miracles, preaches the Gospel, then dies, rises again, advances to such a state of superlative dignity and glory, that He has obtained a name above every name; that angels, principalities, and powers, are made subject to Him; that He is the delegated governor and judge of men and angels! With great respect, but with equal confidence, I challenge Dr. B.—I challenge all the Arians in the world, to point out one single being in the universe so *mutable*, so *changeable*, as they have exhibited the blessed Redeemer—a Being, not like the sun, as beautifully represented in Scripture, but like the moon, in a state of continual mutation and change! Such is the Arian scheme, which, Dr. B. tells us, appears to him to avoid all the difficulties of the other systems; and to have “none of its own, except such as must attach to any supernatural interposition.”

Finally, I call upon Socinians or Arians to mention any one incommunicable attribute of Deity, and I will engage to prove, that that same attribute belongs to the Redeemer. They must, therefore, either deny that the Deity has *any* incommunicable attribute—any attribute by which He may be distinguished from His creatures—or they must acknowledge *that Jesus Christ is the Supreme God*. Socinians and Arians tell us that angels, magistrates, and idols, are styled gods; but I ask them, What created angel, magistrate, or idol, is represented in Scripture as the *omnipotent* God, the *omniscient* God, the *omnipresent* God, the *heart-searching* God, the *eternal* God, the *unchangeable* God? NONE. These are the incommunicable attributes of Deity, and being ascribed to the Redeemer, they prove Him to be *the Supreme God*.

SECTION III.

The peculiar works of God ascribed to our Redeemer.

The Supreme Being has made Himself known by His works, and particularly by the work of creation. (Rom. i. 20), "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." In the Old Testament Scriptures, as well as the New, He frequently appeals to His works in proof of His Deity. He challenges the gods of the nations to produce similar proofs of *their* divinity. He upbraids them, because they can neither do good nor do evil; and assures us (Jer. x. 11), that "the gods who have not made the heavens and the earth, shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens." The work of creation, we are assured, is the work of **JEHOVAH ALONE**. (Neh. ix. 6), "Thou, even thou, art **JEHOVAH ALONE**: thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are therein, the seas and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee." In this great work the Deity admits of no competitor, no partner, no instrument or subordinate agent, as Arians dream. (Isaiah xlv. 24), "Thus saith **JEHOVAH**, thy Redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb: I am **JEHOVAH** that maketh all things, that stretcheth out the heavens **ALONE**, that spreadeth abroad the earth by **MYSELF**." On the *Arian* hypothesis, how is this text to be reconciled with other scriptures, which assure us, that all things were created by Jesus Christ? These texts, on *Trinitarian* principles, are easily reconciled—the Deity spread abroad the earth by Himself, when He spread it abroad by Jesus Christ, for He and the Father are one; but on

the *Arian* scheme, the above-cited texts are utterly irreconcilable. According to Arian principles, the Deity created the world, not by *Himself*, as asserted in Scripture, but by one perfectly *distinct* from Himself—by one infinitely *inferior* to Himself—by one who is Himself a *creature*! If Arian principles be true, Jesus Christ is not only a creature, but a creature that created Himself! (John i. 1, &c.), “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” Now, if Jesus Christ is a creature, a made being, as Arians affirm; and if without Him was not any thing made that was made, the monstrous absurdity follows, *that He made Himself*! I know that, to avoid this gross absurdity, some of the Arians maintain that Jesus Christ only created this earth, but in this they flatly contradict inspired apostles. The Apostle John asserts (John i. 3), “That without Him was *not any thing* made that was made.” The Arian, in direct contradiction to this, boldly asserts, that without Him *thousands and millions* of things were made. The apostle asserts, that *not one thing* was made without Him; but the Arian asserts, that immensely more things were made *without* Him than were made *by* Him! For what is this world compared to the universe? By the acknowledgment of Arians themselves, it is as nothing. The following beautiful description of the grandeur and extent of the universe flows from the pen of Dr. Price, one of the ablest Arian writers (Price’s Sermons, p. 78):—

“We are too apt to look upon ourselves as unconnected with any superior world of beings, and the sun and stars as made only for us. This is all miserable narrowness and short-sightedness. That earth, which appears to us so great, is, comparatively speaking, nothing to the solar system—the solar system nothing

to the system of the fixed stars—and the system of the fixed stars nothing to that system of systems, of which it is a part. I refer, now, to some discoveries in the heavens which have been lately made. The planets are so many inhabited worlds; and all the stars which twinkle in the sky so many suns enlightening other worlds. This no one now doubts. But late observations have carried our views much farther, by discovering that this whole vast collection of worlds and systems bears a relation to other collections of worlds and systems; that our system moves towards other systems; that all the visible frame of sun, planets, stars, and milky way, forms one cluster of systems; and that, in the immense expanse of the heavens, there are myriads of these clusters, which to common glasses appear like small white clouds, but to better glasses appear to be assemblages of stars mixing their light. This sets before us a prospect which turns us giddy; but, however astonishing, we have reason to believe that all that it presents to us is nothing to the real extent and grandeur of the universe; for all these myriads of worlds, of systems of worlds, and of assemblages of systems, being formed so much on one plan as all to require light, it is more than probable, that somewhere, in the immensity of space, other plans of nature take place; and that, far beyond all that it is possible for us to descry, numberless scenes of existence are exhibited, different in this respect, and of which we can no more form a notion, than a child in the womb can form a notion of the solar system, or a man born blind, of light and colours.”

In this eloquent description Dr. Price admits, that, comparatively speaking, this earth is nothing to the solar system, the solar system nothing to the fixed stars, and the system of fixed stars nothing to that system of systems of which it is a part. This world, therefore, compared with the other works of God, sinks into insignificance. It is nothing, less than nothing, and

vanity. And yet this world, this insignificant world, is all that the Redeemer created, according to the view of Dr. Price and other Arians. The Divine Spirit, foreseeing that violent attempts would be made to rob the Son of God of the honour of creation, and ultimately to despoil Him of the glory of His divinity, has been graciously pleased to give us "precept upon precept, and line upon line." Though the testimony of the Apostle John, already quoted, is completely decisive, the Apostle Paul comes in to his assistance, and, in language if possible still more conclusive, assures us (Col. i. 16) that, "By Jesus Christ were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him—and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

Paul assures us, that *all things* were made by the Redeemer; and John assures us, that *no one thing* was made without Him; but Dr. Price, in opposition to both, modestly asserts that the things made by Him are as nothing, compared with those that were made *without Him!* Now, what are those things which were made without Him? Are they things *visible*? No; for all things *visible* were made by Him. Are they things *invisible*? No; for all things *invisible* were made by Him. Those things, therefore, which Arian doctors dream were made without the Redeemer, must be things neither *visible* nor *invisible!* All things *universally* were created by the Son of God—not *by* Him as a subordinate agent, according to Arian doctrine, but *for* Him as their last end, according to the doctrine of the Apostle Paul. "All things were created *by* Him and *for* Him."

In a confused paragraph (p. 127), Dr. B. observes, "that there is probably no word in any language that signifies exclusively production out of nothing—that

the Hebrew verb translated to create, often implies 'to fashion or form matter already in being'"—and that "the creation of the world by Jesus Christ may signify no more than arranging and ordering it according to the will of God." Now, if there is no word in any language that signifies exclusively production out of nothing, I would be glad to know upon what Scriptural evidence the Doctor rests his faith, "That God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing," whilst Jesus Christ only "arranged and ordered this earth according to the will of God." I call upon him to produce his evidence. I am convinced he cannot produce it. The assumption is completely gratuitous, it is a mere *ipse dixit*—a dream. Whatever language is adduced to prove that the Supreme Being created all things out of nothing, will equally prove that all things were produced out of nothing by Jesus Christ. The language and the evidence are in both cases the same.

Again, our learned author asserts that "we have no ground for deciding whether creative power be an incommunicable attribute of the Almighty or not."

In this opinion he is quite mistaken. To convince him of his error, I would request him to read those numerous texts which appeal to creation as a decisive proof of the Almighty's eternal power and Godhead. Admit, for a moment, that creative power may be communicated, and all those texts are rendered insignificant; their force is destroyed; they can no longer prove what they were intended to prove—*the eternal power and Godhead of the Deity*. If creative power be communicable, I call upon Dr. B. to show that the Deity possesses any *one* incommunicable attribute. If a creature may possess creative power, how can we distinguish the creature from the Creator? How can the living and true God be distinguished from idols? How can He be distinguished from the workmanship of His own hands? That the Deity is known by His

works, is admitted by all. It is by His works that He is proved to be the only living and true God. Without an appeal to the works of God we could never prove His existence. But what is the use of such an appeal, if the Arian system be true? There is no work of God to which we can possibly appeal—no work that is not performed by Jesus Christ, one of His creatures. Is *creation* a distinguishing work of God? Jesus Christ has created all things. Is *providence* a distinguishing work of God? Jesus Christ upholds all things. “By Him all things consist.” He manages all the wheels of providence, as we see in the first chapter of Ezekiel. He directs those wheels in all their revolutions, brings order out of confusion, light out of darkness, and good out of evil. Is *Redemption, the new creation, the illumination of the world, the pardon of sin, the resurrection of the dead, or eternal judgment*, a work of the Supreme God? All these works are performed by our Redeemer.

Is there any one work peculiar to the Supreme Being which Jesus Christ does not perform? **Not ONE.** Do the works of God, particularly the work of creation, prove the Almighty’s power and Godhead? *They do.*

Do not the same works prove the eternal power and Godhead of the Redeemer? *Most certainly.* If Jesus Christ is only a mere creature, as Arians contend, and if Jesus Christ performs all the works of the Supreme God, have we any proof that there is a God at all? **NONE WHATEVER!** The Arian system destroys the proof of the being of a God, and leads to Atheism. Such monstrous absurdities induced Dr. Priestly, and other divines of research and penetration, to explode and reprobate the Arian system. These divines saw clearly, that if it be granted that Jesus Christ created the world, it is impossible, without the greatest absurdity, to deny His divinity.

Dr. B. alleges, that the Socinian objections relative to

creation are directed against the sacred writers, not against the Arian system. I grant, indeed, that in order to make out their own scheme, the Socinians are obliged to explain away the plainest portions of the Word of God. But I nevertheless believe, that the Socinian objections are not only *directed against* the Arian system, but I am fully convinced *they have levelled it to the dust*. Arian principles, with regard to creation, are utterly indefensible. Dr. B.'s dream, that Jesus Christ did not create the world out of nothing, but only formed, fashioned, arranged, and ordered it, will not do. It is not only a gratuitous assumption, but even were it proved true, it would afford its author no relief. He admits that the being of a God is proved by His works, and particularly the work of creation. No matter, according to his doctrine, whether by creation we understand the production of the world out of nothing, or only its organization and arrangement. In his treatise on the "Being and Attributes" (p. 89), he writes thus:—"When we have reconciled ourselves to this, we must recur to the interference of the Eternal Spirit to organize the brute mass, and put it in motion—acts, as far as we can tell, that may require *more* power, as well as skill, than creation itself." Now, supposing—though not granting—that God the Father created the world out of nothing, and that Jesus Christ organized the brute mass, and put it in motion, what has the Doctor gained? *Nothing at all*. For Jesus Christ, by organizing the brute mass, and putting it in motion, has displayed greater power (for anything Dr. Bruce knows) than God the Father has displayed by producing it out of nothing! It follows, therefore, from the Doctor's principles, that if God the Father has displayed His eternal power and Godhead by creating the world out of nothing, Jesus Christ has given as great, if not a greater, display of His eternal power and Godhead, by organizing the brute mass and

putting it in motion. Thus it appears, that Dr. B. has fully established what he meant to subvert—the *doctrine of the supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Our author may now tell us that angels, magistrates, and idols are called gods; but I ask him, Of what one of these created angels, magistrates, or idols, is it said that “He made all things”—that “without Him was not anything made that was made”—that “by Him were all things created, visible and invisible?” &c. Of what one of them is it said, that he either created the world out of nothing, or organized the brute mass and put it in motion? Of what one of them is it said, that he is either the creator, preserver, saviour, or judge of the world? *No creature in heaven or in earth is so represented.*

What weakness, therefore, do Dr. B. and Antitrinitarians in general display, when they endeavour to run down the Supreme Deity of our blessed Redeemer, by telling us that angels, magistrates, and idols are called gods!

SECTION IV.

Our Redeemer the object of all religious worship.

Intimately connected with all peculiar works of Deity performed by our blessed and glorious Redeemer, is that religious worship due to Him by all intelligent beings. Creation itself is a sufficient foundation for religious worship. (Rev. xiv. 7)—“Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” (Psal. xcv. 6)—“O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before JEHOVAH our Maker.” If Jesus Christ is JEHOVAH, as Dr. B. admits—if He is our Maker, as I have endeavoured to prove

—or if, according to the Doctor's own principles, He has displayed power as great as creative power, if not greater—why does our author, why do Socinians and Arians refuse to worship Him? If the Redeemer be God—**THE MIGHTY GOD, THE ALMIGHTY GOD, THE GREAT GOD, THE TRUE GOD, THE ONLY WISE GOD, THE MOST HIGH GOD, OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER**—if He be **OMNIPOTENT, OMNISCIENT, OMNIPRESENT, ETERNAL, and IMMUTABLE**—if He be our **CREATOR, PRESERVER, SAVIOUR, and JUDGE**—why should we hesitate for a moment to acknowledge Him as the supreme object of our prayers, praises, and adorations? But, though for the worship of our blessed and glorious Redeemer we have sufficient reasons *a priori*—reasons the most powerful and convincing—yet these are not our *only* reasons. On a subject of such great and paramount importance, the Scriptures afford us “precept upon precept, and line upon line.” Patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, Abraham and Jacob, Stephen and Paul, with the whole apostolic Church—nay, the whole general assembly of saints and of angels, unite in the worship of our glorious Redeemer. “Let all the angels of God worship Him,” is the Divine mandate. With this injunction they cordially comply; they cheerfully unite with the innumerable multitudes of redeemed above, in celebrating the praises of God and the Lamb. (Rev. v. 11-14)—“And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be

unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever." That our blessed Redeemer is the proper object of religious worship, is a doctrine so clearly revealed in the Sacred Volume as to extort the belief of ancient Antitrinitarians. Even Socinus himself believed the doctrine, and some of the Arians still believe it. At present, however, it is denied by *all* Socinians, and, so far as I know, by Arians in general. These modern Antitrinitarians are certainly more consistent than their predecessors. To maintain that Jesus Christ is a creature, and at the same time to worship him as a god, is gross idolatry. It is painful, however, to think that, whilst modern Antitrinitarians are more consistent with themselves, they are less consistent with the sacred oracles. The sacred oracles require that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. The Almighty himself says, "Let all the angels of God worship Him;" but Dr. B. tells us that he would say, "See thou do it not: he is thy fellow-servant, worship God." In thus flatly contradicting his Maker, the Doctor endeavours to justify himself, by attempting to distinguish between civil and religious worship. He maintains that the worship enjoined in Scripture, and actually addressed to our blessed Redeemer, is not religious worship, but only a kind of civil homage. This is the best defence Socinians or Arians can make; but it will not do. Out of our author's own mouth he will stand condemned. (Gen. xii. 7, 8)—"And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land; and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, *having* Beth-el on the west, and Hai on the east; and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called

upon the name of the Lord." (Gen. xxvi. 24, 25)—
 "And the Lord appeared unto him the same night, and said, I *am* the God of Abraham thy father, fear not, for I *am* with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake. And he builded an altar there." (Gen. xxxv. 1-7)—"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that *were* with him, Put away the strange gods that *are* among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which *were* in their hand, and *all their* ear-rings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which *was* by Shechem. And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz, which *is* in the land of Canaan (that *is*, Beth-el), he and all the people that *were* with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbeth-el, because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother." In these scriptures we find the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, building altars to that God who appeared to them. But who was that God that appeared to them? Dr. B. will answer the question. He will tell us that it was not God the Father, who cannot become an object of our senses. He will acknowledge (for he cannot deny it without contradicting himself) that it was the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of the Covenant, by whom the patriarchal and legal dispensations were conducted. Now, why were these altars built to our Lord Jesus Christ? Was

it not for the purpose of religious worship? Undoubtedly it was. The Doctor will not surely pretend that these altars were built for the purpose of civil homage. The absurdity would be too gross and palpable. Out of his own mouth he stands condemned; for altars were built, and, of course, religious worship performed, to that God who appeared to the patriarchs—to that God who, according to his own acknowledgment, was the Lord Jesus Christ. “God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee.” Had Dr. Bruce been present, he would have said, “See thou do it not; he is thy fellow-servant, worship God.” God commands religious service to be addressed to Jesus Christ; but Dr. Bruce forbids it!! To all my readers I would say, whether it be right in the sight of God to obey the learned Doctor rather than God, judge ye. On this important subject let me ask a few questions. Was it proper to address religious worship to Jesus Christ before His incarnation, but not after it? Was Jesus Christ the proper object of religious worship in the days of the patriarchs, but not under the Christian dispensation? Was it proper for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to worship the Redeemer with religious veneration, and would it be improper for Dr. Bruce to address to Him the same species of worship? Is Dr. B. wiser than the patriarchs? Were *they* idolaters, but *he* a worshipper of the true God? Is he wiser than God himself, who instituted and enjoined the worship of His Son?

Prayers, as well as sacrifices, were offered to our Saviour in the age of the patriarchs. Jacob prayed to Him in behalf of the two sons of Joseph. (Gen. xlvii. 16),—“The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.” Who was this Angel? Dr. B. will tell us that it was the Angel of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ. When the good old patriarch was blessing

the two sons of Joseph, and worshipping his Redeemer, leaning on the top of his staff, had Dr. Bruce been present, he would have whispered in his ear, "See thou do it not: he is thy fellow-servant, worship God."

Not only in the patriarchal age, but under the Jewish economy, it was the practice of the Church to address religious worship to our blessed Redeemer. He was the Shechinah.* It was His glory that filled both the tabernacle and the temple. Enthroned above the mercy-seat, and between the cherubim, He received the religious worship of the Old Testament Church. (Lev. xvi. 2)—"And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy *place* within the vail before the mercy-seat, which *is* upon the ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat." The same visible glory that filled the tabernacle afterwards filled Solomon's temple. That the Redeemer appeared in a visible form above the mercy-seat, in the temple as well as in the tabernacle, we have no reason to doubt. It was on this account that the Israelites, when praying, directed their faces towards the temple. To the Redeemer, as appearing in the cloud above the mercy-seat, as we see in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, the most solemn worship was performed, sacrifices were offered, and incense was burned. To Him, as visibly

* Dr. B. (p. 298) fully admits the premises from which I reason. "Compare," says he, "Isaiah vi., throughout, with John xii. 39, 40, 41. Here John says that the vision which Isaiah saw in the temple was the glory of Christ; and that he spoke of Him in that chapter." On this correspondence H. Taylor, author of Ben. Mordecai, observes—"St. John has decided this question beyond all dispute, by declaring the glory which Isaiah saw, and which was undeniably the glory of the visible Jehovah, to be the glory of Christ himself. The whole account is descriptive of the Shechinah, or the mercy-seat between the two cherubim, where the Angel Jehovah used to appear."—Ben. Mordecai, p. 292.

enthroned between the cherubim, were the prayers of the ancient Church directed. Of these prayers, the eightieth Psalm is a beautiful specimen; it commences thus:—"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest *between* the cherubims shine forth. Before Ephraim, and Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up thy strength, and come *and* save us. Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved. O Lord God of Hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people." From this psalm, compared with the ninety-first, and other portions of the Old Testament, it appears that it was JEHOVAH GOD OF HOSTS who was enthroned between the cherubim—who there met with His people, appeared to them, conversed with them, and received their religious homage and adoration. Now, that JEHOVAH GOD OF HOSTS, who thus appeared to the Israelites, and was worshipped by them, Dr. B. himself being witness, could be no other than our BLESSED REDEEMER. Whilst the Church was thus worshipping her Saviour, would Dr. B. have said, "See thou do it not: he is thy fellow-servant; worship God?"

By the New Testament Church, from its very commencement, our blessed Redeemer has been uniformly worshipped. As soon as He was born, the Eastern Magi fell down and worshipped Him. When He calmed the sea, and caused Peter to walk on the water, those who were in the ship worshipped Him. A leper worshipped Him—a ruler worshipped Him—the Syrophenician woman worshipped Him—Mary Magdalene and the other Mary worshipped Him—the disciples worshipped Him. Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit"—"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The Apostle Paul prayed to Him three different times, that the messenger of Satan might depart from him. Praying to Jesus was the distinguishing characteristic of the

primitive Christians. Their denomination was, "*Those that call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.*"—Acts, ix. 14, 21; 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 22; Rom, x. 12. Pliny, a heathen, in his letter to Trajan, (Anno Dom. 103,) describes the Christians as meeting on a certain day, before daylight, and "addressing themselves in a form of prayer to Christ, as to some god." No less than twenty times we find the inspired writers imploring grace, mercy, and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ, as well as from God the Father. The Apostle Paul prays to the Redeemer—not only for the removal of the thorn in the flesh, but also for various blessings. Thus—(1 Thess. iii. 11, 12)—"Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love, one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you." That such prayers as these were only *civil worship*, Doctor Bruce, I presume, will scarcely venture to affirm. If all the prayers and praises addressed to our Redeemer amount to nothing more than *civil homage*, how are we to know when *religious worship* is performed? There is no stronger language expressive of the worship of God the Father, than that which expresses the worship addressed to the Son. The fact is, stronger language could not possibly be employed—(see Rev. i. 5, and v. 12.) How, then, did Dr. B. come to know that *religious worship* is due to God the Father, and only *civil homage*, or subordinate worship, to our blessed Redeemer? He tells us, that corporations and magistrates are called worshipful, and accosted by the title of their worships; but what corporation or magistrate was ever worshipped as our blessed Saviour? Did God ever command to build an altar to a magistrate or corporation? Did He ever command all the angels of God to worship a magistrate or corporation? Samuel was one of the best magistrates that ever ruled; but would

it not be blasphemy to say, "Make an altar unto Samuel?" "Let Samuel, that redeemed me from evil, bless the lads?" "Let all men honour Samuel as they honour the Father?" "Let all the angels of God worship Samuel?"

The reader will now be able to judge with what justice, truth, or candour, Dr. B. has made the following observations—(p. 126):—"There are, no doubt, several other texts, on which very learned divines have relied with much confidence, and which have furnished matter for cumbrous volumes, abounding with criticisms, which I should be ashamed to expose to intelligent and unprejudiced men; for you could not refrain from smiling, when you heard the nature of the Supreme Being, and the faith and salvation of Christendom, suspended on the transposition of a letter, or the construction of a particle—the insertion of a dot, or the omission of some grammatical or rhetorical mark."

Now, I grant, that the First Presbyterian congregation in Belfast might smile at all this. How could they avoid it? The description partakes largely of the ridiculous. But if they really imagine that there is anything in nature to which the picture is like, they are much deceived; and, whilst they are smiling at the supposed folly and stupidity of Trinitarians, the latter are probably prepared to smile at their credulity. What! The nature of the Supreme Being suspended on the insertion of a dot!—the nature of the Supreme Being suspended on the transposition of a letter!—the nature of the Supreme Being suspended on the omission of some grammatical or rhetorical mark! And is it by exhibiting such a picture as this that the grave and dignified Doctor Bruce hopes to raise the laugh against Trinitarians? Be it known to Dr. B.—be it known to the First Presbyterian congregation in Belfast—that, not upon *dots*, nor on *letters*, nor on the *whole volume of revelation*, nor on the *heavens*, nor on the

earth, nor on *anything exterior to Himself*, do Trinitarians suspend the nature of God! Trinitarians maintain, that the Supreme Being is *self-existent and independent*. Whilst raising the laugh against our neighbours, we should beware of rendering ourselves ridiculous.

Again—I would ask our learned author, what divine ever suspended the *salvation* of Christendom on the insertion of a dot? How ludicrous the fiction! What divine ever suspended the *faith* of Christendom on the insertion of a dot? With the ninth commandment before his eyes, how could our author write such a paragraph? By a careful perusal of the preceding pages, the reader, I trust, will be fully convinced that Trinitarians build the faith of Christendom, not on the insertion of dots, nor the transposition of letters, as Dr. B. ridiculously insinuates, but on the broad basis of Divine revelation. They will not, however, look on as indifferent spectators, whilst Socinians or Arians disfigure, mangle, or pervert the Word of God, by an arbitrary insertion of dots, or transposition of letters. By such licentious treatment, unrestrained, the sacred oracles might be so manufactured as to patronise the most abominable errors, heresies, and blasphemies.

Trinitarians are so far from being reduced to the necessity of suspending the faith of Christendom on the insertion of dots, &c., that, if a hundred of those texts, which prove the divinity of Christ, were blotted out of the Bible, the remaining hundreds would be abundantly sufficient to establish the doctrine.

SECTION V.

Antitrinitarian principles lead to consequences the most absurd and blasphemous.

1. IF Jesus Christ be not the Supreme God, the blas-

phemous consequence follows—*that He is not the true Messiah.*

One distinguishing characteristic of the true Messiah is, *that He should abolish idolatry.* Isaiah ii. 18: “And the idols he shall utterly abolish.” Now, if Jesus Christ be only a creature, He has *not* destroyed idolatry. On the contrary, Christians have been almost universally idolaters—they have almost universally worshipped the Redeemer, whom Antitrinitarians maintain to be only a creature. If Antitrinitarian doctrines be *true*, Christianity is *false*. Instead of being a system from which idolatry is abolished, it is *a most idolatrous system!* Our blessed Redeemer, who was to abolish idols—I tremble as I write—is *Himself the greatest and most dangerous of all idols!* Nay,

2. From Antitrinitarian principles, the still more blasphemous consequence follows—*that God himself has led His creatures into temptation—temptation to that very sin which, above all others, He hates and abhors—temptation to idolatry!* The Deity declares, that He is a “jealous God;” that His “glory He will not give to another, nor His praise to graven images.” He most pathetically expostulates upon this subject—(Jer. xlv. 4): “Oh, do not this abominable thing, that I hate.” With what care does the Supreme Being guard against all temptations to idolatry! Lest the Israelites should worship the relics of Moses, the Deity himself privately interred him, and “no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.” The brazen serpent also was destroyed, lest it should lead the Israelites into idolatry. Now, if the Deity used such precaution to prevent men from worshipping the body of Moses and the brazen serpent, is it reasonable to suppose that He would use no precaution where the temptation was infinitely greater? Is it reasonable to suppose that He would use no precautions to prevent men from worshipping His Son, if only a creature? *Reasonable, did I say?*

—Is not such a supposition in the highest degree *absurd and unreasonable*? Not only is there no precaution to prevent men; but there is every temptation to *induce* them to worship the Redeemer. The *most glorious names of the Deity* are given to Him; *the most glorious perfections of Deity* are ascribed to Him; *the most glorious works of Deity* are performed by Him—those very works by which the being and attributes of God are proved—by which His eternal power and Godhead are manifested—and by which He is distinguished from all false gods. And, finally, He is everywhere represented as *the object of the prayers of men, and of the united praises and adorations of all intelligent beings*. What temptations to idolatry, if Jesus Christ be only a creature! All the temptations to idolatry that ever existed, compared with these, were nothing, and less than nothing. If the healing of the stung Israelites was a temptation to worship the brazen serpent, how much greater the temptation to worship Him who has removed the sting of death, which is sin! If the Jews were tempted to worship the inanimate brass, or the dead body of Moses, surely the inducements to worship the *living Saviour* are infinitely greater.

If the veneration attached to the memory of statesmen, patriots, and benefactors, proved a principal source of idolatry, how much greater the temptation to worship Him to whom we owe all the inestimable blessings of creation, providence, and redemption! Jehovah is jealous of His glory. When, in praise of Herod's oration, the people exclaimed, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man," he was eaten with worms, and gave up the ghost. Why? "Because he gave not God the glory." When Moses sanctified not the Lord before the people—when he arrogated a part of the glory of a temporal and typical salvation, saying, "Hear, now, ye rebels, must *we* bring water out of this rock?"—he was ignominiously excluded from the

promised land—his carcass fell with the rebels in the wilderness. With such instances of Divine jealousy before his eyes, can any man believe that Jesus Christ, if only a creature, would be permitted to arrogate, *with impunity*, the glory of being not only the *instrument*, but the *author*, not of a *temporal* and *typical*, but of *eternal salvation*? The man who is able to believe all this is surely more credulous than he who believes, according to the Scriptures, that his Redeemer is “*over all, God blessed for ever.*” For, in a word, if Jesus Christ be only a creature, patriarchs, prophets, and apostles—Father, Son and Holy Ghost, (shall I utter the blasphemy?) have all combined to lead men into idolatry!

3. If the Socinian or Arian system be true, it follows that *Mahomet was more successful than Jesus Christ in communicating correct ideas of the Divine nature!*—that *Mahomet has been incomparably more successful than the Redeemer, in abolishing idolatry!*—that *Mahometanism is superior to Christianity!*—and, that *the Koran is superior to the Bible!**

4. If the Socinian or Arian doctrine be true, it follows that God has *no peculiar name*, by which He may be distinguished from His creatures!—that God has *no peculiar attribute*, by which He may be distinguished from His creatures!—that God has performed *no peculiar work*, by which He may be distinguished from His creatures!—that God claims, or is honoured with, *no peculiar worship*, by which He may be distinguished from His creatures!

If the Arian doctrine be true, we have *no proof of the being of a God*—nothing to prevent us from plunging into ATHEISM!

5. If Socinian or Arian principles be true, our

* See my Tract in defence of the Divinity and Atonement of Jesus Christ, in reply to Dr. Channing.

blessed Redeemer, who made all things, may Himself be annihilated! If He be a creature, He that made Him can surely *unmake* Him; He that brought Him out of a state of nonentity, can, with equal ease, reduce Him to nothing!

6. Finally, if Socinian or Arian principles be true, may not the Redeemer fall?—may He not be condemned like Satan?—may He not be for ever miserable? My reader will pardon me for putting such blasphemous questions. They are naturally suggested by the errors I oppose.

SECTION VI.

Objections answered.

To prove the inferiority of Jesus Christ to His heavenly Father, Dr. B. produces such texts as the following:—"The Father is greater than I. Of myself I can do nothing. As the Father gave me commandment, so I do. My doctrine is not mine own, but His who sent me. I speak not of myself; but the Father who sent me gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." To bring forward such texts as these in this controversy—as Dr. B. and Antitrinitarians in general do—is completely sophistical. It is that species of sophism which logicians style "*ignorantia elenchi*," or a mistake of the question. When Dr. B. and his coadjutors crowd their pages with such quotations, labouring to prove the inferiority of Jesus Christ to His heavenly Father, they are guilty of the most egregious trifling. They are labouring in vain—labouring to prove what nobody denies. Nobody denies that Jesus Christ is inferior to the Father—inferior as He is man—inferior in His official character as Mediator. Socinians and Arians may, in future, save themselves the trouble of such quotations. In this

controversy they prove just nothing at all—nothing but what we all acknowledge, and, therefore, nothing to the purpose.

Of those texts brought forward to invalidate the doctrine of the Redeemer's divinity, that which presents the greatest difficulty is, Mark xiii. 32, "But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." A more careful perusal of the passage would, I presume, convince Dr. B. that this text does not refer to the day of judgment, as he imagines, but to the destruction of Jerusalem. After rectifying this mistake, he will please to observe, that no Trinitarian ever believed that our Saviour, *as man*, was omniscient. His knowledge, *as man*, was progressive. He advanced in wisdom as well as in stature. To say, therefore, that, *as man*, He was ignorant of the time of Jerusalem's destruction, is no way inconsistent with His omniscience as God. Besides: As the communication of the knowledge of that time formed no part of our Saviour's commission—as He had no instructions to make it known—in this official sense, He might be said not to know it. Nor does the Doctor's polite note (page 301) convince me of the absurdity of this view. "Some account," says he, "for our Saviour's language, by charging him with duplicity, similar to that which Calvinists impute to His Father. They allege that He denied, in His human capacity, or as Mediator, what He knew in His divine, and disclaimed in one character what He could perform in another. What should we think of a witness, who should first deny his knowledge of a fact, and then confess that he knew it in his public character, but not in his private capacity?" That Calvinists impute duplicity to the Father is not true; nor does their interpretation of the above-cited text impute duplicity to the Son. We do not say, that the Redeemer knew the day and hour alluded to in His

public capacity, but not in His *private*, as Dr. B. absurdly insinuates. We say the *very reverse*. Nor did our Saviour make the declaration in the capacity of a *witness*, as the learned Doctor still *more absurdly* insinuates, but in the capacity of a *prophet*, commissioned to reveal *some* events, but not *all*. As a *witness*, He told the whole truth, but not as a *prophet*. As a prophet, He revealed only those truths which He was *commissioned* to reveal. To say, that we do not know in a public capacity what we know in a private, argues *no* duplicity—involves *no* contradiction. A member of the Synod of Ulster, in reference to a threat of Lord Castlereagh, exclaimed in open court, “*Who is this Lord Castlereagh? We do not know Lord Castlereagh!*” Did such a declaration involve the Synod in the guilt of duplicity? Surely not.

In opposing the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Doctor quotes Matt. xx. 23, “But to sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.” The English reader will perceive that the words, “*it shall be given to them,*” are printed in italics, which shows that there are no such words in the original—that they are only a supplement inserted by our translators. Though our translators have done justice to the English reader by printing all their supplements in italics, and though their supplements are, in general, judicious, there are some exceptions, and this is one. It completely destroys the sense of the passage. It represents our Saviour as having no power to reward His followers by assigning them places of honour and happiness in His kingdom. But this is quite contrary to the express declarations of Scripture. At the judgment of the great day, He will say to them on His right hand, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world.” (Rev. iii. 21), “To him that overcometh will I grant to

sit with me on my throne." Leaving out the supplement, except the words "*to them,*" the passage will read thus: "To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, except to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." That our Redeemer has power to give seats in His kingdom, no person who reads the preceding quotations can doubt; but to whom? only to the elect—to those for whom the kingdom was prepared before the foundation of the world. This gloss may not exactly please our author, who greatly abhors the doctrine of election. It appears, however, to be the only plain, natural, and consistent meaning of the passage.

In reference to the commencement of John's Gospel, the Doctor makes the following remarks (p. 114):—"We, therefore, feel no difficulty in applying the introduction of John's Gospel to our Lord. The Word was a celestial being, and was with God in the beginning. This is intelligible; but there is no sense in saying, 'God was God, and was with God.'" I grant, indeed, there is no sense in this; but who is guilty of the nonsense? Not the evangelist: he says no such thing. Not the Trinitarian: he says no such thing. The nonsense recoils on the Doctor himself. To substitute *God* for *Word*, and then, instead of "The Word was God," read *God was God*, is certainly very ingenious; it is an admirable specimen of that "sleight of men and cunning craftiness," whereby the simple are deceived. It is well calculated to confound and deceive the man of plain understanding, unaccustomed to the arts of sophistry. To point out and expose the fallacy and absurdity of such management, let us take a similar proposition; for instance, "Elias was a man." This proposition is, in all respects, similar to that on which the Doctor shows his skill. "Elias was a man," and "The Word was God," are parallel propositions. If for *Word*, in the *last* proposition, the Doctor substitutes

God—upon the very same principle, for *Elias*, in the *first*, I will substitute *man*, and then the two propositions will stand thus: *God was God*, and *man was man*. Now I agree with Dr. B., that there is no sense in such propositions. But, if by such reasoning—I should rather say quibbling—he can prove that Jesus Christ is not the *Supreme God*, by the very same logic I can prove that *Elias was not a man*, that *Dr. B. is not a man*, and that *there never was a man on the face of this globe!!!* Nor is it any contradiction to say, that Jesus Christ was *with* the Father. The Deity is in one sense *one*, in another sense *three*. In that sense in which the Supreme Being is *three*, there is *no* absurdity in representing the one person as dwelling with the other.

The Doctor sees no difficulty upon his scheme, in applying the introduction of John's Gospel to our Lord. Is there no difficulty in the idea of a creature creating himself?—and yet, this most absurd of all ideas, as we have already seen, is inseparably connected with the Arian system. On Arian principles, Jesus Christ is one of the highest of the angels—let us call him Gabriel, and then John's Gospel may be read thus:—"In the beginning was Gabriel, and Gabriel was with God, and Gabriel was God; all things were made by Gabriel, and without Gabriel was not anything made that was made (of course Gabriel acted before he existed, and made himself); and Gabriel was made flesh and dwelt among us." The Socinian gloss is still more absurd; for what sense in saying that "*A man was made flesh?*" How blind are men to the difficulties and absurdities of their own systems—systems to which they have been long attached—systems received by tradition from their fathers!

Dr. B. affirms that our blessed Redeemer expressly rejected and disclaimed religious worship. He quotes our Saviour's own words—"Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Now,

if Jesus Christ be "*The Lord our God*," how has He disclaimed religious worship? That our blessed Redeemer is "*The Lord our God*," Dr. B. cannot consistently deny. He admits, that the personage who appeared to Moses in the bush, and gave the law from Mount Sinai, was the Redeemer. Now, this glorious personage declared, (Exodus xx. 2)—"I am **THE LORD THY GOD**, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Thomas also exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" When we worship our Redeemer, therefore, we are worshipping "**THE LORD OUR GOD**." Peter refused religious worship, the angel refused religious worship, but our blessed Redeemer never rejected nor disclaimed it; on the contrary, He taught it to be the duty of all men "to honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."

Dr. B. alleges (p. 103) that Jesus Christ has marked a plain distinction between himself and the Almighty, in these words, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." We readily grant, that the Redeemer is here plainly distinguished from His heavenly Father; but how?—not in respect of nature or essence, but in respect of His official character as "*the sent of God*." If by this text the Doctor can prove that Jesus Christ is not the *true God*, the same reasoning will prove that God the Father is not the *wise God*. In the Epistle of Jude, as we have already shown, Jesus Christ is styled "*the only wise God*;" but, does any person imagine that this excludes God the Father? So, in like manner, when the Father is styled "*the only true God*," should any person imagine that this excludes His only begotten Son?—by no means. He is "**THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE**." Jesus Christ is styled "*the only wise God*," and God the Father "**THE ONLY TRUE GOD**," not to the exclusion of each other, but to the exclusion

of idols.—“Little children, keep yourselves from *idols*. Amen.”

From John xvi. 23, “In that day ye shall ask me nothing,” Dr. B. infers, that we should not address our prayers to to the REDEEMER. Now, this text has no reference to prayer at all, but only to the questions put to our Saviour on difficult subjects. This is evident from two things: 1. From the 19th verse, “Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him,” &c. 2. That our Saviour was speaking of questions on difficult subjects, and not of prayer, is evident from this—that *it is not fact* that His disciples after His ascension asked Him nothing in prayer; for we have already seen that *Stephen* prayed to Him, that *Paul* prayed to Him, and that the *apostolic Church* was in the constant habit of praying to Him. The Doctor’s gloss would make our blessed Redeemer a false prophet.

In opposing the divinity of Jesus Christ, Dr. B. seems principally to rely on those texts in which He is styled the Son of God. In page 108, he writes thus: “The title which He commonly assumes, is that of the ‘Son of God.’ This necessarily implies priority of existence, and superiority of dignity on the part of His Father. He also styles himself ‘the only-begotten Son of God.’ By this we are to understand His only Son, by way of pre-eminence; and also His dearest Son, as human parents are most tenderly attached to an only child. The word has often this signification in the original language, and is, therefore, tantamount to another appellation which our Saviour assumes, the Beloved, and the Beloved Son of God. This is the meaning of these phrases, and they imply, that He is inferior in dignity, and subsequent in point of existence, to the Father, and peculiarly dear to Him. Whatever mysterious sense may be put upon them, it will still remain unquestionable that a father must exist before his son, and the origin of the son, being a fact, must have

taken place at some particular time, however remote. The strictest asserters of the divinity of Christ acknowledge Him to be a derived being." Part of this paragraph is so ungrammatical and incoherent, that I have been obliged to abandon it as unintelligible. In language, however, quite distinct and perspicuous, the Doctor maintains that the phrase, *Son of God*, "necessarily implies priority of existence, and superiority of dignity, on the part of the Father."* In reply, I would offer the following observations:—

1. Many Trinitarians do not believe in the doctrine of eternal generation. Though they believe that Jesus Christ is God equal with the Father, they do not believe that the appellation "*Son of God*" is descriptive of any eternal necessary distinction in the Divine nature, but only of a new covenant relation. According to this opinion, the Doctor's reasoning has no force. It falls to the ground at once; for all acknowledge that, as man and mediator, Jesus Christ is inferior to the Father. But

2. Viewing the epithets, *father* and *son*, as descriptive of an eternal distinction in the Godhead, and of a natural and necessary relation, it does not follow that worms of the dust are able to explain the nature of that relation. Our author, in his appendix, mentions *five* Trinities.† Had he wished to treat his opponents

* Dr. B tells us, that it is not required of a son to equal his father, nor of a scholar to vie with his master. A strange doctrine indeed, and far enough removed from that which teaches the perpetual perfectibility of man—if true, our world would soon be peopled with pigmies and Lilliputians. If the phrase, *Son of God*, proves that the Redeemer was inferior to God, would not the phrase, *Son of man*, prove that He was also inferior to *man*? Would not this prove too much, and by consequence—*nothing at all*?

† Dr. B., in his appendix, mentions a variety of Trinities—the Ciceronian, Platonic, Aristotelian, &c. Now, what does all this prove? It proves, that the doctrine of the Trinity is

with respect, he would have said, "five *different views* of the Trinity." The fifth Trinity, he tells us, according to Bishop Stillingfleet, is the Trinity of the mobile, which is held by the common people, or by such lazy divines as only say, that it is an inconceivable mystery. Now, I must confess, that this fifth and last Trinity, —this Trinity of the mobile, or of the *mob*, as the word signifies—is the Trinity which I advocate. I confess myself one of those lazy divines who say that the Trinity is an inconceivable mystery—a mystery which cannot be explained. I believe in the supreme Deity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. I believe that these are in one respect *three*, and in another respect *one*. I believe these facts, because they are revealed in the Sacred Volume. But how they are three, and yet but one, is a mystery. I believe nothing about it. I am *required* to believe nothing about it. Instead of attempting to ascertain the *facts*, divines have endeavoured to explain the *HOW*. In this I blame them. By attempting to explain what is inexplicable, both philosophers and divines expose their folly, and weaken their cause. It is one of the most important

not peculiar to Christians, but is believed also by heathens. Through all ages, and in almost all heathen nations, it flows down through the corrupt channels of tradition. This very circumstance is no contemptible proof of its truth. If the doctrine had not been originally revealed, on what principle of human nature could it have been propagated—by what means could it have obtained so wide a circulation? But, as our author shows us in his appendix, Christians as well as heathens are divided on the doctrine of the Trinity. And what then? Does this prove that there is *no truth* in the doctrine? Surely not. Men are divided in their opinions with regard to the chief good. On this subject there are upwards of three hundred opinions. Is there therefore *no* chief good? Men are divided in their opinions respecting the nature of virtue. Is there therefore *no* virtue? We will not follow the Doctor's safe rule—we will not abandon the doctrine of the Trinity because men are divided about it.

laws of matter, that all heavy bodies tend to the centre. But should a philosopher attempt to explain the cause why they so tend, he would only expose his own ignorance and folly. Why does the magnetic needle point towards the north? What are the causes of its variation and dip? "How do the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child?" These, and a thousand other questions, all the philosophers in the world cannot answer. With as much justice and propriety may such philosophers as do not pretend to explain the mysteries of nature, be branded with the epithet *lazy*, as those divines who do not attempt to explain the mystery of the Trinity. When orthodox divines speak of the Son as *derived* from the Father, they use the term *derived* in a qualified sense, as applicable, not to His essence, but only to His personality. For my own part, however, I must confess, that I see no warrant for such a term at all. I dislike it. I reject it; and I believe that a great majority of Trinitarians will agree with me. However the Doctor may reason and dispute about the meaning of the phrase "*Son of God*," one thing he *cannot* dispute, that the Jews understood the phrase as implying, not *inferiority* to His heavenly Father, but *equality*. Upon this ground they sought to stone Him, afterwards endeavoured to apprehend Him, and finally crucified Him. (See John x 31-40, compared with Matt. xxvi. 63-67.) When our Saviour, in the first of these passages, declares, "I and my Father are one," Dr. B., and Antitrinitarians in general, contend that this was not a oneness of *nature and essence*. As a parallel text, they quote John xvii. 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." They allege that Jesus Christ is one with the Father in no other sense than that in which *believers* are one. To a superficial thinker, this may appear plausible enough; but it will bear no examination. For, if our Saviour meant to say, that He was one with the Father only in

the sense in which believers are one—if this was the natural construction of His words—why did the Jews consider Him guilty of blasphemy?—why did they take up stones to stone Him? It is abundantly evident that the Jews understood Him as *we* understand Him—*as making himself equal with God.*

The same observations will apply to the phrase, “*Son of God.*” The Jews, who surely knew its meaning better than Dr. B., understood it not as implying *inferiority* to the Father, but *equality*. They expressly declare, that this was the reason why they stoned Him—*that He, being a man, made himself equal with God; because He said, I am the Son of God.* On this ground they conceived Him guilty of blasphemy, and proceeded to inflict the penalty which the law of Moses attached to that crime.

Dr. Bruce, and other opponents of the divinity of Christ, allege that our Saviour rectified this mistaken notion of the Jews, and disclaimed equality with the Father in the following terms:—“Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” In these verses our Saviour, so far from *disclaiming*, persists in *asserting* His own Deity. He proves it by an argument from the less to the greater. If Jewish magistrates, as types of the Redeemer, were denominated gods, why should the Deity of the antitype be denied? Why should He be regarded as a blasphemer for claiming equality with His heavenly Father? That the Jewish magistrates were called gods, *as they were types of our blessed Redeemer*, is evident from the following parenthetical clause, “*And the Scriptures cannot be broken.*” These words plainly show that Jesus Christ is styled God,

not in conformity with the phraseology of the Jews, by which their magistrates were denominated gods, but, on the contrary, that Jewish magistrates were so denominated, as types of Him who is "over all, God blessed for ever." The Scriptures cannot be broken. There must be an antitype answering to the types—a person who would think it no robbery or blasphemy to be equal with God. That our Saviour did not intend to disclaim His own Deity, and equality with the Father, is evident from this—that, after His explanation, the Jews *again* sought to take Him. This shows plainly that the Jews understood the Saviour as we do, not as *disclaiming*, but *asserting*, His divinity. So far was the Redeemer from *denying* His own Deity, that He *died a martyr* to that doctrine. When the high-priest adjured Him by the living God, to tell whether He were *the Son of God*, "Jesus said unto him, *Thou hast said*. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy. What further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard His blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death." The remarks of our author, when reasoning with the Socinians, are appropriate here. "Neither," says the Doctor, "would He (Jesus) have left the Jews under a misapprehension of His meaning, when they said, How is it that He saith I came down from heaven. The candour of our Lord would surely have induced Him to undeceive them, if they had misunderstood His words." Now, I ask Dr. B., when Jesus Christ said that *He and the Father were one*, and that *He was the Son of God*; and when the Jews thought that these expressions were blasphemous, and that He, being a man, was making himself equal with God—if the Jews were mistaken in all this, as Antitrinitarians say that they were, why did not the candour of our Lord induce Him to undeceive them? Why did He give them such an ambiguous explanation,

as left them still under misapprehensions—misapprehensions which induced them, first to attempt to stone Him, and afterwards to crucify Him? According to the doctrine of Socinians and Arians, our blessed Redeemer died “*as a fool dies!*” He was guilty of little less than *suicide!* The use of ambiguous language was the cause of His death! He had not so much candour as to induce Him to undeceive the Jews! He had not sufficient candour to save His own life! His want of candour was the reason why He was first stoned and afterwards crucified! He was stoned for blasphemy, He was crucified for blasphemy, and, upon Socinian and Arian principles, it would be impossible to acquit Him of the crime; for the language He employed conveyed the idea of His equality with God. By doctrine fraught with such absurdities, I had almost said blasphemies, do modern divines endeavour to explode *the Supreme Deity of our blessed Redeemer!* Upon the whole, it appears that the phrase, “*Son of God,*” applied to our Saviour, is so far from proving His *inferiority* to the Father, that it is an invincible proof of His *equality*. When the Jews charged Him with blasphemy for claiming this equality, He did not renounce the claim; but, by boldly asserting it, *He died a martyr to His own Supreme Deity.*

Dr. B., as we already noticed, condemns Socinians and Trinitarians for the use they make of verbal criticism. He boasts, that the Arian scheme is so consistent and rational, that it requires no such aid. To convince him that this is only *vain boasting*, I would take the liberty of turning his attention to Phil. ii. 5–11—that text from which he has preached so long a sermon, in opposition to the Supreme Deity of our blessed Redeemer. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a

servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, He 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; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Now, what is the reason that Dr. B. did not attempt to reconcile this text to the Arian system, *without the aid of verbal criticism*? To this question only one answer can possibly be given. HE COULD NOT. Without the aid of verbal criticism, all the Socinians and Arians in the world could not explain this single text. Without the aid of verbal criticism, this one text would completely overturn and annihilate their systems. If Jesus Christ thought it no robbery to be equal with God, then He *was* equal with God: and if He was equal with God, His SUPREME DEITY rests upon an immoveable basis, and this great controversy is for ever settled. Where is now the vaulted consistency and rationality of the Arian scheme—a scheme, which, without the aid of verbal criticism, *one single text would scatter to the winds, and totally annihilate*? So then, Dr. B. has recourse to verbal criticism. Why?—*because he could not help it*. The case was desperate. Without the aid of verbal criticism, his whole system would crumble into dust. Nor is this all: to preserve his scheme from utter destruction, the Doctor was obliged to have recourse, not only to verbal criticism, but to *erroneous criticism*. He tells us that "the word translated robbery, signifies anything taken by violence, and particularly plunder taken from an enemy." With great deference, I deny that the word has any such meaning. The word ἀρπαγμα signifies anything taken with violence, &c.; but it is not ἀρπαγμα which is translated

robbery; it is *ἀρπαγμος*, a word of a different signification—a word which signifies, not plunder, but the taking of plunder; and therefore, literally and analogically translated *robbery*. I say *analogically*; because it is principally by the *analogy* of the language that the true meaning of the word is ascertained. The same word does not occur in any other part of the New Testament, nor in the Septuagint translation of the Old; and some maintain that it does not occur in any of the profane authors. This, however, appears to be a mistake. It is found in Plutarch, but not used in the sense given it by Dr. B. It is there employed to signify the *action*, as our translators understand it, and as the analogy of the Greek language requires. The following, among many, are instances of this analogy: *Σπαρασσω* signifies to lacerate or tear; from this is formed the noun *σπαραγμος*, laceration or tearing, and *σπαραγμα*, the fragment or part torn off. From *καθαίρω* and *καθαρίζω*, to purge, are formed the verbal nouns *καθαρμος* and *καθαρισμος*, both signifying purgation, or the act of purging; whereas *καθαρμα* signifies the off-scouring or filth. Under such circumstances, nouns terminating in *μος* are not to be confounded with nouns in *μα*; the former express the *action*, but the latter refer to the *object* or *effects* of the action. Nouns terminating in *μος* are not synonymous with nouns in *μα*, but with nouns in *ις*; *καθαρμος*, *καθαρισμος*, and *καθαρις*, are all synonymous—they all denote the *act* of purifying. Proceeding on this plain principle of analogy, our translators have very judiciously and accurately translated *ἀρπαγμον*, *robbery*.

Before dismissing this disputed word, I must caution my reader not to be deceived by the bold and confident assertions of our author. In his Appendix (p. 303), he confidently assumes what is not true—"that all agree in his interpretation of the word." Hammond, M'Knight, Wardlaw, and all Trinitarians that I have consulted

(except one), defend the received version in opposition to the Doctor. The writer whom I have excepted, is Stuart of Andover, who says, "Greek syntax would place the words thus, as to their sense; *οὐκ ἴσους αὐτὸν εἶναι ἰσᾶ θεῷ (κατὰ) ἀρπαγμῶν.*" With great deference, I conceive that the learned professor is, in this instance, quite mistaken. Upon the principles of Greek syntax, the ellipsis cannot be supplied by *κατὰ*, but requires *εἶναι*. In addition to this, I may observe, that his objection to our translation is satisfactorily answered by Dr. Wardlaw.

When it is said, that our Saviour thought it no robbery to be equal with God, the Doctor endeavours to explain away the force of the term *equal*, by telling us that the word *ισα*, in the original, often implies only a near resemblance. On this criticism I would make the following remarks:—

1. It has never yet been satisfactorily proved, that the original word ever signifies, exclusively, likeness or resemblance. The authorities produced by Dr. Whitby are inconclusive. In every instance, as Dr. Wardlaw observes, the word implies equality.

2. Supposing the word *ισα* to signify, not only equality, but also likeness, upon what principle does Dr. B. presume to lay aside the *primary* meaning of the word, and to adopt the *secondary*? Upon what principle can he do this, but upon the sophistical principle of begging the question? Antitrinitarians, taking for granted the thing to be proved, *That Jesus Christ is not equal with the Father*, very modestly conclude that the primary meaning of the word must be laid aside, and a secondary one, agreeable to their own pre-conceived opinions, adopted!

3. In the text under consideration, according to the Doctor's own showing, the word cannot signify likeness or resemblance. All that he pleads for is, that the word "often implies only *near* resemblance." Now,

upon the principle that Jesus Christ was only a creature, between Him and the Deity there was no *near* resemblance. The resemblance between the rudest savage and Solomon the wise was infinitely nearer. Between a creature and his Creator, there is an infinite distance, and, consequently, the resemblance must be infinitely remote. It is therefore evident, that though the word may sometimes imply only near resemblance, this cannot possibly be the meaning of it here. The Doctor alleges, that the original word, if translated *equal*, "would signify that God was equal to Himself; or else, that there are two gods." But does he not know, that Trinitarians believe the Deity to be, in one respect *three*, and in another *one*? They do not believe that there are three persons, and yet but one person; or three gods, and yet but one God—this would be a contradiction—but they believe that there are *three persons*, and yet but *one God*. Jesus Christ thought it no robbery to be equal with God. This proves, that He and the Father are two distinct persons; but not that they are two gods, or that God is equal to Himself.

From the phrases, "*form of God*," and "*form of a servant*," the Doctor concludes, that Jesus Christ was not *really* a servant, but only *resembled* a servant; and that He was not *really* God, but only *resembled* God. From the very same premises, I would draw the very opposite conclusion. From the phrase "*form of a servant*," and from our Saviour's own words, "I am among you as one that serveth," are we to conclude, that our Saviour was not *really a servant*? By no means. The conclusion is contradicted by the following plain declarations of Scripture. Isaiah xlii. 1, "Behold my servant whom I uphold"—verse 19, "Who is blind but my servant? See also Isaiah xlix. 6; lii. 13. Zech. iii. 8. Matt. xii. 18; xx. 28. After reading these Scriptures, will any person say that Jesus Christ only *resembled* a servant? Surely not. When He took

upon Him the form of a servant, *he really became a servant*. In the same manner, I conclude, that His being in the form of God implies, that He was *really God*. Both His being in the form of God, and His thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, establish the same great point—**HIS SUPREME DEITY**.

Dr. B. affirms that the obvious meaning of our translation would make Christ an example of selfishness and ambition. This bold assertion is a mere *petitio principii*—a barefaced begging of the question. It takes for granted what remains to be proved, and what is denied by all but Antitrinitarians. It takes for granted that Jesus Christ is only a creature. Now, if this hypothesis were true—if the Redeemer were only a creature—“To think it no robbery to be equal with God,” would make Him not only an example of selfishness and ambition, but of the *most horrid impiety and blasphemy!* The Antitrinitarian hypothesis, however, has never yet been proved, and I presume, *never will*. This text alone, notwithstanding the violent attempts to pervert it, will for ever prove *an insuperable barrier*. Antitrinitarian comments explain away all the beauty and force of the passage. On their principles, where is that exalted virtue displayed in the humiliation of Jesus. If Jesus was only a man—a carpenter’s son—as Socinians contend, where was His humiliation? According to the Arian scheme, Jesus Christ was only a creature—a superangelic being—a being bound by the law of God—bound to obey His heavenly Father. When His Father commanded Him to humble himself, had He refused, He would have been a rebel, a fallen angel, as bad as Satan, if not worse! When He obeyed, he was only an unprofitable servant! He had only done that which it was His duty to do. His obedience was only a debt, and could lay the Deity under no obligation to confer favours, either on Himself, or on any of the human family. He had nothing of His own—nothing

which He had not received—His sacrifice was not His own—He had no merit—no ground of boasting. He had no liberty to save His own life, without incurring the guilt of the most horrid impiety, rebellion, and apostacy—without becoming a fallen angel! Where is then that exalted virtue which has kindled into rapture prophets and apostles, men and angels, the whole blessed creation? The Arian hypothesis sinks it into *nothing*.

On the other hand, according to the Trinitarian scheme, the text exhibits an astonishing, an overwhelming display of generous disinterested benevolence, humility, and condescension. It exhibits an example worthy of the imitation of men and of angels—worthy of the admiration and praise of all intelligent creatures! Oh! that he who writes, and they who read these pages, 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, which passes knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fulness of God.*

• Intimately connected with our Saviour's taking upon Him "the form of a servant," is that text in the Hebrews, "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham." Dr. B. very properly remarks, that such phrases would be totally inapplicable to a mere man, who could have no power to take on Himself the nature of angels—but he quite forgets that such phrases are no less inapplicable to an *angel, or the highest of angelic beings*. How could an angel, or the highest of angelic beings, take upon himself the nature of angels? If He were originally possessed of their nature, how could He *assume* it? The text is equally inconsistent with the doctrines of Socinians and Arians. For what consistency, or what sense, in talking of a man taking upon himself the nature of a man, or an angel taking upon himself the nature of an angel? Dr. Price, perceiving such phraseology to be grossly absurd, is forced to recur to verbal criticism—to *false* criticism. His translation, designed to supersede the authorised version, runs thus:—"He helped not the nature of angels." This translation of the verb *επιλαμβανειτο* is quite of a piece with Dr. B.'s translation of the noun *αρπαγμα*. Dr. B. affixes the meaning of *αρπαγμα* to *αρπαγμος*; and Dr. Price

affixes the meaning of *αντιλαμβανομαι* to *επιλαμβανομαι*; and by this simple operation of affixing the meaning of one word to another, do these learned Doctors contrive to evade the force of troublesome texts, and to preserve from destruction their favourite system. They deprecate verbal criticism, and pretend to be willing to abide by the received version. I say *pretend*, for it is nothing but *pretence*. They are *not* willing to abide by it; they *CANNOT* abide by it and advocate Arianism. They appeal to criticism in every case of extremity, and to such a species of criticism, too, as would enable them to bring *any meaning out of any text*.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE SUPREME DEITY OF THE HOLY GHOST.

HAVING in the preceding pages endeavoured to establish the divinity of our blessed Redeemer, and to refute those arguments by which Dr. B. has assailed that doctrine, I proceed now to make a few observations in defence of the SUPREME DEITY OF THE HOLY GHOST. The Doctor boasts of the Arian system, as rational and consistent—as quite free from the difficulties attending the systems of Trinitarians and Socinians—as clogged with no difficulties of its own, except such as must attach to any supernatural interposition. To me, I confess, that system appears in a quite different light. It appears to me *unscriptural, unreasonable, inconsistent, and clogged with difficulties altogether insuperable*. The correctness of this view will appear from the doctrine of that system, not only respecting the *Son of God*, but also respecting the *Spirit of all grace, the Holy Ghost*. Arians, in their view of the blessed Spirit, are not only inconsistent with the Scriptures of truth, but with each other. Some of them believe that He is *neither God, nor angel, nor man, nor any being at all*, but only the *power, wisdom, or influence* of the Deity. Others again (and among these Dr. B., though he speaks entirely in the language of scepticism and doubt), believe that the Holy Ghost is a creature inferior to our blessed Redeemer. The hypothesis of those who deny the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost is full of absurdity. And yet, to maintain His personality, but deny His Supreme Deity, appears to involve much contradiction, perplexity, and confusion. The works

peculiar to God are ascribed, in Scripture, to the blessed Spirit. In the work of creation He is represented as a principal agent. He "moved upon the waters," Gen. i. 2. He "garnished the heavens," Job xxvi. 13. He made man, Job xxxiii. 4. In the new creation, also, He is a principal agent. He regenerates the *natural world*, Psalm civ. 30, "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth." He regenerates the *moral world*, Tit. iii. 5, "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." In the resurrection of the dead He will be a principal agent, Rom. viii. 11, "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." These, and many other works of God are ascribed to the blessed Spirit. According to the Scriptures, God stretched forth the heavens *alone*, and spread abroad the earth by *himself*; but according to the system of Dr. B., He did *not* create the heavens and the earth *alone*, or by himself, but by a *created instrument, Jesus Christ*. This is not all. From the preceding scriptures, it appears that God did not create by this subordinate instrument *alone*, but by *another* instrument still lower—by the Holy Ghost. Arians maintain that Jesus Christ is inferior to the Father, and the Holy Ghost inferior to Jesus Christ. From these premises it follows that, in the work of creation, Jesus Christ was an instrument in the hand of God, and the Holy Ghost a subordinate instrument in the hand of Jesus Christ—so that the work of creation was performed by the *instrument of an instrument—the servant of a servant!* The work of creation was performed by a *creature*, the Holy Ghost! This creature was created by *another creature, Jesus Christ!!*—which last creature **CREATED HIMSELF!!!**

Such appear to be the legitimate and native consequences of the Arian system—of that system which is extolled for its reasonableness and simplicity. Should Arians attempt to evade these absurd consequences, by denying that the preceding texts refer to the Holy Spirit taken personally—should they even succeed in making their escape by such an evasion—still I would ask the following questions:—How is the Redeemer's superiority to the Holy Ghost consistent with His being conceived in the womb of the Virgin by the *power of the Holy Ghost*? What! conceived by the power of a creature inferior to Himself, conceived by the power of *His own creature*! The Redeemer was honoured by the descent of the Holy Ghost at His baptism. The Holy Ghost anointed Him, and qualified Him for His mediatorial offices and work. He wrought His miracles by the *power* of the Holy Ghost. How are these things consistent with the inferiority of that blessed Spirit? The Holy Spirit raised our Saviour from the dead—He was "*quicken^d by the Spirit.*" How is this consistent with the Holy Spirit's inferiority? Finally, how is the inferiority of the Holy Ghost consistent with the unpardonable sin? Matt. xii. 31, 32—“Wherefore, I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

The force of this text, as it strikes against the Arian system, Dr. B. endeavours to evade, by asserting—that the Holy Ghost was not then given; or rather by insinuating—that *He did not, at that time, exist!* He writes thus:—“The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, so awfully denounced by our Lord, was an

obstinate and wilful incredulity in His miracles; and particularly, the imputation of them to the agency of evil spirits. It cannot signify denying the personality of the Holy Spirit; for St. John tells us, that the Holy Ghost was not given (given is added by the translators) till Christ was glorified; and, long after that event, the disciples at Ephesus had not so much as heard whether there were any Holy Ghost."

This evasion will not do. The futility and weakness of it will appear from the following observations:—

1. In this passage, as in many other parts of his book, the Doctor is careful to refute what nobody maintains. He says that the text quoted above "cannot signify denying the personality of the Holy Spirit." Who imagines that it signifies this? *Nobody* I presume. Dr. B. would save himself *immense* trouble, if he would not make so many men of straw. God forbid that the sin against the Holy Ghost should signify the "denying of His personality!" If it did, woe, woe, would be to the great majority of Antitrinitarians—*they would be all guilty of the unpardonable sin!* Dr. B. asserts, that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was an obstinate and wilful incredulity in the Redeemer's miracles. Passing over the innate absurdity of the phrase, "incredulity in miracles," would our author examine the passage more minutely,* I presume he would find that he is quite mistaken. The blasphemy against our Saviour—the imputation of His miracles to the influence of evil spirits—*was* forgiven. "Whosoever," says the Redeemer himself, "shall speak a word against the

* *Faith* in miracles is intelligible, but *credulity* in miracles is absurd. The philologist will perceive the reason; he will see, that *faith*, being an *act* of the mind, is transitive, and admits an object; whereas *credulity*, being not an *act*, but a *disposition* of the mind, is *intransitive*, and does *not* admit an object. If, therefore, *credulity in miracles* is not sense, *equally* absurd, if not *more* so, is the phrase "*incredulity in miracles.*"

Son of Man, it *shall be forgiven him.*" For those Jews who thus blasphemed Him, and afterwards crucified Him, He fervently prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." The prayer was heard. When charged with the murder of the Lord of glory, they were pricked in their hearts—they looked on Him whom they had pierced, and mourned; they exclaimed, "What shall we do to be saved?" They were directed to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; they embraced the glad tidings, believed, and were enrolled among His disciples. It appears, therefore, that the imputation of our Saviour's miracles to the influence of evil spirits was *not* the unpardonable sin. "He hath an unclean spirit"—"He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils," were words spoken against the Son of Man. Such words our Saviour himself declares *should be forgiven*; and we have reason to believe that they were *actually forgiven*. But He assures us, that if any one should speak against the Holy Ghost, it *should never be forgiven him*. The Doctor observes, that the Holy Ghost was not then given. Very true; nor did the sin mentioned respect *present*, but *future* communications of the Holy Ghost. It respected the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost after the Redeemer's resurrection. An important question may be here put: Why was the blasphemy against our Saviour forgiven, but that against the Holy Ghost *unpardonable*? I answer, Because the miracles wrought by the Holy Ghost, after the ascension of Jesus Christ, *were the last and most powerful attestation of the truth of Christianity*. The opposition given to our Lord and His miracles proceeded principally from ignorance. To this cause we may trace even His crucifixion. "Brethren," says Peter, "I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." "Glad they known Him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"—and, I may add—they would not have blasphemed

Him, nor imputed His miracles to diabolic influence. The miracles wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, after our Saviour's ascension, were far more glorious and convincing than those wrought by our Saviour himself. This our Redeemer had (John xiv. 12) predicted: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." In opposing the Supreme Deity of the Holy Ghost, one of the Doctor's arguments is, that the Redeemer appeals only to *two* witnesses, Himself and His Father—"that the Holy Spirit was none of His witnesses, for in this case He would have been supported by three; and the third would have been more unexceptionable than himself." Now, the fact is, that He actually *did* appeal to this third and most unexceptionable witness: (John xv. 26)—"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me." He appealed to this witness, but did not actually bring Him forward till after His own ascension. Why? A very satisfactory reason can be given. Had the third and most unexceptionable witness been produced *before* His crucifixion, He would not have been crucified at all. By the influence of this witness, the Jews would have been convinced that Jesus was the true Messiah; and, "had they known Him, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." Dr. B. would have doubtless produced the third witness—and what then? By this circumstance he would have completely counteracted the design of our Saviour's mission, and disconcerted the whole plan of redemption. But the foolishness of God was wiser than Dr. B. As our Saviour came in the fulness of ~~time~~ time, so also did the Holy Spirit. He gave in His testimony when it was calculated to produce the best effect; He gave it on the day of

Pentecost; He appeared in the form of cloven tongues as of fire; He wrought a miracle more glorious and convincing than had ever been wrought before. He appeared a more unexceptionable witness than either the Father or Son, who were appealed to before our Saviour's crucifixion. When *His* testimony was rejected, there was no *fourth* witness. To the obstinate and wilful despisers of Christianity, there remained nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment; and this, I humbly conceive, is the reason why the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost could not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come. The *first* witness was the *Father*, the *second* witness was the *Son*, the *third*, last, and, as Dr. B. admits, *the most unexceptionable witness*, was the *Holy Ghost*. When the testimony of the *Father* was rejected, then additional evidence was afforded in the testimony of the *Son*; and when the testimony of the *Son* was rejected, additional evidence was afforded in the testimony of the *Holy Ghost*; but, when the testimony of the *Holy Ghost* was rejected, there was *no additional evidence*. Those who rejected *His* testimony, blaspheming His person and miracles, sinned against the *clearest light*, wilfully resisted *the most powerful evidence*, and so cut themselves off from *all hopes of forgiveness*.

The reader will now judge of the truth of the following assertion made by Dr. B. (p. 121), "By this He (the Redeemer) declares, that the Holy Spirit was not one of His witnesses." The Redeemer declares *no such thing*. The Redeemer declares the *very reverse*: (John xv. 26), "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me." *The apostles declare the very reverse*. (Acts v. 32), "And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

When the declarations of Dr. B. thus flatly contradict those of our Saviour and His apostles, the reader will know how to treat them. He will perceive with what weapons the divinity of the Holy Ghost is assailed. He will see how little reason the Doctor has to boast that his book "is consistent with itself and the gospels."

Another argument brought forward by our author against the divinity of the Holy Ghost, is—that "He is very often omitted when the Father and Son are mentioned." In reply, I would observe:—

1. That this is only, at best, an argument (*ad ignorantiam*) addressed to our ignorance. Were we intimately acquainted with the Scriptures, we would see—as we have already seen in the preceding instance—that there are wise reasons for all such omissions.

2. Sometimes the Father is omitted when the Son and Holy Ghost are mentioned. According to the Doctor's logic, these cases would prove—**THAT THE FATHER HIMSELF IS NOT A DIVINE PERSON!**

As an additional argument against the divinity of the Holy Ghost, Dr. B. asserts, that He is never styled God in the New Testament. I answer:—

1. If He be so styled in the *Old Testament*, it is quite the same. "THE BIBLE, THE BIBLE, IS THE RELIGION OF TRINITARIANS." We will not suffer Dr. B., nor any Antitrinitarian in the world, to confine us to the New Testament, much less to the gospels.

2. We do not admit the fact, that the Holy Ghost is never, in the New Testament, styled God. In Acts v. 3, 4, lying to the Holy Ghost is styled lying to God. The Corinthians were denominated "*the temple of God*," because they were temples of the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. iii. 17; vi. 19.) All Scripture was given by inspiration of God; because "*holy men of God spake as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST.*"—(2 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Peter i. 21.)

