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Thus, Faith shall raise the Sinner up to Heaven.
Fruits of Faith.

S. H. 1825 ✓

THE
CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR;

CONTAINING
A BRIEF BUT COMPREHENSIVE
VIEW
OF THE EVIDENCES,
DOCTRINES,
DUTIES, EXTERNAL ECONOMY, AND PROSPECTS,
OF THE
Christian Religion.
IN THE
FORM OF QUESTION AND ANSWER.

BY G. CROFT.

THE PROFITS WILL BE GIVEN TO THE LONDON MISSIONARY
SOCIETY.

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PREFACE.

Of too many religious professors, it may justly be said, "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God." This deficiency in knowledge, is partly occasioned by the neglect of reading and study, and partly by the want of suitable books.

We have several systems of divinity, which persons of property and leisure may easily procure, and read with considerable advantage. To such persons, Dwight's System of Theology may be safely recommended, as far superior to all its predecessors, and as possessing in itself a very high degree of excellence. But as there are multitudes of persons, whose means will not allow them to purchase such works, nor their leisure time afford opportunity to read them, it seems highly requisite, that for their instruction, works should be composed of a similar kind, but on a much more contracted scale. To meet the wants of such persons, the following little work was composed. The form of question and answer was preferred, because it enabled the author to bring the work into a smaller compass, and also to render the different subjects more easy of apprehension, by breaking them down into small portions. The Puritans and Nonconformists were well aware of the importance of this mode of instruction; and hence, in the time of the former, the "Assembly's Larger and Shorter Catechisms" were published; and the latter made a liberal use of these works, and some of them wrote explanations and enlargements of the "Shorter Catechism."

That public catechizing, which prevailed so much in those days, should now be almost entirely laid aside, is generally considered to be no small evil ; and this evil is greatly increased by the want of modern works in the catechetical form, which the young and ignorant might read in private. It was the scarcity of books of this kind, which the author could cordially recommend to his own people, that first suggested the plan of the present work.

To prevent objections on the ground of plagiarism, the author frankly acknowledges, that he has availed himself of all the assistance he could derive from any quarter : his object being not to produce an original book, but a useful one. The frequent occurrence of *inverted commas*, will shew what has been borrowed ; but, besides these passages, there are likewise many others which could not be thus acknowledged, because they have not been exactly transcribed, either as to the sentiment or language.

Respecting the Notes, the author has only to observe, that some of them could not be dispensed with ; and if others should be thought unnecessary by one class of readers, they will probably be interesting to another class.

With regard to the perusal of the following pages, the author recommends, particularly to his own people, that a small portion be read at a time, and every position carefully compared with the scripture passages quoted in its support, and where thought requisite, with the statements of other writers on the same subject ; and also, that the volume be always at hand, and some part of it examined almost daily, and frequently made the subject of conversation with others, in order that the reader may become as familiar as possible with the various subjects discussed. Should it be objected, that this plan would be tedious, and that it is quite unnecessary, except in the case of ministers ; it may be replied, that we ought to practice religious reading, not as a mere amusement, but as the means of promoting our knowledge, piety, and comfort ; and consequently, that plan ought to be adopted which is likely to be most successful in promoting these objects. That the plan recommended will best promote our

knowledge, cannot be disputed; and that clear knowledge has a considerable influence upon the piety and happiness of real christians, facts abundantly testify. Besides, every parent is bound to instruct his children, and every master his servants, and all are bound to teach the young and ignorant around them, so far as such persons are willing to learn; but, without diligence in acquiring religious knowledge, we are quite incompetent to discharge this duty. And how dishonourable is it to the cause of Christ, and how injurious too, when professors of long standing can scarcely utter three intelligible sentences on religious subjects, to a careless or ignorant neighbour, much less set before him any tolerable view of that system of religion which they have espoused!

After all, the great object is, to have the heart and life conformed to the revealed will of God; and therefore, the author intreats all his readers, to pay particular attention to those chapters which treat on Justification, and Regeneration, and also to the various duties which are explained in the third part of the work.

Many professors are much perplexed respecting what are usually called *evidences* of piety. The third part will afford all necessary direction on this subject. If we are distinguished in a prevailing degree, by the christian temper and conduct there described, we have sufficient evidence of the reality of our piety; and consequently may, without presumption, indulge a confident hope of future bliss.

May the divine blessing attend this feeble attempt to promote the glory of God, and the best interests of mankind!

PICKERING, June 20th, 1825.

P.S. Perhaps the following definition of Justification will be thought preferable to that given at page 48. "It is that act of God, by which we are accepted as righteous before him, and consequently freed from the sentence of eternal misery, and entitled to eternal life."

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THE
CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR.

PART I.

ON THE EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

1. IN what religion have you been instructed?

In the christian religion.

2. Where is the christian religion to be found?

In the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament, especially in the latter.

3. Can you produce any evidences of the truth of the holy scriptures?

Yes.

4. What is meant by the truth of the holy scriptures?

The truth of the holy scriptures regards their genuineness, authenticity, inspiration, and uncorrupted preservation.

5. What is meant by the genuineness of the scriptures?

By the genuineness of the scriptures is meant, that they were written by those persons to whom they are attributed, and not by others; and especially, that they were written at the time professed, and not imposed upon mankind in any subsequent age.

6. How do you prove that the scriptures are genuine?

In order to do this, it is requisite to consider the Old and New Testament separately.

7. How then do you prove the genuineness of the New Testament?

(1.) That the books of the New Testament are genuine, is rendered probable, by the consideration

that about the time they profess to have been written, there were such persons as Christ and those who openly professed the christian religion. Admitting that there were such persons, it is probable that what is recorded in the New Testament would be committed to writing. And that such persons really did appear in the world, we have the testimony of heathen authors who lived at the time, and of Josephus the Jewish historian; and as these writers never embraced christianity, they could be under no inducement to give a false account. "The most considerable Roman historians who lived in this age and wrote of it, are Tacitus and Suetonius. Tacitus assures us, "that in Nero's days," who began his reign about twenty years after the death of Christ, "there was a vast multitude of christians, not only in Judea but at Rome too; against whom Nero raised a persecution, attended with such circumstances of ignominy and cruelty as moved the compassion even of their enemies." His contemporary Suetonius attests the same: and Pliny, the intimate friend and correspondent of both, being employed in Trajan's time to persecute the christians, writes an account of them to the emperor. After having spoken very favourably of their moral character, he adds, "that many of both sexes, and of every age and rank, were infected with this superstition; that it was gone into the villages, as well as the cities; and that till he began to put the laws in execution against them, the temples of the heathen gods were almost deserted, and hardly any could be found who would buy victims for them." Several of the authors mentioned, also plainly assert, that the christians were denominated from Christ; nay, Tacitus expressly adds, "that he was put to death under Pontius Pilate, who was procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius." The testimony of Josephus, who was born about five years after the death of Christ, is given in his Jewish Antiquities in the following words, "At that time was Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man. For he was the performer of diverse admirable works, and the instructor of those who willingly entertain the truth; and he drew unto

him diverse Jews and Greeks to be his followers. This was Christ, who being accused by the princes of our nation before Pilate, and afterwards condemned to the cross by him ; yet did not those who followed him from the beginning forbear to love him for the ignominy of his death. For he appeared alive unto them the third day after, according as the divine prophets had before testified the same and diverse other wonderful things of him. And from that time forward, the race of the christians, who have derived their name from him, hath never ceased."

(2.) The historical books, including the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, are quoted by a continued series of writers, from the time of the apostles to the present period.

(3.) The four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, thirteen Epistles of Paul, the first Epistle of John, and the first of Peter, were received without doubt by those who doubted respecting the other books ; and afterwards the remaining books, including Hebrews, James, the second of Peter, the second and third of John, and the Revelations, were admitted as genuine, and added to the others.

(4.) The writings of the New Testament were early collected into a distinct volume.

(5.) They were early expounded in christian assemblies.

(6.) Commentaries were antiently written upon them, harmonies formed out of them, different copies carefully collected, and translations made into different languages.

(7.) They were received by antient christians of different sects, and were usually appealed to by both sides in their controversies.

(8.) They were attacked by the first opposers of christianity, as containing the grounds of that religion.*

* See Paley's Evidences, and more largely in Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History.

8. How do you prove the genuineness of the Old Testament scriptures?

(1.) The quotations made from the Old Testament, in the New Testament, prove that the former then existed, and that many of the books were written by those persons whose names they still bear, for the New Testament writers often mention those names in connexion with the different books.

(2.) A Greek translation of it, called the Septuagint, was made about three hundred years before Christ, and was placed in the Alexandrian Library in Egypt.

(3.) The Samaritans, who separated from the Jews many hundred years before Christ, had the Pentateuch or five books of Moses in their own language, which is still preserved.

(4.) Explanations of the books of Moses, and also of the prophets, were published by Jewish writers, either before or very near the time of Christ.

(5.) Many heathen writers about the time of Moses and afterwards, speak of him, as the leader and law-giver of the Jews, and their works contain imperfect accounts of many things which are related in his writings.

9. You have said, that the truth of the scriptures may regard their authenticity, as well as their genuineness: what is meant by the authenticity of the scriptures?

By the authenticity of the scriptures is meant, the truth of the facts related in them, whether common or miraculous, in opposition to their being invented by the writers, or wilfully misrepresented.

10. How do you prove the authenticity of the writings of the New Testament?

(1.) The writers of the common and miraculous facts recorded in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles, certainly knew whether these facts were true or false, as most of them came under their own observation.

(2.) These accounts were published soon after the facts were reported to have taken place, and in the country where they took place, and consequently, had they been false, they might easily have been contradicted; but this was never done.

(3.) The writers of the New Testament appear to have been men of the greatest integrity, and therefore, they would not utter known falsehoods.

Their integrity appears in the artless manner in which they write. "No remarks are thrown in to anticipate objections; nothing of that caution which never fails to distinguish the testimony of those who are conscious of imposture; no endeavour to reconcile the reader's mind to what may be extraordinary in the narrative." "It does not appear, that ever it came into the mind of these writers, to consider how this or the other action would appear to mankind, or what objection might be raised upon them. If the reader will not believe their testimony, there is no help for it; they tell the truth, and attend to nothing else."

"Their integrity likewise appears, in the freedom with which they mention those circumstances which might have exposed their Master and themselves to the greatest contempt, among prejudiced and inconsiderate men; such as they knew they must generally expect to meet with; John i. 45, 46. Luke ii. 4—7. Mark vi. 3. Matt. viii. 20. John vii. 48. Matt. xxvii. 32—44. Matt. iv. 18—21. xxvi. 56, 69—74. Luke ix. 54. Acts xv. 37—40. Their writings also discover the most ardent piety towards God, and the most tender concern for the salvation of their fellow-men. This appears especially in their public discourses and Epistles, where we might most expect to find it."

(4.) If they knew the facts of the New Testament to be false, they could have no temptation to propagate them. "The grand foundation of their scheme was, that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified at Jerusalem, by the Jewish Rulers, was the Son of God and the Lord of all things. It was evidently charging upon the princes of their country the most aggravated murder. They might, therefore, depend upon it, that these rulers would immediately employ all their art and power, to confute their testimony, and to destroy their persons. Accordingly, one of their company was presently stoned (Acts vii. 59.); another quickly after slain with the sword (Acts xii. 2.); and most of the rest

were scattered abroad into strange cities," Acts viii. 1-4. xi. 19. They could scarcely expect better treatment among the Gentiles; and that they actually met with much opposition from these also, is evident from the Acts of the Apostles.

(5.) The miracles which Christ and his apostles are reported to have wrought, were performed in order to convince the people, of the absolute truth of the doctrines which they delivered as being received from God; and that such miracles really were wrought, appears evident from this, that on the testimony of these miracles, numbers both among Jews and Gentiles, embraced christianity, and continued to adhere to it, in spite of all opposition. And the miracles wrought were generally of such a nature, that the people could not be deceived in them. They were numerous; they were wrought publicly; and the effect of most of them continued long. This was the case when incurable blindness, &c. was removed. It was the case with the great miracle of Christ's resurrection; for he continued to shew himself to his disciples for forty days. The miracle by which the gift of tongues was imparted was also of the same nature.

11. How do you prove the authenticity of the writings of the Old Testament?

(1.) "Many of the writers of the Old Testament have given us an account of things, in which they were themselves personally concerned, as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and several of the minor prophets; and consequently they" knew whether the things which they related were true or false.

(2.) "There are great marks of integrity in their writings; not only, as they tell their very amazing story with great simplicity, and without any apology, excuse, digression, &c.; but as they every where write with the deepest sense of God upon their spirit: they do also most candidly acknowledge their own faults; and as for Moses, whose credibility is of the greatest importance to support all the rest, his leaving his family in the circumstances of common Levites, without

entailing any peculiar honours or possessions upon them, is as strong a proof of his uprightness, as could well be imagined."

(3.) As these accounts were published to the people soon after the facts related took place, thousands could have refuted the statements, if false. But this was never done. On the contrary, the writings of Moses, and also all the historical books, to which the term authenticity most properly applies, have always been received as true among the Jews.

(4.) Christ and his apostles repeatedly quote from the different books of the Old Testament, as containing true statements of things.

12. What is meant by the inspiration of the scriptures?

By the divine inspiration of the scriptures is meant, that the sacred writers were under a particular divine influence, which enabled them to communicate the exact truth on every subject, without the least mistake. In writing the historical books, the most suitable facts were suggested to their minds, and in the statement of these they were perfectly secured against all error; and in writing the other parts of scripture, doctrines, prophecies, &c., of which they before knew nothing, were directly suggested to their minds, or made known to them in some other way. This was generally done, in such a manner as to leave each writer to express the ideas suggested in his own language, which accounts for the difference of style that may be observed in the different writers, both of the Old Testament and the New.

13. Is it any advantage for us to know that the scriptures were given by divine inspiration?

Yes; for if they merely contained a true account of things according to the opinion of the different writers, we could have no more confidence in following them, than in following the writings of other wise and good men who have written on religious subjects; for all men when left to themselves, are continually liable to err.

