

THE
SOCINI-ARIAN DETECTED.

A SERIES OF

LETTERS

TO

BARTON W. STONE,

ON SOME

Important subjects of Theological Discussion,

REFERED TO IN HIS

“ADDRESS”

To the Christian Churches in Kentucky,
Tennessee, and Ohio.

BY THOMAS CLELAND.

*He that is first in his own cause seemeth just;
But his neighbor cometh and searcheth him.—Solomon.*

*“He gleans the blunted shafts that have recoil’d,
And aims them at the shield of truth again.”—Cowper.*

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LEXINGTON, KY.

PRINTED BY THOMAS T. SKILLMAN.

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LETTER I.

Miscellaneous Remarks.

“Let not thy years disdain my youth :
“Search only if I speak the truth.”

DEAR SIR,

YOUR late production fell into my hands about two months ago. I have perused it carefully, and with no little concern. Agreeably to a former promise, it was expected that you would not again take the field of controversy; and it was hoped by many that you had, at least partially, recanted your former obnoxious tenets! But, alas! instead of this, after a “re-examination of your views of the gospel,” out comes the same old story, only a little more cautiously told; and the same pernicious errors, varnished and honeyed over in a manner calculated to deceive the ignorant and mislead the unsettled and wavering.

Your reasons for writing are stated to be, “a desire for the good” of those to whom your address is particularly made—“the advice of many of your brethren in the ministry”—and, “to clear the way on your part,” for the promotion of a spirit of toleration and union with all “christians who maintain the divinity of the Bible.” In this last object I am certain you must fail; and as to the others, it is quite doubtful whether the “good” of your disciples can be promoted, or your brethren in the ministry edified, by the long tissue of criticisms on the Greek and Hebrew which you have introduced; when none of them, as I suppose, are better acquainted with those languages than the ignorant papist who hears his priest chattering over his mass in Latin. But with as much implicitness and docility, it is quite likely, will

your fraternity attend to you, and adopt an encomium similar to that I heard a few years ago from a very illiterate man, and a very devoted disciple of a high-sounding Arian preacher of the West,—“Surely,” said he, “Mr. — must be a very great and wise man;” giving at the same time this as his reason: “He goes so deep in his preaching that I cannot understand him.”

Had I intended to “make a book” for the benefit of such a plain and illiterate fraternity as yours must be, I should certainly have made it a desideratum to accommodate myself to their mental capacities, and not have affected such a shew of learning as you have done; especially after inducing them to expect great “simplicity.” And were I as lavish of my caricatures and sneers on the “learned,” the “critics,” and the “schools,” after making such a pompous parade of learning and criticism, I should not be much disappointed if the learned, the critics, or some other ill-natured fellows, should impeach my candour in conducting so unmercifully toward them; while, at the same time, attempting to travel the same road, and endeavoring to assail them with the same kind of weapons: thus making them believe that I possessed sufficient learning and powers of criticism to drive this troublesome host of combatants from the field by a single menace.

It is no less strange to find in page 10, the term “heresies” by you applied to “Arianism, Socinianism, and Pelagianism.” Not but that I most heartily concur with you in this appellation; but how *you* can use it in this way without implicating your own scheme, to me is unaccountable. Let any dispassionate person in the world make himself acquainted with the sentiments of those heretics, and then carefully peruse your book; let him compare them together; and if, after making a fair experiment, he do not pronounce the one a prototype of the other, if he do not say that you have sucked in the very hearts-blood of those heretical schemes, I will hold myself ready to make such acknowledgment to you as he shall deem just and necessary in the case. Make the trial yourself, fairly and honestly—read the works of those men, and those of their defenders and mod-

ern disciples, Crellius, H. Taylor, J. Taylor of Norwich, Harwood, Price, Foster, Robinson, Sykes, Priestley, Belsham, Lindsay, and others, and then it is believed you will be disposed at least to excuse us when we conscientiously apply the term "heresy" to your scheme; and not attribute it to "bigotry" and other ill-natured things so diffused through your book, and charged upon us as the only reasons for not receiving your "simple views." Be assured, sir, it affords me not the smallest pleasure or gratification, no, not a momentary triumph, to call names or apply opprobrious epithets to men's notions and sentiments under any circumstances: much less so, if I really do not believe them to be obnoxious and heretical. Therefore, I wish you to do me the justice to believe, that when I use plain words, or attach particular names or phrases to your sentiments, I do it, not through invidiousness, nor uncharitableness, but to avoid circumlocution, and to express what I sincerely believe to be the truth of the case. I can truly adopt the words of Cicero: "That I speak strongly I confess, but I protest not angrily. I am not used to be soon angry with my friends; no, not even if they deserve it. I can differ from you without reproachful language, but I cannot without extreme pain of mind."

To say that you are ignorant of the Arian and Socinian schemes and their modern disciples, would be to reflect upon your reading and historical information. To say that you had a design, in proscribing them as heretics, to avoid suspicion and prevent the alarm that might be excited in the minds of the honest, timid, but uninformed part of your connexion, from the very striking likeness between your sentiments and those you have called heresies—this would be deemed a want of candor and charity. Yet——Did Arius maintain that "The Son of God was totally and essentially distinct from the Father?" So do you. Did he maintain that he was the first and noblest of those beings whom God had created—the instrument by whose subordinate operation he formed the universe, and therefore inferior to the Father both in nature and dignity?" So do you. Do the Socinians deny the "expiatory sac-

rice, the satisfaction, substitution, imputed righteousness, and redeeming mediation of Jesus Christ?" So do you. All this and more will appear in the progress of this work. Had you therefore palliated, or even advocated the Arian and Socinian notions, instead of condemning them in the manner you have done, while holding the sentiments you do, I confess my surprise would not have been so much excited.

The self-assumed name of "Christian Church," by which you and your party wish to be known from all others, and which seems to embrace any thing, and every thing; no matter whether Jesus be esteemed a God or a creature; no matter whether a man professes to get to heaven through the *merit* and righteousness of Christ, or upon the sufficiency of his own repentance and own obedience *per se*: I say, this assumed name no more proves to me your soundness and purity, than it does that of our modern self-styled "Unitarians," or those heretical sects in Bassora and India, who called themselves "Christians." "And no marvel," says the apostle, "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."

After passing 95 pages of your "Address," in which you have exhausted all your strength against the generally received doctrines of the Trinity, the proper Divinity, the substitution, atonement and satisfaction of Jesus Christ; we find a declaration, which is certainly a levelling stroke and deals a death-blow to your whole system. Having exclaimed vehemently against *creeds* and *confessions*, as the cause of the declining, sinking, and almost ruined state of the church: "At length," you say, "Luther, Calvin, and others, made a bold stand against the corruptions of the church. The Lord wonderfully preserved them, and prospered their labors. Light began to dawn, and pure religion began to revive and smile upon the benighted world." *O magna vis veritatis*, says Cicero: "O the mighty force of truth!" Who would have expected to hear such panegyrical language, or such an unreserved concession from one of your sentiments! These reformers, whose labours the

Lord so wonderfully blessed, (labours which emitted such a flood of light, and were followed by such a revival of pure religion,) preached and disseminated the very doctrines that you have opposed. They maintained the doctrine of the Divine Trinity in Unity, or the three persons in the Godhead: they preached and wrote that Jesus Christ was God and man in one person, and was from eternity the second Person in Jehovah: that man was originally created holy: that of his own accord he departed from God and became vile: that in whatever instance God exercises forgiveness, it is not without respect to that public expression of his displeasure against sin, which was uttered in the death of his Son: that the suffering and death of Jesus Christ were of an expiatory nature, and constitute a *real and proper atonement and satisfaction* for sin in a way of sacrifice: that his righteousness is imputed to the believing sinner, and is the proper and alone meritorious ground of his justification: and that the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Godhead, is the efficient cause or agent in his regeneration and sanctification. But why need I detail what these reformers taught? The merest Tyro in Theology and Ecclesiastical history ought to know, and does know, that they were not the doctrines professed and advocated by you and your adherents. That they believed and taught the doctrines just mentioned, cannot be denied without incurring the impeachment of obstinacy or dishonesty. *Theirs* were the doctrines of grace; because they were the same as taught by their Divine Master and his apostles: but *yours* are, without any question in my mind, of the very essence of "Arianism, Socinianism, and Pelagianism,"—the reiterated dogmas and reveries of Taylor, Priestly, Toulmin, Kentish, and others of modern stamp. Such theories and notions as yours, were never sanctioned by heaven. They never prospered; never produced one single revival of pure religion, or reformation in the manners of the ungodly; never converted one single infidel: and, should their native and dangerous tendency not be overruled and destroyed, never will take one soul to heaven. You may charge these assertions to the cold speculations of "bigotry and

prejudice," or what else you please; I speak the honest language of my heart, and cannot but express my fears on account of your situation, and the dangerous tendency of your doctrines, where they may in any measure obtain in this Western country, which has already teemed, and is yet teeming with productions, both from the pulpit and the press, that strike at the very foundation of christianity.

As to the motives that induced me to undertake this task, in the language of Dr. Owen, "I can assure you it is not the least thirst in my affections, to be drinking of the waters of *Meribah*, nor the least desire to have a share in *Ishmael's* portion. I never like myself worse than when faced with a *vizard* of disputing in controversies. The *complexion* of my soul is much more pleasant unto me in the water of *Shiioah*." Neither is it from any desire to engage in *wordy* battles or *paper* combats in this quarrelsome, "*scambling* territory," where, as Tertullian says of Pontus, *omne quod flat Aquilo est*, "no wind blows but what is sharp and keen" Nor was it any conceit of my own abilities, as though I were the fittest person among many to undertake this work. As an author I have no *selfish* solicitude about it. I have not been burdened with *solicitations* from many, or even a single one of my brethren in the ministry; and among those who are not ministers, too much apparent apathy and indifference seems to obtain respecting the advancement of truth, to have even expected many solicitors from that quarter. As I am not at the head of a party, and as my brethren in the ministry are not dependant on me for explanations and criticisms, therefore I have not written at their instance, nor for their benefit. I take all the responsibility on myself; and if there be any thing wrong in this production, they are not to bear the blame. I have scarcely a hope of being instrumental in your conversion, as you have "re-examined your views of the gospel," and have not only been satisfied as to yourself, but also have been induced to write for the "good" of others. To prevent as much as possible the harm that your publication might do among others, is the principal motive I had in writing. Should this be the result, in any small

degree, God, I hope, will be glorified, the kingdom of Jesus promoted, and my poor labor rewarded.

I would just remark farther, that I have not knowingly or intentionally given a distorted cast to a single point or sentiment you have advanced; nor have I designedly passed over one that I thought worthy of attention, because of any difficulty in answering it. I have the testimony of a good conscience, that I have not wilfully misrepresented you. I have no interest in doing so; and if any thing should appear to you to be erroneously stated, and I can be made sensible of that error, you shall without hesitation have my candid acknowledgment. I confess it is with no small difficulty that you can be understood in many places, owing to the ambiguity that much prevails in your production, and on account of your having left your reader to draw the inference from many of your statements, which seem obscure, not having, or seeming to have, any definite point directly in view. If I have misunderstood you in any one paragraph, I can only say I did not wish to do so.

Should you, or any of your brethren, undertake *seriously* and *candidly* to refute what I have here advanced, if I live to see it effected, and circumstances seem to require it, I engage myself, by the Lord's assistance, to be your humble *convert*, or *fair antagonist*.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

The Trinity.

—————"The *more* of wonderful
"Is heard in Him, the *more* we should assent.
"Could *we* conceive him, God he could not be;
"Or—He not God, or we could not be *man*.
"A God alone can comprehend a God."

Young.

DEAR SIR,

ON the important doctrine of the sacred Trinity you have said but little; and the most you have said, is in a way of insinuation, reprehension, and declamation, against the sentiments of others. Much, I grant, need not be said on this subject, as it is one of pure revelation; and is addressed more to our faith, as a matter to be *believed*, than *demonstrated* by reason and speculation.

"That things may be *above* reason, and yet not *contradictory* to it, is a distinction far from being either obscure or improper. By the expression, *above* reason, may be understood two things—beyond the *power* of reason to *discover*, and above the *reach* of reason to *comprehend*. It would be absurd to controvert it in the first sense; and if it were carefully attended to in the other, and prejudice laid aside, there would be little difficulty. A just statement of it is precisely this; we believe a fact which is fully proved, and authenticated, although there are some circumstances, as to its cause and consequences, that we do not understand. I believe that God is a spirit, and that there are also created spirits different from God, wholly unembodied; and yet I have very obscure and indistinct ideas, if any idea properly at all, of what a spirit is, and of the manner of its operation. Doubtless there are many circumstances relating to

things of great moment and certainty, that are to us totally incomprehensible."

You are apprehensive, it appears, that your view of the doctrine of the Trinity will be rejected by those "who have laboured through mazy volumes of scholastic learning," because of its "simplicity," and because "they have been long taught that the doctrine was a high incomprehensible mystery." "However mysterious it may be," you add, "the scriptures never call it a mystery. It is a term attached to it by man." Such assertions are frequently to be met with in your book, and seem to answer with you instead of a thousand arguments; especially when you have no other mode of refutation. Are there no terms in your production but what are to be found in the bible? When speaking of the soul of Jesus Christ you call it the "pre-existent soul:" Is this a scripture term? And when with the Greek fathers you believe that *many* were made sinners by the disobedience of one man, you understand it "*metonymically*:" Does the bible say so, or is it a term invented by man? This mighty weapon, so often used against your opponents, recoils with double force upon your own head. Can you believe nothing but what is entirely clear of mystery?—nothing that you cannot understand or fully comprehend? What think you then of an uncaused cause of every thing? of a Being who has no relation to time; not being older to-day than he was yesterday, nor younger to-day than he will be to-morrow? who has no relation to space; not being a part here and a part there, or a whole any where? What think you of the existence of evil, moral and natural, in the work of a Being infinitely powerful, wise and good? Can you tell how spirits receive ideas from material organs? how they hear, see, &c? Can you comprehend the nature of your souls' connexion with the body; or the manner in which the soul acts upon the body, and is acted upon? How does spirit act upon matter? How are the muscles of my hand moved in writing at this moment by an act of my will? Or how, by means of the eye, is the mind of my reader made acquainted with my thoughts? What is the connexion between a visible mark of my pen and a

thought of the mind? Or how does an image of the mark upon the retina produce thought? Are we who know but *in part* able to comprehend God, who is *infinite*; his judgments, which are *unsearchable*; and his ways, that are *past finding out*? Is there nothing mysterious respecting the resurrection of a dead body? "Behold," says the apostle, "I shew you a *mystery*, the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Is there no mystery in a *spiritual* body? Can you fully comprehend the relation of Christ to his church, as one body, which Paul calls "*a great mystery*."

But perhaps you will insist, as has been often done before you, "that, for a thing to be revealed, and yet remain mysterious, is a contradiction; that it is as much as to say, a thing is revealed, and yet hid." But to this it may be replied: The thing revealed is the *truth* of the doctrine; so that the truth of it no longer remains hid, though many things concerning the *manner* may be so. Must we always deny or disbelieve a thing, because we are unable to conceive, or fully to comprehend it? If so, then farewell to the existence of God and every thing else. If so, then a man born blind would reason right when he forms this syllogism: "We know the figure of bodies only by handling them; but it is impossible to handle them at a great distance; therefore it is impossible to know the figure of far distant bodies." To undeceive the blind man, we may prove to him that this is so, from the concurrent testimony of all who surround him. But we can never make him perceive *how* this is so. "It is therefore," says Ramsey, "a fundamental maxim in all true philosophy, that many things may be incomprehensible, and yet demonstrable; that though seeing clearly be a sufficient reason for affirming, yet not seeing at all, can never be a reason for denying."*

Therefore, when we say that the Trinity in unity is a mystery, or is incomprehensible, or above reason, we say nothing absurd or contrary to reason. As to the unity of the Divine nature, there is no dispute; but in this uni-

* Philosophical Principles of Religion, vol. I. p. 22, 23.

ty of the divine nature, and in perfect consistency with it, there is a three-fold distinction. Or in other words, there is the most perfect simplicity and unity of nature; and yet in the *mode* of existence a plurality. And we do find in scripture most clear and positive assertions of the unity of God, on the one hand, and, on the other, a real plurality in some respects. There is a common, peculiar and reciprocal, but distinct agency.

That revelation in which Deity has communicated to man information concerning himself, "authorizes us, by a variety of inductive proofs, to conclude that, with regard to the *mode* of existence of the one divine essence, the unity of the Godhead includes a Trinity of persons, (so denominated in the English language for want of any better terms,) who are scripturally styled the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: *distinct*, not in essence or in perfections; but only personally: *one*, not personally, but in the common possession of the same identical nature and attributes.

"No contradiction or absurdity is involved in this doctrine; because the unity refers to one respect, and the trinity to another. But we make no difficulty in professing our incapacity to include in our knowledge, or express by any possible terms, *the respect* in which the Trinity of persons subsists in the perfect oneness of the Deity."*

The three persons in Jehovah are equally engaged in the accomplishment of man's salvation. "To the Father," says the author last quoted, "peculiarly belongs the exercise of rectoral authority, as sovereign, law-giver, judge, and vindicator of rectitude. The Son, constituted the second federal head of mankind, but with an especial respect to the objects of sovereign election, takes upon himself the relation, the responsibility, and of consequence, the nature of man; and becomes a subject of the divine government, the servant and messenger of the Father, the mediator between God and man. To the Holy Spirit, the charge is especially assigned of rendering efficient the whole work of saving mercy,

* Smith's Letters to Belsham, p. 26, 27

by the personal application of its blessings?" Yes, the love of Father, Son, and Spirit, is but one love, directed to the three objects of their respective offices; namely, creation, redemption, and regeneration, terminating in our eternal glorification. But notwithstanding this glorious truth, we hear many who seem not to be satisfied with the plain declarations of scripture, begin to reason and speculate, and inquire *how can these things be?* 'This is the first out-set in the road of error and destruction; and at every step the cry is, "how can these things be?" until thousands have tumbled headlong into the vortex of error, infidelity, and scepticism. All the objections to the doctrine of the Trinity itself are reducible to this one, how can it be? It is contrary to reason, absurd, incomprehensible, &c. It is really surprising to think with what insolence and triumph some have pretended to treat this sentiment, charging Trinitarians with holding the absurd, contradictory notion of three Gods, spirits, or essences, because they maintain that there are three *persons* in the one undivided essence. This, to say the least, is owing to great inattention, or great obstinacy.* It ought to be remembered for ever, in this controversy, that *person* and *essence*, are neither synonymous, nor convertible. For though *each* person be of the es-

* A recent instance of this is to be found in a late pamphlet, written by "David Wells, of Cumberland County," entitled "The Lamp of Plain Truth, held up by the hand of sound Reason." He levels his whole force against a "Trinity of Gods," as he terms it, and the deity of Jesus Christ. He is a co-worker with Mr. Stone, but his performance is so drivelling, nonsensical, not to say blasphemous, that my pages cannot be polluted with quotations from it. "A Trinity of Gods!" Is it owing to a lack of knowledge or honesty that this charge is brought against those who hold the doctrine of the Trinity? Such men ought to remember that a fool's cap, forcibly placed on a wise man's head by a knave, however it might excite the mirth of a crowd, would be no actual disgrace, nor impeachment of his understanding. So with respect to the things of God, the malice of man, whether covered by a laugh, or open in its violence, is rather an argument of their truth than of their falsity.

sence, yet the *three* persons together do constitute the essence itself. Thus it will appear, that though *Essence* and *Person differ* as to the full extent of the terms, yet they perfectly *agree* when they apply to the *reality* of the *Deity*.

From what has been now briefly stated, I see no absurdity or impropriety in saying, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, being three persons in Jehovah, and inseparable from the essence, are *personally* and *essentially* Jehovah, and consequently, either in *union* or *distinction*, are the object of worship. In fact, as true believers, we do not, and cannot worship any one of the divine persons *separate* or *alone*, however we may mention each by themselves; for if we invoke the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Ghost, we invoke the *Divine Essence*, which is inseparable from each. This satisfactorily accounts for the apostolic benediction, and the form of baptism *equally* in the *name*, (not names) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. In the same way I understand what is implied in our Lord's declaration; *He that hath seen me*, (meaning spiritually) *hath seen the Father: I and my Father are One*. And the apostle: *He that hath the Son, hath the Father also: These three are One*.—If this doctrine of three persons in one essence; or of the one essence existing, indivisibly, though distinctly, in the three persons, were rightly stated, there would seem but little room for the disputes respecting the proper *object* of worship, and the *inferiority* or *subordination* of the divine persons. This supposed inferiority, applied to Godhead, is an absurdity in the extreme; throws insuperable difficulties in the way; and is absolutely irreconcilable with many express declarations of scripture.