3. Should Antitrinitarians succeed in evading these

and similar scriptures—should they succeed (which they will never do) in proving that the Holy Ghost is never styled God, neither in the New Testament nor in the Old, still, I would ask, Why should all this be regarded as a valid argument against His divinity? Were the Holy Ghost styled God, as I believe He is, either the Doctor would consider this a proof of His divinity, or he would not. If he *would*, why does he not admit the divinity of JESUS CHRIST, who is confessedly styled God? If he would *not*, why should he consider the want of this epithet an argument *against* His divinity? Why should he require us to produce a proof, which, if we were to produce, he would immediately turn round and say, “*This is no proof at all, for even angels and magistrates are styled gods.*” I have already called upon Dr. Channing in a similar case, I now call upon Dr. B. I call upon all the Anti-trinitarians in the world to show the consistency of such demands with *common candour, common honesty, or common sense*. If the Holy Ghost is *not* styled God, this is an argument *against* His divinity; if He *is* styled God, this is no proof in *favour* of it! What species of proof would satisfy such reasoners?

The Doctor again argues, “that the Holy Ghost is not dignified with any of those titles usually ascribed to the Almighty.” In this, also, he is completely mistaken. Is not the Holy Ghost styled (Heb. ix. 14) THE ETERNAL SPIRIT? Is He not dignified with the title of the HIGHEST? (Luke i. 35.) In a word: Are not the *names, attributes, works, and worship*, that are proper to God only, ascribed to the HOLY GHOST? The same arguments which prove the divinity of the Son, prove also the *Supreme Deity* of the blessed Spirit. Hence the reason why divines in general do not insist so much on the *latter* as the *former*. If our author imagine, as he seems to insinuate, that the brevity with which the doctrine of the divinity of the Holy Ghost

is sometimes treated, is to be attributed to the want of evidence, he is much mistaken. His attack is brief; hence the brevity of the present defence. Should he take the field again, and enter more largely into the controversy, he will see whether there be not in the Sacred Volume accumulated evidence of the truth of the doctrine.

Against the Supreme Deity of the blessed Spirit, our author still farther argues thus (p. 121): "It appears from a remarkable declaration of our Lord, that the Holy Spirit knew neither the Father nor the Son. No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him; for *no man* is evidently taken in an indefinite sense for no one, being applied to the Father and the Son." Now, if by this reasoning the Doctor has proved that the Holy Ghost knows neither the Father nor the Son, by the very same logic can I prove—shall I utter the blasphemy?—*That the Father does not know Himself!* In our translation of 1 Cor. ii. 11, it is asserted, that no man—in the original *οὐδεὶς*, *no one*—knows the things of God, but the SPIRIT OF GOD. Now if the Doctor's reasoning be correct, the blasphemous conclusion follows, that the things of God are not known by GOD HIMSELF, but only by the HOLY GHOST! How weak must that system be which requires such reasoning to support it! Had the Doctor compared Scripture with Scripture, he might have plainly perceived that the Holy Ghost is so far from being *ignorant* of the Father and Son, that the sacred oracles represent Him, not only as *omnipresent* (Psalm cxxxix.), but as *omniscient* (1 Cor. ii. 10), "*Searching all things, yea, the deep things of God.*"

I would conclude this article by the following question: How can the *form of baptism*, or *the apostolic benediction*, be reconciled with the Arian system? What! Baptize in the name of God and two creatures!

in the name of God and two servants, the one inferior to the other! I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, *his servant*, and of the Holy Ghost, *an inferior servant!*—*the servant of a servant!*—*the creature of a creature!* Such, when analyzed, is the *Arian baptism*. On the same principles of analysis, the *Arian benediction* will run thus:—The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, a creature of God, a servant of the Deity; and the love of God; and the communion of the Holy Ghost, a servant of Jesus Christ, a servant of a servant! be with you all. Amen. Dr. B. is fully convinced, that the Holy Ghost is not one with the Almighty. He assures us he has no doubt on this subject. One should suppose that such strong conviction must be founded on strong arguments. Whether this be the case, let the reader now judge. Let him judge whether the arguments by which the Arian system is supported be not extremely weak, and the difficulties with which it is clogged altogether insurmountable.

CHAPTER V.

THE ATONEMENT DEFENDED.

SECTION I.

The necessity of it proved.

INTIMATELY connected with the doctrine of the Supreme Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost, is that of the atonement. Those, therefore, who deny the one, generally reject the other. Indeed, the atonement cannot be consistently maintained, if the doctrine of the Trinity is rejected. These twin doctrines refuse to be separated; they must stand or fall together. A denial of the doctrine of the Trinity spreads darkness over all the other doctrines of the Gospel. Accordingly, Dr. B. regards the connexion which the death of Christ bears to the work of redemption as a subject full of darkness and difficulty. He seems greatly puzzled to know whether the death of the Redeemer were *necessary*; and, after much hesitation, determines in the negative, *that it was not indispensably necessary, and that our redemption might have been effected without it.* I confess that *I* am of a quite different opinion. I firmly believe that sin could not *possibly* be pardoned, and that men could not *possibly* be saved, without a satisfaction—without the penalty of the law operating on a substitute. My reasons are the following:—

I. All the perfections of Deity are opposed to the pardon of sin without a satisfaction. (See Dr. B. pp. 230, 231.)

1. *The truth of God forbids it.* In the threatening

attached to the violation of the Covenant of Works, God pledged His *truth* and *veracity*. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Satan arraigned the truth of the Deity. *God* said, "*Thou shalt surely die,*" but *Satan* said, "*Thou shalt not surely die.*" Were God to pardon sin without inflicting the penalty, *Satan* would be *true*, and the *God of truth a liar!* Because men do not *claim* the fulfilment of threatenings as they claim the fulfilment of promises, Archbishop Tillotson and others conclude, that God is not *obliged* to fulfil His threatenings. This is ingenious, but completely *sophistical*, and extremely dangerous. Is not God obliged to tell the *truth*? *Undoubtedly. Truth,* therefore, *demand*s that the threatening of the law should be fulfilled, and the penalty inflicted.

2. *The knowledge of God* is opposed to the pardon of sin without a satisfaction. The language of sin is, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High?" God hath forgotten, He hideth His face; He will never see it. The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Shall sin be permitted thus to insult with impunity the knowledge of God? Surely not.

3. *The holiness of God* opposes the pardon of sin without a satisfaction. Holiness is that attribute by which the Deity hates sin. Fire and water are not more opposite than sin and holiness. The language of sinners is, that God is not a holy being—that He is altogether such an one as themselves—that He is a God that hath pleasure in wickedness—that evil shall dwell with Him—and that the foolish shall stand in His sight. Now, if sin thus insult and blaspheme the holiness of God, does not the Divine holiness call aloud for the punishment of sin? Surely it does.

4. *The justice of God* opposes the pardon of sin without a satisfaction. Justice is that attribute by which God renders to every one according to his works.

Sin insults this divine attribute (Psalm x. 13), "Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it." Were sin, therefore, to pass with impunity, how could the honour of this attribute be vindicated? How could it be said, that God will by no means clear the guilty?

5. *Even the GOODNESS AND MERCY of God* are opposed to the pardon of sin without a satisfaction. "If it be argued" (says Dr. B., p. 231,) "If it be argued from the Divine holiness and justice, that God must punish the innocent for the guilty, it may be argued from His goodness and mercy, that He must forgive the guilty, and cannot punish at all." Answer.—We do not argue that God *must* punish the innocent for the guilty—we all deny that God was under any *natural necessity* to do so. We all maintain that God might have punished the guilty race of men, as well as fallen angels, *without providing any remedy*. But we argue, *that God cannot pardon sin without a satisfaction*. We maintain that all the perfections of God forbid it. We deny the assertion of Dr. B.—that "it may be argued from the goodness and mercy of God that He must forgive the guilty, and cannot punish at all." We assert that the *goodness* and *mercy* of God, as well as His justice and holiness, call aloud for the punishment of sin. Were the supreme magistrate in a civil state to suffer crimes to pass unpunished—were he, through a mistaken notion of goodness and mercy, to permit robbers, murderers, &c., to pass with impunity, what would be the result? Would not his *clemency* to the *few* be *cruelty* to the *many*? Would not crimes abound? Would not misery abound? Would not that state very shortly become "the field of Golgotha, and dead men's skulls?" Now, in proportion as the moral government of the universe is more important than that of any civil state, in the same proportion would the pardon of sin without a satisfaction be more

mischievous, destructive, and cruel. It is not, therefore, the doctrine of the atonement, but the doctrine of Socinians and Arians, that is inconsistent with the goodness and mercy of God.

II. To maintain with Dr. B., that the death of Christ was not necessary to the pardon of sin, or the salvation of sinners, is to teach a doctrine, not only *insulting to the glory of all the Divine perfections, but degrading to the Divine law, and subversive of the Divine government.* The law of God is a rule to the rational creature. Now, a rule must be something *fixed, inflexible, and permanent.* A rule must not bend or conform to the obliquities of the object measured; but the object measured must conform to the rule. A rule that bends is no rule at all. To pardon sin without a satisfaction would completely destroy the law as a rule. The will of the creature would not be obliged to bend to the law of God, but the law of God to the will of the creature! Thus, Socinianism and Arianism tend to destroy the law of God, by making the law yield to the creature, and not the creature to the law. Socinians and Arians are warm advocates for the steadiness and uniformity of those laws which govern the material system. But, is it not altogether absurd to imagine that those laws which govern the *natural world* should be *steady*; whilst those which govern the *moral world* should *fluctuate*!—that the laws of *inanimate nature* should be *permanent*, but those of the *intellectual and moral creation* *variable*? Reason and revelation unite in teaching a very different doctrine. Our Saviour himself assures us, that He came, not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; and that “*heaven and earth shall pass away; but a jot or a tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.*” Human laws are imperfect, and therefore they are frequently abrogated, or their penalties relaxed; but the moral law being perfect—

being founded on the immutable nature of God—being a transcript of the holiness of the Divine nature—can never be abolished, without the abolition of the Divine image. The law is *holy*, and therefore the holiness of the law requires its execution; the law is *just*, and therefore the justice of the law requires its execution; the law is *good*, and therefore the goodness of the law requires its execution. To pardon sin without a satisfaction would be a virtual acknowledgment, that the law is neither holy, nor just, nor good. To pardon sin without a satisfaction would degrade the Divine law, counteract its object, and open a floodgate for every species of wickedness. How would men be encouraged in sin from the consideration that they might sin with impunity! The sufferings of Jesus were therefore necessary, not only to glorify the perfections of God, but to “magnify the law and make it honourable.” “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

III. That the sufferings and death of the Son of God were indispensably necessary in the work of our redemption, is evident from many portions of the Sacred Volume. (Luke xxiv. 26)—“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” (Heb. ii. 10)—“For 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.” (John. xii. 24)—“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” Dr. B. alleges that the Redeemer’s death might have been dispensed with, without defeating the object for which He came into the world; but our Saviour asserts the very reverse. (John xii. 27)—“Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.” (Matt. xx. 28)—“Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His

life a ransom for many." Nay, the very text which the Doctor adduces to prove that the death of Christ might have been dispensed with, proves His death to be *indispensable*. "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Aversion to suffering is essential to humanity. This aversion our Saviour felt and expressed in this pathetic prayer. His holy human soul shuddered and recoiled at the thought of those agonies He was about to endure. He prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Had it been possible, it *would* have passed from Him: for the Father hears Him always; but it *did not* pass from Him, therefore it was *not possible*. It is true, our Saviour says, "Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee." By this assertion, however, our Saviour could not mean that all things *universally* are possible unto God; but only all things that do not imply a contradiction, or are not inconsistent with the Divine perfections. It is impossible for God to lie. He cannot deny Himself; nor can He act inconsistently with His own Divine attributes. The cup could not pass from the Redeemer. The glory of the Divine perfections, the honour of the Divine law, the stability of the Divine government, rendered it impossible. Had the cup passed from the Redeemer, how could the Scriptures have been fulfilled? What would have become of all the types, the sacrifices, the prophecies, the promises, the counsels of God relative to the death and sufferings of His Son?—The fulfilment of all these rendered it impossible that the bitter cup should pass from the Redeemer—that sin should be pardoned without a satisfaction. "*Without shedding of blood there is no remission.*"

In opposing the necessity of the sufferings of Christ, our author appears completely bewildered. Witness the following extraordinary paragraph (p. 212)—"One text which favours the opinion that the crucifixion of

Christ made an original part of the plan of redemption is in the thanksgiving of Peter and John (Acts iv. 27) —‘Of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel determined before to be done.’ The words, *determined to be done*, may, however, only import that these events were foreseen as the natural consequence of His mission.”

The Doctor himself grants that Acts iv. 27 favours the opinion that the crucifixion of Christ made an original part of the plan of redemption. Now, if the text favours that opinion, that opinion must be true; for surely, no text of Scripture would favour an erroneous opinion. The Apostle Peter favoured the opinion: Dr. B. favours the *opposite* opinion! Now, Christian readers, whether it be right in the sight of God, to adopt the opinions favoured by Dr. Bruce, rather than those favoured by the *Apostle Peter*, judge ye! Our author grants that the text favours the opinion that the crucifixion of Christ made an original part of the plan of redemption; and yet, strange to tell! in the very same paragraph he *denies* that it favours such an opinion! He proves—or thinks he proves—that it does not. How? By a very simple process—by telling us that the Apostle said *one* thing and meant *another*—that though he declared the Redeemer’s crucifixion to be *determined before*, he only meant that it was *seen before*. Thus, in one short paragraph, Dr. B. contradicts the Apostle, contradicts himself, and publishes to the whole world a wonderful discovery —*that foreordination may import nothing more than foreknowledge!**

* When Dr. B. substitutes foreknowledge for predetermination, the reader may suppose that the original word admits

Endeavouring to prove that the Redeemer's blood was not very important in the work of our redemption, and that it might have been dispensed with, the Doctor employs an argument, if possible, still more extraordinary. In the parable of the householder, after the maltreatment of a variety of servants, God the Father is represented as sending, last of all, His Son, saying, "They will reverence my Son." "Here," says Doctor B., "an expectation of the success and safety of His Son is plainly implied." What! Is it possible? Did God foreknow, from all eternity, that His Son would be crucified, and yet expect He would *not* be crucified? In His crucifixion, did His enemies do whatsoever God's hand and counsel determined before to be done, and yet did God expect that His Son would not be crucified? Did God inspire prophets to predict the crucifixion of His Son, and yet did not expect that He would be crucified? Did God—but why expose the absurdity any farther? The Deity never expected—nor could *possibly expect*—any event inconsistent with His own *foreknowledge*, his own *decrees*, and His own *predictions*. Nay, I will go farther and assert, without any fear of rational contradiction, that the Deity never expected any event to come to pass, which does not *actually* come to pass. To suppose that any event may fall out otherwise than the Deity expected, is to suppose that the Divine expectations may be disappointed, and, of course, that the ever-blessed God

of such a construction. He will be surprised, however, to learn that it never has such a meaning. *προωρισε*, the word translated *determined before*, is derived from *'ορω*, to raise up—thence comes *'ορος*, mountain, because mountains are elevations—thence, again, *'ορος*, a boundary, because mountains are boundaries—from *'ορος*, a boundary, comes *'οριζω*, to bound, and *προοριζω*, the word in the text, to bound or determine before.

may be unhappy! In vain does Dr. B. depreciate the death of our blessed Redeemer—in vain does he endeavour to represent it as an unessential part of redemption, by quoting our Saviour's words before His crucifixion, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." Dr. Millar's reply is judicious and satisfactory: (p. 105)—"When, however, our Saviour said in His prayer, that He had *finished* the work which His Father had given Him to do, He must be understood to speak of His ministry. 'I,' He adds, '*have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.*' This was the *work* to be done by our Saviour. That which remained was to be *suffered* by Him," &c.

Dr. B. admits, that "the death of Christ was a principal part of redemption—that it was essential to His resurrection, which is the most incontrovertible proof of the divinity of His religion, the corner stone of the Church, and the foundation of the faith of Christians—that without the awful catastrophe of His persecution, death, and resurrection, all other evidence would have been inadequate* to subdue the stubborn incredulity of this sceptical age." (See p. 241—243).

How such concessions are consistent with the opinion that the death of Christ was not indispensably necessary, remains to be explained. Christ's death was the principal part of redemption, and yet *was not essential to it—was not indispensably necessary!* Christ's death was the most incontrovertible proof of the divinity of His religion, and yet *was not indispensably necessary!* Christ's death was the corner stone of the Church, and yet *was not indispensably necessary!*—Christ's death was the foundation of the Christian faith, and yet *was not indispensably necessary!* One thing, at least, the Doctor will

* The awful catastrophe of our Saviour's death is quite intelligible—but the awful catastrophe of His *resurrection* is absurd; it is another specimen of that confusion of ideas which is so frequently discoverable in the Doctor's sermons.

acknowledge to be indispensably necessary—that *while a writer is contradicting the doctrines of Divine revelation, he should be careful not to contradict himself!*

SECTION II.

Reconciliation shown to be necessary on the part of God, as well as on the part of man.

Our author having laboured hard, but laboured in vain, to prove that the death of Christ was not indispensably necessary, proceeds more formally to attack the doctrine of the atonement. And how does the Doctor advance to the charge? By endeavouring to deprive of all definite meaning the language employed in the communication of the doctrine. The word atonement in his text (Rom. v. 11) is translated in the margin reconciliation. What inference does the Doctor deduce from this? A very extraordinary one indeed—that the original word has “no peculiar signification!” What! In the nineteenth century—in the Athens of Ireland—and by Dr. B., the quondam celebrated principal of the Belfast Academy—to be told that certain Greek words have “no peculiar signification!” Every scholar, who has the least acquaintance with the philosophy of language, knows that every word has some *peculiar*—some *radical* meaning, from which all its other meanings—if it has any other—are deduced. But (*delenda est Carthago*) the atonement is to be exploded, and this object can never be accomplished, without a sacrifice of the first principles of language and general grammar. So long as there is any definite meaning in words, the doctrine of atonement must remain impregnable.

Involving the doctrine in obscurity, with a view to the complete subversion of it, Dr. B. writes thus (p. 314):—

“The English word atonement has a variety of significations in our Bibles.” After enumerating those various meanings, he sagely concludes, “These instances may tend to correct the superstitious notions so often attached to this mysterious word.” By such a simple process, the Doctor contrives to explode the most important doctrines of the Christian system—first the *Supreme Deity*, and now the *atonement* of our blessed Redeemer. The word *God* has various meanings, and therefore we cannot prove by the application of this term, that the Redeemer is *God* in the highest and ordinary sense of that word! The word *atonement* has various meanings: it is a *mysterious* word, and therefore, its common acceptation is to be rejected! An admirable contrivance indeed—a contrivance well calculated to explode all the doctrines of Divine revelation!

If variety of meaning render words ambiguous and mysterious, and if such ambiguity and mysteriousness render them unfit for proving any doctrine, what doctrine could be proved? On this principle, the whole Christian system might be exploded at once! Every person acquainted with the nature of reasoning and language will join with me in protesting against such desolating principles of logic and of criticism.

Atonement or at-one-ment, is the “setting at one again,” of persons previously at variance. In this original meaning of the word, as Dr. B. justly observes, it was synonymous with reconciliation. Now, if those two synonymous words are found, one in the text, and the other in the margin, how does this prove that the original word *καταλλαγή*, of which they are translations, has *no peculiar meaning*? The solution of this problem, I am convinced, would require a philologist far superior either to Dr. B. or his humble opponent. As the original word is in every other place rendered *reconciliation*, it should, I presume, have been so translated in the text. Still more necessary is it to adopt this

translation *now*, as the word *atonement* has undergone a change of signification, and the two words remain no longer synonymous. Though Dr. B. will agree with me in translating the word *καταλλαγή*, reconciliation, in preference to atonement; yet, with regard to the application of the word so translated, whether it is to be understood as reconciliation on the part of *God* or *man*; whether it means God's being pacified towards *us*, or our laying aside our enmity towards *Him*—*this is the point in dispute*. The advocates of the atonement maintain that reconciliation is necessary, both in reference to God and man—that God requires to be reconciled to man, as well as man to be reconciled to God. The enemies of the atonement deny this, and maintain that there is no necessity of God being reconciled to man; but only of man being reconciled to God. This is the cardinal point on which the whole controversy seems to turn.

The opponents of the atonement maintain, that, in the Scriptures of truth, man is always said to be reconciled to God, but God is never said to be reconciled to man. In reply to this, I would observe:—1. That, were the statement true, it would not prove what is intended. In Scripture phraseology the *offending* party is said to be reconciled when the party *offended* is pacified. Thus (Matt. v. 23, 24), “Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Here the *offending* brother is enjoined to be reconciled, though the meaning plainly is—that by proper acknowledgments or restitution, he should endeavour to pacify the brother *offended*. In like manner, when men, the offending party, are said to be reconciled to God, this does not exclude, but implies His reconciliation towards them.

2. God, in Scripture, is said to be *pacified*, which

is tantamount to His being reconciled. (Ezek. xvi. 63), "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am *pacified* toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." To be reconciled, and to be pacified, are phrases of similar import. Again (Isaiah xii. 1), "And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." Here, God is reconciled, His anger is turned away, and the soul comforted.

3. The text from which Dr. B. preaches his two sermons against the atonement proves the very doctrine he so violently opposes. (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." That atonement, or reconciliation, as the word should be rendered, is expressive of *God's being pacified*, and not of *man's being reconciled*, will be evident on a moment's reflection; for how could we receive our *own* reconciliation? Would it not be nonsense to say, we have received *the laying aside of our own enmity*? Daniel prophesies that Jesus Christ would make reconciliation for iniquity; and Paul declares, that our great antitypical High Priest made reconciliation for the sins of the people—and how? The same apostle will answer the question: "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

4. That the blood of Jesus was necessary in order to reconcile God to man, is evident from this—That all mankind were exposed to the wrath and judicial displeasure of God. (Rom. i. 18), "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." By the vicarious sufferings of Jesus, this wrath is turned away, and God is reconciled. "The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness sake."

Against this view of the subject, Dr. B. inveighs

with great vehemence (p. 234): "Another pretence,"* says he, "for the popular doctrine of the atonement is, that sin is so hateful to God as to excite His wrath in the highest degree; and that His vengeance cannot be appeased without the everlasting destruction of the sinners; but that He was prevailed upon by Christ, a portion of His own essence, to accept of His sufferings in their stead. This is an extraordinary accumulation of false doctrine and contradiction." Again (p. 290): "You may begin to apprehend, that I am running into the common error of magnifying the Son above the Father; of ascribing all the grace to Christ, and all the wrath to God." Who magnifies the Son above the Father? Who ascribes all the grace to Christ and all the wrath to God? The Doctor declares that these errors are common. I call upon him to name a single individual, who, either from the pulpit or the press, ever advocated such errors. Who ever maintained that God was prevailed on by Jesus Christ, a portion of His own essence, to accept of His sufferings in the stead of sinners? It is painful to animadvert on such gross misrepresentations. The advocates of the atonement never imagined that God the Father was *less placable* or *less merciful* than Jesus Christ. They never imagined that the Redeemer *rendered God placable*. They always spurned with contempt such foul imputations. Dr. B. *knew* this, for he quotes the following words of the Archbishop of Dublin:—"The sacrifice of Christ was never deemed, by any who did not wish to calumniate the doctrine of the atonement, to have made God *placable*." One should think that this bold protest of the Archbishop against the wilful calumniators of the doctrine, would have prevented future calumnies. But no! It will not do. The preceding quotations show that protests and remonstrances are of no avail. The

* All is mere pretence it seems.

enemies of the atonement will go on to misrepresent and calumniate the doctrine.

Dr. B. (p. 229) indulges in the following invective: "If, therefore, the common doctrine of the atonement or propitiation imply that God is not naturally propitious, placable, and merciful, it contradicts every principle of natural and revealed religion. He requires nothing to make Him merciful, but to be merciful ourselves; nothing to make Him placable, but that we be meek, lowly, and forgiving; nothing to make Him propitious to us, but that we be kind and tender-hearted to one another. With respect to Himself, He requires only that we walk humbly before Him. Any construction, therefore, of this doctrine, which represents God as implacable, should be rejected without further inquiry, without exposing your religious feelings to be degraded by sophistical arguments and fanatical harangues." We grant Dr. B., that if the common doctrine of the atonement implies that God is not naturally propitious, placable, and merciful, it contradicts every principle of natural and revealed religion. But the common doctrine of the atonement implies no such thing. The advocates of the atonement abhor the idea. They regard it with infinite contempt. It is not the friends, but the enemies of the atonement, that represent God as naturally implacable. It is Dr. B. that thus represents Him. According to the Doctor, God is not *naturally* merciful, propitious, or placable, but requires to be **MADE SO!** And who will **MAKE** Him so? **WE OURSELVES!!** He requires *our* mercifulness to make **HIM MERCIFUL!**—*our* meekness, lowliness, and forgiving disposition, to make **HIM PLACABLE!**—*our* kindness and tender-heartedness, to make **HIM PROPITIOUS!** What even the *blood of the Son of God* could not accomplish, is thus modestly ascribed to *human virtue!* Let the reader now judge whose principles are most calculated to expose our religious feelings to be degraded by sophistical arguments

and fanatical harangues—whose doctrine it is that contradicts every principle of natural and revealed religion.

The advocates of the atonement constantly affirm that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are equal in placability, in mercy, in grace, in love, in all Divine perfections. They constantly affirm, that it was the sovereign mercy, grace, and love of God, which induced Him to provide a remedy, to lay help upon one that was mighty to save; to send His Son into the world to save sinners. They constantly affirm, that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Such are the real views of those who hold the doctrine of the atonement—views very different indeed from that “extraordinary accumulation of false doctrine” and contradiction, *falsely* charged upon them by Dr. B.

After our author has sufficiently declaimed against imaginary false doctrine, he proceeds to state what he conceives to be the *true* doctrine. Sin, he grants to be hateful to God, and at the same time assures us, that “God’s hatred of sin can mean only His hatred of the sinner, and His love of righteousness can be shown only by His kindness to the righteous.” Now, if God hate sin, and if His hatred of sin can only mean His hatred of sinners, it follows of course, *that God hates all mankind*, for all are sinners! We distinguish between God’s hatred of sin, and His hatred of sinners. The Doctor denies any such distinction. It follows then, that since God hates sin—and hates it with an implacable hatred, as our author will not deny—He must also *hate sinners with an implacable hatred!* And, as the whole human family who are capable of moral agency are sinners, *He must hate with implacable hatred the whole human family!* but, if He hate the whole human family with an implacable hatred, *the whole human family must be eternally miserable!* They must all be damned! Not one soul can possibly be saved! God *loves* man-

kind, according to the Doctor, yet hates them—hates them as He hates sin, that is, *with an implacable and eternal hatred!!* Such are Dr. Bruce's ideas of God's hatred of sin and sinners! Such is his *mild, true, and consistent doctrine!!!*

Let us attend to his views of God's love of righteousness. "God's love of righteousness," says the Doctor, "can be shown only by His kindness to the righteous." New and strange doctrine indeed! A doctrine as unscriptural and absurd as it is novel. Tell me, Dr. B., can God show His love of righteousness only by His kindness to the righteous? Can He not show it also by punishing the wicked? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? The sentiments of David on this subject differ widely from those of our author. (Psalm xi. 6, 7), "Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup. For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness; His countenance doth behold the upright." Here we see, that God's love of righteousness is testified by raining a horrible tempest on sinners, as well as by showing kindness to the righteous. (See Rev. xvi. 5, 6. Rom. ii. 6, 9, inclusive.) I submit now to every reader capable of the slightest reflection, whether the friends of the atonement, or Dr. B. may more justly be charged with an extraordinary accumulation of false doctrine and contradiction.

SECTION III.

The Death of Christ Vicarious.

The way of a sinner's salvation is so plain, that a wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. But is there anything so plain, either in the volume of nature or Divine revelation, as not to be controverted?

That there is a God has been denied—that there is a sun in the firmament has been questioned—that there is no material world has been asserted—that there is nothing in the universe but ideas and sensations has been strenuously maintained. It would seem that the pride of man piques itself in opposing those truths which are the most plain and incontrovertible; whilst it glories in advocating errors the most paradoxical and absurd. Were this weakness of our nature—to call it by no worse name—manifested only in abstract theories and philosophical speculations, it might be regarded as of very little consequence—it might afford matter of ridicule or amusement; but, when it is employed in subverting the Christian system, or razing the foundations of the sinner's hope, the pious Christian cannot avoid feeling the most acute and painful sensations. Good, however, results from evil. Not only Christianity itself, but all the doctrines of the Christian system, are calculated to bear the most rigorous examination—the most fiery trial. Whilst the wood, hay, and stubble of erroneous opinions are burnt up, the gold, silver, and precious stones of Gospel doctrines shine forth with refulgent splendour, delighting every mind with their beauty, and dazzling every eye with their glory.

The great atoning sacrifice of Jesus was predicted by prophets, typified by sacrifice, proclaimed by apostles, preached by the Redeemer, and celebrated in the rapturous inspired anthems both of the Old and New Testament Church. Hundreds of texts prove that glorious doctrine, which is the foundation-stone of the Christian system—the cardinal point, on which turn all our hopes for time and eternity. The doctrine of a vicarious atonement, being of great, of paramount, of *infinite* importance, is taught in the Sacred Volume so abundantly and so clearly, that he who runs may read.

ISAIAH assures us, that our blessed Redeemer was

wounded *for our transgressions*, and bruised *for our iniquities*; that the chastisement of *our peace* was upon Him, and that by *His stripes we are healed*—that it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, to put Him to grief, to make His soul an offering for sin, and to *lay upon Him the iniquity of us all*.

DANIEL predicted that the Messiah should be cut off, but not for Himself—that He should finish transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness.

THE APOSTLE PAUL assures us that we are bought with a price, that Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity—that we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins—that He has purchased the Church with His blood—that He has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us—that God has set Him forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, and has made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him—that Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, as a sacrifice and offering of a sweet smelling savour; and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

PETER affirms, that we are redeemed, not with corruptible things, as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God, as of a lamb without spot or blemish—that Jesus Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God—that His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.

THE APOSTLE JOHN assures us, once and again, that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and that His blood cleanseth us from all sin.

OUR BLESSED LORD HIMSELF declares, that He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

These, and a multitude of other scriptures too numerous for quotation, prove to the humblest and most

illiterate mind the doctrine of a vicarious atonement. The obvious meaning of such texts Dr. B. endeavours to evade by a variety of stratagems. He tells us, that "the words in Greek which are translated *for*, as 'Christ died *for* us,' and 'He was a ransom *for* many,'" are equivocal. But I will tell the learned Doctor, that the words *ἀντί*, *ὑπερ*, and *πρὸς*, in Greek, are no more equivocal than the word *for* in English. When the mere English scholar reads, that an orange was given for a lemon, or an apple for a pear, does he see any difficulty in the application of the word *for*? *None at all*. He knows quite well, that it signifies substitution or exchange. Were Dr. B. to tell him that he is quite mistaken—that the word *for* has various acceptations—that, therefore, he should not conclude that there was any barter, substitution, or exchange in the case—would not the most illiterate peasant laugh at such criticism? With equal contempt will the plain unlettered Christian treat that criticism which denies that there is any substitution implied in such texts as these—"Christ died *for* the ungodly;" He "*gave His life a ransom for many*;" "*Who gave himself a ransom for all*." And with still greater contempt will such criticism be treated by the man who understands the force of the original. The radical meaning of the preposition *ὑπερ*, is *above*. The first quoted text might therefore be more literally rendered, "Christ died *above* the ungodly." The idea is strikingly significant. The sinner is represented as lying prostrate at the feet of his offended Sovereign, and the arm of Divine vengeance lifted up, ready to strike the fatal blow; the blessed Redeemer throwing himself *ὑπερ*, upon or above the sinner, is pierced by the sword of Divine justice, whilst the sinner escapes. The ordinary signification of the preposition *ἀντί*, is also substitution. (Ex. xxi. 23, 24)—"And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for

hand, foot for foot." In all these instances of substitution, the preposition *for*, is ἀντί, in the Septuagint. Multitudes of similar instances might be adduced. When we are assured that Jesus Christ gave His life a ransom for many (λύτρον ἀντί πολλῶν), can we doubt that substitution is intended? The appropriate meaning of λύτρον, is a ransom, and of ἀντι, substitution. 1 Tim. ii. 6, is, if possible, still stronger. Who gave Himself (ἀντίλυτρον) a vicarious ransom (ὑπέρ πάντων) instead of all. The vicarious nature of the ransom is pointed out, first by the preposition ἀντι, and, if this were not sufficient, it is again pointed out by the preposition ὑπέρ. On some of the senses of these prepositions, Dr. B. tells his hearers, the doctrines of imputed righteousness and vicarious punishment have been chiefly erected. Whether prepositions, or nouns, or verbs, or some of the other parts of speech, contribute most to the support of those doctrines, I have never yet inquired; nor do I conceive it important to determine. One thing I know, that if those doctrines, or any other doctrines, be erected at all, they must be erected on *some* of the senses of prepositions and other parts of speech! I know, also, that the prepositions, in their most usual acceptations, are entirely in favour of those doctrines; and still farther, I know, that if our author be able to overturn those doctrines, it will not be by the ordinary senses of either prepositions or any other class of words. Let not Dr. B. think to explode those doctrines, by telling his hearers that the words by which they are supported have various meanings. We all know this. The words which support *all* doctrines have various meaning. Let him come forward like a true philologist, in a manner worthy of his high literary attainments—let him show that the words *for*, *bear*, &c., must be taken in senses different from those which we ascribe to them; let him do this, or confess that he has done nothing, or, wha

is worse than nothing—*darkened counsel by words without knowledge*. In the same manner the Doctor involves in darkness the whole work of redemption, by representing such terms as *ransomed, redeemed, purchased, bought, &c.*, as metaphorical expressions—forms of speech adopted by the apostles from habit, or from a wish to accommodate themselves to the usage of their correspondents and disciples. He conceives, also, that the death of Christ is styled a sacrifice, only in allusion to the sacrifices of the legal dispensation. He confounds types with antitypes, shadows with substances, and envelopes the whole in darkness and confusion. “The law was a shadow of good things to come,” Jesus Christ, His offices and benefits, were the substance. Dr. B. inverts this order. He represents redemption by Christ, the ransom He paid, and the sacrifice He offered, as mere *shadows, embellishments of speech, and figurative allusions*—allusions to redemption from Egypt, to legal sacrifices, &c.*

“Other expressions,” says our author (p. 219), “are borrowed from the Jewish sacrifices, on account of an *apparent* resemblance between the crucifixion and the death of a victim; but this is only *apparent*, and there is no more reason for taking these literally than the former.” So, then, it seems, that between the legal sacrifices and the death of Christ there was not so much as a *resemblance*. The resemblance was only *apparent*, but not *real*! Christ’s death, according to Dr. B., was

* Dr. B. brings forward the arguments of Socinians and Arians—arguments, the sophistry of which Archbishop Magee has completely detected and exposed. Though he has read Magee on Atonement and Sacrifice, without paying the least attention to the reasoning of that justly celebrated author, he proceeds with the utmost confidence to exhibit once more the exploded doctrines of Taylor and Priestly. For such unaccountable conduct, he falls under the merited censure of Dr. Millar of Armagh, who repeats some of the Archbishop’s arguments.

not a *real*, but only a *metaphorical* sacrifice. Neither is the metaphor itself *real*, but only *apparent*—a metaphor without any real resemblance!—a false metaphor!—the shadow of a shadow! Such an attack upon an inspired apostle requires no comment.

Dr. B. asserts that the paschal lamb was no sacrifice. Page 222, he writes thus: "But the paschal lamb was not sacrificed; no sacrifice could be performed except in the temple; but the paschal lamb, to which our Saviour is compared, was killed in a private house, and dressed and eaten at a domestic entertainment, without any sacrificial ceremonies. If, therefore, Christ was literally sacrificed, He could not be likened to the paschal lamb." In this quotation, Dr. B. asserts, that the paschal lamb was *not* a sacrifice, but the Spirit of God asserts that it *was*. (Ex. xii. 27), "Ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover." (Ex. xxxiv. 25), "Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven, neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning." Hearers of Dr. B., and readers of this REFUTATION! whether it be right in the sight of God to believe the Doctor rather than God, judge ye! It is true, indeed, that the Jews originally killed and eat the passover in private houses; their circumstances forbade them to do otherwise, but it is no less true, that when they came into the land of Canaan, the practice was changed: they were strictly enjoined to sacrifice the passover only in the place which the Lord their God should choose. It was one of the great anniversary feasts celebrated at Jerusalem. After the temple was built, the paschal lamb was sacrificed only in the temple. Was Dr. B. ignorant of this fact? Did he never read Deut. xvi. 2, 6? The Apostle Paul asserts that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. In this assertion, he likens the sacrifice of Christ to that of the paschal lamb; but how could the sacrifice of Christ, whether literal or metaphorical, be like that of the

paschal lamb, if the paschal lamb was not sacrificed at all? To deny therefore, that the paschal lamb was sacrificed, is an outrage upon language and common sense. It is to charge an inspired apostle with likening one thing to another, when between the two objects there is no resemblance! Speaking of the death of Christ, the Doctor says (p. 236), "if it be a sacrifice, it is not a passover; and if a passover, no sacrifice." The preceding observations will show that this bold dogmatic assertion *is not true*. The death of Christ is *both a passover, and a sacrifice*.

In opposing the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Dr. B. gravely tells us, what every one knows, that the scapegoat was not sacrificed, nor put to death in any way. He declares that the ceremony "was an elegant emblem of free pardon—a gratuitous pardon, without sacrifice, ransom, imputation of sin, or vicarious punishment." The Doctor, however, forgets to tell us, that it required *two* goats to complete the ceremony, that the first was sacrificed before the other was sent away as a scapegoat into the wilderness. The sacrificed goat represented the atonement of Jesus, and the scapegoat the efficacy of that atonement in removing guilt. Accordingly, all the sins of all the congregation were confessed over the head of the goat. That the sins of the children of Israel were typically transferred to the goat, is evident from this—that he is said to carry them away; and the priest who confessed those sins over his head, and the person who conducted the goat to the wilderness, were both regarded as unclean, and were both obliged to submit to a course of legal purification. The ceremony, therefore, plainly exhibited those great and important doctrines of imputed guilt and vicarious punishment. To hide these doctrines from the eyes of his hearers, Dr. B. is obliged to conceal one half of the ceremony. He exhibits to view the scapegoat, but carefully conceals the goat which was slain. He puts

asunder what God has joined, and thus contrives to lay aside the most important doctrine of the Gospel. The Doctor asserts, that if Jesus Christ was a sin-offering, He could not be a peace-offering; and if He was a peace-offering, He could not be a sin-offering—and that He was *neither*. This is one of those bold dogmatic assertions with which his sermons everywhere abound—assertions founded neither in Scripture nor in reason. That the Redeemer was both a sin-offering and a peace-offering, the Scriptures plainly teach. He was a sin-offering, for He “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” He was also a peace-offering, for He “made peace by the blood of His cross.” With the same groundless confidence the Doctor asserts, that sin-offerings were never vicarious. It is evident, however, that *all* these offerings *were* vicarious. For what other purpose than to point out their vicarious nature, and to denote a transfer of ceremonial guilt, did the offerer lay his hand on the head of the victim? If the sacrifices of the patriarchal and legal dispensations were not vicarious—if they were not typical of the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ, what were they?—for what purpose were they instituted? Why were so many thousands and millions of victims slain, and so many oceans of blood shed, if not to typify the atoning blood of Jesus Christ? For such an immense waste of blood, no rational account can be given by the enemies of the atonement. They have invented, it is true, a great variety of hypotheses, but they are all completely futile and unsatisfactory.* The hypothesis of Dr. B. is quite as absurd and unreasonable as those of his predecessors. “Sacrifices,” says the Doctor, “were a symbolical address to God, expressing the devotion, repentance, and other pious affections of the offerer.” Devotion! What kind of devotion could be expressed by the daily imbruing of

* See those hypotheses refuted and exposed by Magee on the Atonement and Sacrifice.

hands in blood? Pious affections! What pious affections could possibly be expressed by the dying agonies and expiring groans of suffering animals? Unconnected with the atonement, such scenes of suffering and blood were calculated to eradicate and destroy, rather than to promote and excite, pious and devout affections. Such scenes were calculated not to improve, but to blunt the moral feelings—not to render the worshippers merciful and humane, but cruel and ferocious!! Socinians and Arians are constantly ringing changes on the mercy of God. Mercy! What mercy?—to butcher millions of animals, and shed oceans of blood, and even *the blood of God's own Son*, without any necessity! Not *clemency* and *mercy*, but *cruelty* and *blood*, characterise the Antitrinitarian Deity.

The millions of sacrifices that were offered were so many millions of proofs of the doctrine of the atonement. The language of every victim whose blood stained the altar, was, “WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO REMISSION.” “BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!”

Almost all things were by the law purged with blood. *The mercy seat or the throne of God was sprinkled with blood*, plainly showing, that before mercy is dispensed, justice must be satisfied—that justice and judgment are the habitation, or the basis, of the throne of God, whilst mercy and truth move in glorious procession before Him. Moses also *sprinkled the book, and all the people*. *He sprinkled the book*, thereby signifying, that it is by the peace-speaking blood of Jesus that all the curses written in that book are cancelled; and that it is through the same atoning blood that the people of God are entitled to all the blessings written in that book. *He sprinkled the people*. As only those Israelites, on the upper lintels and door-posts of whose houses the blood of the paschal lamb was sprinkled, escaped the destroying angel, so none but those whose souls are sprinkled with

the atoning blood of Jesus Christ can possibly escape the wrath to come.

Moses made atonement for the holy place; thus signifying, that it is through the blood of Jesus we obtain not only remission of sins, but an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. By this atoning blood we are not only freed from the wrath to come, but have access to the enjoyment of God in heaven. Jesus is entered into the holiest of all, not with the blood of bulls or of goats, but with His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us. As the whole of the way by which the high-priest passed into the *most holy place* was sprinkled with blood, so we have now a new and living way to the holiest of all—to the mansions of eternal glory and bliss, consecrated by the blood of Jesus Christ! Under the law, not only the tabernacle, but all the vessels of service, were sprinkled with blood. Atonement was also made for the altar, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel. Sin cleaves to our most solemn services, and requires the atoning blood of Jesus.

In misrepresenting the doctrine of a vicarious atonement, Dr. B. proceeds as follows (p. 235):—"But this unaccountable proceeding is explained by another yet more unaccountable—by imputed sin and imputed righteousness, a doctrine to which the apostles were entire strangers. It implies, that man was rendered pure and innocent by laying his sins upon Christ; and by this accumulation of imputed sin, Christ became hateful to His heavenly Father, that is, to Himself, for they are said to be one; and was exposed to His wrath, and to all the pains and penalties incurred by the sins of the whole world. I have heard of a tyrannical master, who, when his son committed a fault, would whip a slave in his stead, to show his displeasure, and to make his son good; and a partial parent will sometimes deter his favourite from misbehaviour, by a similar

experiment on another of his children; but these are universally condemned as instances of the grossest folly and injustice. In short, the whole scheme is full of injustice and inconsistency. If the guilt of our sins were literally laid on Christ, He could not be a Lamb without spot, and blameless. If not, He could not be justly punished for them." In asserting that the apostles were entire strangers to the doctrine of imputed sin, and imputed righteousness, Dr. B. is entirely mistaken. He will find it taught in the very chapter whence his text is taken. (Romans v. 18, 19), "Therefore, as 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. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." He will find the apostles teaching the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord doth not impute sin—but imputeth righteousness without works. He will find them teaching, that Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The same doctrine he will find taught in many other parts of the Sacred Volume. But, mark the gross misrepresentation of the doctrine. "By this accumulation of imputed sin," says the Doctor, "Christ became hateful to His heavenly Father." No such thing. He was never more the object of the Father's love than when He was suffering on the cross. All that divines mean, when they say that He suffered the wrath of God, is, that He suffered the penalty of the broken covenant, which was a manifestation of the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. But the Doctor observes still farther, that if the guilt of our sins was literally laid on Christ, He could not be a Lamb without spot, and blameless. Were Dr. B. acquainted

with the principles he opposes, he would know that there is a distinction between the *act* of sin, the *pollution* of sin, and the *guilt* of sin. He would know that the *act* of sin is not imputed to Christ, so as to constitute Him a *sinner*. The rash expressions of Luther, mentioned in the Appendix, are, I believe, condemned by all Calvinists, as well as by Dr. B. Calvinists abhor the idea that Jesus Christ was a *sinner*; and much more, that He was the *greatest of all sinners*. Neither was the *stain* or *pollution* of sin imputed to Jesus Christ. By *pollution*, I mean the depravity or corruption of the human heart. This depravity or corruption was not imputed to Jesus Christ. By imputation He was not constituted a depraved and corrupted being. Such ideas, though imputed to us by Dr. B., we spurn as blasphemous. Neither the *act* of sin was imputed to Christ, nor the *pollution* of sin—the corruption of nature. What then was imputed? I answer, the GUILT of sin, or the LEGAL OBLIGATION TO PUNISHMENT. This is all that was imputed to the Redeemer. By His own voluntary engagement He came under that legal obligation to punishment, which we had incurred by violating the Divine law. He voluntarily submitted to the stroke of Divine justice—was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. All this He did without contracting the slightest stain of moral defilement. He still continued a Lamb without spot and blameless. So far was the Redeemer from contracting any stain of moral defilement, that as man, He was *sanctified*, and *made perfect* through sufferings.

Nor does the doctrine of imputed sin and imputed righteousness imply, as the Doctor asserts, “that man was rendered pure and innocent by laying his sins upon Christ.” This assertion betrays a strange confusion of ideas. It confounds justification with sanctification. The imputation of a man’s sins to Christ changes his

state, but not his *nature*. It frees him from *condemnation*, and exempts him from punishment, but does not render him *pure* and *holy*. This is the work of the Spirit of God. This is done in *sanctification*.

SECTION IV.

Objections answered.

OBJECTION I.

That the innocent should suffer for the guilty is contrary to justice.

This is one of the most common, and indeed the most plausible, of the objections against the atonement. In urging it our author reasons thus (p. 231):—"If penal justice must be satisfied, it can only be by the punishment of the offender. It can never be satisfied by one person's dying for another. That would be the height of injustice, if required by the legislator; and, if he should accept of the voluntary death of the innocent, this would be more inconsistent with justice, than simply to pardon the guilty, without any compensation at all; for, in this case, justice would be violated in two ways—first, by remitting the punishment of the guilty; and next, by inflicting it on the innocent." Again (p. 239):—"Some of our own species have taken delight in cruelty; but they are universally considered as objects of detestation and abhorrence. Nero's putting an innocent person to death, instead of a criminal, would have had no effect in redeeming his character. But to torment and sacrifice an innocent and virtuous victim, from a notion that, a crime having been committed, some person must suffer—and the more dignified and meritorious, so much the better for answering the ends of justice; or to punish his dear and dutiful son because he was exasperated

against his rebellious subjects, whom he pardoned ; and all this to satisfy his vengeance, and appease his wrath ; these are enormities, of which we could never suspect the most capricious tyrant."

In reply to all such reasoning, or rather declamation, I would say—*The cases are not parallel.* What would be unjust and cruel with regard to a mere man, was not so with regard to the Redeemer. Here is the fallacy. No mere man is master of his own life ; he has, therefore, no right to lay it down when he pleases. His death might be a loss to himself, to his family, to his friends, to the Church, and to the commonwealth. The case was quite different with regard to the Redeemer. His life was His own. He had power to lay it down, and He had power to take it up again. His death was an injury to none. It was no injury to *Himself* ; for the laying down of His life was perfectly voluntary, and He resumed it again, which no mere man could do—He resumed it with an immense increase of happiness. His death was no loss to *others*, but infinite gain. Not to mention the redemption of souls by His blood, having resumed His life, He is employed in dispensing to the universe the inestimable benefits of His infinitely wise and benevolent administration. When, among men, the innocent suffers for the guilty, besides the loss sustained, a positive injury is done, the criminal is let loose on society to perpetrate new crimes. This, I grant, would be an act of injustice. The case, however, is very different with regard to the atonement. No injury is done, either negative or positive. The guilty person is not let loose to perpetrate new crimes. On the contrary, provision is made for his complete reformation. Those who are redeemed by the blood, are also sanctified by the Spirit, of the blessed Redeemer. (1 Cor. vi. 11—*"And such were some of you : but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."* Jesus

Christ gave Himself for us—not that we might perpetrate new crimes, but—“that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a people zealous of good works.” Why then should Dr. B. misrepresent and calumniate the doctrine of the atonement?—why should he attempt to bring an odium upon it by such foul aspersions as the following (p. 234):—“His displeasure at sin, it seems, is best shown by forgiving the sinner without amendment or compensation from him.” The advocates of the atonement teach no such doctrine. The Scriptures of truth teach no such doctrine. The doctrine of the atonement gives no encouragement to sin, but lays a foundation for universal holiness. It leads not to presumption, but inspires with reverence and godly fear. (Psal. cxxx. 4)—“But there is forgiveness (*a propitiation*) with thee, *that thou mayest be feared.*” The person who is justified freely by grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, exclaims with indignation, Shall I continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! Between the atonement and regeneration there is an inseparable connexion. Those who receive the one are the subjects of the other. They are regenerated, not merely by water in baptism—the only regeneration which Dr. B. acknowledges—but by “the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” They are “new creatures, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works.”

From the above observations, it is abundantly evident that the innocent suffering for the guilty among men—and Jesus Christ suffering, the just for the unjust, are cases not at all parallel. The innocent person, among men, who suffers for the guilty, does an injury to himself, or to his family, or to the Church, or to the state, or, perhaps, *to all these*. He also injures the community by encouraging criminals to perpetrate new crimes. But, as we have seen above, the very reverse is the case with regard to the atonement. No injury is done, but

infinite good accrues. Let no person, therefore, presume to say, that the doctrine of the atonement is *unreasonable*. Let none presume to affirm that it is *unjust* or *cruel*. Let none deceive himself, nor attempt to deceive others, by instituting comparisons which will not hold, and by confounding cases which are *totally different*.

Whilst Socinian and Arian writers inveigh with great vehemence against the doctrine of the atonement, alleging, that the idea of the innocent suffering for the guilty involves in it the greatest injustice and cruelty; they unfortunately forget, that all their invectives may be retorted, that they rebound upon themselves with accumulated force. They seem to forget that, according to their own views, as well as according to ours, the innocent suffered for the guilty. They grant that Jesus was innocent,* and that He suffered, not for Himself, but for the benefit of sinners. We must *all* grant, that in the death of Jesus we have an instance of the innocent suffering for the guilty. We differ, however, in this—*They* say that the innocent suffered for the guilty to obtain a *smaller* good, whilst we say that the innocent suffered for the guilty to obtain a *greater* good. *Socinians* say that He died to set us an example, and to confirm His doctrines. *Arians* say, that in addition to this, He obtained from the Father, as a reward of His sufferings, the power of forgiving sins to the penitent. *We* say, that in addition to all these things, *He died in our room, as our substitute*—that He suffered the penalty of the law, which we must have suffered, and thus redeemed us by His blood. Now, if there be any absurdity in supposing that the innocent Jesus suffered for the guilty to obtain a good *infinitely great*, it must be immensely *more* absurd to suppose that He suffered to

* A few Unitarians—thank God, only a few—have arrived at such a degree of impiety, as to call in question the innocence of our blessed Redeemer!

obtain a good comparatively *small and inconsiderable*. If, in the innocent suffering for the guilty, there be any injustice or cruelty, the Socinian and Arian schemes must be *most unjust and cruel*.*

OBJECTION II.

As it was only the human nature of the Redeemer that suffered, His atonement cannot be infinitely valuable. "Neither," says the Doctor, "could the sufferings of Christ be infinite. Their duration was temporary, and many individuals may have been exposed to greater torments; whereas the pains of hell, for which they were to serve as an equivalent, are supposed to be eternal, and the sufferers innumerable. Besides His human nature, which alone is said to have suffered, was not infinite." In this paragraph, our author falls into his usual sophism, "*ignorantia elenchi*," or a mistake of the question. He denies that the sufferings of Christ could be infinite, and *proves* that they could not. But why deny what nobody affirms, or why prove what nobody denies. Surely such trifling is quite beneath the dignity of the learned Doctor. We do not maintain that the sufferings of the Redeemer were infinite, but we maintain they were of *infinite value*—we maintain they were *infinitely meritorious*—we maintain that though these sufferings were only temporary, they were fully equivalent to the eternal torments of the whole human family. This we maintain, upon the principle that, though the *nature* which suffered was finite, the *person* that suffered was infinite—though the nature that suffered was human, the person was Divine. It was not Sir Isaac Newton's soul that died; and yet it was his soul that rendered his death immensely more interesting than that of a

* This argument is well managed by Wardlaw on the Socinian controversy.

peasant. Upon the same principle, it was not the Divine nature of Jesus that suffered; but it was His Divine nature that rendered His sufferings and death infinitely interesting and meritorious.

We do not maintain that the sufferings of Christ were infinite; but we maintain that they were immensely greater than can be accounted for, either on Socinian or Arian principles. If our blessed Redeemer did not suffer as our substitute, why did He offer up strong cries with tears?—why was He amazed and exceeding sorrowful?—sorrowful even unto death?—why was He in an agony, and His sweat as great drops of blood? If He was not at that time suffering the wrath of God, or, in other words, the penalty of the broken covenant—if Jehovah was not then bruising Him, putting Him to grief, and making His soul an offering for sin, what account can be given of such circumstances?—they are utterly unaccountable—nay, such circumstances would have betrayed a timidity quite unworthy of the humblest martyr. If we adopt the Socinian or Arian hypothesis, we must admit the blasphemous conclusion, *that many a martyr displayed more fortitude than our blessed Redeemer!*

OBJECTION III.

Another objection to the doctrine of the atonement is stated thus (p. 233):—“Lastly, to complete the climax of absurdity, the sufferer, in this case, is thought to be the same in essence and substance, coessential and consubstantial with the Sovereign himself. If Jesus and His Father be literally and identically one, He sacrificed Himself to Himself, and accepted of His own sufferings as an atonement to Himself, while the real criminals were exempted from punishment, relieved from guilt, and rewarded with high privileges and blessings, without faith, repentance, or reformation.”

In reply to this objection, I would observe, that Jesus Christ did not make the atonement in the same character in which He received it. He made the atonement in the character of *Mediator*, but accepted it in the character of *God*. As a *gracious sovereign*, He offered His human nature a vicarious sacrifice; which sacrifice, as a *lawgiver and judge*, He accepted in the room of guilty sinners. The same person may, in the character of a friend, pay a debt, and, in the character of a judge, discharge the debtor. In this I see no absurdity at all, but a wonderful display of grace and condescension. The remaining part of the objection, that the real criminals are exempted from punishment, relieved from guilt, and rewarded with high privileges and blessings, without faith, repentance, or reformation, deserves no reply. I shall not call it a calumny or a falsehood; I shall only rank it amongst the almost infinite number of mistakes and mis-statements which the Doctor has made, in consequence of his ignorance of the principles he opposes. I regret much that Dr. Millar, of Armagh, in animadverting on the passage under consideration, has joined with Dr. B. in an unjust and ungenerous attempt to roll upon the Calvinistic system the principal odium of the above foul misrepresentation. "The Calvinist," says he, "does indeed teach that the salvation of men is arbitrary, irrespective, and unconditional; and so he may be charged with holding that faith, repentance, and reformation, are not conditions of salvation, however he may maintain that by the influence of the grace of God they always follow election." I ask Dr. Millar, does the Calvinist teach what Dr. B. has asserted? Does he teach that the criminal is exempted from punishment without faith? No. He teaches that he who believes not shall be damned. Does the Calvinist teach that the criminal is relieved from guilt without faith? No; he teaches the very reverse. He teaches that we are justified by faith—

that in order of nature, faith precedes justification—that in order of nature, faith precedes relief from guilt—that the criminal can never be relieved from guilt till he have first believed—that he who believes not is condemned already. Does the Calvinist believe in irrespective salvation, as Dr. Millar asserts? He believes in no such thing. He knows of no salvation irrespective of faith, repentance, and reformation. May the Calvinist “be fairly charged with holding that faith, repentance, and reformation, are not conditions of salvation?” Though Dr. B. has charged him, he cannot be *fairly* charged with holding any such doctrine. He holds that faith, repentance, and reformation, *are* conditions of salvation—not *meritorious* conditions indeed, but conditions *sine qua non*—*indispensable* conditions—conditions which he is able to perform, not by the self-determining power of his own will, but by the omnipotent influence of the blessed Spirit of all grace. He holds that none can be saved without faith, that none can be saved without repentance, that none can be saved without reformation—a reformation which involves a new birth or regeneration—not a mere *baptism* regeneration, but the renewing of the Holy Ghost, in which old things pass away, and all things become new. I say again, that I greatly regret to find a divine of the learning and talents of Dr. Millar, in a treatise expressly written against Arianism, joining issue with an Arian Doctor in misrepresenting Calvinism, though his own creed, as I shall afterwards show, is undoubtedly Calvinistic.

OBJECTION IV.

Our author contends, *that the doctrine of atonement is inconsistent with the freedom of pardon.* The Apostle, however, is of a different opinion. He assures

us that we are “justified *freely* by grace, *through the redemption* which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation* through faith in His blood.” It was the free grace of God that provided a Saviour, and though the pardon of sin cost the Redeemer dear, it is dispensed to us *freely*, without money and without price. Our sins are not to be regarded as a pecuniary, but as a criminal debt. Our creditor was not obliged to accept of payment from the surety, but might have demanded it from the original debtors. To provide such a surety, and to accept of such payment, was an astonishing display of *rich, free, and sovereign grace*.

SECTION V.

Of the moral tendency of the Atonement.

Our author very properly observes, *that we should prefer those views of religion which are most conducive to good morals*. On this ground, the doctrine of the atonement is greatly preferable to the unscriptural views of Antitrinitarians. Antitrinitarian views are hostile to morality in two respects. 1. In reference to the law. 2. In reference to sin.

1. Antitrinitarians have mean ideas of the moral law. They think that it may be violated with impunity—that, though God has attached a penalty to the violation of His law, He is not bound to inflict that penalty, but may pardon sin without a satisfaction. Such ideas of the law of God have a direct tendency towards vice and immorality. What doctrine can be more favourable to vice? What doctrine can be more hostile to virtue than the doctrine which teaches that vice may pass with impunity, and that sin may be pardoned without a satisfaction? The enemies of the atonement are enemies of the moral law, and, therefore,

enemies to morality. Though constantly declaiming in favour of moral virtue, they sap the very foundations of morality, by bringing into contempt the moral law of God. It is the observation of an eminent English divine, that all errors whatever may be resolved into opposition to the moral law. The doctrine of the atonement is a doctrine according to godliness, and is highly favourable to morality, for it has its foundation—at least as taught by Calvinists—in the immutability of the Divine law*—it goes upon the principle, that though the heavens and the earth may pass away, yet a jot or a tittle can in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

2. Antitrinitarian views are hostile to “good morals,” not only as they lower the standard of morality, and degrade the moral law, but also, as they represent sin as an evil of a comparatively trifling nature. Dr. B. reasons thus:—

“But grant, that Christ died to expiate the sins of the world, how can the death of one be an equivalent for pardoning the accumulated transgressions of millions, for a succession of ages? To obviate this objection, the advocates for satisfaction are driven to a greater excess of extravagance. They say, it is true, that the offences of mankind were infinite in number and degree, and, therefore, it was necessary that the satisfaction should be infinite; and, accordingly, a being of infinite merit and excellence was sacrificed in order to atone for them. But, in the first place, the sins of the world were not infinite; for, as man is a finite and limited being, so everything pertaining to him is finite and limited; his existence and his powers of doing good or evil, his virtues and his vices. Guilt is, no doubt, aggravated by the relation in which we stand to

* On the moral tendency of the Atonement, Fuller on Systems, and Stevenson on the Atonement, may be perused with great advantage.

the authority offended, as of a son to his father; but, on this principle, every offence against God would be chargeable with infinite atrocity, and would require the expiation and atonement of an infinite Being.”—(p. 232.)

Arminians agree with Antitrinitarians in denying the infinite evil of sin. The preceding reasoning, therefore, is applicable not to the Arminian, but only to the Calvinistic view of the atonement. Candour should have induced the Doctor to distinguish. Archbishop Magee (*Atonement*, vol. i. p. 171) writes thus:—“On this subject, Dr. Priestly thus represents the arguments of the Orthodox. ‘Sin, being an offence against an infinite Being, requires an infinite satisfaction, which can only be made by an infinite person, that is, one who is no less than God himself. Christ, therefore, in order to make this infinite satisfaction for the sins of men, must Himself be God, equal to God the Father.’ With what candour this has been selected, as a specimen of the mode of reasoning, by which the doctrine of atonement, as connected with that of the divinity of Christ, is maintained by the Established Church, it is needless to remark. That some few, indeed, have thus argued, is certainly to be admitted and lamented. But how poorly such men have reasoned, it needed not the acuteness of Dr. Priestly to discover. On their own principles the reply is obvious—that sin being committed by a finite creature, requires only a finite satisfaction, for which purpose a finite person might be an adequate victim.” With great deference to the Archbishop, I must confess myself one of those “poor reasoners,” who believe that sin is infinite, and requires an infinite satisfaction. Nor am I at all convinced of my error, either by the reasoning of Dr. B., or that of the celebrated author just now quoted. The former of these writers reasons thus:—“As man is a finite and limited being, everything pertaining to him is finite and limited.” This I deny. Is man’s duration finite and

limited? Surely not. His soul is immortal. Again, if man may be the subject of infinite or eternal misery, may he not, on the same principle, be the subject of infinite guilt? Though man, therefore, is a finite and limited being, it is not true that everything pertaining to him is finite and limited. I ask Dr. Bruce, why may not the sin of a finite being be infinite as well as his duration, his happiness, or his misery? Sin is infinite, because committed against an infinite God, because it is the violation of infinite obligation. Our author himself grants, that "guilt is aggravated by the relation in which we stand to the authority offended, as of a son to his father." Upon this principle, the more *amiable* the father, the greater our obligation to *love* him; the more *worthy* the father, the greater our obligation to *esteem* him; the greater the *authority* of the father, the greater our obligation to *obey* him. If the father is possessed of *one* degree of amiableness, dignity, and authority, we are under one degree of obligation to love, esteem, and obey him. If he is possessed of a *thousand* degrees of amiableness, dignity, and authority, we are under a thousand degrees of obligation to love, esteem, and obey him. If possessed of *infinite* amiableness, dignity, and authority, we are under *infinite* obligations to love, esteem, and obey him. It follows, of course, that if we violate these infinite obligations, we incur infinite guilt. Who will deny that we are under infinite obligations to love, esteem, and obey our heavenly Father, and that in violating these obligations our guilt is infinite?

To this reasoning, I know, it has been objected, that if every sin is infinite, all sins must be equal; for nothing can be greater than that which is infinite. But this conclusion does not follow; for one infinite may be greater than another. An infinite surface is greater than an infinite straight line, and an infinite solid than an infinite surface. Or, in other words, an object

infinitely long and broad is greater than one only infinitely long; and an object infinitely long, broad, and deep, is greater than one that is only infinitely long and broad. All objects infinitely long are equal in that dimension, *length*; but they may differ widely in other dimensions: so all sins, though equal in this one aggravation of being committed against an infinite God, may nevertheless be very different in respect of other aggravations. "Some sins in themselves," say our Westminster divines, "and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others." And again, "Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and in that which is to come."*

Can Dr. B. resist the force of the preceding reasoning? He CANNOT. It is true, he considers it highly absurd; but it is no less true that he fully admits it! *In the very act of opposing it*, he fully admits it! He admits the premises, that "guilt is aggravated by the relation in which we stand to the authority offended;" and he admits the conclusion, that "on this principle, every offence against God would be chargeable with infinite atrocity, and would require the expiation and atonement of an infinite Being." Now, this is all we contend for. The highest Calvinist can ask no more. I am quite aware, indeed, that such an admission is a flat contradiction to what the Doctor is endeavouring to prove. He is endeavouring to prove that sin is NOT infinite, and that it does not require an infinite satisfaction, and yet he fully admits the *very reverse*. How powerful is truth! How inconsistent and contradictory is error! Archbishop Magee grants, that from the divinity of Christ we may infer "the great heinousness of human guilt, for the expiation of which it was deemed fit that so great a Being should suffer." But

* These principles have been ably, I had almost said mathematically, demonstrated by President Edwards.

why not infer *infinite* guilt? Would God, who does nothing in vain, apply an infinite remedy to a finite disease? Would this be fit? Would this be proper? An infinite atonement to expiate finite guilt, in my humble apprehension—

“Resembles ocean into tempest wrought,
To waft a feather, or to drown a fly.”

From the infinite value of the atonement we may surely infer the infinity of sin. Calvinists—I speak of them in general, for some individuals do not contend for the infinity of sin—Calvinists see more atrocity in one single sin than Socinians, or Arians, or even Arminians, see in all the sins of all mankind! Sin, according to Socinian and Arian views, is comparatively nothing—an evil of a very trifling nature, a kind of cutaneous disease, that does not require any powerful remedy. According to Calvinistic views, sin is a disease of an inveterate, malignant, and alarming nature, a disease which no medicine can cure, but only the healing balm of the Redeemer's blood. I appeal now to the candid reader—which of the two systems is more favourable to morality?—that which represents sin as a comparatively trifling evil, or that which regards it as infinitely malignant and atrocious? Surely no person possessed of the slightest degree of candour can hesitate for a moment to pronounce that system most favourable to morality which regards sin as the greatest evil. Still farther, we may observe, as the friends of the atonement conceive themselves infinitely deeper in debt than its enemies do, so they conceive that God forgives them infinitely more; will they not therefore *love* more? In proportion as Socinians and Arians see little need of a Saviour, in the same proportion they will feel themselves under little obligation; of course, they will love but little; and, as love is the fulfilling of the law, their obedience will be propor-

tionally defective. It is, therefore, demonstratively evident that the doctrine of the atonement is a doctrine according to godliness, and that it is incomparably more favourable to good morals than the Socinian or Arian hypothesis.

SECTION VI.

Extent of the Atonement.

With Dr. Bruce I fully agree, in reprobating that illiberality which confines the benefits of redemption to those who are baptized, or to those who belong to a particular Church, sect, or party. In common with all Calvinists, I firmly believe in the sufficiency of the atonement. I believe that the blood of my Redeemer is of infinite value, and sufficient to save the whole human family. But the question is, was it so *designed*? Did God *design* to save all mankind by the death of His Son? Did Jesus Christ *design* to save all mankind by laying down His life? Arminians, as well Socinians and Arians, answer these questions in the *affirmative*. Calvinists answer them in the *negative*. To suppose that God *designed* to save all mankind, and yet that all mankind *will not be saved*, appears to me absurd, I had almost said *blasphemous*. To me it appears self-evident that God's designs can never be frustrated—that His intentions can never be disappointed. If He designed that all should be saved, all *would* be saved; for, "who hath resisted His will?" If He designed that all should be saved, and yet all are not saved, then the Divine design is frustrated, and the Divine Being is unhappy! Every being must be unhappy in proportion as his designs are frustrated, and his intentions disappointed. In proportion to the greatness of the designer, and the grandeur of his designs, must be the greatness of his disappointment and mortification, if he

fail in the accomplishment. Now, as God is an infinite Being, and the design of saving souls is an infinite design, in the loss of every soul the Divine Being must feel infinite disappointment and mortification. In a word, *He must be infinitely miserable!!!* Such is the blasphemous but unavoidable consequence of maintaining that God designed to save all mankind by Jesus Christ; or, that Christ shed His blood with an intention to save the whole human family.*

The Arminian doctrine of a universal atonement is clogged with a variety of other absurdities. If it is absurd to suppose that God sent His Son to do that which He previously knew would never be done, and that Jesus Christ shed His blood to accomplish that which He previously knew would never be accomplished, is it not equally absurd to suppose that the same debt should be twice exacted, first from the sinner, and then from the surety?—that Jesus Christ should suffer on the cross for the redemption of those who were at that very moment suffering the vengeance of eternal fire! Is it not equally absurd to suppose that Jesus Christ would shed His blood for the whole human family, and

* At a missionary meeting, I once heard a very sensible Arminian addressing a large audience on the propriety of prayer for the conversion of the heathen. Reasoning from that beautiful promise made to the Redeemer, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied," he said, with great earnestness and emphasis, "*And He will not be satisfied—He will not be content, while there is one soul that is not brought home to Himself.*" Had not the impropriety of disturbing the harmony of such a meeting prevented me, I would have immediately added, "Then the Redeemer *never will be satisfied—He never will be content!—He must be for ever miserable!*" If the Redeemer will never be satisfied, nor content, till every individual of the human family is saved, and if every individual will *never* be saved, the conclusion is inevitable—that *the Redeemer will never be satisfied nor content!* Let any Arminian show, if he be able, that the doctrine of universal atonement does not lead to such blasphemous conclusions.

yet would refuse to pray for them? (John xvii. 9), "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world." The Scriptures teach no such absurdities. They teach, that Christ laid down His life for the *sheep*, but they nowhere assert that He died for the *goats*. They teach, that He died to gather together in one the *children of God* which were scattered abroad, and that He died for His *Church*. (Eph. v. 25), "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." If the love of Jesus Christ in dying for His Church was not *peculiar* and *discriminating*, it would not be a proper object of imitation for husbands. The doctrine of a definite atonement, or particular redemption, might be established by a multitude of other arguments, deduced both from Scripture and reason. To a mind unprejudiced, and capable of reasoning, the preceding, I hope, will be found satisfactory.