14. Do the writers of the New Testament profess to be guided by divine inspiration?

Yes; as appears from the following passages; John xiv. 26. 1 Cor. ii. 12, 13. Gal. i. 11, 12. 1 Peter i. 12. 1 John ii. 20. Rev. i. 1.

15. How do you prove that they were really thus inspired, for their own belief of it cannot satisfy us?

(1.) From the miracles which they wrought.—Christ confirmed the truth of his mission and of his doctrines by numerous miracles. The apostles also confirmed the truth of their doctrine by miracles; Acts ii. 8—12. iii. 7—10: ix. 33—35. xiii. 11, 12. xiv. 8—10. 19, 20. Miracles alone are a sufficient proof that the apostles were really inspired, according to their own profession; for it is impossible that God should thus work by them to confirm falsehood.

(2.) From the prophecies which they uttered.—Christ predicted that the christian church should never be destroyed (Matt. xvi. 18.), and that Jerusalem should be completely destroyed (Luke xix. 43, 44.); both of which agree with facts. In the first ages of the christian church, every attempt was made to destroy it; but it still stands, and is continually increasing. The destruction of Jerusalem, according to Josephus the Jewish historian, took place about forty years after the death of Christ, and exactly as he had foretold. St. Paul predicted the apostasy of the church of Rome, which has exactly come to pass; 2 Thess. ii. 1—12. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. And St. John points out the seat of the apostasy, Rev. xvii. In the ninth verse it is said, that the woman sitteth on seven mountains; which has always been interpreted of the city of Rome, the seat of papal power, which is built on seven mountains.

(3.) The inspiration of the New Testament scriptures was acknowledged by primitive christians. Clemens, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, and many others, speak of the inspiration of scripture, and of the veneration which it gained on that account. This belief of the inspiration of the New Testament has existed through successive ages to the present time.

16. How do you prove the inspiration of the Old Testament?

(1.) From the numerous miracles which Moses and the other sacred writers performed, and the many prophecies which they uttered.

(2.) The Jews always considered the Old Testament scriptures as inspired; and Christ and his apostles, by their numerous quotations from them, and declarations respecting them, confirmed that opinion; John v. 39. 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. Heb. i. 1, 2. 2 Peter i. 21.

17. Are there not also several subordinate arguments, from which the inspiration of the scriptures in general may be proved?

Yes.

18. What are they?

They arise, (1.) From their sublimity, or the exalted views they give of things. The descriptions given by the sacred writers, of God and his perfections, of his universal dominion, &c., convince us that they flowed from a higher source than human reason, as no unassisted mortal can attain such elevated conceptions of divine things. And when we consider these sentiments as originating with the Jews, who compared with other nations were rude and unpolished, we must allow them to be inspired of God.

(2.) From their harmony, or the agreement of the sacred writings among themselves. "Should an equal number of contemporaries, of the same country, education, habits, profession, natural disposition, and rank in life, concur in writing a book on religious subjects as large as the Bible, each furnishing his portion without comparing notes together; the attentive reader, whose mind had been long inured to such studies, would be able to discover some diversity of opinion among them. But the penmen of the scriptures succeeded each other, during the term of fifteen hundred years; some of them were princes and priests, others shepherds and fishermen; their natural abilities, education, habits, and employments, were exceedingly dissimilar; they wrote laws, history, prophecy, odes, devotional exercises, proverbs, parables, doctrines, and controversy; and each man had his distinct department: yet they all exactly coincide in the exhibitions

which they give us, of the perfections, works, truths, and will of God ; of the nature, situation, and obligations of man ; of sin, and salvation ; of this world, and the next ; and in short, of all things connected with our duty, safety, interest and comfort, and in the whole of the religion inculcated by them. *Apparent* inconsistencies will indeed perplex the superficial reader ; but they will vanish upon a more accurate investigation ; nor can any charge of disagreement, among the writers of the Bible, be substantiated : for it can only be said, that they related the same facts with different circumstances, which are perfectly reconcilable ; and that they gave instructions suited to the persons whom they addressed, without systematically shewing the harmony of them with other parts of divine truth. They wrote not by concert, and bestowed no pains to avoid the appearance of inconsistency : yet the exact coincidence which is perceived among them by the diligent student, is most astonishing, and cannot be accounted for on any rational principles, without admitting that they wrote 'as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' "

(3.) From their tendency. "Did all men believe and obey the Bible as a divine revelation, repentance and renunciation of all vice and immorality, joined with the spiritual worship of God in his ordinances, faith in his mercy and truth through the mediation of his Son, and all the fruits of the Holy Spirit, as visible in the life of every true believer, would form such characters, and produce such effects, as the world has never yet witnessed. Men would then universally do justice, speak truth, shew mercy, exercise mutual forgiveness, follow after peace, bridle their appetites and passions, and lead sober, righteous, and godly lives. Murders, wars, bitter contentions, cruel oppressions, and unrestrained licentiousness, would no more desolate the world, and fill it with misery ; but righteousness, goodness, and truth, would bless the earth with a felicity exceeding all our present conceptions."

(4.) From the actual effects produced by them. "These are indeed far from being equal to their

tendency ; because, through human depravity, the gospel is not generally or fully believed and obeyed : yet they are very considerable ; and we may assert, that even at present there are many thousands, who have been reclaimed from a profane and immoral life, to sobriety, equity, truth, and piety, and to good behaviour in relative life, by attending to the sacred scriptures." These effects are not to be ascribed to the scriptures themselves (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7), but to God working by means of them ; and if he is actually found to work by means of them, this is a satisfactory proof, that they are given by the inspiration of his Spirit, and are not the mere invention of men.

(5) From the vast numbers of wise and good men, who through many generations, and in distant countries, have agreed in receiving the Bible as a divine revelation. "Many of them have been noted for seriousness, erudition, penetration, and impartiality in judging of men and things. With much labour, and patient investigation, they detected the impostures by which their contemporaries were duped ; yet the same assiduous examination confirmed them in believing the Bible to be the word of God, and induced them to recommend it, living and dying, to all others, as the source of wisdom, hope, and consolation."

(6.) From their surprising preservation. The sacred books of the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, and other nations, have perished, though no means were used to destroy them. It is true, some antient books have come down to us ; but their case is very different to that of the scriptures. They had no enemies to oppose them, because they neither contradicted the prejudices, nor opposed the passions, of mankind. But it has not been so with the scriptures. Kings and emperors, both before and since the coming of Christ, have been their determined enemies, and have used the utmost severity to accomplish their destruction. Antiochus Epiphanes, in the prosecution of his design to establish the idolatrous worship of the Greeks in Judea, caused all the copies of the law which could be found, to be burnt, and forbid under the penalty of death any Jew

to retain the scriptures in his possession. Diocletian, one of the Roman emperors, ordered the churches of the christians to be demolished, and the scriptures to be burnt, and the most cruel tortures were used to induce the ministers to deliver up the sacred volume. But we see the hand of God preserving the scriptures from all injury with incessant care, and hence we infer that they are a revelation of his will.

“Lastly, “He that believeth hath the witness in himself.” The discoveries which he has made by the light of the scripture; the experience which he has had, that the Lord fulfils its promises to those who trust in them; the abiding effects produced by attending to it, on his own judgment, dispositions, and affections; and the earnest of heaven, which he has enjoyed in communion with God, put the matter beyond all doubt. And though many believers are not qualified to dispute against infidels, they are enabled through this inward testimony, to obey and suffer for the gospel: and they can no more be convinced by reasonings and objections, that men invented the Bible, than they can be persuaded that men created the sun, while they behold its light, and are cheered by its beams.” These general arguments, together with those already adduced in support of the inspiration of the Old and New Testament, compose a body of evidence, which cannot fail to satisfy every candid inquirer.

19. But, admitting that the holy scriptures are genuine, authentic, and inspired; in passing down to us, they may have been greatly corrupted: can you prove their uncorrupted preservation, or that they are the same as when written and first published?

Yes.

20. How do you prove the uncorrupted preservation of the Old Testament?

That the books of the Old Testament have come down to us, in the main uncorrupted, may be inferred from the agreement of the Hebrew Bible with the Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, and other ancient versions; and also from this consideration, that since

the time of Christ, the Christians and Jews have been a check upon each other, to prevent either party from corrupting them.

21. How do you prove the uncorrupted preservation of the books of the New Testament ?

That the books of the New Testament have come down to us uncorrupted, may easily be seen. In the first place, it was next to impossible to corrupt them. Opposing sects soon appeared in the christian church ; and as they endeavoured to support their opinions by appealing to the New Testament, each would watch over the others, to see that they did not corrupt it, in order to serve their own purpose. The New Testament was soon translated into many languages, and spread through many countries ; and therefore, the only way in which it could have been corrupted, would have been, to bring all these people of different languages and nations, to consent to give up their old copies, and receive corrupted copies in their stead : but surely this would have been impossible.—Many of these antient translations of the Testament into different languages, have come down to us, and when compared with each other, and with the original Greek, there is a striking agreement between them ; which shews, that no corruption of this holy book has taken place.—Trifling mistakes have been made, by occasionally substituting one letter, or one word, for another ; which may be fairly attributed to the mistake or carelessness of the transcriber, or person who wrote the copy ; for printing was then unknown.

22. What influence should this subject have upon us ?

(1.) We ought to cherish constant gratitude for so invaluable a gift as that of the inspired scriptures.

(2.) We ought most sincerely and cheerfully to embrace the system of religion contained in them.

(3.) We should bring all opinions and practices to the test of the scriptures, for these are the only infallible rule of faith and duty.

(4.) We should endeavour, by constant reading, to become well acquainted with every part of the sacred

volume; and especially, with those parts which are most important to be known.

23. What are the principal motives to induce us to a constant perusal of the word of God?

(1.) The command of God; Deut. xvii. 18, 19. Joshua i. 8. Deut. vi. 6, 7. Col. iii. 16.

(2.) The invariable practice of pious people; Job xxiii. 12. Ps. xix. 8. Ps. cxix. 20, 24, 97, 103.

(3.) The advantage to be derived from it. It is one of the best means of promoting our advancement in knowledge, holiness, and happiness.

24. How should the word of God be read, in order that we may derive these advantages from it?

(1.) It should be read with seriousness.

(2.) With a mind open to conviction, or willing to embrace every truth which we there discover.

(3.) With deep attention, that we may understand what we read; John v. 39.

(4.) With constancy, and not merely occasionally. Some part of it should, if possible, be read every day.

(5.) With self-application; that is, trying our temper and conduct by what we read.

(6.) Comparing the different parts of it together, in order to reconcile the various statements it contains; which, when properly understood, will always be found to agree. Where the Bible contains marginal references, it will often be found of great advantage to consult them.

(7.) The scriptures should be read in *order*. For devotional reading, we may often select a few verses, which, by their particular seriousness and sweetness, tend to prepare the mind for prayer; but in general, it will be found to improve our knowledge most, to finish one book before we begin another; and, as it respects the historical books, it will be found advantageous to go regularly through, when we have once begun to read them. These, as it regards the Old Testament, extend from Genesis to Job, with the exception of Leviticus, which can scarcely be called historical. As the prophets Isaiah, &c. lived and prophesied during the times of the different kings of

Judah and Israel, it will be of considerable use, in order to understand both the historical and prophetic books, to compare those parts of each which refer to the same subject. This may easily be done by means of marginal references.

(8.) In reading the scriptures, we should constantly pray for divine assistance through Christ; Ps. cxix. 18.

PART II.

ON THE DOCTRINES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

On the Existence, Unity, and Spirituality of God.

1. IS the existence of a God an important truth ?

It is the foundation of all religion ; for " religion always denotes, either a system of truths of which God is the great subject, or a system of affections and conduct of which he is the supreme object."

2. Supposing the notion of a God to have been derived from some source or other, can you prove that this notion is correct, or in other words, that there is a God ?

Yes :

(1.) The general opinion of mankind, in all ages, all nations, and of all descriptions, is a proof. If that opinion had been false, it would doubtless have been strongly opposed, and probably would soon have lost its influence ; but only a few persons have ventured to attack it, and with little success ; as, comparatively, there have always been few atheists.

(2.) Our earth and all the heavenly bodies, afford a strong proof, that there is a God who made and preserves them. It is an unquestionable truth, that

nothing cannot be the author of something ; and that therefore every thing that exists must have a cause. This mode of reasoning leads us to the great first cause of all things, which is God.

3. What improvement should we make of the existence of a God ?

(1.) We should use all proper means to become acquainted with his real character : especially, we should study his word.

(2.) We should constantly worship him, both in public and in private.

(3.) As we are his property, we should be devoted entirely to his service.

4. You have proved that there is a God ; how do you prove that there is only one God ?

From Deut. vi. 4. Isaiah xlv. 5.—We have also a strong proof of the unity of God, in the unity of design and agency, which appears in the universe. The universe is a system in which one part is adapted to another, as the sun to the earth and the different planets, the eye to the light, &c. ; and this adaptation of the parts to each other, has been preserved through all succeeding ages. One designer and agent, is sufficient to account for the contrivance, formation, and preservation of this harmonious system ; and it will be found difficult, if not impossible, for the mind to admit a second designer and agent, as we have no proof either of his contrivance or agency.

5. What is the nature of this one God ?

He is a Spirit ; John iv. 24.

6. What is a spirit ?

A spirit is an immaterial, thinking, and active principle. The soul of man is a spirit, and so is distinct from the body, which is a material substance, and as such is extended, and is also capable of being divided into parts. The soul is also a thinking principle, and can move the body at its pleasure.

7. What are the properties by which God, as a Spirit, may be distinguished from all other spirits ?

God is an eternal, self-existent, unchangeable, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent Spirit.

8. But if God is a Spirit, how is it that the Bible ascribes to him so many parts and motions of a human body?

When God is said to have eyes, ears, mouth, arms, hands, bowels, and heart, we are not to imagine, that he really possesses these things. These words are used to denote the acts in God, which bear some resemblance to those acts which we perform by the members here ascribed to him. By our eyes and ears, we become acquainted with things around us; these in God denote his omniscience. By our mouth, we make known our opinions and wishes; so God is said to open his mouth and speak, when he reveals his will. By our arms and hands, we exert our strength; so these in God denote his power, and lifting them up, &c., the exertion of that power. The terms bowels and heart are often used in the scriptures, the former to denote compassion, and the latter sincerity. They are frequently thus used, in reference both to God and man. Every thing of a corporeal kind which the Bible ascribes to God, must be understood in a similar manner.