But I proceed to examine more particularly the sentiments of your book on this subject. They are to be found in the following words: "I believe there are three distinctions in Godhead; but I cannot express them in more appropriate terms than those used by the inspired apostle: Father, Word and Holy Ghost." Here you have left the matter; and your reader, as to your real sentiments respecting this triune appellation of Godhead, is just as

wise as he was before, and could have learned as much from one single verse. This is the scheme fraught with so much "simplicity" that you calculated on its meeting with a very unfavourable reception from some who are "attached to the unintelligible language of their ancestors, or with whom bigotry outweighs a thousand arguments; and from others, who have labored through many volumes of scholastic learning." You are also strongly inclined to think that the controversy is "a war of words, while the combatants believe the same thing." This being all gratis dictum, you claim a dispensation from the warfare, and think the controversy ought to end. But how *could* you, with any face, declare your belief, that this controversy is a war of words, and that the combatants believe the same thing; when immediately afterwards we find you laboring through thirteen pages, with a view to make it appear that Jesus Christ was a *created* being *only*--that he is not *equal* with God--that his divinity is *communicated*--that his titles are *deputed*--and that he was creator *only instrumentally*? You certainly do know that the commonly received doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of Jesus Christ, stand or fall together; that they who hold the one in the way I have stated, also hold the other, that is, the *real* and *proper* deity of Jesus Christ, as God-man in one person; and they who deny the one, also deny the other. Would it have been greatly departing from your wonderful, "simplicity," to have said whether you believed the "three distinctions in Godhead," to be *equal* in duration and dignity; or whether the idea of *inferiority* and *subordination* is to be attached to any of them? I am not finding fault with the term "distinctions," when applied to Godhead; but with the vague and uncertain manner in which you have left it. "There are three distinctions in the Godhead!" Yes, there are; but we must take care of "mystery." Seeing every thing with you is so "plain and simple," I do wish you had condescended a little, and told us something more about these "*three* distinctions" in Godhead. We know the Father is the first distinction, the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost the third. We also know they are *personal* distinctions,

for the personal pronouns, *I, thou, and he*, are applied indiscriminately to each of them, and is one reason why they are called *persons* in the Godhead, for the want of a better word. But the main question still remains: are they *equal*? The affirmative is a *sine qua non*; no truce can be called without it: The war is more than a war of words; and we crave no dispensation from the field, while there remains an opposer of the Triune Essence, or an enemy to the personal dignity and divine glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I confess that I do not admire, nor even approve of the explanations and definitions of many, respecting either the Trinity, or the term *person* in the Godhead. They are mostly perplexed and unintelligible. The *modus existendi* of the sacred *Three in One*, the scripture has not even attempted to explain; and therefore all disputation upon this point is impertinent, and proceeds from the affectation of being *wise above what is written*. The word *person* is sometimes to be understood in a *philosophical* sense, signifying one single, intelligent, voluntary agent, or conscious being; sometimes in a *political* sense, which may express the different *relations* supported by the same philosophical person, as father, husband, son, &c. But it is in the *theological* sense that it is used to describe the personality of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as expressing that perfection of the divine nature, whereby it subsists three different ways, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, each of which, possessing the divine essence after his peculiar manner, thereby becomes a distinct person.

To inattention to, or misapplication of the term *person* in these different senses, is to be attributed all the perplexities and failure of its friends on the one hand; and all the nonsense and insolent triumph of its enemies on the other. It is not the *term*, however, that is worth contending about, while the *sense* is truly and safely understood.

I come now to attend to the proof of the doctrine; as contained in the holy Scriptures. On this I need not be diffuse, as it will be further supported by the proofs of the proper Deity of Christ the Son, upon which, as is

natural to suppose, the controversy has always turned. If the one be supported, so will the other. They stand or fall together.

We are commanded to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Here is no *inferiority* or *subordination* hinted at, nor can any be possibly inferred. And without the idea of *equality*, how can it be accounted for, that the Son and Holy Ghost should be classed and put upon the same footing with the Father? Without the assumption of this truth, there is *mystery* and absurdity, with a witness. Their very designation leads us to infer an equality of rank, for it is not said in the name of God as Creator, and in the name of Jesus as a *creature*, and in the name of the Holy Ghost as an energy or attribute, but in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." John 5, 7. Where is the *line of inferiority* to be drawn from this passage, or in that containing the solemn form of baptism? Who can fix a *point* between that which is infinite and uncircumscribed, and that which is subordinate and derived? From whence are the ideas to arise of this comparison, and how can the principle be settled? The inferiority in the Sacred Three, as it respects the Godhead, has certainly no foundation in the sacred volume.

The proof of the Trinity may be taken from the form of solemn benediction, "the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." As in the form of baptism, the three are taken in as the object of *worship* and *obedience*; here they are plainly conjoined as the *source* of blessedness. Our *access* to the Father, is *through* Christ the Son, *by* the Holy Spirit. Eph. 2, 18.

A few texts in the Old Testament may suffice to prove the three persons in Jehovah. "And now the Lord God, and his spirit hath sent ME." Isa. 48. 16. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon ME, because the LORD hath anointed ME," &c. Isa. 61—1. In these passages we are only to inquire who is the speaker, and who are spoken of. Proofs are almost endless, but as this

work must not be swelled to an unnecessary length, and especially as the subject will be further supported when we come to prove the proper deity of Jesus Christ, which will be the subject of my next letter, I therefore dismiss the present subject, and subscribe myself
 Your sincere friend and servant.

LETTER III.

The Deity of Jesus Christ.

“Their Glory shines with equal beams;
 Their Essence is forever one;
 Though they are known by different names,
 The Father God, and God the Son.”

Dr. Watts.

DEAR SIR,

THIS important subject equally relates to the *object* of our worship, the *foundation* of our hope, and the *source* of all our happiness. It is therefore of the most interesting nature. A mistake here involves the most serious consequences; as wrong views of the *Person* and *office* of Christ, if persisted in, will necessarily influence and regulate our deportment towards him, and ultimately issue in eternal perdition.

The charge of denying the divinity of Jesus Christ, so long and often brought against you and your partizans, you pronounce “unjust.” “To deny this,” you say, “would be to deny the most plain and fundamental doctrine of revelation. I believe in the divinity of Jesus in the fullest sense.” In this way many have been deceived respecting your sentiments; and have supposed the charge of denying the divinity of Jesus “unjust,” sure enough. This declaration from the pulpit and the press:

“I believe in the divinity of Jesus in the fullest sense,” has doubtless confirmed many pious people in their attachment to your connexion for a while, who, when the secret was found out, saw an essential difference between you and themselves. There does appear to me an ambiguity in your writings generally;—something covered or concealed, I will not say intentionally, yet in such a way, that many are at a loss to know what you do believe. In a former publication you have stated thus: “Nor do I believe, that the divinity in Christ was equal to God, for that divinity was God himself.” Now how *the divinity in Christ was God himself, and yet not equal to God* as the sentence expresses, I confess I know not, for *God himself* is certainly equal to *God himself*. But when the truth slips out, the idea of equality is that of Name and Office only; it does not extend to *essential* divinity.

Now I must believe you certainly do know that there is a vast, yea, an essential difference between your views of the divinity of Christ, and those of Trinitarians, or christians generally. Or in other words, you certainly know what we *mean*, and how we expect to be *understood*, when we use the term *divinity* of Jesus Christ. We thereby mean and wish to convey the idea of *real* and *essential* deity, as pertaining to the second person in Jehovah, including the idea of ETERNITY in his *co-existence* and *equality* with the Father. This I understand to be the “fullest sense” in which the divinity of Jesus is held: therefore

“If sacred truth I speak, give me thy hand;

“If not, thy refutation.”

If I comprehend you, (and I have long thought I did) then I understand you, from the whole scope of your book, and general tenor of your writing on that subject, as holding that the *soul*, or spirit of Jesus Christ, pre-existed, and that before all other beings and things, as the first of God’s creation;—that that soul or spirit was the *instrument* by which angels, men, and all things were created;—that that soul or spirit was divine only by *communication*, and was in the fulness of time united to

a body prepared for it, and called Jesus Christ—that his equality was an equality of *name* and *office* only—that his fulness was only *communicated*, and all his powers *derived*, &c. This is, I believe, what you mean by the divinity of Jesus in the “fullest sense;” and if so, the world must judge whether you have been as explicit and candid as circumstances and the nature of the case required. You have, in page 22, in so many words, declared, respecting Jesus Christ, that “He is not equal in essence, being, or eternity,” with the Father. So say the Arians, Socinians, and Pelagians; but this we flatly deny, and profess to hold directly the reverse. The world may judge then, who holds the divinity of Jesus in the “fullest sense,” or in the scriptural sense—you, or those who are censured and vilified as charging you unjustly.

That I have not mistaken your views of the person of Jesus Christ, will further appear from your own expressions in page 19. “I have proved already that he was created or brought forth by God himself, the first of all.” And again: “From what I have said, it may be infered that Jesus Christ was not eternally begotten of the Father.” You have first “proved” it, and then left it to be “infered!” This is a kind of logic with which I am not acquainted. But the principle and the proof, as well as the logic, will be all contested, and I hope completely overthrown before we are done.

I shall in the first place consider your notion of the “soul” of Jesus Christ, as an instrumental creator. Your words are: “That the soul of the “man Christ Jesus” existed before the world was, is farther evident, because he was the *instrumental* cause of all creation.” “The one God the father is the only efficient cause of all things, and the one Lord Jesus Christ is the instrumental cause of all things.” p. 18. Here I might adopt your short method of dispatching business, by saying, “The Bible don’t say so, it is a term attached to it by man.” But as this is an old Arian argument, and the very soul of your scheme, it therefore deserves a little more attention.

The scriptures not only teach that Jesus Christ is the true God himself, that created all things; but also that *no instrument was used* in that work. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Now this

God is the very same being who was made flesh and dwelt among us. For thus it is written: "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." He that was *with* God, *was* God: "All things were made by him, and *without* him was not *any thing* made that was made." John 1. 1—3. But if his pre-existent soul was made, and yet *without* him was not *any thing* made that was made, then he must have made himself; "For by him were all things created." Col. 1. 16. But this is absurd. According to the Arian scheme, God created a being by his *direct* and *immediate* agency to be an *instrument* to create all things for him. But upon the principle of reason alone, would it not appear more consistent and God-like, for him to have created all things in continuation, by the same direct and efficient agency and operation, than to do it by a creature as an instrument? Besides, how is it possible to reconcile the idea of an instrumental, creature agency, in creation, with the following scriptures: "Jehovah stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and spreadeth abroad the earth by himself." Is. 44. 24. "God himself formed the earth and made it." Is. 45. 18. "He alone spreadeth out the heavens." Job. 9. 8. "I have made the earth and created man upon it: I, even my hands have stretched out the heavens." Is. 45. 12. "I am Jehovah; that is my name: and my *glory* will I *not give* to another." Is. 42. 8. Were the mountains brought forth, and the earth and the world formed by a creature? No; but by one who is "even from everlasting to everlasting." Ps. 90. 2. The idea of an *instrumental* creator has no foundation in the word of God, and, besides the absurdity, expressly contradicts it. How can we clearly see "his Eternal power and Godhead, by the things which he has made," if he be not *really* God? But this instrumental, subordinate creator must have worship and divine honors paid to him! Yes, if there be no more attached to him than a *created* nature, a *derived* glory, and a *communicated* fulness, this absurd, idolatrous notion would have the sanction of sacred scripture, which unequivocally sets forth Christ as the object of adoration, and religious worship.

We are expressly taught, "That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." John 5. 23. Now we can prove that Jesus Christ is honored with all those names, titles, attributes, and works, which are ascribed and appropriated to the one eternal and ever-blessed God. The attributes of Deity are distinguished very properly into *communicable* and *incommunicable*. The communicable ones are those of which there is some resemblance in the creature, as goodness, justice, wisdom, holiness, &c: the incommunicable ones are such as there neither is, nor can be any appearance or shadow of, in any created intelligence, such as omniscience, omni-presence, independence, immutability, immensity, and eternity. These are all in Christ, the second person in Jehovah, not by *communication*, which is absurd and impossible, but *essentially* and *eternally*. If *incommunicable* perfections, a resemblance of which is not to be found in creatures, are nevertheless to be found in Jesus Christ, then he could not be a mere created being even in the most exalted sense; and this, one might think entirely sufficient to lay this matter to rest forever. If proof be required we are ready to produce it.

And first, *Omniscience*. "In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Col. 2. 3. "I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts." Rev. 2. 23. "He knew all men—he knew what was in man—Lord thou knowest *all things*." John 2. 24, 25. and 21. 17. He is *omni-present*, possessing a power of perception and operation in distant places at the same time. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Mat. 18. 20. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." 28. 20. *Independence, eternity, and immutability*. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and forever. His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Rev. 22. 13. Heb. 13. 8. Micah 5, 2. &c. &c.

As it is not my intention to multiply proofs on any point, in this work, seeing they are almost endless, the foregoing are deemed entirely sufficient, as being expli-

cit and unequivocal. How such passages can be applied to our Lord and Saviour, as possessing only a created nature, is almost unaccountable, unless you compare the Scriptures to the Delphic Oracles, which sent forth doubtful and sometimes *contradictory* responses.

As the name "JEHOVAH" comprehends every thing that is in Deity, it ought to be given up, that if this name be really applied to Jesus Christ in the scriptures, the point is established forever; and therefore all minor proofs and considerations only tend to swell the argument to a tedious and unnecessary length. Unexpectedly to me, you have admitted that Jesus Christ "is even called Jehovah." p. 12. This looks like the very thing we want. This looks like it might silence every accuser, and stop every foul tongue. Your partizans here might exult over calumny, and your opponents stop their mouths. But is there no covering—no secret, reserved meaning here? No loop-hole at which you may creep out when pressed, in order to exhibit a shew of consistency in your inconsistent scheme? As we have learned already from your own writings, and as we have long been acquainted with Arian dogmas, and Socinian gibberish, when the secret comes out, it is—that Jesus Christ is *called* God, *called* Jehovah; not, *is* God, *is* Jehovah; but called by these *names*, as *deputed* titles or names of *office* only; and not in respect to an equality with God "in essence, being, or eternity." The title Jehovah is the grand, the peculiar, and the incommunicable name of God. It neither *is* applied to any created being throughout the scriptures, nor can be applied in reason: for it imports the necessary, independent, and eternal existence of the Most High. The word Lord in the Old Testament, when found in large letters, is uniformly the translation of the Hebrew word Jehovah. This must be admitted on all hands. To shew that this name is peculiar to God, that it is *his* name, and that it is incommunicable, I will quote two passages of scripture which will put it beyond all doubt:—"I am JEHOVAH: *that is my name*; and my glory I will not give to another." Is. 42. 8. "Thou whose name ALONE IS JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth." Ps. 83. 18.

Now to shew that this divine, adorable, and incommunicable name of the Most High, is the name *of*, and *essentially* belongs to the Son of God, I need only quote a few passages out of many, and even one would suffice.

The forerunner of the Messiah, and the person who prepared his way before him, pointed at in that remarkable prophecy of Isaiah 40. 3, was John the Baptist, who was to "prepare the way of Jehovah, and make straight in the desert a way for our God." Now let us hear John's record and confession: "He said I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias." Hear also the testimony of Zecharias respecting his son when he was born, and in reference to the same prophecy: "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." See also Mark 1. 2, 3. Jesus, therefore, is Jehovah.

The prophet Jeremiah calls the Son of God, Jehovah, in the following words: "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, &c.—In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name, whereby He shall be called, The Lord our righteousness, (that is JEHOVAH our righteousness)." Jer. 23. 5, 6. See also Is. 43. 3.—45. 21.—63. 9.—48. 17. &c. in all which places the word Lord should be rendered Jehovah, and is applied to Jesus Christ the Saviour.*

*Perhaps the most striking, not to say *confounding*, of those numerous passages in which the incommunicable name is ascribed to the Son of God, is to be found in Isaiah VI. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also JEHOVAH sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly: And one cried to another and said, Holy, holy, holy is JEHOVAH Sabbaoth; the whole earth is full of his glory," &c. In subsequent verses we are informed that this JEHOVAH Sabbaoth sent Isaiah to Judah for the purpose of "making their ears heavy, of shutting their eyes," &c. Let any one read this passage; let him mark the

But to all this I have heard it objected, that we are to distinguish between *supreme* and *subordinate* honors and worship; the former of which is due to God alone, but the latter may be given to creatures: that Moses, Abraham and others were called lords—that there are lords many, and gods many—that Abraham and Lot worshipped angels and called them lords: Gen 18. 2. and 19. 1, 2. And that all the congregation of Israel “bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the King.” 1. Chron. 29. 20.

But to this it may be replied that in these and all such instances, the honors and the worship addressed to men and angels, are of a *civil* nature, and do not by any means

ascriptions of glory and of sovereignty: then let him turn to John xii. 41, where, speaking of this passage in reference to the Saviour, he says, “these things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him.” Jesus then is he who sat enthroned in majesty and glory: Jesus Christ is Jehovah Sabaoth, in whose presence even seraphim veiled their faces, crying “Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah.” What! this a creature! And where then is the creator?—But in truth no new instances are required on this score. Every name, we see, every attribute, every right, every thing of every kind, that is any where ascribed to God the Father, is ascribed to Jesus Christ. Then does it not follow that if the ascription of any or of all these things to Jesus, does not amount to a declaration of his Divinity, in the full and proper sense of the term; neither can it be asserted from the ascription of them to the Father, that even he is God? We apprehend this to be a consequence from which no ingenuity can free the impugner of our Lord’s true and proper deity. For, most clearly, if the ascription of every thing that marks and defines the Deity of the Father, be equally applicable, and equally applied to the Son; and yet the proper, independent, and eternal Deity (forgive the solecism!) of the Son cannot be necessarily inferred from all those ascriptions; then by what rule of construction can the very same things be made to establish the proper, independent and eternal Deity of the Father? Does it not follow that, for aught that can be made appear, the scriptures are silent about any God at all; and that if they, by employing *such* terms in *such* a sense as Unitarians contend for, do not directly teach us atheism, they at least may be so interpreted as to teach nothing to the contrary?

imply *religious* homage. Nor is there ever once found in scripture, an instance where the names LORD or God, thus written in large, or capital letters, are applied to created things, but always in small letters, thus: "lord," "god," &c. The very idea of subordinate worship is unscriptural and dangerous, seeing that, after the strictest care, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to adjust the *degree* of worship due to the most exalted creature, that it might not interfere with that of the *supreme* God: and seeing also that it would be hard to reconcile this with its being so often declared to be the design of the gospel, to bring men to the worship of *the only true God*; or with the force of Christ's reasoning in Luke 4. 8: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." But there is no danger to be apprehended, nor is there one single caution expressed in the Bible, as to our having too exalted opinions of the Son of God, or rendering unto him our highest honors and supreme regards. We need never fear to "honor the Son **EVEN AS** we honor the Father." Thousands, and millions, blessed be God, have repented with the deepest contrition of heart, and compunction of spirit, for having thought lightly of, and for having degraded the Savior, but none, no not one, for having thought *too* highly of him—for having thought him **EQUAL** to God. And for this sin will none ever be condemned at the bar of God. The danger is on the other side.

As there are but two texts of scripture that you recollect, which directly speak of the equality of the Son with the Father; and as these have been by you, frittered down to the unintelligible mummery of Arian and Socinian criticism, and made to speak a language that the followers of Jesus never heard as the voice of God; they may therefore be considered as deserving a more particular attention.