I am perfectly aware that a multitude of Scriptures *seem* to favour the opposite doctrine. I know it is written, that Christ died for *all*—for the *world*—the *whole world*—and *every man*. Every attentive reader of the Bible must, however, be sensible that such terms are frequently used in a limited sense. We read that all the world wondered after the beast, while, at the same time, there were with the Lamb one hundred and forty-four thousand. John declared that the whole world was lying in wickedness, when thousands were converted to the faith of the Gospel. Our Saviour Himself declared that, from the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of God was preached, and every man was pressing into it, when, in fact, the far greater part of the human family had never heard of the kingdom of God. Multitudes of similar instances might be adduced to show that there is nothing more common in Scripture than the words *all, every, world, whole world, &c.*, taken in a limited acceptation. But it may be asked—If

Christ died only for the elect, why were such universal terms employed in reference to His death? I answer, to correct the prejudices of the Jews, who foolishly confined salvation to themselves. "He is the propitiation for our sins," says the Apostle John, "and not for *ours* only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*," that is, He is the propitiation for the sins, not only of us Jews, but also of the Gentiles—of all His sheep through the whole world. That these universal terms are not to be taken in their most extensive signification, is evident, not only from the reasons mentioned above, but also from this, that though the most extensive terms are used in English, yet not in the original Greek. The word *εκαστος*, in Greek, signifies every individual; and *απας* and *συμπας*, signify all collectively; but none of these most extensive terms are ever applied to the death of Christ. It may, however, be still further asked, If Christ did not die for all indiscriminately, why is salvation offered indiscriminately to all? Why does God offer salvation to all, if He never designed that all should be saved? Is not this to tantalize the creature? Does it not argue insincerity in God? This objection is at first sight plausible, but it may be retorted thus: If God foreknew from all eternity those who would reject salvation through Jesus Christ, why does He offer them salvation? Why does He invite those that He previously knew would reject the invitation? Does not this argue insincerity in God? Let the Arminian, the Socinian, or the Arian, show me that it does not argue insincerity in God to offer salvation to the man that He previously knew would reject it, and I will show him, that it does not argue insincerity in God to offer salvation to the man whom He never designed to save. Thus the objection might be retorted. The difficulty arising from apparent insincerity in God is common to all systems of divinity. The Socinian, the Arian, the Arminian, and the Calvinist, are all equally

concerned to solve it. My views of this difficult subject I shall endeavour to explain by the following illustration:—

In the late French revolutionary war, the *Sans Culotte*, in an engagement with the English, was sunk. Her crew refused to accept of quarter. They went down with shouts of *Vive la Republique!* Supposing that the English admiral had picked up a certain number of the drowning French, and saved their lives. Supposing, moreover, that he had sent out a boat and offered to save the rest, knowing at the same time that they would reject his generous offer. Could such an admiral be justly charged with insincerity? His design in sending out the boat, it is true, was not to save them, for he knew they would not accept of salvation; but his design was to exhibit to all the clemency of the English, and, at the same time, the horrid infatuation and implacable enmity of the French. If the obstinacy of the French was so great, and their enmity against the English so inveterate, that they would rather drown than be indebted to British clemency, would not every person say, that they deserved their fate—that their blood was upon their own heads? In this case, those who were saved were wholly indebted for their salvation to the gracious clemency of the British admiral, and those who were drowned had no apology to plead; the admiral offered his clemency, but they basely and ungratefully despised and rejected it. They deserved to die, for they chose death rather than life. Such is the situation of sinners drowning in a deluge of wrath. Life and salvation are offered to all indiscriminately, and all are disposed to treat the offer with contempt. Such is the enmity of the human heart against God, and His law, and His Son, that none would come to the Redeemer for life—all would despise and reject the life-boat of salvation. But God, in His infinite mercy and grace, destroys the enmity of some, bends their stubborn wills

by the influence of His Spirit, and makes them willing in the day of His power—willing to accept of salvation freely, without money and without price. The rest perish—not because they are reprobates, not because Christ did not die for them, but because they are sinners—because they are rebels—because they will not lay down their arms—they will not be reconciled to God—they will not come to His Son, that they may have life. When a drowning man is offered a boat, if, instead of embracing the offer, he should cavil and dispute about the design of the offerer, would he not be regarded as insane? Undoubtedly he would. How much greater the folly and madness of sinners, who, instead of accepting salvation through Jesus Christ, as it is freely offered to them in the Gospel, stand cavilling at the decrees of God, and the particularity of redemption—curiously prying into the secret counsels of the Almighty, and foolishly inquiring whether God, by sending His Son, intended *their* salvation, or whether Jesus Christ shed His blood for *them*! Oh, the stupidity and infatuation of men!

The ministers of Jesus should offer the Gospel indiscriminately to all. They should address rebels in the language of the Apostle: (2 Cor. v. 20)—“We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” Whilst in thoughts that breathe, and words that burn, they call, invite, and expostulate, they should at the same time fervently pray that the Gospel may come, not in word only, but in power, that by the blessed agency of the Divine Spirit it may happily prove the power of God, and the wisdom of God unto salvation.

CHAPTER VI.

ORIGINAL SIN.

THE Calvinistic doctrine of original sin, our author attacks in his tenth sermon. In entering on this important subject, he abandons his "*sure guide*,"* and contradicts himself. He asserts (p. 45,) that if any doctrine is not plainly declared in every one of the four Evangelists, we may be assured that "*it is not even an important truth.*" In the commencement of this sermon, he assures us that the doctrine of original sin is not to be found in any of the gospels, for our Saviour, he maintains, has not said one word about it; yet, strange to tell, he nevertheless grants, that "it may be an important truth." In the one page he asserts that it is not even an important truth, in the other he admits that such a doctrine *may be an important truth.* This is Dr. B. *versus* Dr. B.! It is a trite observation that "sometimes second thoughts are best." In this instance the proverb is verified. I am glad to find our author recanting—giving up a canon so unscriptural, so unreasonable, and, at last, candidly admitting that a doctrine, though not contained in all the Evangelists, may nevertheless be an important truth; and, particularly, that the doctrine of original sin may be an important truth. How glad should I be to find him admitting, not only that it *may be*, but that it *actually is*, an important truth. This instance, I am sorry to say, is not the only one calculated to show that the Doctor passed

* If Dr. B. has not sufficient faith to follow his own "*sure guide*," how can he expect the First Presbyterian Congregation in Belfast to follow it?

too high a eulogium on his volume of sermons, when, in his preface, he pronounced it "consistent with itself and the Gospel."

In the introduction to his sermon on original sin, the Doctor has not only contradicted *himself*; he has also contradicted *matter of fact*. He asserts that "the advocates of the popular notion of original sin do not pretend to appeal to any of our Lord's discourses in favour of their opinion." Now, this assertion is the very reverse of the fact. The fact is, that the advocates of the popular notion of original sin *do appeal* to our Lord's discourses. They appeal to his discourse to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." The very first doctrines which our blessed Lord taught Nicodemus were those which Dr. B. rejects—*the doctrines of original sin and regeneration*. Our Saviour taught that we are born, not only *depraved*, but *totally* depraved, not only *fleshly*, but *flesh itself*. He taught, that such is our natural state of depravity, that "Except a man (*τις* any one, man, woman, or child) be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

To account for the origin of evil is one of the most difficult problems in divinity. No view of the subject, perfectly free from difficulties, has, as yet, been exhibited to the world. The account given in the Sacred Volume is brief; and from it have been formed a variety of opinions. These may be all reduced to three—1. That by Adam's fall we are both depraved and guilty. 2. That by Adam's fall we are only depraved, but *not* guilty. 3. That by Adam's fall we are *neither depraved nor guilty*.

The first of these opinions is that of the Calvinists. That we are all guilty of Adam's first sin, they prove from various texts of Scripture, but particularly from the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, from the twelfth to the nineteenth verses inclusive. In this portion of Scripture we are assured, that by one man sin

entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all ($\epsilon\phi'\omega$ in whom) have sinned—that by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation—and that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners. The penalty attached to Adam's disobedience was death; "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This penalty was inflicted, not only on Adam, but on his posterity. Now Calvinists infer—and I think justly—that if Adam's posterity had not been involved in his guilt, they would not have been involved in his punishment—in the penalty attached to his disobedience. Dr. Bruce maintains that this penalty was only temporal death; but that it included eternal death is evident from the words of the Apostle: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, if that life which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ is *eternal life*, the antithesis shows that that death which is the wages of sin must be *eternal death*.*

If, therefore, we believe the sacred oracles rather than Dr. B., we will believe, that, in consequence of Adam's sin, his posterity are not only exposed to *temporal* death, but death *eternal*; and that they are also *spiritually* dead—"alienated from the life of God—

* Mr. M'Afee says, that by quoting this text in my defence of creeds and confessions, I have made a grand mistake; for the Apostle was not speaking there of the penalty of the Adamic covenant, but of that annexed to the covenant of grace. If Mr. M'Afee be open to conviction, he may at once be convinced, that the grand mistake is made, not by me, but by himself—he may be convinced of this by comparing the text in question with the last verse of the preceding chapter, "That as sin hath reigned unto death; even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." This text is exactly parallel with the former, and the Apostle is undeniably treating of the penalty of the Adamic covenant. Many a grand mistake is made by neglecting to compare Scripture with Scripture.

“dead in trespasses and sins.” This spiritual death, or depravity of nature, is everywhere taught in the Sacred Volume. That God made man upright, is a dictate both of Scripture and reason. The Scriptures assure us, that the Deity created Adam in His own image and after His own likeness. Having lost this moral image, he could not transmit it to his posterity. Accordingly, we read that Adam begat a son in his own image; and the Apostle assures us that we have borne the image of the earthly Adam. “What is man, that he should be clean; and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?—not one.” David acquiesced in this doctrine when he exclaimed, “Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me!” That this depravity is universal, is abundantly taught in the Sacred Volume, particularly in the Epistle to the Romans, third chapter, from the tenth verse: “There is none righteous, no, *not one*: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Every mouth must be stopped, and all the world be found guilty before God.” Against such descriptions Dr. B. cautions his hearers thus:—“You are not to be deluded by general descriptions of the depravity of the world; for those passages do not apply to every individual, but to the general corruption of mankind.” The Apostle assures us that the corruption is universal. The Doctor assures us that it is *not* universal. The Apostle assures us that there is not *one solitary exception, none, none, none, none, no, not one, no, not one*; but, in the face of all this, the Doctor assures us that there *are* exceptions, and that such “passages do *not* apply to every individual, but to the general corruption of mankind.” Reader of this treatise! believest thou the Prophets? Believest thou the Apostles?

I know that thou believest. Learned divines may delude thee, but the Deity never can !

Such is the Calvinistic doctrine relative to the fall of Adam, and the effects of that fall upon his posterity, and such appears to be the Scriptural account of that mournful and all-important event. Calvinists do not pretend to be able to assign all the reasons which influence the Divine mind in connecting so intimately the fate of Adam with that of his posterity. We see, however, something very similar in the connexion of one generation with another. The virtues and the vices, the happiness and miseries of men, we plainly see, are greatly influenced by previous connexions and relations, by ten thousand adventitious circumstances—circumstances over which they themselves had no control. Who would deny that such connexions, relations, and circumstances, have a powerful influence on human conduct?—and yet we all acknowledge, for our own consciousness proves it, that man is a free and an accountable agent. The placing of Adam at the head of our family, as our representative, was a constitution which, viewed abstractedly, appears characterised both by wisdom and goodness. Adam was much better qualified to stand for us, as our representative, than we would have been to stand for ourselves. We come into the world children; our appetites and passions get the start of our reason and consciences, and hurry us into vice before these higher powers of our nature have acquired sufficient energy to keep them in check. On this principle alone, some have endeavoured to account for the universality of human guilt. This, however, was not the case with Adam. His appetites and passions did not get the start of his reason and conscience, for he was created not a *child*, but a *man*. In this respect, it cannot be denied that Adam was much better qualified to stand representative for his posterity, than each to stand personally for himself.

Besides, Adam saw himself at the head of a numerous family, whose happiness or misery was suspended on his good or bad management. If this motive has a powerful influence on men now depraved, and sometimes even on the most depraved of men—if it sometimes proves effectual to reform the rake, and reclaim the prodigal, how much more powerfully was it calculated to operate on the mind of innocent Adam in preserving him in a state of persevering obedience? In this respect, again, federal representation appears greatly preferable to personal responsibility.*

Upon the whole, our opponents may pour forth torrents of declamation and invective against the federal representation of Adam; but on the abstract question, whether federal representation, or personal responsibility, was, in its own nature, better calculated to secure the happiness of the human family—on this abstract question they have never yet met us, and, I presume, never will. Having thus briefly stated the Calvinistic opinion relative to the *fall* and its effects, we come now to the

SECOND OPINION, which is that of the Arminians. They maintain that, in consequence of Adam's fall, we are all depraved, but they deny that the guilt of his first sin is imputed to his posterity. To suppose that we are guilty of a sin, committed nearly six thousand years before we were born, involves, I confess, a great difficulty. To get rid of it, the Arminians deny the fact. They say we come into the world *depraved*, but *not guilty*. They deny that we come into the world *guilty*. but they admit that we come into the world so depraved that, as soon as capable of moral agency, we *must become guilty*. Now, how does this relieve the difficulty? How does this vindicate the justice of God? Where is the difference whether I come into the world *guilty*, or with such a hereditary taint, that in a very short

* These topics are admirably illustrated by President Edwards on original sin.

time I *must become guilty*? Besides, I am quite unable to distinguish between a depraved being and a guilty being. A depraved *innocent* being appears to me a contradiction in terms—as great a contradiction as an honest thief, or a white negro. In a word, the Arminian removes the difficulty a little farther off, but affords no manner of relief—gives no solution.

THE THIRD OPINION is that of the Pelagians, Socinians, Arians, &c. They maintain that we come into the world neither guilty nor depraved, but as pure and holy as innocent Adam. This is the opinion of Dr. B. By thus denying both guilt and depravity, Socinians and Arians vainly imagine that they have completely solved the difficulty; but they deceive themselves, and they deceive their followers. The difficulty is, indeed, removed a little farther out of view; it is, however, nothing *lessened*, but rather *augmented*. Dr. B. admits, that the whole human family sin as soon as they become moral agents. Now, the great question is, why do men universally run into sin as soon as capable of it? The Doctor answers this question by asking another. “Can it be difficult,” says he, “to account for the sinfulness of men at present, surrounded as they are by necessities and pleasures, temptations and discouragements?” So then, we come into the world neither guilty nor depraved; but, nevertheless, as soon as capable of acting, we all become guilty, we all commit sin—we are surrounded with such necessities and pleasures, temptations and discouragements, that we cannot avoid it. The temptations with which we are surrounded are so powerful that none has ever been able to resist them! The *Calvinist* tells me that I came into the world guilty. This is a great difficulty; but the *Arminian* kindly comes forward to relieve me. He tells me that I was not *born* guilty, but that I am so depraved, that in the course of a few years, I *must become guilty*.

This I regard as very poor comfort indeed! The *Arian*, seeing me still in distress, makes a generous proposal of his kind offices. You come into the world, says he, neither guilty nor depraved; but you come into a world so full of snares and temptations, that there is *no hope of your escape—you must become guilty in a very short time!* Cold comfort, indeed! May I not address the Arminian, the Socinian, and the Arian, in the language of Job to his mistaken friends, “Miserable comforters are ye all?” The *Calvinist* says, Your disease is coeval with your birth. The *Arminian* says, The seeds of disease are in your constitution, and the disease itself must make its appearance at a very early age. The *Arian* says, No, you are born in good health, and of a good sound constitution; but your benevolent Creator, at your very birth, has plunged you into a pest-house, where none have ever escaped the effects of contagion. Alas! then, say I, if I am to die of a disease, what matter whether that disease be coeval with my birth, arise necessarily from a radical defect in my constitution, or be caught by contagion which I cannot avoid? Thus we see that the Arminian and the Arian completely fail in removing the difficulty. But this is not all: their hypothesis, so far from casting light on the subject, involves it in difficulties still more embarrassing and insuperable. In commenting on the fifth chapter of the Romans, Dr. B. explains the terms *justify* and *condemn* thus (p. 194):—“As to justify signifies to make just, to place in the situation of just men by pardon, so this expression to make sinners is equivalent to condemn, to place men in the situation of sinners. As a guilty person may be treated as an innocent one, by being pardoned and received into favour, so an innocent man may be treated as a criminal and condemned. The one situation is expressed in Scripture by being justified or made righteous, and the other by being made a sinner.” Having thus explained,

he goes on to comment thus:—"For as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, or were treated as sinners, being subject to death by the sentence of God," &c. From these quotations, it appears, that Dr. B. agrees with the Calvinists in maintaining that God treats the posterity of Adam as if they were sinners; but he differs from them in this:—The Calvinists say, that God treats us as sinners because we *are sinners*, because we have all *sinned* in our federal representative; but the Doctor affirms, that God treats us as sinners, though we are *perfectly innocent*! The Calvinists say, that God condemns the *guilty* posterity of Adam; but the Doctor affirms, that God condemns Adam's *innocent* offspring! He condemns to death His own *innocent* offspring! He condemns them for a crime they *never committed*!—in which they had *no concern*!—of which they were *perfectly innocent*!

Thus the learned Dr. B., in the heat of his zeal against Calvinism, is forced to charge his Maker with that abominable thing which His soul hates. Prov. xvii. 15—"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." Say now, reader, what system is most reasonable?—the system of the Calvinist, who says, God condemns the *guilty*, or that of the Arminian or Arian, who says God condemns the *innocent*?*

* In explaining the words justify, condemn, &c., the Doctor appears evidently to write without thinking. "In Hebrew," says he, "the simple word (what simple word?) means to be a sinner. In another form of the verb (what verb?), to make one a sinner. And it is so translated throughout the Old Testament." Strange! So translated! It is *not* so translated. The very instances adduced by the Doctor to prove that it is so translated prove that it is *not* so translated. The *first* instance is, "Whom the judges shall condemn." It is not so translated here. His second instance is, "If I justify myself my own mouth will condemn me." It is not so translated here. His *third* is, "Wilt thou condemn

Dr. Bruce quotes and condemns the Westminster divines' description of original depravity. Dr. Millar, of Armagh, seems to justify our author in rejecting that description. "It is not unnatural," says he, "that an exposition of this doctrine, so strongly and so harshly stated, should dispose any man of mild dispositions to seek another interpretation. Such a temperate statement of this doctrine might have been found in the ninth article of our church." Now, what is the mildness of the ninth article? Let us see. The ninth article states, that original sin is the fault or corruption of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, and that in every person born into the world it deserveth *God's wrath and damnation!* Where now is the mildness? Did ever the *Westminster divines*, or did ever any *Calvinist* say, that original sin deserves *more* than God's wrath and damnation? But, nevertheless, if we believe Dr. Millar, the doctrine is stated *mildly* by the Church of England. "The article, moreover, is concluded," says he, "with observing that the apostle doth confess, not rigorously denounce, that this same concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin, even avoiding to declare that it is sin in a true and proper acceptation of the term." Now, with great respect, permit me to ask the learned Doctor, how does it come to pass that original sin is not sin in a true and proper acceptation of the term, when at the same time it is acknowledged to deserve *God's wrath and damnation*? Let Dr. Millar answer this question

him that is most just?" It is not so translated here. It is not so translated in any one of the instances mentioned by the Doctor. In *all* these instances the word is translated, not *to make a sinner*, as our author affirms, but *to condemn*. They all prove, not what they were adduced to prove, but the very reverse—they prove not that the Doctor has *wilfully* violated matter of fact, but they prove that he does not always think when he writes, and that his book is not always consistent, either with itself or the Scriptures.

if he can. He may defend Arminianism if he please, but, in defending it, he should not quote the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, particularly, he should not quote the *ninth* article—an article so *highly* Calvinistic.

With regard to the “strong” and “harsh” language of the Westminster divines, I would only request the candid reader to compare that language with the Scriptures referred to, and then say if the language of Scripture be not fully as harsh as that of the Catechism. After quoting the divines’ description of the sin and misery introduced by the fall, Dr. B. exclaims: “Thus are children initiated into the glad tidings of salvation, and taught to love God and honour all men.” The Doctor, no doubt, regarded this sentence as a fine stroke of irony; but did he not know that the disease is one thing, and the remedy another? Did he not know, that the description of our sin and misery is one thing, and “the glad tidings of salvation” are another?—and that teaching “to love God and to honour all men,” is another still? Why does he confound things so different? But, though these things are so different, and should not be confounded, they are not *opposite*. A description of our sin and misery is no way inconsistent with the glad tidings of salvation; on the contrary, the one presupposes the other. Were we not previously convinced of our sin and misery, the good news of the Gospel would not be regarded as glad tidings at all. The Westminster divines are not like those unskilful physicians censured by the Almighty—physicians who heal the wound of the daughter of his people slightly, saying, “Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” The Westminster divines, like skilful surgeons, first probe the wounds of sin, and then apply to them the healing balm of the Redeemer’s blood. Dr. B., breaking through his irony, and blending literal with figurative language, alleges that the description of our original sin, depravity, and

misery, given by the Westminster divines, is calculated to counteract the affectionate invitation of their gracious Lord, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Now, I confess myself utterly at a loss to know how such a description can possibly counteract such an invitation. The greater the depravity and guilt of children, the greater necessity, I should think, to bring them to Jesus Christ the Saviour. On the contrary, if they have no depravity nor guilt at all, what necessity to bring them at all? A Socinian or Arian might reason thus: Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; but my child is no sinner, and therefore Jesus Christ did not come into the world to save it, consequently, I need not bring it to Jesus Christ! Again, Jesus Christ came to seek and save that which was lost; but my child is not lost, therefore Jesus Christ did not come to save it, consequently I need not bring it to Jesus Christ! Once more, Jesus Christ came to save from the wrath to come; but my child is not a child of wrath, therefore Jesus Christ did not come to save it, and, consequently I need not bring it to Jesus Christ! I will not suffer my little children to come to the Redeemer. I see no need. They are not sick, and therefore have no need of Jesus as a physician! They are not sinners, and therefore have no need of Jesus as a Saviour! They are not defiled, and therefore have no need of the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness! In a word, the little children of Socinians and Arians will require a separate apartment in heaven, for they cannot join the general assembly in their song of praise, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Dr. B. asserts that the little children brought to our Saviour were the children of Pagans or Jews, neither baptized nor converted. How does he know this? He

does not know it at all. The probability is, that the facts were the very reverse of his statement. It is quite improbable that the children were Pagans, for the Redeemer was preaching the Gospel, not to Pagans, but to Jews in the coast of Judea beyond the Jordan. That the children were not baptized, is equally improbable. It is in the highest degree probable that the parents were believing Jews. Had they been unbelievers, they would not have brought their children to the Redeemer to receive a blessing. It is also highly probable that the children were previously baptized. The very first ordinance to which believing parents would naturally bring their children would be the initiating ordinance of baptism. That the children were not converted, but vessels of wrath, is a gratuitous assumption, still more improbable than the preceding. Notwithstanding all these improbabilities, the Doctor makes his assertions with as much dogmatic assurance as if delivering oracles. Indeed, his general manner shows that he calculates largely on the implicit faith of his hearers.

To render the doctrine of original sin as shocking as possible, Dr. B. exclaims thus: (p. 201)—“With what feelings of horror and disgust, as well as pity, must a parent who really believes this doctrine behold his child when he presents him for baptism, and hears him denounced as a child of wrath, under the curse of God, and heir only of hell fire!” Answer. The believing parent, whilst presenting his child in the ordinance of baptism, is filled with feelings of love, and gratitude, and joy, whilst, after contemplating with deep humility his child’s lost state by nature, the eye of his faith is directed to the blood and water which issued from the pierced side of his crucified Redeemer—blood for justification, and water for sanctification. His eye affects his heart, whilst he contemplates that water which symbolically represents, not only pardon through the Redeemer’s blood, but regeneration through His blessed

Spirit. With feelings of ineffable gratitude and joy, he draws water out of the wells of salvation; he pleads the promises of the Gospel in behalf of his infant offspring, that God would pour water upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; that He would pour His Spirit upon his seed, and His blessing upon his offspring; that He would be his God, and the God of his seed. Whilst he thus pleads the promises, and anticipates the eternal felicity of himself and his offspring, so far from being filled with feelings of horror and disgust, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The Doctor proceeds: "What respect or reverence can a child feel for a parent who is a bondman of Satan, utterly opposed to everything that is spiritually good?" I answer, for such a parent he cannot feel so much reverence as for a pious parent, a child of God—and what then? Let such a parent flee from the wrath to come. Let him repent of his wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of his heart may be forgiven him, that he may escape from the snare of the devil, and be no longer led captive by him at his will. Becoming a child of God by faith, and a favourite of heaven, he is entitled to more respect, and will obtain more respect from his own children.

The Doctor goes on with his interrogatories thus:—"With what distrust, aversion, and gloomy horror, must the parents themselves view each other during life, wholly inclined to all evil, and tainted in every action and sentiment with corruption, with what anguish and despair at the hour of death?" Answer. Let such wicked parents forsake their ways, and such unrighteous parents their thoughts, and let them return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon them, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon. Let them look unto the Redeemer and be saved. Their distrust will then be turned into confidence, their aversion into love, their

gloomy horror into the assurance of hope, and their anguish and despair into happiness and joy.

The last two questions I might have answered more briefly by asking another; namely, What bearing have such questions on the doctrine of original sin? Answer: **NONE AT ALL.**

The Doctor goes on: "What encouragement have parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, if they think them irreversibly doomed to damnation?" Answer. No parent in his right mind ever thought that his children were irreversibly doomed to damnation. But what are we to think of that divine who is capable of putting such a question?

The Doctor proceeds: "How can young people remember their Creator without hatred and terror, who has brought them into existence only to be vessels of wrath." Quære: Do such foul insinuations bear no resemblance to calumny? Answer. Their Creator never brought *any* people into existence only to be vessels of wrath.

The Doctor persists: "There was some consistency, at least, in those fanatics who renounced matrimony for fear of such consequences." Answer. There was *no consistency*, such consequences being only bugbears conjured up by the fertile imagination of Dr. B. and those fanatics to whom he refers. All parents are encouraged to believe, and then the promise is to them and to their seed.

The Doctor again asks (p. 202), "Are not such doctrines the source of those gloomy thoughts which distract so many pious souls? Do they not deter many from cultivating or crediting religion, and harden them in infidelity and iniquity? May we not fear, that they impel many to hurry on their own fate, rather than endure the despondency, agitation, and torment of mind with which they are doomed to await it?" Answer.

Such is not the native tendency of the doctrines. Though, in some instances, such doctrines may be so abused, that is no argument against them. To argue against anything from its abuse, is not logic, but sophistry. If soothing men's minds, calming their fears, and lulling their consciences to sleep, be meritorious actions, Arian divines deserve great praise. But what should we think of that watchman, who, when the robber is wrenching the door, or the flames bursting from the window, should dissipate all fear by the pleasing intelligence, "*All is well—a fine morning!*" How much more faithful would we regard that watchman, who, without ceremony, and with a voice like thunder, should immediately vociferate—**FIRE! FIRE!** The horrid sound might injure some weak nerves. In a state of trepidation, one might break his arm, and another his leg. These are unfortunate circumstances, it is true, and much to be deplored; but not so deplorable as the fate of those who, lulled to sleep by their treacherous watchman, fall a prey to the devouring element, or perish by the hand of the midnight assassin.

The Doctor introduces a confused mass of heterogeneous matter relative to the Divine decrees. That God could not decree the fall without infringing the free agency of Adam has never yet been proved, and I am convinced, never will. Whenever our opponents reconcile the fall with Divine foreknowledge, we will reconcile it with Divine decrees. For farther remarks connected with this subject, we refer our readers to a subsequent part of this treatise, where Divine decrees will be more formally discussed, and the distinction between God's will of command and will of decree explained and established.

"It is agreed," says the Doctor, "that Adam's transgression and guilt became ours only by imputation." Answer. *There never was any such agreement.* We

are *really* guilty before God *imputes* guilt, for His judgment is always according to truth.

Our author then asks, "Did this imputation find us sinners, or make us so?"* This question, and the former assertions, are inconsistent with each other, and mutually destroy each other; for if by imputation alone we *become* sinners, we were not sinners before, and therefore imputation could not find us sinners. The question, therefore, being inconsistent with the previous statement, is absurd, and shows great want of discrimination in the querist. If imputation found us sinners, the Doctor declares that imputation was unnecessary. What! *unnecessary!* If so, it is unnecessary to impute theft to a man whom we have found stealing, or burglary to a man who is found guilty of house-breaking! But our author tells us, that if imputation found us sinners, imputation was unnecessary. Why? "We might have perished by our own sins." But how we could have perished by our own sins, if those sins had not been imputed to us, will require all the talents and ingenuity of Dr. B. to explain. The Doctor proceeds:—"If it

* In the theological discourses of the Rev. James Thompson of Quarrelwood, Scotland, a work which contains an immense fund of accurate information on the most important doctrines of religion—in a foot-note (vol. i. p. 74), we find the following assertion:—"It is not then God's *imputing* act that makes them guilty, but that act by which He constituted Adam their moral head." This sentence shows how difficult it is to form accurate ideas, or to express one's self accurately on so abstruse a subject. I entirely dissent from this acute and discriminating divine. God's act in constituting Adam our moral head could not possibly *make us guilty*. No act of God could make us guilty, otherwise God would be the author of sin. I believe all mankind are guilty of Adam's first sin, and I believe the guilt of that sin is imputed to them. I believe these facts, but I cannot explain them. I believe the facts, because the Scripture *states* them, and because it would involve the greatest absurdity to *deny* them. If they had not been *guilty* of Adam's first sin, God would not have condemned the whole human family to death for it. God never condemns the innocent.

found men innocent and made them sinners, then it was the cause of their sins, and God was the author of them. Again. If it found us free from sin, the imputation was false, charging those with sin whom it did not find sinners, and God condemned men on account of His own false imputation. Pardon the expression, for it is impossible to treat of these monstrous positions without contradiction and blasphemy." Monstrous positions indeed! and sufficiently interlarded with contradiction and blasphemy!—but they are his own positions—the contradiction his own—the blasphemy his own—we disclaim them *in toto*. I am glad, however, to find him on his knees begging pardon. He would do well to beg pardon, not only of his hearers, and his readers, but of his God, whose majesty he has insulted by such contradictory and blasphemous statements. Imputation neither finds men innocent, nor makes them sinners. Dr. B. should have studied imputation before he opposed it.

Dr. B. proceeds to ask (p. 206), "But why should we be answerable for only one transgression? If our guilt arises from the guilt of Adam, it must be aggravated by all his offences; and if we suffer the consequent corruption of his nature, the penalty of his transgressions, should we not also enjoy the benefit of his repentance and subsequent obedience? If we sinned in our federal head, we must have repented also."

Answer. After Adam committed his first sin, he ceased to be our representative; and therefore it is, that we can neither be charged with his subsequent sins, nor enjoy the benefit of his subsequent repentance. By Adam's first sin the covenant of works was broken, and Adam ceased to be our representative. A *new covenant*, the covenant of grace, was immediately proclaimed, in which covenant our blessed Redeemer represents all His spiritual seed. To all these (not the *repentance of Adam*, but)—the *obedience of Jesus Christ* is imputed for righteousness.

Dr. B. exclaims, "How strange and paradoxical is it, that while God is forgiving our own sins, He should condemn us for the offences of another!" Answer. However strange and paradoxical it may seem, it is a fact.* Still stranger, it is a fact admitted by Dr. B. himself. He has fully admitted that the whole human family are condemned to death for the sin of Adam—and what is still more strange and paradoxical, *that they are all condemned to die for a crime of which they are perfectly innocent!* Surely this is strange and paradoxical indeed! There are no such paradoxes in the Calvinistic scheme.

Dr. B. is generally careful to exhibit, in as frightful a form as possible, the difficulties of the system he opposes, whilst he studiously conceals those of his own. We frequently find him proposing, but seldom answering objections. In this he shows a good deal of generalship. After proposing an immense number of objections to the Calvinistic doctrine of original sin, at the close of his sermon he proposes to answer one, and states it thus: "But it has been asked, Is not the doctrine of original sin necessary to account for the existence of sin? How else came it into the world? I answer by another question, How did the original sin take place? Was it by the corruption of Adam's nature? This will not be pretended," &c. This objection is erroneously stated, and as weakly answered. We do not ask, "Is not the doctrine of original sin necessary to account for the *existence* of sin." This would be an absurd question. But we ask, Is not the doctrine of original sin necessary to account for the *universal prevalence* of sin and corruption? We do not ask, "How else came it into the

* When I say, *It is a fact*, I mean, it is a fact that we are condemned (not for the *offences*, as the Doctor erroneously states, but) for the *offence* of another. Neither Scripture nor Calvinism represents us as condemned for any offence of Adam but *one*.

world?" This would be absurd—but we ask, How else has it spread so widely that none have ever escaped its contagion? Such is the real objection; let us now attend to the Doctor's answer. It is this:—"I answer by another question: How did original sin take place? Was it by the corruption of Adam's nature?"

This is the old exploded answer of Dr. Taylor—an answer which President Edwards has triumphantly exposed, as completely weak and unphilosophical.

Because all men capable of moral agency sin, we infer a universal propensity to sin—a universal depravity, and corruption of nature. No general law was ever better established than this, the law of gravitation itself not excepted. How do we know that all heavy bodies gravitate towards the centre? We know it, and can prove it, only by an induction of particulars. We know, that in every instance in which a stone or heavy body has been projected into the air, it has uniformly returned to the surface of the earth. Hence we infer, that *all* heavy bodies gravitate towards the centre. In this manner the law of gravitation is satisfactorily established. And yet, it must be acknowledged, that the induction of particulars from which the law is inferred, is far from being complete. With regard to thousands and millions of stones and other heavy bodies, it has never been tried whether they would return to the surface or not. The law of sin and death is much better established. Every son and daughter of Adam (Enoch and Elias excepted), from the creation of the world down to the age in which we live, have died. Hence we infer, *That all men are mortal.*

Again. Every son and daughter of Adam, as soon as capable of moral agency, have sinned; and hence we infer—*That all men are depraved*—that there is in all mankind *an original and inherent propensity to sin.* Thus, it appears, that this original inherent propensity to sin, or in other words, this original depravity of

nature, is proved by evidence stronger, if possible, than that by which the law of gravitation is established. The law of gravitation is established by a *partial induction*; but the depravity of our nature, by a *universal induction* of facts. Now, how do our opponents, Dr. Taylor, Dr. Bruce, &c., answer this reasoning? Why, they tell us, that if the universal prevalence of sin proves an original propensity to sin, in like manner, Adam's first sin proved in him a similar propensity; that is to say, *one fact* is sufficient to prove a general law as well as a *universal induction of facts!* Such is the philosophy of that divine, who regards his neighbours as fanatics, enthusiasts, and bigots. Such is the reasoning by which Socinian and Arian writers think to disprove the doctrine of original depravity—a doctrine founded on the clearest dictates both of experience and Divine revelation.

To such of my readers as may still feel disposed to reject the doctrine of original sin, I would put a few questions. Did *Adam* eat forbidden fruit? and do not *we* eat forbidden fruit? Do we not in ten thousand instances commit those sins which God's pure and holy law forbids? Again: Did *Adam* fly from the presence of the Lord? and do not *we also* fly from His presence? do we not frequently feel an aversion to secret prayer, and other ordinances, through the medium of which we are admitted to the high honour of holding intercourse and communion with God? Once more: Did *Adam* and *Eve* form apologies for their conduct? Did *Adam* blame *Eve*, and *Eve* the Serpent? And do not *we* form ten thousand apologies for our crimes? Are we not apt to blame our neighbours, and everything around us, rather than ourselves? Finally: Did *Adam* and *Eve* sew fig leaves to conceal their nakedness? And are not *we* prone to think that the patchwork robe of our own righteousness—our penances, our pilgrimages, our prayers, our tears, our alms, &c., will be perfectly

sufficient to render us acceptable in the sight of God? Instead of submitting to God's righteousness, do we not go about to establish our own righteousness, forgetting that Jesus Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth? In a word: Do we not bear the *image* of Adam? Are not his features strongly marked in our character? With what face can we plead freedom from his guilt, whilst we continue to homologate his crimes? If we say we are perfect, we prove ourselves perverse. If we attempt to justify ourselves, our own mouths will condemn us. Were we to take snow water, and wash ourselves ever so white, yet the Almighty would plunge us in the ditch, and our own clothes would abhor us. Let every son of apostate Adam prostrate himself before the throne of grace, confessing with David, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;"—praying with the same penitent, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." In behalf of myself, my opponent, and all my readers, I would humbly and fervently pray—That as we have all borne the image of the *earthy*, so we may bear the image of the *heavenly* Adam. Amen.

CHAPTER VII.

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

SECTION I.

The Grace of God distinguishing.

THIS doctrine has been attacked of late, not only by Dr. B., but by a variety of eminent Arminian divines of the Establishment. In this combined attack, the learned Bishop of Down and Connor leads the van, and the celebrated Doctors Millar and Graves bring up the rear. To attempt a defence against such formidable assailants may appear presumptuous. Possessing, however, as I verily believe, the vantage ground of truth, I do not despair of ultimate success. I shall endeavour to give a reason of the hope that is in me with meekness and fear.

In all our inquiries, whether scientific or religious, our wisest mode of procedure undoubtedly is, to advance from the consideration of those truths which are more plain, to the investigation of those which are more difficult. Keeping this wise maxim in our eye, were we able to ascertain what is the Divine procedure respecting man in *time*, we might easily ascertain what were the Divine designs from *all eternity*. Creation and Providence are the best commentary on the Divine decrees; for "God executeth His decrees in the works of creation and providence." Let us first inquire, what does God actually *do*, in order to ascertain what from eternity He *intended* to do. That the Deity does nothing without previous intention and design, every

person who believes in His existence must grant ; and that none of the Divine designs or purposes are formed in time, but that they were all formed from eternity, few, I presume, will venture to deny. Were we for a moment to suppose that God forms any new design or purpose, we must at the same time deny His immutability—we must at the same time admit the blasphemous conclusion, that there is in the Divine mind “variableness, or shadow of turning.”

If, then, we wish to ascertain the eternal purposes or decrees of God* concerning sinners of our family,

* Our author asserts, that it was infinitely absurd to puzzle ourselves about the Divine decrees, and that, as the subject itself has never been revealed, it cannot be our duty to study it. Now, my dear Doctor, if you and I have never puzzled ourselves about the Divine decrees—if we have never studied the subject—is it not infinitely absurd to preach and write upon it, and to expect the public to attend our sermons, and read our treatises ? That our author has never puzzled himself about the Divine decrees—that he has never studied the subject, is abundantly evident. We have already heard him asking, whether the decree that man should fall originated before or after the fall. In his sermon on mysteries (and a very mysterious sermon it is), he speaks of that part of the economy of grace which was planned *before* Christ appeared in the world. A part, of course, was planned *after* His appearance—but, if there are any new thoughts or plans in the mind of the Deity, what becomes of His immutability ? By representing the decrees of the Almighty as secret, belonging purely to God, and not revealed to us, he proves clearly that he has not studied the subject, for God has revealed many of His purposes. He has revealed them by *creation*, by *providence*, and by His *Word*. I know that God decreed from all eternity to *create* the world, to *govern* the world, and to *judge* the world. I know He decreed whatever I know He has *done* ; and I know He decreed whatever He has told me He *will* do. Those decrees which have neither been revealed by creation, providence, nor Scripture, belong purely to God himself ; but those which are revealed belong to us and to our children. Of revealed truths, the Doctor says (p. 63)—“Some are merely speculative, others are calculated to influence our practice. It is evident, that these last are the truths

we must previously answer this question—What is His conduct towards them now in time? How does He *now* treat them? If He makes any distinctions *now in time*, He must have determined and decreed from all eternity to make those distinctions. This is a position which no intelligent person will venture to controvert. That distinctions exist now, and that distinctions will exist hereafter, is acknowledged by all who believe the Bible. That the world is distributed into two great classes, believers and unbelievers, penitent and impenitent, righteous and wicked, or sheep and goats, and that the whole human family will be so divided at the judgment of the great day, all Christians admit. Now, the great question is, who makes this distinction? Is it *God* or the *creature*? When one man believes, repents, and reforms, whilst another remains in unbelief, impenitence, and wickedness, who makes the difference? Is it the believer himself, or is it God? A proper answer to this question, I humbly conceive, would settle the whole controversy between the Calvinist and the Arminian. If man makes the difference, the *Arminian* is right; if God makes the difference, the *Calvinist* is right. Whether the first movements in faith and repentance are from God or the creature, according to the judicious statement of the late talented moderator of the Synod of Ulster, the Rev. Henry Cooke, *is the great cardinal point in debate*. If the first movements in faith and repentance are from *God*, the Calvinist is *right*; if from the *creature*, he is *wrong*. Arminians maintain that God has put salvation in the power of all—that if they make a proper improvement

which are said to belong to us and to our children." So then, only a PART of the truths of Divine revelation belong to us and to our children. Is not this Deism, or at least *semi-deism*? In attempting to explode the doctrine of predestination, our author resorts to his usual stratagem—involving the subject in clouds and darkness.

of the talents they possess, they shall infallibly arrive at faith, repentance, and salvation. Now, this system, however plausible at first sight, appears to me totally subversive of the grace of God. If all men are brought into a salvable state—and if all have talents which, if they improve, they shall be saved; when one man improves his talents and is saved, and another neglects them and is condemned, and when the question is put to the man who is saved, Who made thee to differ? may he not boldly reply—MYSELF? For this difference I am no way indebted to the grace of God, but wholly to my own exertions. My neighbour, who is now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, was precisely in the same situation with myself—he enjoyed the same means, he possessed the same talents, but he did not improve them, and therefore is miserable; whilst I improved mine, and therefore am happy! I ask my reader, is not this to exclude the grace of God, and to leave ample ground of boasting to the creature?

The apostle represents it as a thing quite unreasonable and absurd to suppose that one man should make himself to differ from another, with regard to the *miraculous gifts of the Spirit*. I ask, is it not still more unreasonable and absurd to suppose that one man should make himself to differ from another, with regard to what is incomparably more excellent—the *graces of the Spirit*. The Arminian makes himself to differ with regard to the graces of the Spirit of God. By persevering in prayer and other duties, he obtains faith, repentance, and other graces, and thus makes himself to differ from his unbelieving neighbours. For this difference he is in debt, not to the grace of God, but to his own exertions. His principles leave room for much greater pride and boasting than those of the proud Pharisee. The Pharisee acknowledged that it was God that made him to differ: “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men—or even as this publican.” The Arminian

can, in consistency with his own principles, make no such acknowledgment. The language of his prayer should run thus:—Thanks to myself, I am not as other men—I am not unbelieving, impenitent, nor wicked! His system, as I said before, entirely excludes the grace of God. I know he denies this conclusion; but he cannot avoid it. Let us hear his defence. I shall give it in the words of Dr. Graves, the Regius Professor of Divinity in Dublin College, and Chaplain to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant:—“In our accepting,” says the learned Doctor (Calvinistic Predestination, p. 448), “this offer of mercy, is there anything whereof to boast? Will the condemned criminal boast of his accepting of, and rejoicing in, a reprieve, rather than in being led to an ignominious death?—will the unhappy being, sinking under a pestilential disease, boast of his accepting a cure from that Great Physician, whom thousands around Him hail as the preserver of their lives?—will the prisoner, plunged in a dark and loathsome dungeon, when his chains are loosened, and the gate thrown open which confined him from the light of heaven, boast, because he walks forth to liberty and life?” This reasoning is, I confess, extremely plausible. It seems to vindicate the grace of God, and to exclude boasting on the part of man. A few observations, however, will show that it is quite inconclusive, and altogether unsatisfactory. The following question will expose the fallacy:—Had God left all mankind to perish *without any cure, without any reprieve, without ever loosening their chains, or opening the gate of their prison*—in a word, had He suffered all to perish, *without ever putting salvation in their power*, would he have acted justly, or unjustly? Arminians, Socinians, and Arians, all maintain, that it would be unjust in God to condemn any man, if salvation were not in his power. The learned Professor himself considers it not only inconsistent with the justice of God, but with “the whole tenor of the

Divine attributes and government." Of course, it was an act of *justice*, and not of *grace*, to put man into a salvable state. According to the Arminian system, if God brought us into being at all, He was obliged in *justice* to offer us a reprieve—He was obliged in *justice* to offer us a cure—He was obliged in *justice* to loosen our chains, and to set open our prison doors. All these, according to Arminian principles, were acts of *justice*, and not of *grace*. Of course we need not thank the Deity for doing any of these things. We need not thank Him for doing that which His *justice* obliged Him to do, and which it would have been *unjust* not to do. Thus the Arminian scheme cuts up by the roots, and entirely excludes, the grace of God. There is no grace in the *foundation* of the Arminian system, there is no grace in the *superstructure*, there is no grace in *any part of the building*. It is the very reverse of the system laid down in the Bible. The Scripture system is a system of *grace*. The *foundation* is of *grace*, the *superstructure* is of *grace*, and when the *top-stone* is brought forth, it will be with "shoutings of *grace*, *grace* unto it." God's purposes towards His people are purposes of *grace*, His covenant is a covenant of *grace*, the election of His people is an election of *grace*, their calling is a calling of *grace*, they are saved and called with a holy calling, not according to their works, but according to His purpose and *grace*, &c. They are justified by *grace*, adopted by *grace*, sanctified by *grace*, preserved by *grace*, and saved by *grace*. We Calvinists believe that it would have been just in God to leave the whole human family to perish, as He has actually left apostate angels. We conceive that the Deity was under no obligations to save the *one* class of sinners rather than the *other*. We believe that it is wholly owing to the sovereign distinguishing *grace* of God that *we* are "*prisoners of hope*," whilst fallen angels are "*reserved in chains of darkness*." We are convinced that God was under no

obligation, either to provide or offer us a Saviour. We adore His unmerited grace, and exclaim with the Apostle, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!"

Our Arminian brethren entertain different ideas. They imagine that, if we are brought into being at all, we cannot be justly abandoned to perish without remedy. The consequence is, though they do not perceive it, that even the *giving of God's own Son* is not an act of grace, but of justice! Had God not sent His Son, but abandoned us all to irremediable and unavoidable misery, the Arminian maintains, He would have treated us unjustly. From these premises, the impious conclusion unavoidably follows—that we have no right to thank God for His unspeakable gift!—that we have no reason to praise Him, either for providing or offering a Saviour! To provide a remedy, according to Arminians, Socinians, and Arians, was no act of *grace*, but a *debt*; for, it would have been unjust in God, according to them, to permit us to perish *without* a remedy! The truth is, that the atonement of Jesus Christ, according to the Arminian scheme, seems rather to be an atonement for the *injury God has done to us*, than for the sins we have committed against Him! Arminians seem to regard our state by nature, as a state of great hardship; and the benefits of redemption, as a kind of *compensation* for the injuries which we innocently suffer by the fall. They bring the Deity into this dilemma, that He must either *not* bring us into existence, or, if He *do* bring us into existence, that He must bring us into a salvable state, and grant us some privileges to *counterbalance* and *compensate* the evils to which we have been innocently exposed! Dr. Graves (p. 392) writes thus:—"Now, if the infant who expires before he has committed any crime be condemned because of Adam's sin, or if he inherits a nature so irremediably corrupt, that on his arriving at maturity, present guilt and future perdition are to him unavoidable, conferring on him such an existence seems irreconcil-

able with the whole tenor of the Divine attributes and government described in the Scripture, as, I trust, has been shown in the preceding discourses.”*

The native tendency of Arminian principles is to depreciate, supersede, and make void the atonement. “Arminians in general,” says President Edwards, in his Inquiry, “are very inconsistent with themselves in what they say of the inability of fallen man in this respect. They strenuously maintain, that it would be unjust in God to require anything of us beyond our present power and ability to perform, and also hold that we are now unable to perform perfect obedience, and that Christ died to satisfy for the imperfections of our

* In a still more explicit manner, Mr. M’Afee, another defender of the Arminian system, writes as follows (p. 24):—“As a consequence of the first transgression, all men are not only corrupted in their nature, but are also subject to temporal death. As an antidote to the former, Christ is termed the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And to make compensation for the latter, a decree is passed, through the atonement and resurrection of Christ, which determines the resurrection of every man. In proof of the latter proposition, I need only refer you, Sir, to 1 Cor. xv., where the Apostle more than once tells us, that if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised. It appears to me that the Apostle’s view of the subject was simply this; that as God, who is immutable in His designs, gave man a personal existence through Jesus Christ, and as that existence is necessarily accompanied with privations which subject him to temporal death, so, as a counterbalance to this, God, according to His goodness and justice, immutably purposed that all men should be raised from the dead through Christ.” And again (p. 13)—“As Christ died to give us a personal existence (accompanied with many privations, in consequence of the fall), He has made ample provision for every one, whereby these things are counterbalanced.” Thus, the benefits of redemption, through Jesus Christ, are represented as a compensation for the privations we suffer—*innocently suffer*—in consequence of the fall! Thus, the offended Sovereign of heaven and earth is represented in the work of our redemption, as *giving compensation for damages, and paying a debt of justice*, to His rebel offspring, rather than displaying the infinite riches of His grace and mercy!

obedience, and has made way that our imperfect obedience might be accepted instead of perfect ; wherein they seem insensibly to run themselves into the grossest inconsistency. For (as I have observed elsewhere) they hold that God, in mercy to mankind, has abolished that rigorous constitution or law that they were under originally, and, instead of it, has introduced a more mild constitution, and put us under a new law, which requires no more than imperfect sincere obedience, in compliance with our poor, infirm, impotent circumstances since the fall. Now, how can these things be made consistent ? I would ask, what law these imperfections of our obedience are a breach of ? If they are a breach of no law that we were ever under, then they are not sins. And if they be not sins, what need of Christ's dying to satisfy for them ? But if they are sins, and the breach of some law, what law is it ? They cannot be a breach of their new law, for that requires no other than imperfect obedience, or obedience with imperfections, and, therefore, to have obedience attended with imperfections is no breach of it, for it is as much as it requires. And they cannot be a breach of their old law, for that, they say, is entirely abolished ; and we never were under it. They say, it would not be just in God to require of us perfect obedience, because it would not be just to require more than we can perform, or to punish us for failing of it ; and, therefore, by their own scheme, the imperfections of our obedience do not deserve to be punished. What need, therefore, of Christ's dying to satisfy for them ? What need of His suffering, to satisfy for that which is no fault, and in its own nature deserves no suffering ? What need of Christ dying to purchase that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, when, according to their scheme, it would be unjust in itself that any other obedience than imperfect should be required ? What need of Christ's dying to make way for God's accepting

such an obedience, as it would be unjust in Him not to accept? Is there any need of Christ's dying to prevail with God not to do unrighteously? If it be said that Christ died to satisfy that old law for us, that so we might not be under it, but that there might be room for our being under a more mild law, still I would inquire, what need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law which (by their principles) it would be in itself unjust that we should be under, whether Christ had died or no, because, in our present state, we are not able to keep it?" Thus it appears that Arminian principles make void the grace of God, supersede the atonement, and lead to Arianism or Socinianism.

Dr. Millar, of Armagh, endeavours to retort the charge—he endeavours to convince his readers that it is not the Arminian, but the Calvinistic system that has this tendency. In his *Doctrines of Christianity* (p. 130) he writes thus:—"It was not unnatural that when the zeal of Calvinistic Protestants was no longer sustained by opposition, they should themselves recoil from the gloomy and terrible doctrine of the arbitrary decrees of God. Since Calvin, who seems to have been strongly actuated by the spirit of a leader of a sect, could yet acknowledge that the doctrine which he taught was a horrible decree, it may well be supposed that, in a later period, when the zeal of his followers had been gradually moderated by time and tranquillity, this doctrine should give offence to the reason of reflecting men, and dispose them to indulge themselves without restraint in qualifying the articles of their faith, that they might form for themselves what they would denominate a rational religion. Nor was the peculiar doctrine of Calvin free from a direct tendency to generate this corruption of the genuine principles of the Christian faith. When human salvation was referred to the arbitrary and irrespective decrees of God, the second person of the Trinity was easily conceived to be degraded from the

rank of a primary agent in the work of redemption to that of a mere instrument in the execution of a pre-ordained arrangement. Those who embraced this doctrine were accordingly disposed by it to attach less importance to the agency of the Son of God, and the transition was natural from a degraded opinion of His agency to a degraded estimate of His nature and character."

Now, surely no charge was ever more groundless than this. What! Must the Redeemer's character be conceived to be degraded, because He acted on a pre-concerted plan? How unreasonable the conception! To act without a previous plan would be degrading to the meanest mechanic. Nor is it at all true that those who believe in a pre-ordained arrangement are disposed to attach less importance to the agency of the Son of God. The *reverse* is the fact. They attach to His agency immensely more importance. Arminians maintain, that the guilt which Jesus Christ expiated by His blood was only *finite*; Calvinists, almost universally, maintain that it was *infinite*. As we, therefore, conceive that the Redeemer has performed an infinitely greater work, we attach *infinitely greater importance* to His agency. It is the Arminian, therefore, that entertains a degraded opinion of the agency of the Redeemer;*

* That Arminianism tends to degrade the merits of the Redeemer, and to exalt *human* merit, is abundantly evident: "And if God constituted the first man a federal head," says Mr. M'Affee, "and had he continued faithful, I see no reason why his whole posterity, who would have been saved eternally by the imputation of his righteousness, might not have sung glory, honour, and blessing, be ascribed to our father Adam, for ever and ever." An Arminian sees no reason why praises should not have been sung to father Adam, but a Calvinist sees every reason in the world. The Calvinist believes that had father Adam continued to obey, not only the commandment relative to the forbidden fruit, but all the commandments of God, not only for a few years, but for thousands of ages, he would have merited—*just nothing at all*. When he had done all he could, he would have been only an unprofitable servant—he would have done what was

and Dr. Millar assures us, that "the transition is natural from a degraded opinion of His agency to a degraded estimate of His character." The Arminian system, then, and not the Calvinistic, tends to Arianism, as the extract from Edwards fully proves.

his *duty* to do. Were some nobleman to present a large estate to M'Afee and his posterity for ever, on this simple condition, that Mr. M'Afee should return to the donor *one barley-corn*, would the fulfilment of this condition be so *meritorious* as to entitle Mr. M'Afee to the praises of his posterity through all generations? How absurd the idea! And yet, there is an infinitely greater proportion between a barley-corn and the fee simple of a large estate, than between the obedience of Adam and the eternal happiness of the whole human family. In the former case, according to Calvinistic ideas, the praises would be due, not to Mr. M'Afee, but to his kind benefactor; and in the latter—not to father Adam, but to our *Father in heaven*. Calvinists believe that the obedience, not only of Adam, but of all his posterity—nay, that the united obedience of all the men on earth, and all the angels in heaven, can merit *nothing*; and, at the same time they believe, that *every act* of the Redeemer's obedience was *infinitely meritorious*. Had Adam continued in obedience, and, in consequence of his perseverance, had the whole human family been confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness, his posterity, according to Calvinistic ideas, would have attributed all to the *free grace of God*; they would have felt no temptation to celebrate the praises of father Adam. So far from thinking with Mr. M'Afee, that the obedience of Adam would have been more meritorious than that of the Redeemer!—they would have regarded his obedience as having *no merit at all*. Mr. M'Afee labours hard to prove, that the human family would have enjoyed much greater happiness had they never fallen, than is to be enjoyed through the mediation of Jesus Christ—he degrades the work of redemption, and the merits of the Redeemer, by sinking them into comparative insignificance. Calvinists, on the contrary, entertain a low opinion of human merit, but high and exalted ideas of the merits of their Redeemer, and of the benefits of redemption—they believe that immensely more glory will redound to God, and happiness to His creatures, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, than would have accrued from a permanent state of unsinning obedience. The reader may now judge, whether it is the Calvinistic or Arminian system that exhibits degrading views of the Redeemer's agency and character.

The Doctor, however, persists in his attempt to substantiate his charge. He endeavours to prove it by facts. Page 224, he writes thus:—"If, to remove this uncertainty, the Synod (of Ulster) should be induced to recur to their ancient Confession of Faith, they would return to that which, as has already been exemplified in every instance, has naturally tended to pass into that very Arianism or Socinianism from which, in returning to it, they would endeavour to escape. What then would be gained by the change? They would have abandoned a system in which very various opinions are held at the same time, for another, the natural tendency of which has actually shown itself to be an alternate movement between the extremes of Calvinistic Trinitarianism and of Arianism or Socinianism."

In this paragraph the learned Doctor professes to reason from facts. Why then does he not adhere to facts? It is not a fact, that the Confession of Faith, or the Calvinism of that Confession, has in every instance tended to pass into Arianism or Socinianism. Has the Westminster Confession in the *Secession Church* tended towards Arianism or Socinianism? No: there is not in that church a single Arian or Socinian. Has the Westminster Confession in the *Reformed Presbyterian Church* tended towards Arianism or Socinianism? *It has not.* There is not in that church one single Arian or Socinian. Dr. Millar should be better acquainted with facts before he begins to reason from them. He should beware of stating as facts things which are not facts at all. It is a fact honourable to the Westminster Confession, that in every instance in this country, where subscription to that formula has been required, it has proved a bar to the introduction of Arianism. Another fact equally honourable to the Confession is, that Arianism made little or no progress in the Synod of Ulster, till that barrier was removed, till subscription to that Confession ceased to be required.

The last fact I shall mention, and one highly honourable to the Westminster Confession, is, that in no country in the world do "*Sound doctrine and the power of godliness*" more prevail, than in that country where Presbyterianism and Calvinism, as taught in that Confession, are the established religion of the State. What country on the face of this globe can bear a comparison with Scotland, either for orthodoxy or morality? So much for the charge of Dr. Millar, That the Calvinism of the Westminster Confession has a tendency towards Arianism. *What* system it is that has such a tendency, the reader is now left to judge.

SECTION II.

Of Free Agency.

The whole controversy between Arminians and Calvinists originates, I humbly conceive, in a misunderstanding with respect to free agency. It is generally imagined, that Calvinists deny the free agency of man; but this is a gross mistake. The Calvinist, as well as the Arminian, grants that if man were not free, he could not be accountable. The Calvinist, as well as the Arminian, grants that man is a voluntary agent, and when subject to no external restraint, can do what he pleases. The Calvinist believes that man, by the fall, did not lose his natural freedom. Had he lost this freedom, he would have ceased to be an accountable agent. But, though man did not lose his *natural* freedom by the fall, he lost his *moral* freedom. He is a slave to sin. This moral slavery is quite consistent with natural freedom. In a philosophical sense, he acts as freely now in pursuing the paths of vice and folly, as he did before the fall in running the ways of God's commandments. It is true that man, in consequence

of the fall, is not able to keep the whole law of God, nor is he able of himself to believe and repent. Man, by the fall, has lost his ability—not his *natural*, but his *moral* ability. By the fall man lost none of his powers and faculties. He has still an understanding, will, and affections. These faculties are only perverted, but not destroyed. Man has lost his *moral* ability; or, in other words, he has lost his *inclination to do good*. He is now wholly inclined to evil. The imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are only evil, and that continually.

Arminians conceive that indifference is essential to liberty—that to constitute an action virtuous, the mind must be in a state of equilibrium. Calvinists are of a quite different opinion. They conceive that, the greater a man's bias or propensity towards good, he is the more *virtuous*, and that the greater his bias or propensity towards evil, he is the more *vicious*. This appears to me to be a dictate both of Scripture and of common sense. The Scriptures represent the debauchee as arrived at the highest degree of wickedness, when his eyes are full of adultery, or rather of the adulteress, and when he *cannot cease from sin*. In accordance with this view are the dictates of common sense. The common sense even of the Arminian himself, when the matter is brought home to his business and his bosom, rebels against his speculative principles. No Arminian in the world would prefer a servant whose mind should be in a state of equilibrium, or indifference, with regard to moral honesty. In this case, with the Calvinist, he would certainly prefer that servant whose principles of honesty were so confirmed, that he could not deliberate for a moment whether he would rob his master, but would *immediately*, and, as it were *instinctively*, spurn every idea of dishonesty.

In a court of judicature, no criminal was ever known to plead, in arrest of judgment, his moral inability.

Was any parricide ever known to plead, in extenuation of his crime, that his hatred to his father was so great, that he found it quite impossible to avoid committing the horrid deed? Such a plea was never set up in arrest of judgment by any murderer. On the contrary, malice *prepensè* is that which stamps the crime with its characteristic enormity, and distinguishes it from manslaughter. If indifference were essential to liberty and free agency, as Arminians contend, holy angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, could neither be virtuous nor free agents. Nay, the Deity Himself could neither be virtuous nor free! None of these has a liberty of indifference; they are all *wholly* and *invariably* inclined to good. Nor could devils and damned souls be virtuous, for they have no liberty of indifference, they are *wholly* and *invariably* inclined to evil. To such absurd conclusions, Arminian ideas of liberty and free agency unavoidably lead.*

* Some Arminian writers almost admit those conclusions. "The moment Adam committed this one act of disobedience," says Mr. M'Asce, in his Rational and Scriptural Investigation, "he entailed on himself a state of debilitation, which laid him under the necessity of following his corrupt inclinations without any power to resist them." Again (p. 19), he says: "The first act of disobedience, therefore, rendered Adam as guilty as he ever after could become; because it rendered his after actions necessary, and consequently, as such, they were incapable of incurring additional guilt." "Hence I come to this conclusion," says the same writer in the same page, "that had Adam lived 930 years after his fall, without any restoration of his lapsed powers, his guilt would have been no greater than it was upon the perpetration of his first sin." Now, if, in consequence of his inability, it was impossible for Adam after the fall to commit sin, surely it is equally impossible for the damned in the place of misery to commit sin, for *their* inability is at least as great as that of Adam. Upon the same principle, it is equally impossible for the devil and his angels to commit sin, for *their* inability, also, is equally great. When the celebrated Mr. Wesley first taught that believers may in this life arrive at such a state of perfection as to live without

Were the distinction between natural freedom and moral freedom, natural ability and moral ability, carefully observed, the controversy between Arminians and Calvinists would, I humbly conceive, soon terminate. When such distinctions are confounded, Calvinism appears an *absurd, unreasonable, and horrible* system. We are commanded to obey the whole law of God—to believe, repent, &c.—and yet, according to the Calvinistic system, we can no more do these things than we can remove mountains. We are commanded to do things which we *cannot* do—things which are *impossible*—and punished for *not doing them!* This is regarded by Arminians as hard, unjust, and cruel. And, indeed, it would be so, were the inability *natural* and not *moral*. Nothing could be more unjust than to command a man to walk without legs, or to fly without wings, and then punish him for disobedience. But this moral inability

sin, many were astonished. But the disciple has far outdone the master. Mr. M'Affee, on Arminian principles, has proved—not that believers can live without sin; this would be a small thing, but he has proved—that *Adam after the fall, independent of a Redeemer, and without the aid of Divine grace, or influence of the blessed Spirit, could have lived without sin 930 years.* Yes, NINE HUNDRED AND THIRTY YEARS!! Now, if this “able antagonist” has succeeded in establishing this conclusion—and on Arminian principles the conclusion is undeniable—with still greater force of evidence he may conclude, that the sin of the “*old Serpent the devil and Satan*” is no greater now than the moment he fell! Though in Scripture, the devil is represented as that “*wicked one who sinneth from the beginning, and goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour,*” yet, according to Mr. M'Affee's principles, he and all his angels are living lives of perfect innocence!—they have lived without sin nearly six thousand years!—and will so live to all eternity! On the same principles, the damned in the place of misery and woe live without sin!—and hell itself is a place of *sinless perfection!!* Having mentioned sinless perfection, I beg the reader's indulgence whilst I offer a few observations on the doctrine. The advocates of this opinion brand us with infamy, as holding a “*death purgatory,*” because we believe that no man is totally freed from sin till the moment of death. They

of man—his inability to believe, repent, and obey—is of a *quite different nature*. It consists not in the want of *natural powers*, but in the want of *will and inclination*. Were a man ever so *willing*, he could not walk without legs, or fly without wings, or remove mountains; these are natural impossibilities. But if a man were willing to believe, repent, and obey, these duties would be performed. The inability, or impossibility, consists in the want of will and inclination. Ye will not come to me, says our Saviour, that ye may have life. It is accepted, says the Apostle Paul, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not, if there be first a willing mind.

To these observations it may be objected, that the darkness of the understanding, as well as the obstinacy of the will, may be regarded as a cause of unbelief, impenitence, or disobedience. I grant it. But, I stigmatize us as Antinomians. Now, in all my life, I never knew an instance in which a charge could with more justice and truth be retorted. The advocates of sinless or Christian perfection do not pretend that they can live without sin, with respect to the *old moral law given to Adam*, but only with respect to a *new law*, which they call a *law of liberty*. And thus they bring their hearers to a state of perfection, not by bringing them up to the law, but by bringing the law down to them; not by making them conform to the pure and holy law of God, but by making that pure and holy law conform to their obliquities; not by making the object measured conform to the rule, but the rule to the object measured! By such ingenious management as this, the most crooked object in nature might be proved to be straight! Thus it appears that Christian perfection is attained at the expense of bending and bringing down the law of God, and lowering the standard of Christian morality. If this is not Antinomianism, I should be glad to know what it is. The trite observation, that extremes are nearest meeting, is here remarkably verified. The Arminian who cries up good works, and the Antinomian who cries them down, meet in this point—opposition to the pure and perfect law of God. The very attempt to lower the standard of morality proves imperfection. If we say we are perfect, we prove ourselves perverse.

humbly conceive that no darkness, blindness, or ignorance, is at all criminal, any farther than as it is *voluntary*, or connected with the inclination or disposition of the heart. This I consider to be not only a dictate of common sense, but also of Divine revelation. This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and that men *love* darkness rather than light. It is not men's darkness, blindness, or ignorance, that is here represented as the ground of their condemnation, but their *love* of that darkness. Unregenerate men love darkness, and hate the light. It is because men receive not the *love* of the truth—not the truth, but the *love* of the truth—that God gives them over to strong delusion, to believe lies, that all may be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. Thus it appears that the inability of fallen man is a *moral* inability, consisting, not in the want of *natural powers*, but rather in the want of *will and inclination*. Such inability is perfectly consistent with natural freedom, and is no excuse for disobedience, unbelief, or impenitence. Every person who thinks at all must at once see that disinclination to what is *right* can never be an apology for what is *wrong*. Disinclination to obedience can never be an apology for disobedience. If disinclination to virtue were an apology for vice, the greater the aversion or disinclination, the better the apology, which is evidently absurd. That inability, which consists in man's want of will and inclination to do his duty, is so far from being an excuse, that it is the very thing in which his criminality consists. The greater a man's *natural inability* to do his duty, he is the more *excusable*; the greater his *moral inability* he is the more *inexcusable*, the more *guilty*. The greater a man's propensity to vice, the greater is his inability to practise virtue. If such inability were an excuse, then the greater the inability the *better* the excuse. On this principle, it would be wise to confirm

the habits of vice and immorality. On this principle, the more *wicked* any person is, he is the more *innocent*! The more wicked he is, he is the less able to do his duty; and the less able to do his duty, he is the less guilty for neglecting it; of course, when he is so desperately wicked, so completely depraved, that he is totally unable to do his duty, then he has *no guilt at all*, but is completely *innocent*! Such is the monstrous conclusion to which we must necessarily come, if we deny that moral slavery is consistent with natural freedom—or if we deny that there is any distinction between natural and moral inability—or if we deny that moral inability is inconsistent with guilt or blame. Inattention to the distinction between natural and moral inability, natural and moral necessity, natural and moral impossibility, &c., has been the cause of interminable disputes, and inextricable confusion. The distinction has in general been but ill understood. It has been a thousand times confounded, both by Calvinists and Arminians. Whenever a Calvinist confounds the distinction, he betrays his cause; and often has the cause been so betrayed. Arminians constantly confound the distinction. I have never yet met with any plausible Arminian reasoning, but what proceeded on the principle that there is *no distinction* between natural and moral inability, necessity, &c. Were the principle on which Arminians proceed correct—were there no distinction between natural and moral inability, &c., I would have no hesitation in saying that their reasonings are *completely conclusive*, and that I myself would become an Arminian immediately. But I am not more convinced of my own existence, than I am that the distinction is well founded, and, of course, that the Arminian reasonings are altogether inconclusive and sophistical. They may be resolved into that species of sophism which logicians denominate *ignorantia elenchi*, or a mistake of the question. Even Dr. Reid himself

(one of the most eminent moral philosophers) falls into this sophism. He supposes a sailor to maim himself, in order to be exempted from duty—and that his captain commands him, thus maimed, to climb the shrouds, and punishes him for disobedience. The Doctor conceives that this would be great cruelty, and so it would. But between this case and that of fallen man there is no analogy. The one is *natural*, the other is *moral*. The sailor could not obey, were he ever so willing: not so with fallen man. His inability consists in the want of will and inclination. Let us suppose another sailor, who has the use of all his limbs, but is, at the same time, of such a malignant disposition and stubborn temper, and has conceived such an implacable hatred towards his captain, and unconquerable aversion to his duty, that he cannot obey. This sailor, as well as the former, may be unable to climb the shrouds; but surely their cases are very different. The former might be justly blamed for maiming himself, but, after he was maimed, he could not be blamed for not using those limbs which he did not possess. To command, invite, and exhort him to do his duty, and punish him for not doing it, would be the greatest injustice and cruelty. But there would be no injustice, nor yet cruelty, in commanding, inviting, and exhorting the latter sailor, whose inability to obey arose, not from the want of physical strength, but from *stubbornness* and *obstinacy*—not from any deficiency in his limbs, but from *enmity* and *aversion*. The case of this latter sailor, and not of the former, represents the situation of fallen man. His inability is moral and not physical. Were his inability physical, it would be altogether unjust and cruel to command, invite, or entreat him, and then to punish him for unbelief or disobedience. But his inability is *moral*, and, therefore, there is no injustice or cruelty at all. Were man's inability natural, God would be obliged to remove that inability before He

could justly issue any commands. On this supposition Arminian ideas would be perfectly correct. But the inability is *moral*, and God is not obliged to remove *this species of inability* before He issues His commands.