9. Is this doctrine of any importance?

Yes; for in proportion as it prevails, it will abolish all image worship. While mankind conceived God to be spiritual and invisible, they made no image to represent him. The antient Egyptians believed in an eternal and invisible being, whom they called Cnept, whom no one thought it right to represent by painting or sculpture; but at the same time they had an image of another god called Isis.* The heathen in North America have some notion of a God whom they call the Great Spirit, and it does not appear that they have any images among them. And when the doctrine of God's spirituality shall universally prevail through the preaching of the gospel, all image worship will cease: as a proof of this, the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands have destroyed their idol gods as foolish things.

* Congregational Magazine, April, 1818.

10. Is this the only thing for which the doctrine is important?

No: it also teaches us the nature of acceptable worship. This consists in worshipping God in spirit and in truth, or with the spirit; for only this is true or real worship towards a spiritual God. It is only by our souls or spirits that we can feel sorrow for sin, a desire after pardon and grace, gratitude to God and Christ for the blessings of salvation, dependance on God's promises, and resignation to his will; and all true prayer must consist in the exercise and expression of these and similar affections towards God.

CHAPTER II.

On the Trinity.

1. Can you explain the word Trinity?

Yes; the term Trinity, simply signifies 'Three in one.'

2. What is generally understood by it when applied to God?

From its first adoption by the christian Fathers down to the present time, it has been used to denote, that in the one divine nature or Godhead, there are three distinct persons.

3. But how can there be one and yet three, or three and yet one?

There may be a unity or sameness of nature, and yet a distinction of persons. In the former respect, God may be one; and yet in the latter, three.

4. What is meant by the word person when applied to the Trinity?

It is used to designate each one of the sacred Three, but without pretending to explain how they are distinguished from each other.

5. But if the term person does not explain how the sacred Three are distinguished from each other, why is it used?

Because no better term could be discovered or invented. When we wish to particularize one of the sacred Three, we must either entirely adhere to the scripture terms, Father, Son, and Spirit; or else say, the first person of the Trinity, &c., or the first of the sacred Three, &c. Of these and similar phrases, every person may use that which is most agreeable to himself.

6. Can you prove the doctrine of the Trinity to be a scriptural doctrine?

Yes; in the following manner:

(1.) There is only one God, Dent. vi. 4. Isa. xlv. 5.

(2.) In this God there is a plurality of persons, Gen. i. 26. iii. 22. xi. 7.

(3.) This plurality of persons consists of three, John xiv. 16, 17. Matt. xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

(4.) This distinction of three persons is in the divine nature or Godhead. None entertain any doubt, that the Father is a person in the divine nature; and that the Word or Son is also a person in the divine nature, is evident from John i. 1, 2, where he is said not only to be God, but also to be *with* God. The Holy Spirit, if he is a person at all, must be a person in the divine nature; and that he is a person, and not a mere operation or influence, is evident from the names and properties ascribed to him. The pronoun *he* is applied to him, John xiv. 26. Certain actions and affections are also ascribed to him, which cannot be applied to an influence or operation; John xvi. 7, 8. Acts xiii. 4. Rom. xv. 30. Ephes. iv. 30. He is also called the eternal Spirit (Heb. ix. 14), and so must have been one of the sacred Three from eternity. We also learn from the scriptures, that the Son is God, and likewise that the Holy Spirit is God; but as they cannot be two Gods distinct from the Father, such assertions can only be viewed as affording an additional proof, that the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons in the divine nature, as well as the Father. That the Son is God, is evident; (1.) From the names given him: God, John i. 1; great God, Titus ii. 13; true God, 1 John v. 20; only wise God, Jude 25.—

(2.) From the attributes ascribed to him: unchangeableness, Heb. xiii. 8; omniscience, John xxi. 17; omnipresence, Matt. xviii. 20. xxviii. 20; omnipotence, Phil. iii. 21. Rev. i. 8.—And, that the Holy Spirit is God, is evident; (1.) From his being called God, Acts v. 3, 4. (2.) From divine attributes being ascribed to him: omnipresence, John xiv. 16, 17; omniscience, 1 Cor. ii. 10; eternity, Heb. ix. 14. Thus it appears evident, that in the one divine nature or Godhead, there are three distinct persons; and consequently that the doctrine of the Trinity is a scriptural doctrine.

7. Though the Bible, and not the opinions of the first christians, must be our standard, yet our conviction of the truth of this doctrine may perhaps be strengthened, by knowing that they were Trinitarians: can you produce any proof of this?

Yes; Polycarp, a disciple of St. John, when at the stake, addressed a prayer to God, which he concluded in this manner: "For all things, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, together with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ; with whom, unto thee and the Holy Spirit, be glory, both now and for ever, world without end. Amen." Justin Martyr says; "Him (the Father of righteousness) and that Son who hath proceeded from him, and the Prophetic Spirit (that is, the Spirit of inspiration), we worship and adore." Athenagoras says, "We who preach God, preach God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are one."

8. Is the doctrine of the Trinity of any importance; and if so, in what respect is it important?

Its importance arises,

(1.) From the concern which each person has in the work of redemption. God the Father, as the fountain of government, demands satisfaction for sin; and Christ as the Son willingly undertakes to make it, Ps. xl. 7. The Father, satisfied with the proposal, sends him into our world, to accomplish the arduous task; and he willingly comes down for that purpose, John iii. 16. Matt. xx. 28. Having finished his work on earth, he becomes the Intercessor of his people in heaven, Heb. vii. 25. The

Holy Spirit, on the ground of his death and intercession, engages, and is given by the Father, to teach, sanctify, and comfort us; John xiv. 26. Titus iii. 5. 1 Peter i. 2.

(2) From the regard which we owe to each of the sacred Three. Viewing the supreme Being without distinction of persons, as good, wise, powerful, holy, just, and true, he has a just claim to our love, reverence, trust, submission, and obedience. But if we view the persons according to their offices in the work of redemption, each has a claim to peculiar regard. In general, prayer should be addressed to the Father, particularly, for pardon, as he sustains the office of Governor; and it should be presented through the mediation of the Son (John xiv. 13), and in dependence on the Holy Spirit, that we may ask in a proper manner, and for suitable blessings, Jude 20. We should cherish love to each person:—To the Father, for providing, accepting, and sending the Son to be our Saviour; to the Son, for his unspeakable love, in assuming our nature, dying for us, and becoming our Intercessor; Ephes. iii. 18, 19; and to the Holy Spirit, for applying the blessings of redemption.

9. But may we never pray to the Son or the Holy Spirit?

Yes; as each of them is properly God, there cannot be any thing wrong in praying to them: and the Bible furnishes examples of prayer offered to Christ; Acts vii. 59. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

10. But if we pray to the Son, or the Holy Spirit, is it not as if we prayed to another God?

No; there is only one Jehovah or supreme Being, the creator and preserver of all other beings. If then we pray to the Son or the Holy Spirit, as well as to the Father, it is not as another God; but we still pray to the same supreme Being, in another person.

11. What particular method has God adopted, in order to preserve the doctrine of the Trinity in the christian church?

(1.) He requires that all persons who are baptized, should be baptized in the name of the sacred Trinity, Matt. xxviii. 19.

(2.) He caused the apostle Paul to finish some of his epistles by imploring the blessing of the sacred three upon those to whom he wrote; which has led most christian ministers to do the same in dismissing the people: 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

12. What is meant by baptizing a person in the name of the Father, &c.?

The phrase *in the name, &c.*, should most probably be *into*, or *unto* the name, &c. as in 1 Cor. x. 2. When a person voluntarily suffers himself to be baptized into or unto the name of the Father, &c., he thereby professedly engages to receive the truths testified by Jehovah the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and as many of those truths regard the distinct part which each person takes in the scheme of redemption, he necessarily engages to regard each person according to his peculiar work.

13. What is meant by the blessing of the sacred Trinity, which many ministers implore upon their people in the words of Paul, 2 Cor. xiii. 14?

It may be taken, in a general sense, to denote the blessing of the three-one God. This best agrees with the benediction with which the Jewish priests were required to bless the people, Num. vi. 24—26. In this case, the three names are probably mentioned, that we may always remember, that our blessings are the blessings of each of the sacred Three, and that consequently, we should always maintain a suitable regard to each. But if the blessing of each person should be distinguished,—the grace of Christ may mean, all the blessings procured by his grace, or free favour towards us; viz. justification, reconciliation to God, and adoption into his family as his children, all needful supplies for the body, and at length eternal life.—The love of God the Father may mean, that love which, in answer to prayer, leads him to grant all these blessings through Christ, and also to favour us with a sweet sense of his love, as our reconciled Friend and Father.—The communion of the Holy Ghost may signify, all those communications of knowledge, holiness, and comfort, which our

souls require, and which he voluntarily undertakes to impart, as sent by the Father through the mediation of the Son.

CHAPTER III.

On the Attributes or Perfections of God.

1. What is meant by the attributes or perfections of God ?

They are those essential properties in the nature and character of God, which his word teaches us to ascribe to him; viz. eternity, unchangeableness, omnipresence, omniscience, goodness, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, and truth.

2. What is the difference between attributes and perfections ?

In God they denote the same thing; with this difference, that when we call God's attributes perfections, it denotes, that he is absolutely perfect in his attributes.

SECTION I.—*On the Eternity of God.*

1. What is meant by the eternity of God ?

That his duration or continuance has no limits, neither beginning nor end.

2. In what does the eternity of God differ from that of angels and men ?

(1.) They had a beginning, but God had none.

(2.) Though they will have no end, their continuance of being depends entirely on God (Acts xvii. 28); but God is eternal in his own nature, he depends upon no other for it.

3. How do you prove that God is eternal ?

(1.) From scripture declarations; Ps. xc. 2. xciii. 2, Rom xvi. 26.

(2.) Several of his attributes are also said to be eternal; Rom. i. 20. Prov. viii. 1, 23. Ps. ciii. 17.

4. What may we learn from the eternity of God?

(1.) That it is the height of presumption to censure his proceedings.

(2.) The awful state of sinners.—They lie exposed to the anger of a God, who *eternally* lives to punish his enemies.

(3.) The security of all the promises of God.—He ever lives to fulfil them. His people may therefore place unlimited confidence in him; Deut. xxxiii. 27. Isaiah xxvi. 4.

SECTION II.—On the Unchangeableness of God.

1. How may the eternity and unchangeableness of God be distinguished from each other?

God as eternal *always continues*, and as unchangeable he always continues the *same*.

2. How is God always the same, or unchangeable?

(1.) In his nature, and in all his attributes; Ps. cii. 25—27. James i. 17.

(2.) In his purposes; Ephes. i. 11. Isaiah xli. 10.

3. If God is unchangeable, how can he be said to repent?

Repentance generally regards moral concerns, and then supposes previous evil conduct which is repented of. This repentance is quite inapplicable to God. Repentance is also applied to natural concerns, and includes three things; regret for having done, or undertaken, some particular thing; a resolution, or purpose of mind, to alter our future conduct; and, the actual change of that conduct. The last only will apply to God. This repentance, as exercised by man, is occasioned, either by ignorance of the event, how it would turn out, or rashness in using certain means without due consideration; neither of which can be said of God. Properly speaking, he cannot feel regret on account of what he has done; nor can he alter his

purpose, as to what he will do ; for he saw exactly how men would sin, and all the effects their conduct would produce, and under the guidance of perfect foreknowledge, he also resolved how to act; and therefore, he has only to *alter his conduct*, according to his infallible foresight and immutable purpose. Or, if taken in another light, it may denote, that if God were in our place, who cannot foresee things, he would truly repent. Thus, human affections may be attributed to God.

4. But does not God's answering prayer, prove him to be changeable ?

No; for while he is unchangeable in all his purposes, there is no doubt that one part of those purposes is, that sincere and fervent prayer shall be answered.

5. What influence should the unchangeableness of God have upon us ?

(1.) It should lead sinners immediately to seek mercy and grace through Christ; for so long as they continue in sin, a God of unchangeable holiness must always view them with displeasure; and should death find them in their present state, a God of unchangeable justice, truth, and power, must inflict the awful punishment which he has threatened.

(2.) As God is unchangeable in all his perfections and promises, it should lead his people to place unlimited confidence in him.

(3.) The unchangeableness of God, as contrasted with their inconstancy, should lead them to deep humility, and also to pray that they may continually become more like him, in all his imitable and unchangeable excellencies.

SECTION III.—On the Omnipresence of God.

1. What is meant by the omnipresence of God ?

It denotes that he is present in every part of the universe at the same time.

2. Can you form any idea how God is present in every place ?

No ; it is inconceivable.

3. Is it not incorrect, to account for it, by supposing him to be extended through the universe like air or light?

Yes; it is very erroneous.

4. What arguments may be advanced against this view of the subject?

(1.) The spirituality of God. As a spirit, he cannot be either extended or divisible; but air and light are both extended, and also capable of being divided into parts.

(2.) If God were extended like air or light, we could only have a part of him in each place; but by the omnipresence of God is meant, that the whole of God is present in every place.

5. As we cannot form any idea how God is present in every place, are we bound to believe it?

Yes; because, though we know not the *manner* of the fact, yet of the *fact itself* we have the strongest proof.

6. How do you prove the omnipresence of God?

(1.) From scripture declarations; Ps. cxxxix. 7—10. Jer. xxiii. 24.

(2.) From his omniscience. If he knows every thing, he must be in every place.

7. But God is said to dwell in heaven, and he is also said to go from persons, and to come to them; how can these things be reconciled with his being in all places at the same time?