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he——said that God was his father, making himself equal with God." John 5. 18. "The Jews," you say, "concluded, because Jesus said that God was his father, that he was making himself equal with God. So they concluded at another time, that he had a devil and was mad."

p. 20, 21. Their conclusions, then, from his own language, you must suppose, to have been as strong for the one as the other. Such reasoning may, for aught I know, induce some ill-natured *Jew*, to specify a similar charge of demoniacal possession and madness against the author. But you say: "*This* of his making himself equal with God was undoubtedly wrong; for Jesus labors in the following verses to convince them of it." Well, let us hear how. "For what things soever he (the Father) doeth, *these also* doeth the Son *likewise*.——For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."—"That all men should honor the Son, *even as* they honor the Father." ver. 19, 21, 23. This has helped the matter much to be sure! One would think their prejudices against the notion of equality increased, rather than diminished; and that this was the case we have only to travel a little further, and see them together again, John 10. 30--33. "I and my Father ARE ONE. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those good works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest **THYSELF** God." Ah! that's the very thing they could not bear! However *spiritually* blind they were at that time, they could very well understand *doctrinally* what the Saviour taught respecting himself. The charge before was, for "making himself *equal* with God." But now it is, "makest thyself *God*." Now if Jesus were not God, equal with the Father, all must own, that it was his duty to have spoken out in as plain a manner as Paul and Barnabas did, when the people of Lystra took them for gods, and were about to sacrifice to them. But to suffer himself to pass for a blasphemer, and never clear up the matter, but leave his disciples after him to follow his example, and call him God, "the true God," "God blessed forever," "the Great God and Savior," "*by* whom and *for* whom all things were created," when he was really as mere a creature, as you and I are, is what can never be accounted for.

Having, as I believe, entirely failed in the first attempt at destroying the equality of the Son with the Father, we will now see how you come out with the second. It is that noted passage in Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. "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," &c. Here you think the person spoken of "cannot be the only living and true God; for God cannot be emptied, humbled, and exalted, without change." But look at the text again, and you will find that your conclusion is founded on mistake. "He took on himself the form of a servant—and being found *in fashion as A MAN*, he humbled himself," &c. not as God.

But again: "The person spoken of was in the form of God; now the form of a thing is not the thing itself." Logicians say, "that which proves too much, proves nothing," and this happens to be the fate of your logic here; for in the same manner I can from this same passage prove that Jesus Christ was not a servant—was not man. He took upon him the *form* of a servant—was made in the *likeness* of men—found in *fashion* as a man. But the *form*, the *likeness*, the *fashion* of a thing is not the thing itself; therefore Jesus Christ was not a servant, nor a man!!! Q. E. D.

Once more: "The Greek word *isa* is translated *as* instead of *equal*," by Doddridge, Whitby, &c. And thus it is to be read, "thought it not robbery to be *as* God." You and the Socinians wish to convey from this circumstance the idea of *similitude* and not *equality*. But, says Dr. Scott, "the learned bishop Pearson has shown that *isa*, especially used with *cinai*, may express equality as well as *ison*," the proper Greek term for equal. Thus in Rev. 21, 16: "The length, and the breadth, and the height of it (*esti isa*) is equal." And so far from converting Dr. Doddridge to Arianism, by the little word *isa*, that in paraphrasing on the place he uses the following expressions: "*In the form of God*, and having been from eternal ages possessed of divine perfections and glories—

thought it not robbery and usurpation *to be*, and appear *as* God—assuming the highest divine names, titles and attributes, by which the Supreme Being has made himself known .

But let the word *isa* be translated *as* instead of *equal*. Let it convey the idea of *similitude* or *likeness* instead of *equality*; and then let us see what it will come to upon your own ground. In page 20, in a note, you speak of Jesus Christ, *as Son* and *as God*. “As Son,” you say, “he knew not when would be the day of judgment—could do nothing, &c; but *as God*, he knew all things.” But seeing the word *as* must only mean *similitude*, therefore Jesus Christ was neither Son, nor God; not equal to the one, nor to the other. But perhaps you may be ready, like many others, to ask with Socinus: “How can God be said to be equal to himself?” To which it may be replied, that the Son may be equal to the Father, in the unity of the Godhead, which is all that the apostle’s language implies, and all that we contend for. I would in turn inquire; if Christ pre-existed originally, as to his soul, and as an instrumental creator, must he not also originally have been the servant of God; and if so, how can it with propriety, or without manifest inconsistency, be said, that he *took* on him the form of a servant, when he appeared in the world; if he were really a servant before? Is it consistent to say he *took* on him *that* which he *had before* he took it on him? Or can you admit that the *form* of a servant implies the *nature* of a servant, without admitting that the *form* of God means the *nature* of God? But here again we expect the old subterfuge will be resorted to, namely: Christ is God by *name* and *office*, therefore he may call himself God, and as God’s messenger or ambassador may speak in God’s name and person. But was it ever heard of that the ambassador of any king in the world did ever speak thus: “*I am the King, I am the Emperor,*” &c. But because Christ was *sent* into the world by the Father, he is therefore supposed to be *inferior*. This is an old Arian argument repeated a thousand times, and if answered ten thousand times, very possibly the Arians of another generation, ignorant and unmindful of the refuta-

tion, would be pressing it into service again. Who supposes that Castlereagh and Talleyrand were *inferior* in nature to the Prince Regent of England and the King of France, because they were *sent* to the congress at Vienna? There is no question, but those men were *equal* if not superior to their sovereigns in respect of talents and intellect, though *inferior* as it respected their *civil* relation and *office*. So the Son of God and *messenger* of the covenant, though he often spoke of himself as *inferior* to the Father, in calling him *his* God—disclaiming the infinity of knowledge, power, and goodness—praying to the Father—declaring himself, to have received from the Father those things for which he was most eminent; and that throughout the whole of his administration he is described as the *servant of God*;—yet let it be specially noted, once for all;—let it be forever remembered that all these things must be understood as being spoken *by* or *of* him, *as a man, as a servant*, and as it respected the *office of mediator*; and not with reference to his *Deity*, his *self-existent nature*, or that *eternal union* which made him and his Father *ONE** If the divine and human

* Nothing can be imagined more absurd than the grounding an argument against the proper Deity of the Saviour upon his disclaiming infinity of knowledge, (as for instance of the day fixed for the general judgment,) under the circumstances in which he did so. Who ever argued, who ever thought, that his humanity is infinite? Even he, it is recorded, “increased in wisdom,” as well as “stature.” (Luke II. 52.) And it were marvellous indeed, if the human nature of Christ *could* be infinite in knowledge, any more than it could be omnipresent, or eternal, or self-existent, or almighty. Equally strange must it be, if the assertion of this self-evident truth necessarily involves the negation of his Divinity. Does not such a mode of arguing proceed upon the assumption, that it is impossible for the Divinity to constitute or bring into operation such a plan for the redemption of the world, as that which is so plainly taught in scripture, viz. by the incarnation of the Saviour? And is it not a fact, that if this assumption cannot pass, the argument is good for nothing?

The same kind of reasoning applies to the other source of objections; viz. the imputation of inferiority in Christ. Inferiority! in what sense? Why evidently, and solely, as relates to

nature united in the person of Jesus Christ, be not admitted, then it can as easily be proved from the scriptures that he is *not man*, as that he is *not God*. But if this truth be admitted, with filial docility, and due deference to the eternal word of God, without inquiring "*how these things can be?*" the scriptures will appear in perfect harmony, without the aid of human ingenuity and criticism to make them speak right: And the question, or rather interrogatory affirmative in Mal. 2. 10. "*Hath not ONE God created us?*" will be easily understood by turning to John 10. 30. "*I, and my Father are*

the station which he occupies in the new and mere temporary constitution which the mercy of God has set up for the salvation of sinners. In that constitution the second person of the Trinity has accepted an office, it matters not how high or how low; but what has his acceptance of an office or his assumption of its duties, in the mediatorial kingdom, to do with his essential character, his essential nature, and his essential rights, which may and do subsist quite independently of that whole concern.

Mr. Stone's hearers, many of them at least, may, as mere citizens, be his equals, and perfectly independent of him; does it follow that therefore no association can be framed of which he and they may become members, and an inferiority of station, a dependance in act, result from this voluntary, and perhaps merely temporary association. May not his people become in all respects his inferiors and dependents within the pale of this association, and yet remain his equals, perhaps his superiors, in every other relation? Why then argue the natural, and necessary, and universal inferiority of the Saviour, because he occupies the station of dependance, in that limited and temporary constitution of things which we call the mediatorial kingdom? That kingdom, be it remembered, has all its primary references to this world, and not to the universe at large; when its ends are accomplished it will be fully and finally dissolved; (1 Cor. xv. 24—28.) things will then revert to their old and universal channel; the Son will deliver up his delegated dominion, under the temporary constitution, to his father; and instead of the God-man mediator ruling, as he now does, Jehovah the self-existent—God the father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in his essential character, and in the exercise of his rightful and ordinary dominion, will be "*all in all.*"

ONE:" one in nature and essence; equal in power and glory.

But still, in support of the Arian theory respecting the pre-existent soul of Jesus being the first of God's creation, you will inquire—Is he not said to be *the first born of every creature*, and *the beginning of the creation of God?* Col. 1. 15. Rev. 3. 14. As these two passages are much used and relied on to prove the point, they are deserving of some attention.

And as to the first: it is true that Jesus Christ is called, or said to be (*prototokos*) the *First-born*, but not (*protoktistos*) *First-created*; by which the distinction between the eternal Son of God, and the most exalted of those creatures which derived their existence from him will be particularly marked. And in the whole passage, the apostle's argument clearly confirms, and evidently shews, that he meant, that Christ was before, above, and distinct from, all creatures; yea, the author, proprietor, and support of all ranks and orders of them in the universe. And had you consulted your bible, you would have found that the *first-born* among the Hebrews, as typifying Jesus Christ, had special honors and privileges conferred upon them, as it respected the portion of inheritance, and a pre-eminence and authority over their brethren. (See Deut. 21. 17. 2 Chron. 21. 3. &c. See also, Doddridge, Guise, and Scott *in loco*.)

But the Son of God is also "the *beginning* of the creation of God." Let it be noted here, that this is a *title* assumed by him, when writing to the Laodiceans, and no more proves that he was the first being *made* or *begun*, than does the title "Almighty" itself: "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." Rev. 1. 8. But Christ is "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," (verse 11, 17. chap. 2. 8. and 21. 6. and 22. 13. compare Is. 41. 4. and 44. 6. and 48. 12.) Jesus Christ therefore is the Almighty; the *Origin*, *Author*, and *Ruler* of the creation of God. So the word "beginning" is sometimes used actively, signifying the first Actor, or the cause of a thing; thus it is

said of Lachish in Micah, 1. 13. "She is the *beginning* of the sin to the daughter of Zion."

Your criticism seems to have had nothing to do with that famous passage in Col. 2. 9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." You have barely mentioned the words without reference, and made a remark or two, and acknowledge your incapacity to know "How it is that God dwells in Christ in all his fulness." You quote 1 Tim. 3. 16. "Great without controversy is the mystery of Godliness, God was manifest in the flesh;"—Then add, "Though it is a great mystery, yet matters of fact are stubborn things, and prove the doctrine true." p. 12. This will do very well for *you*; but when your *opponents* speak of *mystery*, with reference to some doctrines of the Bible, which they cannot fully comprehend; they are immediately proscribed for inventing terms, and attaching them to the scriptures. What a pity it is you had not seen the *Lamp* of David Wells, your Arian friend and coadjutor!—That wondrous *lamp* which seems to have passed the critical and theological acumen of Wm. Downs, (some greater *Light* I suppose than himself,) in an approbatory note at the close; and which is now the great light of the West.—There you would have been almost overpowered with such a blaze of light on that text, as was never the like seen before. "In the Son," says he, (p. 9.) "all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. Not the Godhead itself—you know the fulness of a cup is one thing, and the cup itself is another." So we might just as well say, (and the above reasoning will go nigh to prove the fact), that a scull itself is one thing, and the brains another; let the latter be taken out, and what is left behind?—*an empty scull*. Does not this great theological luminary, by the figure he has introduced, convey the idea of an empty Godhead? Can the *fulness* of Godhead, which is the very *nature* and *essence* of Deity, be separated from Godhead itself? Verily, the friends of Jesus Christ have little to fear from such mighty Goliath's as these.

But with more plausibility we are often told that the fulness that dwelt in Jesus Christ, was not an *essential*, but a *communicated* fulness: or, as you have expressed it, "the undivided God dwelt in him," I suppose you

mean, by *communication, infusion, or emanation*. This I know is the common interpretation of those who deny the essential divinity of Jesus Christ. But if it were only a communicated fulness that dwelt in the Saviour; what would be the difference between him in that respect, and those christians for whom the apostle prays that they "might be *filled with all the fulness of God?*" Eph. 3. 19. Surely none in respect of *nature*, but *degree* only.* In this latter text, their being *filled* (*pan to pleroma tou Theou;*) *with all the fulness of God*, most naturally and undoubtedly means, filled with all those *gifts and graces* of which God is the author and the giver. But (*pan to pleroma tes Theotetos;*) *all the fulness of the GODHEAD*, is a quite different phrase, of inconceivably superior signification, and includes all the essential, incommunicable attributes and perfections of the divine nature: For *Godhead* is the one only divine nature itself, by which God is what he is. The fulness or perfection of Deity, is a natural idea of all that is comprehended in Godhead; and all this is said to dwell in Christ (*somatikos*) *bodily*; either to intimate the personal union of the divine nature with the human body, as well as the soul of our Lord, when he, the eternal Word, *was made flesh, and dwelt among us*; or *really and substantially*, in opposition to figuratively and emblematically, in types and shadows, in which sense the apostle says *the body is of Christ*. ver. 17.

I will just add a few general remarks before I close my address on this subject, which has already been somewhat longer than I intended.

On this subject you say: "The difference between us, is *substantially* nothing;"† and give this as your reason: "For we all maintain the proper humanity of Jesus Christ." This is another lullaby for timid and hesitating minds. If you can only get them satisfied that there is no great difference between you and your opponents, it will be a sweet requiem to their souls. But be it re-

*And hardly that either, if "filled with ALL the fulness." In fact there would be no difference.

† "*Substantially NOTHING!*" admirable phrase!

membered, we are not disputing about the proper humanity of Jesus Christ. We know that as man he was human. But the dispute is respecting his *real, proper, personal, essential, and eternal* divinity, as the second person in Jehovah: and this is what we affirm, but what you deny. Will you be so candid, the next time you write, as to inform the world, whether this is the truth of the case or not.

Again; "We say, with the scriptures, that the soul of the man Christ Jesus existed with the Father before all worlds." Pray sir, where do the scriptures say so? In what book, chapter or verse is this to be found? The truth is, the scriptures say no such thing. It is no where to be found except in your own ~~safe~~ assertions, unfounded inferences, and distorted expositions; unless you may have found it in the *Improved version of the New Testament*, by the self-styled *Unitarians* of England; in which they have so mantled their scheme, and formed a covering of such loose and wide dimensions, that the wearer may turn round and round in it, without disturbing its shape, or depriving himself of its shelter. These, however, I believe, were generally on the Socinian side of the question; and their version of the New Testament made to suit themselves, has been most ably and judiciously examined and detected by Mr. Nares, in his *Bampton Lecture*; to him the cause of Christianity is much indebted for this valuable work.

On the subject of the Divinity of Christ, you have informed us, p. 13, "That for nearly twenty years past your mind has not wavered respecting its truth." This declaration seems in my view to implicate your own character in point of candour and honesty. I shall rejoice to find myself mistaken, but this implication appears the more plausible from the following considerations:

On the 4th day of Jan. 1797, you visited Transylvania Presbytery, as a probationer from the presbytery of Orange, and applied for privilege to preach within their bounds. They, then in session, "examined your credentials, and likewise your acquaintance with *doctrinal* and *experimental* religion," and being satisfied, permitted you to preach in their bounds. On the 10th day of A-

pril, the next year, you was received under their care, and a call from the united congregations of Cane-ridge and Concord laid before presbytery for you at the same time; in consequence of which you was solemnly ordained and set apart to the office of the holy ministry in the presbyterian church, and as the pastor of said congregations, on the 4th day of Oct. 1798. All this is not twenty years ago, by at least four or five years.

Now when you were licensed in one of those presbyteries, and ordained in the other, in both instances you answered the following question publicly in the affirmative: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the confession of faith of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy scriptures?" Now that confession which you professed "*sincerely*" to receive and adopt, speaks very pointedly on the divinity of Christ, and that too in what I call the "fullest sense." "The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, &c. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and man, and yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man." * This is plain talk. No person can mistake such language. This is what you professed "*sincerely to receive and adopt,*" as scripture doctrine, a little over sixteen years ago. Yes, your fathers and brethren in the ministry had no doubt of your sincerity. They did not suspect you for being an Arian at that time. If they had believed you held, as you now say, that Jesus Christ is not equal with the Father in "essence, being, or eternity," you would not have been by them licensed or ordained unto this day. How you could hold a sentiment respecting Jesus Christ, four years before your ordination, so repugnant and so contradictory to that just quoted from the confession of faith; and then at your ordination satisfy the presbytery and the congregations, that you

* Conf. of Faith. Chap. viii. Sec. 2.

both sincerely received and adopted the doctrine of that very confession, is what cannot be accounted for, except upon principles, which to name, might be offensive, and to think upon, disagreeable. That the Lord may yet bring you to see your errors, and lead you in the right path, is the sincere prayer of

Your, &c.

LETTER IV.

Atonement and Sacrifice.

“The types bore witness to his name,
Obtain’d their chief design, and ceas’d;
The incense and the bleeding Lamb,
The ark, the altar, and the priest.”

Watts.

DEAR SIR,

BEFORE attempting to overturn the commonly received doctrines of the atonement and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, you were aware of a previous step necessary to be taken; lest in marching on to the attack, you might leave a battery in your rear, which, if suffered to play upon you, would inevitably prove your ruin. Hence, with much labor, and with as much confusion, obscurity and derangement, you have endeavoured to fritter away the sacrificial language of the Old Testament, in every instance of atonement under that dispensation, so as to make it convey nothing more than a mere *ceremonial purification*, having no *vicarious* import, nor any thing of an *expiatory* nature.

As the legal atonements were typical, “having a shadow of good things to come,” should they be left in full force, retaining their *vicarious* and *expiatory* import,

pointing to, and corroborating with the sacrificial language of the New Testament, thereby confirming the *real* atonement and satisfaction made by the one offering and sacrifice of the Son of God, you well knew, if this were the case, vain and fruitless would be all your efforts (and vain and fruitless they are) against the sacrifice of the cross. While Moses keeps up a galling fire behind, and Jesus Christ with his apostles thunder before you, it is not hard to determine what your fate must be.

You say the word *Atonement* signifies *reconciliation*; and for your authority you have plain scripture—the opinion of the translators of the New Testament—the etymology of the word—and the acknowledgment of your opposers. p. 24. If all this be true, there needs nothing more to be said. But we are not yet ready to take assertions for proof, without further investigation.

Though the word atonement and reconciliation are sometimes used synonymously, yet this is not always the case. *Reconciliation* sometimes means a being *actually in friendship with God, through faith in the blood of Christ*: but when used synonymously with atonement, it denotes the *satisfaction of justice only*, or the opening of a way by which mercy may be exercised consistently with righteousness. In both these senses the word occurs in Rom. 5. 10. “For if when we were enemies we *were reconciled to God* by the death of his Son; much more *being reconciled*, we shall be saved by his life.” There appears to me, to be as plain a distinction here, as between *cause* and *effect*; for it is on the very ground of the propitiatory sacrifice and oblation of Jesus Christ, that actual *reconciliation* is alone to be effected; and this I think may be fairly infered from your own acknowledgment:—“Had Jesus never lived, died, and rose again, we had died in our sins.” p. 77. That is, we should have died in a state of enmity against God; but now in consequence of the propitiatory sacrifice, or atonement of Jesus Christ, as the *reason*, the *ground*, or the *foundation* on which our *reconciliation* to God can be effected, we can be prevented from dying in our sins.