That God is obliged to remove man's moral inability, and to give him grace, which if he improve he shall be saved, seems to me to be the GREAT FUNDAMENTAL ERROR of the Arminian system. It is this radical mistake, I humbly conceive, which leads Arminians into all their other errors. That I am fully justified in thinking so, will appear from the following remarks of the learned divinity professor, Dr. Graves (p. xiv.) :—
 “ But it seems to me that, to prove God vouchsafes Divine grace to all to whom is promulgated His revealed will, it is sufficient to show, that in such revelation He commands an obedience requiring such Divine assistance ; for it is inconsistent with all He teaches us of His attributes, to suppose that He would command what could not be performed, or rather withhold the means of performing what He commands. Nor can I agree to the doctrine that would impute to that Deity who punished Pharaoh for demanding the same tale of bricks while he withheld the straw—a system of moral government which would be equally inconsistent with His mercy and justice. Whenever this revealed will then is promulgated, I would assert that this power is communicated, in different degrees indeed, as God sees fit to deal out the measure of His grace ; but to all what, if used, would lead to further grace and ultimate salvation,* and, if neglected, shall rise up in witness,

* If, as Arminians contend, there is so much grace given to all, that if they improve it they shall be saved, I ask, how much improvement is necessary to secure salvation ? What endeavours are necessary ? If a man use half the endeavours in his power will this be sufficient ?—will *one-third* do ?—or must he use *two-thirds* ? Where must the line be drawn ? It must be somewhere. Suppose at one-half. The man, therefore, who uses half the endeavours in his power, obtains grace

and condemn the despisers of God's holy will."—(See also p. 211). In this quotation, the Doctor concludes that, because God gives commands which cannot be obeyed without grace and assistance, He therefore gives grace and assistance to all to whom those commands are addressed. Now, here lies the *grand error*. If our inability to obey were *natural*, the Doctor would be right; but it is *moral*, and therefore he is mistaken. God commands us to believe, to repent, and to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and our neighbour as ourselves. These commands, without Divine assistance, we can no more obey than we can remove mountains. But our inability is no excuse—it is the very thing in which our criminality consists. Our inability is great. No power less than omnipotent can remove it. But all this proves the greatness of our criminality—the enormity of our guilt. Our inability is great, because our *pride is great*, our *hatred is implacable*, our *enmity irreconcilable*. Would any rational being venture to apologise for his unbelief, disobedience, and impenitence, thus:—*I hate my God*; my mind is filled with enmity against Him; and therefore I cannot be justly commanded to love Him! *I hate my Redeemer*; I see no form nor comeliness in Him—no beauty why I should admire Him; and therefore I cannot be justly commanded to believe in Him! I would rather die in my sins than accept of salvation through His blood! I must therefore be excused, though, by my unbelief, I make God a liar, trample underfoot the blood of my Redeemer, and do despite to the Spirit of grace, who stands knocking

and is saved; but he who does not come up to this line, though within a hair-breadth of it, is condemned. One man goes to eternal happiness, and the other to eternal misery, and yet there was only a hair-breadth's difference in point of exertion or improvement! Let Dr. Graves solve this difficulty.
—See *Edwards' Remarks*.

at the door of my heart! My enmity is so great, I cannot help it! *I hate the pure and holy law of my God*; my mind is full of enmity against it; I cannot, therefore, be justly commanded to obey it! I must be excused, though I trample it under my feet! *I love my sins*; I roll them as a sweet morsel under my tongue; and therefore I cannot repent of them nor turn from them. I would rather die in them, and be eternally punished for them! In short, *my pride and my hatred are so great*, that I can neither love God, nor His law, nor His Son! *My enmity is so great*, that I can neither believe, repent, nor obey; and therefore faith, repentance, and obedience, cannot be justly required, unless God grant His grace and assistance! Would any of the sons of apostate Adam dare thus to apologise for their unbelief, impenitence, or disobedience? Have such monsters of wickedness any claims on Divine grace or assistance? Is it not a miracle of mercy, that God does not pour on such miscreants the cataracts of His wrath, and consign them to eternal separation from His presence—"unrespited, unpitied, unretrieved?" Is it not a miracle of mercy that, instead of making bare His red right arm, and hurling against such rebels the thunderbolts of His vengeance, He has sent His Son to *save* them—to *die* for them? Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He first loved us. While we were *enemies*, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

The Arminians are guilty of two grand mistakes. 1. In supposing that God was in justice obliged to provide a remedy, and to put salvation in the power of such rebels. 2. In supposing that His perfections oblige Him to remove our moral inability, and to make us willing to accept of that remedy. *We* maintain that the Deity is under *no* such obligations. What! when God's own children, whom He has nourished and brought up—to whom He has given life, and breath, and all

things—when these unnatural children turn round on their heavenly Father, and, with hearts filled with enmity, lift hostile arms, and wage impious war against Him who is the author of their existence, the length of their days, and the source of all their enjoyments—instead of crushing such rebels under His feet, or dashing them to pieces like a potter's vessel, is the insulted Governor of the universe obliged to put in their power the means of salvation? *Surely not.* When they had so basely forfeited His favour, He was under *no* obligation to make provision for their happiness. Or, if any will be so unreasonable as to affirm that His perfections obliged Him to make such provision, they will be forced to admit, as we have already shown, *that there is no grace in such provision*—that it is purely a *debt*.

Again. If God was not obliged to make provision for the recovery of His rebel offspring—if He was not obliged to provide a cure, much less was He obliged to make them willing to *accept* of that cure—if He was not obliged to offer them a reprieve, much less was He obliged to make them willing to *accept* of that reprieve; if He was not obliged to *loosen their chains, and open their prison doors*, much less was He obliged to make them willing to walk forth to liberty and life. Can God not command us to accept of that remedy which He has provided at infinite expense?—can He not command us to accept of a reprieve? and when our chains are loosened, and our prison doors thrown wide open, can He not command us to walk forth to liberty and life?—can He not issue these infinitely gracious commands till He has previously given us will and inclination to obey them? Surely nothing can be more absurd or unreasonable than such a supposition. Should Arminians reply, We do not say that God is obliged to give us will and inclination. I ask, What then do you mean by power to obey the commands of God? If you mean *natural power* or *natural faculties*, we have no dispute

with you on this subject; but if you mean *moral power*, that is nothing else than will and inclination. The supposition that God is obliged to vouchsafe His assisting grace to enable men to obey His commands, is, in every view of the subject, absurd. For if God is obliged to vouchsafe His grace, that grace vouchsafed is no longer grace, it is a debt. That which God in justice is bound to give, is not grace. Dr. Graves, and other Arminian writers, talk absurdly, and are guilty of a gross abuse of language, when they call by the name of grace that assistance which they allege God is bound to give, in order to enable us to obey His precepts. They should either give up their system, or, at least, they should call things by their proper names. From their vocabulary the word *grace* should be entirely expunged. It is a gross misnomer.

Both Arminians and Calvinists agree in this: that man, in his natural state, without Divine assistance, is utterly unable to believe, repent, and obey. This inability, as we have already seen, arises from, or rather consists in, our moral depravity. This depravity is *universal*. There is none that doeth good, no, *not one*. It is *total*. All the faculties of the soul are depraved—the understanding—the will—the affections—the imagination—the conscience—the heart. Men, in their natural state (Eph. iv. 18), have their “*understanding* darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” Their *will* and *affections* are carnal, and filled with enmity. (Rom. viii. 7), “The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to His law, neither indeed can be.” Men in their natural state are “haters of God,” and live hateful, and hating one another. “Madness is in their heart.” It is “deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” “Every imagination is only evil continually.” The state of fallen man involves in it two things, *guilt* and

depravity. Guilt is removed by the atoning blood of Jesus, as we have already seen; and depravity is removed by the renovating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost. Dr. B. maintains that baptism is regeneration.* To expect any subsequent regeneration, he stigmatizes as rank enthusiasm. He is not the first master in Israel who knew not these things, and needed to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, was also ignorant of this great and cardinal doctrine. Our Saviour assures him, that he needed not only baptism by water, but regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Baptism with water was the sign, but *regeneration*, or the *new birth*, was the thing signified. Water is the great regenerating agent in the *natural world*; the Holy Spirit in the moral world. The one is a fit emblem of the other. The vegetable world during the winter is in a state of decay. By the vernal showers it is regenerated, and the decayed face of the earth renewed. In like manner, by the blessed Spirit of all grace the souls of men are renewed, and the *moral world* regenerated. (Isaiah xlv. 3, 4), "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." Old and New Testaments unite in teaching the same blessed doctrine. (Titus. iiii. 5), "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to

* Dr. Mant, now Lord Bishop of Down and Connor, in his Bampton Lectures, and the Bishop of Lincoln, in his Refutation of Calvinism, advocate the same dangerous and uncharitable doctrine. For a refutation of it, the reader may consult the work of an eminent divine of the Church of England—*Scott's Remarks on the Refutation of Calvinism.*

His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." We may as well expect the renovation of the vegetable world without water, as the regeneration of the moral without the all-powerful influence of the Divine Spirit. The same Divine power which created the world, and raised the dead, is necessary to the restoration of our fallen nature, and regeneration of our perverted faculties. To illuminate our darkened understanding, requires the influence of that omnipotent Agent who said "Let there be light, and there was light." It is the same Almighty Being that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, who shines in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of His Son Jesus Christ. Some imagine that, as light expels darkness, so all that is necessary to expel the darkness of our minds is the light of the Divine Word. This, however, is a gross fallacy. Light, indeed, introduced into a dark room, will banish the darkness, but it will not give light to a man born blind. With regard to such a man, it is not only necessary that he should be introduced to the light; but, in order that he may profit by it, the cataract must be couched, his eyes must be opened. Just so with the natural man. He requires not only an external revelation, but an internal illumination. Hence the judicious prayer of David: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law." Were Dr. B. to offer the same prayer, it might not be unprofitable. By Divine illumination he might be brought to see, in the Sacred Volume, many wonderful things which he has never yet seen, particularly the necessity of the new birth—the necessity of a regeneration quite different from water baptism.

The omnipotent power of the blessed Spirit is not only necessary to open the darkened understanding, but also to bend the stubborn will. We have already seen, that men are naturally unwilling to come to the

Redeemer that they may have life, and that the carnal mind is enmity against God ; but God sends forth the rod of His strength out of Zion, and makes His people willing in the day of His power.—(Psal. cx. 3.) By the powerful energy of the blessed Spirit, He destroys the enmity of the carnal mind, and sheds abroad Divine love in the heart. In a word, man by nature is spiritually dead—dead in trespasses and sins. To raise him from his spiritual death, and enable him to walk with Jesus in newness of life, requires an exertion of Divine power equal to that which raises the dead. To enable an unregenerate man to believe, requires, not only the power of God, but the *exceeding greatness* of His power. (Eph. i. 19)—“And what is the *exceeding greatness* of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.” The same apostle prays for the Thessalonians, “That God would fulfil all the good pleasure of His will, and the work of faith with *power*.” It is the powerful agency of that same Spirit which entered into Ezekiel’s dried bones, that quickens dead sinners—that begins the good work of grace, and carries it on to perfection in the day of Christ Jesus. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus that makes us free from the law of sin and death. By His blessed agency sinners are created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works—they are renewed in the spirit of their minds—old things pass away, and all things become new. My readers are now left to judge what kind of a system that must be, which does not embrace, but rather excludes, the regenerating and sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost.

Should any person ask, is it the duty of fallen man to regenerate himself, I answer, *it is*. Many, I know, will be astonished at this answer. They will be ready to exclaim, What ! the duty of fallen man to regenerate himself ? What monstrous absurdity ! Might he not,

with as much reason, be required to *create* himself? or to raise himself from the dead? By no means; though the impossibility in the one case is as great as that in the other, it is of a quite different nature; and, therefore, the greatness of the impossibility does not affect the obligation of the duty, nor render the requirement of it unreasonable. That it is the duty of fallen man to regenerate himself, cannot reasonably be doubted by any who believe the Bible to be the Word of God. In the Sacred Volume we are expressly enjoined to regenerate ourselves. (Ezekiel, xviii. 31)—“Make you a new heart, and a new spirit.” Now, if regeneration, or the making of a new heart and a new spirit, were not a duty, it would not be enjoined. The righteous Governor of the universe cannot possibly issue any command, which it is not our duty to obey. His commandments are not grievous; they are all holy, just, and good. Would it be unjust or cruel in a husband to address his unfaithful spouse thus:—Break off your adulterous connexions, and become a *new woman*. Be a faithful, loving, and obedient wife. Be no longer for another man, and so will I also be for thee.” Would such an address be unreasonable or cruel? *Surely not*. Such an abandoned female might indeed find it as great an impossibility to become a new woman—to become a faithful, loving, and obedient wife—as to create herself out of nothing, or to raise herself from the dead. But surely every person must see that such impossibility, arising from dissipation and depravity, could not possibly be any excuse—could not possibly relax her obligations to duty and obedience.

I ask again, would it be unjust or cruel in a father to address his prodigal son thus:—Leave off your courses of dissipation and prodigality. Become a new man. Behave as a dutiful and obedient son, and you shall be heir of all my possessions. Would such requisitions be unjust or cruel? *Surely not*. And yet the son might be such an abandoned, dissipated, character,

that he could no more obey his father's injunctions, than he could raise the dead, or create a world. Why then may not God, our heavenly Father, address us, His prodigal and rebellious offspring, in similar language? Why may He not say unto us, "Repent and turn yourselves from your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die?" When enjoined to make a new heart and a new spirit, all that is required is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and our neighbour as ourselves. Is it unreasonable, I ask, for God to require of us to love Himself, and to love one another? Surely nothing can be more reasonable. It is true, I acknowledge that, in our present depraved state, we can no more comply with those reasonable requirements than we could create ourselves out of nothing, or raise the dead. But such inability proves what? It fully proves that we are **MONSTROUSLY DEPRAVED, DESPERATELY WICKED, AND QUITE INEXCUSABLE.**

With regard to the unfaithful wife, and prodigal son, mentioned above, would any one say, that the husband, after making the gracious proposals previously stated, was obliged, moreover, to change his wife's depraved and dissipated mind?—that he was obliged to change her hatred and disaffection into love?—or that the father was obliged to eradicate his son's vicious habits and corrupt propensities, and to infuse into his mind filial piety and virtuous affections? Surely this would be highly unreasonable. But, perhaps, it may be said, the cases are not parallel. The husband was not able to change the dispositions of his wife, nor the father of his son, but God is able to change the dispositions of all His children. I grant it. But, because He is *able*, is He therefore *bound* to do it? Surely not. He is *able* in a moment to eradicate every vestige of wickedness

out of the minds both of men and devils, but He is not therefore *bound* to do it. He is neither bound to *prevent* men from sinning, nor, after they have sinned, is He under the smallest obligation to eradicate their depravity, and restore them again to a state of holiness and bliss. If He *were* bound to do these things, the operation, as I stated before, would not be *grace*, but *debt*.

The learned Professor of Divinity in Trinity College, and Arminians in general, maintain that God has *conditionally* bound himself to give a new heart, faith, repentance, and other graces. They allege that He has engaged to give these things to all who sincerely seek them. He has promised, they tell us, to give His holy Spirit to them that ask Him.

In all this there is a complete fallacy. Arminians here are altogether mistaken. In the whole Sacred Volume, there is not a single promise made to the prayers or endeavours of unregenerate men. In the prayers and endeavours of unregenerate men there is nothing of the nature of true virtue—nothing that is well pleasing in the sight of God. Their prayers and other endeavours cannot be acceptable, because they do not proceed from *faith*; for without faith it is impossible to please God—they cannot be acceptable, because they do not proceed from *love*. Nothing can be acceptable that proceeds from a mind filled with enmity. If we give all our goods to feed the poor, and have not charity (*love*), it will profit us nothing. Finally, unregenerate men have no regard to the *Divine glory*, and, therefore, their prayers and other endeavours are altogether unacceptable. Whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, all should be done to the glory of God. Arminians talk absurdly when they talk of the *sincere* prayers and endeavours of unregenerate men. In an unrenewed heart—in a heart filled with pride, enmity, and unbelief, there can be no *true* sincerity, no *godly* sincerity. There may be a sincere desire to *avoid misery*, or a sincere

desire to be *happy*. The devil himself has this sincerity. But there is no sincere *love to God*—no sincere *love to His law*—no sincere *love to holiness*. In a word, an unregenerate man has no sincerity which is truly virtuous, and, on this account, well pleasing in the sight of God. God has not promised His Spirit, as Arminians suppose, in answer to the prayers of unregenerate men. It is true He has promised His holy Spirit to them that ask Him; but how must they ask? Is it not in faith? And does not faith presuppose regeneration?—and does not regeneration presuppose a previous influence of the Holy Ghost?

When our Saviour says, Ask and ye shall receive, and assures us that every one that asks receives, &c., He only intends that species of asking, seeking, and knocking, which is accompanied with faith. (Matt. xxi. 22) —“All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, *believing*, ye shall receive.” The Apostle James teaches the same doctrine. (James i. 5, 6) “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God . . . but let him ask in *faith* nothing wavering.” That the promises of the Gospel are not made to every species of asking, seeking, and knocking, is evident, not from the above-cited texts only: the Spirit of God positively declares, with regard to certain characters who are not believers, (Prov. i. 28) “Then shall they call, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me.” It is only the prayer of faith that God has promised to hear; and faith the apostle assures us is “not of ourselves, it is the gift of God.”*

* Arminians endeavour to evade the force of this text by a grammatical criticism. They say it cannot be *faith* that is the gift of God; for the relative *τουτο*, being in the neuter gender, cannot agree with *πιστις*, which is feminine. Now, if this criticism be admitted to be just, upon the very same principle Arminians might contend that, in Phil. i. 28, salvation is not said to be of God; for *τουτο*, in the neuter gender

Dr. Graves fully admits (p. 273) that we cannot pray acceptably, till God previously pour upon us a spirit of grace and supplication ; and thus we are furnished with a striking example of that species of sophism, which logicians denominate "reasoning in a circle," or "the circulating syllogism." Ask Dr. Graves how we are to obtain faith ; he will say, *by prayer*. Ask him again, how can we pray acceptably ; he will reply, *by faith*. That is to say, acceptable prayer precedes faith, and yet faith precedes acceptable prayer ! Such is the contradiction in which the Arminian system involves one of its most learned advocates !

It is, therefore, abundantly evident, that when a man believes and repents, God is the *first mover*. It is God that has made that man to differ from his unbelieving and impenitent neighbours. The Arminian says, No. The man himself was the first mover. By his earnest prayers he moved God to grant him faith and repentance. But, let me ask the Arminian, who poured upon him this spirit of grace and supplication ? who enabled him to pray so fervently ? Surely it was God. The Deity then was *still* the first mover, and still it was God that made him to differ. Dr. Graves maintains, that all the Divine promises and dispensations are conditional. I grant, indeed, that certain privileges are promised on certain conditions ; but then I maintain, that in all those who are saved, God Himself works *those very conditions*. Salvation is promised on the condition of faith ; but, in all who are saved, God Himself works this condition. Faith is the gift of God. Jesus Christ is both the author and finisher of faith. Unto you it is *given*, says the apostle, not only to *believe*, but to suffer for His sake.

can no more agree with the antecedent *σωτηρίας* in the *one* case, than with *πιστεως* in the other. The truth is, that in these cases, and others that might be adduced, the neuter relatives do not refer immediately to the feminine nouns that precede them, but to the word *πραγμα*, understood.

The conditions which are mentioned in Scripture are conditions of connexion. There is a real and inviolable connexion between faith and salvation. It is the duty of all to believe, and all who believe shall be saved. These propositions are both true; but it is equally true, that none will believe, but those whom God by His omnipotent grace persuades and enables to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to them in the Gospel. To all others the Redeemer may say, as He said to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." No less unwilling are those who believe, till, in the day of His power, God *makes them willing*. The careful student of the Sacred Volume will easily perceive, that what God enjoins as a condition, and commands as a duty, He has elsewhere promised as a *privilege*. Wash ye, make ye clean, is a duty commanded; but what is thus commanded is elsewhere promised. (Ezek. xxxvi. 25), "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." The conditional promises to all the heirs of glory are converted into absolute promises. For instance, "If ye are willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land," is a conditional promise, but it is turned into an absolute promise, thus: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Arminians look only at *one* side of the subject—at the *conditions* of the promises; but they seem to forget that those very conditions God has promised effectually to work in the souls of all who shall be finally saved. Supposing, for a moment, the Arminian doctrine to be true, that all the promises are conditional, and that the conditions of the promises depend on the self-determining power of the will, then it is possible that *no promise should ever be fulfilled*. For example, "He that believes shall be saved," is a conditional promise. Now, if it depend on the free will of every man whether he believe or not—

if every individual may reject the Gospel, then all may reject it, and none may be saved. According to this Arminian tenet, it is in the power of free will to frustrate the whole work of redemption. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life; but the free will of man may render all this love useless. Notwithstanding this love, all may perish and not one be saved. Jesus Christ loved His Church, and gave Himself for her.

“He was betrayed, forsook, denied,
Wept, languished, prayed, bled, thirsted, groaned, and died;
Hung, pierced and bare, insulted by the foe,
All heaven in tears above, man unconcerned below!”

But it is in the power of free will to render all that Jesus Christ has done and suffered quite vain and without effect. His love may have been exercised in vain—His blood may have been shed in vain, and the ransom, the price of our redemption, paid in vain! Dr. Graves tells us, that the Holy Spirit may be resisted, quenched, and grieved; upon his own principles, he might have added—that his mission, and all his gracious operations, may, by the free will of the creature, be rendered altogether vain and ineffectual.

“Time flies, death urges, knells call, heaven invites,
Hell threatens: all exerts; in effort, all;
More than creation labours.”

But all the exertions of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; of prophets and apostles, pastors and teachers; of God, angels, and men—all these mighty and combined exertions to save sinners may ultimately prove utterly abortive; the perverse will of man may completely counteract and frustrate them all!—the old serpent may prevail over the seed of the woman—Michael and his angels may be completely foiled, whilst the devil and his angels enjoy an eternal triumph! All this may be

done by Arminian free will! Free will must turn the balance; free will must decide whether the dragon or the Lamb shall be ultimately victorious! According to the Arminian system, and the plain language of an Arminian poet,

—“God *wills*—Almighty man *decrees*;
Man is the maker of the almighty fates.”

By the omnipotent power of free will, the almighty power of God may be counteracted, and all the promises He has made relative to the success of His Son's undertaking, may fail of accomplishment! God, who cannot lie, promised eternal life before the world began; but Arminian free will can frustrate this promise! God, who cannot lie, promised that Jesus Christ shall see His seed, and prolong His days, and that the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand; but Arminian free will may determine, in opposition to all these promises, that the Redeemer shall never see one of His seed—one of the travail of His soul—that He shall never be satisfied, but for ever discontent—that the pleasure of the Lord shall never prosper in His hand—that He shall never obtain the heathen for His inheritance, nor the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession! These promises, with regard to us, are all, I humbly conceive, *absolute*, but free will can frustrate them all! It depends on free will, according to the Arminian, whether any one of them shall ever be accomplished! In vain do Arminians attempt to evade the force of the preceding reasoning, by saying that God foreknew that free will would determine otherwise. The evasion will not do. It makes bad worse. The foreknowledge of contingent events involves a contradiction, as we shall afterwards see: and we all know that contradictions can solve no difficulties.

But, were we to suffer such contradictions to pass, and were we to admit that God foresees that some will

believe, though at the same time they may *never* believe, *still the evasion would not do*. Were every iota to come to pass exactly as God had promised, still it was not *God* that fulfilled those promises. Were I to promise that Dr. Graves shall preach first Christmas-day in the Castle Chapel, and that the Lord Lieutenant shall be a hearer; and were all this to come to pass as I had promised, surely nobody would say that I fulfilled the promise. The Doctor's preaching does not depend upon *my* will but upon his *own* will—the Lord Lieutenant's hearing does not depend upon *my* will but upon *his own*. Supposing, therefore, that the one should preach, and the other should hear, as I had promised, surely it requires no logic to prove that it was not *I* who fulfilled the promise. Just so with regard to the promises made to the Redeemer—the fulfilment of them, according to Arminian principles, does not depend on the will of God, but on the free will of the creature. Supposing, therefore, that every iota that God promised to His Son should actually come to pass, still no person could say that *God* had fulfilled those promises. On the Arminian hypothesis, it would be impossible for the Deity to fulfil *one* of them!

From the preceding reasoning, I hope it is evident, that when any believe, repent, and are saved, it is God who makes them to differ from those who continue in unbelief and impenitence—and, if this be so, the doctrine of election and reprobation is established. If God makes a difference, He must have *determined* to make that difference. The Deity can do nothing without *determining* to do it. And, as there cannot possibly be any new determinations in the Divine mind, He must have determined to make that difference from *all eternity*. In other words, from all eternity He must have chosen to salvation all those who shall be finally saved. *This is election*. On the other hand, God does not work faith, repentance, &c. in the minds of all. He leaves

some in their unbelief, impenitence, and wickedness, on account of which He finally condemns them. Of course, He must have *determined* so to do—determined, *not in time*, for there are in the Divine mind no new determinations, but from *all eternity*. *This is reprobation*. If it is just in God *now in time* to make such distinctions between one class of His rebel subjects and another, where was the injustice in decreeing *from eternity* to make those distinctions? On such principles, as well as on a multitude of express declarations of Scripture, some of which shall be afterwards quoted, I rest the doctrine of predestination.

SECTION III.

Election and Reprobation more formally defended, and the attacks of the most eminent Anti-Calvinists repelled.

The decrees of election and reprobation are stigmatized by Arminians, Socinians, and Arians, with the most opprobrious epithets. Dr. Bruce, Dr. Millar, Dr. Graves, and Bishop Mant, scarcely ever mention them without prefixing such epithets as the following:—*arbitrary* and *irrespective*, *cruel* and *unrelenting*, *severe* and *terrific*, *gloomy* and *horrible*! These epithets are generally prefixed in couples, as if one of them would be too little to excite in the minds of men a suitable degree of *horror* and *disgust*.

As an abusive epithet, the adjective *arbitrary* is admirably adapted for exciting odium. It conveys the idea of something *capricious* and *tyrannical*. If, however, there is nothing capricious or tyrannical in *Divine providence*, neither can there be anything of a capricious or tyrannical nature in the *Divine decrees*, for the latter are an exact copy, or counterpart, of the

former. The decrees of God being the dictates of infinite wisdom, and being infinitely opposed to everything capricious or tyrannical, are designated in Scripture—"THE COUNSEL OF HIS WILL."

The epithet *irrespective* is also well calculated to excite odium against the doctrine of Divine decrees. In a qualified sense it may indeed be admitted, as applied to election. We have no objection to the term, if it is only meant to convey the idea that election was not founded on foreseen faith, or good works, or any other virtuous qualification, or disposition, of its object. In this sense, we fully admit that election is *irrespective*. The Arminian doctrine, that election was founded on foreseen faith and good works, has its foundation neither in Scripture, nor in reason, nor yet in the standards of the Church of England. It has no foundation in Scripture. Election, in Scripture, is described as an election of *grace*, and if it be of grace, it is no more of works. In Scripture we read, not that those who were *foreseen to believe* were ordained to eternal life, but that as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Dr. B. boasts of the simplicity of his system, and wishes his hearers to believe that, in the support of it, there is no necessity for a deviation from the received version. The reverse, however, is the fact. New translations and verbal criticisms are constantly necessary. Acts xiii. 48 affords a striking example. Our translation, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed," is so clear a proof of predestination, that, in order to subvert it, all the powers of verbal criticism have been roused to action. Socinians, Arminians, and Arians, all attack our version. As the case is desperate, the opposition is determined. When the assailants fail in argument, they increase in confidence, and, by pouring contempt on their Calvinistic opponents, they vainly hope to drive them off the field. Dr. Adam Clarke represents

the text as *pitifully* misunderstood by the Calvinists; and the Bishop of Down and Connor quotes with approbation Pyle and Grotius, who pronounce those *blind* who cannot see the propriety of their new version. Dr. A. Clarke very properly observes, that we should be careful to examine *what* a word means, before we attempt to fix its meaning. He then proceeds thus:—“Whatever τεταγμένοι may mean, which is the word we translate *ordained*, it is neither προτεταγμένοι nor προηορισμένοι, which the Apostle uses, but τεταγμένοι, which includes no idea of pre-ordination or predestination of any kind.” What! Has the Doctor forgotten his favourite maxim, that with the Deity past knowledge and present knowledge are the same? Or does he need to be told, that with God to *destine* and to *predestinate*, to *ordain* and to *pre-ordain*, are all one? The Doctor’s criticism, made with so much pomp, depends upon the absurd hypothesis, that there are in the Divine mind *new* thoughts, purposes, and determinations! Grant that any were *ordained* to eternal life, and—unless there be in the Divine mind variableness and shadow of turning—the conclusion inevitably follows, that they were *pre-ordained*. The word translated “ordained” our opponents render *disposed*, *well-disposed*, or *possessed of good dispositions*. On this translation I would make the following remarks:—

1. It substitutes a *far-fetched* meaning (if any meaning at all) for an *ordinary* one. Whether is that system more likely to be true, which takes words in their *common acceptation*, or that which constantly needs the aid of *far-fetched meanings*?

2. I do not conceive that it has ever been satisfactorily proved that the word has *any such meaning* as that assigned to it by our opponents. The instances adduced by Whitby, to prove that the word signifies persons internally disposed, and not outwardly ordained—though relied on with great confidence by the Lord

Bishop of Down and Connor, and other anti-Calvinistic writers—appear to me altogether unsatisfactory. If I am not much mistaken, they completely fail in establishing the point. In affixing to a word a meaning which has not been generally received, and which is disputed, it is necessary to quote instances which cannot be explained on the principle of any of its ordinary significations. I lay down this as a canon, which I flatter myself no candid critic will controvert. On the principle of this canon, I proceed to examine Whitby's instances. His first is, "Acts xx. 13, St. Paul went on foot to Assos, *οὕτω γὰρ ἦν διατεταγμενος*, for so he was disposed to do." Now, I appeal to every candid critic, if the Doctor's translation be not quite *gratuitous*, and if the words would not be more naturally translated thus:—*for so he was appointed according to mutual arrangement*. The preposition *δια* shows that an arrangement had been made *between* Paul and the ship's company.

The Doctor's second instance is Ecclus. x. 1, *ηγεμονια σουστον τεταγμενη εσται*, "The government of the wise man will be well ordered or disposed." But this refers not to the *internal dispositions of mind*, but to the *external administration of government*. It is, therefore, totally inapplicable.

His third instance is Philo's address to Cain, "Thou needest not fear being killed by them who are *εν ση τεταγμενοι συμμαχια*, 'ranked on thy side,' i. e. of the same dispositions and affections." Now, to say that this Greek phrase is designed to express the internal dispositions, and not the external hostilities of the enemies of the Church, is nothing but a mere begging of the question.

His fourth instance is the words of Philo respecting "those children who, having had vicious parents, have themselves proved virtuous." He says that they are *αμεινω τεταγμενοι ταξει*, "placed in a better rank." And,

speaking of Esau and Jacob, he represents Esau as fierce, subject to anger and other passions, and governed by his brutish part; but Jacob as a lover of virtue and truth, and so *ἐν τῇ βελτίονι τεταγμενός ταξεί*, placed in a better rank of men, or one of a better temper and disposition." Jacob was placed in a better rank; but who placed him? Was it *God* or *himself*? The children mentioned above were placed in a better rank, but who placed them? Was it *God* or *themselves*? To say that either Jacob or those children wrought in themselves good dispositions, and by this means placed themselves in a better rank, is a barefaced begging of the question, and contrary to the whole tenor of Revelation. (Rom. ix. 11-13)—("For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth,) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

His fifth instance is still less to the purpose. Samuel was *τεταγμενός θεῷ*, "one well disposed towards God." This I regard as a complete mistranslation—*θεῷ* is the dative of the agent. The clause should be translated, "*Samuel was ordained, appointed, or placed, BY God*" (according as the context may require). The rule of syntax which warrants this translation is the following: *Agens aliquando effertur in dativo; sic, τι πεπρακται τοις αλλοις; Quid ab aliis factum est?*

Whitby's last instance would induce one to think that he had abandoned the meaning for which he was contending, and had completely come over to the Calvinistic camp. It is the words of Epictetus, *απο θεου τεταγμενός εις ταυτην την ταξι*, being by God placed in that rank. The person here is represented as placed in a rank, not by his own inclinations or dispositions, but *by God*, or in other words, *by Divine ordination and appointment*—God exciting Him, as Simplicius interprets. Now,

surely this instance, so far from overturning, completely establishes the received version. On the whole, we deny that the word *τεταγμενοι* has, in any of those instances, the meaning which our opponents attempt to impose upon it. The most learned lexicographers and philologists acknowledge *no such meaning*. Schleusner does not recognise it—his translation of the text is, “Quot quot destinati erant a Deo felicitati Christianorum æternæ.” And the learned Morus, though a decided anti-Calvinist, translates it thus:—“Atque eam (doctrinam) amplexi sunt fide quicumque felicitati æternæ destinati erant.” Whether Dr. A. Clarke’s charge of prejudice do not recoil upon himself, and on anti-Calvinists in general, the learned reader is now left to judge. Should criticism fail, the Lord Bishop of Down and Connor imagines he can make his escape, by alleging that God ordained to eternal life the persons mentioned, on the foresight of their good dispositions—but the evasion will not do. From the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation—from the creation of the world down to the present day, his Lordship will not find one single person possessed of good dispositions till they are implanted by the Almighty. In Scripture we read, not that those who were foreseen to be holy, or possessed of good dispositions, were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, but that “we were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, *that we might be holy*.” Holiness and good dispositions are represented, not as the causes or foundation, but as the fruits and effects of election. What our Saviour said to His disciples, in the days of His flesh, is equally applicable to believers in every age—“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit.” As we love God because He first loved us, so we choose Him because He first chose us. (Psal. lxxv. 4)—“Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee.”

2. That election is founded on foreseen faith and good works, is contrary, not only to Scripture, but also to reason. On Arminian principles, it involves a contradiction. Arminians allege, that it depends on the free will of the creature whether any believe or do good works. According to them, it is possible that *all* may remain unbelievers and wicked. Now, if the Deity foresee that some will believe and do good works, and yet these persons may *never* believe nor do good works—it follows, that what God foresees *as future* may, nevertheless, *not be future*—and what He foresees will come to pass may, nevertheless, *not come to pass*—it follows, that God may be mistaken and disappointed!—that He foresees and does *not* foresee at the same time! I conclude, therefore—and I think I do it on the incontrovertible principles of mathematical demonstration—I conclude that election could not possibly be founded on foreseen faith and good works, because faith and good works, on Arminian principles, could not *possibly* be foreseen.

3. As the doctrine of election founded on foreseen faith and good works is both unscriptural and unreasonable, so it has no foundation in the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England. Bishop Mant, and Doctors Millar and Graves, wish us to believe that the Thirty-nine Articles are Arminian—and that the clergy of the Church of England were Arminian at the time the Articles were framed; but they labour in vain. The following extracts from the letters of Dr. Millar of New York, abundantly prove the vanity of the attempt:—“Calvin was not only respectfully consulted by the English Reformers, but he had also much influence among them. That great deference was paid to his judgment, will appear from this fact, that, on the first appearance of the English Liturgy, it prescribed praying for the dead, chrism, extreme unction, and other Popish superstitions. These, Calvin, in a letter

to the Protector, very frankly and decidedly blamed. The consequence of which was, that all these offensive things were left out, agreeably to his advice. Dr. Heylin himself declares, that these alterations were made in compliance with Calvin's wishes. 'The first Liturgy,' says he, 'was discontinued, and the second superinduced upon it, to give satisfaction unto Calvin's cavils, the curiosity of some, and the mistakes of others, his friends and followers.' And Dr. Nichols gives us the same information. 'Four years afterwards,' says he, 'the book of Common Prayer underwent another review, wherein some ceremonies and usages were laid aside, and some new prayers added, at the instance of Mr. Calvin of Geneva, and Bucer, a foreign divine, who was invited to be a Professor at Cambridge.' Nor was the authority of Calvin without its influence, in drawing up the Articles of the Church of England. It is commonly said by our Episcopal brethren, that those Articles are anti-Calvinistic; and that, especially on the doctrine of Predestination, as exhibited in the seventeenth Article, the Reformers held, and meant to express, a different opinion from those of Calvin. Now, it happens that this Article itself bears the most unquestionable internal evidence of the contrary. The qualifying clause toward the end of it, which has been quoted as decisive proof that the framers rejected Calvinism, is nearly quoted from Calvin's Institutes; and the latter part of it is a literal translation of that Reformer's caution against the abuse of this doctrine. For evidence of the former, see his Institutes (iii. 2-4, 5) compared with the Article. For proof of the latter, read the following:—'Proinde in rebus agendis, ea est nobis perspicienda Dei voluntas quam verbo suo declarat.' Instit. i. 17, 5. 'Furthermore, in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared to us in the Word of God.' Art. 17. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of

England are undoubtedly Calvinistic. This is proved, not only by the bare inspection of the Articles themselves, but also by the known sentiments of those who framed them, and by the decisive interpretation of some of the ablest bishops, and other divines, that ever adorned that Church. The same convocation which drew up the Thirty-nine Articles reviewed, corrected, formally approved, and ordered to be published, as it now stands, the celebrated catechism of Dr. Newell. This catechism is acknowledged, by the worst enemies of Calvin, to be decidedly Calvinistic. It is acknowledged to be so by Bishop Cleaver, who, a few years ago, gave a new edition of it. And yet the Convocation, which embraced all the principal dignitaries of the Church, publicly recommended it, 'as a standing summary of the doctrines professed in that Church;' and, many years after, it was held in such high esteem by Archbishops Whitgift and Parker, and other contemporary prelates, that even ministers were enjoined to study it, that they might learn true divinity from it.* The illustrious reformer and martyr, Bradford, a short time before he suffered, wrote and published a decidedly Calvinistic work on election and predestination, which he sent to Archbishop Cranmer, and to Bishops Ridley and Latimer, who all gave it their approbation, after which it received the approbation of the rest of the eminent ministers in and about London.†

"The famous Lambeth Articles, formed in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, are acknowledged by all who ever read them, to be among the most strongly Calvinistical compositions that ever were penned. Yet these articles were drawn up and signed by Archbishop Whitgift, that very prelate of whose character and principles

* Strype's Annals, 313—316.—Life of Parker, 122, 301.

† Strype's Memorials of Cranmer, p. 350. The editors of the "Christian Observer" attest that they have seen Bradford's Treatise, and that it is unquestionably Calvinistic.

Dr. Hobart frequently speaks in the most exalted terms, and whom he holds up to view as one of the most illustrious divines and fathers of the Church of England. The Archbishop was assisted in this service by the bishops of London and Bangor, and by some others. After receiving the public approbation of these dignitaries, the Articles were sent to the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Rochester, who also subscribed them. Thus ratified, Archbishop Whitgift sent them to the University of Cambridge, with a letter, in which he declared, 'That these Articles were not to be considered as laws and decrees, but as propositions, which he and his brethren were persuaded were true, and corresponding with the doctrine professed in the Church of England, and established by the laws of the land.* Nor is this all. It having been suggested by some, that the Archbishop agreed to these Articles, rather for the sake of peace than because he believed them, Strype, his episcopal biographer, repels the charge with indignation, declaring that such an insinuation is as false as it is mean and disparaging to the Primate.† We have seen also, in a foregoing part of this letter, by the confession of Heylin himself, an implacable enemy of Calvin, that the great body of the bishops and other clergy of the Church of England were doctrinal Calvinists, for more than half a century after the Articles were formed. And we have found a modern Episcopal clergyman asserting, on undeniable evidence, that 'Calvin's Institutions were read and studied in both the universities by every student in divinity, for a considerable portion of a century; nay, that by a convocation held at Oxford, that book was recommended to the general study of the nation.' All the delegates from the Church of England to the Synod of Dort, among whom were Bishop Carleton,

* Strype's Life of Whitgift, p. 461—863.

† Ibid, p. 462.

Bishop Hall, and Bishop Devenant, formally subscribed to the five Calvinistic Articles drawn up and adopted by that venerable Synod. On their return home, they were attacked by a certain writer, and charged with having departed from the public standard of their own Church. Against this attack they thought proper to defend themselves, and accordingly wrote a joint attestation, which contains the following passage:—
 ‘Whatsoever there was assented unto and subscribed by us, concerning the Five Articles, either in the joint synodical judgment, or in our particular collegiate suffrage, is not only warrantable by the Holy Scriptures, but also conformable to the received doctrine of our said venerable mother, which we are ready to maintain and justify against all gainsayers.* Again, Bishop Hall, in a work of his own, addressing some who had charged him, and other bishops of his day, with entertaining Arminian sentiments, as to the doctrine of election, thus indignantly replies to the charge:—
 ‘You add, election upon faith foreseen. What!—nothing but gross untruths? Is this the doctrine of the bishops of England? Have they not strongly confuted it, in *Papists* and *Arminians*? Have they not *cried it down to the lowest pit of hell?*’ ”

Such are the arguments by which Dr. Millar, of New York, has proved that the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England are Calvinistic, and that the great body of the clergy were Calvinists at the time those Articles were framed. That the evidence is decisive, I humbly presume, no candid reader will venture to deny. Divines of the Establishment may preach, if they please, the doctrine of election founded on foreseen faith, love, and good works; but let them not charge with that doctrine, either the Thirty-nine Articles or their *reforming forefathers*. That very

* See their Joint Attestation.

doctrine which these modern divines are now crying up to the starry heavens, the English divines, the fathers of the Reformation—if we believe Bishop Hall—“*cried down to the lowest pit of hell!*”

Having endeavoured to prove, and I hope with success, that the doctrine of election, founded on foreseen faith and good works, has its foundation, neither in Scripture, reason, nor the Thirty-nine Articles, I would now proceed to observe—that when our opponents characterise election as *irrespective*, if all they mean is, *that election was not founded on any foreseen virtuous qualification of its object*, we have no objection to the application of the epithet. We believe, however, that in the decree of election men were chosen, not only to eternal life, but also to faith, holiness, and all those means which lead to that end. If, in any sense inconsistent with this, our opponents denominate election *irrespective*, we spurn the epithet as inapplicable and unjust.

The great popular outcry against predestination is—that it supersedes the use of means, and is quite inimical to holiness and good works. I regret to find learned divines reiterating this stale objection after it has been answered a thousand times. Dr. B. (p. 172) writes thus:—

“It (predestination) contradicts every exhortation to holiness and faith, every dissuasive from sin and infidelity, every conditional promise of everlasting life, and every warning against endless perdition, that we find in His (Christ’s) discourses. In fact, if it were true, the mediation, mission, death, and intercession of Christ would be absolutely nugatory and ineffectual, since they could neither improve the condition or prospects of the elect few, nor redeem the reprobate from that fate to which they are destined by the eternal and irreversible decree of the Almighty.”

Powerful reasoning indeed! The purport of it is

this: "God decreed to bring the elect to the enjoyment of eternal life, by means of exhortations, warnings, and promises; and, therefore, these exhortations, warnings, and promises, are absolutely nugatory and ineffectual! God determined to save the elect by the mediation, mission, death, and resurrection of Christ; and, therefore, the mediation, mission, death, and resurrection of Christ are absolutely nugatory and ineffectual! God determined to punish the reprobate for their sin and infidelity, and, therefore, every dissuasive from sin and infidelity, and every warning against endless perdition, are absolutely nugatory and ineffectual!" Admirable logic! Bishop Mant, in his Bampton Lectures (p. 146), urges the same objection—quoting Bishop Sherlock, he writes thus:—

"If I be elected, no sins can possibly bereave me of the kingdom of heaven; if reprobated, no good deeds can advance me to it." Such was the language of a German potentate in former times, when his friends admonished him of his vicious conversation and dangerous state. "An objection," remarks Heylin, "not more old than common; but such, I must confess, to which I never found a satisfactory answer from the pen of Supralapsarian, or Sublapsarian, within the small compass of my reading."

So it appears that this old and common objection is, in the estimation of these learned writers, unanswerable. At least, *they* have never met with any satisfactory answer. Now, I do not promise to give a *satisfactory* answer, for some minds are not easily satisfied; but, with great ease, I can give an answer which *ought* to satisfy. It is this. *The objection separates what God has joined.* Election and holiness are inseparably connected in the same decree. We are "chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." But the Arminian objection runs thus:—
"If I be chosen to salvation through sanctification of

the Spirit, I shall be saved whether I be sanctified or not—if I be chosen to salvation through belief of the truth, I shall be saved whether I believe or not—if God from all eternity decreed to save me from my sins, I shall be saved whether I continue in my sins or not!" Such is the logic of Arminians, by which they hope to overturn the Calvinistic doctrine of election! Dr. B., and the learned Bishops Sherlock and Mant, might have carried their objection farther, and reasoned thus: "If God determined to save the Apostle Paul by means of a ship, there was no *need* of a ship! If God determined to save the apostle by the instrumentality of sailors, there was no *need* of sailors!" When the Apostle Paul declared, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved," had Dr. B. and the learned bishops been present, they would have immediately exclaimed, "What! not saved! If God has determined to save you, ye shall be saved whether the sailors abide in the ship or not! God has determined to save you by the medium of a ship, and by the instrumentality of sailors, and, therefore, the ship and the sailors are *quite nugatory and ineffectual!*" So much for that old and common objection, which Dr. B. relies on with so much confidence, and which the learned and talented Bishops Sherlock and Mant consider as altogether unanswerable.

In the Divine decrees, means and ends, like links in a chain, are inseparably connected. Now, is it not evident that, the closer the connexion between means and ends, the greater the encouragement to use means. The links of a chain being inseparably connected, when we pull one link, we are quite confident the whole chain will follow. Were the links detached, we would not have the same confidence or encouragement. Such a connexion between means and ends encourages Calvinists to activity and diligence, to avoid all sin, and to practise every virtue. They are encouraged to "abound in the work of the Lord, for as much as they know that

their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." The Apostle Paul, in spiritual as well as in temporal matters, acted on those consistent principles. He had made his calling and election sure. He was assured that God would preserve him to His heavenly kingdom. But this assurance did not supersede the use of means. He kept under his body, and brought it into subjection, lest, whilst he preached the Gospel to others, he himself should be a castaway. From this and similar texts, Dr. Graves and other Arminians infer, that believers may possibly fall from a state of grace. The inference, however, is completely illegitimate. With equal propriety, they might infer, from the declaration of the apostle, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved," that it was possible for Paul never to reach Rome, notwithstanding the Divine assurance to the contrary. Such propositions show the connexion between means and ends, but do not at all prove the possibility that either the means should not be employed, or the ends not accomplished. Our Saviour says, speaking of the Father, "I know Him, and if I should say I know Him not, I would be a liar like unto you." Would any Arminian, from this hypothetical proposition, infer, that it was possible for Jesus Christ either to deny the Father, or to be a liar? Why then do they infer, from similar propositions, that it is possible for believers to fall away from a state of grace, or the Divine decrees to fail of accomplishment?

Having endeavoured to show in what sense election is irrelative, and having endeavoured to prove that it is not unfavourable to good works, nor inconsistent with the means of grace and salvation, I now proceed to animadvert on the epithets *arbitrary and irrelative, as applied to reprobation*. In what sense our opponents apply those epithets will be best understood by a quotation or two. Dr. Graves (*Predestination*, p. 116) writes thus:—"So unboundedly merciful, so unspeakably encouraging, is the genuine doctrine of the Gospel of

Peace—how totally repugnant to a scheme which represents that all who are not in the number of the elect are passed over, rejected, or reprobated by God, who has, by an eternal, unalterable decree, preordained them, before they were born, to certain and everlasting death, for which God himself prepares them, to which they are devoted, not because He foresees their unworthiness, but solely because He wills it, and which, from the very hour of their birth, He hath foreordained them not to escape, and hath precluded them from the means of escaping.” Bad as this quotation is, it is not so bad as that portion of the Bampton Lectures from which it is extracted. The Bishop’s representation of Calvinism was too terrific for the learned Professor. Shuddering at the picture, he broke off the quotation before he came to the end of the description. It runs thus (Bampton Lectures, p. 129) :—“It is the Calvinistic doctrine, that all those who are not in the number of the elect are passed over, rejected, or reprobated by God, who has, by an eternal, unalterable decree, preordained, predestinated, and doomed them, before they were born, to certain and everlasting death, ruin, perdition, and damnation, for which He himself fits and prepares them, to which they are devoted, not because He foresees their unworthiness, but solely because He wills it, and which, from the very hour of their birth, He hath made it impossible for them to escape, and hath precluded and repels them from the means of escaping.” Another sample of his Lordship’s mode of representing Calvinism we find in p. 252 :—“The Calvinist teaches, that God elected a few individuals to salvation, and that Christ died to make atonement for their sins alone, to the exclusion of the great mass of mankind—that the salvation of these elect depends solely upon certain absolute and irrespective decrees of God, and is effected solely by the grace of God, so that no conditions are required to be fulfilled, no co-operation to be given on their parts,

but that, however great and numerous may be their sins, they are eternally sure of salvation—and that the great bulk of mankind are eternally doomed to perdition, no reference whatever being made to any faults of theirs, no possibility whatever being allowed them of escaping their doom, the sole cause of which is the pleasure, and the sole object of it the glory of God.”

As an appendix to such a description, why did not his Lordship add, “From such Calvinism—such *horrible* Calvinism—such *monstrous* Calvinism—good Lord deliver us.” Had the good bishop added this prayer, I am perfectly convinced that not only all the Socinians, Arminians, and Arians in the world, but that all the Calvinists on the face of the globe, would have echoed in one universal response—AMEN! AMEN!

I can assure the learned Bishop, that Calvinists regard with unutterable contempt, and unqualified detestation, the doctrine contained in the preceding quotations. They believe no such doctrines—they teach no such doctrines—they abhor all such doctrines. I regret much, that talents so respectable as those of his Lordship should be exhausted in beating the air—in refuting doctrines which nobody holds—in charging upon Calvinists doctrines the very reverse of those which they believe—doctrines which they hold in the utmost contempt and abhorrence. What then do Calvinists believe? I answer negatively, they do not hold themselves bound to believe everything that *Calvin* taught, that *Austin* taught, that *Zanchy* taught, or that *any one of our reformers* taught. Much less do they hold themselves bound to believe every foolish thing said by Calvinists for three hundred years past! To collect those foolish sayings—to add some things which they *never* said—to combine all these into a system—and to call that system Calvinism—is neither *candid*, *generous*, nor *just*. It is an *insult* offered to the Calvinistic system. For such disingenuous conduct there is no *apology*. Even the

mitre of a Bishop should not screen him from censure. Every person knows, or at least might know, what Calvinism is. It is the doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England—doctrine as different from Bishop Mant's Calvinism, as light is from darkness. Were any writer to profess to give an account of the doctrines of the Church of England, and, instead of exhibiting those doctrines as they are stated in the Thirty-nine Articles, should rake together the most foolish things written by the members of that Church for 300 years past, adding some things which they never wrote—and then denominate such a compound of folly and nonsense, "*The doctrines of the Church of England*"—in what light would such a writer be viewed by Bishop Mant and his learned coadjutors? What terms could be found in the English language sufficiently strong to characterise such a work? To the learned Bishop, and his Arminian colleagues, I would only say, "Whatsoever ye would that Calvinists should do unto you, do ye even the same unto them; for this is the law and the prophets."

What Calvinist ever taught, that God elected to salvation only a "*few individuals?*" No Calvinist ever taught so. All Calvinists believe, that the elect are so far from being only a few individuals, that they are *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands*; that they are "*a number which no man can number.*" It is *no tenet of Calvinism*—though Bishop Mant, Dr. Graves, Dr. Millar, and Dr. Bruce, are constantly representing it as a Calvinistic tenet—it is *no tenet of Calvinism* that the number of the elect is smaller than that of the reprobate. Many Calvinists believe the very reverse. Our Westminster divines wisely abstain from giving any opinion on the subject. With regard to the *number, or proportion, of those who will be finally saved, we have no controversy with any, except with*

those who maintain a universal restoration. From the very nature of the case, all rational controversy is excluded. "Secret things belong to the Lord our God." On this point, Socinians, Arminians, Arians, and Calvinists, are all equally ignorant, and must remain so till the judgment of the great day. Our opponents may, therefore, save themselves the trouble of any reference to the number of the elect; for on this subject we profess ourselves totally ignorant. Should any ask me, "Are there few that be saved?" I can only answer in the words of our Saviour, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, but shall not be able."

Is the Bishop's statement true, that, on Calvinistic principles, the elect do not co-operate with God in the work of their own salvation? *It is not.* Calvinists believe that the elect, though *passive* in regeneration,* are *active* in sanctification; they are "*workers together with God,*" "*and work out their salvation with fear and trembling.*" They ask, they seek, they knock, they run, they strive, they fight—they give all diligence to make their calling and election sure—they "*press into the kingdom of God,*" and take "*the kingdom of heaven by force.*"

Is the Bishop's representation true—that the elect, on Calvinistic principles, however great and numerous their sins, are eternally sure of their salvation? *It is not.* The elect can have no assurance of their salvation till after their conversion. And, after conversion, many of them have no assurance during life. And, even in those who enjoy that privilege, it is often by sin inter-

* Calvinists maintain that, even before regeneration, it is the duty of all to attend all the ordinances of Divine institution, and to use all the means of grace which God has appointed—and that it is to those who attend such ordinances, and use such means, that *He usually communicates His saving grace.*

rupted and lost. Such is the doctrine of the Westminster Confession (chap. xviii., sec. 3, 4)—such is the doctrine of the Larger Catechism (quest. 81)—such is the doctrine of Calvinists in general—a doctrine very different, indeed, from that of which they are unjustly accused by his lordship.

Is the statement of Bishop Mant true, that, upon Calvinistic principles, God has preordained, predestinated, and doomed the reprobate to everlasting death, ruin, perdition, and damnation, without any reference to their fault? *It is not.* It is as far remote from truth as light is from darkness. This will appear by comparing it, or rather *contrasting* it, with the genuine Calvinistic doctrine, as it is distinctly stated by the Westminster divines. In their Confession (chap. iii., sec. 7), they affirm, that God has ordained the reprobate to dishonour and wrath *for their sin, to the praise of his glorious JUSTICE.* In their Larger Catechism (quest. 13), they assert, that God has passed by the reprobate, and “foreordained them to dishonour and wrath, *to be for their sin inflicted to the praise of the glory of His JUSTICE.*” The blasphemous doctrine charged upon the Calvinists by Bishop Mant, is:—that the will and pleasure of God, and not men’s sins, are the cause of their damnation. Their *own* doctrine is the *very reverse*:—that *no decrees of God*, but men’s *own sins*, are the *sole* cause of their condemnation. God’s treatment of the reprobate is entirely *judicial*—it proceeds upon principles of *strict justice.* Upon what ground will He pronounce the doom of the wicked at the judgment of the great day? Upon the very same ground did He determine from all eternity so to doom them. If there will be no injustice or cruelty in *dooming* the wicked to eternal misery for their sins, there could not possibly be any injustice or cruelty in *decreeing* so to doom them. Dr. Graves argues against predestination, from the justice and mercy of God; but

if God is not unjust or unmerciful in consigning men to eternal separation from His presence, He was not unjust nor unmerciful in *decreasing* thus to consign them. If there is no cruelty nor injustice in *doing* a thing, there can be no cruelty nor injustice in *decreeing* to do it. Whatever God does, He decrees or determines to do—and, as there are no new determinations in the Divine mind, He decrees nothing in *time*, which He did not decree from *all eternity*. These are the dictates of common sense, as well as of Divine revelation. Let not, therefore, Dr. Millar, nor Dr. Graves, nor Dr. Bruce, nor the Lord Bishop of Down and Connor—let no Arminian, Socinian, nor Arian, stigmatize the decree of reprobation as *irrespective*. It was no more *irrespective* than the condemnation of the wicked will be at the judgment of the great day. The one is the exact counterpart of the other.

Bishop Mant represents Calvinists as maintaining, that *no possibility whatever* is allowed the reprobate of escaping their doom. Is this representation true? *It is not*. No *natural* impossibility stands in the way of the salvation of the reprobate. No impossibility stands in their way, but that which aggravates their guilt; I mean that moral impossibility which arises from their own *hatred* and *enmity*. None will ever be able to say, “I was willing to accept of Jesus as a Saviour, and to walk in His commandments and ordinances blameless; but the decree of reprobation prevented me.”

The heaviest part of the charge of Doctor Graves and Bishop Mant is, that, according to the Calvinistic system, *God prepares* the reprobate for damnation. Is this charge just? *It is not*. Calvinists maintain, that God prepares the *elect* for happiness; but, that the reprobate, by their sins, prepare *themselves* for misery. (Rom. ix. 22, 23), “What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to de-

struction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory." In this remarkable passage, it is asserted, that God *prepares* the vessels of mercy for glory; but it is not said, that God *fits* or *prepares* the vessels of wrath for destruction. It is said, indeed, that they are *fitted*; but it is not said that *God* fits them. They are fitted not by *God*, but by *their own sins*.*

It may be objected, however, that these very sins were foreordained, and could not be avoided. **Answer.** The origin of evil is the most abstruse and difficult subject to which the human mind has ever been directed. That God is not the author of sin, Calvinists, as well as Arminians and others, strenuously maintain. The contrary imputation they repel with abhorrence. They maintain that all good comes from God, and that all evil comes from the creature. This, however, they do not consider inconsistent with the doctrine:—"That God has foreordained whatever comes to pass"—sinful

* In a long continued strain of invective, the Lord Bishop of Down and Connor pours contempt on the Calvinistic system, by representing it as inconsistent with *mildness* and *clemency*. For this purpose he plunges into politics, and charges the Scotch Covenanters with selling their king, and the English Calvinists with beheading him. Now, were his lordship able to prove that the Scotch Covenanters sold King Charles I.—which I am convinced he will never be able to do—and that he was afterwards beheaded by the English Calvinists, which we do not deny, what follows? Does it follow, that the Calvinists of that age were more *ferocious* than Arminians under the subsequent reigns of Charles II. and James VII. ? Does his lordship mean to tell us now, in the nineteenth century, that there was more cruelty in beheading an *arbitrary tyrannical despot*, who, in violation of the British constitution, was trampling under his feet the liberties of his subjects, than in *deluging with the best blood of her citizens a whole nation for twenty-eight years*? Surely his lordship's prudence had completely forsaken him, when he adverted at all to the transactions of those times.

actions not excepted. The decree that sin should, by Divine permission, have a place among the works of God, does not make God the author of sin; for sin's introduction is not to be ascribed to any *positive influence* of the Deity. That God permits sin, all must acknowledge; for, if He did not permit it, it could not exist. Now, if He permits it, He must *will* to permit it; He must *decree* to permit it. God can do nothing without a previous act of His own will, or, in other words, without a previous decree. That God decreed to permit sin, is a position which admits of no rational contradiction. It is also demonstrably evident that, if God's *permitting* sin does not make Him the author of sin, neither is He made the author of sin by *decreeing* to permit it. If there be no harm in *doing* a thing, there can be no harm in *decreeing* to do it.

That God from all eternity decreed that sin, by Divine permission, should have a place among His works, I prove by the following arguments:—

1. My first argument is drawn from the appointment of Jesus as a Saviour. That God determined to send His Son into the world to save sinners, none will deny; and, as there are no *new* determinations in the Divine mind, He must have so determined from all eternity. Now, if God from all eternity determined or *decreed* to send His Son into the world to save His people from their sins, He must have decreed from all eternity that those sins, by Divine permission, should have a place among His works—it must have been from all eternity *certain* that they would have such a place; for if it were possible that those sins might never be committed, then it was possible that God might decree to send His Son in vain!

2. My second argument is drawn from the appointment of a general judgment (Acts xvii. 31)—“Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath

ordained." Now, if God on this day will condemn the wicked, He must *will* or determine to condemn them; for He can do nothing without previously *willing* or *determining* to do it: and, as there can be no *new* purposes or determinations in the Divine mind, God must have determined or decreed *from all eternity* to condemn the wicked. And, still farther, if God decreed from all eternity to condemn the wicked for their sins, it must have been certain from all eternity that those sins would be committed. If it were possible* that the persons whom God from all eternity decreed to condemn and punish might never sin; then it was possible that God might condemn and punish the *innocent*. It is, therefore, demonstrably evident, from the Divine procedure at the general judgment, that God from all eternity decreed that sin, through Divine permission, should have a place among His works. Should any allege, that neither the decree that Jesus Christ should come into the world to save sinners, nor the decree that, at the judgment of the great day, He should condemn and punish sinners—should any allege that neither of these decrees proves that the futuration of sin was *decreed*, but only that the futuration of sin was *certain*, I shall answer their objection in

3. My THIRD ARGUMENT, which is drawn from the foreknowledge of God. The foreknowledge of God proves His decrees. It proves that God foreordained whatever comes to pass, sinful actions not excepted. If God from all eternity *foresaw* all events, it was from all eternity certain that those events would occur. For example—if God from all eternity *foreknew* that Dr. B. would write a book against the plenary inspiration of His Word, the divinity and atonement of His Son, the

* The reader will still bear in mind, that I do not speak of an *absolute* or *natural* possibility or impossibility. I mention this to prevent all misunderstanding or cavilling.

supreme Deity of His Spirit, &c., then it was certain from all eternity that Dr. B. would write that book. If it was possible that Dr. B. might never write that book, though God foreknew that he *would* write it, then it was possible for the Deity to be mistaken and disappointed! Every person must see, that it is impossible for the Deity to know that a thing exists, if it does not *really* and *certainly* exist. Equally impossible is it to foreknow that a thing *will* exist, if its *future* existence is not *certain*. As *knowledge* presupposes the *certain present existence* of things *known*, so *foreknowledge* presupposes the *certain future existence* of things *foreknown*. If God, therefore, from all eternity foresaw whatever comes to pass, the future existence of everything that comes to pass was from all eternity certain.

To say that God foresaw anything as future which yet never comes to pass, is an evident contradiction. It is to say that God foresaw it, and yet did not foresee it; for that which never comes to pass could never be the object either of *sight*, or *foresight*—of *knowledge*, or *foreknowledge*. Arminians sometimes labour hard to prove, that foreknowledge could have no influence on future actions; but they labour in vain: they labour to prove what we do not deny. We do not say, that foreknowledge *renders* future events *certain*; but, we contend that it *presupposes* their certainty. Foreknowledge does not *constitute*, but it *proves* the certainty of future events. This is what we assert.*

* Dr. Dwight (Theol. p. 199) says:—"Foreknowledge *renders* the future existence of that which is foreknown certain; therefore, the actions of the agent supposed are all *rendered certain*, and will of course exist." And again (p. 200):—"God's foreknowledge of voluntary actions does in no respect lessen or affect their freedom, although it *renders* their future existence absolutely certain." "Aliquando dormitat bonus Homerus." The Doctor here has expressed himself quite inadvertently, and inconsistently with what he has elsewhere maintained. He elsewhere maintains, that foreknowledge can have no influence whatever on the nature of actions.

Now, if all things that come to pass were from all eternity certain, what *rendered* them certain? To bring things out of a state of mere possibility of existence into a state of certain futurity, is an effect, and every effect must have a cause. In this case what was the cause? The cause must have either been the things themselves, or the decree of the Deity. It could not be the things themselves that rendered their own future existence certain, for nothing can produce an effect before it exists; it follows then, by necessary consequence, that it was *the will* or *decree* of the Deity. Thus, the doctrine of Divine decrees, notwithstanding the contempt with which it is loaded, appears to me capable of the *strictest demonstration*. The steps are extremely simple. God from all eternity foreknew all things that come to pass; therefore, all those things were from all eternity *certain*. Again, what *rendered* the future existence of those things certain? Was it the will of God?—or was it the things themselves? It must have been either the one or the other of these causes. It could not be the things themselves; for no cause can produce an effect before it exists. It must, therefore, have been the *will of the Deity*—or, in other words—*the Divine decree*.—(See Edwards' Remarks).

Doctor Adam Clarke maintains that there is, strictly speaking, no *foreknowledge* nor *afterknowledge* with the Deity—that His knowledge is all present knowledge—that past, present, and future, are with the Deity *one eternal now*. To this opinion Archbishop Tillotson, one of the ablest defenders of the Arminian system, was quite opposed. He poured upon it the utmost contempt. To me, the opinion appears quite rational. I agree with the Doctor, rather than with the Archbishop. I AM is one of the names of the Deity; and our Saviour says, not before Abraham was *I was*, but, before Abraham was, I AM. It appears to me, that past, present, and future, are all equally present with

the Deity. With Him, past knowledge, and present knowledge, and future knowledge, are all the same. I therefore perfectly agree with Dr. Clarke, Mr. Drew, and others, in this view of the knowledge of God. It is, in my mind, both more Scriptural and more philosophical than that of the learned prelate. At the same time, I perfectly agree with the Archbishop, in wondering that men should "call this explaining things." It gives no explanation at all of the Arminian difficulty. On the contrary, it exhibits the difficulty in a more striking point of light. It renders the contradiction of foreseeing contingencies more apparent. Does not God's knowledge of *past* events prove the certainty of those events? does not His knowledge of *present* events prove the certainty of those events? On the same principle, does not His knowledge of *future* events prove the certainty of those events? If, with the Deity, foreknowledge, present knowledge, and after knowledge, are all the same, then they all equally *presuppose* and *prove* the certainty of their object. As nothing can be otherwise than God sees it to be, so nothing can be otherwise than He *foresees* it. If, with the Deity, foreknowledge and present knowledge are the same, then what is true of *present* knowledge is also true of *foreknowledge*; but *present* knowledge *presupposes* and *proves* the certainty of the thing known, and, therefore, *foreknowledge* must also *presuppose* and *prove* the certainty of the thing *foreknown*. No Arminian in the world can possibly refute this reasoning, nor evade the force of it, without trampling under his feet the very first principles of argumentation.

Divines of the first-rate learning and talents are sensible of this; they decline the controversy, and resolve the whole into faith. Socinians, finding that they must either give up the contingency of future events, or the foreknowledge of God, adopted the desperate alternative of making a sacrifice of this Divine

attribute. Dr. Adam Clarke, following their steps, has chosen to give up the omniscience of Deity rather than his Arminian tenets. Dr. Millar and Dr. Graves, with a modesty more becoming Christian divines, confess the weakness of their own faculties, and, finding demonstration against them, endeavour to make their escape by taking refuge in faith. Arminian writers of an inferior class, with less reason but more effrontery, pertinaciously adhere to their principles, not only in the face of demonstration, but in contempt and defiance of those self-evident truths—those *axioms* on which demonstration is founded.*

* From my Defence of Creeds and Confessions, Mr. M'Afee quotes the following words:—"Every person must see that it is impossible for the Deity to *know* that a thing exists, if it does not *really* and *certainly* exist. Equally impossible is it to *foreknow* that a thing *will* exist, if its future existence is not certain." On this quotation he makes the following remark: "The first proposition in this quotation is evidently true, but the latter appears to me, not only to be erroneous, but contrary to that timidity and modesty which should accompany all our disquisitions concerning the unsearchable God." Now, if the knowledge and *foreknowledge* of the Deity are the same, is it not a self-evident truth—is it not an axiom—that what is true of the *knowledge* of God, must be also, true of His *foreknowledge*? Yet the timid and modest Mr. M'Afee, in defiance of this axiom, modestly affirms of the Divine *knowledge*, what he denies of the *foreknowledge* of Deity! Such is that champion of Arminianism whom Mr. Drew, editor of the *Imperial Magazine*, dignifies with the epithet of an "able antagonist." If continuing to reason after one is defeated—if continuing to argue in the face, not only of demonstration, but of axioms—if this constitutes an able antagonist, Mr. M'Afee has certainly strong claims to that title.

"In reasoning, too, the parson owned his skill;
For, even though vanquished, he could argue still."

But will the reader believe that this same "able antagonist," who, even in the face of self-evident truths, reasons against the certainty of future events, has, in the very same pamphlet *fully admitted that certainty*? "The espousers of liberty are well aware of an objection urged against their scheme by the

4. With regard to whatever comes to pass, God must either be *willing* that it should come to pass, or *unwilling*. If He is *unwilling* that it should come to pass, and yet it *does* come to pass, then His will is crossed, and He is unhappy. No man can rationally maintain that God is unwilling that sin should have a

advocates for necessity and Calvinism. Why (it is triumphantly asked) is there so much stress laid upon the freedom of the will? Are not the good and evil actions the same, in point of certainty, as if they had all been decreed? and will not the number of the saved and lost be as definite at the last, according to the doctrine of *liberty*, as according to that of necessity? Granting the certainty of the actions, and the definiteness of the numbers spoken of, we only say that things are just as they *really* are. Again. The number is definite by that *certainty* which always accompanies contingent actions." He afterwards admits, that the number of the saved would be actually as great, and finally certain, as if Deity had passed Calvinistic decrees concerning them. Thus it appears that this able antagonist gives up the whole controversy, and surrenders to the Calvinists at discretion. If the certainty of an event does not destroy liberty, how could that liberty be destroyed by the decree of God, which *rendered the event certain*? If *apprenticeship* does not forfeit the freedom of a corporation town, no man can forfeit that freedom by being *bound* an apprentice. If the *apprenticeship* itself cannot deprive him of his freedom, the *binding* him an apprentice—or *that act by which he was bound*—cannot deprive him of it; so, in like manner, if certainty cannot destroy liberty, the decree of God constituting that certainty cannot destroy it. By admitting certainty of event, Mr. M'Fee has given up the Arminian cause. All the necessity we plead for is a necessity consisting in certainty of event. A *natural necessity, a universal necessity, a necessity of compulsion, coercion, or constraint*, is unjustly and injuriously charged on the Calvinistic system by its ignorant or prejudiced opponents. Mr. M'Fee quotes President Edwards, strongly disclaiming, and decidedly condemning the doctrine of a *universal necessity*: and yet this "able antagonist," with his characteristic timidity and regard for truth, *modestly* charges Edwards, and Calvinists in general, with holding that same universal necessity! Absurdly confounding the laws of mind with those of matter, he even attempts by a *diagram* to demonstrate the absurdity of the Calvinistic system! Had I

place in His works. If he maintains this, he must run into the gross absurdity of maintaining *that sin has forced its way into the works of God in opposition to the Divine will—in defiance of the Divine Being!* He must maintain that the will of the Deity is crossed in millions of millions of instances, and that the ever-blessed God, instead of

considered Mr. M'Afee's pamphlet worthy of an answer, my motto would have been: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

Mr. M'Afee admits that the number of the saved and the lost "is definite by that *certainty* which always accompanies *contingent* events," that is to say, the *certainty* which accompanies *uncertain* events! Who can doubt that such a writer is an "able antagonist?"

Again. Mr. M'Afee declares (p. 24) that, as a compensation for that death incurred by the fall, a decree is passed, which determines the resurrection of every man; and that God immutably purposed to raise all men from the dead. He also admits, that the number of the saved and the lost is as definite as if fixed by a Calvinistic decree. Take these doctrines in connexion, and the amount of them is—That God has passed a decree, and immutably purposed, to raise to the resurrection of damnation a definite number of the human family—and all this as a compensation for that death which they incurred by the fall! By such mild and sensible doctrine, our "able antagonist" proposes to amend Calvinistic decrees! How appropriate the modest title of his pamphlet, "*A Rational and Scriptural Investigation!*"

Mr. M'Afee, in his preface, informs us—not that his design was to answer the arguments of his opponent; no, this might be troublesome, but he informs us—that his plan was "to advance a system as forcibly and argumentatively as possible, which, if true, necessarily proves that of the reverend gentleman he opposes to be false." Now, one would suppose that this "able antagonist" would grant his opponent the same privilege. One would think that, according to the law laid down by Mr. M'Afee, the Calvinist, by proving his own system *true*, at the same time proves Mr. M'Afee's to be *false*. But—*no such thing*. This "able antagonist" explains the laws of war quite differently. Page 80, he states them thus:—"Before it can be proved, Sir, that we sinned in Adam as a federal head, from the words now in question, the absurdity of the above conclusions must be clearly shown, and the various

being the most *happy*, is, in reality, the most *miserable* Being in the universe. Now, if God be not *unwilling* that sin should have a place among His works, He must

arguments advanced throughout these epistles fairly and rationally answered." So then, Arminians are not bound to answer the arguments of *Calvinists*, but Calvinists are *indispensably obliged* to answer all the arguments of *Arminians*! The Arminian has only to prove his own system true, in order to prove Calvinism false; but the Calvinist must prove Arminianism *false* before he can prove his own system *true*!