These modes of expression, are used in accommodation to human language and human weakness. A king may be said to reside in that city which is the seat of government, and yet he is the ruler of the whole country; so the seat of God's government and the throne on which he sits, are said to be in heaven, yet still he rules in all parts of the universe, and is also *essentially* present in every part at the same time. As to his coming to us, and departing from us, it only denotes his manifesting his kindness towards us, or ceasing to do it; just as our friends shew their attachment, or the want of it, by continuing or discontinuing their visits.

8. What influence should the omnipresence of God have upon us?

(1.) It should lead us to speak of God with reverence, and to attend to what is spoken by others respecting him, with the same feeling.

(2.) The omnipresence of a perfectly holy God, should lead us to guard against the indulgence of any sin.

(3.) As God is constantly present with all his people, to witness and approve all their attempts to serve him, and promote his cause in the world, it should make them zealous, courageous, and persevering; Ps. xvi. 8. cxix. 168, Heb. xii. 1.

(4.) As God is always present with all his people, to protect, support, assist them, and provide for them, it should prevent their dread of future evils, and make them patient under present trials; Ps. xvi. 8. xlvi. 1-3. Isa. xli. 10. xliii. 2. Heb. xiii. 5.

SECTION IV.—On the Omniscience of God.

1. What is meant by the omniscience of God?

By the omniscience of God is meant, not merely that he *can*, but that he *does* know all things.

2. Does the omniscience of God include a perfect knowledge, both of present, past, and future things?

Yes; as appears,

(1.) From scripture declarations; Ps. cxlvii. 5. Heb. iv. 13. Gen. ix. 14, 15. Isa. xlv. 10. Acts. xv. 18.

(2.) From his omnipresence. If he is in every place at the same time, he must know, at least, all present things.

3. Does God's perfect knowledge of the present, the past, and the future, include the actions of rational creatures, as well as objects and events produced by his own agency?

Yes.

4. How do you prove this?

That God knows all the present and past actions of men; is evident from, Job. xxxiv. 21, 22. Hosea vii. 2;

and that he knows all their future actions, will appear from, 1 Sam. xxiii. 10—13. Acts ii. 23; and also from his predictions respecting such actions, compared with their accomplishment; Gen. xv. 13, compared with Exod. i. 11, &c.—Isa. xlv. 28, compared with 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23. Ezra i. 1—4.—Ps. ii. 1, 2, compared with Acts iv. 25—27.—Acts xxi. 11, compared with verse 33, &c.

5. Has God's knowledge of the future sinful actions of men, any influence in producing those actions?

No; God for some wise end, merely *permits* such men to take their own course; and therefore their conduct is as criminal in such actions, as if they had not been foreknown. It was foreknown that the Jews would crucify Christ, but his crucifixion is charged upon them as a heinous crime; Mark x. 33, 34. Acts ii. 23.

6. Does God know the hearts of men as well as their external conduct?

Yes; Ps. cxxxix. 2. Jer. xvii. 10. Ezek. xi. 5.

7. What may we learn from the omniscience of God?

(1.) That God possesses astonishing patience and kindness; as appears in his bearing so long with us, and still bestowing upon us so many blessings, when he sees all our present sins, and perfectly remembers all those that are past.

(2.) The awful condition of those who die impenitent; for they have to give an account of themselves to that God, who perfectly knows all the thoughts, feelings, language, and conduct, of their whole lives?

(3.) The necessity of a mediator between us and God; for how dare we approach him in our own name, when all our sins are exactly known to him!

8. What influence should the omniscience of God have upon us?

(1.) It should lead careless sinners, and mere professors, to seek that holiness of heart which he requires; for as an omniscient God, they cannot deceive him.

(2.) It should lead all to worship him with deep humility, as he knows all their sins; and also with the greatest sincerity, in all their confessions, petitions,

thanksgivings, and intercessions, since he knows their hearts as well as their language.

(3.) It should comfort the mourning saint, who longs, prays, and strives to be more holy; and also those who are persecuted, or unjustly accused; Rev. iii. 8. ii. 9. Ps. xxxvii. 6.

SECTION V.—*On the Goodness of God.*

1. Are the goodness and love of God the same?

Yes; when his love is taken in the sense of benevolence.

2. What is meant by the goodness of God?

It denotes his disposition to promote happiness.

3. Is goodness the spring of all the divine conduct?

Yes; it was to give vent to this lovely disposition, that God formed unnumbered worlds and all their inhabitants, and still preserves them. Even justice must be viewed as the offspring of goodness. It is to promote the general welfare of intelligent beings, that God acts the part of universal Governor, rewarding the righteous, and punishing the wicked.

4. Have the patience, grace, mercy, and pity or compassion of God, any particular connexion with his goodness?

Yes; they are all only so many expressions of his goodness. His patience is his goodness delaying to punish the sinner; his grace is his goodness exercised towards the unworthy, or those who have no claim upon him, and particularly regards spiritual blessings; his mercy is his goodness pardoning and helping the guilty; his pity, or compassion, is his goodness commiserating the distressed, and affording them actual relief.

5. Does the word of God represent him as good?

Yes:

(1.) In its positive declarations; Exod. xxxiv. 6. Ps. lxxxvi. 5.

(2.) In the view it gives of his conduct towards the Jewish nation.

(3.) In ascribing to him the glorious scheme of human redemption, which provides unspeakable blessings, both in this world and the next, for those who have deserved a directly opposite treatment; John iii. 16.

6. Do the works of God furnish any proofs of his goodness?

Yes; they afford abundant proofs.

7. How may the goodness of God be discovered in his works?

As goodness is the disposition to promote happiness, it must necessarily regard living creatures only; and in proportion as these are numerous, and furnished with capacities for enjoyment, and objects adapted to them, in the same proportion does his goodness appear.

8. Do the works of God exhibit many living creatures in such circumstances?

Yes; heaven is peopled with myriads and myriads of exalted spirits, and perhaps of various degrees of capacity, and all of them enjoying the most complete and refined bliss. It is also highly probable, that all the heavenly bodies, which are numerous beyond computation, are inhabited by intelligent beings like ourselves; and as they may all still retain their holiness (and we know nothing to the contrary), so likewise their happiness. If we turn to our earth; the sea is full of living creatures of all sizes, and of all kinds; the air, of fowls and insects as various; and the ground is covered with beasts, and cattle, and reptiles, of all sorts. Every leaf, the bark of every tree, and perhaps every drop of water, teems with living creatures, too small to be discovered by the naked eye. All these are formed capable of certain portions of enjoyment, and a bounteous God has furnished the means of enjoyment for them all.

9. Does man furnish a bright display of the goodness of God?

Yes:

(1.) In his individual capacity. Does he require food and raiment? He is furnished with these in great abundance and variety. The earth presents him, not only with necessities, but also with luxuries; and

even his daily provision is rendered pleasant to his taste, as well as nourishing to his body. Is he endowed with the senses of seeing, hearing, and smelling? God has furnished him with an endless variety of objects to gratify each sense. He is also so constituted, that the study of the different arts and sciences affords him the most refined enjoyment, and there is scarcely any employment which does not yield some degree of pleasure to the mind.

(2.) In his social capacity. God has so formed us, that in the mutual exercise of affection and kind offices, between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, much happiness may be enjoyed.

The common intimacies of life also, and particularly the endearments of friendship, arising from similarity of dispositions, views, or pursuits, greatly minister to our happiness.

(3.) In his moral capacity. Here his duty is made to be his happiness. As a rational creature, he is required to love God supremely, and his fellow-creatures as himself; and in all respects to act towards both, as love requires. What will always be his duty, formed his real character when first made; and does so still, in a prevailing degree, when he is renewed by divine grace. Such a character is delightful in itself, or in the feelings and conduct of which it is composed; in the consciousness of its being the only right character; and also in its effects, as it respects others. It honours God, and promotes the happiness of mankind. Of all the pleasures of which man is capable, none are so noble, substantial, and durable, as those of piety and benevolence.

10. Has it ever been found, that man is endowed with any sense or faculty, whose natural exercise gives him pain?

No; and this is a strong proof of the goodness of God.

11. But if God is good, how is it that misery so much abounds in the world?

The greatest part of our miseries should be attributed, not to God, but to sin (for it should never be

forgotten, that the whole race of man is sinful); and where God does cause suffering, either directly or indirectly, it is done with the best intention. It is to promote the welfare of the individual, or the public, or both.

12. What are those miseries which should be ascribed to the follies and sins of man?

All the miseries occasioned by sloth, imprudence, extravagance, intemperance, licentiousness, contention, slander, fraud, oppression, robbery, seduction, and that dreadful evil,—war.

13. What are those calamities which you hinted might be traced up to God, either in a direct or indirect manner?

Storms, earthquakes, volcanoes, famines, plagues, and many diseases and accidents of different kinds, which often affect the temperate and pious, as well as abandoned sinners.—All these are designed to restrain sinners, and rouse them to seek the salvation of their souls; and also to advance the piety of real christians, and increase their desires after heaven.

14. It seems, then, that sin is the cause of all our sufferings; but if so, how could a good God permit it to enter the world?

This is a subject far too high for our feeble faculties; but as it cannot be proved, that infinite wisdom and power cannot so controul sin, as to make it ultimately for the good of the universe, instead of its injury, the permission for sin to enter the world, cannot be proved to militate against the goodness of God.

15. What improvement should we make of this subject?

(1.) As we are always in danger of abusing the goodness of God, by the indulgence of pride, security, and sensuality; we should constantly guard against these evils, especially in seasons of prosperity.

(2.) We should maintain a constant and lively conviction, that notwithstanding the instrumentality of ourselves or others, God is either directly or indirectly the cause of all our mercies.

(3.) The infinite goodness of God should constantly excite our highest admiration; and the benefits which

he is daily conferring upon us, should draw forth lively and unceasing gratitude.

(4.) We should imitate the goodness of God, by cultivating a benevolent disposition, both towards friends, strangers, and enemies.

SECTION VI.—*On the Wisdom of God.*

1. What is meant by the wisdom of God?

It denotes his discernment of the best means, and his constant disposition to adopt them, in order to secure the noblest end.

2. What is the end God aims at?

The greatest possible sum of happiness to his universe of intelligent creatures, in connexion with his own honour, or the regard due to himself.

3. What relation does the wisdom of God bear to his knowledge and goodness?

It is composed of both. Infinite goodness chooses the end, and infinite knowledge discerns the best means; infinite goodness likewise constantly disposes God to adopt those means, and also leads him actually to adopt them, as occasion requires.

4. How does the wisdom of God differ from that of his creatures?

It is infinite and unchangeable, while that of every creature is imperfect and subject to change.

5. Does it differ from that of any of his creatures, in any other respect?

Yes; it differs from that of Satan, by the excellence of its end. All the capacious powers of this apostate spirit, are vigorously, constantly, and perseveringly employed, in order to displease God and ruin men. It differs from that of wicked men, who make their own separate earthly happiness their end, and often pursue it by means which are very injurious to others. It also differs from that of some good men, who sometimes pursue a good end by means which have too much of artifice.

6. Does the Bible ascribe wisdom to God, and wisdom thus superior to that of any creature?

Yes; Job ix. 4. Prov. xxi. 30. Rom. xi. 33.

7. Do the works of God display his wisdom?

Yes; in the highest degree.

8. Does the sun display the wisdom of God?

Yes; in his annual circuit from north to south, and from south to north; for had he been fixed, one part of the world would have had perpetual summer, and all the rest perpetual winter. The earth daily turns round on its axis. This motion of the earth, when viewed in connexion with the sun, strikingly displays the wisdom of God, as it causes the sun to be absent many hours each day, during which time, the dew descends to cool the air, and revive vegetation. An opportunity is also afforded for man and beast to lie down to rest, which seems absolutely necessary to our comfortable existence.

9. Does the moon display the wisdom of God?

Yes; for it is so contrived as to answer several important purposes. In the absence of the sun, and particularly in the long winter nights, it is remarkably pleasant, and very useful to persons that have to travel during the night, whether by sea or land. It is also understood, that the moon by approaching our earth, affects the sea by a kind of attraction, and thus causes the tides to flow. This, by agitating the water, preserves it from putrefaction, and consequently the land from pestilential diseases.

10. Does the air display the wisdom of God?

Yes; for it is an admirable contrivance to promote our happiness, in different ways. It is the medium both of smell and of sound. It is also the medium of respiration; so that without it we could not breathe: even fire will not burn without it. It likewise forms a kind of reservoir for water. The clouds lodge in it, and afterwards empty themselves in showers. In summer, the air put in motion, administers to our comfort by its refreshing breezes; and to the inhabitants of Jamaica, Japan, and Guinea; the fresh breeze is of inestimable value. It also serves to waft our ships.

to distant ports, and thus enables us to carry on our trading enterprizes with all nations.

11. Does the earth display the wisdom of God ?

Yes :

(1.) In its general form, being round. By this contrivance, light and heat are more generally and speedily diffused ; air and wind have a more free circulation, and there is a more equal distribution of water.

(2.) In the large quantity of water which it contains. Water is of great importance in different ways.—It pleases the eye, in the river, canal, or cascade. It mixes with all our food and drink, and having no taste, will by mixture take any taste. In rivers and canals, it affords an easy and cheap mode of inland carriage. Water, in the ocean, affords the greatest facility for holding commerce with other nations, and is a strong barrier against the ravages of a foreign army.—Water also, particularly in the ocean, is a storehouse of fish in the greatest abundance, which affords an inexhaustible supply of provisions ; and the wisdom of God has so ordered it, that some of those fish, most useful for food, as salmon, herring, and mackerel, crowd our shores and creeks when fat, and when unfit for use, withdraw. “Water, in the ocean, is likewise the great storehouse of vapour. Hence are formed clouds ; which beside presenting the eye with innumerable, ever-varying and delightful prospects ; sheltering, in intense heats, the bodies of men and animals from the blaze of the sun ; become the sources of rain, dews, hail, and snow, and the origin of fountains, brooks, lakes, and rivers. By these the earth is watered, enriched, and beautified ; and man supplied with food and drink, raiment and fuel.”