I have no difficulty in admitting that the word *katalage* in Rom. 5. 11. rendered in our translation *atone-*

ment, ought to have been rendered *reconciliation*; and although the word *atonement* is not used in the version of the New Testament, except in this single instance, "yet in the original, the same, or words derived from the same root with that which the Septuagint commonly use when speaking of the legal atonement, are not unfrequently employed in treating of the death of Christ. Thus *ilaskomai* and *exilaskomai*, which signify to *appease*, or make *propitious*, are almost always used by the seventy for the Hebrew word which by translators is sometimes rendered to *make atonement for*, and sometimes to *reconcile*: and in Hebrews 2. 17. we find it said of our Lord, that he was *a merciful and faithful high-priest, to make reconciliation for (eis to ilaskesthai) the sins of the people*; and again he is twice in 1 John entitled *ilamos, a propitiation, &c.* Now in all these, the word *atonement* might have been used with propriety; and as the *reconciliation* which we have received thro' Christ, was the *effect* of the *atonement* made for us by his death, words which denote the former simply, as *kattallage*, and words derived from the same root, may, when applied to the sacrifice of Christ, be not unfitly expressed by the latter, as containing in them its full import."*

But "Lexicographers derive the word *atone* from the two words, *at* and *one* (see Johnson and Bailey). To be *at one* signifies to be reconciled." In a former publication you had it, that *God and the sinner are at twos, and that Christ came as mediator between God and man to at-one them, or make them one.* The phrase *at twos*, you have not ventured in your late work—a phrase not to be found in any dictionary, or in any book but your own. Nor did you ever see it, until your own *inventive* pen wrote it. It was a new coined word altogether, which you wished no doubt to have a place in your vocabulary. But you received so complete and deserved a castigation for your temerity from the pen of your opponent,† that it is presumed you thought it prudent to drop it in your late edition.

* M'Gee on atonement and sacrifice. p. 142.

† Campbell's Vindex. p. 77.

But when did you learn that the word atone, meant to *make one*? "It has no such meaning—it never had; nor can you shew a single book in our language, which uses it in that sense, except your own. You not only impose a new sense upon the word, but from a *neuter* verb, convert it into an *active* one." Let us see Dr. Johnson's Dictionary, an authority to which you have appealed, and therefore must admit it to stand as good against, as for you.

"To Atone. (verb neuter) To agree; to accord.—2. To stand as an equivalent for something."

"To Atone. (verb active) To expiate." Atonement. s. 1. Agreement; concord. 2. Expiation; expiatory, equivalent.

This is certainly hostile to your notion of reconciliation, which excludes the idea of expiation and propitiation altogether. You certainly ought to have known, that it was neither classically elegant, nor critically accurate to change a *neuter*, into an *active* verb, and thus make it speak a language it never intended, and which consequently shall never be admitted to speak. Such criticism palmed upon Dr. Johnson, is surely, "enough to rouse the dead man from his tomb."

You are equally as unfortunate in your citation from Acts 7, 26. "And the next day he shewed himself to them as they strove, and would have set them *at one*; that is, he would have reconciled them." I have quoted you accurately, and what I would observe first is, that a careless reader would suppose that the last sentence is a part of the verse, instead of your own comment, seeing the whole is made a quotation. But he would have set them *at one* (*eis eixenon*.) Is this the original word for atonement, or reconciliation? Is this your "*plain scripture*" for making these two words signify the same thing? or was it cited to confirm your *partial* and *distorted* criticism from Johnson's Dictionary? *O tempora! O mores!*

As a self-evident proposition, you contend that "the atonement, reconciliation or union, whether moral, political, or ceremonial, never took place before the person or thing defiled was cleansed or sanctified." But

here again we are so refractory and stubborn, that we are not ready to admit it as a "self-evident proposition;" and for this plain reason, namely; that you have not only neglected the original, and strict signification of the term implying sacrificial atonement, and imposed upon it a sense, which at best is but secondary and remote; but also decided on a partial and hasty view of the subject, even as confined to the English translation: for surely, although it be in every case of atonement evidently implied, that the thing or person atoned for, was thereby cleansed, and so rendered fit for the service of God; it must likewise be admitted, that by this they were rendered pleasing to God, having been before in a state of impurity, and unfit for his service, and being now rendered objects of his approbation and acceptance, as fit instruments of his worship.

The fallacy of the proposition consists in this, that it assumes that to be the *sole end* of the atonement, which, although an undoubted *consequence* from it, was inseparably connected with, and subservient to another and more important effect: the atonement indeed purifying, so as to qualify for the service and worship of God; but this purification consisting in the removal of that which unfitted and disqualified for such sacred purposes; bringing what before was undeserving the divine regard into a state of agreement with the divine purity, and rendering it the object of the divine approbation. To make atonement then to God, was to remove what was offensive; and thus, by conciliating the divine favor, to sanctify for the divine service.

That the Jewish sacrifices were *propitiatory*, or in other words, that in consequence of the sacrifice of the animal, and in virtue of it, either immediately or remotely, the pardon of the offender was procured, is a proposition we are able to maintain both by scriptural authority, and by answering the objections you have urged against it. That I may be fully understood, the single point I intend to establish is just this: that the sins of the offender were *symbolically transferred to the victim*, and immediately, *expiated by the death of the animal to which they had been so transferred*. This having been done,

the next point will be carried without difficulty, namely: that God's displeasure against sin is such, that he has ordained that the sinner shall not be admitted to reconciliation and favor, but in virtue of that great sacrifice which has been effected for the sins of men, exemplifying the desert of guilt, and manifesting God's righteous abhorrence of those sins, which required so severe a condition of their forgiveness.

In your former choice publications, (the sentiments of which you have never retracted, and the present scarceness of which has been one reason for republishing) you have stated "that atonement differs not from regeneration;" and that under the law it is explained to signify, "purging, cleansing, most generally, if not always," and this sentiment is still maintained in the work before us: Thus in p. 43. "The apostle to the Hebrews uniformly explains the effects of the legal sacrifices, by *purging* or *cleansing*." And again: "It appears to me evident that the first effect of the sacrifices was to purge, cleanse or sanctify the transgressor, and the unclean. The consequence of this effect was, that atonement or reconciliation took place, or was made between God and the purified offender." In your self-evident proposition, "The atonement, reconciliation, &c. never took place before the person or thing defiled was cleansed or sanctified."

If the reader can understand you, I confess he has much greater philological abilities than I possess. If there be no ambiguity or contradiction here, I believe I know not what is such. First, "atonement signifies purging or cleansing;" then it is the "effect" of it, yea, more, "the consequence of this effect." How things are the same, and yet one the effect of the other, or the "consequence of an effect," is what I cannot understand. I always thought, that an *effect* was uniformly produced by an operating *cause*; and I can as readily understand how any thing can be the effect of an effect, as the *consequence* of an effect. "Atonement, reconciliation, or union, never took place before the person or thing defiled was cleansed, &c. And yet, cleansing, purging, &c. signify the same thing as atonement. If this be your "unsullied light," I confess, to me it is a very dark one.

That the sacrifices of the law chiefly operated to the cleansing from external impurities, and to the rendering persons or things fit to approach God in the exercises of the ceremonial worship, there can be no question. But at the same time it is equally as unquestionable, that they were designed to typify or prefigure the sacrifice of Christ, which was purely spiritual, and possessed the transcendent virtue of atoning for all moral pollution. It is in this view of the case, that we see the true proportion of both dispensations, preserved without even the shadow of inconsistency. And this is doubtless the plain reason why the writers in the *New Testament*, naturally adopt the sacrificial terms of the ceremonial service; and by their reference to the use of them, as employed under the law, clearly point out the sense in which they are to be understood in their application under the gospel. In short, admit the sacrifice of Christ to be held in view, in the institutions of the law, as a real and propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and every part is plain and intelligible; reject that notion, and every theory devised by the ingenuity of man to explain the nature of the ceremonial worship, becomes trifling and inconsistent.

Of all the sacrifices under the law, that which was offered for the whole assembly on the solemn anniversary of expiation, seems most exactly to illustrate the sacrifice of Christ. See Lev. 16. On this solemn day, the priest was to offer a bullock and a goat as sin-offerings, the one for himself, and the other for the people: and having sprinkled the blood of these in due form before the mercy-seat, to lead forth a second goat, denominated the scape-goat; and after laying both his hands upon the head of this goat, and confessing over him all the iniquities of the people, to *put them upon the head* of the goat, and to send the animal, thus bearing the sins of the people, away into the wilderness: in this manner expressing by an action which cannot be misunderstood, that the atonement, which is directly affirmed, was to be effected by the sacrifice of the sin-offering, consisted in removing from the people their iniquities, by this symbolical translation of them to the animal. Let it be particularly noted, that the *two goats* are, throughout the

chapter, spoken of as *one* sin-offering, presented *jointly* as the offering of the people. The death of the one animal was requisite to represent the *means* by which the expiation was effected; and the bearing away the sins of the people on the head of the other animal was requisite to exhibit the *effect*; namely, the removal of the guilt. For these distinct objects, therefore, two animals were necessary to complete the sin-offering.

“What then are we taught to infer from this ceremony?—That as the atonement under the law, or expiation of the legal transgressions, was represented as a translation of those transgressions, in the act of sacrifice in which the animal was slain, and the people thereby cleansed from their legal impurities, and released from the penalties which they had incurred; so the great atonement for the sins of mankind, was to be effected by the sacrifice of Christ; he undergoing, for the restoration of men to the favor of God, that death which had been denounced against sin, and which he suffered in like manner as if the sins of men had been *actually* transferred to him, as those of the congregation had been *symbolically* transferred to the sin-offering of the people.

On this important passage of holy writ, you wish it to be “well observed, that the scape-goat was not sent away till the high priest had been in the holiest of all;” from which you would infer that if the “text be strained to signify imputation of sin, then it must follow that the imputation was, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and not before; consequently it was not the reason of his death.” But you might have saved yourself the trouble of drawing such an inference as this, if you had recollected that the *dying goat* and the *scape-goat* constituted but the *one* sin-offering, (Lev. 16. 5, 7.) the former representing the death of Christ, the latter his resurrection, in order to effectuate the purposes of his death, in the actual forgiveness and justification of his believing people. So that the ceremony of the scape-goat is not a *distinct* one, but a continuation of the process; and is evidently the concluding part, and symbolical consummation of the sin-offering.

But it is again inferred, that "if the sins of all Israel were imputed to the scape-goat, and borne away by him, then the doctrine of universalism cannot be avoided." But how can such a dilemma attend the scheme of imputation in this case more than your own? Did not the atonement, reconciliation, or union," by this sacrifice, include the whole congregation of Israel, the penitent and impenitent? But your conclusion seems to recognize no difference between Israel of old, as a people set apart visibly, relatively, and externally holy, and the true Israel of God in Christ Jesus;—between the legal atonement which was only typical and illustrative, and that of Christ, which was *real* and *efficacious*;—and finally, between a *typical* transfer of guilt, which respected temporal punishment, and averted the judgments of God from the nation, and that which actually removes guilt and moral pollution from the whole commonwealth of God's spiritual Israel.

Your hostility to the doctrine of substitution, and the vicarious import of animal sacrifice is further evinced from the manner in which you have stated your objections; first, you say, "Because there were no sins, for which the law required death, which admitted of sacrifice or atonement. And for those sins, for which sacrifice was admitted, the law never required the death of the transgressor. Therefore the death of the victim could not be instead of the offerer's; consequently it was not a substitute in his stead." p. 33. This is an argument advanced with great confidence, than which I am sure there is none abounds with greater fallacies. It is untrue in point of fact; it is sophistical in point of reasoning; and it is impertinent in point of application.

1. "It is untrue; for atonements *were* made in cases where *without atonement* life was forfeited. This appears at once from Lev. 17. 11. which expressly declares *the life to be in the blood*, and subjoins as a consequence from this, that *it is the blood or life of the animal offered, that maketh an atonement for the soul*, or life of the offerer. It also appears from the unbending rigor of the law in general, which seems to have denounced death against every violation of it, (see Deut. 27. 26. Ezek. 18.

19—23. Gal. 3. 10. Jas. 2. 10.) and in particular, from the specific cases of *perjury* and *profane swearing*, (Lev. 6. 3 and 5. 4.) for which atonements were appointed, notwithstanding the strict sentence of the law was death. (Exod. 20. 7.—and Lev. 24. 16.)

2. It is *sophistical*; for from the circumstance of atonement not being appointed in those cases in which death was peremptorily denounced, it is inferred, that no atonement could be made where life was forfeited: whereas the true statement of the proposition evidently is, that *life was forfeited* where *no atonement* was permitted to be made. It is true, indeed, there is no express denunciation of death in those cases, where atonements were allowed. The reason is obvious, *because* the atonement was permitted to arrest the sentence of the law; as appears particularly from this, that where the prescribed atonement was not made, the offender was left under the original sentence of the law, which in those cases no longer suspended its natural operation, but pronounced the sentence of death. But,

3. The whole argument is *inapplicable*. For even they who hold the doctrine of *vicarious punishment*, feel it not necessary to contend that the evil inflicted on the victim, should be exactly the same in quality and degree, with that denounced against the offender. But still less will this argument apply, where *vicarious punishment* is not contended for; but merely an emblematic substitute, the result of institution, and which in no respect involves the notion of an equivalent." (Magee.)

But another formidable objection appears: "The victim suffered death, when there was no sin confessed, and none to confess; consequently none imputed, and therefore the victim was not imputatively guilty. What sin had the woman after child birth, the leper, or the man with the running issue, to confess?—Yet for all these things the persons had to bring a sin-offering, by which an atonement was made for them." To which I reply: The cases here specified did not involve moral guilt, and therefore can only prove that there were sacrifices which were not vicarious, inasmuch as there were some that were not for sin: but it by no means follows, that

where moral guilt *was* involved, the sacrifice was not vicarious. Now it is only in this latter case that the notion of a vicarious sacrifice is contended for, or is indeed conceivable. And it deserves to be considered, whether pains of child-bearing, and all the diseases of the human body, being the signal consequences of that apostacy which had entailed these calamities on the children of Adam, it might not be proper on occasion of a deliverance from these remarkable effects of sin, that there should be this sensible representation of that death which was the desert of it in general, and an humble acknowledgment of that personal demerit which had actually exposed the offerer to the severest punishment.

The imposition of the hands upon the head of the victim, usually considered in the case of piacular sacrifices as a confession of sin, a symbolical translation of the sins of the offender upon the head of the sacrifice, and as a mode of deprecating the evil due to his transgressions, you have treated in your usual short way of assertion without proof. To make it appear that imposition of hands on the head of the victim, did not imply an acknowledgment of sin, you triumphantly ask: "Did every woman after child-birth who brought her sin-offering, and according to law laid her hands on the victim's head—did she by this act confess her sin, because she had brought forth a child into the world? Did the leper—the man with a running issue, by laying their hands on the head of their sin-offerings, confess they had sinned in these things? I cannot think so." No sir, nor do I. But where did you find the law requiring the imposition of hands at all in these cases? I am sure, not in the references you have made to them. I am certain you cannot place your finger on the place, where it is said, either the puerpera, the leper, or the man with a running issue was required to lay hands on the head of the victim. And this circumstance deserves particular attention as going to establish the sentiment advanced a while ago, respecting the distinction between those cases where moral guilt was involved, and where it was not. It also strongly militates in favor of the idea of acknowledgment of sin, being joined with imposition of hands in pi-

acular sacrifices, intended as the substitute for the offender, and as the accepted medium for expiation; which will also appear from the bare recital of the ceremony, as prescribed on the day of expiation. "*Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, AND CONFESS ALL THE INIQUITIES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat—and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities,*" &c. (Lev. 16. 21, 22.) From this, one would naturally think, there could be no difficulty in understanding the true import of the ceremony of laying hands on the head of the victim, both in this and all other cases of peculiar sacrifice.

But you contend that "laying on of hands rather signifies to consecrate or devote the thing to God. Thus the Levites were brought before the Lord, and the children of Israel put their hands upon them, and Aaron offered them unto the Lord. In the same manner, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, the ministers of the gospel are consecrated to the Lord for the work of the ministry. So the victim by the ceremony of laying on of hands, was consecrated or devoted to the Lord, for the service of the tabernacle, and support of the priesthood." p. 34. What an outrage is this upon common sense! Who could have thought that a man of your pretensions to philological and biblical learning, would dare to impose upon the public (especially after having provoked the critics and learned so much) such sophistry, and absurdity! "The Levites were consecrated to the Lord, for the service of the sanctuary," by the laying on of the hands of the children of Israel. Yes, they were. But were they offered in sacrifice too, as the victims were, that constituted the sin-offering? But the ministers of the gospel too are consecrated to the Lord for the work of the ministry, by the same ceremony. Yes, even to this day. What then? Are they offered in sacrifice as a sin-offering too? Who but yourself, and those who wish to get rid of the sacrifice of the cross, would ever have thought that the ceremony of the imposition of hands upon the head of an animal brought for a sin-offering, and that of the consecration of the ministry, were analo-

gous and parallel? Surely that must be a bad cause, when such shifts are resorted to, in order to bolster it up.

On this subject we have another instance of your masterly reasoning. To the idea of the victim being *accepted for the offerer, meaning in his stead*, or as a substitute, you oppose this powerful argument, namely; "A sheaf of wheat is said to be accepted for you. Lev. 23. 11. And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, and it shall be *accepted for him*. Surely the sheaf was not a substitute, nor sin imputed to it, and it accepted in the stead of the offering." p. 35. It is sufficient here, just to inquire again, if this sheaf of wheat was brought before the Lord as a sin-offering? Was it an animal sacrifice? Was any *life* given, any blood shed? Were there no sacrifices or offerings of the *eucharistical* kind, whereby the offerer acknowledged the bounty of God, and his own unworthiness, and rendered praise for favors received, and desired a continuation of the divine blessing?

It would have appeared much more plausible, had you urged the sin-offering of flour (Lev. 5. 11—13.) as an objection to the idea of a vicarious substitution of a life, seeing that here an atonement was made, and yet not by animal sacrifice; and in as bad a cause as yours, it is somewhat remarkable, that the "drowning man did not catch at this straw." And lest it should in another edition be pressed into service, as your Socinian brethren have done before you, let it be remembered this was a case of necessity; and that this offering of flour was accepted *only* where the offerer was so poor that he could not by any possibility procure an animal for sacrifice. And therefore, by the positive will of the sovereign law-giver, he was indulged in this inferior sort of offering, which he was to consider but as a substitute for the animal sacrifice. It must likewise be obvious, that although no vicarious substitution of a life could be conceived, where life was not given at all; yet from this it cannot follow, that where a life *was* given, it might not admit a vicarious import.

I have intentionally omitted to animadvert on many things you have advanced respecting the legal atonements, not because your arguments (if such they may be

called) are either formidable or unanswerable; but because it is deemed unnecessary, from the specimen already given, and because it would be swelling this work beyond the intended limits, seeing we have many things yet to say on other subjects contained in your Address. And now having, as I conceive, attended to the principal arguments which you have urged against the vicarious nature of the legal piacular sacrifices, it is not difficult to judge how far they are conclusive against the notion of their *vicarious import* here contended for.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

The Death of Christ a Propitiatory Sacrifice.

* * * * * Man disobeying,
* * * * * * * * * * *

He, with all his posterity, must die;
Die he, or justice must; unless for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.

Milton.

DEAR SIR,

Having with the aid of Dr. Taylor and other Socinian writers, levelled your whole force and exhausted all your strength against the propitiatory nature and vicarious import of the legal atonements, as a preliminary measure, without which your main purpose could not be effected; we see you marching forward in hostile array and self-confident expectation, to give the finishing stroke to the fair fabric of christianity, by endeavouring to demolish the only foundation of the christian's hope in the substitution and surety righteousness of the Son of God.

In order to do this, we find you resorting to criticism upon those phrases which have always conveyed the idea of a *real and proper* substitution; hence, *to bear sin*, and *to forgive sin*, are in your estimation, and according to your theory, synonymous and convertible terms. So when Christ was once offered *to bear* the sins of many, we are not to understand thereby, that he suffered in our stead, or on our account, that punishment which was due to our sins. And where it is said "his own self *bare* our sins in his own body on the tree," it means the same as *to bear away*, or *put away* our sins by remission or forgiveness *only*, the idea of substitution being excluded altogether: and further to support this Socinian hypothesis you have introduced Isai. 53. 4. with Taylor's interpretation, which you endeavour to support by Mat. 8. 16, 17. where the evangelist applies that passage of the prophet to Christ, when employed in casting out devils and curing diseases. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." The inference you draw from this passage is, that as Christ's casting out devils and healing the sick, are to be understood of the removal of those evils; his *bearing sin* must be explained of his *bearing it away*, or *forgiving it*.

As to your translation of 1 Pet. 2. 24. I hesitate not one moment to pronounce it erroneous. The Greek word *anaphero* which is there rendered *bear*, does in its primitive and most direct signification, mean, *to bear up*, *sustain*, *endure*, or *shoulder up* any thing. It strictly signifies *to bear*, not *bear away*, and to carry *up*, not carry *away*; and therefore it is commonly applied in the sense of *offering up* a victim, as *carrying it up* to the altar: and may with equal propriety be applied to Christ *bearing up* with him, *in his own body*, our sins (*epi xulon*) *to the cross*. It does of course fairly admit the signification of *bearing as a burden*; and when joined to the word *sins*, or *iniquities*, it thereby signifies the *bearing their punishment*, or *sustaining the burden of suffering* which they impose.