Such is the logic of Mr. M'Afee; and the editor of the *Imperial Magazine* assures us that Mr. M'Afee is "*an able antagonist.*"

In this miscellaneous note, I should have taken some notice of the efforts of Mr. Drew, editor of the *Imperial Magazine*, to reconcile *contingency* with *foreknowledye*. Of metaphysics, when used on the *Arminian* side of the controversy, he appears very fond—and is himself no contemptible metaphysician—but when used by *Calvinists*, he does not seem to like them at all. He discovers a particular dislike to the metaphysical "*fastnesses*," from which President Edwards, and some of his successors, cannot easily be dislodged. Could Mr. Drew raise as many Arminian troops as would storm those fastnesses, I am convinced he would do an essential service to the Arminian cause. For his own part, he uses every effort in his power; but, in my humble opinion, without success. In attempting to reconcile the contingency of human actions with Divine foreknowledge, he soars so high in the regions of metaphysics, that to my feeble sight he becomes quite invisible. I find it impossible, and, I am happy to say, *unnecessary* to follow him in his flight—I see him when he rises, and recognize him when he descends. He represents the Deity—I write from recollection—as penetrating duration, and looking *back*, as it were, at contingent events, looking at them as if they were past. He seems, however, strangely to forget, that his *seeing* those events proves their *certainly*, no matter whether he looks *backward* at them, or *forward* at them. If he sees them *at all*, their existence must be certain, and Arminian contingency must be overthrown! An Arminian writer in the *Imperial Magazine*—a writer of very respectable talents, Mr. Tucker, of Belfast—has abandoned the absurd doctrine of contingency. I am decidedly of the opinion, that Dr. Clarke, Mr. Drew, and all Arminians whatever, would discover their wisdom by imitating his example.

be *willing*; and if He is willing, then He decrees it, for with God to will and to decree are the same thing.

Dr. Bruce, in common with all Socinians, Arminians, and Arians, ridicules the distinction between the secret and revealed will of God, or His will of decree and His will of command. He writes thus (p. 174):—"Nor do the most learned advocates for this doctrine shrink from these absurd and blasphemous consequences; for thus they write:—'The Lord sometimes orders a thing to be done by a man, and yet by His secret will does not wish that it should be done by him;' for God has a secret and revealed will. 'It does not follow because He commands all men to believe in Christ, that He wills them to do so. But, though we cannot understand how God can be unwilling that His commands should be executed, yet we ought not to deny it. Though God calls the wicked to repentance, He does not wish them to be saved. Though He declares that He wishes the wicked or reprobate to believe, He does not actually wish it. God does not always mean what He says that He means, and yet is not guilty of hypocrisy.' So that, according to these divines, God practises mental reservation, when He wills that 'all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.' It is to be feared that some mercenary or fanatical declaimers even labour to aggravate these horrible representations."

Thus Dr. B., in his usual manner, endeavours to bring Calvinism into contempt, by charging upon it the most foolish things said by its advocates. I must therefore again remind my readers, that the foolish and absurd things said by Calvinists *are not Calvinism*. The nonsensical, contradictory, and blasphemous expressions of Piscator—if ever he uttered them, which I very much doubt—Calvinists hold in sovereign contempt. Nor do I believe the most mercenary or fanatical declaimer living would approve, much less aggravate, such horrible representations. A little more of that

charity which thinketh no evil would have a great tendency to allay the Doctor's fears on such subjects. Dr. B., and other writers, may pour contempt on the distinction between God's will of decree and His will of command, but they will never be able to prove it groundless. They cannot deny, as I have already shown, that it is the will of God that sin should have a place among His works. The existence of sin is not contrary to His decretive or providential will; otherwise there could be no sin at all: and yet all will grant that it is contrary to His preceptive will—His will of command. The distinction, therefore, between the secret and revealed will of God—or rather between His will of decree and His will of command, is capable not only of *proof*, but of *demonstration*. The distinction is not only founded in reason, but is taught with the clearest evidence in the Sacred Volume. “Though we cannot understand”—says Trigland, as cited by the Doctor—“Though we cannot understand how God can be unwilling that His commands should be executed, yet we ought not to deny it.” Dr. B. denies it; but if he does, he must also deny the Word of God. God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, and yet He was unwilling His command should be executed. Will the Doctor deny this? God decreed that Isaac should not be sacrificed, and yet He commanded that he *should* be sacrificed. Will the Doctor deny this? Let Dr. B. say—let all the opponents of Calvinism say—is not this a decisive instance of the distinction between God's will of decree and will of command?—His providential and preceptive will? Again, God commanded Pharaoh to let Israel go, and yet hardened his heart so that he should not let them go. Here, again, the distinction between God's will of command and His will of decree is as clear as noonday.

Another striking instance of this important distinction is recorded in 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12—“Thus sayeth

the Lord, behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this before all Israel, and before the sun." Will any person deny, that it was the *decretive* or *providential will* of God that David's adultery and murder should be punished by the subsequent incest of his unnatural son Absalom? And will any person deny that Absalom's incest was contrary to God's *preceptive will*? Surely not.

Once more. The selling of Joseph into Egypt was sinful. It was contrary to the *preceptive will* of God, and yet it was quite agreeable to His *providential will*, or His will of *decree*. "It was not you that sent me hither," says Joseph, "but God. Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." In like manner, the crucifixion of the Redeemer, though contrary to the revealed will of God, and highly criminal, was nevertheless agreeable to His will of decree. It was by the "*determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God that He was taken, and, by wicked hands, crucified and slain.*" All the indignities and cruelties of the Jews were nothing more than God's "*hand and counsel determined before to be done.*" "Those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of His prophets that Christ should suffer, He so fulfilled."

The last instance I shall quote—for the instances are almost innumerable—is Rev. xvii. 17—"For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the Word of God shall be fulfilled." Will Dr. B. deny—will any opponent of Calvinism deny, that for the ten kings to give their kingdom to the beast was contrary to the revealed will of God?—or will any deny that it was agreeable to His will of *decree*? They fulfilled His *will*. *What will*? Not His *preceptive will*, surely. It must have

been His will of *decree* or *purpose*. If my learned antagonists, or any other opponents of the Calvinistic system, think they can explain the above-cited passages without admitting a distinction between God's will of decree and His will of command, let them try it. Let them show, if they can, that the arguments drawn, first from *reason*, and then from *Scripture*, are inconclusive; but let them not think to run down the distinction by the quotation of a few nonsensical sayings—sayings which all Calvinists, as well as Socinians, Arminians, and Arians condemn.

Our opponents allege, that this distinction which we make between God's will of command and will of decree, represents the Deity as possessed of two *contradictory* wills. In answer to this objection, I would observe that, if the distinction is a matter of fact, as I have proved it to be, my *opponents* are as much bound to reconcile any apparent contradiction as *I* am. My object, however, being not so much to silence an adversary, as to investigate truth, I would observe:—That God's will of command, and will of decree, are not to be regarded as two different and opposite wills; but as the same will operating differently on different objects. An apothecary permits poison to enter his shop—not *as poison*—not for the purpose of *destroying his fellow-men*, but he permits its entrance, that, being compounded with other ingredients, it may eventually become a *powerful medicine*. If an apothecary, without any contradiction, may *prohibit* poison *as poison*, and yet *prescribe* it *as a medicine*; may not the Deity, without any contradiction, *prohibit* sin *as sin*, and yet *permit* it, and decree that through His *permission* it shall have a place in His works, for the greater manifestation of His own glory, and the greater happiness of the universe at large? “There is no inconsistency or contrariety,” says President Edwards, “between the preceptive and decretive will of God. It is very con-

sistent to suppose that God may hate the thing itself, and yet will that it should come to pass. Yea, I do not fear to assert that the thing itself may be contrary to God's will, and yet that it may be agreeable to His will that it should come to pass; because His will in the one case has not the same object with His will in the other case. To suppose God to have contrary wills towards the same object is a contradiction; but it is not so to suppose Him to have contrary wills about different objects. The *thing itself*, and that the thing should come to pass, are *different*, as is evident; because it is possible the one may be *good* and the other may be *evil*. The thing itself may be evil, and yet it may be a good thing that it should come to pass. It may be a good thing that an evil thing should come to pass; and oftentimes it most certainly and undeniably is so, and proves so." Agreeably to these remarks, we may observe, that the crucifixion of Christ was in itself an *evil thing*—one of the *worst* things that ever occurred; and yet the *occurrence* of that event was the *greatest blessing* ever conferred on our apostate family. That "every sin has in it something of the good work of God," is one of those foolish sayings brought forward by our author to blacken Calvinism—a saying which all Calvinists abhor. I would nevertheless say, without the fear of rational contradiction, *That not one sin was ever permitted to enter the works of God, but will ultimately be overruled to the promotion of universal good.* (Psal. lxxvi. 10), "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain." (Rom. viii. 28), "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Had sin never entered, God's love in sending His son, the love of Jesus in dying for sinners, or the love of the Holy Ghost in applying the work of redemption, could never have been displayed. The grace of God in pardoning the guilty, and His mercy in saving the

miserable, could never have been manifested. Meekness, patience, forgiveness of injuries, and other Christian virtues, could never have been exercised. Men would never have been exalted to so high a state of dignity and glory, nor angels to such a state of felicity. Though sin, therefore, *as sin*, be contrary to the will of God, it is not contrary to the will of His decree to permit so much sin to enter His works, as, under His infinitely wise providence, shall ultimately terminate in the more illustrious display of all His perfections, and greater felicity of the universe at large.* Nor do we make God the author of sin, by maintaining that He decreed to permit sin, and that by such permission sin should have a place among His works. The influence of the Deity with regard to *sin* is very different from that which He employs in the production of holiness. The production of holiness requires the *positive influence* of the Deity, and, therefore, he is properly the *author of holiness*; but the introduction of sin requires no such influence, and therefore the Deity is not the *author of sin*. To produce *light* requires a *positive influence*; but no such influence is necessary to the production of *darkness*. The sun, by the pouring forth of his rays, has a positive influence in the production of light; but all that is necessary to the *production of darkness* (if I may use the expression), is the withdrawing of those rays. When the sun withdraws his rays,

* "If any man," says Bishop Davenant, "shall go about to set men's will at liberty, and to tie up short the decreeing and determining will of God, as if this had not the determining stroke amongst all possible evil actions and events which shall infallibly be, and which shall infallibly not be, he may avoid the suspicion of Stoicism or Manicheism; but he can hardly avoid the suspicion of Atheism. For the greater number of men's actions being wicked and evil, if these come into act without God's determinate counsel and decree, human affairs are more overruled by man's will than by God's."

LETTERS WHICH THE LORD WILL THEREFORE SAY, THAT THE
 SUN & THE AUTHOR OF DARKNESS? SAYING NOT, EQUALLY
 WOULD I BE TO CHARGE YOU WITH BEING THE AUTHOR
 OF SUN, INSTEAD OF WITHHOLDING THAT DIVINE INFLUENCE
 WHICH WOULD HAVE PREVENTED ALL SUCH LIKE WORKS OF
 DARKNESS. — THE SUN TRAVELS SHOW AND ICE BY THE
 INFLUENCE OF HIS HEAT AND THE PRODUCTION OF SNOW OR ICE
 PROCEEDS IN SUCH POSITIVE MANNER. WHEN THE SUN
 WITHDRAWS HIS HEAT SHOW AND ICE DISAPPEAR: BUT WOULD
 NOT THE SUN THAT THE SUN & THE AUTHOR OF SNOW OR ICE?
 SAYING NOT, IN THE MANNER WHICH GOD IS SAID TO
 IMPART HIS LIGHT & HEATS TO POSITIVE MANNER IS IMPEDED
 & I THAT IS IMPEDIMENT TO PRODUCE THE EFFECT IS TO GIVE
 THEM UP TO THE DARKNESS OF THEIR OWN HEARTS BY WITH-
 HOLDING THAT LIGHT WHICH WOULD OTHERWISE ILLUMINE THEM.
 THE SUN WILL NOT SAY I HAVE THEM IN MY HAND OWN
 HEARTS HEAT: BUT THEY WOULD IN THEIR OWN DARKNESS.

THE NEXT DIFFICULTY CONCERNING THEOLOGICAL SPEAKING CAL-
 VINISM OPPOSES IS THAT GOD HAS DECREEDS WHICH IMPLY
 THE FREE AGENCY. ALL THAT TO THIS OBJECT I WOULD
 REMARK THAT THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION IN RECONCILING
 THE DECRETUM OF GOD WITH THE FREE AGENCY OF MAN, THAN
 THERE IS IN RECONCILING THE DECRETUM OF GOD WITH
 THE SAME FREE AGENCY. Whenever the Arminian or
 the Arian solves the latter difficulty, we will solve the
 former. Arminians, Tillotson, Dr. Meier, Dr. Graves,
 and all the ablest opponents of Calvinism, confess
 themselves unable to reconcile the foreknowledge of
 God with the freedom of human actions, and plead, as
 an apology, the weakness of their faculties.

Now, if our opponents, Arminians, Socinians, and
 Arians, are unable to reconcile the foreknowledge of
 God with the free agency of man, why do they call
 upon us to reconcile the decrees of God with the same
 free agency? If the doctrine of the Divine decrees is
 clearly taught in the Sacred Volume, and can be
 demonstrated even by reason—and if the free agency

Of man is also taught both by experience and Scripture—may we not safely conclude, that those doctrines are not inconsistent, though, from the limited nature of our faculties, we should be unable to reconcile them? This is surely as good a solution of the difficulty in *our* case, as the Arminians have given in *theirs*. Nay, I maintain, that the solution is infinitely better. For no solution can ever reconcile a contradiction. We can demonstrate, and we have demonstrated, that it implies a contradiction to maintain that God can foresee future contingent actions or events. In vain, therefore, do Arminian and Arian divines plead the weakness of their faculties. The faculties of an *angel* could not reconcile a contradiction. If Arminian and Arian doctors be permitted, in the face of reason and demonstration, to resolve into faith the doctrine of the *Divine foreknowledge of contingent events*, why may not the doctors of the Church of Rome be also permitted to resolve into faith *the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation*? No doctrine can possibly be true which contradicts either our *senses* or our *reason*. I grant, indeed, that the doctrines may be *above* our reason, and then we may resolve them into faith; but, if they are really *self-contradictory*, and if the contradiction can be *demonstrated*, they *cannot* be the doctrines of Divine revelation. Our opponents, indeed, consider Calvinistic decrees as unreasonable—as inconsistent with the free agency of man—but have they ever been able to demonstrate a *contradiction*? *They have not*. The great question between Calvinists and their opponents is this—*Can God create free agents, and govern free agents, and have all His ends, designs, and purposes respecting the final destination of these agents accomplished, without infringing their liberty or free agency?* We say He *can*, and our opponents say He *cannot*. I believe that my Maker created me a free and accountable agent—I believe that He had a particular design to accomplish

by me—and I firmly believe that He *can* and *will* accomplish that design, without doing me the slightest injustice, or infringing in the least my liberty or free agency. Let the opponents of Calvinism demonstrate, if they can, that this creed involves a contradiction. This is a task that they have never yet been able to accomplish, and I am convinced they never will. I now say again, that if we can demonstrate by reason, and prove from Scripture, the doctrine of Divine decrees, and also the doctrine of the free agency of man, we may safely conclude that those doctrines are perfectly consistent, though, from the weakness of our faculties, we may feel unable to reconcile them. On this ground we might safely take our stand; but, if we could proceed a little farther in this difficult subject, and if we could actually reconcile those doctrines, an object of great magnitude would be obtained. To accomplish this object has long been a problem in divinity. If I am not much mistaken, Dr. Dwight of America has ultimately succeeded. I shall give the solution in his own words (p. 199):—“I will suppose once more a voluntary agent, either self-existent or existing casually, possessing powers of understanding similar in their extent to those of angels or of men, and, at the same time, free, in the highest sense annexed to that term. Let him be also supposed to be known and comprehended by God, in the same perfect manner in which any angel or man is known by Him, so that God can foresee, with an omniscient survey and absolute certainty, all his future actions. At the same time, let it be supposed, that God exercises over him no government or influence whatever. This being will undoubtedly be acknowledged to be free, even by those who make this objection; because he was neither brought into existence by the will of God, nor is controlled nor influenced in any manner whatever by any will beside his own. Let me farther suppose, what, as it must be granted, cannot

lessen nor affect his freedom, that all his actions, thus foreseen, are agreeable to the Divine pleasure. Now, let me ask, whether the Divine omniscience could not contrive, and the Divine power create, a being exactly resembling this which I have here supposed in every respect, except that he was not self-existent nor casually existent, and so perfect a copy, that he would differ from this supposed being numerically only—would possess the same attributes, be in the same circumstances, and perform, both in substance and mode, exactly the same actions. Were this supposed being, for example, to be placed by God in His kingdom, in certain circumstances, and acting a certain part in the system, which was exactly agreeable to the Divine pleasure, would not the created being who was His perfect counterpart, if substituted in His place, perform precisely the same actions, with the same faculties, and the same freedom? The only difference between them would be, that he who was casually existent would perform these actions in consequence of possessing such and such attributes, without having been created for this purpose, while the other would perform them in consequence of having been thus created with the very same attributes." Such is Dr. Dwight's solution of the difficulty—a solution which, to me at least, appears completely satisfactory.

Our opponents cannot deny that the Scriptures teach the doctrine of election, but they either maintain that it is founded on foreseen faith and good works, or they contend that it is not *particular* or *personal*. They maintain that the Scriptural election is only a national election, or an election to the enjoyment of the external privileges of the Christian Church. Against a personal or particular election, they not only put into a state of requisition all the forces of logic and criticism, but they display an evident and deep-rooted prejudice. Out of many instances I shall mention only one or two. Jacob, by the Calvinists, is regarded as one of the *elect*, and

Esau as one of the *reprobate*. For this reason, anti-Calvinists discover a strong partiality in favour of Esau, and a deep-rooted prejudice against Jacob. Dr. B. writes thus:—"In the lives of the patriarchs he finds an inexhaustible source of instruction, religious, moral, and prudential, whether he reflects on the faith or resignation of Abraham, the piety and mildness of Isaac, the *art and duplicity* of Jacob, or the *liberal, affectionate, and forgiving* character of Esau."

Dr. Adam Clarke maintains that Esau, with his four hundred men, had no hostile intention against Jacob, but only meant to honour him! When he runs to meet Jacob, the learned Doctor rapturously exclaims, "How sincere and genuine is this conduct of Esau, and, at the same time, how magnanimous! He had buried all his resentment, forgiven all his injuries, and receives his brother with the strongest demonstrations, not only of forgiveness, but of fraternal affection." Again, he asks, "If the blessings had referred to their eternal states, had not Esau as fair a prospect for endless glory as his deceitful and unfeeling brother? Justice and mercy both say—*Yes*." That it is not justice nor mercy, but deep-rooted prejudice against Calvinism, that says—*Yes*—I appeal to the Doctor's own words; they run thus:—"It appears that Jacob was, on the whole, a man of more religion, and believed the Divine promises more, than Esau." Now, I ask, has a man of *less* religion as fair a prospect for endless glory as one of *more* religion?—*Justice, mercy, Scripture, and common sense, say—No*. The truth is, that no man, whose mind was not deeply imbued with prejudice, would ever think of *comparing* the characters of Jacob and Esau with respect to religion. Religion! *Where* was the religion of Esau? The Scriptures do not represent him as a man of religion at all, but as a *profane, irreligious* character. They set him up as a beacon on a mountain, that others, being shocked by the *grossness* of his pro-

fanity, may avoid the rock on which he made shipwreck. "Looking diligently," says the apostle, "lest there be any fornicator or *profane* person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." On the contrary, in the whole Word of God, there is not a character more celebrated, nor more honoured for his piety, than Jacob. John, the beloved disciple, leaned on the bosom of the Redeemer; Moses conversed with Him as a man with his friend; but *Jacob wrestled with Him*. He said, "*I will not let thee go except thou bless me.*" *Like a prince, he had power with God and men, and prevailed.* In a variety of respects, he was honoured above all the men that ever lived. The Old Testament Church was called by his name; and New Testament believers are also styled "*the Israel of God.*" One calls himself by the name of *Jacob*, and another subscribes with his hand unto the Lord, and surnames himself by the name of *Israel*. Nay, the Deity himself appears to delight in such epithets as these:—"The God of Jacob"—"*the mighty God of Jacob*"—"the God of Israel." In the 24th Psalm, he seems to assume the very name *Jacob*. "This is the generation of them that seek Him, that seek thy face, *O Jacob!*" He even swears "by the excellency of *Jacob.*" In a word, the Spirit of God does not *compare*, but *contrasts*, the characters of Jacob and Esau. He declares again and again, that he *loved* Jacob, and *hated* Esau. He holds up Jacob as a pattern of *piety*, and Esau as an example of *profanity*. He loads Jacob with *honours*, and brands Esau with *disgrace*.

Between the manner in which God treats the characters of Jacob and Esau, and the manner in which Dr. B. and Dr. A. Clarke treat those characters, there is a very striking contrast. God treats Jacob with the greatest *respect*; but these Doctors treat him with the greatest *disrespect!* God exhibits in a striking point of light the virtues and excellencies of Jacob; but

these learned divines throw those virtues and perfections into the shade! Dr. B. does not mention one of them. His jaundiced eye sees nothing in that patriarch but “art and duplicity!” God *brands with infamy* the character of Esau; whilst those learned doctors are careful to *emblazon* it—to exhibit it in the most *amiable* and *interesting* point of light! To His servant Jacob God does not say one reproachful word whilst those reverend divines load him with the most *opprobrious epithets*! On the contrary, God never applies one epithet of respect to the character of Esau; whilst Dr. B. and Dr. A. Clarke, endeavour to embalm it by such *honourable* appellations as *liberal, affectionate, forgiving, and magnanimous*! In the name of everything sacred, I ask, why do these divines fly in the face of their Maker? Why do they pour contempt on that character which God delights to honour, and load with honours that character which God has branded with infamy? The most charitable account that can possibly be given of conduct so extraordinary, I had almost said *impious*, is, their *deep-rooted prejudice against the Calvinistic doctrine of election and reprobation*. On the same principle, we can account for Dr. Clarke’s extraordinary exertions to prove that Judas will be saved. The Deity assures us, that it would have been good for Judas had he never been born; that he was the son of perdition, and went to his own place. Almost the whole of the 109th Psalm is employed in denouncing vengeance on the head of the traitor. We are there particularly assured (if we translate into the future tense instead of the imperative mood), that, when judged, he shall be condemned, and that his very prayer should become sin. But Dr. Clarke endeavours to prove that Judas was a true penitent, and that he shall finally be acquitted and saved!

We do not deny that the Scriptures teach a national election, or an election to the enjoyment of church

privileges ; but we maintain that the Scriptures also teach a *personal* election, or an election of *particular persons*, not only to *external privileges*, but to *eternal life*. Their number is as definite as if their names were written in a book. Of Clement and others it is said, (Phil. iv. 3), that their names are written in the book of life. In various other Scriptures the heirs of glory are so represented. The Apostle John addresses his second epistle to the *elect* lady and her children, and mentions also her *elect* sister. “When the children of Jacob are styled God’s chosen ones,” Dr. B. assures us, that it is not meant “that every one of the Israelites was chosen, but that they were members of the chosen nation.” Supposing that this sentence did not contradict the axiom, that “*The whole is equal to its parts*”—supposing the assertion *true*—still it would not follow, that the election of which *we* are treating is not particular or personal—for *Clement* is an individual, the *elect lady* is an individual, and *her elect sister* is an individual. Particular persons are elected, and particular persons have their names written in heaven.—(Luke x. 20). Romans viii. 28th to 30th verse inclusive, is an irrefragable proof of particular election :—“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

Dr. B. alleges, that in this beautiful passage the apostle “Speaks of the Christian church at large.” Let us try the application. Are all the members of the church at large conformed to the image of God’s Son? Are all the members of the church at large justified?

Will they all be glorified? Surely not. The Doctor understands the clause, "*whom he called,*" as equivalent to—whom He "invited into the Christian church." Now, I ask, Did all things work together for good to such? By no means. Many were called, and invited into the Christian Church, who made light of the invitation, who said, "We will not have this man to reign over us; this is the heir, come let us kill him." Did all things work together for *their* good? Quite the reverse. "The King of Heaven sent forth His armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Again, I would ask, Do all things work together for good to those who are not only invited into the Christian Church, but who accept of the invitation, and become church members? are all such *justified*? will all such be *glorified*? Surely not. It is, therefore, abundantly evident that the apostle is *not* speaking of the "*Christian Church at large,*" as the Doctor affirms, but only of a *particular select number*, or in other words, *the elect*.

Dr. B. declares that, "if we cannot explain this passage conformably to our Saviour's doctrine, we should rather abandon it as unintelligible, than prefer the lower authority to the higher." Plain language indeed! To apply the epithets *higher and lower authority* to the Holy Scriptures, which were all given by inspiration of God, and to express a readiness to abandon any portion of those sacred oracles, savours more of *Deism* than of *Christianity*. To do the Doctor justice, however, he *must* abandon the passage in question. He must either abandon *it* or abandon his own favourite hypothesis. He must either abandon *it*, or admit the doctrine of predestination against which he preaches so long a sermon. The Calvinist is determined neither to abandon this, nor any other passage of the Sacred Volume. To the *Arian* it may appear unintelligible, and *must* appear so, whilst he denies predestination; not so to the

Calvinist. To him it appears a glorious chain of special privileges extending from eternity to eternity. His view of it is this:—That those of the fallen human family, who were the objects of God's foreknowledge, or of His eternal distinguishing love,* He *predestinated* or *foreordained* to be conformed to Jesus Christ His Son, not only in suffering, but in holiness and happiness. Those same persons whom He thus predestinated, He in due time *calls*, not only *externally* by His Word, but *internally* and *efficaciously*, by His *Spirit*. He calls them from darkness to light, from death to life, from Satan to God. "He persuades and enables them to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to them in the Gospel." The persons thus effectually called He also *justifies*. "He freely pardons all their sins, and accepteth of them as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and received by faith alone." Those same persons whom He thus justifies, He finally *glorifies*. He makes them "perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity." After ten thousand attempts to torture the passage, this

* It is generally acknowledged by divines—those who oppose as well as those who advocate the doctrine of predestination—that foreknowledge in the text implies love or favour. Knowledge is frequently put for love in Scripture. "*You only have I known of all the families of the earth.*" Other families of the earth, as well as the Jews, were the objects of God's simple knowledge; but the Jews alone were the objects of His distinguishing love (Deut. vii. 6—8), "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people. But because the Lord loved you." It is to this distinguishing unmerited love, and gracious election, that God refers, when He says, "*You only have I known of all the families of the earth.*" On the same principle, it is to the distinguishing and electing love of God that the apostle refers, when he says, "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate."

appears to be its plain and unsophisticated meaning. Nor is the doctrine of particular election, thus plainly taught by the *apostle*, at all inconsistent with the doctrine taught by our *Saviour*. Dr. B. may *boldly insinuate* that they are inconsistent, but the insinuation is as *groundless* as it is *impious*. It appears to me, that the doctrine of election and reprobation is taught by our Saviour in language nearly, if not *altogether*, as explicit as that of the apostle. "I have other sheep," says He, "that are not of this fold, them also must I bring," &c. "All that the Father hath given to me shall come unto me. Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep."

Dr. Bruce's commentary on Romans viii. leads into this gross absurdity—that *the whole visible church will be saved*. To avoid this consequence, Dr. Adam Clarke adopts an ingenious expedient. As Rehoboam substituted shields of *brass* instead of the *golden shields* which Shishak, king of Egypt, carried away, so Dr. Clarke takes away the *golden link of eternal glory*, and substitutes the *brazen one of temporal privileges!* The clause, "Them He also glorified," he explains thus: "He has honoured and dignified the Gentiles with the highest privileges. He has rendered them illustrious by innumerable gifts, graces, and privileges, in the same manner as He had done to the Israelites of old." Thus, to get rid of Calvinistic decrees, this learned commentator "*shrivels into meagreness*" one of the most beautiful passages in the whole Book of God. That the word *glorified* refers, not to *temporal*

privileges, as the Doctor imagines, but to eternal felicity, is evident from the antecedent context (verses 17, 18), "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The various unsuccessful and contradictory attempts made by the enemies of Calvinism to explain the passage in question, are a strong presumptive argument, that the Calvinistic interpretation is the true one.

Were the word election in Scripture applicable only to nations, but not to individuals, what would our opponents gain? It will be said, no doubt, that this election to external privileges was very different from a particular election to eternal life. To show, however, that the difference is not so great as is generally imagined, I would ask, were not thousands saved in consequence of this national election, that would *not* have been saved had they *not* been elected? This question, I presume, will be universally answered in the affirmative. No person will venture to maintain, that as small a number of *Jews* obtained eternal life, as of the *surrounding heathen nations* of equal extent. Even Dr. Adam Clarke, who affirms that Esau had as fair a prospect for immortal glory as Jacob, will not be bold enough to assert that the *Edomites* had as fair a prospect for glory as the *Israelites*. He will not venture to assert that as many of the *one* nation were saved, as of the *other*. "Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord?" Salvation was of the Jews. Now, if thousands of Jews were saved, that would *not* have been saved had their nation *not been elected*, all those thousands, whatever be their number, owe their salvation, their *eternal* salvation, to election—to a *gratuitous* election—an election, not of *works*, but of *grace*. The same may be said of those

nations elected to the enjoyment of Christian privileges. Are not thousands saved in Britain and Ireland, that would *not* have been saved had they been left in a state of heathenism? To what do all those owe their salvation? To THEIR ELECTION—to the *free, sovereign, and electing love of God*, who purposed from all eternity to separate them from the rest of the world, and elected them to the enjoyment of those external privileges, by the means of which they are finally saved. Where now is all the noisy declamation against the doctrine of particular election? Does it not recoil on the opponents of the doctrine? Where is now the loud cry of favouritism and partiality? Was there no favouritism or partiality in electing a whole nation, whilst all the rest of the world was rejected—whilst all other nations were permitted to walk in their own ways? Has the Deity shown no favouritism or partiality in electing the various nations of Christendom to the enjoyment of the privileges of the Christian church, whilst all the other nations of the earth, enveloped in darkness worse than Egyptian, are left “without God and hope in the world?” Did the Almighty discover no favouritism or partiality, by so loving the world as to send His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life; whilst a more noble order of beings, who kept not their first state, “were cast down to hell, and reserved in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day?” Let our opponents show that the Deity has discovered no favouritism or partiality in these things, and we will show that he has discovered none *in particular election*.

The charge of partiality, so long and loudly vociferated, rests upon the false principle that sinners of our family have claims on Divine grace and bounty. But, even Dr. B. himself being witness, we have *no such claims*. “Few,” says the Doctor, “very few indeed, are the legal claims which we have upon the Divine

justice, and we have *none* upon His *bounty*; and yet infinite are the gifts He has to bestow." Why, then, I ask, should any venture to charge the Deity with favouritism and partiality, because He dispenses His own unmerited bounty as He pleases? To every such objector the Almighty may justly reply, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?"

The Arminian objection of partiality leads into *Deism*. A principal objection against revelation is drawn from its partial diffusion. Deists argue that the Scriptures cannot be the Word of God, because they are not communicated to all; and this, they allege, would make God partial. The very same objection would lead to *Atheism*; for, in the works of creation and providence, God does not confer the same favours upon all. His sovereignty shines in all His works, and in all His dispensations.

Another objection—an objection on which our opponents seem principally to rely, and which Dr. B. chiefly urges—is, that particular election supersedes the necessity of prayer and other means of grace. Why need we pray?—why need we strive? say our opponents. If we are elected, we shall be saved; but, if not, we shall be condemned. Had not the absurdity of this objection been already pointed out, we might retort it thus:—If nations are elected to the enjoyment of Gospel privileges, why need we pray that the Gospel may be sent to the heathen? Why need we form missionary societies, for the purpose of sending through the world the glad tidings of great joy? The nations that God has elected to enjoy such privileges shall enjoy them; therefore our prayers and missionary exertions are altogether useless!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

IN the general attack made by Dr. B. on almost all the fundamental truths of Christianity, we could not expect the doctrine of the Saints' Perseverance to escape. He has assailed it, not only incidentally in his Sermons, but endeavoured to hold it up to detestation and contempt in his Appendix. With the abominable Antinomian quotations which he has given, we have no manner of concern. Dr. B. himself does not hold those quotations in greater abhorrence than *we* do. However foolishly, impiously, or blasphemously, Antinomians may talk or write on the subject, no doctrine contained in the Sacred Volume is capable of a more triumphant defence. Out of an immense mass of evidence, I shall lay before my readers a few of those reasons which induce me to believe the doctrine.

1. To me it appears that a multitude of texts of Scripture must be *false*, if the doctrine of perseverance is not *true*. I shall mention a few:—Our Saviour asserts, "He that believeth shall be *saved*," but Dr. Bruce asserts, and all anti-Calvinists assert, that believers may fall from a state of grace, and be *condemned*! Our Saviour asserts, that whosoever believeth on Him shall *not perish*, and that His sheep shall *never perish, nor be plucked out of His hand*;* but Dr. B. and all anti-Calvinists assert, that believers *may* perish, and that Christ's sheep *may* be plucked out of His hand! Our

* If they do not assert *in so many words*, that Christ's sheep may be plucked out of His hands, they assert what is fully equivalent.

Saviour assures us, with a double verily, that the believer "*shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life ;*" but Dr. Bruce, and all anti-Calvinists, assure us, that he *may* come into condemnation, and *never see life!* Our Saviour will say to the wicked at the great day, "Depart from me, I never knew you." Had any of those addressed fallen away from a state of grace, the Redeemer's declaration *would not be true!*—*it would not be true that He had never known them!*

From these counter-declarations, I ask two questions : —1. Whether should we believe our blessed Redeemer, or Dr. B. and other opponents of the saints' perseverance? 2. Does the Doctor's volume of sermons deserve that high character which he himself has given it? *Is it consistent with the Gospel?"*

Agreeable to the above-cited declarations of the Redeemer are those of the Apostles. The Apostle John declares, "That he that doeth evil hath not *seen* God," and that "Whosoever sinneth hath not *seen* Him, neither *known* Him." Now, if the doctrine of perseverance is not *true*, these texts are false. If any fall away from a state of grace, commit sin, and do evil, it is not true that they have not *seen* God, neither *known* Him." Dr. B., and other opponents of the saints' perseverance, maintain, that a man *may have seen God, and also known Him*, and, after all, he may *fall away, "commit sin," "do evil,"* and finally perish. Between this doctrine and that of the Apostle is there not a flat contradiction? Surely there is.

2. The doctrine of the saints' perseverance rests on the solid basis of the Divine perfections. The foreknowledge of God proves the doctrine. God hath not cast off His people whom He foreknew. "Whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate, and whom He did predestinate them He also called, and whom He called them He also justified, and whom He justified

them He also glorified." Unless this golden chain can be broken, the saints' perseverance cannot be denied. The apostle's chain is what logicians denominate a sorites. The conclusion is not expressed, it is this ;— *therefore whom He did foreknow them He also glorified.* If this conclusion be *denied*, then the apostle's chain is not a sorites, but a sophism! If it be *admitted*, the doctrine of the saints' perseverance is *fully established*. Some divines, with a boldness bordering on impiety, attempt to break the apostle's chain. Were they to succeed, they would prove—what?—that the apostle is an inconclusive and sophistical reasoner!

The omnipotent power of God secures the final perseverance of the saints. They are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." *The love of God and the Redeemer* secure the saints' perseverance. Whom the Redeemer loves "He loves unto the end." God loved believers with an everlasting love—draws them with loving-kindness—declares that his loving-kindness shall not depart from them, and, accordingly, the apostle exclaims (Rom. viii. 35), "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

3. I believe the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, because they are "*members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.*" Could any of those members be torn off, the mystical body of the Redeemer would

be a maimed and mutilated body! It would not be perfect and glorious, but unsightly and deformed!

4. I believe that none of the saints shall ever fail of obtaining the heavenly inheritance, because their charter to that inheritance is the very same with that of the *Redeemer himself*. They are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ." If the Redeemer's charter be good, so is *theirs*. If His charter cannot be broken, neither can *theirs*. Their lives are hid with *Christ in God*. Because *He* lives, *they* shall live also.

5. I believe that the saints cannot totally and finally fall away from a state of grace, or fail of obtaining the heavenly inheritance; because they have *the first fruits and earnest* of that inheritance. If an earnest gives security among *men*, much more so with *God*. Men *may* refuse to make good that bargain which they have confirmed by giving earnest; but God will not tantalize His creatures, by first giving them the Holy Spirit as the earnest of their inheritance, and afterwards excluding them from the full possession.

6. I believe that the saints cannot finally fall away from a state of grace, because "*they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise—sealed to the day of redemption.*" They cannot fall away and be lost, except *the broad seal of heaven can be broken!*

7. I believe in the perseverance of the saints, because I believe that "*He who begins the good work of grace will carry it on to perfection!*" I believe that the Deity is not like the foolish man, who began to build and was not able to finish. When God threatened to destroy the Israelites for their rebellion, Moses intercedes thus (Deut. ix. 26—29):—"O Lord God, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their

wickedness, nor to their sin ; lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness. Yet they are thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power, and by thy stretched out arm." On similar principles, Joshua intercedes (Josh. vii. 7—9) : —“ Alas ! O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us ? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan ! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies ! For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land, shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth : and what wilt thou do unto thy great name ?” If it would have reflected dishonour on the great name of God, to redeem the Israelites out of Egypt, and then to destroy them in the wilderness ; still more inconsistent with the Divine perfections would it be, to suffer those to fall, and finally perish, whom God has redeemed from sin and Satan.

8. Finally ;* if the saints might totally and finally fall from grace, their state now, under the *covenant of grace*, would be worse than it was under the *covenant of works*. Under the covenant of works, the happiness of man was suspended on the free will of an *innocent* Being ; but, according to the doctrine of those who deny the saints' perseverance, it is suspended on the free will of a *weak, corrupt, and depraved* Being !

Men may fall away from an *external profession of religion*, but not from *true faith*. “ From him that hath not,” says our Saviour, “ shall be taken away that which

* I might have argued the doctrine from the death of Christ—His surety-ship—His intercession—and a variety of other topics.

he hath ; or, as it is explained, "that which he *seemeth* to have." "They went out from us," says the Apostle John, "but they were not *of us* ; for if they had been *of us*, they would have no doubt continued with us : but they went out, *that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*"



**CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS
DEFENDED,**

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO THE ANONYMOUS AUTHOR OF

“THE BATTLE OF THE TWO DIALOGUES.”

“Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth?”

“Paul, thou art permitted to speak for thyself.”

ADVERTISEMENT.

ATTACKS, from various quarters, having lately been made on the principles which the writer of the following letters has espoused, and on the denomination to which he has the honour to belong—for some time past he has waited with anxiety, expecting every moment to see them repelled by some abler antagonist. In this expectation he has been hitherto disappointed. Those gentlemen, who, by talents, learning, and other accomplishments, seemed best qualified for entering the lists, appear to have regarded such attacks as despicable; they have therefore treated them with silent contempt. On this subject the author entertains a different opinion.

Though a pamphlet in itself may be really insignificant; and though, in the estimation of men of learning and talents, it may be truly contemptible; yet, if falling in with the tide of popular prejudice, it is written in a bold declamatory style, its effects may be pernicious. By treating such pamphlets with silent contempt, sufficient deference is not paid to the opinion of the world. Silence may be construed into conscious imbecility, and contempt into cowardice. With fresh increments of audacity, attacks may be reiterated, till the press at last teem with the crude eructations of every “assuming

pedagogue." By such considerations, the author feels himself impelled to stand forward as the advocate of a cause which has long been despised—as the apologist of a society obscure and inconsiderable.

The various and important ends and uses of creeds and confessions have been accurately exhibited, and ably defended, by divines of great eminence. Dunlop on Confessions may be consulted with advantage. The writer of the following letters has confined himself to one single view of the subject; and the chain of reasoning which he has employed, has, at least, one recommendation—it is, so far as he knows, new.

Some may blame the author, because on all occasions he has not been careful to preserve his gravity; whilst others again, considering the spirit of the pamphlet on which he animadverts, may think that he is only *too* grave and serious. Whether he is actually guilty of running into *either* of these extremes, it is not his province to determine. All he can say is, that attention to the golden medium has been his object. The principle upon which he proceeds, is—that reasoning ought to be refuted by argument; but that satire is the *only* weapon with which folly and impertinence can be successfully assailed. The author hopes, that the candour of the reader will prevent him from identifying the Rev. Presbyterian with the Synod of Ulster, or imputing to that learned body the blunders, absurdities, and contradictions of one of its members. Nothing can be more unfair, though nothing is more common, than to impute the errors of an individual to a whole community.

With regard to the continuance of the controversy, the author has only to say, that he neither feels disposed to provoke, nor to deprecate discussion. He holds no principle which he has not previously examined in private, and which he is not willing to submit to a *public* examination. If the tenets of any other denomination can be clearly shown to be more agreeable to the Word of God, he can have no interest in refusing to adopt them. As truth excels error, as far as light excels darkness—so, when she is exhibited holding not only in her right hand spiritual blessings, but in her left riches and honour, surely they must be worse than fools who would refuse to embrace her.

Should the Rev. Presbyterian, or any other gentleman, think proper to renew the attack, the author hopes that he will not, like Joab, carry his dagger under a cloak, for the purpose of stabbing in secret the characters of his superiors; wrapping himself up in ignominious obscurity, he will not attempt to screen himself from public chastisement.

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CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS DEFENDED.

LETTER I.

TO THE REV. PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—That, both among the advocates and opponents of creeds and confessions, men of great talents, learning, and piety, might be found, is a fact which, I flattered myself, none would dispute. In this it appears I have been mistaken. The advocates of creeds and confessions, in your *Battle of Dialogues*, you represent as a truly despicable race of mortals; you contemptuously style them creed-makers and creed-mongers, who coin formulas to measure men's consciences; and you gravely inform us that "ninety-nine out of a hundred who contend for creeds never think what they are; and the few who do read them never think of the meaning of language." What contemptible miscreants are these same advocates of creeds and confessions! Ninety-nine out of a hundred, though they *subscribe* them, and though they *contend* for them, yet never read them! How implicit their faith! How blind their zeal! "And the few who do read them never think of the meaning of language." Still worse; a still lower degree of degradation! Hide your diminished heads, ye contemptible advocates of creeds and confessions. Never lift your pens—never open your mouths—be for ever silent; for ye never think of the meaning of language! With infinite contempt, Rev. Sir, you look down on the "pitiable creatures who know not between *t-h-e* and

t-h-e-y;" and with profound disdain, mingled with pathetic lamentation, you stigmatise that "most ungrammatical *talking*, which is frequently palmed on the people for preaching." Surely, said I (whilst meditating on these things), surely, said I, the writer of this dialogue is an admirable scholar—an accurate grammarian—a profound philologist. In this, however, I confess, I found myself a little disappointed. The perusal of your pamphlet, I candidly acknowledge, did not altogether answer the expectations you had raised. Glancing at your pages in a critical point of view, to my great astonishment, I found them replete with grammatical blunders. For my own entertainment, I marked a number of them on the margin; and for your gratification, I shall exhibit a specimen.*

Page 6, line 6 from the bottom, the pronoun *they* is in the plural number, whilst *Seceder*, the noun for which it stands is singular. On the contrary, page 19, line 12, the pronoun *it* is singular, whilst *instructions*, the noun for which it stands, is plural. Same page, line 7 from the bottom, the verb *must subscribe*, has two nominatives, *negro* and *he*; on the contrary, page 9, line 4 from the bottom, the verb *hope* has no nominative at all; for when two verbs of different moods or tenses are coupled together by a conjunction, the nominative of the former must be repeated before the latter. Additional violations of this rule will be seen, page 21, line 19, and page 30, line 10. In page 22, line 16 from the bottom, and page 43, line 2, examples will be seen of the verb disagreeing with its nominative case. A variety of other grammatical blunders might be pointed out; but these may suffice at present.

Let us attend a little to the style of your Dialogue. Of your talents for composition you appear by no means diffident. Whilst you reprobate the advocates

* Omitting this letter, at least the grammatical part of it, the unlearned reader may pass on to Letter II.

of creeds and confessions, as ignoramuses who never think of the meaning of language, you speak, with apparent self-complacency, of the well ordered words you have used in a former Dialogue. Of that Dialogue, having never seen it,* I can only say, that I hope its words are much better ordered than those of the one now under review. In your Battle of Dialogues, page 14, we read thus:—"But there were many exceptions to the Talmud amongst the Jews; and we have every reason to believe that Timothy and his forefathers were of the number." Were Timothy and his forefathers exceptions to the Talmud? Are these words well ordered? Are they sense? Same page, near the bottom, we are informed, that "the birth of Jesus Christ, His person, &c., were handed down by the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of the apostles." Pray, sir, how was the person of Christ, (as distinct from His preaching and doctrines, which are tautologically mentioned in the same sentence,) how was the person of Christ handed down by the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of the apostles? Had you been a Rev. Catholic, instead of a Rev. Presbyterian, I would have at once recognised the doctrine of transubstantiation.

In page 16, we are informed, that "the Israelites had

* Since writing the above, the original Dialogue has fallen into my hand. For a specimen of the philological talents of its author, we have only to consult the bottom of the title-page—"Belfast, printed this present year, 1817." Lest any person should imagine that 1817 was *not* present when it *was* present; or lest any person should imagine that it was not printed 1817, A.D., but 1817, A.M.; or, in other words, that it was printed in the days of Noah, a little after the universal deluge—to prevent all misconceptions of this kind, the author "in words few and well ordered," not only informs us that the pamphlet was printed in 1817, but gravely assures us that that year was then present. After such a specimen of accuracy in the title-page, who can doubt that the Dialogue itself is admirably composed?

disagreed to walk according to God's commandments." To *agree* to walk according to the commandments of God, is perfectly intelligible; but to *disagree* to walk according to these commandments is neither English nor sense.

Page 19, we are told, that "though the Spirit was given to Jesus without measure, yet the apostles got it as it were step by step." To get a gift, as it were step by step, is not English.

Page 20, we read thus:—"You have now *passed over* the whole of his arguments." The words *passed over* convey the erroneous idea, that he had not adverted to those arguments at all. Same page, at the bottom, you propose to put Layman in possession of a standard, which will answer in all engagements, and against all enemies. Now, what is this standard? It is the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of Gospel preparation, &c. A very remarkable standard, indeed! One would expect, that the hero who fought the Battle of Dialogues would understand military terms better than to confound a girdle, a breastplate, or a pair of shoes, with a standard!

Page 22, we read thus:—Charity, or at least prudence, might have *constrained* your colleague from making such an attack, and from warping into it the motives, &c. Not to mention *constrained* for *restrained*, which may possibly be only a typographical error—what a jumble of metaphors! Warping motives into an attack! A very extraordinary web, no doubt!

Page 26, the Presbyterians of Scotland, and the Protestants of England, are styled the most learned assemblies in the world. We know, that the Presbyterians of Scotland are under the inspection of a very learned assembly; but are the Presbyterians themselves an assembly? Are the Protestants of England an assembly? Well ordered words, indeed!

Page 13, we read thus:—"On being asked, 'Do you

think that either the Divine Jesus, or His apostles, made use of any other standard of faith besides the Scriptures ?' he says, 'I am quite certain that they did.' After such boldness, a person of plain sense would expect a quotation or two from that of which he is so certain," Now, that of which he is so certain, is "that the Divine Jesus, and His apostles, made use of another standard besides the Bible." It is the truth of this proposition of which he is so certain. To expect a quotation or two from the truth of a proposition, is surely ludicrous enough! So absurd an expectation, "I am quite certain," was never entertained by any person of plain sense.

Page 35, you express yourself thus:—"The ground of my loyalty is not founded on the countenance of Government." This sentence, when analysed, will read as follows:—The foundation of my loyalty is not built on the foundation of the countenance of Government. Well ordered words, indeed!

Campbell, in his Philosophy of Rhetoric, has a chapter on "What is the cause that nonsense so often escapes being detected both by the writer and by the reader?" A careful perusal of this chapter I would earnestly recommend to all who read the Battle of Dialogues. The various kinds of nonsense enumerated by Campbell, are the puerile, the learned, the profound, and the marvellous. With great submission, I conceive the enumeration is incomplete—he ought to have added, the *pedantic*.

In the preceding pages, I have exhibited a few specimens of the blunders, in grammar and in style, with which the Battle of Dialogues abounds. I say a *few*; for, to exhibit them all, would swell this letter to a size much larger than that of the Dialogue itself.

My reverend and dear Presbyterian, I am extremely sorry for your calamity. Before you attacked the advocates of creeds and confessions, you were doubtless

an excellent scholar, an accurate grammarian, an acute philologist; but now, alas! your learning is fled, your talents are blasted. As an atonement for your sin, by which you have brought upon yourself so awful a judgment, I shall take the liberty of prescribing for you a course of penance. It is this:—that, at the first meeting of Synod, you come forth from your lurking place, with tears in your eyes, and the *Battle of Dialogues* in your hands, confessing yourself to be the author of that performance. 2; that in open Synod you fall down on your bended knees, humbly begging the pardon of all the advocates of creeds and confessions, professing, at the same time, the deepest sorrow for the scurrilous manner in which you have treated them. 3; that you bring forward a motion to the following effect:—That no member of the Synod of Ulster shall, on pain of public censure, presume to attack the *Westminster Divines*, or any of the advocates of *Creeds and Confessions*, till having previously studied *Murray's grammar*, he is able to write a couple of pages without committing any material blunder.”

The utility of this motion you will easily perceive. In the first place, it may be the means of averting future judgments. In the second place, it will preserve the respectability of the Synod. It will prevent that venerable and learned body from being disgraced by the incoherent effusions of every contemptible scribbler. In the third place, (for I love to be methodical), it will have an admirable effect upon pulpit exhibitions. It will prevent “The most ungrammatical talking from being palmed on the people for preaching.” Those, you know, who write ungrammatically, will, of course, talk no better. And, indeed, either to write or talk ungrammatically, in this learned age, is quite intolerable, I had almost said unpardonable. With great propriety, therefore, you drop the tear of lamentation, whilst you express yourself thus:—“Alas, sir, you are well aware,

that the most ungrammatical talking is frequently palmed on the people for preaching." It is true, indeed, that a bigoted Seceder or Covenanter would have probably said, alas! sir, you know that the most *erroneous* and *heretical* talking is frequently palmed on the people for preaching. Alas! sir, you know that "there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation; ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Alas! sir, you know, that for a long time past, "false teachers have been privily bringing in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing upon themselves swift destruction." Alas! sir, you know, that "many follow their pernicious ways, by reason of which the way of truth is evil spoken of." Alas! sir, you know, "that, through covetousness," these false teachers, "with feigned words, make merchandize of" their hearers. Alas! sir, you know, that their "judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." Alas! sir, you know, that because men "receive not the love of the truth, that they may be saved, for this cause God sends them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie; that they all may be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness." Such, my dear sir, was current language seventeen or eighteen hundred years ago—nay, so rude are some of the old advocates of creeds and confessions, that they retain it even in the present day. You assure us, however, that the term heretic is used only as a bug-bear to frighten children, and that the utmost we can expect of men is, "to act on their opinions." We have no just reason, therefore, to lament, that errors and heresies are frequently palmed on the people for preaching. We have no reason to blame the propagators of these errors, heresies, and

doctrines of devils. The utmost we can expect of them is, to act on their opinions.

With regard to ungrammatical talkers, the case is quite different. For these there is no apology. The remedy is obvious. Let them return and spend a few additional months at the grammar-school: for the same purpose, let them peruse this letter, which I design for their edification.

I am, sir, your sincere friend, and fellow-labourer in grammar,

JOHN PAUL.

LETTER II.

MY DEAR SIR,—The Rev. Covenanter, with whom you contend in your *Battle of Dialogues*, appears to be a very puny antagonist—the simplest and best-natured creature in the world. During the whole of the conflict he never strikes a single blow, but, when smote on the one cheek, with the greatest meekness and good humour, turns to you the other. To be candid, sir, I am afraid you have mistaken your man; I am afraid your antagonist is a Quaker, and not a Covenanter. Covenanters, I can assure you, are not quite so tame as represented in your dialogue. A mistake, not altogether unlike the one just mentioned, I am sure you have made, when you assert that the dialogue which occasioned yours was written by a teacher, and not by a layman. Of this mistake, should you call in question the authenticity of my information, you can be convicted in the most satisfactory manner. Equally groundless is your ungenerous suspicion, that the reverend Covenanter was a member of a mixed club, who often assembled to drill Layman. In vain, sir, has that gentleman employed almost the whole of his life, (including seven years at Glasgow college)—in vain, I say, has he employed almost the whole of his life in cultivating talents of a superior order; if, after all, afraid of appearing in the public field of controversy, he skulks in obscurity, and dares only to carry on a clandestine and inglorious war. The truth is, your supposition that Layman was drilled by the clergyman, is completely destroyed by your former assertion, that the layman was actually the clergyman in disguise.

In your controversy with Layman, I do not design

very formally to interfere. If you imagine you have fought a hard battle, and gained over him a signal victory, I shall not, unless in a few instances, attempt to pluck the laurels from your brow. I would only admonish you, not to be too hasty in laying aside your armour, for it does not appear to me that the victory is quite so decisive. Your antagonist may arise and renew the conflict.

In your late battle, had you acted merely on the defensive—had you only endeavoured to repel the attacks of Layman—I should never have entered the lists; but when you carry on offensive operations against all creeds and confessions, particularly the Westminster Confession of Faith, the National Covenant, the Solemn League and Covenant, together with that venerable assembly by which those ancient documents were compiled, I feel myself called on to take up the gauntlet—to stand forward in defence of principles and characters, which, in my humble opinion, are worthy to be held in the highest estimation, but which you have indecently and furiously assailed.

The whole of your reasoning against creeds and confessions appears to me resolvable into that species of sophism, which logicians style *ignoranti elenchi*, a mistake of the question. In page 10, you inform us, that the question is, “Whether the Word of God be a perfect rule of faith and manners.” Now, sir, this is not the question at all. This never *was* the question. I appeal to your own motto, “The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy Him.” This motto, which, by mistake, you quote from the Westminster Confession of Faith, will be found in the Shorter Catechism. It contains an explicit declaration of the sentiments of our Westminster Divines, with regard to the sufficiency and perfection of Scripture. It declares those sacred

oracles to be, not only the rule, but the *only* rule to direct us in the glorification and enjoyment of God, and it proves, beyond a doubt, that your statement is erroneous.

Pray, sir, what advocate of creeds and confessions ever called in question either the perfection or infallibility of Scripture? For what purpose, then, do you again, and again, and again, talk about the perfection of Scripture, and the infallibility of Scripture, about mending that which is perfect, adding to infallibility, &c. What a waste of time and paper! On these points there is no dispute. You have fought indeed a hard battle—but with whom? Not with the advocates of creeds and confessions, but with certain imaginary beings, who deny the perfection and infallibility of Scripture! In a word, you have set up a man of straw, and over him you have gained a signal victory!

In reply to these observations, you will doubtless exclaim, Of what use, then, are human creeds and confessions? I answer, they are useful, not for mending the Word of God, not for adding to its perfection or infallibility, not as a rule of faith and manners—but they are useful, as they assist us in applying the rule of God's Word; they are useful, as they assist us in understanding each other, with regard to the ideas we attach to the Word of God—for these purposes, I contend, they are useful, and not only useful, but *necessary*.

The controversy about creeds and confessions may be reduced, if I mistake not, to very narrow limits, thus :—

Either a simple profession of faith in the Scriptures, (so far as belief is concerned,) is sufficient to entitle to the privileges of the Christian Church, or it is not. If such a profession *is* sufficient, then creeds and confessions are unnecessary. If it is *not* sufficient, then both the necessity and utility of creeds and confessions are fully established.

Now, my dear sir, as you talk so much of the sufficiency, perfection, and infallibility of Scripture, I ask you, Do you imagine that a simple profession of faith in the Scriptures is sufficient to entitle to the privileges of the Christian Church? Were a person to apply to you for admission, and, upon his application, declare that he believed the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and that he believed all the doctrines contained in that Sacred Volume, would you regard this declaration as perfectly satisfactory?—as perfectly sufficient to entitle him to admission? Upon this principle, would you actually admit him? If you say you would, and prove that in doing so your conduct would be proper, you have gained your point; the controversy is ended. But, my dear sir, do you not perceive, that if a simple profession of faith in the Scriptures were all that is necessary to qualify for admission, the most erroneous and fanatical persons that ever lived could never be excluded. Those who “give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, forbidding to marry, and abstaining from meats,” must all be admitted into your community. Those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, and contend for a community of wives, and those who plead for polygamy, divorce, and even fornication, must all be received. Those who deny the Christian Sabbath, baptism, the Lord’s supper, the preaching of the Word, and even the obligation of the moral law of God, must all become members of your society. Those who believe the Redeemer to be the supreme God—those who believe Him to be a superangelic Being—those who believe Him to be a mere man, a peccable being like ourselves, and those who believe that He had no human nature at all—that His incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension, were all imaginary—all these must be admitted by you to the enjoyment of the most solemn ordinances. If they profess their faith in the Scriptures, you cannot refuse them. Dancers, Dunkers,

Jumpers, and Shakers, must all be admitted into your community. If they profess their belief in the Scriptures, you can ask no more ; yourself being judge, "the utmost that can be expected of them is, to act on their opinions." Of course, when public worship commences, your alleys must be cleared, that the Dancers may "trip it on the light fantastic toe;" whilst the Jumpers and Shakers, having stripped off their clothes, leap till their heads strike the joists of your galleries, and their bodies fall down in convulsions before you.

Nor must you by any means refuse admission to the Flagellantes, who believe that salvation can only be obtained by faith and whipping. Presume not to deny them the most effectual means of their salvation—the cat-o'-nine-tails. Whilst, with energy and zeal, they exercise their godly discipline, and vigorously persevere in their pious flagellations, dare not to interfere. "The utmost you can expect of them is, to act on their opinions."

Suppose the next class of candidates for admission to be the Circoncelliones. With the clubs of Israel in their hands, and the war-whoop of "Praise be to God," in their mouths, these ancient fanatics sallied forth in frantic fury. As "vindicators of justice, and protectors of the oppressed," they enfranchised slaves, discharged debtors, cancelled bonds, and forced masters to exchange situations with their servants. With the clubs of Israel (for they used no swords, our Saviour having forbidden the use of one to Peter), with the clubs of Israel, breaking the bones of their victims, and pouring into their eyes a solution of quick-lime and vinegar, they left them to perish in the utmost agonies. Violating their vows of chastity, they gave themselves up to wine and every species of impurity. At last, by voluntary martyrdom, or suicide, they terminated a series of unexampled atrocities. These, no doubt, you would consider a coarse description of Christians. But what

could you do? If willing to subscribe the Scriptures, you could not refuse them. "The utmost you could expect of them would be, to act on their opinions."

The Adamites, the Cainites, the Serpentarians, and Satanians, must all be admitted members of your society. It is true, the tenets of the Adamites might, perhaps, displease you a little—particularly the fundamental maxim of their society, "Jura, perjura, secretum prodere noli"—Swear, forswear, and reveal not the secret. Whilst they strenuously maintain, that it is highly improper to marry, or to wear any clothes, you must not presume to condemn their tenets, for, according to your own doctrine, you are fallible as well as the Adamites; you are as liable and as likely to be mistaken as they. In imitation of old father Adam, you must allow them the privilege of appearing in your assembly *naked*. "The utmost you can expect of them is, to act on their opinions."

Upon the same principle, I conclude, you are by far too liberal to exclude from your community the sect of the Cainites. You would not condemn this sect for holding in the highest veneration such worthy characters as Cain, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and the Sodomites, but particularly Judas Iscariot, who was singularly useful in betraying the Redeemer, by whose blood we are saved!

Nor must you by any means reject the Serpentarians, who venerate the serpent that beguiled Eve, supposing it to be the Son of God!

Nor could you refuse the right hand of fellowship to the good old Satanians, who very wisely considered that, as the devil was a being of great power, it was a dictate of prudence to venerate and adore him. You must not condemn any of these tenets: for you are a fallible being, as liable and as likely to err as any Serpentarian or Satanian in the world. "The utmost you could expect of such characters, is, to act on their opinions."

The Amsdorfiens asserted, that good works were not only unprofitable, but obstacles to our salvation.

The Beguines maintained, that when once we are united to God, we arrive at a state, not only of sinless perfection, but of impeccability—that we may indulge all our appetites and passions without restraint—that the greatest enormities are perfectly innocent, and that we are bound by no laws, neither civil nor ecclesiastical.

The Libertines contended, that God was the immediate author of every action—that, properly speaking, there was no such thing as sin, nor any essential difference between right and wrong—that we might indulge all our appetites and passions without restraint—that all our actions and pursuits were perfectly innocent—that our blessed Redeemer was nothing more than a mere *je ne sçai quoi*,* composed of the Spirit of God, and the opinion of men.

Now, sir, is it not evident that, upon your own principles, Amsdorfiens, Beguines, and Libertines, must all be admitted and recognised as Church members? Professing to believe in the Word of God, you could not refuse them. Nor could you at all condemn their tenets. Why? You will answer the question yourself. You are “as fallible, as liable, and as likely to err,” as any Beguine, Amsdorfiens, or Libertine in the world. “The utmost we can expect of men is, to act on their opinions.”

To render your Church a little more respectable, you might have a few Stylites, or pillar-saints. These worthy characters, like St. Simeon Stylites, perched on the tops of towers, forty or fifty cubits high, might stand there motionless for thirty or forty years. The elevated piety and exalted devotion of these anchorites could not fail to excite universal admiration; they would undoubtedly be looked up to by Christians of every description. Should our Rev. Presbyterian prove

* I know not what.

a little sceptical, and attempt to bring down from his high station one of these exalted characters, the ancho-rite might quote his authority thus :—“ I will set me on my tower,” &c. Continuing still a little sceptical, should your Reverence remonstrate with him, and attempt to substitute your own interpretation, his high mightiness might rejoin :—According to your own doctrine, you are as fallible, as liable, and as likely to err, as any pillar-saint. “ One interpretation may be as good as another.” Mine may, therefore, be as good as yours. I will not come down.

Thus, sir, it appears that, upon your principles, persons whose opinions are the most fanatical, the most erroneous, the most immoral, the most impious and abominable, must all be admitted, and recognised as church members; professing their faith in the Scriptures, they cannot be rejected. Of the heterogeneous materials of such a church, the population of Noah’s ark would be only a faint representation. So far from living together in love and peace, the whole British army could not restrain them from cutting each others throats. From such a church, “ Good Lord deliver us.” If this be liberality, let me for ever remain a bigot.

In the preceding pages, I have endeavoured to point out the consequences which naturally, and, in my humble opinion, necessarily follow from the position, that a profession of belief in the Scriptures is all that is necessary to entitle to the privileges of the Christian church. The consequences I have inferred, I humbly conceive, naturally and necessarily follow from the premises. Sorry, however, would I be to insinuate, that my friend the Rev. Presbyterian would acknowledge these consequences. I can assure you, my dear sir, that I hope better things of you. I flatter myself, that you were not aware of the consequences to which the principles laid down in your dialogue would naturally lead you. I cannot believe, sir, that upon their acknowledgment

of the Scriptures, you would profess yourself willing to hold communion with all descriptions of men, however immoral, impious, or abominable their tenets.

Though Latitudinarian and sceptical principles are frequently palmed on the world, under the specious guise of liberality and charity; yet I do not believe there is any Rev. Presbyterian hardy enough to avow the consequences mentioned above.

Now, sir, if you grant (and I am confident you will) that, on a bare profession of their belief in the Scriptures, you would not admit to church fellowship such characters as are mentioned above, I have gained my point. The utility and necessity of creeds and confessions follow of course, and all your reasoning falls to the ground, or may be easily retorted. A Nicolaitane, for instance, applies to you for admission. You inform him that he cannot be admitted, so long as he pleads for a community of wives. He replies, that in the days of the apostles they had all things common. You begin to explain this portion, and to point out the absurdity of his opinion. He answers, "The Bible is my creed. I am willing to subscribe the Word of God; I am willing to seal it with my blood; but I am not willing to subscribe to your doctrines or opinions. The Bible is infallible; your opinions are fallible—if God's Word be an infallible standard, can you add to infallibility? The Word of God is a perfect rule; measure me by that; but I will not submit to be measured by the imperfect rule of your opinions. No man, or body of men, has a right to prescribe any other terms of communion between Christ and me, than those which He Himself hath prescribed, which terms are a belief in His doctrines, as contained in Revelation. Nay, further, however innocent you may presume yourself to be, you are guilty of rebellion against the person of Christ as the King and Head of the Church, and of presumptuously making additions to that which He has pronounced perfect.

You might as well set up a candle when the sun is in his splendour, as your opinion, where the Gospel shines. You should never dare to dictate to me what I am to believe. Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who art thou?"

Thus, sir, you see that a Nicolaitane, or any other person of erroneous principles, when refused admission, might, in your own words, retort upon you all your invectives against creeds and confessions. The reason is obvious: the moment you refuse admission to any person on account of his tenets, you are, by your own acknowledgment, setting up "your conscience against his conscience, your opinion against his opinion. You are setting up your interpretation of Scripture as the confession of his faith—as a creed to measure his conscience. You are a fallible, uninspired man, as liable and likely to mistake and wrest the true sense of Scripture, as any of those for whom you are contriving tests, and excluding under the name of heretics; and yet, fallible and uninspired as you are, we must suppose you to be wiser and more merciful than God, and capable of delivering His mind and will in terms more clear, express, and unexceptionable, than Jesus Christ himself. Still farther, if the Nicolaitane is willing to subscribe the Scriptures, though in an unscriptural sense, what then, I ask, should hinder him from subscribing your interpretation in the same manner? If he will deal treacherously with the words of God, why not much more so with the words of man?"—with the words of the Rev. Presbyterian?

Thus, sir, you see the dilemma in which you are involved. If, upon their simple profession of faith in the Scriptures, you refuse to admit persons of the most impious and abominable principles, you have given up your cause, you are acting upon the principles of creeds and confessions. All your own reasoning recoils upon yourself; and I may justly address you in the words of the apostle:—"Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man,

whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things."

But, if, on the contrary, you say that, upon their acknowledgment of the Scriptures, you *would* admit persons of all descriptions, however immoral, impious, and abominable their principles—and particularly, that you would admit the Nicolaitane mentioned above, you stand reprov'd by the Spirit of God, Rev. ii. 14—17, "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which things I hate." Read the words of your Redeemer in the sixteenth verse, and tremble as you read: "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Were it necessary, I might quote a variety of other texts, in which the Latitudinarian principle is condemned; but, till once some person appear in public bold enough to avow that principle, I shall not proceed any farther in its refutation.

The principles of Latitudinarians stand condemned by common sense as well as by the Word of God; for how can two walk together, except they be agreed?*

* Notwithstanding the abuse you have poured upon Layman for quoting this text in favour of creeds and testimonies, I have ventured to commit the same crime. In this verse, and those that follow, the premises only are laid down; they are all incontrovertible truths, dictates of common sense. The literal meaning of the text quoted is, How can two *men* walk together except they be agreed? The conclusion to be inferred is, therefore, how can God and His people walk together, &c. The validity of the conclusion depends upon the truth of the premises—upon the truth of that maxim, "That no two men

How can thousands, and tens of thousands, whose principles and practices are the most heterogeneous, discordant, and opposite—as opposite as light and darkness, Christ and Belial—how can thousands and millions of such characters walk together in love and peace? Sooner may we expect to see wolves and lambs, leopards and kids, foxes and geese, laying aside their natural antipathies, and uniting in one amicable and harmonious commonwealth!

It must be confessed, however, that, though Latitudinarian principles are inconsistent with Scripture and common sense, they are nevertheless perfectly consistent with themselves. If persons of all descriptions, upon the adoption of the Bible as their creed, ought to be admitted to church fellowship, it follows, of course, that human creeds and confessions fall to the ground.

Nor is it at all strange, that men of corrupt minds, who walk in craftiness, handle the Word of God deceitfully, and corrupt the Gospel of Christ—it is not at all strange, that such characters should cordially hate, and vigorously oppose, all creeds and confessions. Those who bring in damnable heresies, the apostle assures us, can walk together, except they are agreed." Your commentary on the text concludes thus: What folly to rub the dust off our Bibles, while we only read half sentences! My dear sir, did you really believe that the text was a half sentence? or did you wish to impose that belief upon Layman? Did you really think, that the hue and cry you had raised in the beginning of the paragraph, together with the notes of admiration appended to the end of it, would terrify Layman out of his senses, so that he would be unable to distinguish between a half sentence and a whole one? Trust me, dear sir, we should not calculate too much on the stupidity of laymen. Some centuries ago, their confidence in the *ipse dixit* of a clergyman was much more implicit than it is at present. Of late, they appear very much in the habit of thinking for themselves. And, indeed, it must be confessed, that to see the layman walking in the path of common sense, whilst the clergyman is wandering from it, and completely bewildered, is no uncommon case.

do it *privily*; they "*ercep in unawares.*" But creeds and confessions tear off the mask, and expose to public odium those, who, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, lie in wait to deceive. To such men, creeds and confessions are no less odious than locks and bars to nightly depredators. Such characters, I say, in their opposition to creeds and confessions, act consistently, and as might be expected. But creeds and confessions are opposed by vast numbers of a very different description—by individuals, and by communities, strongly attached to the doctrines of the Gospel, and firmly resolved not to open the doors of the church for the reception of those whom they regard as heretical. Such characters do themselves what they condemn in others. Between them and the advocates of creeds and confessions the difference is merely circumstantial. Whenever they exclude an erroneous person, they do it on the principle of a creed, as we have already observed. They exclude him, not because he refuses to profess his faith in the Scriptures, but because they conceive he has not correct views of the Scriptures. Their own views are exhibited to him as a confession of faith, which he is requested to subscribe. If he cannot acquiesce in these views, he is refused admission. For instance, if he refuse to profess his faith in the Supreme Deity of the Redeemer—His atonement—the depravity of nature—the efficacy of grace, &c., he cannot be admitted. Now all these doctrines, be they what they may, are so many articles of their creed. The difference between it and ours (as I already observed) is merely circumstantial, and the balance appears decidedly in our favour. Theirs is a verbal creed, ours a printed one. Theirs private, ours public. Theirs exhibited by individuals, ours by a learned and venerable Assembly of divines. Every candidate for admission, with us, has an opportunity of examining our creed at his leisure. He may pause, ponder, sift, and compare every article with the

Word of God. In joining those who have no public creed, he has not this privilege. He has not the same advantage for becoming acquainted with the principles of those into whose society he is about to enter. Of course, the union cannot be supposed so complete, nor the communion so comfortable.