(3.) In the variety of hill and vale, which its surface presents to our view. This variety is both pleasing to the eye, and conducive to health. The fine air of hills suits some constitutions, and to others the soft air of vallies is more agreeable. It also affords commodious places of habitation, as the hills become a shelter. To the hills also, fountains owe their rise, and rivers their

conveyance. Unless there were high parts, the water could not flow; and by the wisdom of God all countries have hills, and the inland parts, both of continents and islands, are generally the highest.

(4.) In the manner in which the useful objects beneath its surface are generally placed. Had they been placed on the surface, they would always be in our way, and would also prevent vegetation; and if they had been placed very deep, it would be difficult, and it might be impossible, to obtain them.

(5.) "In the most useful things being generally diffused, while those less important are more rare. Food, raiment, and fuel, are spread every where. Gold and gems, wines and spices, are found only in particular places. Wheat and grass, the most useful vegetables, grow in more soils than any other. Water and air exist throughout the world, and are placed beyond the controul of man. Animals useful for food, or other important purposes of man, are multiplied easily to any extent. Fish, which furnish so considerable a part of human sustenance, multiply, in a sense, endlessly."

12. What improvement should we make of this subject?

(1.) We should meditate on the wisdom of God, as displayed in all his works and ways, in order that we may admire and praise him; Ps. cxliii. 5. cxxxix. 14.

(2.) We should be humble, on account of the distance in this respect between us and God.

(3.) We should never censure any part of his conduct, nor utter any complaints against it; for it is all the result of infinite wisdom.

(4.) We should cheerfully embrace his revealed will contained in the Bible; for it is a display of perfect wisdom, both in its doctrines and duties; as it is admirably adapted to promote the honour of God, and the happiness of man, both in this world and the next.

(5.) Saints should always trust him to manage all their concerns; for "he is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind."

SECTION VII.—*On the Power of God.*

1. Does the Bible ascribe power to God ?

Yes ; Ps. lxii. 11. cxlvii. 5.

2. What are the distinguishing properties of God's power ?

It is almighty (Rev. i. 8.), can accomplish its object without instruments, and with infinite ease (Gen. i. 3. Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9.), and is never exhausted ; Isa. xxvi. 4. xl. 28.

3. Has not God given many signal displays of his power ?

Yes ; particularly in the work of creation, the government of all things, and the redemption of man.

4. How has God displayed his power in the work of creation ?

(1.) In producing matter out of nothing.

(2.) In forming that matter into globes of vast magnitude, and almost infinite in number.

(3.) In the production of vegetable, animal, and especially of rational life, as in angels and the souls of men.

5. How does God display his power in the government of all things ?

(1.) In gravitation ; which is that exertion of the power of God which keeps the parts of solid bodies together, preserves the different globes at their proper distance from each other, and causes them all to move in their orbits, with amazing rapidity, and the greatest regularity.

(2.) In controuling the peculiar tendencies of matter, the dispositions of irrational creatures, and also the desires and purposes of man ; as when fire did not burn the three Jewish youths, nor the lions devour Daniel, nor Esau destroy his brother Jacob, as he intended ; Dan. iii. 27. vi. 23. Gen. xxxii. 6. xxxiii. 1, 4.

(3.) In expelling the fallen angels from heaven, destroying the human race by the flood, and in many other instances of vengeance inflicted on account of sin.

6. How does the redemption of man display the power of God?

(1.) In the supernatural conception, miracles, and resurrection, of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

(2.) In qualifying the apostles for their great work, leading them to endure many privations, and to brave every danger, in diffusing the gospel; and also, in changing the hearts, and reforming the lives, of numerous idolaters; and enabling many of them to endure martyrdom, rather than renounce their christian profession.

(3.) It will be amazingly displayed, in making the ignorance, wickedness, and misery, which prevail throughout the world, give place to those delightful scenes of knowledge, holiness, and happiness, which the scriptures teach us to expect in the last days.

7. What influence should the power of God have upon us?

(1.) It should restrain sinners from provoking him, either by direct insult, or by wilful disobedience to his laws. Some have done the first, and have been struck dead on the spot; and those who continue to do the last, will find it a terrible thing to deal with an almighty God; Ezek. xxii. 14.

(2.) It should lead them immediately to seek to be reconciled to him through Christ; for then this almighty God will become their Friend.

(3.) It should encourage his people to trust in him at all times; for he is, and always will be, able, as well as willing, to supply all their wants both of body and soul; Isa. xxvi. 4.

(4.) It should encourage them in seeking the conversion of the world. God has promised it, and as almighty he can accomplish it with the greatest ease.

SECTION VIII.—*On the Holiness of God.*

1. What is meant by the holiness of God?

It appears to be his goodness in its relation to rational, accountable creatures in general; and negatively considered, it denotes the purity of his nature.

or his perfect freedom from any bias to evil; and positively considered, it denotes his constant disposition to do whatever is right.

2. Is the holiness of God a scripture doctrine?

Yes; Exod. xv. 11. Ps. xxx. 4. 1 Pet. i. 15.

3. What are the distinguishing properties of God's holiness?

It is infinite and unchangeable; 1 Sam. ii. 2. Job iv. 17, 18. Isa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. Mal. iii. 6.

4. Does not God manifest his holiness, both in his own conduct, and also in reference to that of rational creatures?

Yes.

5. How does he manifest his holiness in his own conduct?

As the holiness of God, positively considered, includes his justice and truth, consequently, he displays it in his own conduct, by the perfect exercise of both of them.

6. How does he manifest his holiness in reference to the conduct of rational creatures?

He does it *generally*, by testifying his delight in holiness, and his abhorrence of sin, in all his creatures (Heb. i. 9. Hab. i. 13); and *particularly*,

(1.) As their Creator; by making both angels and man perfectly holy; Gen. i. 27.

(2.) As their Lawgiver; by enjoining holiness and forbidding sin, on pain of everlasting misery; Jude 6. Gen. ii. 17. Gal. iii. 10. Ps. ix. 17.

(3.) As their Governor; by expelling the apostate angels from heaven, and fallen man from paradise; by the flood, and many other judgments, inflicted upon men on account of their sins.

(4.) In our redemption; by delivering men from hell, and bringing them to heaven, only through his Son, who as our Mediator lived a perfectly holy life, and died on the cross for our sins; Heb. vii. 26. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

(5.) He will display it at the day of judgment, when every individual shall be received to heaven, or sent to hell, according as his character has been holy or sinful; Matt. xxv. 46.

7. What improvement should we make of the holiness of God ?

(1.) We should always approach him with the most profound reverence ; Lev. x. 3. 1 Sam. vi. 19, 20. Ps. lxxxix. 7. Isa. vi. 2, 3. Heb. xii. 28, 29. Rev. iv. 8—11.

(2.) As the holiness of God must necessarily exclude all sinful beings from his presence in heaven, it should lead us earnestly and constantly to seek holiness, as a blessing absolutely necessary to our final happiness ; Matt. vii. 21. Heb. xii. 14. Rev. xxi. 27.

(3.) The example of God as holy, and also his delight in holiness, and abhorrence of sin, in all his creatures, should lead us to the constant practice of the former, and prevent our committing the latter ; 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

SECTION IX.—*On the Justice of God.*

1. What is meant by the justice of God ?

It denotes his unalterable disposition, to reward or punish all the subjects of his moral government, exactly according to their conduct.

2. What are the extremes to be avoided in the exercise of perfect justice ?

Rewarding or punishing persons beyond their deserts, or suffering them to go unrewarded or unpunished.

3. How do you prove that God punishes none beyond their deserts ?

(1.) From his goodness. As good, he delights in the promotion of happiness ; and therefore, cannot inflict undeserved punishment.

(2.) From scripture declarations ; Job xxxiv. 10—12. Ps. xcii. 15. Rom. iii. 4, 5.

4. How do you prove that God will not allow sin to go unpunished ?

(1.) From scripture testimony ; Rom. ii. 6—9. 2 Thess. i. 6.

(2.) From the punishments inflicted on guilty nations. As God does not, like human governors, call offenders to an immediate account for their conduct ;

but has appointed a day of general judgment for the whole human race, we cannot form a just opinion on this subject, from his treatment of individuals in the present world. But nations, as nations, exist only in the present world; and therefore, if punishment be inflicted for their sins, it must be here; and as it has been inflicted, we may justly infer, that if individual sinners escape punishment on earth, they will certainly be punished in a future state. The Israelites afford a striking proof of God's justice, as they prospered or were punished, just according to their conduct. The destruction of the old world, of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Tyre, Nineveh, and Babylon, may also be regarded as memorable instances of the justice of God.

(3.) From the sufferings of Christ; Rom. iii. 25. If it was necessary that God's own Son should die, in order to manifest his righteousness or justice to mankind, it is evident, that if sin is committed, it must be punished, either in the offender or a substitute.

5. But why cannot God, as well as earthly rulers, pardon offenders, without inflicting punishment, either upon the offender or a substitute?

The power of earthly kings to pardon offenders is founded upon the imperfection of human laws, and if exercised consistently with justice, it will only be in those cases, which, if foreseen by the legislators, would have been considered exceptions to the law, and not subjecting the offenders to the penalty. But the law of God is absolutely perfect; and therefore, justice requires that he should strictly adhere to it, in dispensing rewards and punishments.

6. How do you prove that the righteous shall not go unrewarded?

From scripture; Rom. ii. 7, 10, 11. Jam. i. 12. 2Tim. iv. 8.

7. What may we learn from the justice of God?

(1.) That he is admirably qualified for the government of rational creatures.

(2.) The awful state of those who die impenitent.

(3.) The true reason why the wicked hate God, and frequently reject the Bible. It is because they know that they lie exposed to his justice. To quiet their

fears of that future punishment which a just God will inflict, they endeavour to persuade themselves, that the Bible which reveals it is false ; and too often they succeed, at least so far as to throw the Bible aside.

(4.) The great evil of sin, which when committed must be punished.

(5.) Our immense obligations to Christ, who bore the stroke of justice for us.

8. What influence should the justice of God have upon us ?

(1.) It should lead us to seek mercy through Christ ; for then divine justice will have no demands upon us.

(2.) Saints should rejoice in being under the government of a God so just ; Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6. xciv. 22, 23.

SECTION X.—*On the Truth of God.*

1. Is not truth usually divided into two branches ?

Yes ; truth in declarations, and truth in promises. The former is generally styled veracity ; and the latter, faithfulness.

2. What is meant by the truth of God ?

It denotes his disposition always to declare the truth, and fulfil all his promises.

3. What proofs can you adduce from reason of the truth of God ?

(1.) He is a God of goodness, and as such delights in the promotion of happiness ; and therefore must be a God of truth ; for the opposite character would diffuse misery among men, instead of happiness.

(2.) His circumstances lead us to infer, that he is a God of truth. When persons are false in their declarations, it is generally through fear, as in the case of children, servants, or inferiors ; or else, to obtain some object which they could not gain by speaking the truth. But God can never be placed in either of these situations. If men are not faithful to their promises and engagements, it is generally owing, either to weakness or selfishness ; but nothing of the kind can be imputed to God.

4. Can you prove the truth of God from scripture testimony?

Yes; Ps. xxxi. 5. c. 5. Deut. vii. 9. Ps. xxxvi. 6. Heb. x. 23.

5. But will not the truth of God appear in a still more satisfactory manner, if we compare his declarations and promises, as recorded in scripture, with facts?

Yes.

6. What are the passages of this kind which regard the world in general?

God promised that the earth should no more be destroyed by a flood (Gen. ix. 11, 16.), and also that the different seasons of the year should proceed in their regular order till the end of the world (Gen. viii. 22.); and facts, for upwards of four thousand years, bear full testimony to his truth in both of these cases.

7. What are the passages of scripture of a similar kind which regard Christ?

It is said, that he should be born of the tribe of Judah, of the family of David, and at Bethlehem (Gen. xlix. 10. Ps. lxxxix. 35, 36. Micah v. 2.); that he should be a Saviour to the Gentiles as well as the Jews (Isa. xlix. 6.); that he should save them by dying for them (Isa. liii. 5—8.); and that his kingdom should at length become universal; Ps. lxxii. 8, 11, 17.—All these declarations agree with facts: the last being partially accomplished, and thus authorizing us to expect its complete fulfilment.

8. What are the passages of scripture of a similar kind which regard the people of God?

God promises to answer their prayers (John xvi. 23.), to afford them all necessary supplies for the body (Ps. xxxiv. 10), and to support them in trouble (Isa. xli. 10.); and they can all bear witness, that in each of these things he has proved himself to be a God of truth.

9. Do not facts bear witness to the truth of God in his threatenings, as well as promises?

Yes; the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Babylon, and of Jerusalem, all bear witness to this; and could we see into the eternal world, the dreadful misery of impenitent sinners would also afford an awful proof.

10. What may we learn from the truth of God ?

(1.) How fit he is to be the ruler of intelligent beings. As he is a God of unchangeable truth, in all his declarations, promises, and threatenings, they know what will be the result of their conduct, and should act accordingly.

(2.) The sinfulness of unbelief; for it denies the truth of God, or makes him a liar.

11. What influence should the truth of God have upon us ?

(1.) It should excite us to diligence, and perseverance in seeking his blessing.

(2.) It should lead his people to place unlimited confidence in him.

(3.) We should carefully imitate him as a God of truth, in all our declarations and promises.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Primitive State of Man.

1. What was the primitive state of man ?

It was a state of perfect holiness, and of great happiness; Gen. i. 26—28. Ephes. iv. 24. Gen. ii. 8, 9.

2. Did our first parents continue in this holy state ?

No; they soon yielded to the temptation of Satan, in eating of the forbidden fruit; Gen. iii. 6.

3. In what did the evil of eating the forbidden fruit consist ?

In disobeying the plain command of God, and that when the temptation was very small. This disobedience evinced ingratitude for God's mercies towards them; disbelief of his word which engaged to inflict the penalty (Gen. ii. 17. iii. 4.); a rejection of his supreme authority (Gen. ii. 17.); an attempt to invade the peculiar prerogatives of God (Gen. iii. 5.); and discontent with the state allotted them.

4. Why was not the happiness of our first parents suspended upon their obedience to a moral precept,

which is in its own nature unchangeably good, and not upon their obedience to a *positive* precept?