St. Peter in his description of Christ's bearing our sins, refers to Isai. 53, 11, 12. *He shall bear their iniquities—he bare the sins of many*, and not to the 4th

verse, as some have erroneously supposed. In this reference he evidently quotes the very words of the prophet, and quotes them too in the language of the seventy, which leaves no doubt of his stating them in the very same sense in which *they* used them; and that when he says that Christ *bare our sins in his own body on (or to) the cross*, he means to mark, that Christ actually bore the burden of our sins, and suffered for them all that he endured in his last agonies.

It is therefore positively denied that you have proven, or ever can prove, that the original Greek word translated *bare*, and *to bear our sins*, signifies *to forgive*, nor yet *to bear away*, otherwise than as a weight or a burden; and in this sense, have our translators rendered it, and so all *real* christians understand it.

You have often wondered, it seems, "why divines, leaving the plain explanation of Isa. 53, as given by Christ and his apostles, are yet continually pressing that chapter in support of that imputation of sin, and of vicarious punishment." p. 47. The very reason is, because it is the voice of God and the revelation of the Holy Ghost, and because it is the doctrine taught by Christ and his apostles, and which you would have continued to preach unto this day, had you not been deceived by the erroneous criticisms and false glosses of Socinian writers, such as Dr. Taylor of Norwich, in his celebrated Key to the apostolic writings, from which the most of your criticisms are compiled, (or an imitation of which, at least, you have lamely attempted. But this same Dr. Taylor has contradicted himself most palpably, and therefore when he contradicts the scripture, ought to be relinquished as a guide in matters of such importance and magnitude.

The purport of his criticism on the word *Nasa*, is *to forgive*, and also *to bear away*, or *take away*; and that as it occurs in Isa. 53. 4, 12, these verses should be rendered, "surely he hath borne away our griefs—And he bare away the sin of many," &c. Though he has expressed himself thus in his Key, (which by the bye is a false one) yet in his Hebrew Concordance on the word *Nasa*, he defines it thus: "To bear, *to lift up*; to bear, *to suffer* &c.

fiction, trouble, terrors, reproach, shame, punishment, sin, iniquity. Lev. 5. 1. 17. and 24. 15. Num. 18. 22. Ps. 59. 7—38. 15. Jer. 15, 15. Ezek. 14. 10—39. 26." By carefully attending to this quotation, and especially the texts referred to, it may be seen how this author refutes himself very handsomely. It will be found, that *to bear sin*, is to suffer the punishment due to sin, and that two of the texts (Ps. 59. 7. and 88. 15.) can apply to no other than the suffering Saviour.

Dr. Parkhurst, a man whose consummate learning and industry no one can question, offers the best explanation of the word the world has ever seen. That part of it which relates to the present controversy, is as follows: "*To bear, bear up* as the waters of the flood did the ark. Gen. 7. 17.—*To bear, carry* as a burden. Gen. 45. 23. Ex. 25. 14.—*To bear sin* as an offender; *to bear it himself* as a burden, i. e. *to be reckoned as a sinner, and punished accordingly*. Lev. 5. 1, 17.—xxiv. 15. et al. freq.—*To bear sin*, in a vicarious manner, or instead of the sinner; and that whether typically, see Exod. 28. 38. Lev. 10. 17. and 16. 21.—or really, Isai. 53. 4, 12."*

The learned and incomparable Lowth, who is worth an host of yesterday critics, may be here introduced to support what has just been advanced. In his admirable and deservedly celebrated translation of Isaiah, and of the verses now under consideration, the rendering is as follows: Isai. 53.

4. Surely our infirmities he hath borne—
And our sorrows he hath carried them.

11. By the knowledge of him shall my servant justify
many;

For the punishment of their iniquities he shall bear.

12. And he bare the sin of many.

Now, when the common translation is supported, and the true notion of a propitiatory sacrifice vindicated by a Parkhurst and a Lowth, there is little to be apprehended from the imbecile attacks of Taylor, Sykes, and

*Heb. Eng. Lex. under *Nasa*.

Priestly, with all the little, skirmishing critics of yesterday's growth.

As for Isai. 53. 4. and Mat. 8. 17, "they can be perfectly reconciled, by considering the first clause in each as relating to diseases removed; and the second to sufferings endured. For it should be remarked that the Greek words *elabe* and *ebastaze* in Matthew, bear to each other the proportion of the verbs *Nasa* and *Sabal* in Isaiah, the former in each of these pairs being generic, and extending to all modes of *taking* or *bearing on* or *away*: and the latter being specific, and confined to the single mode of *bearing, as a burden.*"

If the original word *bastazo* does not contain the force of *burden* and *suffering*; or, in other words, if *tas nosous ebastazen*, must be rendered *to bear away our diseases*, then the following texts in which the same word is used, must appear very awkward and inconsistent: Mat. 20. 12. *have borne the burden and heat of the day.* Luke 14, 27. *Whosoever doth not bear his cross.* John 16. 12. *But ye cannot bear them now.* Acts 15. 10. *A yoke on the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.* And in the same sense we find it used by St. Paul, Gal. 6. 2. *Bear ye one anothers burdens*: also 5. 10. *He that troubleth you shall bear his judgment*: and again, Rom 15. 1. *We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak.* It must be needless to cite more passages. There are in all, 26 in the New Testament, in which the word *bastazo* occurs exclusive of this of Mat. 8. 17. and in no one is the sense any other than that of *bearing*, or *lifting as a burden.*—But, according to your criticism, the foregoing passages must be read—*have borne away* the burden and heat of the day—*whosoever doth not bear away* his cross—the yoke, &c. *we were not able to bear away*—*bear away* ye one anothers burdens—*ought to bear away* the infirmities of the weak, &c. But this would be nonsense, and therefore your fabrick, being unsupported, of course falls to the ground; and thus is the original objection, derived from St. Matthew's application of the prophecy, completely removed: since we now see that the *bearing* applied by the evangelist to *bodily disease*, is widely dif-

ferent from that which the prophet has applied to *sins*; so that no conclusion can be drawn from the former use of the word which shall be prejudicial to its commonly received sense in the latter relation.

The scriptures, you say, "attach two ideas to the phrase of *one bearing the iniquity of another*. The first is to *sanctify, or take them away*. The second is to *bear the burden of iniquity*, as the children of Israel bore the iniquities of their fathers, (Sam. 5. 7.) by suffering great distresses on account of their iniquities." p. 47. Were I not afraid of swelling this work unnecessarily, I could easily shew that the passage just quoted has no such meaning as you have given it, but the proper translation of it according to Dr. Blayney is: "Our fathers have sinned, but they are no more, and we have undergone the punishment of their iniquities. The passage may also be compared with Jer. 31. 29, 30. and to the application of it also in Esek. 18. 19, 20. and in Num. 14. 33. In all of these, the sons are spoken of as *bearing the sins* of their fathers in a way of *suffering* for them agreeably to the second commandment: and on the peculiar principles of the Jewish dispensation, the reasonableness of this procedure as a judicial infliction must be admitted. But the time is approaching, says Jeremiah, in which this shall not be any longer, but *every man shall die for his own iniquity*. This would take place under the *new covenant* which was to be made with the Jewish people, and which was to differ from that which preceded, in that God was not, as hitherto, to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, but to visit each individual for his own transgressions.

But from your gloss on Sam. 5. 7. we are at no loss to comprehend your notion of the sufferings of Christ. "He suffered pain, persecution, and death—not because, or on account of his sin, but for, or because of ours." p. 47. This looks a little like substitution or vicarious punishment—this looks like the very thing we want. But let us see the next page. "In bearing the burden of our iniquity, Christ suffered not only in body but also in his soul." Yes, there is no doubt of that. But now the secret comes out. "As the prophets, seeing the miseries, pains, and distresses, coming upon the wicked na-

tions around, are said to bear their burden; the effects of this burden were, that the prophets' loins were filled with pain; pangs took hold of them, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth; they were bowed down at the hearing of those calamities, and dismayed at the seeing of them." And now, lo! the solemn conclusion follows: "So Jesus bore in his soul the sins of the world."

We have now before us, in your account, the whole amount of Christ's sufferings. They are just such as the prophets and other good men had suffered before him, in a way of sympathy, terror, dismay, consternation, persecution, and death. And no solid reason can be assigned why one of these suffering prophets could not have answered, (seeing the idea of substitution must be laid aside) the same end of sacrifice and offering, agreeably to your notion of bearing the burden of iniquity, as well as the mere creature-Saviour, that you have dressed up in a super-human, or super-angelic garb, and presented to the world. Alas! how wretchedly deceived have thousands and tens of thousands been—how false their joys and comforts, their hopes and expectations, who in the moments of triumph on their dying beds, viewed a crucified Savior, suffering in their stead that punishment which their sins deserved, and through his meritorious obedience, imputed or reckoned to them, completely justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. O! my soul! if this man's theory be correct, how mistaken hast thou been in the *object* of thy worship, the *foundation* of thy hope, and the *source* of all thy happiness! The wonders of the cross that used to shine every thing else into darkness and shade, must now be lowered down to the faint glimmerings of a sympathizing prophet, or a suffering martyr! The dazzling glories of the cross have been deceptive and illusive, for the want of a little Socinian gloss and Arian criticism to set the Bible right, and subject its language to the test of proud human reason! The mirror in which it was thought the infinite evil of sin appeared, when the Son of God died upon the cross, has been too strong in its reflective operations in magnifying the evil nature of sin, and consequently depreciating human

righteousness. Finally, this scheme does not stop short of a total subversion of all christianity, and a virtual renunciation of the entire gospel of God.

By the blood of Christ you say, "we are *redeemed, bought, purchased, and ransomed,*" which words many have taken "in their literal signification—as much so, as if your government should pay a sum of money to the Dey of Algiers, for the liberty of some American citizens, detained by him in slavery. They represent Christ the purchaser—man the being purchased—the blood of Christ given—but as to the person from whom the purchase was made, they have differed." This last assertion is without foundation; for they who embrace the generally received doctrine of the atonement of Jesus Christ, believe with the apostle, that he gave "himself for us, an *offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.*" Eph. 5. 2.—That he "*offered himself without spot to God,*" Heb. 9. 14.—that in this very way the church of God was "*purchased with his own blood.*" Acts 20. 28. and that this blood is the *price* with which we are *bought.* 1 Cor. 6. 20. But *these* expressions, "redeemed, bought, purchased, and ransomed," are to be understood *metaphorically*, and not *literally*. What weight has this in the argument, seeing it must still be acknowledged that a price or ransom was paid some how or other, and that this price was Christ himself or his blood? Now for a price to be actually paid, and a ransom actually given, and yet no one to receive it, this is a monstrous absurdity. The very reason why it is called price and ransom, is because it was received; for if it had not been, it would have been called any thing else in the world, rather than price and ransom. And unless some one be allowed to receive this price, there is no foundation even for a metaphor; it would not be even so much as a metaphorical price; nay, it would not be sense, but profound nonsense.

As for that *pretty* comparison in which our government is introduced as negotiating with the Dey of Algiers, it is entirely an invention of your own, and may be placed upon the same file of repose with that you published some years ago in your letters (p. 24.) "Here we

see the devil had the power of death, and got the PRICE which was the DEATH OF CHRIST." This sentiment you now disavow, and throw it upon St. Austin and his disciples, and deny that your writings, if "fairly construed, speak any such sentiment." The quotation to be sure, seems to be very plain and positive, and must speak for itself. That ambiguity, however, which is every where observable in your writings, may afford some apology in your behalf towards a more favourable construction. But be it as it may, if we think of the work of redemption as being exactly paralel to a bargain and sale among men, we think ridiculously. The tremendous incomprehensible nature of God and his mysteries, are not to be measured by buying and selling, like debtor and creditor in the commercial affairs of beings who are but of yesterday. As sin is not a *pecuniary* but a *moral* debt; so the atonement for it, is not a pecuniary, but a moral ransom. Therefore it is not true that redemption has for its basis the idea of pecuniary, and not of *moral* justice. But this you call "an evasive subterfuge," and to be classed among "nice distinctions," as you "cannot detach the idea of *morality* from justice in any view." But surely, sir, you and every body else must know, that it is no unusual thing for moral obligations to be expressed in language borrowed from pecuniary transactions. For a man to *owe a debt* of obedience, or *owe* his life to, the justice of his country, or for one to *pay a debt* of gratitude—no one mistakes these things by understanding them of pecuniary transactions: and there is doubtless a sufficient analogy between pecuniary and moral proceedings, to justify the use of such language, both in scripture and common life; and it is easy to see the advantages which arise from it; for without this distinction it is not difficult to see how "the scripture doctrine of atonement, conveyed in language borrowed from pecuniary transactions, has not only been improved by unbelievers into an argument against the truth of the gospel, but has also been the occasion of many errors amongst the professors of christianity. Socinus on this ground attempts to explain away the necessity of satisfaction. "God," says he, "is our *Creator*. Our sins are

debts which we have contracted with him; but every one may yield up his right, and more especially God, who is the supreme Lord of all, and extolled in the scriptures for his liberality and goodness. Hence then it is evident that God can pardon sins without any satisfaction received." To this reasoning of Socinus, Dr. Owen judiciously replies, by distinguishing between right as it respects *debts*, and as it respects *government*. The former he allows may be given up without a satisfaction, but not the latter. "Our sins," he adds, "are called debts, not properly, but metaphorically." This answer equally applies to those who pervert the doctrine, as to those who deny it; for though in matters of debt and credit a full satisfaction from a surety excludes the idea of *free* pardon on the part of the creditor, and admits of a *claim* on the part of the debtor, yet it is otherwise in relation to crimes."*

I designedly pass over many things in your book, not because they are formidable and unanswerable, but because they do not deserve a serious reply, and because they contain mere assertions, without proof or reason, and false conclusions from unallowed premises. Your hostility, however, to the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction and surety righteousness, deserves some attention. Your denial of the first of these is to be found in p. 59. "People unacquainted with the bible, by attending to a great part of the preaching and systems of religion in the present day, would almost conclude that Christ died only to satisfy justice—appease the vengeance of God, and purchase grace. These things I do not believe to be contained in the bible." And again, in p. 75. "It is a pity that so much is said and written on the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction,---when the doctrine is not contained in the bible." "The imputed righteousness of Christ is not once named in the bible." p. 68. This is your sweeper, with which you attempt to level all opposition; "not contained in the bible---not once named in the bible---the bible dont say so," &c. &c. It really looks disingenuous, to say the least of it, to find a writer expressing himself in

* Fuller's Gospel Witness, p. 155

this manner in every two or three pages, when in the same compass there are to be found many words and phrases not once named in the bible. To me it appears little and trifling for the hero of a party to make such a parade, and raise such a hue and cry against words and phrases, if, notwithstanding, the truths and doctrines which are intended thereby to be described, remain in full force: By satisfaction is meant simply this, namely: "Whatever that is, which being done or suffered either by an offending creature himself, or by another person for him, shall secure the honors of the divine government in bestowing upon the offender pardon and happiness, may properly be called a SATISFACTION, or ATONEMENT made to God for him."* By this it is not intended to assert that it is in the power of an offending creature to *satisfy* for his *own* sins; but only to shew what is meant when we speak of his doing it. As under the law, God was not appeased without shedding of blood, nor sin expiated without suffering the punishment, nor the sinner pardoned without the substitution of a sacrifice; so all these are eminently accomplished in the death of Christ, who "hath given himself *for us*, an *offering* and a *sacrifice to God* for a sweet-smelling savour."

In consequence of the sacrifice of Christ, God can be *just* and also the *justifier* of him that believeth—sin was condemned, and yet the sinner saved—*mercy* and *truth*, or *justice*, are met together, *righteousness* and *peace* have embraced each other,—the law is magnified—justice satisfied—and the richest grace exercised, not to the discredit of any, but to the unspeakable glory and honor of all the divine perfections. But if the sacrifice of Jesus was not *expiatory*, and if God could without injury to his justice, without any difficulty, and without a satisfaction, forgive the sins of men, then this whole business of sacrifice and ceremony, (with reverence I speak it,) appears to be nothing but a kind of solemn farce, an empty shew, and by no means worthy of God, thus to appear, without any necessity, with such terrible majesty in the death of his beloved Son.

* Dod. Lec. vol. 2. p. 217.

The great end of Christ's death was not only to save sinners, but also in their salvation to demonstrate the righteousness of God. This direct end the apostle had in view in the following declaration: "Whom God hath set forth to be a PROPITIATION through faith in his blood, TO DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS." Rom. 3. 25. But we shall have occasion to attend to this more particularly in noticing your objections to the doctrine of satisfaction; a word which you sneeringly say "the learned have, after diligent search, found in *one* passage where the same in Hebrew, commonly translated *atonement*, is translated *satisfaction*. Num. 35. 31, 32." It seems then that the original word in Hebrew has been indifferently translated *atonement*, *reconciliation*, and *satisfaction*.— But this last word offends you,—the very sight of it seems to be hateful, and, consequently, the authority of the translators is condemned, and their orthodoxy called in question. "It may prove that they believed the doctrine; but it can be easily proved, that they believed many doctrines which were false." p. 62. O those wicked, heretical translators! Fifty-four learned divines, "profoundly skilled in all the learning, as well as in the languages of the East," were appointed by King James; forty-seven of whom, according to Fuller's list, three years after their appointment, being ranged in six divisions, entered on their province in 1607; and in 1613 the work was published; in consequence of which all other versions dropped and fell into disuse. "The English translation of the Bible." says the learned and judicious Selden, "is the best translation in the world, and renders the sense of the original best." Buck observes, they "have given us a translation which, with a very few exceptions, can scarcely be improved; whilst some of those who have presumed to improve their version seem not to have possessed a critical knowledge of the Greek tongue, to have known still less of the Hebrew, and to have been absolute strangers to the dialect spoken in Judea in the days of our Saviour, as well as to the manners, customs, and peculiar opinions of the Jewish acts."

But these translators “believed *many* doctrines which were false.” It is very certain they were not Arians nor Socinians; yet if they translated in favor of those many false doctrines which they believed, what surety have those plain people (for whose “good” you profess to have written,) that the greater part, if not the whole of your book contains false doctrine, seeing you have most profusely quoted their translation, and especially, seeing you are not able to correct them, as you have but a smattering of the Greek, and not even that much itself of the Hebrew. How you can profess “no new light, but that old unsullied light which shines in the Bible,” under all these circumstances, is somewhat mysterious, and as it is an assertion without proof, it must go just for what it is worth.

You have undertaken to state and refute three schemes held by your opponents, who “explain the word atonement to mean satisfaction.” The first is, that contained in the Confession of Faith, which you once *professed* sincerely to receive and adopt, as containing the doctrines taught in the Bible, and which sets forth Jesus Christ as a substitute and surety in the room and stead of the sinner, who “by his obedience and death, made a *proper, real, and full satisfaction* to God’s justice, in behalf of them that are justified—and *fully discharged* their debt. By his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, he hath purchased reconciliation, and procured the favor of God: The sinner is justified, accepted, and accounted righteous in the sight of God for salvation, the obedience and satisfaction of Christ being imputed to him.” p. 60.

The second scheme is found in the Methodist Discipline, art. 2. and 20. in which they have adopted the 31st article of the church of England. As for the third scheme, you have referred to no authority, but have taken the liberty to frame it yourself, and of course I suppose none of your opponents will be willing to father it. And indeed it was poorly worth your while to trouble yourself and your reader with this addition, when you say, “that it differs not essentially from those just considered,” and that it “appears to be a palliative of the two former, but as unfounded in truth.”

As it is principally with the first scheme that I am concerned, and against which you have pointed your heaviest artillery, I shall proceed very succinctly to notice your chief objections. And lo! that which stands in front is the old sweeper, "not found in the Bible." But probably all this time you have meant the Hebrew or Greek scriptures, and not our English Bible; seeing the translators are rendered suspicious at least, in consequence of the "many" false doctrines which they held, among which, it is presumed, are the doctrines of *substitution*, *satisfaction*, and *suretyship*. They doubtless believed these doctrines, for we find them running through the entire of the Bible.