To the reasoning employed in the preceding pages, it may be objected, that I have not attempted to prove the necessity or utility of creeds and confessions from the Word of God. In reply to this objection, I would observe, that if the Latitudinarian scheme which I have in the preceding pages endeavoured to expose, stands *condemned* by the Word of God, it follows, of course, that creeds and confessions, by the same Divine Word, are fully *recognised* and *established*. Between the Latitudinarian scheme, and the adoption of creeds and confessions, I have endeavoured to prove there is no medium. It necessarily follows, that the condemnation of the one is the recognition and establishment of the other. Should this answer, to persons unaccustomed to close thinking, appear not altogether satisfactory on the affirmative side, I would ask a few questions. Are we not commanded to reject a heretic? Were not the Asiatic churches reprimanded for not excluding erroneous persons? Are we not commanded to speak the same things—to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment, &c.? Now, sir, I presume it will be a task too hard for you, or any man, to show how it is possible to obey these injunctions upon any other principle than that of the adoption of creeds and confessions. If we throw open the door of the church for the reception of persons of the most opposite, jarring, and heretical opinions, it is evident, we do so in direct violation of the above-mentioned precepts; on the other hand, if we exclude any one on account of their opinions, we must do it by a creed. Our views of Scripture are a creed, and we exclude

them because they do not acquiesce in these views. It follows, of course, that, if we have any authority in Scripture for the exclusion of heretical persons, we have the same authority for the use of a creed, because it is only *by a creed* that any person can possibly be excluded. Our creed may be a verbal one, a written one, or a printed one (the difference is not essential); but still it is only by the medium of a creed we can possibly obey the above Scripture precepts.

I am, sir, a notorious creed-monger, but at the same time, your sincere friend, and very humble servant,

JOHN PAUL.

LETTER III.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Having in the preceding letter, from principles both of Scripture and reason, endeavoured to prove, not only the utility, but also the necessity of creeds and confessions, I shall in the present briefly advert to a few of the most plausible things you have said in opposition to the cause which I advocate.

Page 19, you conclude, that “when there are twenty different confessions, nineteen of them must be wrong.” With equal force of reasoning, you might infer that when there are twenty pictures (suppose of Bonaparte), nineteen of them must be badly executed, and only one of them a true likeness. Nay, farther, if such a mode of reasoning be legitimate, the blasphemous consequence would follow, that only one of the four gospels contains a true biographical account of our blessed Redeemer! Creeds may be different, but not opposite; notwithstanding apparent or circumstantial differences, there may be, upon the whole, an astonishing agreement.

Page 24, you reason thus:—“But let us suppose the utmost—that your human creed, or test, whatever it may be, contains the true sense of Scripture—yet still it is incomprehensible how *it* should be any remedy against heresy, or any means of detecting the heretic, more than the Scriptures themselves. Heretics, you allow, will readily subscribe the Scriptures, though in an unscriptural sense; and what then, I ask, should hinder them from subscribing human creeds and tests in the same manner? If they will deal treacherously with the Word of God, why not much more so with the words of men!!”

This argument, being a remarkable one, you very wisely set off by two notes of admiration. With reverence and awe let us approach it! When you talk of heretics dealing treacherously with the Word of God, what do you mean? Do you mean that all heretics are hypocrites—that they do not believe what they profess—that they do not believe their tenets to be founded on the Word of God? If this be your meaning, allow me to inform you, that a bigoted Covenanter is more liberal in his ideas respecting heresy, than the Rev. Presbyterian. If it is essential to the character of a heretic that he is condemned of his own conscience, he never could be known, and, of course, could never be rejected. Would a heretic tell the world that he was acting in opposition to the dictates of conscience? It would be absurd to suppose it. How, then, could any person ascertain the fact? It would be impossible. The truth is, that, however false and erroneous the tenets of heretics, we have no reason to imagine that they do not believe them. On the contrary, we are assured by the highest authority, that, because men receive not the love of the truth, for this cause God gives them over to strong delusions—to believe lies. Their tenets are lies, but they actually believe them. They believe them to be founded on the Word of God; and, therefore, they can profess their faith in the Scriptures without any violation of the dictates of conscience. With regard to a human creed, the case may be different. We shall illustrate by an example. Suppose a person such as Hymeneus, Philetus, or one of the Corinthian heretics, applies to you for admission. You ask him what he believes concerning the resurrection? He replies, that he believes what the Scriptures teach on that subject. You inquire still farther, do you believe that the dead bodies of men, both of the righteous and the wicked, shall at the last day be raised from their graves, and united to their souls, never more

to be separated? He answers, I believe no such thing. I believe that the resurrection mentioned in Scripture is to be understood in a spiritual or mystical sense: all that is intended by it is only a resurrection from sin, &c. This, I believe, is what the Scripture teaches. The Scriptural account I am willing to subscribe, but I will not subscribe your creed.

Thus, my dear sir, it appears to me quite easy to conceive how a human creed might shut the door of the church against a heretic, whilst the Scriptures themselves would be no obstruction. Indeed, I acknowledge, that when the tide of self-interest sets strongly in, creeds, confessions, Scripture, and conscience, frequently prove but feeble barriers. The exclusion of such characters will always be found difficult, in proportion to the temptations of wealth and aggrandizement. No wonder, therefore, if the English establishment answer the laconic description of Pitt: "A Calvinistic creed, a Popish liturgy, and an Arminian clergy." In a word, it is not creeds, but royal emoluments, that make men deal treacherously with the words both of God and man.

Page 18, Covenanter asks—"Do you not honestly think that it is necessary for men to be on their guard with respect to the solemn subjects of religion?" To this you reply—"Most assuredly I do; and, as these subjects will not run out of the Bible more than the stars out of the heavens, we should imitate the example of navigators, who never steer by a blaze, and always endeavour to make advances in science by viewing the heavenly bodies as they are arranged by God, and not as they are fancied to be by this man or that. All aid is fair; but, whatever the systems be, they will best appear in the volume of nature, which cannot be touched, and the volume of Revelation, which ought not to be assorted. Each object will appear best in its own situation; and the moment you remove it to any other, it becomes deformed, and leaves a breach behind.

Take, for example, a particular verse out of one of the gospels, and who can tell its meaning by itself, or discover the sense of the whole, once it is removed?" But why, my dear sir, did you dismiss this paragraph without the usual insignia? If the former one was judged worthy of two notes of admiration, surely this was fully entitled to at least half a dozen. In the commencement of it you talk of subjects running out of the Bible, and stars running out of the heavens—a very remarkable race indeed! . The Olympic course never exhibited one so interesting. You then inform us, that we should imitate the example of navigators, who never steer by a blaze. If this be so, then down with all light-houses. You next assure us, that navigators always endeavour to make advances in science by viewing the heavenly bodies as they are arranged by God, and not as they are fancied to be by this man or that. Pray sir, is there a single navigator on the face of the earth who is no way indebted to human systems? When once you have convinced the world of the impropriety of studying navigation by the help of books and systems—when once you have persuaded navigators to throw away these helps, and to study the art merely by consulting the volume of nature—then let creeds and confessions be for ever exploded, and let the Bible and the volume of nature be the only books in the universe! But, "Oh!" says the Rev. Presbyterian, "all aid is fair." A very candid confession indeed! It is all I ask. Indeed it is much more than I could have possibly expected. *All aid is fair*; then doubtless the aid of creeds and confessions is fair. If all aid is fair in studying the volume of nature, why not in studying the volume of Revelation? My dear sir, had you duly considered the import of these four monosyllables, "all aid is fair," you would have thrown down your arms, and the Battle of Dialogues had never been fought. But the Rev. Presbyterian is

not so easily driven off the field. As if my friend had made no concession, with undaunted courage he proceeds to observe, "whatever the systems be, they will best appear in the volume of nature which cannot be touched, and the volume of Revelation which ought not to be assorted." But, in the name of common sense, what does my friend mean by the volume of nature which cannot be touched? Of this *new* volume, I solemnly declare that, down till the present moment, I have never heard one single syllable. It is only with the *old* volume of nature, which *can* be touched, that I am acquainted. This old volume, sir, according to my dull apprehension, we all touch—we cannot avoid touching; for we are living in constant contact with it. Nay, more, of this old tangible volume both the Rev. Presbyterian, and his humble servant, are constituent parts.

Philosophically remarking, that the volume of nature cannot be touched, and theologically observing, that the volume of Revelation ought not to be assorted, you assure us, that, whatever the systems be, they will best appear in these two volumes. Here, again, I must confess my ignorance. I must candidly acknowledge, that I never before knew that any systems but the *true* ones would appear best, either in the volume of nature or Revelation. According to you, it is no matter what these systems are, whether they be true or false; you assure us, *whatever* they be, they will best appear in these two volumes. Pray, sir, do you really think, and are you perfectly sure, that not only the Copernican or Newtonian system; but that the old exploded systems of Ptolemy and Des Cartes, will best appear in the volume of nature. Do you really believe, that the Socinian, Arian, Arminian, Calvinistic, Antinomian systems—nay, that all the systems of divinity that ever were written, will best appear in the volume of Revelation? If you believe all this, (and you have

boldly asserted it) you are much more credulous than any of the advocates of creeds and confessions. They really believe that various systems, exhibited both by philosophers and divines, are so far from appearing *best* in the volumes of nature and Revelation, that they do not appear in those volumes *at all*. Nay, farther, they verily believe that many of those systems have no existence in *nature*, but only in the bewildered imaginations of their blinded votaries.

With great sagacity you go on to observe that “each object will appear best in its own situation, and the moment you remove it to any other it becomes deformed, and leaves a breach behind.” That each of the stars, planets, &c., appears best in the situation assigned to it by the Almighty, I readily admit; but how it would appear, when removed from that situation, I am not at present prepared to say. You assure us that it would appear deformed—it may be so. Covenanters, not being “great astronomers,” have not yet begun to “pluck the planets from their orbits.” Of course I can say very little on this subject.

But when you talk of removing objects from one situation to another, perhaps you mean not stars or planets, but objects in this lower world. Your language indeed implies both; but, as we cannot always ascertain your meaning from your words, perhaps you had no thought of removing a star or planet, but only terrestrial objects, such as trees, flowers, stones, &c. Now, my dear sir, do you really think that trees and flowers become deformed, in consequence of their removal from the forest to the orchard or flower-garden? Do stones become deformed, when removed from the quarry, to occupy a place in the splendid edifice? Say, ye botanists, ye florists, and ye architects, is this doctrine true? is it true that the moment ye remove any object from its own situation to another, it becomes deformed? If so, on the face of this globe can ye find no better

employment, than to render deformed the works of your Maker!

The truth is, that in astronomy, natural history, botany, chemistry, in every department of science and of art, classification and arrangement are absolutely necessary. In every branch of literature the necessity of systematic arrangement is universally felt. Even to the Rev. Presbyterian himself, the hero who fought the Battle of Dialogues, I would recommend a little more attention to classification and arrangement. The Duke of Wellington will inform him, that, without strict attention to order and arrangement, he had never gained the victory in the Battle of Waterloo; and I can assure my friend, that unless, in all his future military operations, he display more attention to order than formerly, he needs never dream of conquering the Westminster divines.

My Rev. and dear Presbyterian, I do not think it strange, that you oppose classification (I do not mean clerical classification, or the classification of *Regium Donum*), I do not think it strange that you oppose classification, both in theory and practice, for, to be candid, I am afraid you have not a single correct idea on the subject. Do you really imagine, that there can be no such thing as classification or arrangement without removing objects from their own situation to another, and leaving a breach behind? Is it not possible, for instance, to classify the stars or planets without plucking them from their respective systems, rendering them deformed, and leaving a breach behind them? In like manner, is it not possible to quote texts of Scripture, and to classify and arrange those texts, without rendering them deformed, and leaving a breach in the Sacred Volume? "Take, for example," say you, "a particular verse out of one of the gospels, and who can tell its meaning by itself, or discover the sense of the whole, once it is removed?" I confess, my dear friend, that I

do not like this example at all. "Take a particular verse out of one of the gospels." No, sir, I would not take a particular verse out of one of the gospels for the whole world. "For, "if any man take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part out of the book of life." Indeed, my dear sir, could any person be found impious enough to make the sacrilegious experiment which you recommend—could any person be found, who would take away a part of the Scriptures, I perfectly agree with you, that it would be difficult—nay, impossible, to discover the sense of the whole, that part being removed. But does your reverence really imagine, that any of the advocates of creeds and confessions have it in contemplation to take away a part of the Sacred Volume, and to leave mankind to guess the meaning of the remainder? Trust me, dear sir, you need not be in the least apprehensive. In reducing divine truths into a system, all that is necessary is the liberty of quotation. There is no necessity of taking a single text out of the Bible.

But perhaps you will say, that by taking a particular text out of one of the gospels, all you intended was the quotation of that text. Now, if this was your intention, why do you talk of the difficulty of ascertaining the meaning of the whole, when that text is removed? The text, upon this principle, is not removed. The whole of the portion from which you quote is the same after as before quotation; and, of course, the discovery of its meaning equally easy.

With regard to the text quoted, you ask, who can tell its meaning by itself? Now, my dear friend, if there be any difficulty here, the weight of it falls on your own head. Page 25, at the top, you have (to use your own perspicuous phrase) taken a verse out of one of the gospels—you have quoted Matthew xv. 9. "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Pray, sir, who can tell the

meaning of this text by itself? For what purpose, then, did you quote it? Is it not become deformed by being removed from its own situation to occupy a place in your dialogue? Has it not left a breach behind it? and who can discover the meaning of the whole, now it is removed? The inconsistency of your principles and practice here reminds me of Berkely, the sceptic, who, by a close chain of reasoning, endeavoured to prove that all reasoning was inconclusive. That subtle genius unfortunately forgot, that if all reasoning were inconclusive, his own reasoning, by which he was endeavouring to establish that point, must, by consequence, go for nothing. Alas! how inconsistent a creature is man! Even men of the greatest talents, when once they have wandered out of the path of common sense, soon run into the grossest absurdities.

Before you sent your pamphlet to the press, had you carefully perused it, you might have perceived that it is not merely in your animadversions on the quotation of a single text, that you have contradicted yourself: but also in your observations on the quotation and arrangement of various texts. You condemn the quotation of numerous portions of Scripture adduced in proof of the different articles of the Confession of Faith. You assure us, that it would have been much *fairer* and *more convenient*, to have had the whole of Revelation before us. Now, in pages 24 and 25, you have quoted no fewer than seven portions of Scripture. You have arranged them according to your own taste, in an order quite different from that in which they stand in the Sacred Volume. Pray, sir, had you reflected for a moment, might you not have easily perceived that any person might retort your own arguments in your own words, thus: "It would be much *fairer* and *more convenient*, to have the whole of Revelation before us. I cannot see how you will carry the principles of the Bible out of the Bible, so as to give them greater force.

If any man can arrange them more conspicuously than the Holy Spirit, he will then prove his superior wisdom in communicating the knowledge of the truth. It is a strange compliment to Revelation, to suppose that, though it should fail in establishing its own sufficiency and perfection, yet these doctrines are so methodically arranged in the *Battle of Dialogues*, as fully to accomplish that end." Thus, sir, you see, that the readers of your Dialogue might, in your own words, retort your own argument—in the language of the ancient proverb, they might sarcastically address you: "Physician, heal thyself!"

The truth is, that between the volumes of Nature and of Revelation there is a very striking analogy. In the volume of nature, objects are not arranged according to genus and species. Trees, animals, &c., of all descriptions, are promiscuously blended. To assist us in acquiring the knowledge of these objects, men of learning and science have classified and arranged them. In botany, how great the utility of the system of Linnaeus? In the study of natural history, how much are we indebted to the systematic productions of a Goldsmith and a Buffon? The case is quite similar with regard to the volume of Divine Revelation. The truths relating to the same subject are not all contained in the same chapter or the same book. They are not systematically arranged, but promiscuously blended. In the study of those sacred oracles, as "all aid is fair," compends of Christian doctrine, creeds, confessions, catechisms, &c., are of admirable use. It is true, indeed, they may be abused, as the best of things are; but this is no argument against their utility. To deprive us of those means so remarkably calculated to facilitate our progress in Scripture knowledge, is certainly a mode of discovering our respect for the Scriptures, extremely worthy of modern illumination! Warmly attached to systematic arrangement, both in philosophy and divinity,

I am, dear sir, yours, &c.,

LETTER IV.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Wishing always to give honour where honour is due, I must acknowledge that your language is appropriate, when you assure us that the Synod of Ulster have *decently* laid aside the Confession of Faith. In giving up that Confession, if your account be correct, the general Synod have proceeded very decently indeed. They have given it up, not all at once, but gradually: first, by the pacific act; next, by a resolution founded upon that act; then, by using it in such a qualified manner as to render it a mere name—a piece of appearance; and, lastly, by scarcely mentioning it at all, in case of license and ordination. The whole of this procedure all must acknowledge to be highly *decent* and *respectful*. That the Westminster Confession is so decently laid aside, you seem to glory; and, indeed, no wonder; if our subordinate standards have been set up, as you insinuate—“*to supersede the Scriptures, to rival their splendour, and to divert the attention of mankind from their perfection.*” If such be their actual tendency, they should have been laid aside long ere now—they should have been laid aside, not decently, but with the greatest contempt. With the national covenant and the solemn league, they should have been burned by the hands of the common hangman. But, my dear sir, do not candour and justice say, that before these standards are condemned, they should be fairly tried and found guilty? Tell me, sir, has the use of the Confession of Faith actually produced those evils you so much dread and deprecate? Or has the laying of it aside been attended by a great augmentation of respect for the Scriptures? Is family

worship more punctually performed? Are the sacred oracles more frequently read? Are they daily read—morning and evening—by the heads of families? Are they daily read, even in the families of clergymen, and particularly of those clergymen who decry all creeds and confessions, who are enemies to the doctrine of the Westminster Confession, and extol the perfection and infallibility of Scripture? Are both clergymen and laymen more in the habit of associating in fellowship meetings for the purpose of reading the Word of God, and conversing on its sacred contents; of addressing the throne of grace; of teaching and exhorting each other in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts unto the Lord? Where are now those days when the houses of your pious ancestors, both laymen and clergymen, resounded with the praises of their Creator and Redeemer?—when a portion of the Divine Word was read every morning and evening in the families of many?—when family prayers, like clouds of incense, daily ascended to the throne of the Most High?—when, on the mornings and evenings of Christian Sabbaths, our towns and cities were rendered vocal by the chaunting of divinely-inspired anthems? “How is the gold become dim, and the fine gold changed!” Say, my dear sir, has not the laying aside of the Confession of Faith been followed up by a corresponding dereliction of the most sacred duties—of family worship, social worship, reading the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in spiritual songs, singing and making melody in the heart unto the Lord? I trust, however, that the neglect of those duties, though mournfully prevalent, is not universal. I hope—nay, I firmly believe—there are exceptions—honourable exceptions, both among the laity and the clergy of your community—men of piety and zeal, who strain every nerve to stem the torrent of defection, who exert all their energies to revive the prac-

tice of those sacred duties. But who are those men? Are they not generally attached to the Confession of Faith, or at least to the doctrines of that ancient volume? Tell me, also, my dear sir, who are most forward in excluding from their psalmody the divinely-inspired compositions of Scripture? Who are most forward in substituting for the psalms of David, hymns, paraphrases, &c., the productions of uninspired and fallible men? Is it by the friends or the enemies of the Confession that the dictates of Revelation are thus sacrilegiously shuffled out and supplanted? Where are now all your fears for the ark of God? Are you no way alarmed lest our fine modern poetic effusions "supersede the sacred oracles," "rival their splendour," and "divert the attention of mankind from their perfection? Have not those who were most forward in laying aside the Confession of Faith, been also the most forward in giving up, and decently laying aside, the Psalms of David? With what decency and decorum do our modern reformers proceed in this business! First, a few paraphrases are occasionally sung; next, a few hymns of human composition; then the Psalms of David are culled, the cursing ones, (as they are called, or rather miscalled,) entirely rejected, and a few of the better sort sung alternately with the hymns of Watts, Newton, or Cowper; afterwards, this selection is used so sparingly as to render it a mere name—a piece of appearance! and, lastly, these sacred hymns are scarcely ever mentioned in public worship. How gratifying to think that the Psalms of David are likely to obtain so decent a funeral! But, again:—

Tell me, dear sir, who are most forward in excluding from public schools the sacred oracles? Solomon once thought it a dictate of wisdom to train up a child in the way he should go; but in this it appears he was completely mistaken; for we have now discovered, in this age of reason, that an early religious education is

highly injurious—that it has a tendency to fill the mind with prejudices and prepossessions, to bias it in favour of a system, and ultimately to destroy all freedom of inquiry. We have, therefore, wisely excluded the Scriptures from our seminaries of education. Our children must not be allowed to read these sacred oracles, lest too much familiarity should breed contempt. Their young and tender minds must be left, like the sluggard's garden, overrun with noxious weeds, in order to prepare them for the good seed of the Word of God! The enemy must be allowed time to sow his tares before the good husbandman be permitted to plant his wheat! In respect for the Scriptures, these modern *illuminati* are only one step behind the old mother Church. To prevent their being abused, they have only to lock them up from the laity altogether! Speak out, my dear sir, and inform the public by what class of Christians the Bible is thus betrayed with a kiss—whether by the advocates of creeds and confessions or those Latitudinarians who oppose these standards, because they cordially hate their contents. Inform the world by what class of Christians the Bible is most read, studied, and respected—whether by the friends or opponents of the Westminster Confession and its doctrines. By what class of Christians is the plenary inspiration of the Bible denied, and the Old Testament Scriptures represented as an antiquated almanac?

After the Confession of Faith, Psalms of David, &c., the next thing to be laid aside is that code of discipline which our blessed Redeemer has established in His Word. The various articles of this code will be found in different departments of the New Testament. A number of those articles we shall here exhibit in one view:—

“Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother; but

if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no, not to eat. Now, we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed; yet count him not as an enemy, but entreat him as a brother. Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear. A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject," &c.

Such, my dear sir, is a specimen of that code of discipline handed down in the New Testament by our Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church. Such are the immutable laws which the Redeemer himself hath established, and which you have presumed to supersede and alter. Out of your own mouth you stand condemned; for, page 20, you say—"If the constitution and laws of the Church be fixed by Christ himself, I know not how any man can take the liberty to supersede or alter them." Now, sir, you are the very man who has taken the liberty to supersede and alter the laws of Christ; for, in page 23, you assure us "that though the doctrines should remain as they came from heaven, yet the discipline may be varied as circumstances require." Nay, sir, you have dared to supersede the Redeemer's code of discipline by a civil

code—a code which may be necessary in one age, but unnecessary in another—a code which, you candidly confess, has no more foundation in the Word of God, than the hour for public worship. Thus, sir, you have laid aside, not decently, but rudely and presumptuously, the disciplinary laws of the exalted Redeemer! In the room of those laws you have set up a civil, unauthenticated, fluctuating code, from which, even to the Word of God, you will not allow so much as the privilege of appeal! Let us hear your own words:—“Even where human standards of doctrine exist, the appeal will always be made to Revelation; but in codes of discipline, the appeal must be made to the code itself.” Say now, my dear friend, and let all the world judge, whether you or the advocates of creeds and confessions are most sincerely attached to the Sacred Oracles. With *them*, you candidly grant, the last appeal is to Revelation; but with *you*, the laws of Christ are a dead letter—they are completely superseded; from your fluctuating code there is no appeal!

Is this, my dear sir, the result of all your flaming professions of respect for the Scriptures? Are you the clergyman who declared yourself unwilling to be measured by any other rule but the perfect one of Divine revelation? Are you the Rev. Presbyterian, who was so much afraid of setting up any human standard, lest it might supersede the Word of God, rival its splendour, or divert the attention of men from its perfection?—and yet, after all, without shame or remorse, by one stroke, you sweep away the whole of that divinely inspired code of disciplinary laws which was established by the blessed Redeemer of men! In all this (to use your own words) “however innocent you may presume yourself to be, you are guilty of rebellion against the person of Christ as the Head of the Church.”

The Church and the world are distinct societies—the one is an enclosure, the other a common. In Scripture

the Church is represented by a walled city, a field, a vineyard, a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. It is the will of Heaven, that the distinction between the Church and the world should be perpetually kept up—that the Church's enclosure should remain for ever inviolable. This distinction was established by the Almighty himself, when there was only one family on the face of the earth. Cain, as unworthy of Church privileges, was excommunicated by his Maker, banished from the presence of the Lord, and excluded from the fellowship of the saints. This was the first partition wall built between the Church and the world. The breaking down of this wall was the cause of the deluge. The Church of God, mingling with the excommunicated offspring of Cain, rapidly degenerated, till the earth was filled with violence, and till (Noah and his family excepted) all flesh was corrupted, and the flood came, and swept them all away.

Every person knows that the Jewish Church was a complete enclosure. Subjected to a code of discipline remarkably rigorous, by a middle-wall of partition she was separated from the world. If, at any time, she suffered her walls of discipline to be broken down, she was severely reprimanded and chastised. Her priests, if guilty in this matter, were degraded; whilst those who were faithful obtained the highest encomiums, and were encouraged to persevere, and to teach the people of God the difference between the holy and the profane, and to cause them to discern between the clean and the unclean. Relaxation of discipline was uniformly accompanied by a corresponding relaxation of morals, and was always followed by alarming visitations of Providence.

Under the Gospel dispensation, the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles is broken down, but not that wall which separates the Church from the world. In the New Testament Scriptures quoted above,

and a variety of others, the separating lines are distinctly drawn. Persons of heretical opinions, or immoral character, have no right to be recognized as Christians. We are commanded to reject them—to treat them as heathen men and publicans—to have no company with them, that they may be ashamed. A sense of shame is a powerful principle. Its influence is incalculable. Hence we find, that the laws of honour are frequently obeyed, whilst the laws of the state are treated with contempt. Now, if a sense of shame operates so powerfully in securing obedience to the laws of honour, falsely so-called—to the laws of gambling, &c., how much more powerful should it be in securing obedience to the laws of morality—to the laws of religion—to the laws of God! By confounding all distinction between the Church and the world, the influence of that powerful principle of shame is completely paralysed, and effects the most baneful and pernicious produced. Such conduct, though dignified with the specious epithets of liberality and charity, I have no hesitation to pronounce alike repugnant to the laws of Christ, and the soundest principles of reason and philosophy. Could a city be more completely exposed to the incursions of her enemies, than by the breaking down of her walls and fortifications? Could a corn field be more effectually ruined, than by the breaking down of its fences? Could a vineyard be more effectually destroyed, than by the removal of its hedges? “Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they that pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.” “I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.” Tell me, my dear sir, could you more effectually ruin the Church of

God, than by breaking down the walls of her discipline? How is it possible for the holy city to be trampled underfoot of the Gentiles? Is it not by admitting into the Church of God the impious and immoral, the profligate and the profane? Is it not by giving things that are holy to dogs,* and casting pearls before swine? Is it not by admitting to the most solemn ordinances persons who should be treated as heathen men and publicans? When such persons are admitted, then the holy city is trampled underfoot of Gentiles. It is profaned by persons, who, though they may wear the name of Christians, are in reality baptized infidels. Nay, sir, when the walls of discipline are broken down, the temple of God is destroyed—and “if any man destroy the temple of God, him will God destroy.” Presume not, therefore, to supersede, or alter the laws of your Redeemer. Dare not to substitute any civil code in the room of that system which *He* has established. Attempt not to legislate for the Church of Christ. Content yourself with the faithful execution of those laws which He has enacted. Allow me to address you in the language of Paul to Timothy: “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things, without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.”

I am well aware, that to break down the walls of

* In the present enlightened age it is becoming unfashionable to exclude from solemn ordinances any who have a desire for communion. No discipline—no tokens of admission—no debarring—these are only the relics of bigotry and superstition. It is left to the consciences of all, whether they will participate or not. Now, in the Word of God, the profane are denominated dogs and swine—animals not the most remarkable for diffidence or modesty. Serious as the subject is, it is scarcely possible to avoid smiling, when we hear downy doctors gravely addressing dogs and swine—politely appealing to their consciences, whether they will taste the children’s bread. Surely this is liberality with a witness!

discipline, and to build the temple of God with wood, hay, and stubble, as well as with gold, silver, and precious stones, is a dictate of worldly wisdom. I know that the most abandoned characters are frequently the most opulent, and that the faithful exercise of discipline would be attended with a prodigious reduction of numbers, and diminution of emoluments. From these considerations, I do not think it strange, that some ministers of the Gospel would reason thus: "If we exercise Christian discipline, our meeting-houses will be immediately deserted: we shall soon find ourselves left in a small minority. Stripped of all our wealth and respectability, we shall be hissed off the stage as enthusiastic bigots—the offscouring of all things, and the refuse. On the contrary, by decently laying aside the discipline of the Church, we shall be looked up to as gentlemen of liberal and enlightened minds—minds quite free from the prejudices and bigotry of the dark ages; we shall obtain both wealth and aggrandizement; and, having large congregations, we shall have it in our power to do more good." In reply to all such reasonings, the words of the divinely-inspired apostle, when treating of this very subject, are appropriate: "Let no man deceive himself; if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

Decidedly hostile to everything calculated "to supersede the sacred oracles," "to rival their splendour," or "divert the attention of mankind from their perfection,"

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

REV. SIR,—Having displayed your military prowess, in combating creeds and confessions in general, you select a few doctrines of the *Westminster* Confession, and against these you direct your death-dealing artillery. The first doctrine selected is that of the covenant of works—a doctrine which, you assure us, has given rise to countless volumes. But why were all these volumes written?—that the world, no doubt, might be dazzled by a most brilliant display of the polemical talents of our Rev. Presbyterian! Ye divines of the greatest respectability, both of ancient and modern times! where are now your boasted learning and talents?—they are completely eclipsed. Where are now the countless volumes you have written on the covenant of works? Our Rev. Presbyterian, by less than four lines of his *Battle of Dialogues*, has swept them all into the gulf of annihilation! “I now venture to affirm,” says this redoubtable champion, “I now venture to affirm, that there is not a single syllable, in the whole book of God, concerning such a covenant—there is not the most distant hint of it in Revelation.”

To be serious, sir, is it not consequential enough in you to imagine that now, in the beginning of the nineteenth century, your simple *ipse dixit* will be regarded as a sufficient refutation of countless volumes? The covenant of works is a doctrine which has stood the test of examination during a series of centuries: the friction of opposition has only tended to brighten its evidence: its advocates are daily increasing, and the myriads of those virulent pamphlets published against it, have, like Jonah's gourd, “sprung up in a night and

perished in a night." As countless volumes have already been written on the subject, I shall not, at present, increase the number. Till you condescend to reason a little on the subject, I shall submit to your consideration only a few remarks.

You assert that there is not a single syllable in the whole book of God concerning the covenant of works. In opposition to this assertion, I could adduce a variety of Scriptures, besides those quoted by our Westminster divines. But, as you object to the mode of establishing doctrines by a collection of quotations, and assure us, that "it would be much *fairer* and more *convenient* to have the whole of Revelation before us," I shall, for once, endeavour to gratify your taste. Wishing to do everything that is *fair*, and to consult your *convenience* as far as possible, I shall allow you the privilege of having the whole of Revelation before you.* Read it verse by verse, and then tell me if you do not find thousands of syllables concerning the covenant of works. Tell me, in particular, if you do not find something about the Covenanters, or parties contracting—about the condition of the covenant—the penalty of the covenant—the reward attached to the fulfilment of the covenant—the seals of the covenant, &c ; in a word, tell me, if you do not find in the Sacred Volume everything essential to the constitution of such a covenant. When Adam sinned, were not his posterity treated as if they had been represented in the same covenant? were they not treated precisely as he was? The penalty threatened was death ; now, this penalty was

* Good news, ye Rev. Divines of every denomination ! No concordances—no marginal references—no laborious search, to find texts of Scripture to prove your doctrines. Thanks to the Rev. Presbyterian, this old-fashioned method, practised by the Westminster divines, is now exploded. As a much more *fair* and *convenient* method, refer your hearers to the whole of Revelation !!!

inflicted, not only on Adam, but on all his posterity. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. The last clause should be literally rendered [*εν ᾧ*] *in whom* all have sinned. That the penalty threatened included, not only temporal, but eternal death, is evident; for the apostle assures us, "That the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, if that life, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord, is *eternal life*, does not the contrast lead us to conclude, that that death which is the wages of sin is *eternal death*? Pray, sir, how could Adam's posterity be subjected to the same penalty with their sinning ancestor, had they not been represented in the same covenant? But why need I reason any farther on the subject? Were I to fill volumes with such reasoning, in reply to them all, you would only call upon me to produce a single text of Scripture, in which it is asserted, that God entered into a covenant with Adam, as the representative of his posterity. That no such text is contained in the Bible, I readily admit; but, if this be any reason for exploding the doctrine, a variety of doctrines of great importance, held by the Rev. Presbyterian himself, must, on the same principle, be expunged from his creed. You hold, for instance, the doctrine of infant baptism: pray, sir, produce a single text, in which it is asserted that children ought to be baptized. You believe in the Divine institution of the Christian Sabbath: produce a single text, in which it is asserted that the Redeemer has changed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. You admit females to the Lord's supper: produce a single text in which their right to admission is asserted. If by boldly asserting that there is not a single syllable, in the whole book of God, concerning the covenant of works—that, in Revelation, there is not the most distant hint of that cove-

nant—if, by such bold assertions as these, you have led your people to believe that they are quite free of the guilt of Adam's first sin, I would request you to try the same experiment with regard to their privileges—with regard to infant baptism, and the admission of females to the Lord's supper. When parents apply to you for the administration of baptism, address them thus: "Infant baptism has given rise to countless volumes; but, in order to prove that they are all built on mere conjecture, I now venture to affirm, that there is not a single syllable in the whole book of God concerning infant baptism—there is not the most distant hint of it in Revelation. I will not therefore baptize your children." Pray, sir, would parents be satisfied with such a mode of reasoning? Would they insist no farther on having their children baptized? Suppose, again, that the female part of your congregation apply for admission to the Lord's supper, and you address them thus: "I venture to affirm, that there is not a single syllable in the whole book of God concerning the admission of females—there is not the most distant hint of it in Revelation: I cannot therefore admit you"—pray, sir, would such a mode of reasoning be perfectly satisfactory? Would females immediately relinquish their privileges?

Indeed, my dear friend, it is a difficult thing to argue people out of what they suppose to be their privilege. But oh! how astonishing their credulity—how easy to practise on it—when the tendency of our reasoning is to free them from the imputation of guilt, or the infliction of punishment! No wonder, therefore, that your bare *ipse dixit* should satisfy your hearers that there never was any such thing as a covenant of works, and that they are quite free of the guilt of Adam's first sin; whilst the strongest reasoning you could possibly employ, would be far too feeble to induce them to renounce infant baptism, or the claims of females to the holy communion. In a word, sir, prove from Scripture

the Divine institution of the Christian Sabbath, and the Divine right of infant baptism, and of the admission of females to the Lord's supper; and I shall pledge myself to prove, with equal, if not greater force of Scriptural argument, the doctrine of the covenant of works, which you have exploded.

Before I conclude this letter, suffer, my dear sir, the word of exhortation. Never attack the Westminster divines with weapons which may be turned against yourself—never attempt to overturn any doctrine which they have taught, by arguments, which would deprive your own congregation of their most solemn privileges, of the Christian Sabbath, baptism and the Lord's supper.

A warm friend to all those doctrines, which have their foundation in Scripture, though they may not be asserted in so many words,

I am, &c.

LETTER VI.

REV. SIR,—After the covenant of works, the next article of the Confession you attack, and over which you flatter yourself you can gain an easy victory, is the doctrine of predestination. In advancing to the charge, you “stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood, and disguise fair nature with hard-favoured rage.” The manner (you declare) in which the Westminster divines have arranged their proofs, “must exasperate the indignation of any man, who may find it inconvenient to believe the doctrine.” Under the influence of such exasperated indignation, you write a paragraph, calculated to excite feelings (if not of indignation, yet) of pity, mingled with contempt. It commences thus:—“I say, that the Westminster divines did not understand the New Testament on that subject, or that they have most foully quoted Revelation to prove their own scheme of it. In the 3d chapter and 5th section of the Confession, they assert, that the predestination of mankind to life took place without any foresight of faith or good works; and then they quote separately, as they do in every other place, the 30th verse of the 8th chapter of the Romans, which begins even with a *moreover*, but which is compelled, in this insulated state, to answer their purpose, &c.”

In this extraordinary paragraph you represent your Westminster divines as treating of the predestination of *mankind* to life. Now, my dear sir, allow me to assure you, that the predestination of mankind to life is a doctrine, of which the Westminster divines are totally ignorant. They *believe* no such doctrine—they teach no such doctrine, neither in the 5th section of the 3d

chapter, nor in any other section of any other chapter. It is only the predestination of a *part* of mankind—of the *elect*, that is the subject of that section—it reads thus :—“ *Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life,*” &c.” Is this a wilful misrepresentation? no; it is only a Rev. Presbyterian blunder.

You proceed: “and then they quote separately, as they do in every other place, the 30th verse of the 8th chapter of the Romans.” Is it possible! Do the Westminster divines quote, not only in this place, but in every other place, the 30th verse of the 8th chapter of the Romans? Is this a wilful misrepresentation? No; it is only a Rev. Presbyterian blunder!

Tell me, my dear sir, tell me candidly, have the Westminster divines, either here, or in any other place, quoted the 30th verse of the 8th chapter of the Romans, in proof of predestination without foreseen faith and good works? **THEY HAVE NOT.** Let the section referred to be read, together with the Scripture proofs, by any person possessed of sufficient intelligence to trace those quotations; it will then appear, that it is not the Westminster divines who do not understand the New Testament—it is not the Westminster divines who have foully quoted Revelation—it is the *Rev. Presbyterian* who has most foully misrepresented the Westminster divines. Rom. viii. 30, is quoted to prove predestination in general, and this it *does* prove. To prove that predestination was not founded on foreseen faith or good works, with their usual good sense and discrimination, the divines have quoted, among others, the following appropriate texts :—2 Tim. i. 9—“Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” Eph. i. 4—“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame

before Him in love," &c. These texts, which the Westminster divines quote in proof of their doctrine, you throw completely into the shade—you *decently* pass them over, as if no such texts had been quoted—in- stead of these you foist in one, adduced by the divines for a quite different purpose—you then raise the hue and cry against them—you pour upon them a torrent of abuse—you brand them with infamy, for ignorance of the New Testament—foul quotation of Scripture, &c. ! Is this, my dear sir, your boasted candour? is this the liberality of the nineteenth century? Might I not here retort your own words, "Sir, it is a happy blunder, which enables me to show that some people turn all they touch into error and misrepresentation, and then raise the cry of absurd assertion against their neighbours?" Your readers may now judge what credit is due to the following sweeping assertions:— "There is not a single chapter in the Confession of Faith, to support which some passages have not been wrested from their original meaning—even if its doctrines were true, there is a constant misapplication of Scripture to support them." Such assertions as these, published by a man confessedly under the influence of exasperated indignation, and convicted of the grossest misrepresentation, will not be admitted as sufficient proof, that the Westminster divines were the most ignorant and dishonest men in the world.

Say, my dear sir, does it not argue a weak—a *desperate* cause, when, in defence of it, you are obliged to brandish such disgraceful weapons? Why did you not allow the Westminster divines to speak for themselves? Why did you not lay before the public those texts they had quoted in proof of their doctrine? Why did you basely suppress those texts adduced by them to prove that predestination was not founded on foreseen faith and good works? Were you afraid that those texts would flash conviction in the faces of your readers? To me,

I confess, it appears very difficult to conceive how any person, not previously biassed in favour of a system, could read those texts, and not believe the doctrine true. We are said to be "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy," &c. We were chosen, not because we were *foreseen* to be holy, but that we *should* be holy. From this very text is it not demonstrably evident, that our holiness was not the foundation of our election, but our election the foundation of our holiness? Hence it is styled "an election of grace—and if it be of grace, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace." Such is the uniform language of Scripture. In favour of foreseen faith and good works, there is not a single text in the Bible. Rom. viii. 29, 30, the only one on which you seem to rely, is perfectly silent on the subject. It does not say, that God predestinated to life those who He foreknew would believe, and perform good works. This is what *you* would probably say, but the Scriptures say no such thing. Whatever be the meaning of the phrase "whom He did foreknow," the Arminian* gloss cannot be the true one. That predestination is not founded on foreseen faith and good works, is demonstrably evident from this—that faith and good works, upon Arminian principles, *cannot possibly be foreseen*. Arminians maintain that it depends upon the self-determining power of the will, whether any person believe or do good works. Upon their principles, every individual person may refuse to believe. Now, if any individual may refuse to believe, *all* may refuse to believe. According to this scheme, it was possible that not one promise made to the Redeemer with regard to the salvation of sinners should ever be fulfilled; it was possible that the Redeemer should never see "*one of His seed—one of the travail of His soul;*" it was possible

* The term Arminian is used merely as a term of distinction, not of reproach.

that, notwithstanding all our Mediator has done and suffered, *not one single soul should ever believe—that not one single soul should ever be saved*; it was possible that *all mankind might continue in unbelief and wickedness, and perish eternally!*

Now, I would be glad to know, how it was possible for God to have a certain foreknowledge of those who should believe and do good works, when it was possible that *none* would ever believe or do good works. Believe me, dear sir, had your prudence been equal to your “exasperated indignation,” you would have studiously avoided any controversy about the foreknowledge of God. Arminians have laboured for ages, but laboured in vain, to reconcile their system with this Divine attribute. Tillotson, Groves, Abernethy, Dr. Samuel Clarke, and a whole host of philosophers and divines, have exerted their combined energies, and exhausted their gigantic powers, in fruitless efforts to accomplish this more than Herculean labour. The present learned and acute Dr. Adam Clarke has not been a whit more successful than his predecessors. “We grant,” says the Doctor, “that God foresees nothing as absolutely and inevitably certain, which He has made contingent; and, because He has designed it to be *contingent*, therefore He cannot know it as absolutely and inevitably certain. I conclude, that God, although omniscient, is not obliged, in consequence of this, to know all that He can know, no more than He is obliged, because He is omnipotent, to do all that He can do.” This is to *cut*, but not to *loose*, the Gordian knot—it is the dernier resort—the forlorn hope of Arminians—it is to deny one of the perfections of God, rather than give up a favourite system. Though, *in words*, the learned Doctor acknowledges the omniscience of God; yet, *in fact*, he denies that attribute. If the Deity is not possessed of the *actual knowledge* of all things, but only of the *power of knowing* all things, He is not omniscient. To say that

the Supreme Being has a power of acquiring knowledge, is the same as to say that, at one period of His existence, He may be comparatively *ignorant*, and at another period more *knowing*—that His knowledge may increase with His years, and that He may become wiser as He grows older! If the Deity is capable of any accessions of *power*, He is not *omnipotent*; in like manner, if He is capable of any accessions of *knowledge*, He is not *omniscient*. To say that God is *omniscient*, and yet deny that He must *know* all things, is a contradiction in terms. It is as great a contradiction as to maintain that He is omnipotent, and yet deny that He must be possessed of *all power*. To say that the Deity is not possessed of *all power*, is to deny His *omnipotence*; to say that He is not possessed of *all knowledge*, is to deny His *omniscience*. The Doctor, therefore, denies the omniscience of God—he acknowledges the *name*, but denies the *thing*.

But, still farther; by denying that the Deity has the *actual knowledge* of all things, and maintaining that He has only the *power of knowing* all things, Dr. Clarke has gained *just nothing at all*. The difficulty remains the same. The question still recurs:—How can the Deity, on Arminian principles, be possessed of such a power? How can He foreknow things which are contingent—things which may never come to pass? As *knowledge* presupposes the certain existence of the thing *known*, so *foreknowledge* presupposes the certainty of the future existence of the thing *foreknown*. If the Deity *knows* that Dr. Clarke is *at present* a believer, it is certain that Dr. Clarke *is* a believer. If it is possible that Dr. Clarke is *no* believer, whilst the Deity knows him to *be* a believer, then it is possible for the Deity to be mistaken. So, in like manner, if the Deity *foreknew* from all eternity that Dr. Clarke *would be* a believer, it was certain from all eternity that Dr. Clarke *would believe*. If it was possible that Dr. Clarke might *never*

believe, though the Deity foreknew that he *would* believe, then it was possible for the Deity to be mistaken!

Every person must see that it is impossible for the Deity to *know* that a thing exists, if it does not *really* and *certainly* exist. Equally impossible is it to *foreknow* that a thing *will* exist, if its *future* existence is not *certain*. That these things are *equally* impossible, the Doctor himself must acknowledge; for, according to his own doctrine, *foreknowledge*, *after* knowledge, and *present* knowledge are all the same. With the Deity there is nothing, strictly speaking, but *present* knowledge. To say, therefore, that the Deity knows that a thing exists, and yet that it is possible that it does *not* exist, is to say that the Deity has a certain knowledge of its existence, and yet has *no* certain knowledge of it. In like manner, to say that the Deity *foreknows* those things which *will* exist, and yet that those things may *never* exist, is the same as to say that the Deity has a certain foreknowledge of their future existence, and yet that he has *no* certain foreknowledge of it!

Again, to say with Dr. Samuel Clarke, Mr. Bird, and others, that God foreknows *necessary* events *as necessary*, and *contingent* events *as contingent*, is to say nothing at all to the purpose. The question still recurs:—How is it possible that contingent events *should* be foreknown? Mr. Bird illustrates his reasoning by the following example:—We see the sun shining over our heads, and at the same time we see a man walking upon the earth. The one we see as voluntary, the other as natural. He grants, however, that both must be done, or we could not *see* them at all; but he denies that they were both necessary *before* they were done—it was only necessary that the sun would shine, but not that the man would walk. Now, in opposition to this, I contend that if it was necessary that the man should walk, in order that he might be *seen* walking, it was *equally* necessary that he would walk, in order to be *foreseen* as walking. *The*

walking of the man is an event which must certainly and infallibly come to pass (as well as *the shining of the sun*), in order to be either *seen* or *foreseen*. As *knowledge* and *foreknowledge* are the same with the Deity, He can no more *foreknow* what *will* not certainly and infallibly exist, than He can *know* what *does not at present* certainly and infallibly exist. Mr. Bird asserts that God *necessarily foreknows* all that will come to pass. Dr. Adam Clarke asserts that God is *not obliged to know all that He can know*. This flat contradiction in the principles upon which these gentlemen proceed, does not prevent the Doctor from declaring that *Mr. Bird's* argument is a good one, and that *his own* is better. The Doctor must pardon me for thinking that Mr. Bird's argument is no argument at all, because it affords no solution of the difficulty; and that his own is *still worse*, because it fails in solving the difficulty, and involves besides, not only a plain contradiction, but also the denial of a Divine perfection.*

Some of the most penetrating Arminian divines and philosophers have given it as their opinion, that no man will ever be able to reconcile the contingency of future events with the foreknowledge of God. In this opinion I heartily acquiesce. I firmly believe these things will never be reconciled, because I believe they are *irreconcilable*. If any man is able to prove that it is possible for a thing to be, and not to be, at the same time—if he can prove that it is possible to know a thing, and at the same time *not* to know it, then he may prove that

* If the denial of one of the attributes of Deity, and the belief of a contradiction, which is capable of the strictest demonstration, be necessary to free Calvinists from the gross absurdities and blasphemies charged upon them by Dr. Clarke, I am fully of opinion, they will universally agree with me in thinking, that the remedy is incomparably worse than the disease. They will regard the Arminian cause as desperate indeed, when, in defence of it, a gentleman of the learning and talents of Dr. Adam Clarke is reduced to such extremities.

it is possible for the Deity to foreknow those events which may possibly never come to pass.

Thus, sir, it appears that predestination cannot be founded on foreseen faith and good works; because, upon Arminian principles, it is *absolutely impossible* that either faith or good works *should be foreseen*. It appears, not only that the doctrine of our Westminster divines, with regard to predestination, is sanctioned by the Word of God, but the absurdity of the opposite opinion is capable of a demonstration as strict as any contained in Euclid's elements. Calvinistic principles stand upon a proud pre-eminence—they rest upon the immoveable basis of Divine Revelation, and are consistent with the soundest principles of philosophy. Our moral philosophy class-rooms, and divinity-halls, do not now resound with the doctrine of the self-determining power of the will; the salt is now cast into the fountain. For more than half a century past, Calvinistic principles have been gaining ground, both among the learned and illiterate. At present they are rapidly progressing. If I can rely on the testimony of one of themselves, a young gentleman of great respectability, the students of the Synod of Ulster have, for some time past, been almost universally Calvinists. From the new wine they are turning with listless apathy, with the general exclamation, "The old is better." That the General Synod are retracing their steps—that they are returning to the Calvinistic principles of their ancestors, is a fact which I believe admits of little doubt. The unanimity displayed in their judicious appointment of a divinity professor speaks volumes on this interesting subject. And indeed, from my inmost soul I congratulate them on their return to what I conceive to be the true and genuine principles of the Gospel. "I have no greater joy than to see" Christians of every denomination "walking in truth."

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

MY REV. AND DEAR PRESBYTERIAN,—I flattered myself that the vengeance you had taken on your enemies in your hard-fought Battle of Dialogues would have fully gratified your “exasperated indignation.” I flattered myself that, after the battle was over, the Westminster divines would find in the Rev. Presbyterian a generous foe. It never once entered my mind that so illustrious a warrior would return again to the field of battle, for no other purpose than to insult and abuse the wounded and the dying! In this it appears I have been mistaken. In your Battle of Dialogues, having knocked down (or *thought* you had knocked down) your enemies, you return, in your Appendix, to kick them for falling. You assure us that the Westminster Confession “is not only inconsistent with the Scriptures, but that it is many times inconsistent with itself.” To establish this charge, you give a garbled account of the 3d sec. of the 9th chapter, after which you exclaim, “How miserable then is the state of this unregenerate man; since, if he pray to God, it is a sin, and since, if he pray not, it is a greater sin!”

In the section referred to, the divines teach that the works of unregenerate men, though they may be materially good, being done according to the Divine command, and useful both to themselves and others—are, nevertheless, sinful, on a variety of accounts: because they do not proceed from *faith*, for without faith it is impossible to please God; because they do not proceed from *love*, for though we give all our goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing, &c. The divines also teach that the *neglect* of these works

is still *more* sinful and displeasing to God. This they establish by irrefragable evidence. If we give our alms to be seen of men, we have no reward. Without charity, giving all our goods to feed the poor, profits nothing; and yet, at the judgment of the great day men shall be condemned for *neglecting* acts of charity. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink, &c." "Inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these, ye did it not to me," &c. Instead of laying before your readers this appropriate proof, you foully suppress it, and quote only the introductory verse, which you are pleased to hold up to ridicule. "Then shall he say unto those on His left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This you style a singular proof; but did you not know, my dear friend, that this is no proof at all? Was it ignorance, or was it fraudulent design, that induced you to represent it as a proof? Did you not know that it was only the *introduction* to a proof, and that the proof itself was contained in the subsequent verses, which I have already quoted, but which *you* have disgracefully suppressed? You pretend to lay before the public the proofs which the divines have advanced in support of their paradox. Instead of this, you only bring forward two garbled texts, in proof of the one part—the other part you leave entirely destitute of proof. Of the two texts brought forward, the one you represent as quoted for a purpose quite the reverse of that for which it was really adduced—the other you represent as a *proof*, when it is only the *introduction* to a proof. Such management needs no comment; the only observation I would make is, that you acted wisely in concealing your name.

To support their paradox, the divines produce a multitude of appropriate texts, which the reader may consult at his leisure. That an action may be sinful,

and the neglect of it *more* sinful, is a paradox consistent both with Scripture and reason. "The ploughing of the wicked is sin," and yet I trust you will readily acknowledge, that not to plough would be a *greater* sin. The conduct of Henry VIII. in promoting the Reformation, considering the abominable motives by which he was actuated, was undoubtedly sinful; and yet, what Protestant will deny, that his conduct would have been *also* sinful, had he neglected to promote the Reformation. Jehu's conduct in cutting off the house of Ahab, because it proceeded from improper motives, was sinful; and yet, had he disobeyed the Divine command, his conduct would have been *more* sinful. Suppose a man sees his neighbour's house on fire, and hates the family so much, that he would gladly see them all consumed; there being, however, in the house a person who owes him a sum of money, he assists in extinguishing the flames, and rescuing the family from the devouring element. Considering the state of his mind, and the baseness of his motive, is not his conduct sinful? And yet to suffer the whole family to perish, would be *more* sinful. May I not here exclaim, in your own style, "How miserable is the situation of this poor man! If he quench the flames, it is a sin, and if he does not quench them it is a *greater* sin." "The sacrifice of the wicked," we are assured, "is an abomination to the Lord;" and yet, had he neglected to sacrifice, he would have been guilty of a *greater* sin. In like manner, the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; and yet, not to pray would be a *greater* sin. In your introductory sentence you say, "Perhaps he (the author) may venture to suppose that, independent of the inconsistency which exists between it (the Confession) and the Word of God, it is many times inconsistent with itself." In reply to this, you will now permit me to say, *that perhaps I may venture to suppose that you are mistaken.*

As paradoxes seem to be the order of the day, let us advert to those of the Rev. Presbyterian. Whatever may be your inferiority to the Westminster divines in other respects, candour and justice oblige me to acknowledge that, in writing paradoxes, you are not behind the very chiefest of them. Those of the Westminster divines are easily solved; but the solution of *yours*, I am perfectly convinced, will baffle the ingenuity of all the philosophers and divines in the world. Compared with *them*, Samson's riddle is not worthy to be named. Page 43, you assure us, "that if the General Assembly and Seceders were to act up to the principles of their predecessors, Covenanters would be punished as heretics." Now, my dear sir, as the predecessors of these two bodies were *Covenanters*, were they to act up to the principles of their predecessors, they would be *also* Covenanters. How then could Covenanters be punished as heretics? Here is a paradox!

Page 20, you inform us that, though Layman would be orthodox in Ireland, he would be a heretic in England. Now, my dear sir, every schoolboy, who has read a little geography, knows that the established religion of England and Ireland are the same. How then could Layman be orthodox in Ireland and a heretic in England? Another paradox!

Same place, you assure us, that "Layman, if a Seceder, would be banished from the United Kingdom by the solemn league." Now, my dear sir, if Seceders swear and subscribe the solemn league, how is it possible that by that same league they should be banished from the United Kingdom? Another paradox! Most extraordinary and paradoxical covenants, to be sure! Those who *believe* them would be punished by them, and those who do *not* believe them would be punished by them; those who *subscribe* and *swear* them would be punished by them, and those who do *not* subscribe and swear them would be punished by them—*Seceders*

would be punished by them, *Covenanters* would be punished by them, and *all others* would be punished by them! Diabolical covenants indeed! No wonder they were burned by the hands of the common hangman!

Page 36, you assure us, that the Covenants and Confession are inseparable. How then were they separated by the Synod of Ulster? How were they separated by the General Assembly of Scotland. Another paradox!

Without mentioning any more of your paradoxes, perhaps I might now venture to suppose that, independently of the inconsistency of your sentiments with the Word of God, they are many times inconsistent with themselves.

I am, sir, notwithstanding, your sincere friend and paradoxical correspondent, &c.

LETTER VIII.

MY REV. AND DEAR PRESBYTERIAN,—It would not be doing justice to your talents and ingenuity, to pass unnoticed your lucubrations on Covenants, Covenanters, Seceders, &c. With regard to covenants, you express yourself thus:—“If our forefathers, instead of composing leagues and covenants, and swearing to them, had bound themselves to spread the Scriptures by the gentle arts of persuasion, under the protection of the civil magistrate, you must grant, that they would more readily and rapidly have melted down oppression from amongst themselves, and persecution from amongst their enemies.” Pray, sir, how could our forefathers have bound themselves to spread the Scriptures, but by a league and a covenant? The paragraph, when analysed, will read thus:—If our forefathers, instead of binding themselves by leagues and covenants, had bound themselves by a league and a covenant, &c. After reading an observation so sagacious and sensible, can any person doubt your qualifications for discussing the subject of leagues and covenants? I confess, however, that, notwithstanding the flood of light you pour all around you, there is one difficulty still resting upon my mind—it is to ascertain, whether the Rev. Presbyterian be not himself a kind of mongrel Covenanter. To covenants, binding to spread the Scriptures, you seem to have no dislike; on the contrary, you appear to approve of them highly. Now, sir, were you to enter into a covenant to spread the Scriptures, do you not know that you would be a Covenanter? You appear to hesitate. When Covenanter observes, “you are such an advocate for Gospel alone, that you would

refuse, I plainly see, to sign them, (the covenants) or swear to them in any case"—“*that I cannot tell,*” says the Rev. Presbyterian. You appear to doubt, whether, in any case, you would become a Covenanter. In clearing this doubt, perhaps *I* could assist you a little.

Page 43, you assure us, that the ministers of the Church of Scotland swear and subscribe every article of the league and covenant. In this sentence, sir, there is a slight inaccuracy—I mean that what you have asserted is not matter of fact. It happens, that the ministers of the Church of Scotland neither swear nor subscribe *one single article* of the league and covenant. No matter—You *thought* they did; for I am sure you would not wilfully publish a falsehood. You thought, that the ministers of the Church of Scotland swear and subscribe the league and covenants; in other words, you thought they were Covenanters. Now, my dear sir, when you were exerting yourself to obtain a union with these ministers, did you not think, that you were about to become a Covenanter? Why then do you not join the *Irish* Covenanters? It cannot be lucrative motives that prevent you, for you assure us, that “the foundation of your *loyalty* is not founded on the countenance of government;” much less can we suppose, that “the foundation of your *religion* is founded on that countenance.” Perhaps you will allege, that the true reason why you give a preference to the imaginary Covenanters of the General Assembly, is that, though they swear and subscribe the same standards, yet, with them, they are in a great measure a dead letter. That this is actually the case, you assure us, page 26. Now, sir, if this be so, why do you censure Covenanters and Seceders, because, with regard to a section or two of the Confession of Faith, there is a slight diversity of opinion; and because the subscribers explain the sense in which they understand those sections? To me, I confess, such a mode of pro-

ceeding appears quite candid and fair. You think otherwise. You express yourself thus :—“ For I do assure you, that society is now fully persuaded, from experience, that neither Covenanters nor Seceders are too honest or too holy, and that subscription to the whole doctrines contained in the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, often turns out a rope of sand, which they can snap at pleasure.” All very good ; but pray, sir, what do you think of the honesty and holiness of the General Assembly of Scotland ? If *your* account of them be true, they swear and subscribe the Confession and Covenants, and afterwards allow them to remain in a great measure dead letters. Could a more infamous banditti be found on the face of this earth, than you have represented the General Assembly ?—a banditti of perjured villains, who are no way influenced by oaths or subscriptions—who trample underfoot the most solemn obligations ! Now, sir, if Covenanters and Seceders have a right to be stigmatized as dishonest and unholy, because they subscribe a few sections of the Confession and Covenants in a qualified sense ; must not the General Assembly, upon your own principles, be ten thousand times *more* dishonest and *more* unholy ? and yet, strange to tell, dishonest and unholy as they are, you courted their fellowship !—still, stranger to tell ! dishonest and unholy as they are, they considered themselves *too* honest, and *too* holy, to admit *you* into their communion ! Their language to you was, “ Stand by thyself ; come not near us ; for we are holier than thou ! ”

But again—Do you really imagine, that the two Presbyteries of the Synod of Ulster, that, according to your own account, use the Confession of Faith “ in such a qualified manner as to render it a mere name—a piece of appearance !!! ”—do you really imagine, that these two Presbyteries have much the advantage of Covenanters or Seceders in point of honesty or

holiness? Ye Seceders and Covenanters! ye Christians of every religious denomination! come see the zeal of the Rev. Presbyterian for honesty and holiness! in *him* contemplate a perfect paragon of candour and impartiality!

Page 26, you say, "Let any humble Christian compare the acts and testimonies of Seceders and Covenanters, and then let him judge, as to the harmony and uniformity which are brought about by adhering to the same human confession." Here, I am convinced, both Seceders and Covenanters should plead guilty. They have not, on all occasions, treated each other with that meekness and gentleness, which become disciples of the meek and lowly Redeemer. The only legitimate conclusion, however, which follows from this, is, that creeds and confessions go only a certain length in producing peace and concord—they do not eradicate *all* our corruptions—they do not render men *absolutely perfect*. The objection, however, would prove too much—it would prove that the Scriptures themselves are only an imposture; for these sacred oracles do not produce universal peace and harmony. Because perfect harmony cannot be attained by all the means we can possibly employ, is this any reason that *no means at all* should be used for obtaining so desirable an end? Surely not.

That the controversial writings of Seceders and Covenanters, published fifty or a hundred years ago, should participate a little of the spirit of those times, is not very strange. It is hoped, however, that the candid inquirer will judge of their spirit and temper by their modern productions. Let any unprejudiced person consult "A short account of the old Dissenters," and "An explanation and defence of their terms of communion," both published by the Reformed Presbytery in Scotland. Let him also consult the Act and Testimony published by the Covenanting Church

in America, Reid's pamphlet against Fletcher, and Longmoore's pamphlet against the Covenanters; and then let him say, if they do not breathe the manly, but, at the same time, mild and candid spirit of the Gospel.*

For a considerable time past, it has been in contemplation to revise some of our subordinate standards, particularly our Act and Testimony. In the meanwhile, I trust it will be distinctly understood, that it is not for *words or phrases*, but for *principles*, that Covenanters contend. If, in their Act and Testimony, or other public documents, the language employed is in any instance harsh, or calculated to give unnecessary pain to any denomination of Christians, Covenanters do not approve of such language. Their object, however they may fail in its accomplishment, is, under a deep sense of unworthiness, fallibility, and imperfection, to testify against the evils of the age in which they live, in language calculated, not to irritate and mortify, but to conciliate and reform—in language calculated, not to widen, but to heal those breaches which so mournfully prevail.

The truth is, that if there be any want of harmony between Seceders and Covenanters, it is not to be attributed to their subscribing the same standards. It is not the *identity*, but the *difference* of their standards

* The only exception with which I am acquainted, is a sermon entitled "The Times," published recently by a Professor of Divinity, in Belfast. In this sermon the author has poured upon Covenanters a torrent of illiberal abuse. In less than half a page he has lavished upon them nearly a score of abusive epithets. The poison, however, is accompanied by the antidote. Such railing accusations against sister sects is strongly and repeatedly reprobated in the same sermon. The author assures us, that such a mode of supporting truth is wearing away. I believe it is. I hope that his own virulent invective may be safely regarded as the *expiring groan of party spirit*.

that has occasioned their disputes. Among Covenanters themselves, who all subscribe the same standards, has there not been, from the earliest period of their history, an astonishing uniformity of sentiment? With them, doctrines the most heterogeneous and opposite are not exhibited from the same pulpit. One does not teach that the Redeemer is the supreme God; another, that He is the highest of all creatures; and another, that He is nothing more than a mere man. One does not teach, that the Redeemer's blood is a vicarious sacrifice; and another, that it is only a beneficial attestation of the truth of His doctrine. One does not teach, that we are justified by our *own* righteousness; and another, that we are justified by the righteousness of the *Redeemer*. One does not ascribe our sanctification to the efficiency of the Holy Ghost, and another, to the self-determining power of the will. In a word, with them, one is not employed in destroying what the other builds. Neither, sir, do Seceders differ among themselves, nor dispute with Covenanters about these great and important doctrines of our holy religion. With *you* a greater diversity of opinion prevails, than would obtain among Seceders, Independents, and Covenanters, were they all united into one community. Nor can you boast very much of your harmony—at least you have exhibited a very poor specimen. You represent two of your Presbyteries as guilty of the deepest dissimulation—as acting a solemn farce in setting apart candidates to the office of the holy ministry—as using the Confession of Faith in such a qualified manner as to render it a mere name, a piece of appearance! You represent a reverend brother, whom (if I mistake not the object), learning, talents, zeal, and popularity, have raised to the highest eminence, and rendered an object of envy; this worthy character you represent as so completely absorbed in self, that duty never predominates over interest—as “always in a strait between

two, the opinions of his hearers and the laws of his master, whilst the former frequently turn the beam!" Were you to break cover, and come forth from your dark retreat, the General Synod, I have no doubt, would do its duty, by inflicting on you that chastisement, which such insolence, not to say malignity, deserves. Tell me, my friend, could you exhibit to the world no better specimen of the harmony which pervades the General Synod, or of that liberality and charity which characterize the enlightened enemies of creeds and confessions? Your quondam reverend father, Dr. M'Dowal, of Dublin, has expressed himself thus:—"A society made up of jarring principles is more likely to defeat the designs of the Gospel than to promote them. It bears some resemblance to Samson's assemblage of foxes, which being enclosed in the same field, with their heads looking different ways, but fastened together by the tails, with firebrands betwixt them, snarled, bit, and struggled, drawing different ways, until they laid waste the pleasant field, and utterly destroyed the plentiful crop." Whether the Doctor would have regarded you as one of those foxes, bound to the Synod only by the tail, as he and I are not in the habit of corresponding, I am not at present prepared to determine. Nor can I say much about the *fundamental* bond of union. That it is not the Confession of Faith is evident—for this you have *decently* laid aside; that it is not the Bible is equally plain—for it would not teach you to snarl, bite, and devour. What the fastening ligament *really* is, as the Doctor is silent on the subject, I shall leave to you and the public to decide. I confess, my dear sir, that, from your Battle of Dialogues, it is difficult to ascertain your real principles. You style yourself a Rev. Presbyterian—a title which you assure us *exclusively* belongs to the members of the General Synod. Your sentiments, as we have already seen, would sometimes

lead us to conclude that you are a *Covenanter*; whilst other parts of your pamphlet would authorize us to infer, that you were neither more nor less than a *good old Roman Catholic*. For instance, you triumph over Layman for asserting that fallible men may produce [teach] infallible doctrine. This you represent as the greatest contradiction, and the rankest Popery. Now, sir, if this be so, I hope to prove to your own satisfaction, that you are a rank Papist. That we may not forget our logic, I shall prove it syllogistically, thus:—

Whoever teaches truth teaches infallible doctrine.

But the Rev. Presbyterian teaches truth.

Ergo, the Rev. Presbyterian teaches infallible doctrine.

You will not deny, I hope, that *truth* is infallible, and, of course, that every true doctrine is an infallible doctrine—nor will you deny that you sometimes teach truth, or in other words, that you sometimes teach infallible doctrine.

Now, Mr. Aristotle, just one syllogism more, and I have done:—

Whoever teaches infallible doctrine is a rank Papist.

But the Rev. Presbyterian teaches infallible doctrine.

Therefore, the Rev. Presbyterian is a rank Papist.

Do not blush, my good friend; you have not the least reason to be ashamed; you have performed a glorious achievement. You are surrounded on all hands with excellent company. All the ministers of the General Synod—all Seceding ministers, Covenanting ministers, Protestant ministers, Methodist ministers—in a word, all the ministers in Christendom are rank Papists! You have reclaimed them all—reduced them all to obedience to the Holy See! You have effected more by a few lines of your *Battle of Dialogues*, than all the anathemas of Rome—than all the Pope's bulls—than all the tortures and executions of the holy Inquisition! A jubilee, not only at Rome, but a *universal* jubilee, will, no doubt, be immediately

proclaimed; and, hark ye, my friend! when the chair of St. Peter becomes vacant, who is better entitled to fill it than your Reverence?—after death whose name will be more deserving of a place in the calendar of saints?—whose shrine will be more generally visited than yours? That of St. Thomas-a-Becket will be almost entirely deserted—it will sink into comparative contempt.

Hail, universal peace and harmony! Animosities and divisions are now no more. All distinctions of sects and parties are entirely abolished. Heresy is completely annihilated. The term heretic will no longer be used—not even “*as a bugbear to frighten children.*” The only heretic in the world is the Rev. Divine, your neighbour, who, you assure us, “is a teacher of words, but in no instance of truth.” I confess, indeed, that I was of opinion there was no such teacher in the world—I thought that errors and lies, without any mixture of truth, were a dose by far too nauseous for human beings of any description; but in this, it appears, I have been mistaken, for your neighbouring clergyman, you assure us, is, “in no instance, a teacher of truth.” Now, if this be so, (and who can doubt it, after you have asserted it?) if this be so, it is quite plain, that the preacher in question is no Papist. If he teaches no truth, he teaches no infallible doctrine—if he teaches no infallible doctrine, he is no Papist—if he is no Papist, he is a heretic—and, if he is a heretic, *you* know how to treat him. After you have ascended the chair of St. Peter, by your Inquisitor-General, proclaim an *auto da fe*; and by one decisive blow banish heresy for ever from the world.

Leaving you in the bosom of your old mother church, and congratulating you on the prospect of your advancement to the Papal chair, I am, sir, warmly attached to infallible doctrine, and at the same time,

Your sincere Friend, &c.

LETTER IX.

REV. SIR,—Against Covenanters, both ancient and modern, you prefer the heavy charges of intolerance, and persecution. “It is notorious,” you assure us, “that numbers were banished and confined for non-conformity, and that many were put to death for denying some of the doctrines of the Confession. Among those who were tried and hanged was a student of Edinburgh College, for speaking against the trinity and incarnation of Christ. He was denied the common place of interment, and was appointed to be buried in the same ground with notorious criminals and malefactors. Such was the manner in which the covenanted uniformity was prosecuted.” I suppose, sir, you will not deny that every man should be held innocent till once he is proven guilty. This privilege is all I ask for our reforming ancestors. You are their public accuser; bring forward your evidence. You say numbers were banished—pray, *what* number? You affirm that many were put to death—pray, *how* many? Such vague and indefinite language is indeed a very fit vehicle for slander and calumny, but is ill adapted for the ascertaining of truth. Please be a little more particular; quote your authorities—specify time, place, and other circumstances. The characters of our reforming ancestors, to whose magnanimous exertions we are indebted both for civil and religious liberty, are too precious and respectable, to be allowed to fall victims to your licentious, unauthenticated abuse. Remember, sir, you are publicly called on to substantiate your charges. If you fail in your evidence, or refuse to bring it forward, you must be content to be viewed as a public calumniator.