As God has not condescended to assign the reasons of his conduct in the present case, we ought to rest satisfied in knowing that it is the plan adopted by infinite wisdom. Besides, there would have been considerable difficulty, in the circumstances of our first parents, in making a moral precept the test of man's obedience; but by fixing upon a positive precept, in which the duty required, was merely to abstain from the fruit of a certain tree, all was plain, and innocence or guilt could be easily and infallibly ascertained.

5. What was the consequence of their disobedience to God?

Toil, sorrow, and death; Gen. iii. 16—19. ii. 17.

6. What was included in the death threatened to our first parents in case of disobedience?

It included,

(1.) Temporal death, or the death of the body.

(2.) Spiritual death, or the loss of their original disposition to every thing holy.

(3.) Eternal death, or everlasting misery.

7. What may we learn from this subject?

(1.) That we should never suffer ourselves for a moment to question the truth of God's declarations.

(2.) That we should resist temptation at its very commencement.

(3.) That our safety when tempted lies in fleeing to God for help.

(4.) That every act of disobedience to God is a great evil. This is evident from the manner in which God punished the disobedience of our first parents.

CHAPTER V.

On the Present State of Man.

1. What is the present state of man?

It is a state of depravity and condemnation.

2. In what respect is it a state of depravity?

Man has lost his original rectitude, which consisted in a prevailing disposition to love God supremely, and

his fellow-creatures as himself, and act towards both in every respect as love requires; and is become the subject of a prevailing and habitual disposition to selfishness, or to regard supremely his own interest and gratification in the present world, and consequently to neglect or violate the law of God, as the rule of duty towards God and man, whenever it interferes with his wishes.

3. How do you prove that man by nature is thus depraved?

(1.) From scripture declarations; Gen. vi. 5. Ps. li. 5. Eccles. viii. 11. Rom. iii. 9—18. vii. 17, 18. viii. 5, 7, 8. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Ephes. ii. 3. 1 John v. 19.

(2.) From observation. That the natural man possesses a prevailing and habitual disposition to selfishness, or a supreme regard to his own interest and gratification in the present world, must be evident to every attentive observer.—That he has no habitual disposition to love God supremely, and act towards him as he ought, is abundantly evinced by his conduct. He habitually treats with indifference the character, worship, word, day, and cause of God in the world. To religious exercises of any kind, there is not only an indifference, but even a strong aversion, except so far as habit, decency, or fear may dictate; and the law of God is wilfully broken, whenever it opposes his inclinations. This is particularly observable in reference to the fourth commandment.—That he has no habitual disposition to love his fellow-creatures as himself, is evident from the little which such persons do to promote the happiness of their fellow-men, and from all the frauds, oppressions, and cruelties, of which they are guilty.

(3.) From the confession of pious people in all ages. These have universally acknowledged the depravity of their natural state, and lamented the remains of it which still adhered to them; Ps. li. 5. Rom. vii. 18, 24.

4. There are some persons whom we cannot view as changed characters, and yet their conduct is very correct and innocent, and in some cases very amiable; how do you account for this?

It may be easily accounted for, in perfect consistency with the depravity of human nature. Self-love, which is the ruling principle in depraved nature, may lead a person to be temperate and chaste, for the sake of his health, property, and reputation; and also to act justly in his dealings with others, from regard to reputation and success in business. Man is also the creature of habit; and it is evident from observation, that habits of truth and justice may be acquired by education, so that the person in adult years shall practice them as it were instinctively; which conduct, though highly beneficial to society, cannot be allowed to possess real goodness. Men may also be very inoffensive to others, because natural timidity makes them dread the consequence of an opposite conduct; and the fear of divine vengeance, in this world and the next, may also keep many under great restraint. Some seek their happiness in society and reputation combined, and, as might be expected, become civil and polite in all their deportment when in company; but some of these persons are monsters for rudeness and cruelty at home. Others are by constitution gentle, meek, compassionate, grateful, and affectionate; but at the best, such characters differ completely from him who *habitually aims* at pleasing God, and promoting the happiness of his fellow-creatures in general, as well as his own; and no man possesses the latter character till changed by the grace of God.

5. How do you account for the universal depravity of man?

It is the consequence of Adam's first transgression; Rom. v. 12, &c.

6. How does it exist in consequence of his first transgression?

The only way to account for this, is to consider Adam as a covenant-head to his posterity, so that they should receive good or evil as well as himself, as he obeyed or disobeyed; and the scripture exhibits him as acting in this capacity; Rom. v. 14. 1 Cor. xv. 45. As our covenant-head he sinned, and thus forfeited the divine favour; and consequently the blessing of

divine influence was withdrawn from him and his posterity. The depravity of human nature appears to result from man's being thus left to himself, and not from any *positive infusion* of evil.

7. You said, that man's present state is a state of condemnation as well as depravity; how do you prove this?

From Rom. iii. 19.

8. Why are all men by nature in a state of condemnation, so as to lie exposed to eternal misery?

Because they have not only fallen in Adam, but have broken the law of God by actual sin; Gal iii. 10.

9. What may we learn from this subject?

(1.) The importance of the atonement of Christ; for it is by this only, that we can be delivered from condemnation; Rom. viii. 1. 1 Thess. i. 10.

(2.) The necessity of regeneration, or a change of heart, and of the Holy Spirit to produce it.

10. What influence should this subject have upon us?

(1.) It should deeply humble us.

(2.) Instead of perplexing ourselves with any difficulties which the subject may present, we should immediately embrace the gospel, as the only method by which we can be recovered from this state of depravity and condemnation.

CHAPTER VI.

On Justification.

1. What is meant by our justification before God?

It is that judicial sentence of God, by which we become exempted from eternal misery, and entitled to eternal life.

2. Can we be justified by our own works?

No.

How do you prove this?

(1.) From scripture declarations; Rom. iii. 20. ix. 31, 32. Gal. ii. 16, 21.

(2.) From the nature of the case. The law of God, like every other law, demands perfect obedience, in

order to justification; but we have all sinned, and therefore it is impossible for us to be justified by our own works.

(3.) From the confession of those who are justified; Ps. cxxx. 3. Gal. ii. 16. Phil. iii. 8, 9. All real christians can sincerely adopt the language of David and Paul.

4. But does not Paul mean works of the ceremonial, and not of the moral law, when he says that we cannot be justified by them?

No; for,

(1.) He excludes from justification the works of the heathen, and they had not the ceremonial law of the Jews; Rom. iii. 9, 20.

(2.) He speaks of that law by which we obtain the knowledge of sin; which must be the moral law, for by this only, could men in general discern their sins; Rom. iii. 20.

(3.) It is after quoting expressions in reference to the moral law, that he draws the conclusion; Rom. iii. 10—20.

5. If we are not justified by our own works, how are we justified?

Through Christ; Rom. iii. 23. v. 10. Gal. ii. 16. Phil. iii. 8, 9.

6. How did Christ become the meritorious cause of our justification?

By assuming our nature, obeying the law, and enduring its penalty; Rom. v. 19. 2 Cor. v. 21.

7. Why is Christ, as God in our nature, obeying the law, and enduring its penalty, constituted the meritorious cause of our justification?

Because by these means he has accomplished the design of God in requiring an atonement, in a manner infinitely superior to what any other person could have done. God as Governor, could have no other design in requiring an atonement previously to his exercising mercy to the guilty, than to support the honour of the law, both in its precepts and penalty, and so to preserve the motives to obedience in all their strength. Christ has honoured the law in its precepts, by yielding it a perfect obedience. His having done this in human

nature justifies the law, and condemns our disobedience. As he was God as well as man, this obedience must have been consented to by the divine nature ; and such consent reflects the greatest honour upon the law. As God, he must have had a perfect knowledge of what was right, and also a state of mind infinitely disposed to adopt and encourage it. For the divine nature therefore to consent to such obedience, was for infinite wisdom and holiness to bear their testimony to the perfect excellence of the law, as the rule of man's obedience. Christ also honoured the law in its penalty ; and though as God, he could not suffer, yet when he voluntarily took our nature, and in that nature endured the penalty of the law, it was the testimony of infinite wisdom and holiness to the justice of the penalty. God the Father also, in thus giving his only Son to obey and die for us, gave the strongest proof, that he considered the law absolutely perfect, both in its precepts and penalty.

8. Are we not freed from hell by the sufferings of Christ, and entitled to heaven by his active obedience?

As the design of God, in requiring Christ to obey and die in our stead, was to honour the law, both in its precepts and penalty, and thus to prevent giving the least encouragement to sin ; it is evident, that the obedience and death of Christ, as the meritorious cause of our justification, ought not to be separated ; and that, without both, we can neither escape the miseries of hell, nor obtain the joys of heaven.

9. How does any individual become actually justified ?

Through faith ; Rom. iii. 25.

10. What is faith ?

It is such a belief of any truth as produces effects corresponding with the nature of that truth. " If it is wonderful, I am amazed : If it is alarming, I am terrified : If it is joyful, I am delighted : If it is mournful, I am sorrowful : If the statement involves a promise of good to me, I expect the good promised, and rely or depend upon him who made the promise, to do as he has said."

11. What then is meant by that faith in Christ which is the means of our justification?

It is such a belief of the declarations of God respecting Christ, as the meritorious cause of justification, and of his promise to save all who come to him through Christ, as leads the person to him in prayer, pleading the atonement of Christ, and depending entirely upon it. This faith evidently implies, that he who is the subject of it, is deeply convinced of his own sinful character, dangerous state, and utter helplessness in himself, or any other, except Christ. The conviction of his sinfulness and danger, makes the salvation of the gospel an object of ardent desire; and the persuasion that it can be obtained only through Christ, makes him immediately and cheerfully seek it through him.

12. Why has God adopted the plan of justification simply by faith in Christ?

(1.) Because it is by faith only that we can accept of Christ as *our* Saviour, so as to depend entirely upon him, and seek salvation through him.

(2.) Because it magnifies his grace, or unmerited goodness, and abases man, by leading him, as a condemned and utterly helpless sinner, to sue for mercy through Christ (Rom. iii. 27. iv. 16); and thus lays the foundation for the warmest gratitude to God, and the deepest humility, which are leading graces of the christian character.

13. But if Paul contends for justification by faith, James evidently contends for works as well as faith, in order to our justification; how can their different statements be reconciled?

When Paul declares that we are justified by faith only, he means, such a faith as leads the person to seek salvation entirely through Christ; and which, as to its effects, excites him to love God, Christ, and mankind, and to act accordingly; but when James, in the second chapter of his Epistle, asserts that faith cannot save a man, he means, such a belief of the truth of what is declared respecting Christ as a Saviour, as neither leads its possessor to seek salvation through Christ, nor produces any holy effect upon his temper

and conduct. Paul and James had to deal with opposite errors, which is the reason why their views at first sight seem to be at variance. Paul had to do with those who were very prone to seek justification by works; and therefore he endeavours to set these, as the foundation of hope, completely aside, and to lead sinners to an entire dependance upon Christ. James had to deal with those whose belief of the truths of christianity had no influence upon them; as is the case with thousands in this country at the present time; and accordingly, he justly contends, that faith, unless it produces its appropriate effects, is dead, and cannot save the soul.

14. The doctrine of justification by faith has been frequently charged with having an immoral tendency; and does not this militate against its being true?

No; it shews that it is the doctrine of Paul; for exactly the same objection was raised against his doctrine; which would not have been done, had he taught justification by works; Rom. iii. 8, 31.

15. Can you shew that the doctrine has not this immoral tendency?

Yes; and that it has a directly opposite tendency; for,

(1.) He who seeks justification by faith, must have the strongest persuasion of his obligation to obey the moral law, in all its extent; for that conviction of his sinfulness, danger, and complete helplessness in himself, which every one feels previous to his seeking justification by faith in Christ, arises from this persuasion; and such a persuasion must tend to obedience.

(2.) He that seeks justification by faith, must have a deep impression of God's hatred to sin; for it strikingly appears in the sufferings of Christ, and in God's allowing us to come to him only through the perfectly holy Jesus; and surely such an impression of the hatred of that God to sin, with whom we have to do, must tend to holiness.

(3.) Justification is the greatest blessing that can possibly be conferred upon a person; and of this every

one who has obtained it is deeply sensible, and consequently feels that ardent gratitude which makes it his delight to do the will of God.

(4.) The holy tendency of the doctrine is evident from facts.

[1.] Ministers who hold this doctrine, almost universally preach a stricter system of morality than their opponents.

[2.] Their hearers who cordially embrace it, are generally despised and censured for being too exact in their religious and moral conduct.

[3.] The various institutions which aim to promote religion and morality, in this and other countries, have been formed and perseveringly supported, chiefly by persons who hold this doctrine.

16. What may we learn from this subject ?

(1.) Our immense obligations to Christ.

(2.) The amazing love of God ; for when we had completely ruined ourselves by sin, he sent his Son to die for us ; and he is ready to receive all who come to him in the Saviour's name.

(3.) The happy condition of true believers ; for their justification exempts them from the sufferings of hell, and entitles them to the joys of heaven.

17. What influence should this subject have upon us ?

(1.) We should immediately seek to be justified through faith in Christ (Gal. ii. 16.) ; and in order to this, we should endeavour, by the constant perusal of the Bible and other suitable books, self-examination, and prayer to God, to obtain a deep conviction of our ruined state.

(2.) If actually justified, it should excite our constant and lively gratitude.

(3.) We should endeavour to refute the common objection to the doctrine, that it has an immoral tendency, by a conduct constantly and eminently holy.*

* See Note 1.

CHAPTER VII.

On Regeneration.

1. By what name is that change of heart usually designated, by which we are recovered from our depraved state?

It is generally called regeneration, or the new birth; both of which phrases express exactly the same thing.

2. But is not this important change expressed in scripture by various other names?

Yes; repentance and conversion regard the same change, and it is also styled a creation, a quickening, and a resurrection; Luke xiii. 3. Matt. xviii. 3. 2 Cor. v. 17. Ephes. ii. 5, 6.*

3. In what does this change consist?

It is such a renovation of heart, as gives rise to the constant exercise of supreme love to God, and all its attendant graces, and also real love to our fellow-creatures; and all that conduct towards both, to which love naturally leads, and which the word of God requires; Gal. v. 6. vi. 15. Col. iii. 10. 1 John iv. 16. Mark xii. 30, 31. 1 Cor. xiii. 2 Cor. v. 17.