Objec. 2d. "This scheme destroys the ideas of grace and forgiveness. For if my surety and substitute has *fully discharged my debt*, having paid *the real, proper*, and full demand for me, can it be grace in my creditor to forgive me?" This is again confounding *moral justice*, or justice as it relates to *crimes*, with *pecuniary justice*. "No two ideas are more distinctly marked in common opinion and in scripture, than those of our obligation to a creditor, who demands *money*, and our responsibility to criminal law, which claims the *life* of offenders." But as this subject has been considered before, it is not necessary here to enlarge on it. Your reasoning is evidently false, and calculated to mislead and perplex your reader.

It is contended in the third place, that "This scheme imposes certain damnation on every one who ever sinned against the gospel, by unbelief or disobedience. For according to the scheme, the curse of the law was death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. But Christ could not suffer more than eternal death." This is certainly one of the most curious positions ever taken in divinity. It is just this; that sins under the gospel are not to be recognized and condemned by the law. This is fairly contained in the premises, and is further confirmed in that masterly piece of reasoning which we find in your tenth objection: "There are many precepts of the law which Christ could not have fulfilled. How could he have fulfilled the peculiar duties of a wife to her husband, or of a husband

to his wife—of parents to children, or the duties of any relation which he did not sustain” .

There are “many precepts of law which Christ could not have fulfilled.” Thus you have flatly contradicted the Saviour himself, who expressly declares that he came not to destroy the law or the prophets, “but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law **TILL ALL BE FULFILLED.** Whosoever, *therefore*, shall break one of these least *commandments*,” &c. Mat. 5. 17—19. To love the Lord with all the heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, are two commandments on which hang **ALL THE LAW** and the prophets.” Mat. 22. 37—40. *Love is the fulfilling of the law.* This is the sum aggregate of the whole; so that he who shall “offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” Jas. 2. 10. But according to your reasoning, this doctrine of the apostle James is incorrect; for the man who has no wife, the woman who has no husband, and the parent who has no child, cannot violate the *whole* law, or by offending in one point be “guilty of all,” however numerous their failures may have been in other respects.

The truth is, the Saviour completely fulfilled the general law of Love, both as it respected God and man; and there is no precept of the gospel, the violation of which would not be noticed and condemned by the law, which extends to every motion of our souls, and every action of our lives, and demands the universal perfection of our nature. But according to your theory, this law may now be violated without exposure to death and damnation. “Though the moral law was not abolished by Christ, yet its political curse was, which I before proved to be death, under Moses.” p. 54. Just before, you acknowledged the law to be “unchangeably and eternally binding on all intelligent creatures.” This *unchangeable* law once had a curse annexed to it; but *now* it is abolished. What a contradiction! It was once more severe than it is now; and yet called a moral law! With a *political curse* too! The apostle was surely mad in saying, that “as many as are of the works of the **LAW ARE UNDER THE CURSE.**” Gal. 3. 10. But all who are in their sins, are under the

law. (Rom. 6. 14.) "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become *guilty* before God." *Under sin, under the law, under the curse*, is apostolic language; but a moral law with a *political curse*, (a phrase, by the bye, not once named in the Bible) and this *abolished*, too, is a language worthy of those only who deny the truth.

It is further objected, that the doctrine of substitution "conveys the notion of two independent Gods. For one God cannot purchase any thing from himself, or pay any thing to himself, so as to satisfy himself." p. 64. This is the borrowed language of infidels, and is too ridiculous to come from the pen of a christian minister. The position has no foundation in truth, and the conclusion is fallacious. It is no where said that God the Father paid the price of our redemption, or made the purchase; but Christ as man paid in his human nature what was accepted in the divine. The sacrifices under the law were offered to God, and that he accepted them cannot be denied; yet his were both the animal that was sacrificed, and the person who offered it; both really belonged to him, and to him was the offering made; yet what man in his senses would ever think about God's offering to himself, or paying himself in these ceremonies? Such inferences are too visionary and chimerical to deserve a serious refutation.

But it is further objected, that "This scheme veils the glory of God's grace to sinners." For, "when the sinner, in his surety has *fully discharged the debt* against him, how can he see and praise the grace of God in this." To this it may be replied in the language of the Apostle: *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a PROPITIATION, through faith in his blood, TO DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* Rom. 3. 24—26. Now according to this passage, *free grace* requires a *propitiation*, even the shedding of the Saviour's blood, as

a *medium* through which it may be honorably communicated. And it further teaches, that redemption by Jesus Christ was accomplished, not by a satisfaction that should preclude the exercise of grace in forgiveness, but in which the displeasure of God against sin being manifested, mercy and grace to the sinner might be exercised without any suspicion of his having relinquished his regards to righteousness. This is clearly to be seen, for in his *setting forth Jesus Christ to be a propitiation*, he declared his righteousness for the remission of sins. The whole objection is only a recitation of the old story of *debt and credit*, or *item per item*, which has been considered before. You have introduced the parable in Mat. 18. 23. of a king who forgave his servant ten thousand talents, because he had nothing to pay, as a "beautiful representation of the grace of God in forgiving us." This has no application that way at all. It was a forgiveness without reference to any sacrifice or atonement whatever. It was also a forgiveness without justification; which two doctrines are inseparable: for *through Christ is preached the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified.* (Acts 13. 38, 39.) But the truth is, the scope of this beautiful allegory, which you have partially quoted, is to teach us, that unless we forgive our offending, but penitent brethren, we cannot expect forgiveness of God. But if parables (which are only similitudes and not arguments) and detached parts of allegory be made the basis of special and definite doctrines, then what whimsies may not be invented, what errors may not be broached, and what blasphemies may not be uttered under the sanction of scripture?

"In religion

What error, but some sober brow

Will bless it, and approve it with a text,

Hiding the grossness with fair ornament."*

It is again contended, that "this scheme represents God as changeable—as being full of wrath against the sinner; but by the blood of Christ, he is appeased or re-

* *Shakespeare.*

reconciled to the sinner, though he remains unchanged and in the same state of rebellion against God and his government." Who ever held that God was reconciled to impenitent sinners? The charge is a mere invention of your own; for your opponents never held any such doctrine; you never heard it, or saw it written in any page of any book but your own. It is the uniform language of orthodoxy, that all persons previously to a state of actual reconciliation with God, are "*by nature, children of wrath even as others.*" The plain language of your objection is, that there is no wrath in God, that God is not said to be reconciled *to us*, as this would make him changeable; but that we are every where said to be reconciled *to God*. But let it be remembered, once for all, that the displeasure of God is not like man's displeasure, a resentment or passion, but a judicial disapprobation: which if we abstract from our notion of God, we must cease to view him as the moral governor of the world. The scriptures represent a reciprocal opposition between God and the sinner: "*My soul lothed them, and their soul also abhorred me.*" (Zech. 11. 18). "*God is angry with the wicked every day.*" "*The carnal mind is enmity against God.*" (Ps. 7. 11. Rom. 8. 7.) That reconciliation was necessary on the part of God as well as of man, and that the Divine Being is placable, without a change of his nature, can be proved by plain and positive scriptures which no man in his senses can deny. "*And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, when I am pacified (*kapâr* reconciled) toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.*" (Ezek. 16. 62.) Without multiplying quotations, I will just notice one case, which is exactly in point to the main argument before us, in which there is described, not only the *wrath* of God, but the turning away of his displeasure by the mode of sacrifice. The case is that of the three friends of Job—in which God expressly says to one of them, "*My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends:—Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant*

Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept; lest I deal with you after your folly." (Job 42. 7, 8.) This case will answer instead of a thousand arguments, and completely demolishes the foundation of your whole fabrick. Another, which is no less fatal to your scheme, is found in Luke 8. 13: "God be merciful to me a sinner." In the original it is, (ὁ Θεὸς ἱλασθητί μοι τὸν ἁμαρτολό) *God be propitiated to me a sinner.* And thus the doctrine of God's being *propitiated, appeased, or reconciled* to the sinner through the sin-atonement blood of Christ, is firmly established and placed beyond the reach of Socinian criticism and cavil forever.

But again; the scheme you oppose, "contradicts stubborn facts. For according to it, the demands of law against the sinner were *death, temporal, spiritual and eternal.*—If Christ satisfied these demands, why do the elect suffer temporal or spiritual death? and why does Christ not suffer eternal death?" Answer. The elect by the redemption of Jesus Christ, are actually delivered from *spiritual death*, or a death in trespasses and sins, when that redemption is applied in a gracious regeneration whereby the *dominion* of sin is destroyed; they are consequently no more exposed to *eternal death*, and as for *temporal death*, it is not to them the penalty of the law, but the "gate of endless joys;" this is their complete deliverance from a state of temptation and warfare: To them death has no sting, over them the grave has no victory. (1 Cor. 15. 55.) 'Tis here the weary are at rest, for they *sleep* in Jesus, until the glorious "resurrection morn."

*The graves of all his saints he blest,
And soften'd every bed:
Where should the dying members rest,
But with their dying head?**

* Nothing indeed could, in our apprehension, be more completely stupid, than is the triumphant assurance with which this objection is frequently advanced. Be it remembered that the fact of the Redeemer's undertaking and accomplishing the deliverance of his elect, can by no means involve the ne-

As for Christ's suffering eternal death, it is out of the question. No person ever said so. At least it is not to be found in that book to which you have referred, as containing the scheme which you vehemently oppose, nor is it there said that "the demands of the law were death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal," as you have charged upon the scheme. But let it suffice that the death of Christ was entirely sufficient as a *governmental transaction*, as a *vicarious medium*, and as a *ransom found*, which *saves the sinner from going down into the pit*. The last wonderful words that were uttered on the cross are

cessity of an instantaneous recovery from their thralldom.— Mercy as well as wisdom will evidently dictate such a mode of applying the great deliverance as may be best accommodated to the circumstances of the case. But, very evidently, the reversal of the decree by which "it is appointed unto all men once to die," would be so far from comporting with the dictates either of wisdom or of mercy, that the inevitable consequence must be a scene of horror and dismay greater than we have words to paint. Suppose that no Godly men were to die; then, clearly, every instance of mortality around us would bear on its front the indubitable attestation that the deceased had been adjudged to the place of torment. What havoc such an assurance would make of human feeling, even of *sanctified* feeling, none need be informed. Good men must be so constituted, and possessed of such views, as can alone comport with another and a better state, before it can be presumed that even they could contemplate without dismay—without anguish—"judgment laid to the line."—This is only ONE consideration among many that might be suggested in behalf of the reasonableness, and even necessity, of letting things take their present course. But because the Redeemer thus applies his remedy in the measure and manner best suited to the actual state of the world, is it therefore to be inferred that no remedy of the kind contended for is applied at all? Does it follow that, because he has not adopted what would evidently be an unpropitious and uncomfortable course, he must be debared from taking *any* order on the subject? From death temporal he *will* deliver; but because the best interests of his people, and the peace of the world, demand such an arrangement, "the *last* enemy that shall be conquered is death."

entirely satisfactory, without any comment: "It is finished."* But in your scheme it would seem there is no such thing as spiritual death—no such thing as human depravity, and this, by the bye, was necessary as a precursor to the denial of the doctrine of regeneration, which you have confounded with atonement and reconciliation. In Rom. 5. 19. the many that *were made sinners, by the disobedience of one man*, you are of the opinion "of the Greek fathers."—"They believe the many were made sinners *metonymically*, that is, by being made subject to mortality and death, the effects of Adam's sin." (p. 69.) You ought, rather to have said, that you were of the same mind with Chubb, a noted subtile, inveterate

* The eternity of punishment, as respects the creature, necessarily results from two considerations. 1. It is incapable of existing under that full infliction of the vengeance of the Almighty to which its sinfulness would otherwise of right subject it. Its nature is finite—its pains must be so too. Infinite punishment of course would never be endured; infinite righteousness must continue, therefore, unsatisfied; and nothing can remain but that the offender be held down to the penalty, which at every given moment is equally remote from exhaustion. But to the Saviour of sinners these things will not apply. He lacked not the capacity of sustaining the full measure of the curse; by him, of consequence, the penalty *was* exhausted. 2. Let it also be remarked that there is nothing in punishment, such as we have in view, that can promote the amendment of the sinner. This even Mr. Stone will grant, unless he means to advocate the sentiments of universalism. Of course the spirits of the accused are always adding to their crimes, and, by consequence, always affording new grounds of punishment. The reverse of all which, Mr. Stone needs not be informed, is true in the case of the Saviour.

It may not be amiss to add here, that the objection, at least strongly implied, with respect to the Saviour's not having endured death spiritual as a part of the wages of sin, rests on a ground equally fallacious. The corruption of the creature, its enmity, its desparation, are the necessary consequences of the withdrawal of the Divine communion. Men naturally hate God when they regard him only as the God of judgment, and in connexion with their own guilt—they are, *say the scriptures*, his "enemies, by wicked works." But to

infidel, and whose arguments and opinions are plentifully scattered in the numerous treatises in which the deity and atonement of our Saviour are exploded; and at the same time all ostentatious display of the source from which they are derived, most carefully avoided. But the absurdity of your *metonymical* construction of the above, and other similar passages, will glaringly appear by substituting the word "mortality" in the place of the common reading—for instance: "By one man *mortality* entered into the world, and death by *mortality*; and so death passed upon all men, for in him all are become *mortal*." "Until the law *mortality* was in the world, but *mortality* is not imputed when there is no law."—"Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not been *mortal*, after the similitude of Adam's *mortality*."—"But not as the *mortality*, so is the free gift, for

suppose the same liability to corruption on the part of the Saviour, would argue no less absurdity than blasphemy. Still, however, in so far as the act of God is directly concerned in this matter, the Saviour did not escape even this portion of the penalty. Communion with his Father actually was suspended; and so keenly did he feel the infliction of this judgment, that on the cross he exclaimed, "my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." The penalty, therefore, in every respect was perfectly exhausted. That it did not involve an eternity of punishment we ascribe to that very Divinity of his nature which is denied by Mr. Stone, but without which he must have evidently sunk beneath the untempered stroke of the Almighty arm: that it did not issue in the corruption of his nature, or, in other words, in the aversation of his heart from his God and Father, we ascribe to the fact that, constituted as he was, (*divine* as well as *human*.) he was necessarily and unchangeably pure. Neither could despair freeze the heart of him who "know the end from the beginning." Neither could blindness of mind ensue in a case where the "messenger" of the Father was himself concerned. We repeat it: All these things—all that we call corruption or spiritual death, are but the native results (in so far as mere creatures are concerned) of the withholding of the Divine fellowship. That is the punishment directly from God himself; and to *that* ACT of God the Saviour was subjected, because it was, in part, the appropriate punishment of sin. HE sunk not under it, he erred not, BECAUSE HE IS DIVINE.

if through the *mortality* of one many be *dead*," &c.—“You hath he quickened who were *dead* in mortality.” Thus by putting the cause for the effect, or metonymically, as you express it, the like impertinency will be found in all those passages which describe man’s apostacy and depravity; the mere representation whereof is a sufficient refutation of such a trifling construction.

Closely connected with this, is your denial of sin’s being an “infinite evil,” or the transgression of an infinite law; and so, to proceed on, there is little doubt in my mind but that you deny, with many of the Socinian tribe, the doctrine of infinite or endless punishment. As for the expression “infinite law,” about which you have found so much scope for your logic, I do not know that your opponents use the phrase in any other sense than what we find in your own words respecting the moral law, which you say “must be unchangeably and eternally binding on all intelligent creatures.” With this expression I am perfectly satisfied; but surely you must have forgotten this declaration when commenting on Rom. 10. 4. “Christ is the end of the law,” you contend, in two particulars—one is, when he abolished it, having nailed it to his cross. The other is, that he is the *end* or design of the law, which is *charity out of a pure heart.*” (p. 68.) Now according to your divinity, this law, the scope and substance of which is charity or love to God and man—yes, this very law, which in your own words is “unchangeably and eternally binding on all intelligent creatures,” is by Christ “abolished, having nailed it to his cross.” And thus intelligent creatures are freed from that rigid law that required love to God and man, even that very law which was before thought and declared to be unchangeably and eternally binding on them! From such logic and such divinity may the good Lord deliver the world! This law being abolished, of course there can be no more sin committed; for “where there is no law there is no transgression.” Or, to say the most of it, its “political curse” being abolished, as we have it in another place, it has now become so mild and good-natured as not to stamp the transgression of it with infi-

nite turpitude, and thus the idea of sin being an infinite evil must be altogether out of the question.

Those who maintain that sin is an infinite evil, wish to be understood, I suppose, as holding that God being in himself infinitely amiable, deserves to be, and actually is, the moral centre of the intelligent system—that rebellion against him is opposition to the general good, and tends to universal anarchy and mischief, consequently it is an infinite evil, as aiming destruction at universal good, and is deserving of an infinite, or endless punishment. But the idea of sin's being an infinite evil you assert, will “destroy the distinction of greater and lesser evils:” but to this it may be replied, that the least sin may be an infinite evil, because of the infinite obligation we are under to do otherwise, and yet all sins not be equally heinous: for there is as great a difference among infinities, as among finities; I mean, among things that are infinite only in one respect: For instance, to be forever in hell is an infinite evil, in respect of the duration; but yet the damned are not equally miserable. Some may be an hundred times as miserable as others in *degree*, although the misery of all is equal in point of duration.

As it can be proved that the obligations of the creature to love and obey the blessed God, are derived from the OBJECT, and are therefore INFINITE: so it is capable of strict moral demonstration, that the violation of those obligations is infinitely criminal; that is, sin with respect to its object, is an infinite evil. Sin, therefore, *deserves* an infinite, that is, an everlasting punishment. The nature of this punishment is not an arbitrary infliction, but a necessary consequence of moral evil. This proposition can be denied on no other principles but such as are subversive of the government and the perfections of God; or principles virtually atheistical.

But lastly: It is urged, that the scheme you oppose, “contradicts the gospel plan of justification by faith. For it represents the sinner as justified by the surety-righteousness of Christ imputed to him.” (p. 66.) And a little further forward it is declared, that “The imputed righteousness of Christ is not once named in the Bible.” Such assertions avail nothing, however, while the *doc-*

principle stands in full force, and runs through the entire of the Bible. When simply defined and stated, it is this: "The actions and sufferings of A, might be said to be *imputed* to B, if B should on the account of them in any degree be treated as if he had done or suffered what A has done or suffered, when he really has not, and when, without this action or suffering of A, B would not be so treated."* From the foregoing definition, the following conclusions are fair and legitimate, viz: The *sins* of A may be said to be *imputed*, if B, though innocent, be upon that account treated in any degree as a sinner. On the other hand, the *righteousness* of A, may be said to be *imputed* to B, if upon account of it B, though a sinner, be treated as if he were righteous. That the sins of Christ's people were in some sense *imputed* to him as their surety and Saviour, is plainly inferred from the following scriptures: "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and FOR SIN condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." (Rom. 8. 3.) "For he hath made him to be SIN FOR US, who knew no sin." (2 Cor. 5. 21.) "For Christ also hath SUFFERED FOR SINS, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." (1 Pet. 3. 18.) "Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time WITHOUT SIN, unto salvation." (Heb. 9. 27.) Now if the Saviour shall appear the second time *without sin*, what is thereby implied, but that his first appearing was in some sense *with sin*? But as he had none of his own, it must have been by *imputation*.

That our justification is in consideration of the *righteousness* of Christ *imputed*, as the meritorious ground, and by *faith*, as the *instrumental* cause of it, is, in my view, the plain scriptural doctrine of justification by faith. A few texts from among hundreds may suffice to prove the doctrine: "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is OF ME, saith the Lord." (Isa. 54. 17.) "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel BE JUSTIFIED, and shall glory." (Isa. 45. 25.)

* Doddridge's *Lec.* vol. 2d. p. 209.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM.” (2 Cor. 5. 21.) “And be found *in him*, not having on mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith OF CHRIST, the RIGHTEOUSNESS which is OF GOD BY FAITH.” (Phil. 3. 9.) “Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ UNTO ALL and UPON ALL them that believe.” (Rom. 3. 22.) “Who of God is made unto us wisdom and RIGHTEOUSNESS,” &c. (1 Cor. 1. 30.) But this, you say, “will also prove imputed wisdom, sanctification, redemption, strength, salvation, hope,” &c. There might be some weight in this old objection which you borrowed from Dr. Whitby, if this were the only passage of scripture by which they, who hold imputed righteousness, support their doctrine; if there were any other passages in the sacred oracles, which even seem to countenance the notion of imputed wisdom, &c. and if the nature of the case were not essentially different. Another may pay my debt, and also allow me to receive wages which he has earned; thus his payment and his labor are set down to my account, or imputed to me for my adequate advantage: but who can have wisdom, health, strength, or liberty, by imputation?