I have no idea, that either the civil constitution or administration of our reformers was perfect. I am no way bound, nor do I feel disposed, to vindicate all their measures, acts of parliament, &c. In some instances, they might be too severe; in general, however, I am convinced they ruled, considering the circumstances of the times, with a very mild sceptre. Their measures were sometimes quite *too* lenient. So far were they from attempting, according to your groundless accusations, to put down all who differed from them in opinion, that a considerable minority, who refused to acquiesce in the established order of things, were nevertheless allowed to live unmolested, in the enjoyment of personal liberties and property, under the protection of the law. These men were generally attached to prelacy and arbitrary government; many of them had fought against the liberties of their country, under the reign of Charles I., and many of them were men of infamous moral character—hence called malignants; yet, notwithstanding, so foolishly indulgent were our reforming forefathers, that they admitted these men into places of power and trust, to the complete subversion of the constitution, and introduction of prelacy and arbitrary power, with all the horrors of tyranny and persecution in their train! Be candid, my dear sir, and distinguish between that just chastisement inflicted on those who were conspiring against the civil and religious liberties of the nation, and any severity which may be supposed to have been exercised on men merely on account of their religion; make this candid distinction, and I am convinced that the mountain of persecution, which you have conjured up before the imagination of your readers, will instantly dwindle into a mole-hill.

As, in the Reformation period, the circumstances of the times might justify a degree of severity, which in the present age would be highly criminal; so, we might

expect that modern Covenanters would be much more mild and humane than their forefathers. It appears, however, that the case is quite otherwise. You assure the world that, if Covenanters could get the king to sign and swear the covenants, we should soon feel the wholesome effects of their contents—what these wholesome effects would be we may learn from page 44, where you assure us, that “all must believe, or seem to believe, the doctrines contained in the covenants and confession, or be burned, buried, or banished, as Covenanters and the magistrate might think proper.” Pray, sir, how many were burned, buried, or banished, for those crimes, when the king *did* sign and swear the covenants? Was a single individual burned?—*not one*. Was a single individual buried?—yes, no doubt, after death. An odd kind of punishment indeed, to bury people after they die! I suppose the majority of the nation were so punished. But perhaps you mean (for your words would generally require an interpreter), perhaps you mean that Dissenters would be buried *alive*. Pray, sir, how many were buried alive during the Reformation period? It is true, indeed, this is not the question—the question is not what Covenanters did nearly two centuries ago, but what they would do in the *present age*. The ancient Covenanters, it seems, had a *small* portion of humanity, but the modern ones have *none*. The old ones were content with *hanging and beheading*, but nothing less than *burning and burying alive* would gratify the ferocity of their degenerate sons! What a perverse race of mortals are these same Covenanters! Whilst all other classes and denominations are in a progressive state of civilization, *these savages* are constantly becoming *more sanguinary and ferocious!* In the course of less than two centuries more, we may expect them metamorphosed into complete cannibals! Compose yourself, my dear friend; dismiss your fears, I hope you need not be very uneasy; I trust there is

no great danger of your being either burned or buried alive; your fears on this quarter are nearly as groundless as those you entertain, lest the Covenanters should pluck the planets from their orbits. "It is well," says the Rev. Presbyterian, "that you (Covenanters) are not great astronomers, or I dread you would pluck the planets from their orbits, that you might the better arrange their courses." Now, sir, your fears of being burned or buried alive are, I presume, as groundless as your dread of the planets being plucked from their orbits—nay, they are *more* groundless. From the fewness of their numbers, it is not very likely that Covenanters will attempt to overturn the state; and, as they do not stand on a very respectable footing with his majesty's government, there is little danger of the king joining them in their diabolical scheme of *burning* the people, or *burying them alive*. But with regard to the plucking of the planets from their orbits the case is very different. To qualify for this, according to your own doctrine, all that is necessary is, that Covenanters be *great astronomers*. Now, who can tell but, some time or other, this may actually be the case. I can assure you, sir, it is whispered—nay, it is confidently affirmed by some, and they appeal to the records of Glasgow College for the truth of their statement—that, for more than twenty years past, the Covenanting students, in proportion to their number, have taken more prizes, particularly in the higher philosophical classes of that university, than the students of any other denomination in the united empire. It is even reported, that the gentleman who, in philosophical studies, has lately eclipsed all his fellow-students, and who, at this very moment, is in possession of a large bursary, is an *Irish Covenanter*. Now, sir, I must confess, that according to your doctrine, there is something in these appearances *truly alarming!* Should Covenanting students go on in this way, eclipsing their fellow-students,

it is hard to say but some of them may at last become great astronomers; and, in case of this event, I would not guarantee the safety of the solar system. What mischief might enter the minds of such aspiring headstrong fellows, it is difficult to say. Should they actually pluck any of the planets from their orbits, for aught I know, the consequences might be universally pernicious. Not only would these planets, according to your doctrine, appear deformed; but, as you are a *great astronomer*, you know much better than I do, that these planets are peopled as well as our own; and, of course, should these desperadoes drag them to a nearer conjunction with the sun, their miserable inhabitants, though not buried alive, might be *burned alive*—on the other hand, should those miscreants sweep the planets to a greater distance, the conqueror of the French, General Frost, might, without the least mercy, overwhelm in one universal catastrophe their entire population!

Now, my dear sir, being a very humane gentleman—your benevolence being not at all confined to this *dirty little world*, but embracing in its extensive grasp the inhabitants of *distant stars and planets*—I have no doubt you will memorialize the faculty, not to permit any Covenanter to enter the higher philosophical classes in Glasgow College, till he has previously given sufficient security that he will not, on any account whatever, either pluck, or assist in plucking from their orbits, any of the planets of the solar system. Allowing you time to draw up your memorial, and, in the meanwhile, warmly participating in your benevolent concern for the safety of the planets,

I am, &c.

LETTER X.

REV. SIR,—To convince the world that the principles of Covenanters are intolerant, you quote the following paragraph from their Act and Testimony:—“And further they declare, that it is most wicked, and what manifestly strikes against the sovereign authority of God, for any power on earth to pretend to tolerate, and by sanction of civil law to give license to men to publish and propagate with impunity, whatever errors, heresies, and damnable doctrines, Satan and their own corrupt and blinded understandings may prompt them to believe and embrace: *authoritative toleration* being destructive of all true religion, and of that liberty wherewith Christ hath made His people free, and of the great end thereof, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies we may serve the Lord,” &c.

Now, sir, you will certainly grant that the Presbytery who published the above document are the best qualified to explain it.

In an abstract of their principles, designed as an introduction to their Act and Testimony, they express themselves thus:—“While Dissenters testify against toleration, they are not to be understood as meaning a merely *passive toleration*, implying nothing more than simply permitting men to exist unmolested to hold their different opinions, without using external violence to make them change these, or to exterminate them from the face of the earth if they do not. Forbearance of this kind, after every Scriptural and rational means has been used without effect, *cannot be condemned*; but what they have in view, is, *that authoritative toleration*, in which the rulers of a kingdom, assuming the character

of judges in these matters, by their proclamations or other public deeds, declare what different opinions or systems they will allow to be taught and propagated, and to what modes of worship they will give countenance and protection, while they exclude others from that supposed privilege."

Such are the principles Covenanters have published to the world. Be candid, sir, and tell your readers, that it is only against *authoritative toleration* that Covenanters testify. *Passive toleration*, they have declared in their *public deeds*, they by no means condemn. They approve of no weapons for converting men but the *Bible, the preaching of the Gospel, arguments, prayers*, and the like. That toleration against which they testify, even in the paragraph you have quoted, is expressly styled *authoritative toleration*. Viewed in this light, the texts adduced in proof of the doctrine are perfectly appropriate. They read thus:—"There is one lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy; who art thou that judgest another? Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. But Peter and John answered and said, whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy Word. Ye are bought with a price; be ye not the servants of men. And call no man your father, upon the earth, for one is your Father, who is in heaven," &c.

By way of inuendo, you tell us that these texts are worthy of observation—and then you go on to observe: "If these texts mean anything, it is, that no magistrate, or man, or body of men, has a right to prevent their fellow-creatures from believing whatever doctrines their understandings may prompt them to believe and embrace."

Pray, sir, did the Reformed Presbytery teach in the

passage you have quoted—or have they taught in any other part of their writings—that any magistrate has a right to prevent men from believing according to the dictates of their understandings? No, sir; neither the *Reformed Presbytery*, nor *any other* Presbytery, have taught as you ridiculously insinuate. They have taught no such absurdities. No Spanish inquisitor can prevent a man from believing according to the dictates of his understanding. He might as well attempt to prevent him from seeing colours, or hearing sounds, according to the dictates of his *senses*. Not to believe the doctrines which our understandings prompt us to believe, is a *contradiction*: it is to *believe* and *not* to believe those doctrines at the same time. Now, sir, were the texts quoted above written for the purpose of proving that no man has a *right* to do that which is *impossible*—that which implies a *contradiction*? A new and admirable commentary, indeed!

The texts, my dear sir, were quoted against *authoritative toleration*. They were quoted to prove, that no man or magistrate has a right to assume the character of a judge in matters of religion—that he has no right to license men to publish and propagate whatever doctrines he may think proper, and to prohibit by law the publication of others. The doctrines which are tolerated are either the true and genuine doctrines of the Bible, or they are *not*. If they are *not* the doctrines of the Bible, for any mortal man to give them the sanction of his authority is downright rebellion against the King and Head of the Church; to sanction by *civil* law what is contrary to the *Divine* law, is nothing less than treason against the King of Heaven. What would be thought of the lord lieutenant of Ireland, were he to issue proclamations, tolerating us to obey laws directly contrary to the laws of the land? On the other hand, if the doctrines tolerated are the true and genuine doctrines of the Bible, they *require* no toleration—they

disdain it. To pretend to tolerate such doctrines, is to insult the majesty of Heaven. How impious for any monarch, who is but a worm of the dust, to say to the subjects of King Jesus, "I tolerate you to obey your master!" Does not such language imply, that he has a right to prohibit their obedience if he pleases, and that *his* authority is *paramount* to that of the blessed Redeemer! What would be thought of the President of the United States, if, coming over to Ireland, he were to issue proclamations, tolerating us to obey the laws of our country!

Such, my dear sir, is that *legal* toleration, of which you appear to be so great an admirer, and against which Covenanters esteem it their duty to testify. Now, every person must at once see, that it is not the *enemies* of legal toleration, but its *friends*, that plead for the interference of the civil magistrate in matters of religion; they must see, that Covenanters, in testifying against *legal toleration*, are testifying against the interference of the civil magistrate, and that the Rev. Presbyterian, by *approving* of legal toleration, approves, at the same time, of *magistratical interference*.

You tell us, that our forefathers, like Jesus and his apostles, could have struggled for toleration. Pray, in *what one instance* did our blessed Redeemer and his apostles struggle for a *legal* toleration? It would border too nearly on *blasphemy* to suppose it. Did the Redeemer struggle to obtain a legal toleration from Herod? How different His conduct!—"Go ye and tell that fox, behold I cast out devils, and do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected."

It is true, indeed, that in your dialogue you declaim very much against the interference of the magistrate in matters of religion. I confess, however, that I find it very difficult to give you credit for the *sincerity* of your declamation. I am sure it would require more ingenuity than *I* can boast of, to reconcile your *professions*

and your *practice*. We have just now seen, that you contradict those professions by approving of authoritative toleration. In a variety of other particulars, the inconsistency of your conduct is still more glaring: for instance, why do you allow the civil magistrate to dictate to you in the appointment of days of public fasting and thanksgiving? Is this to disclaim magisterial interference? Is this to “call no man master?” Is this to act in agreeableness to the Divine prohibition, “Be not ye the servants of men?”—Again:—

Why do you allow the civil magistrate to dictate to you in the manner of swearing? Swearing is one of the most solemn acts of worship. To direct us in the manner of its performance we have the example of God himself—of His saints—and of His Son. Our blessed Redeemer “lifted up His hand to Heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer.” *Book-swearing* has its foundation neither in Scripture precept nor example: it can only be traced to heathenish idolatry. No matter: it is enjoined by the civil magistrate; and with *you*, it appears that *his authority* for the manner of performing this solemn act of worship is perfectly sufficient.

Allow me, sir, to ask you, as a *Dissenter*, Why did you separate from the Church of England? Was not one principal reason *the imposition of human rites and ceremonies*? Now, sir, if you submit to the imposition of *one* ceremony, why not of *two*? why not of *ten*? why not of *all* the ceremonies of the Church of England? If you obey the civil magistrate when he commands you to touch and kiss the book in swearing; upon the same principle, would you not obey him, were he to command you to kneel at the sacrament, to use the sign of the cross in baptism, or to conform to *all the other ceremonies* of the Established Church? You would not suffer the *Church* to wreath about your neck a yoke of ceremonies. You stood fast in the liberty

wherewith Christ had made you free ; why, then, have you surrendered that liberty at the discretion of the *State*? By submitting to the dictation of the civil magistrate in the article of book-swearing, have you not entirely given up one principal ground of your dissent from the Church of England? You assure us, that it is impossible to prove that magistrates have any authority to dictate to us how we are to worship the Deity. *I think so too.* Why, then, do you suffer them to dictate to you in that solemn act of worship, swearing? Has not our Saviour expressly declared, “*In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*”*

You are very much afraid, lest creeds and confessions divert our attention from the Word of God. Pray, sir, whether do Covenanters or you adhere most closely to that Divine Word in the article of swearing?

But, again : if you are in earnest in deprecating the interference of the civil magistrate in matters of religion ; why did you strain every nerve to obtain a coalition with the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland? Do you not know that the king is virtually the head of that church ; or, at least, that a compromise is made of her headship between the king of England and the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you not know that the king assumes the right of calling, adjourning, or dissolving her

* The above observations are not intended as a censure on the civil government. The government is Episcopalian. Episcopalianism act *consistently*; and yet, book-swearing has been condemned by some of the most respectable dignitaries of the Established Church. It is only Dissenters who are *inconsistent*. Nor would this mode be imposed upon *them*, were government convinced that it was really obnoxious. A respectful remonstrance would obtain for them immediate relief. Judges and inferior magistrates are, in general, extremely indulgent. Some of the latter have, in a very generous and disinterested manner, been exerting themselves to have the grievance redressed.

assemblies at his pleasure ; and that he has sometimes exercised that right in a very arbitrary manner ? Do you not know that he claims it as his prerogative to circumscribe the objects of their attention, and to prohibit them from discussing such matters as he may judge improper ? Do you not know that he prescribes for the ministers of that church whatever political oaths he pleases, as an *indispensable* qualification for the exercise of their office ? Do you not know that he peremptorily commands the ministers of that church, as his servants, to read, on the Lord's Day, his proclamations, or other state papers, which may be subservient to the purposes of government ? Do you not know, that the right of presenting to vacant charges, is, in many instances, vested in the crown ? Now, sir, can any person in the world give you credit for the sincerity of your professions ? Can any person believe that you have a strong aversion to the interference of the civil magistrate in matters of religion ? If you have such an aversion, why did you persevere so long in fruitless attempts to obtain a coalition with the *Erastian Church of Scotland* ?

The truth is, that a variety of Churches at present, so far from deprecating the interference of the civil magistrate, seem to value themselves in proportion to the intimacy of their connexion with the State. The General Assembly were not ashamed to *avow* this principle, when, in their communication to the General Synod, they declared—that in consequence of the respectable footing on which the Synod stood with his majesty's government, they thought it might be expedient to have communion established between the two bodies, &c. The Church of England looks down on the Church of Scotland, because she does not stand on so respectable a footing with his majesty's government, the Church of Scotland looks down on her Presbyterian sister in Ireland, because she does not stand on so respectable a footing with his majesty's government ;

for the same reason does not the General Synod look down on the Secession Church, &c. ? And yet, sir, where is the candid observer who would presume to deny, "That the declension of Churches from primitive Christianity may be estimated by the respectability of the footing on which they stand with the civil governments of the nations ?" Did not an aged and respectable member of the General Synod, when commenting on the Assembly's letter, shrewdly observe—"that neither the twelve apostles of the Lamb, nor even the Lord Jesus Christ himself, were He to come down from the right hand of God, would be admitted into the pulpits of the General Assembly of Scotland ?" Why ? because they would not stand on a respectable footing with his majesty's government ! Would to God the above pointed remark were applicable to no assembly in the world, but only the General Assembly of Scotland !

That all Churches without exception, so far as they have deviated from primitive Christianity, may with one accord retrace their steps, "seeking the Lord their God, and inquiring their way to Zion with their faces thitherward," is the fervent prayer of—Rev. Sir, your sincere friend, and very humble servant,

JOHN PAUL.

Loughmourne, April 1, 1819.

REVIEW OF A SPEECH
BY
THE REV. DR. MONTGOMERY,
OF BELFAST,

AND
THE DOCTRINES OF UNITARIANS

PROVED TO BE UNFAVOURABLE TO THE RIGHT OF PRIVATE
JUDGMENT, TO LIBERALITY AND CHARITY, TO THE
INVESTIGATION OF TRUTH, AND THE
PRACTICE OF VIRTUE.

" Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good."

PREFACE.

SHOULD Socinians and Arians, on reading this pamphlet, raise the old cry, "Illiberal! uncharitable!" &c., I would only say:—show your own liberality, by condescending to weigh my arguments. If you think I am wrong, evince your charity by pointing out my errors, and setting me right. But if you substitute declamation for reasoning, or invective for argument, you furnish another proof of what I am endeavouring to establish:—**THAT YOUR PRINCIPLES ARE UNFAVOURABLE TO LIBERALITY AND CHARITY!** And if, according to the instructions of some of your most celebrated divines, you refuse to read controversial writers; or if, according to the practice—the *boasted* practice of some of your most popular public journalists, you read only the advertisements of controversial works, can you possibly deny **THAT YOUR PRINCIPLES ARE UNFAVOURABLE TO THE INVESTIGATION OF TRUTH?** Cease, I beseech you, from such instructions, for they "cause you to err from the words of knowledge." Beware of such examples; they flatter you in your ignorance, they confirm you in your prejudices; they are degrading and

pernicious. Obey rather the injunctions of an inspired apostle: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." The present age is an age of inquiry. The measuring reed of the Word of God is beginning to be applied to "the temple, the altar, and them that worship thereat." The doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, not only of the Church of Rome, but of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and all other churches, sects, and parties, must be brought to this test; and whatever does not correspond with this rule must be rejected as "reprobate silver." Those churches, and those denominations of professed Christians, which are most corrupt and most erroneous, will be most reluctant to submit to such measurement. The fiery trial of public discussion alarms *most* those who are most in need of reformation. It is not the "gold, silver, and precious stones, but the wood, hay, and stubble," that dread the fire. The morbid sensibility which some discover, when any of their tenets are called in question, betrays a consciousness that their principles cannot bear the test of examination. We are all fallible, erring creatures. Individuals err, communities err, councils err, and general assemblies err. Where is the church quite free from error? Where is the church which can say, I am perfect? Who will affirm that the reformed churches are so far reformed as not to require farther reformation? But how can individuals, or how can communities turn from their errors, till these errors are pointed out? How can they reform, till they are con-

vinced of their corruptions?—and how can they be convinced of their corruptions, till these corruptions are detected and exposed. In surgery, the probing of wounds is not more necessary than, in theology, the refutation of errors, or exposure of corruptions. In both cases the operation may be painful, but in both it is sometimes indispensably necessary. If I saw any fellow-mortal, suppose a Socinian, or an Arian, wandering on a mountain, every moment in danger of falling into some pit, or of tumbling over some precipice, would he be offended at me for showing his danger, and pointing out the right way? Surely not. Oh, Socinians and Arians! do not think me “your enemy because I tell you the truth.” If I see your souls, your immortal souls, in danger, would it not be cruel not to warn you? If I see you wandering out of that way which leads to life and eternal felicity, would it not be cruel to look on with cool indifference without one effort to arrest your progress—without one endeavour to lead your feet into the path of truth. Say that I am weak—say that I am foolish—say that I am superstitious, and that my fears are groundless; but do not say that I am *uncharitable*. Love to your souls, if my heart deceive me not, is the cause of my importunity. Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for you all is, *that you may be saved!*

In the following sheets a variety of important topics are glanced at:—The criminality of error—the absurdity of Antitrinitarians holding communion with the Ortho-

dox, or the Orthodox with Antitrinitarians—the eternity of future punishment—the state of the heathen—the state of infants, &c. Orthodox views of those subjects are shown to be consistent with charity, and highly favourable to the practice of virtue.

R E V I E W
OF THE
REV. DR. MONTGOMERY'S SPEECH.

CHAPTER I.

THIS speech, delivered in the Synod of Ulster, at its last annual meeting, besides its publication in the provincial newspapers, has been printed on a separate sheet, and widely circulated by some of the professed friends of religious liberty. As no formal reply has appeared, though able replies were made at the time, by some it is triumphantly pronounced, and by many it is believed, to be quite unanswerable. To detract from the merits of the speech, as a display of eloquence and ingenuity, I have no intention. I believe it deserves great praise. This circumstance, however, renders it more dangerous, and the necessity of a reply more imperative.

Mr. Montgomery is the professed friend of civil and religious liberty. As such I praise him. To these great principles I have always been, and I trust always shall be, devotedly attached. Against these principles I never will knowingly speak one word, nor write one syllable. Mr. Montgomery advocates the right of private judgment, and in this also he has my most cordial approbation. But wherein do civil and religious

liberty, and the right of private judgment consist? Does Mr. M. claim a liberty and a right to exercise his own judgment, and to think for himself in civil and religious matters, and does he deny the same liberty and right to his neighbours? This would be an extraordinary notion of civil and religious liberty, and the right of private judgment, and yet it appears to be Mr. Montgomery's.

With regard to *civil liberty*, he was lately convicted of this mistake by the late talented editor of *The Belfast News-Letter*, now editor of *The Guardian*. With respect to *religious liberty*, if I am not much mistaken, he has fallen into the same error. This will appear from the celebrated speech now under review. Does Mr. Montgomery allow the orthodox the same right of private judgment which he claims for himself and his Arian brethren? As he claims the right of thinking for himself, does he allow the orthodox the same right—does he allow them also to think for themselves? If he does, then, however reluctant I may feel, candour obliges me to tell him plainly what the orthodox think:—they think that certain doctrines taught by him and his brethren are not *salutary medicine*, but *soul poison*. If he allows the orthodox a right to think for themselves, *this* is what they think. If he allows them the right of private judgment, *this* is their judgment. For entertaining such thoughts, and forming such a judgment, I am perfectly aware the orthodox will be charged with great want of charity. The groundlessness of this charge I shall afterwards endeavour to evince, and to show with what justice it may be retorted. But this is not the question at present. The question is, not whether their thoughts be correct, and their judgments charitable, but whether they have a right to think and judge for themselves. If they are allowed this right, then, as I said, they think and judge that certain doctrines taught by the Arians

are *soul poison*. They think and judge that the distinguishing doctrines of Arianism are subversive of the very foundations of the Christian system. These are their thoughts, and such is their judgment. Now, I appeal to Mr. Montgomery himself—I appeal to all the Arians or Unitarians in the world—whether it be consistent with religious liberty to force these men coolly to look on, whilst what they regard as soul poison is being administered? In building the temple of the Lord, must the orthodox be forced to co-operate with those who, in their judgment, are razing the very foundations of that glorious fabric? Would this be consistent with religious liberty? Would it not be the very essence and soul of tyranny? Every society of Christians is, or ought to be, a voluntary association. No man should be forced either to join it, or to continue in it. Mr. Montgomery and his Arian brethren are at perfect liberty to withdraw from the orthodox whenever they please. They enjoy the right of dissolving partnership (if I may use the expression), at pleasure. Why then deny the same right to their orthodox brethren? Might not these orthodox divines turn round on Mr. Montgomery, and retort his own invectives? Using his own language, they might address him thus:—“How dare you, in the face of common shame, and common consistency, to turn upon your brethren, and to attempt to place the yoke of bondage upon their necks?”

It is not, therefore, the orthodox, but the Arians, who infringe the right of private judgment—who attempt to lord it over the consciences of men, and over the heritage of God. For any number of Christians to lord it over their brethren is unjust; but for the few to lord it over the many, is *monstrously* unjust. To deny the minority the right of withdrawing from the majority, is tyrannical; but to deny the majority the right of withdrawing from the minority, is *mon-*

strossly tyrannical. This right, I acknowledge, like every other right and privilege we possess, may be abused; but that will never justify the tyranny of those who would rob us of such rights, or deprive us of such privileges. The right of withdrawing from the grossly erroneous, is not only founded on the law of nature—it is fully recognised and solemnly sanctioned in the Sacred Volume. The Scriptures *command* to reject a heretic; and *censure* the Churches of Asia, for retaining in their communion erroneous teachers. “But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.” (Rev. ii. 14, 15).

Mr. Montgomery censures the orthodox for applying to the Arians the epithet *heretics*. He represents the use of it as indicative of the most hateful and malignant passions and evil propensities of human nature, and declares that he never expected to hear the word used in a Protestant assembly. But does not Mr. Montgomery himself, and do not all Socinians and Arians whatever, regard the orthodox as heretics? They certainly do, provided we can rely on the testimony of Dr. Drummond—of that Dr. Drummond with whom Mr. Montgomery esteems it an honour to be classed. The Unitarian (under which term he includes all Antitrinitarians), the Unitarian, says he, rejects the doctrine of the Trinity, “*because he thinks it the greatest of Antichristian heresies.*” Here Dr. Drummond, in the name of all his Socinian and Arian brethren, brands the orthodox with heresy—and not only with heresy, but with Antichristian heresy—and not only with Antichristian heresy, but with the *greatest* of Antichristian heresies! Now, if the use of the term

heretics indicates, in the orthodox, hateful and malignant passions and evil propensities, what does it indicate in Dr. Drummond? What does it indicate in Socinians and Arians? Did Mr. Montgomery know that when reproaching orthodox divines, he was, at the same time, reproaching himself—reproaching his friend Dr. Drummond, and reproaching all his Socinian and Arian brethren? Did he know that he was reproaching the inspired writers—the apostles of our Lord? Does not Mr. Montgomery know, that heresies are mentioned by the Apostle Paul, and classed among the vilest works of the flesh?—that they are mentioned by the Apostle Peter, and branded with the epithet *damnable*?—and that the Church of God is commanded to reject a heretic. I am perfectly aware that Dr. Campbell has endeavoured to affix to the word heretic a meaning somewhat different from that generally assigned to it. But, whatever be its meaning, why should the word not be used? Why is it unsuitable for a Protestant assembly? Is Mr. Montgomery influenced by better principles and passions than those of the apostles?—and is his nomenclature more suitable for a Christian assembly than theirs? The epithet may be misapplied and abused; but that is no argument against the use of it. Our Saviour was impiously charged with blasphemy; but He did not on that account discard the word. The apostle was falsely charged with heresy; but he did not therefore reject the term, nor conceive it unsuitable for a Christian assembly. The epithets theft, robbery, murder, &c., may also be abused and misapplied; but we must not therefore lay them aside. They never *should*, they never *will*, be laid aside, till the crimes cease which they are employed to designate. Just so with the epithet heresy. The name will never cease to be used, till the things cease which it is employed to denominate. I know, indeed, that the minds of men may be reconciled both to error and to vice, by the use

of softened terms. As the miser may be called an economist, and the prodigal a *good fellow*, so the heretic also may be denominated "*a good well-meaning man, though mistaken.*" This, however, is not charity, it is cruelty. Persons who employ such softened phraseology may regard themselves, and be regarded by others, as men of liberal and charitable minds; but the Scriptures of truth denounce upon them an awful malediction. "Woe to them who call evil good, and good evil!" How different the practice of our Saviour and His apostles. They exhibit error, and they exhibit vice, in all their hateful and disgusting deformity. A lascivious desire our blessed Redeemer denominates *adultery*. Paul denominates covetousness *idolatry*; and the man who hates his brother is, by the Apostle John, the beloved disciple, branded as a *murderer*. Nor were they more indulgent to errors and heresies; these they represented as destructive and *damnable*.

Dr. Drummond is much offended that Antitrinitarian principles are, by Pope and Maguire, denominated leprosy and soul-destroying heresies. But why should he be offended? There is no greater breach of charity in calling that leprosy which we believe to be leprosy, and that heresy which we believe to be heresy, than in calling that poison which we believe to be poison. To label arsenic, *cream of tartar*, or calomel, *magnesia*, would be a real breach of charity; and the person who would wilfully commit the crime should be tried for his life. If we saw our neighbour drinking poison, believing it to be wine, should we not immediately vociferate POISON! Should we not, if possible, dash from his lips the fatal cup? Would this be regarded as illiberal or uncharitable? Surely not. Much less should *they* be branded as uncharitable who sound the alarm when they see the souls of men, or *think* they see them, in danger of being poisoned by errors and heresies. To attribute the plain language and faithful

warnings of such men to "hateful and malignant passions and evil propensities," proves Mr. Montgomery to be guilty of that very crime which he unjustly lays to the charge of the orthodox. It proves him to be extremely *uncharitable*.

CHAPTER II.

MR. MONTGOMERY, and Antitrinitarians in general, are willing to hold communion with the orthodox, and, therefore, they imagine that the orthodox should be willing to hold communion with them. This, to a superficial thinker, may appear quite fair and candid; but it is not; for the cases are not at all parallel. Errors and heresies are viewed in a very different light by the two contending parties. Mr. Harris, the Unitarian minister in Glasgow, in his sermon on the progress of Reformation, says, "We (Unitarians) think no worse of any man, whatever be the faith he has adopted. In equity, we ask to be judged by the same rule ourselves." No, Mr. Harris!—there is no equity here. For you to set up your thoughts as a rule to the orthodox, is not *equity*, but *tyranny*. You are the editor of *The Christian Pioneer*—the professed object of which is to "uphold the right of individual judgment;" but in the quotation I have made from your sermon, you do not *uphold*, but *put down* that right. The right of private judgment you allow the orthodox is only the right to think as *you* do. *You* think no worse of any man, whatever be the faith he has adopted; and, because *you* think so, *we* must think so; and all this you demand as a matter of equity! Alas!—how weak and inconsistent a creature is man! How true is the proverb, "Extremes are nearest meeting! How thin the partition between liberty and tyranny! Antitrinitarians flatter themselves that they are upholding the right of private judgment at the very moment they are trampling it under their feet!

To "think no worse of any man whatever be the

faith he has adopted," to Antitrinitarians may appear quite liberal, candid, and fair; to the orthodox it appears altogether absurd—as inconsistent with reason and common sense as it is with the volume of Divine Revelation. If we should think no worse of a man for believing lies, then he *is** no worse, for we should think of every man as he *is*. Now, if a man is nothing worse for believing *lies*, he can be nothing better for believing the *truth*; and if this be so, not only "fearless, free inquiry"—to uphold which is the professed object of the *Christian Pioneer*,—but all inquiry after truth whatever, is VAIN and FRUITLESS. If the orthodox are rendered nothing worse by the faith they have adopted, in the name of candour and common sense, why do Antitrinitarians labour so hard to *rob* them of that faith? Their officiousness may do much harm, but cannot possibly do any good. By their "Christian Pioneers," their "Christian Moderators," and by all their labours to convert the orthodox, they are doing that which is "NOTHING, LESS THAN NOTHING, AND VANITY."

Such absurdities and contradictions are not to be regarded as the mere mistakes of a rash inadvertent writer. They appear to me to characterise the systems of Arians and Socinians, and to disfigure the most ingenious works of their most admired and standard authors. To substantiate this charge, I shall give a few extracts from the sermons of the celebrated Dr. Price, lately re-published under the patronage of the Antrim Presbytery. The particular information which the Gospel has in view, according to Dr. Price, is, "The future coming of Christ to destroy death, and to reinstate us in a happy immortality." "This in-

* If a man *is* worse for his belief, then we should *think* him worse; but if we should think him no worse, it must be because he *is* no worse. I beg the reader's attention to this, as the whole argument hinges upon it.

formation," says the Doctor, (page 9), "includes all that we have any reason to be anxious about, and we should regard with indifference all disputes that leave us in possession of it; and there are no disputes among those who take the New Testament as a rule of faith which do not leave us in possession of it. A deliverance from death through the power of Christ, to be judged according to our works, and, if virtuous, to enter upon a new and happy life which shall never end. This is the sum and substance of the Gospel, and also the sum and substance of all that should interest human beings." The disputes about other points—about the person and offices of Christ—whether He be possessed of supreme Divinity, or be only a super-angelic being, or a mere man, &c.—these disputes he represents as of no moment, and quite insignificant. Such is the representation which he gives of all disputes whatever about Christian doctrines. He assures us, that those doctrines of Christianity which are fundamental are so clearly revealed, that they have not been disputed, nor *can* be disputed. These liberal sentiments the Doctor assures us, (page 44), "extirpate the wretched prejudices which make us shy of one another, and enable us to regard with equal satisfaction and pleasure, our neighbours, friends, and acquaintance, be their mode of worship, or their systems of faith what they will." Such is the liberality and charity of Dr. Price. Let us now advert to a few other sentiments of the same celebrated Doctor, contained in the same volume of sermons. Page 24, he writes thus:—"The better we are informed about the controversies among Christians, and the more correct our judgments, the more respectable we shall be, and also the more useful and valuable members of the Christian church, provided we take care to add to our knowledge brotherly kindness, and suppress in ourselves every tendency to intolerance and uncharitableness."

Page 32, he represents some parts of the Calvinistic system as shocking to men's feelings; and, in page 34, speaking of the same system, he says—"It seems, indeed, to be, in most parts of it, a system inconsistent with reason, injurious to the character of the ever-blessed Deity, and, in the highest degree, comfortless and discouraging." In page 35, he rises still higher, and, from his lofty tribunal, pronounces sentence on Calvinism, thus:—"In truth, were any man, (supposed unacquainted with the controversies which have arisen among Christians), to set himself to invent a system of faith so irrational and unscriptural as to be incapable of being received by Christians, he could scarcely think of one concerning which he would be more ready to form such a judgment." Nay, farther, he pronounces all who worship the Lord Jesus Christ, **IDOLATERS**—no less idolaters than if they worshipped wood and stone, (page 163.) And, (page 66), he says—"That grand apostacy among Christians which is predicted in the New Testament, consists principally in their falling into idolatrous worship. This is that spiritual fornication for which the Jews were so often punished, and which, according to the best commentators, has given the name of the mother of harlots to the Church of Rome." Of course, they who worship their Redeemer, are chargeable with the principal part of the Antichristian apostacy. We need not, however, be alarmed at this; for idolatry, according to the Doctor, (page 163), is not to be regarded as a condemning sin. It is only a "great mistake."

Now, with all due deference to a divine so learned and so respectable, I humbly conceive it would be almost impossible to form a conception of sentiments so absurd, so contradictory, and so unscriptural. Dr. Price assures us that all disputes about Christian doctrines should be regarded with indifference. Now, if this be so, why have the Arians embroiled the

church of God with their disputes, for upwards of fourteen hundred years? Was not this monstrously absurd? Was it not cruel? If they regard disputes as indifferent, let me beseech them to dispute no longer. As a small sacrifice on the altar of peace, let them burn all their controversial writings.

But again:—If all disputes about doctrines should be regarded with indifference, it would follow, of course, that it is a matter of indifference whether the religious principles we adopt be agreeable to Scripture, reason, and common sense, or whether they be unscriptural, irrational, and nonsensical! Surely this is another monstrous absurdity.

Once more:—How absurd and self-contradictory, first to tell us that all disputes are to be regarded with indifference, and then to assure us that “the better we are informed about the controversies among Christians, and the more correct our judgments, the more respectable we shall be, and also the more useful and valuable members of the Christian Church!” If, by studying the disputes of Christians, we become more respectable, more useful, and more valuable, it is monstrously absurd to tell us that those disputes should be regarded with indifference. As well might the Doctor have told us, at once, that the disputes of Christians *are* indifferent, whilst, at the same time, they are *not* indifferent!

Again:—The liberal sentiments of Arians, the Doctor assures us, enable them to regard, with equal satisfaction and pleasure, their neighbours, friends, and acquaintance, be their modes of worship or their systems of faith what they will. Now, surely this is liberality with a witness. According to these liberal sentiments, the man whose creed shocks common sense—insults reason—and contradicts Scripture, is to be regarded with as much pleasure and satisfaction as he whose faith is consistent with Scripture, reason, and common

sense ! The man who worships idols, stocks, and stones, is to be regarded with as much satisfaction and pleasure, as the worshipper of the one living and true God ? If this be liberality, let the orthodox remain for ever bigots.

Antitrinitarians assure us, that they regard the orthodox with as much pleasure and satisfaction as if their creed identified with their own ; but we do not believe them. The thing is impossible. To walk upon the water, or to fly in the air, is not more contrary to the laws of our constitution, than to regard those who differ from us in sentiment with as much pleasure and satisfaction as those who agree with us. As we are necessarily satisfied and pleased with our own opinions, we must necessarily be pleased with the approval of them. The person who adopts our opinions pays a compliment to our understanding—a compliment with which we are necessarily pleased. On the contrary, the person who differs from us in opinion tacitly censures our understanding—and with such censure we are necessarily *displeased*. In the nature of things, it is impossible that we should regard with as much pleasure and satisfaction those who differ from us in opinion as those who agree with us. Other things being equal,* we must necessarily regard, with the *greatest* pleasure and satisfaction, those whose opinions come nearest to our own, even with regard to the affairs of this life, and much more so with regard to the affairs of religion. This liberality, therefore, which the Arians profess towards their orthodox brethren, and on which they appear to value themselves much, is an *absurd* liberality. It is a liberality which they *do* not, because they *can* not, possess. It is a liberality as inconsistent with the philosophy of the human mind, as it is with the volume of Divine Revelation.

* I say *other things being equal*; for, on account of other amiable qualities, I may feel more attached to the man who differs from me, than to the person whose opinions coincide with my own.

CHAPTER III.

By Dr. Price, and by Socinians and Arians in general, the orthodox are regarded as idolaters. But idolatry with them is only a very trifling sin, if any sin at all! The Doctor assures us that we will not be condemned for it more than for any other great mistake. To this charitable opinion the Rev. Henry Montgomery subscribes. "I believe," says he, "though many of my brethren be in error, that simple error is not a condemning sin." Now, the orthodox believe all sin to be condemning. They make no distinction between venial and mortal sins. The least sin, according to their view, requires the application of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. If the Redeemer and the Holy Ghost be only creatures, or the Redeemer a creature, and the Holy Spirit only an attribute or influence of the Deity, then the orthodox, in worshipping the Son and Holy Ghost, are guilty of idolatry. Dr. Price may denominate this a great mistake, and Mr. Montgomery may represent it as simple error not exposing to condemnation; but the orthodox view it in a very different light. They regard it, not only as a sin, but as one of the *greatest* sins that can possibly be committed. They thus regard it, because it is thus represented in the Sacred Volume. Dr. Price very properly observes, that idolatry is that spiritual fornication for which the Jews were so often punished, and which has given the name of the mother of harlots to the Church of Rome.

As jealousy is the rage of a man, and as nothing provokes him more than the unfaithfulness of his wife—so, in allusion to this, the Lord our God is said to be a jealous God. His glory He will not give to another, nor His praise to graven images. Nothing can possibly

provoke Him more than to set up a rival in His throne. With regard to this sin, He pathetically expostulates :— “ Oh ! do not that abominable thing which I hate ! ” By Divine authority, the crime was made capital among the Jews, and was capitally punished. (Deut. xvii. 2—5.) “ If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing His covenant, and hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded ; and it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel ; then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which hath committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die.”

Again (Deut. xiii. 6), “ If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers ; namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth ; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him ; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him ; but thou shalt surely kill him ; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die.”

If a city fell into idolatry, the orders were peremptory. (Verse 15.) “ Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it

utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof, and shalt burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof, every whit, for the Lord thy God : and it shall be a heap for ever ; it shall not be built again. And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand : that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of His anger."

Against the first act of idolatry committed by the Israelites, in the worship of the golden calf, the awful displeasure of Almighty God was thus manifested (Exod. xxxii. 27):—"Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, consecrate yourselves to-day to the LORD, even every man upon his son and upon his brother ; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day."

By this tremendous sacrifice were the Levites consecrated for the priest's office. By this extraordinary act of self-denied obedience they obtained the promised blessing, as we read in Deut. xxxiii. 8, 9 :—"And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah ; who said unto his father, and to his mother, I have not seen him ; neither did he acknowledge his own brethren, nor knew his own children : for they have observed thy Word, and kept thy covenant."

The sons of Levi are here praised for their zeal and impartiality—zeal for the glory of God, and impartiality in punishing idolatry, even in the persons of their

nearest relatives. Inconceivably great must the guilt of that sin be which provoked the Father of Mercies to enjoin it on His people that, bursting asunder all the tender ties of nature, they should imbrue their hands in the blood of their nearest relatives—their sons and their daughters—the wives of their bosoms, and those friends which were dear to them as their own souls! In the eyes of God, how heinous must that sin be which turned a city into a ruinous heap!—putting to the sword all its inhabitants, without regard to age or sex —“the suckling as well as the man of grey hairs”—involving even the inferior animals in the same indiscriminate and universal carnage! To recount all the threatenings denounced against this sin, and the tremendous judgments with which it was punished, would be to transcribe the greater part of the Old Testament Scriptures.

It may be alleged, however, that we are now living under a more mild dispensation. I grant it. The antediluvian age, the legal economy, and the Christian dispensation, resemble three periods in the life of man. The time before the flood may be compared to the period of infancy—that period in which we are more particularly under parental care and instruction. The Old Testament dispensation may be compared to the time we spend at school. And the Christian economy may be compared to our manhood. This analogical view of the three dispensations is not to be regarded as merely fanciful. It is sanctioned by the authority of Divine Revelation. (Gal. iii. 24, 25)—“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” (Chap. iv. 1—5) —“Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were

children, were in bondage, under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The members of the Jewish Church, as children at school, were under tutors and governors. The discipline to which they were subjected was rigorous. The rod was constantly over their head. "Through fear of death, they were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Temporal blessings, as premiums to children, were promised as rewards of obedience and good conduct. Temporal judgments, as rods of correction, were employed to banish folly from their hearts. From the commencement of the Christian era, Church members are regarded not as servants, but as sons—not as children, but as men, and are treated accordingly. The discipline under which they are placed is more spiritual and manly. When the child becomes a man, the father lays aside the rod of correction. He says, "My son, I will not whip you—you are too old for that; but if you behave improperly I will disinherit you." In like manner now, under the Christian dispensation, our Heavenly Father treats us, not as minors, but as men. He keeps us in awe, not so much by corporal as by spiritual discipline. He operates on our fears, not so much by temporal as by eternal punishments. For rash or unhallowed approaches to the presence of God, men are not punished with instantaneous death, as in the cases of Uzzah, the Bethshemites, Nadab, and Abihu. "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." "The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished." Sins striking against God, and not so immediately affecting the interests of society, are not *less* now than under the law—they are *greater*. Our light being greater, these sins are more aggravated. They are not,

however, to be treated in the same manner. As God himself does not treat them in the same manner, neither should *we*. As He has changed *His* plan of discipline, we should change *ours* also. In settling differences in matters of religion, no sword should be drawn but the sword of the Spirit. Scripture and reason are weapons not carnal; but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of error and heresy. Carnal weapons will never succeed. Those who take the sword shall perish by the sword. On such grounds, and for such reasons, I am totally opposed to every species of persecution; and in such views, I am happy to think, every enlightened mind—whether Socinian or Arian, Arminian or Calvinist—will cordially acquiesce. Had Christians known “what manner of spirit they were of”—had they distinctly adverted to the change of dispensation with regard to discipline, errors and heresies would never have been punished by civil pains and penalties. The punishment of error and heresy by the power of the civil magistrate was certainly very culpable. It was completely at variance with the spirituality, the mildness, and the clemency of the Christian dispensation. But, alas! how weak and inconsistent a creature is man! Avoiding one extreme we have fallen into its opposite. Guarding against persecution, we have abolished Church discipline. Laying aside the civil sword, we have also laid aside ecclesiastical censures. In this we have displayed our weakness and our folly. We foolishly imagine that error, heresy, and idolatry, are not so sinful *now* as they were under the legal dispensation—because they are not punished by such awful visitations. The very reverse, however, is the fact. They are much *more* sinful. Their criminality is certainly much enhanced by the immense superiority of our light and privileges. Accordingly, we find that the punishment *then* threatened was *temporal*; but that which is *now* threatened is

eternal. In the New Testament heresy is represented as *damnable*, and idolatry as exposing to *everlasting misery*. (Gal. v. 19-21)—“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 the 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.” Now, if the orthodox are idolaters and heretics, as Arians affirm that they are, their doom is fixed. “*They shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*”

The same awful sentence is also recorded (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10)—“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor *idolaters*, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” By the beloved disciple, the same dreadful doom is pronounced in still more tremendous language. (Rev. xxi. 8)—“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (Rev. xxii. 15, 16)—“For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.” Besides these threatenings of eternal vengeance, how many and how awful are the temporal judgments denounced upon Antichristian idolaters! They so abound in the Revelation of John, that, to any person accustomed to read his Bible, quotations are unnecessary. I call upon Socinians and Arians to point out any one sin men-

tioned in the whole Sacred Volume, against which so many and so terrible denunciations are levelled, as against the sin of *idolatry*. If there is any other sin so frequently—so awfully threaténed, let them point it out. And yet they regard this sin as no sin at all; or, at the utmost, as a sin of a very trifling nature. Dr. Price, as we have seen, represents it as a matter of indifference, or at most, as a great mistake, for which no risk of condemnation is incurred. Mr. Montgomery does not consider it as a condemning sin; and Mr. Yates, one of the ablest opponents of the Trinity, quoting Bishop Watson, writes thus:—"If different men, in carefully and conscientiously examining the Scriptures, should arrive at different conclusions, even on points of the last importance, we trust that that God who alone knows what every man is capable of, will be merciful to him who is in error. We trust that He will pardon the Unitarian, if he be in an error—because he has fallen into it from the dread of becoming an idolater—of giving that glory to another which he conceives to be due to God alone. If the worshipper of Jesus Christ be in an error, we trust that God will pardon his mistake—because he has fallen into it from a dread of disobeying what he conceives to be revealed concerning the *nature* of the Son, or commanded concerning the honour to be given Him. Both are actuated by the same principle—THE FEAR OF GOD; and, though that principle impels them into different roads, it is our hope and belief that, if they add to their faith charity, they will meet in heaven." Let these charitable sentiments be compared, or rather contrasted with the preceding scriptures, and I will venture to affirm that the north and south poles of the globe we inhabit will not be found more diametrically opposite. The Scriptures assure us that idolaters shall *not* inherit the kingdom of God; but Socinians and Arians assure us—or, at least, they *hope* and *trust*—that they *shall* inherit that heavenly kingdom. The

Scriptures assure us that idolaters shall be condemned—that they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; whilst these divines assure us—or, at least they *hope* and *trust*—that they shall *not* be condemned, but shall meet their brethren in heaven!

How charitable are these same learned divines!—far more charitable than the prophets!—far more charitable than the apostles!—far more charitable than the Father of mercies!—far more charitable than the compassionate Redeemer! “I, Jesus, testify unto you,” says the Saviour of sinners, “that idolaters shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” “Oh!” say the Socinians, “we hope not!” “Oh!” say the Arians, “we trust not! This would be too bad! What! Consign to the lake which burns with fire and brimstone conscientious, well-meaning men!—men impelled into idolatry by the best of all principles—THE FEAR OF GOD! By no means. Those who worship the true God, and those who worship idols, will meet together in heaven. This is what we hope, trust, and believe.”

Such is the charity of Socinians and Arians!—a charity which insults the Redeemer to His face, and gives to the God of truth the “*lie direct!*” In the records of history, can anything be found equal to this? Yes—there is one. God said, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die:” but the serpent said, “Ye shall *not* surely die!” Just so here. God says to idolaters, Ye shall surely perish; but Socinians and Arians say, Ye shall *not* surely perish! And this insult offered to Almighty God, they wish to be regarded as a decisive proof of superior illumination, liberality, and charity! Charity! O! deceitful, ruinous, and destructive charity! To flatter heretics and idolaters with the delusive hopes not only of impunity, but of heavenly glory, is not CHARITY, but CRUELTY.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM the preceding pages, it appears that the error of the orthodox—if they are really in error—is not one of a trifling nature. It is no less than idolatry, one of the most aggravated sins they can possibly commit. If they are really guilty of it, they are in extreme danger. Nor can their fears be possibly allayed by all the assurances of peace and safety given them by Socinian and Arian divines. Such assurances they regard as a poor guarantee against the threatened wrath of Almighty God. If the orthodox are really idolaters, their Arian brethren treat them very cruelly, whilst they calm their fears and lull them asleep, crying—“Peace! peace! when there is no peace.” Were Socinians and Arians possessed of that charity they profess, they would lift up their voice like a trumpet. They would say to their orthodox brethren—“Oh, do not that abominable thing which God’s soul hates! Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry! Oh, flee from the wrath to come!” Were such faithful warnings and exhortations to prove unsuccessful, they should exercise the discipline of the Christian Church. They should refuse to hold with them any communion either civil or ecclesiastical. They should not participate with them in a common meal, much less in the ordinances of the Lord’s Supper. All this, I know, may be regarded as bigotry, but it is the bigotry of the New Testament. It may be considered as extremely illiberal, but it is the illiberality of an inspired apostle. (1 Cor. v. 9–11)—“I wrote to you in an epistle, not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with *idolaters*; for then must you needs

go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an *idolater*, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."* Mr. Montgomery seems to deprecate a separation between the orthodox and Arians in the Synod of Ulster. I submit, however, to his own good sense whether this very Scripture do not render the duty of separation imperative. If Mr. Montgomery's orthodox brethren are idolaters, all communion with them is expressly forbidden—"with such an one no not

* "With such an one no not to eat,"—eat what?—not the Lord's Supper, but a common meal. That this is the meaning is beyond all doubt, for we are not forbidden to eat with the *idolaters of this world*. Now, if we are permitted to eat with the idolaters of this world, what are we permitted to eat? Surely not the Lord's Supper. No person could imagine this. It must be only a common meal. When, therefore, we are forbidden to eat with a *brother* who is an idolater, it is a *common meal* that is prohibited. When an officer in the army behaves dishonourably, his fellow-officers will not eat with him; or when a member of a hunting club behaves dishonourably, the members of that club will refuse to eat with him. So neither should members of the same Christian community eat with that brother who acts dishonourably, and disgraces his profession by any of the crimes specified above. We should have no communion with such characters, "that they may be ashamed." A sense of shame is one of the most powerful principles of our nature. By letting down the discipline of the Church, the influence of this principle is in a great measure lost, and much evil ensues. If we wish a reformation, let us reform our discipline.

The discipline of that section of the Church to which I belong, is generally regarded as too severe. In *this* particular, I humbly conceive it is too lax, and requires revision. In concluding this note, it is proper to observe, that if we should not eat a common meal with a brother who is guilty of any of the crimes specified in the text, much less should we eat the Lord's Supper. If we should decline civil intercourse, much more should we abstain from religious communion. But this prohibition, I humbly conceive, extends no farther than to the members of the same community.

to eat." If Arians hold communion with the orthodox, they do it in defiance of this Divine interdict. If they do not withdraw from those whom they regard as idolaters, they treat with contempt apostolic authority—they trample under foot the Divinely-established discipline of the church.

The preceding reasoning proceeds on the supposition that the Arians are right, and the orthodox wrong. On this supposition the orthodox are idolaters. Their sin is great, their danger is tremendous, and their Arian brethren should immediately withdraw. They should renounce all communion, and break off all intercourse. The duty is imperative—it is enjoined upon them by the highest authority. But let us now suppose that the orthodox are right and the Arians wrong. On this supposition, Arians are idolaters—and not only idolaters, they are also blasphemers—degrading the Creator to the level of a creature. Socinians and Arians flatter themselves that, even if in error, they are not idolaters. It is the fear of idolatry, they assure us, that has induced them to reject the Deity of the Redeemer. But, alas! how weak a creature is man! They have fallen into that very error which it was their object to avoid. If consistent with themselves, they are universally idolaters. This I might prove from the form of baptism which they use, and the apostolic benediction which every Lord's Day they publicly pronounce. The same thing might be proved thus:—If the true God—the God of the Bible—consists of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Socinians and Arians do not worship the true God. They do not, on this supposition, worship the God of the Bible, but another God—an idol of their own imagination. Is not this idolatry? I think it is. But, waiving these topics at present, I maintain that Socinian and Arian principles directly lead to idolatry, and that those who embrace them cannot consistently avoid it.

Those Antitrinitarians who, with the ancient Socinians, worship the Redeemer, are by their own acknowledgment, worshipping the creature, and, of course, are idolaters. Those, on the contrary, who refuse to worship the Redeemer, will be forced to admit, that in the patriarchal age, either the angel of the covenant—the Lord Jesus Christ or a created angel—was, with Divine approbation, the object of religious worship. Under the names of “God Almighty,” and “The angel of the Lord,” or “The angel JEHOVAH,” a certain great personage appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and to other patriarchs. To this great personage altars were built and prayers addressed. See the Scriptures cited below, and my *Refutation of Arianism*, pages 88, 89, 109, 110.

Now, who was the great personage, who, appearing to the patriarchs, was so denominated and worshipped? That it was not God the Father, our opponents admit, for He never *appeared*. He is the King eternal, immortal, *invisible*, whom no man hath seen or *can* see; nor is He ever denominated an angel. That great personage, therefore, who is denominated God Almighty, and THE ANGEL JEHOVAH, must either be the Lord Jesus Christ, or a created angel. If it was the Lord Jesus Christ who was thus denominated and worshipped, then on the Socinian or Arian hypothesis, those patriarchs, in obedience to a Divine command, worshipped a creature, and were guilty of idolatry. If, on the other hand, it was a created angel who was worshipped, was not this idolatry also?—and idolatry, too, sanctioned by the authority of a Divine injunction. There is no escape for Socinians or Arians. If they do not abandon their principles and acknowledge the Redeemer to be God—equal to the Father,* into the vortex of idolatry they

* Genesis xvii. 1; xxxv. 1—11; xlviii. 3. Exodus vi. 2, 3, compared with Genesis xii. 7, 8; xxvi. 24, 25; xxxii. 24—30. Hosea xii. 3—6.

are inevitably drawn; and into this tremendous gulf—horrid to say!—some of them appear determined to plunge. In the *Christian Pioneer* (p. 365), we find Unitarians expressing themselves thus:—"But they are not well acquainted with the Old Testament who do not know that the organs or instruments by whom God appeared to the patriarchs had vows vowed to them, and prayers offered to them, by the name of that Almighty God whose representatives they were."

Here is idolatry with a witness! According to Unitarians, the patriarchs were idolaters! Idolatry was enjoined by God himself! The patriarchs obeyed God when they worshipped the creature! They obeyed God when they worshipped an angel! Into such a gulf are Unitarians plunged—I say *plunged*. They have not fallen into it through inadvertence. They are *plunged* into it by the necessities of their system. Oh, Unitarians! will ye follow your leaders? Will you plunge into the gulf of idolatry? Will you admit the propriety of worshipping a created angel, and refuse to worship the angel of the covenant!—the angel Jehovah! Surely neither reason, nor Revelation, nor common sense, would dictate this. Acknowledge at once the Deity of your Redeemer. Fall down and adore your omnipotent Saviour! In the language of faith and reverent adoration, individually exclaim, "My Lord and my God!"

Those who maintain that Jesus Christ is nothing more than a mere man, were formerly called Socinians. They are now ashamed of that name, and have assumed to themselves appellations more honourable. They sometimes call themselves "*Rational Christians*," as if no Christians were rational but themselves. They now generally call themselves Unitarians, as if they were the only Christians who believe in the unity of God. The reason why they dislike the name "*Socinians*," according to Dr. Drummond, is, that the ancient Socinians prayed to Jesus Christ. This, he assures us,

was the grand error of their creed, that, whilst they believed in the simple humanity of Christ, they worshipped Him as a God. This, he admits, was a great inconsistency. Now, if this was the grand error of the old Socinians, and the great inconsistency of their system—on account of which their descendants are ashamed of the very name—I put it to the good sense and candour of Dr. Drummond—I put it to the good sense and candour of the most learned and talented opponents of the Redeemer's Divinity, whether Socinians or Arians, if I have not convicted them of the very *same* inconsistency, and of a still *greater* error. If it was inconsistent to represent the Redeemer as a creature, and yet to worship Him as a God, is it not the very same inconsistency to worship as a God, one of the *angels*, who are, on all hands, acknowledged to be creatures? If it is a grand error to worship our Redeemer, is it not as grand an error, if not *grand*, to worship a created angel? Modern Socinians and Arians flatter themselves that they are wiser than their forefathers, and that they have discovered their superiority in refusing to worship the Redeemer. In one sense, I admit, they are wiser and more consistent; in another, they are more foolish and inconsistent. They are wiser and more consistent, in refusing to worship that Redeemer whom they regard as nothing more than a creature; but they are more foolish and inconsistent, whilst they profess themselves willing to worship an angel, and, at the same time, protest against the worship of EMMANUEL! They insult Socinus—they offer an unmerited indignity to the memory of their founder. They refuse to be called by his name. Why? Because he was, forsooth, guilty of idolatry in worshipping the Redeemer, and yet they themselves *approve* of idolatry, of that very idolatry for which all classes of Protestants have condemned the Church of Rome—THE WORSHIP OF ANGELS.

My reasons for dwelling on this argument so long are:—1. Because it is, so far as I know, *new*; and, 2. Because I humbly conceive it is quite decisive. If no man *hath* seen, nor *can* see God the Father, as themselves grant, and if a great personage, called GOD ALMIGHTY, and JEHOVAH, was seen and worshipped by the patriarchs—worshipped not with civil, but religious worship—worship enjoined by God himself, then this great personage was either the second person of the Trinity, who, “being over all God blessed for ever,” was entitled to worship, which is the opinion of the orthodox;—or, secondly, this great personage was the Redeemer, but only a creature, a super-angelic being, which is the opinion of Dr. Bruce, and other Arians;—or, thirdly, this great personage was not the Lord Jesus Christ, but only a created being, or angel, which is the opinion of Socinians or Unitarians. Now, it is evident that, on either of the two last hypotheses, the patriarchs were guilty of idolatry, and that their idolatry was enjoined and sanctioned by the Deity himself! Socinians, therefore, if consistent, are idolaters, and Arians are idolaters. Whilst they retain their principles, they can no more avoid the precipice of idolatry than the vessel floating down the rapids of the St. Lawrence could escape the tremendous falls of Niagara.

If the reasoning contained in the preceding pages be correct, (and, if it is not, I should feel obliged to any Socinian or Arian to point out the fallacy), it follows, as a necessary consequence, *that neither the Antitrinitarian should hold communion with the orthodox, nor the orthodox with the Antitrinitarian.* If the Antitrinitarian is right, the orthodox are idolaters; and with such the New Testament, as we have already seen, forbids them to hold any communion. On the other hand, if the orthodox are right, as I firmly believe they are, Antitrinitarians are idolaters, and not only idolaters, but *blasphemers*. Of course, for their

orthodox brethren to hold any communion with *them*, is still *more* absurd and anti-Scriptural. On the whole, I conclude, without any fear of rational contradiction, either from the orthodox or the Antitrinitarians, that between these two classes of professing Christians, there should be no communion. What I said before, with regard to Antitrinitarians, I now say with regard to the orthodox. I say and affirm, with regard to *both*, that neither party can hold communion with the other. They cannot do it consistently with their own principles. They cannot do it consistently with Scripture. They cannot do it, without treating with contempt apostolic authority. They cannot do it but in defiance of a Divine interdict. They cannot do it without trampling under foot the Divinely-established discipline of the Church. For the Antitrinitarians and the orthodox to "*agree to differ*," is quite preposterous. To say:—"We do not worship the same God—we regard each other as idolaters or blasphemers; and yet, to show our liberality, we will still continue to worship together, we will hold communion with each other." This is monstrously absurd. What communion hath the temple of God with idols? To sit down at the same holy table of the Lord with those whom we regard as blasphemers or idolaters, is surely a great absurdity; nor is it less absurd to join with them in *discipline*. What! join in acts of discipline with blasphemers or idolaters! Sit in council with blasphemers or idolaters! Join, as a Presbytery, in laying hands on blasphemers or idolaters! Ordain to the work of the holy ministry blasphemers or idolaters! Could any thing be more inconsistent, absurd, or impious? Surely not.

CHAPTER V.

Now, if I have succeeded in proving the necessity of a separation between the Antitrinitarians and the orthodox, as I humbly presume I have; the necessity of creeds, confessions, or "tests of orthodoxy," as they are sometimes called, must be quite apparent; for, without these, it is altogether impossible to effect a separation. Let those who think otherwise make the attempt, and then they will be convinced of their error. "Oh!" says the Socinian, "the Bible is my creed." "Oh!" says the Arian, "the Bible is my creed." "Oh!" says the orthodox opposer of creeds and confessions, "the Bible is my creed. I acknowledge no creed but the Bible. Do you imagine that any human creed can be a more effectual barrier against error and heresy than the Word of God?" Now all those who use such language—and the language, I acknowledge, is extremely specious, plausible, and imposing—all those who use such language, I will be bold to say, are using words without any definite meaning. The unmeaning absurdity of such language may be easily perceived by one single question. How can the Bible exclude from communion those who profess to believe in the Bible? The Bible is the rule, the only *infallible* rule of faith, but, like every other rule, it must be *applied*. If it is not applied, it is useless; and it cannot be applied without a creed. Let those who think otherwise make the experiment. Suppose three candidates, A, B, and C, apply to an orthodox minister for admission to Church communion. The reverend divine catechises them thus:—What is your creed?—The Bible. What does the Bible teach

concerning Jesus Christ? A replies:—It teaches that He is an incarnate angel. B replies:—It teaches that He is a mere man. C replies:—It teaches that He is God, equal to the Father. On these answers A and B are rejected. The minister assures them that he cannot admit them, because they do not believe Jesus Christ to be equal to the Father. “That,” say they, “is *your* creed, but it is not *ours*. The Bible is our creed. You are rejecting us, not because we do not believe the *Bible*, but because we do not believe your *view* of it; or, in other words, because we will not subscribe *your* creed.” I entreat the opponents of creeds to pause. I beseech them not to suffer themselves to be deceived by words without meaning. If a *separation* is necessary, a *creed* is necessary. An effect without a cause is not more absurd, than separation without a creed.

The gross absurdities into which those fall who declaim against creeds, and pretend to adopt the Bible as their creed, are truly astonishing. Though they believe a thousand contradictions, still they will tell you that they believe the Bible. Dr. Drummond assures us that Unitarians believe in the revealed will of God; and, with regard to Jesus Christ, that “they believe whatsoever is written of Him in the Inspired Volume.” Now, all this is extremely plausible, and well calculated to deceive the simple. The deception, however, may be detected thus:—Do Unitarians *understand* whatsoever is written of Jesus Christ in the Inspired Volume? If they say, “We do,” I might suitably address them, in the language of Job—“Doubtless ye are the men, and wisdom will die with you.” But they will not pretend it. No intelligent Socinian will pretend—no intelligent Arian will pretend, that they understand whatsoever is written of the Redeemer in the Inspired Volume. Were any so weak as to pretend it, one single circumstance would sufficiently expose the vanity and

folly of such a pretension. The circumstance to which I allude is, the various and contradictory opinions which Unitarians entertain relative to our blessed Redeemer. Some believe that He is a super-angelic being; and others that He is only a mere man—a fallible being like ourselves. Some maintain that, in consequence of the shedding of His blood, He has obtained the power of pardoning the penitent; others deny it. Some believe that He created all things; others, that He only created this earth, or, at farthest, the solar system; whilst multitudes contend that He created nothing at all. These are only a very small specimen of the various, conflicting, and contradictory opinions of Unitarians, relative to the person and offices of Christ. Now, if Unitarians really understand all that is written of Jesus Christ in the Inspired Volume, their creed on that subject would be simple and uniform. It would not contain so many contradictions. The writings of the Inspired Volume do not contradict themselves, but Unitarians do; and, therefore, we infer that Unitarians do not *understand* all that is written of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Inspired Volume. But if they do not *understand* all that is written of the Redeemer, how can they *believe* all that is written of Him? One favourite maxim of Unitarians is—“*To believe nothing which they do not understand;*” but here they have completely abandoned that maxim. They do not *understand* all that is written of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Inspired Volume, and yet they *believe* all that is written of Him! They believe what they do not understand! No, Dr. Drummond! You are deceiving yourself, and you are deceiving your friends. You “understand neither what you say, nor whereof you affirm.” Neither Dr. Drummond, nor any other Unitarian Doctor in the world, either *understands* or *believes* all that is written of the Redeemer in the Inspired Volume.*

* To excite the “*odium theologicum*,” Dr. Drummond classes the orthodox with the Papists, speaks contemptuously of

The unmeaning cry, "*The Bible is our creed*," has opened the floodgates of error and heresy. The pious mind is quite delighted to find so much respect paid to the Scriptures. Under such a noble confession of faith, nothing erroneous is ever suspected. It operates as a charm—the mind is intoxicated—the shout becomes

"the disciples of Calvin and the Pope;" represents them as influenced by the same spirit which actuated the ancient Pharisees, and declares that "orthodoxy, like Popery, deems itself infallible." Now, that it is not orthodoxy, but Antitrinitarianism, that deems itself infallible, I shall prove out of the Doctor's own mouth, and out of the mouth of Dr. Bruce. Though Dr. Drummond, in common with all Antitrinitarians, is a great enemy to creeds, yet, inconsistently enough, he gives us an abridgement of the Unitarian creed—not in the language of Scripture, but in his own. This creed, he assures us, embraces whatever is written of Jesus Christ in the Sacred Volume. Now, if whatever is written of Jesus Christ in the Sacred Volume is infallible, the Unitarian creed must be infallible also. The creed, therefore, of the Unitarians, and not that of the orthodox, claims the attribute of infallibility. Dr. Bruce makes a similar claim in favour of his own volume of sermons. His opinion of that volume he expresses thus:—"*It is consistent only with itself and the gospels.*" Now, if the Doctor's volume of sermons is consistent with the gospels, it must be true; for nothing but what is true is consistent with the gospels; and if it is true, it must be infallible, for truth is infallible. The Doctor, however, denies this attribute to every other book but his own. No book is consistent with the gospels but the Doctor's; for, if any other book were consistent with the gospels, that book and the Doctor's, being consistent with the same, would be consistent with one another; but the Doctor's book is not consistent with any other book—it is consistent only with *itself* and the gospels! The Doctor's book, being the only book consistent with the gospels, is, of course, the only infallible book in the world! Such is the estimate which Dr. Bruce has formed of his own volume of controversial sermons. Now, if this estimate be correct, no person can question the validity of his claims to the title of honour given him by Dr. Drummond—"THE SAGE OF BELFAST!" Unitarians denominate our blessed Redeemer "*THE SAGE OF NAZARETH*," and Dr. Bruce "*THE SAGE OF BELFAST!*" Oh, Unitarians! will ye never cease to exalt yourselves, and to degrade your Redeemer?

louder—"THE BIBLE IS OUR CREED!" It is truly astonishing to what ridiculous extravagances the human mind may be carried, when under the influence of this spiritual phrenzy. I have just now before me "A Sermon preached in the Meeting-house of the Second Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast, on Sunday, the 26th of August, 1827, and published at the request of several who heard it. By Hugh Hutton, M.A., Minister of the Old Meeting-house, Birmingham." The motto is taken from Chillingworth, and commences thus:—"Let all men believe the Scripture, and that only." Was ever such a motto prefixed to a sermon? Was not the preacher's mind strangely bewildered, when he did not perceive that, if all men believe the Scripture, and the Scripture only, no man will believe his sermon; for his sermon is not Scripture. Mr. Hutton preaches a sermon, and publishes that sermon, and gravely tells the hearers of the sermon and the readers of the sermon—what does he tell them? Why, he tells them *that they should not believe it*. He tells the world never to believe *one* of his sermons! To such a degree of absurdity has the popular and delusive maxim, "*The Bible is my creed*," driven this eloquent Unitarian divine!

Many orthodox divines, as well as Unitarians, are carried away by the fascinating influence of the same unmeaning maxim. Among these divines, it is with great reluctance that I am obliged to rank the pious, learned, and successful defender of "the old doctrine of faith"—the Rev. James Carlile, of Dublin. In his sermon, preached before the General Synod of Ulster, in 1826, he boasts of the encouragement which his church gives to the free and public expression of various opinions. To such a liberty he would set no bounds. He encourages his brethren in adhering to the experiment they have so auspiciously commenced, by allowing full latitude to the expression of opinion. "I doubt

not," says he, "that if the pure, unalloyed Word of God were placed as freely before the understandings of men as the high vault of heaven is placed before their eyes, and they were left as much liberty to form and to express their opinions of the system of religion revealed in it, as they are to form and express their opinions of the mechanical system indicated by the motions of the heavenly bodies, they would soon arrive at as much uniformity of sentiment respecting religion, as they have already attained respecting astronomy." Such is the experiment which Mr. Carlile recommends. He tells us that he conceives it a "*noble* experiment"—a "*most Scriptural* experiment"—and he has no doubt at all of its success. I must confess, however, that I have great doubts. I must acknowledge I have no faith in the experiment at all. I am quite certain it would not succeed. And why? Because it is founded upon a false hypothesis. It is based upon the Socinian and Arian hypothesis—that *man is not, by nature, a depraved being*. Now, this hypothesis being false—being contrary both to Scripture and experience, as Mr. Carlile will himself acknowledge—the experiment founded upon it must, of necessity, fail. Man, though depraved, is still a noble creature, "*majestic, though in ruins*." The efforts of his genius, when directed to studies purely philosophical, are truly astonishing. In these investigations his innate depravity is not called into exercise. It does not blind his understanding, nor warp his judgment, as it does in the investigation of religious truth. It is *here* the carnal mind displays its enmity against God and His law. It is not with regard to astronomy or philosophy, but with regard to *morals* and *religion*, that men hate the light, and love darkness rather than light. So long, therefore, as the depravity of the human mind continues to operate, and Satan, the god of this world, continues to assist its operations by "*blinding the minds of those that believe not, lest the*

light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"—so long as these causes continue to operate, Mr. Carlile's experiment can never succeed. It is vain to anticipate the same uniformity of opinion in matters of religion, as in those of astronomy.