4. What are some of the more immediate and general effects of this change?

Those who are made the subjects of this change, become deeply sensible of the goodness of God in sending his Son to die for them, and in calling them by his grace. Their past sins fill them with sorrow, and lead them to great self-abasement before God. The atonement of Christ is their only ground of hope, and him they ardently love. Sin, in general, whether in themselves or others, they decidedly hate; and resolve, by divine aid, to renounce it in all its forms, and advance in every christian grace as much as possible. The word, worship, day, and people of God, are now their delight; and in the spread and success of the gospel, they feel a lively interest.

* See Note 2.

5. By whom is this change produced?

By the Holy Spirit; John iii. 5. Tit. iii. 5. This is likewise evident from all those passages in which christians are said to be born of God.

6. What influence should this consideration have upon us?

It should lead pious parents, and also christians in general, constantly to pray for the Holy Spirit to effect this change in their children and others; and all should pray for the Spirit to produce it in themselves; Ps. li. 10. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 37.

7. By what means is this change produced?

God is not confined to any particular means, though he frequently, and perhaps generally, makes use of his own word, either as preached or read, particularly the first; Acts ii. 14, &c. 1 Pet. i. 23.

8. What influence should this consideration have upon us?

It should lead pious parents, to take their children constantly to hear the word of God in public, to see that they read it at home, to direct them to the most important parts, and to point out the meaning where it is requisite. All serious persons should also adopt the same plan, as much as possible, towards all around them; and give every encouragement to those excellent societies which aim to send Bibles, and christian preachers, throughout the whole world. Every man is also bound to read and hear the word of God, in order to promote the salvation of his own soul.

9. In what manner is this change wrought?

The Spirit of God is not confined to any particular method. In some instances, it may be completed at once, as Adam was at once formed in the image of God; but in general there appear to be many preparatory steps. The Holy Spirit often commences this work, by leading a person to frequent and serious self-examination, by which means he sooner or later obtains a deep conviction of his sinfulness and danger. In this state of mind, he is naturally led to cry for pardon, and also for holiness, because he finds that the latter is as absolutely necessary to his final salva-

tion as the former. Such prayers are chiefly the result of a due concern for his own safety ; yet as they are offered up for suitable blessings, and in a sincere and earnest manner, they are not rejected. God at length bears his cry, and gives him so lively a faith in the promises of mercy through Christ, as draws forth his soul in a love of gratitude to himself and his Son, and in love to mankind, especially for their sake ; and this love being rendered habitual, it may now be said that regeneration has taken place. In the order of nature, faith appears to precede regeneration, as well as justification. While God is viewed as an implacable enemy, he may be dreaded, but he cannot be loved. It is only when the soul is enabled to believe his readiness to save sinners, that it is capable of loving him ; and if some persons have been brought to experience this change, without a distinct belief of the gospel promises of mercy, they have had so deep a conviction, either of the general goodness of God, or of his past goodness to them, as had the same tendency to produce that love to him, which is the leading principle to which this change gives rise.

10. What may we learn from this part of the subject ?

(1.) We may learn, how we should act in attempting the conversion of others. We should endeavour, in the first place, to lead them to a deep conviction of their sinfulness and danger, and afterwards to a believing view of the gospel of mercy ; and for this purpose, we should converse with them in a kind but searching manner, lend them suitable books, and urge them to the constant study of the scriptures, and also to continual self-examination and prayer.

(2.) Every individual may also learn, how he should act in order to secure his own conversion. He is bound, for this purpose, to listen attentively to such conversation, to read such books in a careful manner, and especially to study the Bible, examine himself, and pray continually that these means may be rendered successful, both to his conviction and conversion.

11. Is it necessary that all should become the subjects of this change?

Yes; for,

(1.) Without it there is no real happiness on earth; Isa. lviii. 20, 21. The chief happiness of rational creatures is derived from mutual affection; and therefore, to love God supremely, and be beloved by him, or have him for our Friend, must above all things promote our happiness; but unless regenerated, we shall never truly love God, nor be beloved by him.

(2.) Without it, we can neither obtain heaven, nor escape hell; Matt. xviii. 3. Luke xiii. 3. John iii. 5.

(3.) Were it possible for us to obtain heaven without it, we should not be happy there. This will be evident, if we consider, that the society and engagements of heaven are all holy; and that, as such, unregenerate men must feel a strong aversion to them. It is not a change of place, but a change of heart, that can make us happy in such society and engagements.

12. What influence should this part of the subject have upon us?

(1.) In seeking the conversion of others, we should frequently and confidently insist upon its absolute necessity; and as men are generally more influenced by the fear of misery than the hope of happiness, we should particularly insist upon the absolute necessity of this change, in order to escape everlasting misery.

(2.) Every person is bound continually to press upon his own mind the same considerations, in order to excite him to the serious and diligent use of all the means of grace for his own conversion.

CHAPTER VIII.

On Effectual Grace, and the Perseverance of the Saints.

1. What is meant by effectual grace?

It denotes that operation of divine grace on the mind of man, which absolutely produces conversion.

2. Where the grace of God produces conversion, is that conversion suspended upon the soul's compliance with any limited measure of such influence?

No ; it may indeed be presumed, that wherever the Spirit ceases to operate on any soul, it is because his influences have been repeatedly resisted, and so justly forfeited (Gen. vi. 3. Acts vii. 51. Heb. x. 29) ; at the same time, wherever those influences produce conversion, that conversion is to be viewed as the accomplishment of the divine purpose (2 Tim. i. 9.) ; which purpose will assuredly be fulfilled in all who are the objects of it ; Prov. xix. 21. Isa. xlvi. 10. John vi. 37. Rom. viii. 29, &c. Eph. i. 3, &c.

3. But is not the doctrine of effectual grace, respecting all the chosen people of God, of a very discouraging nature ?

No ; for,

(1.) It does not in the least interfere with the general provision made for man's salvation. The death of Christ is sufficient for all (John iii. 16. 1 Tim. ii. 5. 1 John ii. 2, &c.) ; the plan of salvation through him is both free for all, and will be found true by all who embrace it (Mark xvi. 15, 16. Luke xxiv. 47. John iii. 16. vi. 37. Rev. xxii. 17, &c.) ; and the Holy Spirit prompts all who hear the gospel to receive it, and is ready to work more abundantly on all who pray for his influences (Acts vii. 51. Phil. ii. 13. Heb. x. 29. Luke xi. 13.) ; just as if the purpose of God respecting effectual grace had never been formed. It is not the purpose of God respecting effectual grace, that hinders any man's salvation, but his own wilful rejection of the gospel ; John v. 40. Acts xiii. 46. Heb. ii. 3.

(2.) It affords direct encouragement to christian parents, ministers, persons in general, who are concerned for the salvation of others, and also to every individual who is diligently engaged in seeking his own salvation.—Parents may know, that salvation is free for all their children, and yet feel little encouragement ; because when they consider their past neglect of it, and that of almost all around, they have too much ground to fear, that they will still reject it. But let them consider, that their children may become the subjects of that grace, which will absolutely lead to conversion ; and if they are conscientiously and ac-

tively devoted to God's service, and greatly desirous of this grace for their children, they have good ground to hope for it. First, because God acts according to true friendship. He is a Friend to the families of his friends. Thus the Israelites received many blessings, because of their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Secondly, because God generally gives his favours where they are most desired and prized. Ministers and others whose attempts to promote the salvation of sinners have often been frustrated, must feel encouraged, when they consider, that it may be the purpose of God to exert his effectual grace, on the minds of those very persons whose impenitence they have so frequently lamented; and if so, their efforts will at length meet with success.—To persons under deep concern for their own souls, it must be encouraging to reflect, that this concern may be the result of effectual grace; in which case it will assuredly end in conversion.

4. But is not the doctrine of election to effectual grace of bad moral tendency; for, according to this doctrine, every person may argue, "If I am among the elect, I need give myself no concern, for the Holy Spirit, at the appointed time, will be sure to convert me?"

We are bound to take the word of God, not his unknown purpose, for our rule; and that word urges us to an immediate and diligent use of the means of grace (Isa. iv. 6, 7. Matt. vii. 7, 8. Luke xiii. 24, 25.); and should any person abuse the doctrine of effectual grace, by wilfully and perseveringly neglecting these means, he will either lament it in unavailing tears in hell, or should he become the subject of effectual grace, his abuse of the doctrine will probably be made to fill him with more deep and abiding remorse and alarm, than any other part of his conduct. In those who are actually converted, this doctrine must have a direct tendency to holiness; for, according to it, their conversion was entirely owing to the abundant mercy and grace of God; 1 Cor. iv. 7. 2 Tim. i. 9. This consideration must excite the warmest gratitude to God,

and the deepest humility; and these are leading features of the christian character.

5. For what purposes does the Bible bring forward the doctrine of effectual grace, respecting all the chosen people of God?

(1.) To shew believers, that their salvation is entirely of grace, and so to prevent pride, and excite lively gratitude to God; John xv. 16. Eph. i. 3, 4. 1 Thess. i. 3—5. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Pet. i. 2, 3.

(2.) To shew sinners, that though they may continue to reject the gospel, the Saviour will never want sincere disciples; John vi. 36, 37. The tendency of this is, to excite them to seek a share in the blessings of salvation, of which they perceive that many will partake, whether they do or not.

(3.) To encourage ministers and others, in seeking the salvation of sinners around them, and of the world at large; Isa. lv. 10, 11. John x. 16. xvii. 20. Acts xviii. 9, 10.

6. Is the change produced by effectual grace an abiding one?

Yes.

7. By what name is the continuance of this change usually called in human authors?

"The perseverance of the saints."

8. How do you prove the perseverance of the saints to be a true doctrine?

(1.) From their being chosen to eternal happiness; 2 Thess. ii. 13. If thus chosen to salvation, they must at length obtain it; and if so, they must continue holy to the end; Heb. xii. 14.

(2.) From the intercession of Christ, as recorded in John xvii. 20; 24. Christ here prays, that those given to him may be with him in heaven; and as all who are given to Christ come to him, or believe in him (John vi. 37.), it is the same as if he prayed that all believers might be with him. What Christ thus prays for, must come to pass (John xi. 42.); and if all believers enter heaven, they must continue to bear this holy character through life; Luke xii. 46. Rev. xxi. 8.

(3.) From scripture declarations. [1.] From those passages which speak of real christians continuing in a state of acceptance with God; John v. 24. x. 27, 28. Rom. viii. 29, &c. If christians continue in this state of acceptance with God, they must continue to be holy. [2.] From those which directly assert their continuance in holiness; 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. Phil. i. 6. 1 Pet. i. 5.

9. What are the objections commonly alleged against this doctrine?

That it is contrary to facts, and to the word of God; and also that it has an immoral tendency.

10. How is it said to be contrary to facts?

It is said, that there have been many instances of persons who once were truly religious, but afterwards completely went back to their former sinful ways.

11. What reply can be made to this?

We cannot search the heart, and therefore may often conclude, that persons are really changed, when they are not; and though the persons themselves who become apostates, may fancy, that they were once truly converted, it is very possible that they may have deceived themselves. It is therefore evident, that we cannot decide the question by observation, or experience, but by the unerring word of God only.

12. What are the scripture passages usually brought forward against this doctrine?

(1.) The various cautions, admonitions, &c., which are found in the Old and New Testament.

(2.) That striking passage recorded in Heb. vi. 4—8.

(3.) It is said, that the Bible admits the fact that some have fallen away; John xvii. 12. 1 Tim. i. 19.

13. What answer can be given to these objections?

If the first class of passages is thought to oppose the doctrine of perseverance, all those quoted under question 8, (3.), decidedly maintain it. In those quoted in defence of the doctrine, God speaks absolutely; but in those quoted against it, he addresses men merely as professing to be religious, and treats them as rational beings. In doing this, he by no means sets aside the absolute passages, but only acts as all ministers do who

hold this doctrine. Such ministers tell their hearers, that every truly converted person shall persevere ; but they do not tell professed christians, either as a collective body, or as individuals, that they shall persevere ; because, in general, they are not absolutely certain respecting any individual, that he is a truly changed man ; but viewing them as rational creatures, they urge them by every suitable motive, to avoid sin, and grow in grace continually ; and assure them, that if they go back to the world, they will not merely perish, but perish with aggravated guilt.—As to the passage in Hebrews, it cannot be proved to refer to real christians ; and if it could, the same answer would serve as has just been given to the first class of passages.

14. What reply do you make to the third class of passages ?

It is evident, that the first of those passages (John xvii. 12.) requires the mind to supply something, to make the sense complete. There are two passages in Luke, which in this respect resemble it. If therefore it is inferred from John xvii. 12., that Judas was once a real disciple of Christ, then, from the other passages (Luke iv. 25—27.) it may be inferred, that the widow of Sarepta was a widow in Israel, and Naaman a leper in Israel ; though the first was a Sidonian, and the last a Syrian. The passage in dispute should be read thus : “Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition *is lost* ; &c.” It then appears, that Judas was not one of those said to be given to Christ. The passages in Luke require a similar addition at the end of each.—The second passage of the third class (1 Tim. i. 19.), will apply to those who never were really changed ; as a person may for a time act conscientiously, through fear, whose heart is not the seat of love to God and man, in which true religion consists. It is evident, therefore, that neither of these passages proves the fact, that persons may fall from a state of grace. Whenever professing christians become apostates, it is clear from 1 John ii. 19., that they never were truly converted.

15. In what respect is the doctrine said to be of bad moral tendency?

It is asserted, that if a man once persuade himself that he cannot fall away, he will be sure to neglect the means of grace, and to become careless in his moral conduct.