The doctrine of surety-ship, you say, is common to the three schemes which you have examined, and is “supported by two arguments.” The doctrine being “supported,” if it were only by one argument, this would be sufficient. But let us see your opposition. Heb. 7. 22. “By so much was Jesus made a *surety* of a better testament.”—“I need only remark, that in this text only is he called surety, but here he is called the surety of a testament, and not of mankind; therefore the text is not in point.” p. 70. But, pray sir, tarry a little, and be not so hasty to run away from this first pillar, which surely deserves more attention, seeing there are but two only to support the system. A *surety* or *sponsor* (*engguos*) is one who draws nigh, undertakes or promises, and is bound for another, either to do or pay that for him which he cannot, or will not do or pay for himself: It is one who engages for another, that the obligations which he

is under shall be one way or other answered. A *testament* is the authentic signification of a man's last will, with regard to the disposal of his property, and always implies legacies therein contained, and legatees who are to be the receivers: It also implies the death of the *testator* as necessary to give it effect, according to the universal law and custom of all nations. Now in the text under consideration, Christ is called a *surety* of a better testament, or *covenant*, as it may be properly rendered, and as the apostle uses the same word in other places where it is so translated. Christ as *the surety* of this covenant in behalf of his people, engaged to do every thing necessary to make their restoration to the divine favor consistent with the perfections of deity, and the rectitude of his moral administration; he engaged also to purchase for them all the blessings of grace and glory, (Heb. 9. 15.) and also to furnish them with all those supplies of his spirit and grace, through the merit of his blood, which should be necessary to renew and sanctify them, to bring them to faith and repentance, to enable them to fulfil those duties of the covenant that should be incumbent on them, and to prevent their violating its sacred bonds, and defeating their interest in it, by wilful disobedience and utter apostacy, through the prevalency of temptation or indwelling corruptions, by which they would miscarry if left to themselves.

As man can approach his God only in a covenant relation—as in this way only he can partake the divine favor and blessing—and as, in himself, being a weak and sinful creature—such a *surety for us to God* as is the friend of sinners, appears the more reasonable and necessary, and by no means detracts from the honor of the divine majesty; but in the whole plan, God is exalted, the sinner is humbled, and holiness promoted. What idea can you, or any person, have of a *surety*—of a *testament* containing legacies; the rich legacies of the *testator*, whose will and testament was sealed with *blood* too, and at the same time exclude human beings from the benefits of his suretyship, and from that heavenly inheritance which he has bequeathed with all its richest blessings to the heirs of promise? The notion of a *surety*, where human

beings have no concern, is too absurd and ridiculous to be admitted by any man in his sober senses.

“The second argument for suretyship, you say, is drawn from the Greek prepositions *hyper* and *anti*, as signifying *in the room* or *stead of*. In your opposition to this, and in order to extricate yourself from the shackles of scripture language, you have furnished us with a specimen of criticism the most trifling, irrelevant, and nonsensical, that perhaps can be found in any page of any book, besides your own. Though it be frequently said in scripture that Christ *died FOR us, FOR our sins, &c.* yet this must not signify *in our room, or instead of us*, or as a *substitute* for us; which is the same old story of Sykes, Priestly, and H. Taylor, who long before you hunted up, and minutely examined all the passages in the New Testament in which the preposition *for* is introduced; which they say amounts to no more than dying *on our account, or for our benefit*, but not *instead of us*. Any shift or turn it seems will do Socinian writers, in order to do away the *hateful* doctrine of Christ’s *substitution*.

The word *for*, or the Greek words *anti, hyper, dia, pro*, of which it is the translation, admitting of different senses, may of course be differently applied, according to the nature of the subject, and yet the *doctrine* remain unchanged. Thus it might be perfectly proper to say, that Christ suffered *instead of us*, although it would be absurd to say, that he suffered *instead of our offences*. Had you been candid or discerning enough to have observed this distinction, you might have saved yourself the unnecessary trouble of foisting in so many impertinent and irrelevant criticisms; and the only inference that you could with justice have drawn from all the places enumerated, is, that the word *for* does not necessarily imply substitution in *all* these passages. But on the other hand, that it does *not* imply it in *any*, can by no means be contended: the word *hyper*, being admitted to have that force frequently in its common application; and this is put beyond the shadow of a doubt from the language of the apostle. Rom. 5. 7, & For scarcely (*hyper*) for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure (*hyper*)

for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died (*huper*) for us. To deny that the word *for*, in these verses means substitution would be an outrage on common sense. In like manner, (2 Sam. 18. 33.) when David saith concerning Absalom, *tis doe ton thanaton mou anti sou*, there is clearly expressed David's wish that *his* death had been *instead* of Absalom's. Many quotations can be made from Greek authors, particularly from Xenophon, where the word *huper* does unequivocally imply a *vicarious death*, and as such they understood it. But the scriptures are sufficiently explicit on this subject—"Christ died for (instead of) the ungodly—While we were yet sinners Christ died for (instead of) us—For Christ hath suffered the just for (instead of) the unjust. The son of man came to give himself a ransom for (instead of) many—Who gave himself a ransom for (instead of) all." On texts so plain, it would be insulting the understanding to comment. The doctrine of substitution stands immovable as the basis of the humble christian's hope; fixed on that rock, he looks with mingled pity and contempt upon the puny efforts of the enemies of the cross, with all the pigmy race of yesterday critics, to demolish that foundation against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. When I look at your attempts to destroy this fundamental doctrine by lengthened criticisms on Greek *prepositions*, and such little words, of various significations, according to the subjects with which they are connected, I cannot help thinking all the while of the viper in the fable, gnawing the file; and I have no doubt but the result will amount to about the same.

Suffer an observation or two more, and I will have done with this long letter. In your former rare and valuable productions, you pronounced atonement and regeneration to be the same: and for this you were so severely handled by your antagonist that you have not ventured it in your late production; but in the room of the word *regeneration*, you have substituted the word *union*—a word not once named in the bible. To shew the ab-

surdity of thus confounding terms, as synonymous and convertible, we need only to recite a few passages of scripture, adopting the word union, instead of atonement, reconciliation and propitiation, all which, in your theory, mean the same thing. Dan. 9. 24. Seventy weeks are determined, &c. to make *union* for iniquity!—John 2. 2. He is the *union* for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.—And 4. 10. And sent his son to be the *union* for our sins.—Heb. 2. 17. A merciful and faithful high priest to make *union* for the sins of the people.—Exod. 30. 10. And Aaron shall make a *union* upon the horns of it [the altar] once in a year with the blood of the sin-offering of *unions*. And thou shalt take the *union* money of the children of Israel—ver. 16. From this specimen, it is quite observable the absurdity and nonsense into which you are driven at every step in a departure from the plain road of truth and sound doctrine.

Having in your plan of redemption set aside the substitution, satisfaction and surety—righteousness of Jesus Christ, the sinner of course is to receive pardon and forgiveness upon his *repentance*, without reference to, and irrespective of the *merits* and *righteousness* of Christ.—This is necessary, to make a shew of consistency in the scheme,—it is what all Socinians maintain, and what is ambiguously set forth and covertly maintained in your address from p. 77 to 79. The sufficiency of repentance to ensure pardon, without expiatory sacrifice for sin, and without reference to the *merit* of Christ as the *vicarious* medium of forgiveness, is what I presume you will not call a false charge. This is what you believe, and what runs through the whole of your book. But it may not be impertinent to inquire, *in what way* this repentance is likely to be brought about? Your reply is: “The goodness of God leads to repentance—this goodness of God is eminently seen in Christ crucified and in the gospel.” Christ crucified for what? To make an *expiatory* atonement? to satisfy law and justice? as the sinner’s substitute and surety? No: This is all denied in your scheme. What then? Merely as a *witness* to afford an evidence or token of God’s goodness and love to sinners: Some-

thing like the conduct of the young Turks at Cyprus;—when one wishes to obtain a wife, he walks in the garden of his mistress, makes a great many gestures, and cuts and slashes his breast with a knife until the blood runs plentifully, which he exhibits before her window as an expression or token of his great regard for, and love to her. So the death of Christ was not in a way of expiation or satisfaction, but only an expression or token of God's great love to sinners. This must melt them down—this must lead them to repentance.—The law being destroyed,—its political curse abolished—the sinner being only mortal, not depraved in soul, or dead in sin and iniquity—not needing the agency of the Divine Spirit in regeneration and faith; he is only to read the gospel, look at the cross, melt down at this display of love and goodness, ask forgiveness of God as a penitent, and receive pardon and justification in his own name and person, and not, as the pious have generally thought and believed, through Christ's righteousness *imputed*, nor for his *name's sake*. Is the bare declaration that God will forgive the repentant sinner, sufficient to insure his amendment, or rouse him from the apathy of habitual transgression? Or is it not rather calculated to render him easy under guilt, from the facility of reconciliation? If pardon of sin can be obtained by repentance *without* satisfaction or atonement in a way of expiation, it may be inquired, whether you have such good news for fallen angels? What can hinder their redemption on this plan more than that of fallen men? Doubtless this doctrine of forgiveness without satisfaction, otherwise than by repentance, would be such glad tidings to those fallen spirits, that hell itself would resound with shouts and jubilant songs at this declaration of God's goodness and mercy, and the facility of reconciliation. But were even this supposed, still it may be inquired, how such doctrine can afford any relief in the case of fallen man, who is naturally incapable of a true repentance by any power of his own, even as much so as of making a strict and adequate atonement? Have we not had abundant experience of what man can do, when left to his own exertions, to be cured of such vain and idle fancies? What is the histo-

ry of man, from the creation to the time of Christ, but a continued trial of his natural strength? And what has been the *moral* of that history, but that man is strong, only as he feels himself weak? strong, only as he feels that his nature is corrupt, and from a consciousness of that corruption, is led to place his whole reliance upon God? But to suppose, as you do, that faith and repentance are all that can be necessary in order to forgiveness, and which the sinner can exercise at any moment when he shall please to exert his power—that men are justified on the ground of personal merit, or because they are *actually* righteous, and not *imputatively* so—that in God there is nothing like wrath, vengeance or indignation against the ungodly,—I say, to suppose all this, and much more that might be mentioned, is at once to renounce christianity and turn deist. That your principles are virtually deistical, and strongly tend that way, is evident upon comparison, and also from the general cry of “*encore, encore,*” when they hear you and your partizans preach, and from the smiles your book receives from them while perusing its contents. “Tell me with whom you be, and I will tell you who you are.” When infidels love doctrines, be assured they are not the doctrines of Christ or his disciples. To the same purpose is the opinion of the evangelical Roland Hill. “To set up a *mediator* without a *satisfaction*; to talk of *sanctification* without a *propitiation* for sin; to approach to God, but not as *being reconciled by the blood of the cross*, is only Deism in disguise, and has all the essence of denying Jesus Christ come in the flesh.”*

I am, &c.

* Pulpit and Desk, p. 110.

LETTER VI.

On Human Depravity, Regeneration, and Faith.

“————— Then proud, poor worm,
 Conceived in sins, offending from thy youth,
 In every point transgressor of the law:
 Of righteousness, of merit towards God
 Dream if thou canst; or madman if thou art;
 Stand on that plea for heaven, and be undone.”

Young.

DEAR SIR,

BY the fall of the first parents of mankind, it is quite evident that human nature lost its virtue; sin entered into the world, and men are now found to be in a state of impenitent ungodliness. That all mankind are in a state of *total depravity* and *sin*, is a truth clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The great questions are—In what does this depravity consist? and how are the several powers and faculties of the mind affected by it? In answering this question, I shall endeavour to be short, as my intention thereby is, to open the way to a more plain and explicit statement of what I conceive to be the scriptural doctrine of the Spirit's operations in regeneration and saving faith, and which is intended as a general answer to what you have written on those subjects; in which there appears, as usual, so much ambiguity and contradiction, that I have chosen this method, rather than that zigzag course, which would be inevitable, were I to notice in a formal manner every thing objectionable.

The *understanding* is that capacity in man by which he perceives truth, and judges of the relation between different truths. The *will* is that power of the rational mind by which it chooses or refuses, receives or rejects such truths as are perceived or known by the *understanding*. The *heart* most commonly denotes the *will* and *affections*. Hence the heart, the will and affections are used, in most moral and evangelical discourses, as words of the same meaning. An holy will is an holy heart, and an holy heart flows out in holy affections towards holy objects. The reverse is the case of an unholy heart, or unrenewed will.

The conclusion to be drawn from these observations is simple and easy, namely: That the primary seat of depravity is in the heart, will, or affections; so that if this be made right, a rectification of whatever is wrong in any other power or faculty of the mind, will of course follow. This depravity is so essentially seated in the heart, that no kind of address or acting on the other faculties, will remove sin from the soul. It hence appears, that human depravity doth not originate in the *understanding* or natural intellect, but hath its primary seat in the *heart*. Here it entered—here it reigns—and from this fountain it corrupts the whole man, soul and body.

The depravity of man is described in the scriptures by ignorance, darkness, and blindness. By this is not meant doctrinal ignorance, or any incapacity in the natural intellect to perceive truth; for holy and unholy men can both perceive the truth or falsehood of propositions which are placed before the understanding. They can receive evidence, and infer one truth from another. This is a natural operation of the mind, the powers of which were not destroyed by the apostacy; and neither proves the existence, or the want of holiness. If men had not the natural power of understanding and receiving doctrinal knowledge, they could not be charged with transgression. Christ told the Jews, “Ye have both *seen* and *hated* me and my Father.—If I had not come and spoke to you, *ye had not had sin*, but now ye have *no cloak* for your sin.” Both these refer to doctrinal knowledge; and the persons who *saw* and who *heard* Christ speak, were

in the depth of that blindness which is essential to depravity. If depravity consisted in doctrinal ignorance, then it might be removed by the instituted means of instruction. It is readily acknowledged that *means*, as they are generally called, may instruct and act powerfully on the understanding to give doctrinal light, as appears from the case of Herod, Felix, Agrippa, and thousands who live under the gospel without religion. They fix our attention; set the character and law of God before us; make us acquainted with our own character and wants, and with the nature and consequences of holiness and sin; and generally, give doctrinal information: but beyond this, it is not conceived they have any power; this is the whole of their efficacy—the whole for which they were appointed by a wise God.

There is an essential difference between *doctrinal* and *spiritual* light. The one may see the truth by means of evidence presented to the understanding; and when seen it may appear either glorious or hateful, according to the moral state of the heart. The other is seeing the glory, amiableness, excellence, and loveliness of truth; and such a view or state implies a good heart. There is likewise an essential difference between *doctrinal* and *spiritual* ignorance. The one may be removed by the instituted means of instruction; the other can only be removed by the power of God renewing the heart, which he effects, not by a revelation of truth which was before unseen by the understanding, or by giving any new power to the perceiving faculty; but solely by changing the heart. If all the difficulty of the sinner's regeneration lay in the understanding, then by a little industry he could regenerate himself; or, to use your own words: "A sinner can believe prior to this internal work;" that is, the internal work of the spirit, which seems on your plan to have nothing to do with the sinner until *after* he becomes a true believer in Jesus Christ: In other words, your christian is an *unregenerate* believer, the change is merely *intellectual*, and the whole of what you have advanced on these subjects goes to the denial of the sin of human nature, and, by a *metonymical* construction, excludes the doctrine of original

depravity, and supposes man only became *mortal* in consequence of Adam's sin.

From the foregoing observations, let it not be understood as though I contended to hold forth the idea that there is as much doctrinal light among sinners, as there would be if they were holy. The indulgence of intemperate lusts, by injuring the body, may enervate the mind and the vigor of the natural understanding. Also, by the opposition of their hearts to truth, they are indisposed to seek for it; they neglect means, and do not study to be informed. It was the heart which apostatized, and consequently the understanding became dark. Doubtless then, when the heart is made better by regenerating grace, it will be more disposed to those truths presented to the understanding, by which the mental capacity will be much improved. But that there may be, and often is, great doctrinal light, or speculative knowledge, in the head, while the heart is destitute of love to God, there can be no doubt; experience and observation prove it every day; and an inference from the apostle's declaration confirms it: "Though I have the *gift of prophecy*, and understand *all mysteries* and *all knowledge*; and though I have *all faith*, so that I could remove mountains, and have *not charity*," or divine love, "I am *nothing*." (1 Cor. 13. 2.) The way is now prepared for a fair and candid inquiry respecting the nature of divine regeneration.

A twofold inquiry here presents itself: In what does regeneration consist—and how is it effected? In attempting to give an answer I shall be as plain and succinct as possible; observing by the way that the doctrines of total depravity and regeneration stand or fall together, as the latter cannot be supposed to have any existence without the former.

In describing this change, the word of God makes use of the highest expressions, denoting both the special power and action of God, and the newness of the thing produced. It is called a new birth—a new heart—a new creation, with a multitude of other expressions, the strongest possible, denoting the immediate agency of God in the production of a new moral principle, or a

new heart. "For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works." From these words it is evident that in this change there is something *produced* or *created* which the sinner was totally destitute of before. By this entire *new creation* is not to be understood the super-addition of any new faculty to the mind, or member to the body. These things are not totally wanting in all men by nature, nor are they the things created anew in regeneration. Neither the capacity of understanding, nor the faculty or power of willing, requisite to formal agency, were lost or destroyed by the fall—not the *faculty*, but the *rectitude* of the *will* was lost; consequently these powers or capacities are not created in regeneration. It is not that mental sense, called in scripture *conscience*, which is common to all men, that is any part of the new creation in question. Nor is it the modification of any moral principle, which previously existed in the mind; but the production of one that is entirely new. "Human nature in its deepest depravity," says one, "is not so sunk—so perfectly annihilated as to need a new creation of any of those powers or senses necessary to constitute man a rational, voluntary, and conscious agent." But something more is necessary—a something of which the unregenerate are as completely and totally destitute as any fallen spirit whatever; namely: a holy *temper* of heart, or a good *disposition*. This we suppose to be wholly wanting in mankind by nature, as being born of the flesh; and to be the thing *created radically anew*; when any are born of the Spirit. A man will not, and cannot act right so long as he is not so *disposed*; however capable he may be of willing and acting agreeably to his own mind. "The vile person *will* speak villainy, and his heart *will* work iniquity. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. But this new principle—this *disposition*, we suppose, is the thing, the only thing which is properly *created* in regeneration.

"The heart, or the will and affections, are the seat of this change; therefore, the increase of doctrinal or speculative knowledge, be the degree ever so great, hath no tendency to regenerate a person. As has been stated before, doctrinal light hath its seat in the understanding, and it is contrary to all experience, that more knowledge

of an object, to which the heart or will is from its very nature opposed, will change the opposition into love. If the taste of mind be opposed to the very nature of an object, the more the object is even, the more an opposing taste will exert itself.—The divine action in regenerating an unholy soul is, therefore, on the heart, or the will and affections.”

Dr. Witherspoon, in his admirable treatise on regeneration, says: “That it may be fully comprehended in the following things; giving a new direction to the understanding, the will, and the affections.” “And no doubt,” he adds, “with respect to every one of these, there is a remarkable and sensible change. But as the understanding is a *natural* faculty, which becomes good or evil, just as it is applied or employed, it would be scarcely possible to illustrate the change in it without introducing, at the same time, a view of the *disposition* and tendency of the heart and affections.” Without this, it does not appear how it can be properly considered as a change of a moral or spiritual nature. President Davies says, “It is the implantation of the seeds or principles of every grace or virtue in a heart that was entirely destitute of them, and full of sin; and that the new birth implies a great change in the views, the temper, the practice, and state of the sinner.”

The next thing now to be considered is, how this great change is effected. And here it must be granted on all hands, that the *manner* of divine acting in this instance of creation, is as much above our conception, as it was in the creation of the world. Only the effects of this agency are made sensible to the person who hath experienced it. He finds in himself a new temper—new feelings toward moral objects. He hath not done it himself. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, &c. but thou canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” That is, the *manner* of divine acting is unknown, the *moment* of divine acting unperceived, the creature is passive in his change; but by the effects of it he knows that it hath happened.