Mr. Carlile alleges that his noble experiment has never been tried; but he is mistaken. It was tried by the Church of Pergamos. It was also tried by the Church of Thyatira. These churches, even in the apostolic age, made the experiment. In perfect accordance with Mr. Carlile's views, they "set opinion free as the winds." They used no creed but the Bible. They brought errors to the surface, by holding out every encouragement to the free expression of them. But, alas! the experiment did not succeed. Such "judicious treatment," as Mr. Carlile calls it, did not effect the cure. On the contrary, it introduced the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. It introduced the abominable doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, and encouraged Jezebel to teach and seduce the servants of God to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. For making so foolish an experiment these churches were severely reprimanded, and awfully threatened. The Redeemer declared that He would fight against them with the sword of His mouth, and kill their children with death.

The Apostle Paul was altogether ignorant of Mr. Carlile's experiment. He besought Timothy to abide still at Ephesus. For what purpose? Was it to set opinion free as the wind? Was it to encourage the erroneous to express their opinions freely? No. It was "to charge some that they should teach no other doctrine." The Apostle John was quite ignorant of Mr. Carlile's experiment. So far from encouraging the

erroneous to express their errors with freedom, he charged the elect lady neither to receive them into her house, nor to bid them God speed. That our Lord and his apostles acted on very different principles from those recommended by Mr. Carlile, is evident from this—that, in the apostolic age, erroneous teachers “*crept in unawares,*” and “*privily*” introduced their damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them. Had Mr. Carlile’s plan been then in operation—had the erroneous been encouraged to express their errors openly—what necessity to “*creep in unawares?*” What necessity to introduce their heresies “*privily?*” Is not this one circumstance a decisive proof, that Mr. Carlile’s experiment is as contrary to Scripture as it is to reason and sound philosophy?

I trust Mr. Carlile will pause—that he will “lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker in other men’s sins”—that he will see the impropriety of holding communion with them that worship another God—that degrade the Redeemer—that vilify His blood—that subvert the foundation of the Christian system, and poison, by their errors, the souls of men. I praise him for advocating freedom of opinion. I praise him for condemning all compulsory measures; but, when he would crowd into the same church the teachers of every species of doctrine—the most blasphemous, idolatrous, impious, demoralizing, and abominable, not excepted—“do I praise him in this?—I praise him not.”

With regard to an astronomical creed, which Mr. Carlile conceives would do so much injury by producing a great diversity of opinion, I have only to observe that such a creed virtually exists. Were an astronomical professor, in the Belfast Academical Institution, to employ the time of his students in pouring contempt on the Newtonian system of astronomy, and in fruitless attempts to revive the old exploded systems of Ptolemy

and of Descartes, what would be the consequence? Would he not be immediately superseded?—would he not be obliged to resign his situation with all its emoluments? Undoubtedly he would. Is there not, therefore, a *virtual*, an *implied*, or *understood* astronomical creed? Surely there is—and yet no such effects are produced as Mr. Carlile anticipates. Would Messrs. Carlile and Montgomery—for, however opposite their sentiments on *other* points, in *this* they coincide—would these gentlemen say that the expulsion of this supposed professor would be unjust?—would they consider it an infringement of the right of private judgment?—would they regard it as persecution?—would they maintain that the professor had a right to express his opinions openly to his students, without any risk of being injured in his pecuniary interests? Were such a professor on his trial before the Boards of the Belfast Institution, would Mr. Montgomery plead for his continuance with the same arguments he uses in advocating the cause of Arian ministers? Surely not. Were he to appeal to the feelings of the proprietors, managers, and visitors, as he did to the feelings of the Synod of Ulster—were he to bring tears from their eyes by exhibiting a picture of the wretchedness entailed on the wife and family of the discarded professor—what reply would be made to such a pathetic heart-rending appeal? Would it not be this—“Mr. Montgomery, the case you describe is truly deplorable. The evil, however, you have greatly exaggerated. There is no probability that a man of learning and talents, whilst health remains, will ever be reduced to such extreme wretchedness. Though excluded from this college, there are many other avenues to emolument—many other ways and means by which his family may be decently supported. But even were it otherwise—were the scene to occur which you have described—still we cannot sacrifice a public institution to the interest of any individual family.

Open a subscription list for the relief of the family, and place your own name at the head of it. To such a measure we have no objection. We will assist and support you in it. But we will not suffer the minds of our youth to be perverted by an antiquated, spurious, and false philosophy."

Now, I would ask—Are the doctrines of *religion* less important than those of *astronomy*? Are the principles taught by Jesus Christ of less consequence than those taught by Sir Isaac Newton? Is the Synod of Ulster less bound to defend the fundamental doctrines of the Christian system, than the managers and visiters of the Academical Institution are bound to defend Newton's philosophy? Will the person who reviles Newton's philosophy be turned out of a professor's chair, whilst the man who reviles the person and offices, blood and righteousness, of the Redeemer, is recognised as a minister of Jesus Christ, fully entitled to all the emoluments of the ministerial office? Is the Synod of Ulster to use less precaution to prevent the poisoning of the souls of a whole province, than the managers and visiters of the Academical Institution to prevent the perversion of the astronomical views of a few students at College? How absurd the supposition!

Mr. Montgomery makes a lamentable outcry about the inconvenience to which the families of some Arian ministers might be exposed, in consequence of the avowal of their sentiments. But how could the avowal of their sentiments expose them to inconvenience? It could only be in two ways—either by sinking them in the eyes of their people, or by cutting them off from the communion of the Synod. But the open avowal of their sentiments could not sink them in the eyes of their people, unless they had been previously *deceiving* their people, by passing themselves for orthodox, when, in reality, they were Arians. Their public profession, so far from sinking, would raise them in the eyes of

their people. Their people, if not previously deceived, would be pleased and gratified by such a candid and open avowal. Nor could Arian ministers be injured by being cut off from the Synod. The Antrim Presbytery would hail their approach, and receive them with open arms. If they have not previously worn a rough garment to deceive, their people would rally round them—their stipend would be paid as usual—and their royal bounty continued. Where then is the inconvenience to which they would be reduced? I cannot perceive it. The only men who could possibly suffer are men who deserve to suffer—*vile hypocrites and impostors*—men who have foisted themselves into the priest's office for a morsel of bread—concealing their sentiments and deceiving their people.

To find Mr. Montgomery pleading for such characters, astonishes me much. He is horribly afraid of making men hypocrites, and yet he pleads the cause of hypocrisy. He begs that hypocrites may be allowed to go on in their hypocrisy without detection. He entreats that the mask may not be torn from them by any public test or declaration of their faith. Arians, who tamper with their conscience by making an orthodox profession, do not thereby *become* hypocrites—they were hypocrites *before*. It is only a continuation of their old trade of dissimulation and hypocrisy. The proposal of a public declaration of faith may *detect* hypocrites, as Mr. Montgomery himself grants—for some, he admits, will refuse the test, and these, of course, will be detected—but it cannot possibly *make* a hypocrite. His apprehensions on this quarter are totally groundless. Nor can the proposal of a public declaration make any man a martyr, unless he was previously a hypocrite, and hypocrites are surely a curious species of martyrs. I may also add, that when a man is turned out of a situation which he held by deception, the loss he sustains is an odd kind of martyrdom. For a minister

to foist himself into a congregation by concealing his sentiments, and to retain his situation by a continued and studied concealment of his views, is a *disgraceful piece of priestcraft and imposture*. To oblige the people to submit to such treatment, is *cruel and tyrannical*. It is first to blindfold, and then to rob them. Those ministers who are detected, and, in consequence, discarded, whatever pity Mr. Montgomery may attempt to excite in their favour, are not to be regarded as *martyrs*, but as *swindlers*. Rouse from your slumbers, ye drowsy Presbyterians! Submit no longer to such imposition. You hear much boasting of the right of private judgment. *Assert that right—exercise that right*. You have a right to call upon your ministers for a public declaration of their principles, and, if they are honest men, they will not refuse it. Neither *virtue* nor *truth* is afraid of the light. It is *vice* and *error* that affect concealment. Suffer not yourselves to be gulled by a class of men who will take your money, and afterwards boast that you never knew their sentiments. You have a *right* to know their sentiments, and not only to *know* them, but to *judge* of them too. Try them by the Word of God. Weigh them in the balance of the sanctuary, and if they be found wanting, write "*Tekel*" upon them. "Believe not every spirit; but try the spirits. To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." You are not *Roman Catholics*—you are *Presbyterians*. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Suffer not yourselves to be led blindfold—for "if the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch." Mr. Montgomery appeals to your feelings in behalf of the wives and children of Arian ministers—and it is *right* you should feel for them. If you found them in want it would be your duty to relieve them. But you should

feel more for your own immortal souls. The loss of one soul poisoned by error could not be counterbalanced by the temporal prosperity of all the wives and children of the Synod of Ulster. What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?—or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul!

According to Mr. Montgomery's representation, the Arian ministers in the Synod of Ulster are generally considered a very unprincipled class of men. Mr. Montgomery himself seems to have no confidence in their integrity. He thinks they would, in general, tamper with their consciences, by subscribing what they do not believe. And the temptation, as we have already seen, is very small indeed. To compare it with the temptation by which Cranmer fell, is truly ridiculous. What! The loss of a situation compared to the loss of life! The loss of a few pounds per annum compared to burning alive!* There is no parallel here. Ah, Mr. Montgomery! Are Arians sunk to such a state of degeneracy? Where is the stern, unbending integrity of your Presbyterian ancestors? "How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed!"

Two reasons are advanced by the Rev. H. Montgomery for his determined opposition to all creeds, confessions, or tests of orthodoxy:—1. Perfect uniformity of opinion is impracticable. 2. In the churches of England and Scotland, confessions have not produced uniformity.

1. He asserts that uniformity is impracticable, and doubts whether it be really *desirable*. Now, if Mr. Montgomery could prove that uniformity of opinion is

* That Messrs. Montgomery and Porter—the two leading Arians in the Synod of Ulster—in consequence of their open avowal of their sentiments, have been subjected to a cruel persecution, cannot be denied. Each of them has been forced to receive a very costly service of plate. This, I admit, was a very grievous affliction. I hope they will submit to it with becoming resignation. For their consolation, I can assure them, that their orthodox brethren sympathise so sincerely, that they would willingly bear a part of their calamity.

not desirable, he might also prove that *knowledge* is not desirable, and that *truth* is not desirable. Knowledge banishes error as light expels darkness. As knowledge advances, error vanishes, and truth shines. As we progress in knowledge, we approach to uniformity; and when we arrive at perfect knowledge, uniformity of opinion will be perfect also. To say, therefore, that perfect uniformity of opinion is not desirable, is as absurd as to say that *perfect knowledge* is not desirable, and that *truth* is not desirable. In perfect unison with Antitrinitarian views, the sentiment is equally opposed to the progress of knowledge, and the investigation of truth. It is nearly allied to the old exploded maxim, *that ignorance is the mother of devotion*. It would not be a whit more absurd to say that *perfect holiness* is not desirable, because in this life it cannot be attained, than it would be to affirm that perfect uniformity of opinion is not desirable, because impracticable in our present state. The one sentiment is as hostile to *truth* as the other is to *holiness*.

The Scriptures speak a very different language. (1 Cor. i. 10), "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." Is not the end of the Gospel ministry to bring us all to "*the unity of the faith of the Son of God*, that we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive?" It is very true that two of us can scarcely agree with regard to the ordinary occurrences of life. It may also be true, that there are not two Christians in the world in whose religious opinions there are not slight shades of difference. But it is quite illogical to infer from this, with Mr. Montgomery, that *no* differences of opinion, *however great*, should interrupt communion, or exclude from it.

We grant that *slight* differences in religious views are not inconsistent with church communion, and do not warrant separation. But we deny that the same can be affirmed of the *greatest* differences. *All ministers sin, and therefore no minister should be censured for any sin, however great*, is not a more absurd inference than to say—"All ministers differ. You could not point out two that agree; and, therefore, no minister should be excluded from ministerial or Christian communion on account of the *greatest* difference of opinion." In both cases the conclusion is absurd; and, as in the latter we have seen, quite repugnant to the Sacred Volume. Scripture and reason unite in condemning the latitudinarian communion so ingeniously advocated by the Rev. H. Montgomery.

2. Mr. Montgomery opposes creeds and confessions on the ground of their supposed inadequacy to secure the desired uniformity. He argues from matter of fact, and mentions the Churches of England and Scotland. But why did he overlook the Church of the Secession, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church? The reason is obvious. These two communities prove the reverse of what he was labouring to establish. They prove the efficacy of creeds and confessions in securing uniformity of faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith has, in these two churches, proved an effectual bar to the introduction of Socinian and Arian doctrines. In so far, at least, as these doctrines are concerned, the Westminster Confession has preserved uniformity. What confessions *have* done, they *can* do. They *have* excluded errors; and therefore, they *can* exclude errors. If they have not been so successful in excluding errors from the Churches of England and Scotland as from the Church of the Secession, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the blame is not to be attributed to *them*, but to those pecuniary inducements by which their influence is paralyzed, and their efficacy counteracted; or to the laxity of that discipline which prevents their being applied.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM the sentiments quoted in the preceding pages, it appears that the systems of Socinians and Arians are liable to two great objections:—1. They are inimical to the investigation of truth. 2. They are unfriendly to the practice of virtue.

1. The sentiments of Antitrinitarians are inimical to the investigation of truth. This appears from their views of error. Error is regarded by them either as no evil at all, or as a very trifling one. Mr. Harris, as we have already observed, assures us that Unitarians think the worse of no man on account of his opinions. No man, therefore, is made worse by his errors; for, if he is made worse, Unitarians would certainly *think* him worse. But if no man is made worse by error, error is no evil. Unitarians, therefore, if we believe Mr. Harris—and surely he would not calumniate his own sect—Unitarians regard error as no evil at all. Dr. Price, as we have seen, regards all matters of dispute among Christians as matters of indifference. Of course, *error* must be a matter of indifference. It cannot be an *evil*, for, were it an evil, religious disputes could not be indifferent. Dr. Bruce believes, as we have shown in our *Refutation of Arianism*, that error may not only be *innocent*, but “**RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY!**”

Some Antitrinitarians, agreeing with Deists and infidels, maintain that no man is accountable for his belief. Absurdly confounding the laws of mind with those of matter, and what is natural with what is moral, they conclude that, as we cannot see black to be white, nor white to be black, but must see colours as we

actually *do* see them ; so, in like manner, we *must* believe as we actually *do* believe, and cannot possibly believe otherwise. On this ground, they infer that we are not at all accountable for our belief. I suppose, however, they only mean that *themselves* are not accountable ; for they call the orthodox to a strict account, and condemn them without mercy, for the supposed absurdity and uncharitableness of their belief.

Some Unitarians are so charitable as to believe that the greatest of errors proceed from the purest of principles ; that blasphemy and idolatry, as we have already seen, proceed from the best of all causes, "THE FEAR OF GOD!" Mr. Yates maintains that the same Divine cause, "*the fear of God,*" produces quite different and opposite effects ; that it drives mankind into quite different and opposite roads ; that it drives one part into the path of truth, and another into the path of error ; that it influences one part to worship the living and true God, and drives the other away from God, and plunges them into the gulf of idolatry. Quoting Bishop Watson, he assures us that Trinitarians and Antitrinitarians, in coming to quite different and opposite conclusions, are both influenced by the same principle, "THE FEAR OF GOD." Such sentiments as these, however high the authority by which they are sanctioned, I have no hesitation in saying, are quite absurd, and diametrically opposed to the doctrine of Scripture. What ! The fear of God ; the Divine principle of reverential and filial fear which always flows from a principle of love ; will this Divine principle drive men away from God ? Will it drive them into idolatry and blasphemy ? By no means. On the contrary, it is the very best security against apostacy. (Jer. xxxii. 40) :—"But I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Unitarians tell us that the fear of God impels men to depart from Him, whilst the Deity Himself assures us that this Divine principle prevents their

departure. Whether we should believe Unitarians rather than God, let all the readers of this essay judge.

The orthodox, and particularly Calvinists, view error in a very different light. They do not regard it as a *trifling evil*, much less do they view it as *innocent*, and, least of all, do they consider it as righteous and holy. They do not trace error, idolatry, and blasphemy, to any Divine or virtuous principle. Quite the reverse. They trace them up to the depravity of human nature—to the enmity of the carnal mind against God and His law, to “an evil heart of unbelief,” disposing us to depart from the living God. Unregenerate men “do not like to retain God in their knowledge; “they say to the Almighty, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; they do not receive the truth in the love of it; they hate the light, and love darkness rather than light.” These are the true sources of men’s errors, idolatry and blasphemy—sources very different from that so charitably assigned by Mr. Yates. In a word, error is regarded as an infinitely greater evil by the orthodox than by the Unitarians. Now, if it is regarded as a greater evil, will it not, of course, be more carefully avoided? And if the orthodox are more careful to avoid error, is there not every probability that they will be more successful? Are not these the dictates of common sense? Reasoning, therefore, from the cause to the effect, there is the strongest antecedent probability that the principles of the orthodox are true, and that those of Antitrinitarians are erroneous. It would be a very strange anomaly indeed, if those who regard error as the smallest evil, if any evil at all, should, nevertheless, be most careful to avoid it, and most successful in their endeavours to escape it. This, I say, would be a singular phenomenon. It would be contrary to the whole analogy of nature. Again, if error by the orthodox is regarded as a greater evil, truth, of course, which is its opposite, must be regarded as a greater good

—as a more precious jewel. Now, if truth is regarded by the orthodox as more valuable, will it not be more eagerly pursued? As the orthodox value truth *more*, will not their investigations be pursued with *greater ardour*? Will they not be more disposed to “cry after knowledge, and to lift up their voice for understanding, to seek her as silver, and to search for her as for hidden treasures?” And if more ardent in their pursuit, is there not every probability that they will be more *successful*? Is that system, I ask, likely to be true, which depreciates truth? Is that system likely to be true, which gives least encouragement to the investigation of truth? Surely not. On the contrary, is there not every probability that that system is the true one, which sets the highest value on truth—which regards truth as an inestimable jewel?

The preceding observations make it evident, I presume, and that even to demonstration, that Antitrinitarian principles are unfavourable to the investigation of truth. The correctness of the reasoning might be confirmed, were confirmation necessary, by an appeal to facts. Do Socinians or Arians make religious principles the object of their study as much as the orthodox do? They do not. They are neither as well acquainted with the Bible, nor with books of religious controversy. For the truth of this statement, I appeal to a gentleman whose acuteness of intellect, whose knowledge both of men and of principles, and whose acknowledged liberality give weight to his evidence. I appeal to the examination of John Barnett, Esq., before the Commissioners of Education Inquiry—“We understand your answer to imply that the higher classes are more generally Arians?—They are. Can you account for that in any manner?—It is invidious for any person to say that the higher classes did not inquire as much for themselves as the lower; but my own opinion is, that there are very respectable men in the town of Belfast, and elsewhere,

who know very little about the differences in religion. But who are Arians nevertheless?—Yes, I think they read the Scriptures too little, and sceptical works too much. You, being a Calvinist, consider that inquiry would lead to Calvinism?—Yes, Biblical reading and religious inquiry. And, therefore, you conclude that these persons are Arians, without making inquiry for themselves?—Yes, they take the word of the clergyman they hear; the Arian clergymen are not in the habit of preaching upon doctrinal points; they deliver moral essays, which are very good so far.” That among the Arians, and also Socinians, there are honourable exceptions, I have no doubt. But the number devoted to Biblical reading and religious inquiry is comparatively small. Why should they read? or why should they study? Their ministers do not encourage them. It is only a small portion of the Bible they warmly recommend. And with regard to the reading of controversial works, they warn them against it. To such instructions their hearers are, alas! but too attentive. They are well adapted to the taste and convenience of mercantile men in general, and of the majority of the higher classes of society; they are very glad to learn from their teachers, that modes of faith are of little consequence; that upon their sincerity, and not upon their creed, their acceptance depends. It is very convenient for such men to avoid the drudgery of Bible-reading and religious inquiry. On their orthodox neighbours, whose religious information is incomparably superior to their own, they look down with contempt. They regard them as fanatics, enthusiasts, and bigots. Their religious inquiries, and their religious observances, they deride as the effects of a monkish superstition. They flatter themselves that they are a century before them. They are liberal, enlightened, and charitable. I would now submit, and earnestly recommend, to the consideration of Socinians and Arians, the five following questions:—

1. If Unitarians regard error as a smaller evil than the orthodox do, will they not be less careful to avoid it?

2. If less careful to avoid the gulf of error, will they not be more likely to fall into it?

3. If they regard error as a smaller evil, must they not also regard truth as a smaller good?

4. If they regard truth as less precious, or a smaller good, will they not be less ardent in their pursuit of it?

5. If less ardent in their pursuit of truth, are they not less likely to obtain it?

Socinians and Arians may, in their turn, ask me this question:—"Are not your ideas of error more uncharitable than ours; for you think that men may be condemned for their errors, but we do not? To this question I answer—No. Those ideas of error are most charitable that have the greatest tendency to preserve the minds of men from its influence. And such, undoubtedly, are the ideas of the orthodox. The orthodox say, "Error is a tremendous precipice, and those who fall over it are in danger of being dashed to pieces." Socinians and Arians say, "There is very little danger, if any at all." Which of these declarations, I ask, is more likely to keep men back from the precipice—which is more likely to preserve men from error? Is it not the declaration of the orthodox? and, if so, is it not, of the two, the more *charitable* declaration? I conclude, therefore, that the doctrine of the orthodox, relative to error, is more charitable than that of Socinians or Arians. I may also affirm that it is much more agreeable to the analogy of nature.

The Socinian and Arian systems are not only unfriendly to the investigation of truth; they are also unfavourable to the practice of virtue, and the cultivation of holiness. This is, indeed, a heavy charge. It strikes at the very vitals of the Socinian and Arian systems. If it can be substantiated—if it can be proved—it follows, of course, that those systems are false. No

system unfavourable to virtue and holiness, Antitrinitarians themselves being judges, can possibly be true. Now for the proof:—Socinians and Arians do not consider sin to be so great an evil as the orthodox do. *Comparatively*, they regard it as no evil at all. They regard it only as *finite*, whilst the orthodox maintain it to be *infinite*. Now, between finite and infinite there is no proportion. If, therefore, Socinians and Arians regard sin as an infinitely less evil, will they not *hate* it less?—and, if they hate it less, will they not be less careful to avoid it?—and if they are less careful to avoid sin, will they not be less careful to practice its opposites?—will they not be less virtuous and holy? Is it not evident, therefore, even to demonstration, that the Socinian or Arian creed is less favourable to virtue and holiness than that of the orthodox.

Again, if the orthodox view sin as an infinitely greater evil, they must, consequently, regard the pardon of it as an infinitely greater blessing. As, therefore, they conceive that infinitely more has been forgiven them, will they not be disposed to *love* more? Our Saviour assures us that they will—that those to whom much is forgiven will love *much*, and that those to whom little is forgiven will love but *little*. Is it not, therefore, reasonable to conclude that Socinians and Arians will love but little, as they conceive that comparatively little or nothing has been forgiven them? Now, if they have little love, they can have little virtue or holiness, for all true virtue and holiness may be resolved into love. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Is it not evident again, even to a demonstration, that the systems of Socinians and Arians are unfavourable to virtue and holiness?

Once more, Socinian and Arian principles are less friendly to virtue and holiness than the orthodox system, because they do not address themselves in the same manner to the fears of men. Our Maker, who knows our frames, addresses Himself not only to our

hopes, but also to our fears. He addresses us not only by the promises of the Gospel, but also by the threatenings of the law. Do Socinians and Arians imitate their Maker in this? Are their ministers as careful to denounce the threatenings, as they are to exhibit the promises of Divine revelation? They tell their hearers that the Deity is a God of love, that He is a God of mercy, and that He is a long-suffering, tender, affectionate Father—and all this is right. The orthodox do the same. But are they as careful to tell them that He is a God of holiness, justice, and truth?—that “He hates all the workers of iniquity”—“abhors the bloody and deceitful man”—“is angry with the wicked every day,” and that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God?” Are they careful to tell their hearers that “our God is a consuming fire?”—that “He will rain upon sinners snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest?—that He will rend the caul of their liver?—that He will make His arrows drunk with their blood?—that His sword shall devour their flesh, and avenge the quarrel of his covenant?” Do they faithfully declare that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men?—that He will come with fire, and with His chariots, as a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebukes with flames of fire?” Do they honestly tell their hearers that “Tophet is ordained of old; that the pile thereof is fire and much wood; and that the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it?—that all the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God?—that they shall be cast into a lake which burns with fire and brimstone?—that they shall be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched?” Are they careful to warn hypocrites that “fearfulness shall

surprise them,"—that they will be obliged to exclaim, "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"—that, persisting in their hypocrisy, they cannot escape "the damnation of hell?" Do they faithfully warn Gospel despisers that it is impossible to escape, if they neglect so great a salvation?—that, if those who despised Moses' law died without mercy, inexpressibly more dreadful shall their punishment be who trample underfoot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith He was sanctified an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace?" Do they honestly tell their hearers that the blessed Redeemer is not only a Lamb to His friends, but a lion to His enemies?—that He will tread them in His anger, "and trample them in His fury—that their blood shall be sprinkled on His garments, and that He will stain all His raiment!"

The Apostle Paul kept back nothing that was profitable to his hearers; but Socinian and Arian ministers studiously keep back such terrific and alarming representations. They are neither disposed to bring them forward, nor would they be permitted. The weak nerves of their hearers could not bear them. The Apostle assures us that the time would come when men would not endure sound doctrine. Has not that time long since arrived? Would Socinian or Arian congregations endure the doctrines taught in the preceding scriptures? Would they even endure these scriptures themselves? Were a sermon to contain a number of such quotations, would not its author be regarded as a Goth or a Vandal? Would he be permitted to preach in one of their pulpits? The polite ears and refined taste of a Unitarian audience could not endure such horrifying descriptions. Nor is such morbid sensibility either unnatural or unprecedented. As the probing of wounds is a painful operation, no less painful to the

mind of a sinner is that soul-searching sermon in which sin is exhibited in all its hateful deformity, and the threatenings of the law in all its terrors. The ancient Jews—and human nature is the same in every age—could not bear such plain and faithful dealing. (1 Kings xxii. 8)—“And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, there is yet one man, Micaiah, the son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord; but I hate him: for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.” (Isa. xxx. 8, 9, 10)—“Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever; that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits.” Those prophets who faithfully told them the truth, who lifted up their voice like a trumpet, told Judah her transgressions, and the house of Israel their sins, who boldly denounced the judgments of God and the threatenings of His law—how were they treated? “Lord,” said Elijah, “they have digged down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword, and I only am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” The fear of man soon brought a snare. The love of popularity triumphed over a sense of duty. In accommodation to the depraved taste of the people, their prophets flattered them, preached to them smooth things, and prophesied deceits. By such unfaithful, time-serving conduct, they provoked the wrath, and incurred the severe censure of Almighty God. (Jer. vi. 12-14)—“Their houses shall be turned unto others, with their fields and wives together: for I will stretch out my hand upon the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord. For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one

dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, peace, peace; when there is no peace."

Such was the morbid sensibility of the Jews, and such the treacherous and temporising spirit of their priests and prophets. Would God we could say, that modern times exhibit nothing similar! But, alas! it is otherwise. Do not Socinian and Arian divines speak smooth things? Do they not heal the hurt of the daughter of God's people slightly? Do they not say, "Peace, peace; when there is no peace?" Instead of faithfully denouncing the threatenings of the law, do they not endeavour to soften them down or explain them away? Do they not represent them as strong hyperbolical expressions, and bold, eastern figures, &c.? Do not some of them calm the growing fears of their hearers, by assuring them that there is no devil? and do not others affirm that there is no place of endless torment?—that hell is only a kind of purgatory?—and that the whole human family will finally be forever happy? What God calls *curses*, they call *blessings*; what He calls *hatred*, they call *love*; what He calls *wrath*, they call *mercy*! They gravely tell us that, when denouncing the most awful vengeance, He is threatening them—with what?—with BLESSINGS? Yes, with BLESSINGS! When He cursed the earth for man's sake—when He cursed the serpent—when He pronounced sentence on man, dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return—when, clad in all the terrors of incensed majesty, He was denouncing these curses, He only meant to BLESS our family! Nay, the torments of hell are blessings in disguise!—they are manifestations, not of the *wrath*, but of the *love* of God!—their tendency is, not the *ruin*, but the *recovery* of men! Such are the sentiments of Socinian and Arian divines—of those I mean, and they constitute, I presume, a large majority, who believe in the doctrine of universal

restoration. Orthodox writers are held up to public contempt for their awful descriptions of future misery. I admit, indeed, that their descriptions are awful; I admit they are tremendous. And what then? The question is, which of the two systems is more hostile to vice and more favourable to virtue?

Now, surely, this question is easily answered. If the principle of fear deters from vice, the orthodox system has a decided advantage, for that system, even our opponents being judges, makes the most powerful appeal to the fears of men. Antitrinitarians, by softening down the threatenings of the law, and calming the fears of sinners, are, at the same time, breaking down one of the most powerful barriers which Almighty God has opposed to the progress of vice. They are setting wide open the floodgates of immorality. They tell us that the orthodox descriptions of the punishment of sin are horrible. I grant it—and what then? The very *design* of such descriptions is to horrify. The more horrible future punishments appear, will not men be more careful to avoid them—and, of course, to avoid those sins which procure them? On the contrary, the less horrible future punishments appear, will not men be less careful to avoid them—and, of course, to avoid those vices and crimes which lead to them? Are not these principles self-evident? and do they not abundantly prove that Antitrinitarian principles have a demoralizing tendency—that they break down the barriers of virtue, and open the floodgates of vice, by softening down the threatenings of the law, and taking off the horrors of future punishment? On the contrary, orthodox principles are immensely more favourable to virtue; because the motives they propose to deter from vice are immensely more powerful. Whether the orthodox or the Antitrinitarian system be the true one, let the reader now judge.

Here, again, I am perfectly aware that Socinians and

Arians will endeavour to drown the voice of reason by the loud cry of "*uncharitableness*." "How harsh!" they will exclaim—"how uncharitable your principles!" Orthodox divines they hold up to public contempt on account of their descriptions of future misery. Boston, in his "Fourfold state," describes the damned as having none to pity them—as neither pitying each other, nor receiving any sympathy from their godly relatives. On the contrary, he supposes, that their relatives will acquiesce in their just condemnation, saying Alleluia! when their sentence is pronounced. For his awful descriptions of future misery, in which such sentiments are expressed, Boston is represented by Unitarians rather as a *monster* than as a man. He is particularly stigmatized by Dr. Southwood Smyth, of London, Mr. Harris, of Glasgow, and, if fame does not lie, their invectives have been lately reiterated with great effect by the Rev. H. Montgomery, of Belfast. "I ask," says Mr. Harris, "does such a man, capable of dwelling with savage delight—such a Nero-like pleasure—on the miseries of the damned, does he deserve to be considered as a judicious or a well-informed minister of Christ? Must not his piety have been dreadful—his, indeed, a painful pre-eminence? Judge ye!" Not only Boston and other eminent divines, but even *old women*, fall under the censure of the Rev. George Harris. "A pious mother," says he, "of an unworthy son, whose misconduct had induced upon her that species of decline familiarly termed a broken heart, sent for him to her death-bed, and addressed him in this remarkable language:—'My dear Charles, how tenderly I have loved you is but too evident from the state to which you now see me reduced, and so long as I remain in this body I shall not cease to love you, and to pray for you with all a mother's anxiety. But the period is approaching when I shall hear the sentence of even your eternal destruction with a majestic composure,

and an entire complacency, arising from a feeling identified only with perfect purity, and infinite rectitude.' Hear it, ye mothers," exclaims Mr. Harris, "and pause before you embrace or defend a system which thus withers every affectionate sensation in the parental bosom."

Now, I would ask, does Mr. Harris really think that the saints in heaven will feel for the sufferings of their relatives in the place of misery, in the same manner as they felt for their sufferings when here on earth? Does Dr. Southwood Smyth think so? Does Mr. Montgomery think so? Do all Socinians and Arians think so? If they do, I must confess that, in my estimation, the old woman censured by Mr. Harris showed herself to be, on this point, at least, a divine and a philosopher much superior to any of her accusers. What! Because the poor woman broke her heart for her son on *earth*, must she break it again in *heaven*? Is this the divinity of Socinians and Arians? Is this their charity? From such a charity all the orthodox will pray—"Good Lord deliver us!" If the saints in heaven feel for their relatives in the place of misery in the same manner, and in the same proportion, as they felt for them here on earth, heaven would be no longer heaven. It would not be a place of *happiness*, but of *torment*. No, Mr. Harris; Mr. Boston, and even the *old woman* whom you hold up to female detestation, had much more correct views of heaven than you have. Your doctrine is unscriptural and absurd—it would turn even *heaven* itself into—HELL! But hers was Scriptural, rational, and consistent. The misconduct of her son had put her to much pain on earth; but her Bible had taught her that there is no pain in heaven. On *his* account, she had suffered much sorrow, and heaved many a sigh; but she knew that in heaven sorrow and sighing would for ever flee away. Whilst on earth she had shed many a tear, but in heaven she knew that her

God and her Redeemer would wipe away all tears from her eyes. She had suffered a kind of hell upon earth ; but her good sense, as well as her Bible, prevented her from dreaming that she was about to suffer another in *heaven*. Socinians and Arians would consign her to both. After suffering all the agonies of a broken heart, they would probably consent to admit her into heaven, but with such a state of feelings as would destroy all its happiness, and convert it into HELL! Such is the charity of Socinians and Arians. Of certain characters it is said that their "tender mercies are cruel." How cruel the charity of Socinians and Arians! A pious mother, from the excess of parental affection, is dying of a broken heart. On her death-bed she declares that till the last moment of her life, she will never cease to love her undutiful son—that son whose conduct was bringing down her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. She declares that whilst she remained in the body she would never cease to love him, and pray for him, with all a mother's anxiety. This pious female the excess of whose tenderness had broken her heart, and was bringing her down prematurely to the grave, Mr. Harris represents as an unfeeling monster, in whose "parental bosom every affectionate sensation was withered." Such is the charity of this champion of Unitarianism! The mother who dies through *excess* of affection, he *charitably* concludes has no affection at all! And why? Because she did not think she would be miserable in heaven!!!

The charity of Antitrinitarians towards their orthodox brethren is truly astonishing. Because Boston gives an awful description of hell, Dr. Southwood Smith very charitably concludes, that he is completely destitute of all the feelings of humanity, and contemplates with complacency the torments of the damned. And Mr. Harris still more charitably asserts that Boston is capable of dwelling on the miseries of

the damned with savage delight and Nero-like pleasure. But how, it may be asked, do these gentlemen know that Boston was so destitute of humanity, and possessed of such savage and Nero-like feelings? Why, they infer it—they *charitably* infer it, from his terrible descriptions of future misery. Now, *I* would infer the very reverse. I would infer that his tender and affectionate regard for immortal souls induced him to draw such horrible pictures. By alarming sinners, he hoped to awaken them to a sense of their danger—he hoped to arrest them in their mad career of vice and folly. By the terrors of the Lord he persuaded men—he persuaded them to flee from the wrath to come—to break off their sins by timely repentance, and to flee for refuge to the hope set before them.

Were a mother to address her children thus:—"My dear children, beware of the well; do not go near it: if you fall into it you will certainly be drowned. You cannot escape. And when you are playing, beware of the precipice. Keep at a distance; for if you fall over it you will undoubtedly be destroyed—you will be all bruised—you will be all cut and mangled—all your bones will be broken—you will be dashed to pieces." From this horrible description, would it be fair to infer that such a mother was an unfeeling monster—quite destitute of maternal affection? Surely not. No person possessed of one spark of charity would draw such a conclusion. Every person possessed of common sense and common candour would conclude that it was the tenderness of her affection, and the greatness of her concern for the safety of her children, which induced her to draw so horrible a picture.

Let us now take a different view of this subject. Supposing a maid-servant should address the children thus:—"There is no such danger as your mother represents. Falling over the precipice, your skin may be scratched, but you will not be destroyed. If you fall

into the well, your clothes may be wetted, but you will not be drowned. You may sink for a while, but your life is safe—you will rise to the surface, and surely get out. Your Father is too merciful to suffer you to drown. Besides, you will be washed, and come out quite clean. Remember, also, that the cold bath is useful. Your constitution will be improved, you will be much more healthy and enjoy more happiness than you ever did before." I now ask my reader, which of the two characters—the mother or her maid—appears the more affectionate? Which of the two addresses appears the more charitable? The application is easy. Orthodox ministers, like the affectionate mother, warn their hearers—their spiritual children. They say, "Beware of the wrath to come! Beware of the gulf of future misery! Avoid those sins which lead to the precipice. If you stumble over, your fall will be tremendous! If you sink, you will rise no more! The gulf into which you plunge is the bottomless pit! The misery into which you rush is beyond description. In the mansions of woe there will be none to pity you, none to help you. All will be your enemies. God will be your enemy—the Redeemer will be your enemy—holy angels will be your enemies—wicked men will be your enemies—Satan will be your enemy—his angels will be your enemies—the whole creation will be your enemy. Your own friends and relatives will neither be disposed to pity nor relieve you. In those doleful mansions you must for ever dwell, doomed to converse with everlasting groans, unrespited, unpitied, unretrieved, ages of hopeless end."

Socinian and Arian ministers in general address their hearers in very different language. "Hell," say they, "is not so bad a place as the orthodox represent it. The torments of it will not be so intolerable. Should you happen to fall into it, you will get out of it again. Your sufferings will all be for your good. They will

do more for you than the love of God displayed in sending His Son, or the love of the Redeemer manifested in dying for sinners. They will do more for you than the preaching of the Gospel, or any of the other ordinances or means of grace. They will reclaim you, they will reform you. They will bring you to repentance and amendment of life. They will purify and refine you, and fit you for heaven and eternal glory."

Readers of this pamphlet, and candidates for immortality! what is your opinion? Of these two addresses, which is the safer? Which appears to you to be the more charitable? Charitable! Where is the charity of Antitrinitarian principles? If smoothing the way to the pit of destruction be charity, Socinian and Arian divines are the most charitable men living.

Oh, charity! under thy sacred name what cruelties have been perpetrated! What havoc has been made of the souls of men! Cajoled by thy deceitful influence, how many are daily sinking by the sides of the pit, and how many are daily plunging into the gulf of perdition! Votary of Arianism! rouse from thy slumbers! Be not deceived by a false, delusive, and cruel charity. "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

CHAPTER VII.

IN reply to the preceding reasoning, Antitrinitarians may allege that the orthodox, in their descriptions of the wrath of God, exaggerate; and that the fears they excite are unreasonable and excessive. This I deny, and maintain, on the contrary, *that no man has ever formed an adequate conception of the wrath of God.* "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?—even according to thy *fear* so is thy wrath." Now, if no man *knows* the power of God's anger, no man can *describe* it. If the *knowledge* is defective, the *description* of course, must be defective also. I may, therefore, affirm that neither Boston and Edwards, nor the Westminster divines, have shot beyond the mark in their descriptions of the wrath of God. I may venture to affirm that no divine has ever come up to it. The fears excited by the most horrible descriptions are not excessive. The dreadful nature of the wrath of God fully justifies the greatest fears that have ever been excited by the most alarming descriptions. "Even according to thy **FEAR**, so is thy wrath."^{*} I feel no necessity, therefore, to offer an apology for Boston, Edwards, or the Westminster divines. They labour, indeed, to excite men's fears by alarming descriptions of the wrath of God, and of the misery of the wicked; but in doing this, they are imitating the prophets and apostles—nay, they are

* It may be said that the fears of some are so great as to drive them to suicide. I grant it: but this arises not from the excess of their fears, but from the want of faith. Faith's view of the "*fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,*" would dispel fear, encourage hope, and ultimately lead to "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

“workers together with God.” If their descriptions prove them to be destitute of humanity—to be possessed of savage and Nero-like dispositions, what shall we say of the penmen of Scripture? What shall we say of the *author* of the Scriptures? What shall we say of the Deity Himself—the Father of mercies? The language of orthodox divines may be strong, but it is not stronger than that of the prophets. Their descriptions may be tremendous, but not more so than those of the apostles. Their pictures of future misery may be dreadful and horrifying, but not more so than those drawn by the Father of mercies. That in the inspired descriptions, both of future happiness and misery, figurative language is employed, I readily grant. When the Apostle Paul was caught up to the third heavens, he heard words which it is *unlawful*—it should have been rendered *impossible*—for a man to utter. No language in use among men could convey an adequate idea of the happiness of heaven; and, therefore, in accommodation to our weak conceptions, figurative language is employed. The descriptions of the tree of life—of the river of the water of life—and of the new Jerusalem—are all figurative. They are sublime and beautiful. They assist our feeble conceptions, but convey no adequate ideas of heavenly glory. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He (our Redeemer) shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” Just so with regard to *future misery*. Though in its description all the powers of language are exhausted, the most correct idea we can form is extremely inadequate. In the Sacred Volume, figure is added to figure, and epithet to epithet, in order to heighten our idea of the wrath of God. We there read of “the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God”—not merely the *wrath* of God, but the *WINE* of His wrath—and not merely the wine of His wrath, but the wine of the *FIERCENESS* of His wrath—and not

only the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God, but the wine of the fierceness and wrath of **ALMIGHTY** God; as if, in the infliction of His wrath, the Deity intended to give a tremendous display of His **ALMIGHTY POWER**. Rom. ix. 22, "What if God, willing to **SHOW HIS WRATH, AND MAKE HIS POWER KNOWN**, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." When the wine of the wrath of God is mentioned in Scripture, it is in one place said to be "*without mixture*," evidently intimating that the cup of misery administered to the wicked will contain nothing but pure wrath, without any sweet ingredient, any mixture of mercy. In another place it is represented as "*full of mixture*," intimating clearly, that though in it will be found no sweet ingredient—no mixture of mercy—it will, nevertheless, contain a tremendous infusion of all **BITTER** ingredients, of everything calculated to aggravate misery. The inspired writers, and orthodox divines, labour to communicate ideas of the wrath of God as *terrible as possible*. Socinian and Arian divines, on the contrary, labour as much as possible to keep such terrible ideas out of our minds. They labour to calm our fears, and to lull us to rest in the cradle of security. They either shun to declare the whole counsel of God, or they handle the Word of God deceitfully, by softening down the threatenings of His law; and smoothing the way to the mansions of misery. And all this treacherous dealing with God, and with the souls of men, they dignify with the epithets *liberality* and *charity*. I now submit, whether those systems can possibly be of God which are so completely at variance with His revealed will—so directly opposed to the sacred oracles. Instead of leading to holiness and happiness, they are evidently demoralizing and destructive.

Socinians and Arians are induced to soften down the threatenings of the Divine law from a mistaken notion

that they are inconsistent with the character of God, as a God of love, and the Father of mercies. It is from this mistaken notion that they oppose so violently the alarming descriptions of orthodox divines. There is, however, no inconsistency between the *wrath* and the *love* of God. His love to the universe is the very reason why His wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The love which a good king bears to his subjects is in no way inconsistent with his character as "a revenger, executing *wrath* on them that do evil." On the contrary, it is his love to his subjects that is the very reason why he punishes evil doers. He loves his subjects; and, therefore, he punishes those who injure and annoy them. God also loves the subjects of His moral government; and, therefore, He will punish all those who disturb that government, and annoy those subjects. His wrath is no uneasy, capricious, or turbulent passion. It is only the holy, calm, but determined opposition of the Divine nature to whatever opposes the public good.

Socinians and Arians impugn the eternity of future punishments, as cruel and unjust. This charge, however, is based upon a false hypothesis. It supposes that sin is not infinite. The orthodox have proved—and their proof, I conceive, is very little short of demonstration—they have proved that every sin, as it strikes against an infinite God, is infinite. This demonstration I have exhibited in my "Refutation of Arianism," and have also endeavoured to show the futility of the principal objections by which it is opposed. No Socinian or Arian in the world has ever attempted, so far as I know, a *direct* refutation of the argument; and I presume they never will attempt it. They have only opposed it *indirectly*, by alleging that it leads to certain absurd consequences. The principal one is, *that it would make all sins equal*. If every sin be infinite, say they, all sins must be equal; for nothing can be

greater than what is infinite. This objection was long since answered, and answered with the evidence of mathematical demonstration, by President Edwards. With his usual philosophical acuteness, he replied, that one infinite might be greater than another; that what is infinitely long and broad is greater than that which is only infinitely long; and that what is infinitely long, broad, and deep, is greater than that which is only infinitely long and broad; that as all objects infinitely long are equal in *that* dimension, yet may differ widely in other dimensions—so all sins, though equal in one dimension, being committed against the same infinite God, may yet differ widely in other respects, being clothed with a great variety of aggravations. Entirely overlooking this triumphant reply, Socinians and Arians reiterate again, and again, and again, their stale objection.

Dr. Southwood Smyth, on the Divine Government (p. 336) says, “It has already been shown that sin is not an infinite evil: the only argument on which the justice of the eternity of punishment is founded is, therefore, fallacious. Some persons, indeed, believe in the eternity of punishment, who do not believe in the infinity of the evil of sin, but they differ from this author (Edwards) only in believing without any reason, what he believed for an insufficient reason.” From this quotation it is evident that Unitarians consider the infinity of the evil of sin as the best ground on which to rest the doctrine of the eternity of future punishment. This ground, however, is regarded by them, and particularly by Dr. Smyth, as quite insufficient—and why? Oh! just the old objection, that it would lead to the absurdity of making all sins equal. Though he mentions the argument of Edwards to prove that sin is an infinite evil, he totally overlooks his triumphant reply to the stale objection. With great confidence he proposes that objection as if it

had never been answered. How disingenuous! how uncandid! The Rev. George Harris, in his "Unitarianism and Trinitarianism contrasted," displays the same disingenuity and want of candour. He quotes the objection from Archbishop Tillotson, but takes no notice of President Edwards' triumphant reply. The fact is, that Edwards has completely confounded his opponents; none of them has either the candour or courage to face him.

Dr. Drummond, of Dublin, in accordance with his brethren in England and Scotland, condemns the doctrine of the infinite evil of sin, but never attempts to answer the reasoning by which it is supported. His conduct is prudent; for it is much easier to *declaim* against the doctrine than to *reason* against it. It frequently happens, that it is much more convenient to overlook an argument, or treat it with contempt, than to answer or refute it.

Against the doctrine of the infinite evil of sin there is one objection which I have never seen answered. It is brought forward by Mr. Harris, and sanctioned, like the preceding objection, by the high authority of Archbishop Tillotson. "By the same reason," says that celebrated author, "that the least sin that is committed against God may be said to be infinite because of its *object*, the least punishment that is inflicted by God may be said to be infinite because of its *author*, and then all punishment from God, as well as all sins against Him, would be equal, which is palpably absurd." This objection is at first sight, plausible. Let us examine it. Its absurdity may be illustrated by the following example:—

If, in the army, a *private soldier* is insulted or maltreated, the crime is not so great as if the same insult were offered to a *sergeant*; it would be greater still if a *captain* were the object, and still greater if the object were a *general*; it would be more aggravated if com-

mitted against the *commander-in-chief*; and, most of all, if the KING were the object. From this illustration it appears that the demerit of a crime is increased in proportion to the dignity or authority of the person against whom it is committed. And upon this principle it is that every crime committed against God, an infinite object, must be infinite. This is a dictate of common sense. But is it agreeable to common sense to suppose that the same punishment becomes greater in proportion to the greatness or dignity of its author? Surely not. Would the same punishment be greater when inflicted by the *king* than when inflicted by the *commander-in-chief*, by a *general*, a *captain*, a *sergeant*, or even by a *drummer*? By no means. Punishment, therefore, is not aggravated by the greatness of its author, as sin is increased by the greatness of its object. The very *reverse* is the fact. It is the *inferiority*, and not the *dignity* of its author that aggravates punishment. Abimelech thought so. (Jud. ix. 54)—“Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him.” Zeba and Zalmunna thought so. They conceived it disgraceful to be slain by Jether, a youth, and said to his father, the heroic Gideon (Jud. viii. 21)—“Rise *thou*, and fall upon us; for as the man is, so is his strength.” The objection, therefore, is completely futile. When weighed in the balance it is found wanting. It insults reason and outrages common sense.

I have been thus particular in endeavouring to defend the doctrine of the infinite evil of sin, because I regard it as a doctrine of great and paramount importance. It is important not only in itself, but as it is one of the main pillars on which rests another doctrine of immense importance—the doctrine, I mean, of eternal punishment. If sin is an *infinite* evil, eternal misery is nothing *more* than infinite, and, therefore, it is not unreasonable. It is only an adequate punishment of

sin. Admitting this doctrine, everything appears natural and consistent. If sin is infinite, then an infinite atonement is natural; the tremendous threatenings of the Divine law are natural; the awful descriptions of the wrath of God are natural; and the horrifying representations of the torments of hell are all natural and consistent. On the contrary, deny the infinite evil of sin, and everything appears unnatural and disproportionate. As between the infinity of the evil of sin, and the eternity of future punishment, there is a close and intimate connexion; so the same objection, with a little variation, is levelled against both. Unitarians allege, not only that the infinity of the evil of sin would make all sin equal, but they insist also, that the eternity of future misery would make all future misery equal. "No punishment," say they, "can be longer than eternal, and, therefore, all future punishments must be equal." I grant, indeed, they are all equal in one respect—in respect of *duration*; but in respect of *severity* or *intensity*, the sufferings of one may be immensely greater than those of another. Of two sufferers, even in this life, one may suffer more in a *day* than another does in a *year*. Must not Mr. Harris, and other Unitarians, be sadly straitened when obliged to resort to such childish arguments? By such reasoning they may deceive the simple, but they must be simple indeed, who are thus deceived. Neither the infinity of sin, nor the eternity of future punishment, is at all inconsistent with the doctrine, *that every man will be rewarded according to his works*.

Now, if the wrath of God and the eternity of future punishments are not inconsistent with justice, they are not inconsistent with mercy; for all the Divine attributes completely harmonise. Mercy and justice are never at variance. The descriptions, therefore, which the orthodox give of the wrath of God—of the threat-

enings of His law, and the eternity of future punishments, do not exhibit God as a tyrant, nor are they unfriendly to benevolence and mercy. They are not calculated, as Antitrinitarians allege, to counteract the charities of our nature, to freeze the milk of human kindness, and to render men unfeeling, cruel, and tyrannical. On the contrary, these charges may be justly retorted. Socinians and Arians, in general, believe that hell is only a *purgatory*, or *house of correction*, and that sinners will be *reformed* by the punishment there inflicted. They believe that what could not be effected by kindness and love will be accomplished by misery and torment. They believe that the torments of hell will be a more powerful means of reformation than the love of God—the blood of His Son—the influence of His Spirit—the preaching of His Word, and all other ordinances and means of grace.

Now, if Socinians and Arians believe misery and torment more powerful remedies than kindness and love, will they not be naturally disposed to employ them? Will they not be disposed to make men miserable, in order to reclaim them—and to torment them, in order to reform them? It is not, therefore, the doctrines of the orthodox, but those of Socinians and Arians, that exhibit the Deity as a tyrant, and tend to make men ferocious and cruel. The doctrine which teaches that hell is a place of reformation, is as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural. What! Is it in the nature of fire and brimstone to melt down the enmity of the human heart? Is it in the nature of torment to beget love? Surely not. The idea is absurd. "Love, and love only, is the loan for love." Socinian and Arian divines! deceive not yourselves! Oh, do not deceive your hearers! Flatter them not with the vain hopes of repentance or reformation beyond the grave. Honestly tell them, that if the love of God melts not their hearts, all the flames of hell can never

mollify them. Tell them plainly, that if they "trample under foot the Son of God, count the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace, there remains nothing for them but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall (not REFORM OR RECLAIM, but) DEVOUR the adversaries." Tell them that the worm of their conscience shall never die, that the fire of their torment shall never be quenched, and that they shall be an abhorring to all flesh. Tell them that *now* is the acceptable time, and that *now* is the day of salvation. Or, if you do not *believe all the Scriptures*, and therefore feel reluctant to quote them, tell them Mr. Montgomery's fable of the sun and the north wind. Tell them that the most furious blasts of the north wind could not induce the traveller to lay aside his garment, whilst the genial heat of the sun succeeded. This fable was quoted by Mr. Montgomery in his celebrated speech, in order to show that the Arians, if in error, cannot be reclaimed by *severity*, but only by *mildness* and *love*. Now, if *Arians* cannot be reclaimed by severity, how can the *wicked, in the place of misery*, be reclaimed by it? Socinians and Arians! be not deceived. Read Mr. Montgomery's fable. Read it again and again, and never more dream of the torments of the damned reclaiming the wicked, after the love of God, and the blood of His Son, have proved ineffectual.

Let the reader now judge between the two parties. The orthodox say—"God melts down *our* enmity by love, and we should melt down the enmity of *each other* by love. When our enemy hungers, we should feed him—when he thirsts, we should give him drink. We should thus heap coals of fire upon his head. As metals are melted by coals of fire, so the enmity of the human heart, as it operates either against God or man, can only be melted down by the fire of love, and by

acts of kindness." "Oh," says the Socinian—and "Oh," says the Arian, "there is a more effectual method than this for melting down enmity." What method? "BY THE FLAMES OF HELL!" Say now, reader, which of these systems do you judge most favourable to benevolence and charity? Which is most favourable to virtue and holiness? Socinians and Arians neither preach the law nor the Gospel. They first soften down and explain away the threatenings of the law; and then assure us that the torments of hell will be more efficacious for reforming sinners than the love of God, and the death of His Son!

CHAPTER VIII.

There are two topics still, which require a few remarks.

1. The state of the heathen. 2. The state of those dying in infancy.

The sentiments of the orthodox on these two topics have long been the subjects of severe animadversion, and unqualified censure. They have long been regarded as most illiberal and uncharitable, and, therefore, worthy of universal execration.

1. It is conceived to be monstrously uncharitable to believe that the heathen cannot be saved by attending to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess. Now, if this creed argues want of charity, I would observe that *all* the orthodox are not guilty. Many of them believe that the heathen who never hear the Gospel may be saved.

Without entering directly into the argument, or examining those Scriptures which are adduced on both sides of the controversy, let me ask—Which of the two creeds is more favourable to the heathen? Which of the two creeds is calculated to produce the most beneficial effects? Surely the old, uncharitable creed. One party think that the heathen can be saved without the Gospel; the other think not. Now, surely, those who think that the heathen will be saved without the Gospel will be less anxious to send them the Gospel. This is the dictate of common sense. It is the dictate of reason, and the dictate of experience. Where are the missionary societies of Socinians and Arians? How much money have they expended in the missionary cause? What exertions have they made to enlighten

those who are sitting in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death? And where, I might ask, is all their charity? Or, what kind of a charity is that which paralyzes all exertion? From such a charity the heathen may say—"Good Lord deliver us."

Suppose a person bathing, and two of his acquaintance looking on. Sometimes he appears above the surface—at other times he sinks below it. One of his friends cries—"He is drowning! we must endeavour to save him." "There is no danger," says the other, "he will come out himself." Which of the two, I ask, is the more charitable? Surely the man who cries—"He is drowning!" Surely the man who endeavours to save him. This man, I say, though even mistaken, is evidently the more charitable of the two. Or, suppose we see volumes of smoke issuing from the chimnies, the doors and windows of our neighbour's house: one cries—"Our neighbour's house is on fire, and all the family will be burned to ashes!" Another says—"There is not the least danger—it is only the chimney that is burning. All will be well." Which of these shall we regard as the more charitable? The application is easy.

Orthodox divines, of the old school, say—"The heathen are perishing for lack of knowledge. They are sinking down by the sides of the pit, and shall no arm be stretched out to save them? Shall no man care for their souls? God forbid! Let us strain every nerve. By our fervent prayers to Almighty God—by our pecuniary contributions—by our missionary exertions—and by every means in our power, let us endeavour to turn them from darkness to light, and from Satan to God, that they may obtain remission of sins, and an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." This I conceive to be true charity—very different, indeed from that cold-blooded charity which says—"The heathen, may be saved as well as Christians. Let them alone."

The creed of the old school could do the heathen no harm, but the creed of the new may do them much injury. When our Westminster divines thought that the heathen could not be saved without the Gospel—(I suppose they meant *in ordinary cases*)—their thoughts could do the heathen no harm. On the contrary, they were calculated to do them much good, by exciting a feeling and interest in their favour. But when Socinians and Arians think that the heathen have nearly, if not altogether, as good a chance for happiness as ourselves, their thoughts are not harmless—they are *highly injurious*. They freeze at its fountain the life-blood of charity, and paralyze every exertion to save the poor heathen. Oh, false and ruinous charity! Thou hast slain thy thousands and thy ten thousands! In thy skirts their blood will be found!

Some Calvinistic divines, and divines too of great eminence, men whose praise is in all the churches, seem half-seduced by this delusive charity. Among these I may rank—and I do it with regret—a Wardlaw, and a Burder. The former of these alleges, that God may bless the volume of nature, and, by the influence of His Spirit, make it effectual for the salvation of the heathen, as the volume of Divine Revelation is made effectual for the salvation of Christians. He says that God *may* do so; but he does not assert that He *will* do so. He does not plead any Scripture authority: why then does he hazard any opinion at all? Why be wise above what is written? When God is silent, should not Christian ministers be silent also? Dr. Wardlaw does not allege, and I believe Mr. Burder does not allege, that God has opened any door of hope. Why then do *they* open one? If none is opened in the Scripture of truth, why should one be opened in their writings? By opening such doors, harm may be done; but I cannot perceive the slightest good. All such representations, however good the motives by which they are suggested, are

calculated to do the heathen, not *good*, but *evil*. They cut the sinews of missionary exertion. The more safe and the more comfortable the situation of the heathen, the less necessity of sending them the Gospel, and of using every other means in our power to save them. On the contrary, the more deplorable or desperate their state, the louder the call—"Come over and help us," and the more powerful the motive to use every exertion in our power for their relief.

2. The state of infants has afforded a still wider field for declamatory abuse. A hideous outcry is raised against all those who are not prepared to subscribe a creed pronouncing all happy who die in infancy. The most virulent invectives have been levelled against the Calvinistic system as consigning millions of infants to the pit of eternal misery and woe. These invectives, however, though pretending to be all on the side of charity, are extremely uncharitable. They are unjust and calumnious. On the final state of those dying in infancy, the Calvinistic system pronounces no judgment. The most talented Calvinistic divines with whom I have had the honour of being acquainted were favourable to the opinion that all who die in infancy will be saved.

With regard to the children of believing parents, I presume there is little diversity of opinion. Their salvation, if they die in infancy, appears to be guaranteed by a particular promise—"The promise is to you and to your seed. Those who believe are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The children, therefore, of believing parents, who die in infancy, and, of course, have not forfeited their privilege by actual transgression, have their eternal felicity secured by the promise of God.

"But what," it may be asked, "is your belief relative to the children of the wicked? Do you believe that any of their children shall be damned?" No. "Do you believe that they will be all saved?" No.

“What then do you believe?” I believe NOTHING. When God has *revealed* nothing, I can *believe* nothing. When *God* is silent, I am silent. When He has revealed nothing, I am content to be ignorant. I am perfectly satisfied that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

Learned, and pious, and orthodox divines, publicly teach that all children dying in infancy shall be saved—the children of the wicked as well as the children of the righteous. To such divines I would say—and I speak with great respect—When God makes a difference between the righteous and the wicked, relative to their seed, why do you make none? When God holds out a promise to the righteous, and not to the wicked, relative to their seed, why do you hold out a promise to *both*? Are you not in this going beyond your commission? You are bound to teach all things whatsoever the Redeemer has commanded you; but where has He commanded you to hold out promises to the seed of the wicked? God has not placed the seed of the wicked on a level with the seed of the righteous, in His *providence*—nor has He placed them on a level in His *Word*, neither in the *Old* nor *New Testament*. Why then should *you* place them on a level? Besides, I would ask—What good end is answered by such charitable doctrine? No good can be done to the *infants*. Their state cannot be at all affected. It cannot be rendered either better or worse by our opinions or belief, nor can any good be done to the *parents* by such comfortable doctrine. On the contrary, much harm may be done. To say to a wicked man—“Your children, dying in infancy, will as surely obtain heaven as those of the greatest saint on earth,” is calculated to do him great injury. It is to “sew pillows under his arm-holes,” and to make him easy in a state of wickedness. Parental affection is a powerful principle. It has sometimes been the means of reform-

ing the wicked; but the effect of this principle is lost when the salvation of all infants is proclaimed.

Let the wicked, on the other hand, be addressed thus:—"You are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. The wrath of God abides upon you; and, whilst you continue in unbelief and impenitence, a dark cloud hangs over your offspring. To your little children dying in infancy, there is not one promise made in the whole book of God. Oh, then, turn from your wickedness, and flee from the wrath to come! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Not only will you obtain your own soul for a prey, but the souls of your offspring dying in infancy will also be safe, for 'the promise is to you and to your seed.'" I ask now—Is not this the more charitable doctrine? It does no harm to the children, and is calculated to do much good to the parents. It lays hold on the principle of natural affection, and exhibits to the wicked a powerful motive to faith, repentance, and reformation.

From the reasoning contained in this tract, and particularly in this chapter, I hope I may, without presumption, infer the propriety of examining orthodox principles before they are condemned. They have been condemned, and condemned again—and a thousand times condemned, and all without evidence. By a few hard names they have been run down. Their opponents tell the world that they are illiberal—that they are uncharitable—that they are hostile to free inquiry—that they are unfavourable to virtue; that those who profess them are hypocrites, fanatics, bigots, or enthusiasts. These hard words—these abusive epithets—these nicknames—have produced a magical effect. They have terrified many, and induced them to abandon the cause of truth. On the contrary, "*the right of private judgment,*" "*liberality,*" "*charity,*" "*fearless free inquiry,*" and such high-sounding epithets, have deluded thou-

sands. But, thanks be to God, the charm will soon be broken. The world will not *always* be governed by names. Men are beginning to think and to reason. They are beginning to examine the Word of God—the sacred oracles. They are beginning not only to search the Scriptures, but to pray to God for the illumination of His Spirit; and the Deity Himself is pouring upon them a Spirit of grace and supplication. I hope He is pouring this Spirit on Mr. Montgomery. He never enters the pulpit, he tells us, without prayer. He never reads the Scriptures with a view to ascertain their meaning, without prayer. He never writes a sermon, or any religious discourse, without prayer. I take it for granted that all this is true. It would be extremely uncharitable either to call in question his veracity, or to ascribe to unworthy motives these public proclamations of his private devotions. CHRISTIANITY should teach us to search no man's heart, and CHARITY should teach us to think no evil. His conduct, on the contrary, deserves great praise, and his practice is worthy of universal imitation. If he is yet in error, he believes that God will enlighten his mind. This, also, I hope and trust. If God has inspired him with the *love* of the truth, I firmly believe He will bring him to the *knowledge* of the truth. If God has poured upon him the Spirit of grace and supplication, and induced him to pray with David, "Open thou mine eyes that I may see wonderful things out of thy law," I have no doubt at all of his ultimate illumination. If, however, it be fair to criticise prayers; or if so humble an individual might venture to suggest to Mr. Montgomery an idea or two on so solemn a subject, I would say—Beware, sir, of depending too much on your own talents and qualifications. My reason for this caution is your own language. It reads thus:—"He (Mr. Cooke), grants me a mind capable of judging, and concedes that I possess literary acquirements adequate to enlighten and

direct my judgment; and yet (most strange to say), he declares that I do not understand the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel, which he avers is clearly revealed in every page of the New Testament! How this alleged force of intellect, and extent of information, can be reconciled with my alleged ignorance of the plainest proposition of Revelation, it is not for me to determine." Now, sir, this same difficulty, which to you appears altogether insuperable, requires not the talents of Mr. Cooke to solve. The humblest rustic acquainted with his Bible, could tell you, that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." He could tell you that our heavenly Father sometimes "hides the mysteries of salvation from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes." He could tell you that "not many *wise* men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the *foolish* things of the world to confound the *wise*." When the wise men of Greece and Rome rejected Christianity, a few mean mechanics—fishermen and tent-makers—embraced it. When Peter professed his faith in the Redeemer, he was thus addressed by his Lord and Saviour:—"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." If Mr. Montgomery would be successful in his applications to the throne of grace, he must come—not as THE REV. HENRY MONTGOMERY, ONE OF THE MOST LEARNED AND TALENTED MINISTERS OF THE SYNOD OF ULSTER—he must come, not "leaning to his own understanding"—not depending on his learning and talents—he must come as a *poor miserable sinner*—he must come as the blind man in the Gospel, saying, "Lord, that mine eyes may be opened! Lord, that I may receive my sight!" It is only such humble mendicants that can expect to succeed at the throne of grace. The plea of the proud beggar will be always

rejected. God "fills the hungry with good things, but the rich He sends empty away."

Mr. Montgomery should consider that his learning and talents are no proof of the truth of his doctrines. He surely knows that learning and talents are two-edged swords—that they may be employed either *for* the truth, or *against* it. Socinians and Arians are constantly appealing to learning and talents in proof of their systems; but if learning and talents could prove systems true, **POPERY** would be true—**DEISM** would be true—and even **ATHEISM** itself would be true. Dr. Doyle is a man of as great learning and talents as Mr. Montgomery, and yet he believes that he can first *make* his God, and then *eat* him! Bishop Berkeley was a man of as great learning and talents as Mr. Montgomery, and yet he believed that there is no material world! David Hume, Esq., was a man of as great learning and talents as Mr. Montgomery, and yet he was a sceptic, a Deist, and an Atheist! He neither believed in the existence of God, in the existence of angels, nor in the existence of men! He believed that there is nothing in the world but ideas and sensations! Away, then, with your men of learning and talents! Away with your Lockes, your Lardners, and your Clarkes, your Ramohan Roys, your Miltons, and your Newtons! Were you to produce ten thousand such authorities, we would say to them all—"JESUS WE KNOW, AND PAUL WE KNOW; BUT WHO ARE YE?" We call no man **FATHER**—we bow to no authority inferior to that of our **BLESSED REDEEMER**. Our creeds and confessions contain *statements* of our doctrines; but they are *no authority for believing those doctrines*. Our *only* authority for believing any doctrine is—"Thus saith the Lord." Our "faith rests not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

In the preceding pages, I have endeavoured to show—that the charity of Antitrinitarians is **UNCHA-**

RITABLE—that their liberality is ILLIBERAL—that the right of private judgment they allow us, is only A RIGHT TO THINK AND TO JUDGE AS THEY DO—that their principles are UNFAVOURABLE TO THE INVESTIGATION OF TRUTH, SUBVERSIVE OF FREE INQUIRY, AND OPPOSED TO VIRTUE AND HOLINESS;—in a word, that their system is DEMORALISING and DANGEROUS—and, of course, THAT IT IS NOT TRUE. How far I have succeeded I now submit to the judgment of a candid public; praying that truth may burst through every cloud of error—that the Sun of Righteousness may dispel moral darkness—and that the earth may be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. Amen.

POSTSCRIPT.

The reader is requested to observe, that the foot-note relative to the persecution of Arians was written under the presumption, that Mr. Montgomery's plate would have been presented prior to the publication of this pamphlet. I wish it also to be understood, that the epithets, ANTI-TRINITARIANS, UNITARIANS, ARIANS, and SOCINIANS, are used in this pamphlet as terms of distinction, not of reproach. I request it may be also distinctly understood, that the epithet "ΟΡΘΟΔΟΧ" is used, not as a title of honour, but simply as a term of distinction.

Against the use of such terms, I am well aware, a hideous outcry has been raised by some. They declaim with great vehemence; but their declamation is unphilosophical—it is childish. They might as well declaim against the epithets English, Irish, Scotch, and Germans. Where distinctions exist, we must have some terms to *mark* those distinctions. Were any man to say—"I do not wish to be called an Arian, a Socinian, an Arminian, or a Calvinist—I would rather be called a Christian, or a Bible Christian." He might just as well say—"I do not like to be called an Irishman—I would rather be called a MAN, OR A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD." In both cases the folly and absurdity are the same. As he may wish to be called simply a *man*, or a *citizen of the world*, who is ashamed of his country, or wishes to conceal it—so the man who is ashamed of his principles, or is anxious to conceal them, may wish to be denominated a Christian, or a *Bible Christian*. The assumption of such epithets, to the exclusion of all distinctive denominations, though well enough calculated to deceive the simple, must nevertheless be regarded by every intelligent mind as absurd and nonsensical.

In the present controversy between Trinitarians and Anti-trinitarians, Dr. Drummond charges the orthodox with being the aggressors. He assures us that Antitrinitarians "have provoked no quarrel, unless their repose "be a provocation." Were this charge of aggression true, I do not see that the crime would be great. To attack error, wherever we find it, is not a crime, but a duty. The charge, however, is *not*

true. In this controversy, it is not the Trinitarians, but the Antitrinitarians that have been the aggressors. Did not the Antrim Presbytery re-publish Price's sermons? Did not Dr. Bruce publish a volume of controversial sermons? Did not the Arians re-publish, or import, Channing's sermons? Did they not attack the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ, through the medium of a public journal? Did they not display their *illiberality* by refusing to insert a reply? Was not a missionary sent from England for the express purpose of attacking the Trinitarian creed? Were not tracts circulated, gratis, for the same purpose? Were not all these public attacks made by the Arians prior to any controversial publication on the part of the orthodox? When the orthodox have now taken the field, the Arians appear quite alarmed. They deprecate controversy. They declaim against controversy—against that very controversy to which they have challenged us. The Rev. Dr. Bruce, of Belfast, declares himself unwilling to defend his own attack. The Rev. John Mitchell, of Newry, declares himself unwilling to defend *his*. Whether Dr. Drummond will defend what he has written against the Trinity, time will determine. Mr. Mitchell complains that the controversy was forced upon him—that he was rudely assailed by interrogatories on the subject in the open streets—and that he was written to, requiring an explicit declaration of his religious sentiments. Now, all this appears very strange. If Mr. Mitchell read so much, and studied so much, and prayed so humbly—so frequently—and so fervently as he assures us he did; and if God has at last brought him to the knowledge of the truth, as he thinks He has, why did he CONCEAL that truth? Why did he not proclaim it from the PULPIT, and thus supersede inquiries in the streets, and by private letters? And why refuse to subject the grounds of his conversion to the test of public discussion? His conduct is prudent—for I am fully convinced that the reasons he has assigned for changing his opinions, if weighed in the balance of Divine Revelation, will be found wanting.