The scriptures are explicit in ascribing the production of this principle to the *direct* or immediate agency of God on the human mind. "Blessed art thou Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath *not revealed* it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but of God." Now when we say, that this divine and supernatural principle is *immediately* imparted to the soul, by the direct agency of God, and not obtained by natural means, "it is not intended that the natural faculties are not made use of in it. They are the *subject* of this change, and that in such a manner, that they are not merely passive but active in it; the acts and exercises of a man's understanding are concerned and made use of in it. God, in communicating this divine principle to the soul, deals with man according to his nature, or as a rational creature, and makes use of his human faculties. But yet this change in the heart is not the less immediately from God on that account; though the faculties are made use of, it is as the *subject*, and not as the *cause*. As the use that we make of our eyes in beholding various objects when the sun arises, is not the cause of the light that discovers those objects to us, but they are the subject of the light which is nevertheless *immediately* from that luminous body.

Nor is it intended that outward means have no concern in this matter. It is not in this affair, as it is in inspiration, where new truths are suggested; for by this change there is only given a due apprehension of the same truths that are revealed in the word of God; and therefore it is not given ordinarily without the word; but this is made use of as a glass through which this divine light is conveyed to us, when God by a direct agency of his Holy Spirit shines into the heart, by which it is qualified for seeing "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." This light is the light of the glorious gospel; but if not *spiritually* discerned, it may shine in darkness and not be comprehended. But farther,

When it is said this divine principle is given *immediately* by God, and not obtained by natural means, here-

by is intended, that it is given by God without making use of any means that operate by their own power, or a natural force. God makes use of means, but not as *mediate* causes to produce this effect. There cannot possibly be any second causes of it. The word is only made use of to convey to the mind the subject matter of this saving instruction, which indeed it does by natural force or influence. It conveys to our mind such and such doctrines; it is the cause of the *notion* of them in our *heads*, but not of the *sense* of the divine excellency of them in our *hearts*. Admitting that a person cannot have spiritual light without the word, yet that does not argue, that the word properly causes the light. Admitting also that the mind cannot see the excellency of any doctrine, until that doctrine be first in the mind, yet that does not imply, that the seeing the excellency of the doctrine, may not be *immediately* from the Spirit of God; though the *conveying* of it may be by the word. As for instance, that notion that there is a Christ, and that he is holy and gracious, is conveyed to the mind by the word: but the *sense* of the *excellency* of Christ, by reason of that holiness and grace, is nevertheless *immediately* the work of the Holy Spirit.*

But it is urged that this work is actually effected by the power of means;—that we are begotten *through the gospel—with the word of truth, and by the word of God.*

To me there appears no difficulty in understanding these passages to mean only that regeneration is by the word, as other other supernatural works are represented to have been wrought by men and means. That God does ordinarily change the hearts of men, under the dispensation of the word of truth, is readily granted; but that a new heart is given to them by the power of the word, these texts, we apprehend, do not determine. Ezekiel was directed to prophecy over a valley of dry bones, and to say unto them, “O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord” He was again commanded to prophecy to the wind, and to say, “Come from the four winds O, breathe, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.” And

* *Edwards' Works, vol. 3. p. 502.*

while he was prophesying: "the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." Now will any one undertake to explain philosophically, how all this was effected by the prophet's voice, or by the force of what he said? No one will imagine but that such an event as was represented in this vision, must have been as perfectly *supernatural* as if there had been no prophesying nor any prophet in the case. And no more need we suppose that it is in the power of preaching to give spiritual life to souls dead in sin, because we read of men's being begotten through the gospel, and born again by the word. Most of the supernatural works recorded in the scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, are represented to have been wrought in consequence of certain words and actions of men: and should the very particles of speech be insisted on, instances are not wanting in which the most undisputed miracles are expressly said to be done *by* men, and *through* the instrumentality of means. Acts 5. 12. "*By* the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people." And in Acts 8. 18. "*Through* the laying on of the hands of the Apostles the Holy Ghost was given." And Acts 19. 2. "God wrought special miracles *by* the hand of Paul." In such a sense as this, it is not denied that sinners are regenerated by the means of grace, and through the ministry of the word. In this sense Paul might truly say, he had begotten the believing Corinthians through the gospel; though the operation of God in giving them a right spirit was ever so properly supernatural. This answer to the objection grounded on such texts as the foregoing, appears to me quite sufficient and unexceptionable.

"If it be true that man is by nature totally depraved in the spirit of his mind, it is a plain case that the *beginning* of holiness in him, can be no otherwise than by a new *creation*. When spiritual life is once begun in the soul, in however low a degree, it may be preserved and increased by moral means, as well as any plant or animal can be kept alive and made to grow by natural means. But the *first production* of the radical principles of this life, can no more be the effect of a second cause, than the

first root or seed of any plant or tree could have been produced by rain, sun-shine, and cultivation."*

To all this one would think you would have no objection, when you have asserted that "the whole work of regeneration and salvation from sin, is the work of the Spirit—that God begins, carries on, and perfects the whole work, and that it is a work infinitely beyond the power of man." p. 83. This seems like coming to the point; but in several pages afterwards we find it again and again repeated that faith *precedes* the work of the Spirit in us—that we must believe the bible as containing the truths of heaven, and thus come to God and ask, and he will give the Holy Spirit, &c. The man is a *true believer*, it seems, *before he comes to God, and before he asks for the Holy Spirit!* How this can accord with God's "*beginning*" the work of salvation, its being also "*the work of the Spirit,*" and inseparably connected with faith, I leave to others better skilled in reconciling contradictions and making crooked things straight than I am.

Having shewn that regeneration is the *beginning* of all that moral conformity to God, which is the true preparation for heaven and its blessedness,—that it is the *beginning* of *spiritual life* in the soul, and that change from which *holy exercises* proceed; the way is prepared for the consideration of the nature of saving faith. There is a difference between regeneration and faith. In the first, there is given a new *temper*, a new *disposition*, or a new *heart*. The other is an *exercise* of that new heart. In this view of the case the Apostle's language is quite plain: "With the HEART man believeth unto righteousness." But surely not with an *unregenerate* heart! In regeneration we are *passive*, and receive from God *subjectively*; but faith implies *activity*, or something done; and is not a mere passive conviction of any truth whatever; it is a *turning to God, receiving or embracing Christ*, and may properly be called the first act of the soul, which covenants with God through Christ.

* See Dr. Smalley's Sermon on Regeneration.

We are told, that *“as many as received Christ, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”* John 1. 12. The next verse describes these persons by the change of their hearts: *“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* This teaches us plainly that none but *regenerated* persons have *received* Christ and become the sons of God, so as to receive eternal life. The first of these two verses you quoted to prove that faith precedes regeneration. p. 87. But why you omitted the second, which finishes the subject, and gives us to understand what sort of persons they are who receive Christ, or believe on his name, cannot be well accounted for. Certain it is, that no passage in the Bible more directly proves the contrary of what you have asserted. Let any one read the 12th verse, and then ask the question, who were they that received Christ, or believed on his name? He will find the answer in the 13th, which evidently shews that regeneration in natural order is *prior* to faith,—but as to time they are cotemporary. You say: “Faith depends not on the will, inclination, or disposition, but on testimony.” And what does this amount to, but the mere *assent* of the natural understanding, which is all the faith that thousands have, who never embrace the Saviour? It also implies that a man may be a believer in Jesus Christ without being *willing, inclined, or disposed* to believe. Your illustration is as curious as your position: “Were I from home, and a messenger should come and inform me that my wife was dead, I should believe it; not because I was willing, but because of the testimony of the messenger.” I answer: In this case there is just as great a difference between the *object* of your faith presented by the messenger, and that presented in the gospel, as there is between a dead wife and a living Saviour; and the analogy is just about as appropriate. It is also very evident that you have all along on this subject made no distinction between the *warrant* and the *nature* of faith, which are as different as the *testimony* of your messenger and the *exercise* of your mind upon that testimony,—observing, by the way, that there is as much differ-

ence respecting the warrant afforded by the messenger, and the exercise of your mind about your wife, and that afforded in the gospel, with the proper exercise of mind connected with it, as there is between things merely physical or natural, and those that are moral or spiritual. And the inference is, that your faith in the Saviour, without will, inclination or disposition, has about as much holiness and religion in it as your belief in the death of your wife.

To prove further that faith precedes regeneration, and that it includes nothing pertaining to the will, we meet with the following unhallowed assertion in p. 91: "The scriptures assert that God justifieth the ungodly that believe; for none but believers are justified—Therefore the ungodly sinner does believe." But, God be praised, the scriptures say no such thing. Such a conclusion is worthy of yourself, and shews to what lengths a man will go in a bad cause. It is granted that God is said to *justify the ungodly*; but is the believer who only is justified, altogether and in every sense ungodly and unregenerate at the time of his justification? Is this the *existing character* of an actual believer? Or is the term *ungodly* used only to describe the character the sinner sustains antecedent to his justification, both in the account of the lawgiver of the world, and in his own account? If there be any meaning in your statement, you certainly do consider the term *ungodly* as denoting *the existing state of mind* in a believer at the time of, and not antecedent to, his justification. In this, however, you are consistent with yourself, however inconsistent you may be with the scriptures. In confining faith to the understanding you was aware that you disowned its having any thing in it, as pertaining to the will; which would have overturned your scheme, that does not admit of any thing holy or spiritual in the exercise of faith, and excludes the idea of its being a *duty*. All duty, however, comes under the influence of the will.—But faith is a duty.—Therefore faith comes under the influence of the will.

If faith may be merely light in the understanding, unbelief must be the absence of light; and if the former in-

clude nothing pertaining to the will, neither does the latter. To say that though unbelief contain a *voluntary* rejection of the truth, yet faith contains no *voluntary* reception of it, is saying that belief and unbelief are not opposites; which is equal to denying a self-evident proposition. If one be purely intellectual, so is the other; and as there is no obedience in the first, there is no disobedience in the last. But faith is a duty. It is enjoined by the high authority of God: "This is his commandment, That we *should believe* on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." (1 John 3. 23.) But there is no such thing in the universe as obedience, where the heart or will has no concern, and if believing on the name of Jesus Christ be not a true and proper obedience to this command, it cannot be truly and properly obeyed at all. But if it be a true and proper obedience, and yet faith be a merely physical or intellectual act in which the will is not concerned, as you suppose, then there may be a physical, intellectual, involuntary obedience, which is absurd.

Sincerity is a property of the *heart*; but cannot belong to the *intellect*. With propriety we speak of sincere choice, desire, affection, inclination, &c. But it would be nonsense to talk of sincere apprehension, reasoning, judgment, or recollection. Yet we find that sincerity is a character of that faith which saves the soul. The apostle in two different places calls it *unfeigned* or *sincere* faith. Hence it appears that faith is a *voluntary exercise*; and being the exercise of a renewed heart, as has been stated, I may add that faith which is saving, or justifying, is a *holy* exercise, which was the thing to be proved.

That saving faith is something more than merely the simple act or assent of the understanding, is evident because of its being held forth in the scriptures (see Rom. 6. 17. and 10. 16.) as *obeying* the gospel, and *obeying* the doctrine from the heart. There may be a strong assent, or belief of divine things in the understanding, and yet the heart remain at *enmity against God*. This is proved to us every day by our neighbours and friends who attend on a preached gospel with us. (see also 1 Cor. 13. 2.)

That true faith, in the scripture sense of it, implies not only the exercise or assent of the understanding, but also the cordial *approbation* or *consent* of the heart, is very evident from the word of God. “*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*” It is a *complex* act of the understanding and the will at the same time, the one *perceiving* and being *persuaded* of, and the other *receiving* or *embracing* the object presented. This Paul tells us of the pious patriarchs; “These all died in faith; not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were *persuaded* of them, and *embraced* them.” Heb. 11. 13.

By excluding all exercise of the heart from your notion of faith, it is no wonder to hear you making the following unscriptural and dangerous declaration: “The sinner is dead indeed, but yet he can hear and believe unto everlasting life.” Few of your readers, it is to be hoped, will believe this. Certainly those who are acquainted with their Bibles and their own hearts will not. Equally absurd and erroneous is your answer to the question, “How does God give faith?” Your reply is, “Should I relate to my neighbour an incident in my knowledge, and he believe me, I surely am the author and giver of his faith—so God, by his Son, has given us his word,” &c. p. 88. But how if that neighbour, being a wicked and ill-disposed fellow, having no “will, inclination, or disposition” to believe you, should do otherwise, and call you a liar or an impostor? What then? Why, truly, by the same way of reasoning, you are “the author and giver” of his unbelief. This inference is fair upon the principle of confounding or making no distinction between the *warrant* and the *nature* of faith. The sinner does not disbelieve for the want of a sufficient warrant from the word of God to authorise him to put his trust in the Savior; but *because* he “*WILL NOT* come unto him that he might have life?”

I will close this subject with a few extracts from Dr. Witherspoon’s sermon on faith, which for plainness and perspicuity, I believe, is not exceeded by any. “Faith,” he observes, “may be considered in two views; its ob-

ject and its *actings*: 1st. *The object of faith*; that is to say, the truths to be believed: 2d. *The actings of faith*; or what it is to believe these to the saving of the soul. *Christ Jesus the Saviour*, is doubtless the object of faith. This in its full extent, includes every thing that is revealed in the holy scriptures with respect to his person, character and work. It may be said indeed, to include the whole will of God; because every part of this will has a more remote or immediate reference to him. In this view, the object of faith may be summed up in the following particulars.

1. That we are by nature in a state of sin, alienated in heart from God, transgressors of his law, and liable to his wrath. 2. That there is no way of recovery from this state but by Christ. Acts 4. 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* 3. That the pardon of sin, and peace with an offended God, are freely offered to the chief of sinners, without money and without price, through Christ. 4. And in the last place, the object of faith is the power of Christ to renew our natures, to deliver us from the bondage of corruption, and bring us into the glorious liberty of the children of God." These are truths to be believed, and are doubtless essential to saving faith. But many profess to see and believe all these truths, who nevertheless have no religion. Therefore the question is; what is it to believe these things *to the saving of the soul*? 1. "A firm assent of the understanding to what is revealed of Christ in the scriptures; particularly as summed up in the preceding particulars, namely: That man is in a lost and helpless state by nature and practice; that Christ is able to save to the uttermost; and that he hath made effectual provision, both for expiating our guilt and purifying our hearts. Perhaps many will think that this is easy, and be ready to say, that they have from their youth given, and that they do at this time give entire credit to the whole." Thus far many will go, whose faith however is vain and fruitless. There is more here than they are aware of: it is not enough to give a cold and general assent to the truths of religion, when they are not contra-

dicted. There is a great difference between a common and traditionary belief, which rests in the undestanding, and that inward and personal conviction which dwells in the heart. Therefore, I observe,

2. "That faith implies the *consent* and *approbation* of the heart to every truth with regard to Christ's person and character, and salvation through him." *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.* To every true believer the plan of redemption, appears not only true, but wise, reasonable, gracious and necessary. Instead of faith being only *a simple act of the natural understanding* to the doctrines of the gospel, it is, as before observed, a *complex act of the mind*, and signifies both *assenting* and *consenting*.

3. "In the last place, faith implies such a personal application of the truths of the gospel as produceth repose of conscience, and reliance on the Saviour. Thus the *assent* of the *understanding*, the *approbation* of the *heart*, and these jointly producing repose of conscience and peace with God, is all that is implied in the actings of faith, or believing in Christ to the saving of the soul.

As for your skirmishing observations "on Church Government, Party-names, Schism, Heresy, and Shakerism," they must go for what they are worth; they affect not the present controversy respecting the fundamental doctrines of christianity. And having the features of railing, caricature and banter, with irrelevant statements and groundless assertions, I have no inclination to trouble you or the world with any thing like a reply to them. Whatever may be the fate of this production, I can truly say that I am not without considerable advantage in the investigation of your sentiments, as thereby I have fuller knowledge of the points of controversy—see more clearly the dangerous road of error in which you have progressed very far—and feel more than ever thankful to God that I have not been left to wander in the same way. I have not the smallest doubt of your being in error; and I do sincerely pray that you may yet discern it before it shall be too late. On the doctrine of the trinity you are a Sabellian, holding only a trinity of names. On the

person and work of Jesus, you are fully in with the Arian and Socinian, who deny the *EXPIATORY SACRIFICE* and the *REDEEMING MEDIATION* as well as the *ESSENTIAL DEITY* of Jesus Christ. Atonement, propitiation, reconciliation, union, ransom, redemption, regeneration, sanctification, purging, cleansing, &c. in your account all mean the same thing—a mere *ceremonial purification*, making God and the sinner *at-one*. Your faith has no holiness in it, excluding every thing like *will, inclination, or disposition*;—it is merely an *intellectual exercise*. Forgiveness takes place upon repentance, without reference to the merit of Christ; and justification upon personal obedience, without reference to his righteousness. If your theory be correct, then surely the Bible has been all along the best calculated to deceive of any book in the world; seeing it requires such immense labor, cunning, and criticism, to make it speak a language entirely different from what it has been generally thought to contain, and on which thousands have triumphantly relied, living and dying. If the doctrines I advocate be not the doctrines of the Bible, then the writers thereof discovered great injudiciousness in the choice of their words, and adopted a very incautious and dangerous style. At all events, I feel myself on the safe side, having two chances for your one; for should the stand I have taken be too elevated and be found untenable, I have only to come down to yours, which seems to extend every way for quantity, and on which I can but rest at last. But reverse the statement, and the same conclusion has no support. Upon your plan you can only, with any shew of consistency, censure me for going farther than is necessary, or believing *too much*, instead of too little—of thinking more *highly* of Jesus Christ and his atonement than I ought. This charge it shall be my boast to bear, while I retain my senses, and believe my Bible.

As your book was written for the benefit of others, it is evident enough to me, that you are not averse to reading authors yourself. Think it not impertinent then, if I recommend to your serious and candid perusal a few books, where you may find every point you have touched completely answered and refuted; or, if you will not be

so fortunate as to see this, you will at least learn that the controversy is more than a "war of words,"—that your sentiments are not new, and that if Arianism, Socinianism, and Pelagianism, come under the appellation of "heresies," your production cannot escape the charge, being only a repetition or feeble imitation of others of the same stamp who have gone before you.

For a full and clear exposition of the *four* essential and fundamental principles of the christian scheme;—to wit, the entire depravity of fallen man; Justification by Jesus Christ; Sanctification by the Holy Ghost; and the doctrine of the Trinity; read "Middleton's doctrine of the Greek Article," applied to the criticism and the illustrations of the New Testament; "Simpson's Plea for the Deity of Jesus;" and "Magee on the Atonement and Sacrifice." This last mentioned author I have particularly and carefully read, and to him I cheerfully acknowledge myself much indebted for assistance in this littlework. He is certainly a master workman; his arguments are unanswerable; and, especially to the critical reader, his book is worth its weight in gold. On these subjects, I also recommend *Robinson's "Plea for the Divinity of Christ;"* *Searle's "Horæ Solitariae,"* "*Abbadie,*" "*Waterland,*" "*Hawker,*" and "*Hey,*" on the Divinity of Christ; "*Jamieson's View of the Doctrine of Scripture, and the Primitive Faith concerning the Deity of Christ;*" *Owen on "The Glory of Christ's Person;"* *Hurrion's "Christ Crucified;"* "*A proof of the true and eternal Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ, against modern attacks,*" by *Dr. Wynperse.* This work gained the highest prize of the Hague Society for the defence of Christianity in 1792. To which may likewise be added, *Sharp's "Remarks on the use of the definitive Article in the Greek Text:"* containing many new Proofs of the Divinity of Christ. Against the modern, rationalizing Arians, and self-named Unitarians, *alias*, Socinians, read *Owen on the Hebrews,* abridged by *Dr. Williams;* *Richie's Criticism on modern notions of sacrifice:* *Fulter's Letters,* in which the Calvinistic and Socinian systems are examined and Compared as to their Moral Tendency: The amiable Wilberforce calls this a "high-

ly valuable publication; and a masterly defence of the doctrines of Christianity, and an acute refutation of the opposite errors:" "*Smith's Letters to Belsham, and Macgowan's Socinianism brought to the Test.*" Against your notions of Faith, see Fuller's "*Gospel worthy of all Acceptation,*" particularly the *Appendix*; also his *Strictures on Sandemanianism*, and especially Dr. Scott's "*Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ,*" in the 4th vol. of his Works.

Could you read these authors without prejudice, you would be constrained to acknowledge that the "learned and the critics," as you sneeringly call them, have at least some shew of reason in their arguments; and that if they are misled and deceived, the Bible has done it by its incautious and unwarrantable language.

Krinei phaos to mellon. Eurip.

"The light to come shall just decision bring."

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