16. What reply can you make to this objection?

(1.) No man knows with absolute certainty, that he is a child of God; and therefore, no man can be absolutely certain, that he shall not fall away; and if this is admitted, all the force of the objection is removed. The evidence of a person's conversion, arises from the exercise of holy affections, and from habitually holy conduct; and should these at any time be such as to exclude every doubt of his conversion, yet no sooner does he give way to sinful indulgence, than the reality of his conversion becomes doubtful; and if so, how can he continue in sin, under the persuasion that he cannot fall from his converted state?

(2.) The same God who reveals this doctrine, also declares, that he will use such means as will cause his people to persevere in well-doing; Jer. xxxii. 40. 1 Pet. i. 5. Ps. lxxxix. 30. Isa. lix. 1, 2. Hos. v. 15.

(3.) Real christians who hold this doctrine can testify, that so far from relaxing their exertions, it animates them in the pursuit of holiness,*

* See Note 3.

PART III.

ON THE DUTIES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

*On our Duty to God.*SECTION I.—*On Love to God.*

1. WHAT are the principal branches of inward piety, or of that state of mind which should be cherished towards God ?

Love, reverence, trust, and submission.

2. What is meant by love to God ?

It includes a delight in his character, as a being of infinite goodness, and as displaying that goodness in his kindness *to us* (Ps. cxvi. 1. 1 John iv. 19.); and a desire that his will or pleasure may, in all things, be accomplished. When love to God is viewed as arising exclusively from the consideration of his love *to us*, it is called gratitude; and as the principal manifestations of the love of God have a reference to ourselves, gratitude must necessarily enter largely into our love to him.

3. To what degree should our love to God extend ?

To the highest degree possible; Mark xii. 28—30.

4. How does love to God manifest itself ?

(1.) By leading us to think and speak much of God, to praise him in a lively manner, and to desire that all others should do the same (Ps. civ. 33, 34. ciii. 20—22.); and gratitude will lead us to abound in thanksgiving; Ps. ciii. 1—5.

(2.) To desire a sense of his favour or special regard, which he has promised to them that love him, and to

rejoice in it when attained; John xiv. 21—23. Ps. xlii. 1, 2. lxiii. 1—3. lxxiii. 25. Hab. iii. 17, 18.

(3.) To desire and pray that we may be more like him.

(4.) To delight in his law, and make it the rule of our conduct.

(5.) To co-operate with him, in the most cheerful manner, in all his gracious designs towards our world; Rom. xiv. 7, 8. 1 Cor. vi. 20. We shall earnestly and constantly pray to God in behalf of Missionary, Bible, Tract, and Sunday School Societies, that much good may be done by them. We shall cheerfully contribute of our property, according to our ability, to support these and other institutions, which aim to promote the spiritual and temporal happiness of men, in this and every country. We shall also readily assist by personal exertion, in collecting, &c.; and use our influence with others to induce them to act a similar part.

5. You have already pointed out the way to obtain divine love,* can you also specify the proper means to be used for its advancement, where it is obtained?

Yes;

(1.) We should consider its vast importance.—It is the root of all moral goodness, so that without it every thing else is of no worth in the sight of God; 1 Cor. xiii.—It is the most powerful motive to the discharge of every duty, both towards God and man.—It is a rich source of present happiness to the person who possesses it. The feeling itself is in the highest degree delightful, and God has promised a sense of his special regard to those who love him; John xiv. 21—23. As God is every where, the believer, in loving him, loves one whose society he can enjoy at all times, and in all places, and from whom nothing can separate him. In proportion as we love God, every religious duty becomes delightful; Ps. xxvii. 4. xlii. 1—4. lxiii. 1—5. lxxxiv.

(2.) We should seriously and frequently meditate on those things in God, which tend to excite our love

* See Regeneration.

to him. Particularly, we should reflect upon his goodness as displayed towards man, and all living creatures on our globe, and more especially towards ourselves; and each particular instance should be considered by itself; which will be found to have a far more powerful influence in exciting our love to him. Amongst these displays of his goodness, that of giving his Son to die for our redemption stands preeminent, and should therefore be made the constant theme of our meditation. In this we may consider the love displayed in giving one so near to himself, giving him unsolicited by us, giving him for sinners and rebels, giving him to die a shameful and painful death for us; and this, not only to deliver us from hell, but also to advance us to heaven. We should likewise frequently think of his goodness in favouring us with the gospel, and especially, in leading us to that faith in Christ which gives us an interest in all its blessings. To excite our love to Christ and the Holy Spirit, as distinct persons in the Godhead, we should consider the peculiar part which each has taken in our salvation.

(3.) We should exercise this love, when excited, in continued meditation, and also in prayer and praise. This will not only strengthen it at the time, but also powerfully tend to form it into a habit.

(4.) Example will also be found to have considerable influence. When we perceive others, in preaching, praying, singing, or conversation, to be much under the influence of divine love, we shall generally find that it excites our love to a greater degree of fervour, which should induce us to place ourselves in such situations as much as possible.

6. But is it not wrong for persons to work themselves up into religious servours and transports?

If it be done merely for the pleasure it affords, or to deceive others, or gain their applause, it is highly blamable, and likewise very dangerous. But if a person uses every suitable means to raise his love to God to the highest pitch, from a conviction that God is infinitely worthy of such regard; and also from a desire that his own prayers and praises may be more

sincere and fervent, and his obedience more unreserved, cheerful, vigorous, and constant; he deserves commendation instead of blame, and ought to be imitated by all. Some persons, however, by natural constitution, and others, by the change wrought in their constitutions through age or affliction, are utterly incapable of strong emotions, though their conduct gives sufficient proof of the strength of their love; while others are remarkable for lively feelings, and their effects on the body, who are by no means exemplary in their conduct, and in some instances such persons habitually live in known sin. It must also be admitted, that the strength of our love is to be determined, not by the mere liveliness of the inward feeling, or its effects on the countenance, voice, &c.; but by its influence on our conduct. It is strong, in proportion as it leads us to deny our own ease, inclination, interest, and reputation, and also the solicitations of others, in order to please God; and likewise in proportion as it leads to a cheerful, vigorous, and constant obedience to all his will.

SECTION II.—On Reverence towards God.

1. What is the property in intelligent beings which excites our reverence?

Superiority, as it respects either age, ability, character, or relation.

2. Is God in these respects a fit object of reverence?

Yes; for, as it regards past existence, he is eternal; as it regards ability, he is infinite in wisdom and power; as it regards character, he is perfect in goodness, holiness, justice, and truth; and as it regards relation, he is our Creator, Lawgiver, Ruler, and Judge. As God, in all these respects, is infinitely superior to the most exalted creature, we should always regard him with the most profound reverence.

3. From what may this reverence be distinguished?

(1.) From that awe which springs from the contemplation of the various astonishing works of God,

but which has no regard to his holiness and justice ; for reverence has a particular regard to these attributes.

(2.) From superstitious and slavish fear. Where slavish fear is the predominant feeling, God cannot be loved, and obedience to his law must be a burden; but reverence is the fear of one who truly loves God, and so serves him cheerfully ; and is therefore properly styled filial fear, that is, the fear of a child towards a beloved parent. Where superstitious fear is the ruling principle; it leads the person to attempt and expect to appease the wrath of God, and secure his continued approbation, by trivial observances, or by an almost exclusive attention to religious ordinances ; while Christ as the foundation of hope, and the law as the rule of conduct, are nearly, if not entirely, overlooked ; but reverence is connected with an entire reliance upon Christ, and the constant pursuit of real holiness, both of temper and conduct. But though reverence differs from superstitious and slavish fear, a degree of such fear may often be found in connexion with it, arising from a timid disposition, want of clearer views of the plan of salvation, and the nature of true religion, and from secret or open backsliding.*

4. How does reverence towards God express itself ?

In proportion as we possess it, all our language, tones of voice, and gestures, in divine worship, will be respectful and solemn.

5. But has it no influence upon our conduct ?

Yes ; in this it is the powerful coadjutor of love. While love excites to cheerful obedience, reverence restrains from evil (Prov. xvi. 6.), prevents us from omitting known duty (Gen. xxii. 12.) ; and when love and other christian graces decay, reverence excites us to use the proper means for reviving them ?

6. Does the Bible require us to reverence God ?

Yes ; Ps. xxxiii. 8. Prov. xxiii. 17. Ps lxxxix. 7. Heb. xii. 28, 29.

7. What are the means to be used in order to attain and promote reverence towards God ?

* See Note 4.

(1.) We should endeavour to obtain the grace of divine love; for reverence is a modification of love, and therefore, cannot exist without it.

(2.) We should seriously and frequently consider its importance.—It is absolutely necessary to render our devotions acceptable to God; Ps. lxxxix. 7. Heb. xii. 28, 29.—It is beneficial to our fellow-creatures; as it restrains us from injuring them, and prevents us from neglecting our duty towards them.—It is also advantageous to ourselves; as its influence on our conduct may prevent much of that chastisement for sin which God might otherwise inflict; and the feeling of reverence, though a solemn, is yet a delightful feeling.

(3.) We should dwell much on the character of God, in that light which tends to excite it. Particularly, we should meditate upon his power, omnipresence, omniscience, holiness, and justice; and also frequently peruse those parts of his word which describe these features of his character.

(4.) We should constantly check all irreverence, in thought, word, and action; which will prevent us from acquiring a habit of irreverence, or destroy it if already acquired.

(5.) We should read such books, and keep such company, as tend to promote this spirit, and carefully shun those of an opposite description.

(6.) We should pray for assistance in using these means, and that they may be rendered successful in promoting a reverential spirit.

SECTION III.—*On Trust in God.*

1. What is meant by trust in God?

It includes a dependance or reliance on him, in opposition to depending on ourselves or others; and also a persuasion that he will fulfil all his promises to us, and do that which, upon the whole, is best for us, in opposition to distrusting him.

2. For what should God's people trust in him?

As they, in common with all his creatures, derive every thing from him (Acts xvii. 28.), and as he has

promised to afford every thing which they really need, (Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Phil. iv. 19.), and is possessed of infinite wisdom and power to fulfil his promises, they should therefore depend upon him to supply all their wants.

3. What are the chief temporal supplies which God has promised to grant ?

Food, raiment, and protection ; Ps. xxxvii. 3. Matt. vi. 25—30. Ps. iii. 3. Zech. ii. 5. Matt. x. 29—31.

4. What are the spiritual supplies which God has promised to bestow ?

(1.) Pardon ; Ps. cxxx. 4. Mic. vii. 18, 19. 1 John i. 9.

(2.) Knowledge, to direct their faith and practice ; John xvi. 13. Prov. iii. 6. Jam. i. 5.

(3.) Grace, to promote their inward purity, and also to keep them from actual sin, and fit them for the discharge of every duty ; Phil. i. 6. Jam. iv. 6. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Phil. iv. 13. Prov. iii. 6.

(4.) Peace of mind, and support in trouble ; Phil. iv. 7. Ps. xli. 1. Isa. xli. 10.

(5.) Eternal happiness after death ; 1 John ii. 25.

5. How does trust in God express itself ?

Particularly by leading its possessors to pray to God earnestly and constantly for the blessings which they need, and, especially, for those which he has promised ; Ps. xxv. 2, 3. lxii. 8.

6. But will God fulfil all his promises to his people, without the use of any means on their part, except prayer ?

No ; as it respects food, raiment, and protection, they must exercise industry, frugality, and prudence, otherwise they tempt God instead of trusting in him ; and with regard to spiritual blessings, they must not only pray, but also use every suitable means of grace ; and yet in reference both to temporal and spiritual blessings, they must depend upon God to succeed their use of appropriate means, and express that dependance by earnest and constant prayer.

7. Does the Bible require the people of God to trust constantly in him ?

Yes ; Ps. xxxvii. 3. lxii. 8. Isa. xxvi. 4. 1 Pet. iv. 19. v. 7.

8. And should not sinners also trust in God?

Yes; but as most of God's promises are made to his own people exclusively, sinners should first depend upon him to grant them pardon and effectual grace (1 John i. 9. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 37. Luke xi. 13. Rom. x. 13.), so as to seek these mercies at his hands by earnest prayer, through Christ; and thus becoming his people, it will be both their privilege and duty, to trust in him for every blessing which they need.

9. What are the best means of exciting christians to trust in God?

(1.) They should frequently consider its importance. It must be pleasing to God; for it honours him, by affording a practical acknowledgment of our entire dependance upon him, and also of his infinite goodness, wisdom, power, and faithfulness; and he not only requires it, but also denounces a curse upon those who depend upon their fellow-creatures, instead of depending upon himself; Jer xvii. 5, 6.—It is beneficial to themselves, as it promotes tranquillity of mind in all circumstances, and also secures to them the accomplishment of all God's promises; Ps. cxii. 7. xxxi. 19. xxxiv. 22. Jer. xvii. 7, 8.—It is also beneficial to others, as it tends to encourage other saints to trust more confidently in God, and is also calculated to impress sinners with a conviction of the value of religion.

(2.) They should frequently dwell upon those considerations in themselves and God, which tend to excite it. Particularly, they should habitually remember, their own entire dependance upon him, his infinite goodness, wisdom, power, and faithfulness; and also his promises, the relation of Father which he bears to them (Matt. vii. 9—11. 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.), and his conduct towards his people in all ages; Gen xlviii. 15, 16. Ps. xxxiv. 6. xxxvii. 25.

(3.) They should check every feeling and expression of dependance on themselves or others, which interferes with their dependance upon God; and also every feeling and expression of distrust towards God.

(4.) They should constantly pray for divine assistance; Mark ix. 24.

SECTION IV.—*On Submission to God.*

1. May not submission to the providence of God be divided into three branches ?

Yes ; viz. contentment, patience, and resignation.

2. How may contentment, patience, and resignation, be distinguished from each other ?

Contentment regards our limited portion of good things ; patience, our sufferings ; and resignation regards either or both of them ; but while contentment and patience refer to them as present, resignation regards them as future.

3. What is the general state of mind which these words denote ?

They denote that state of mind in which the person acquiesces in, or consents to, the will of God, respecting his temporal condition ; from a persuasion that that will is founded in perfect goodness and wisdom ; or from a firm confidence in the goodness and wisdom of divine providence.

4. Does the word of God teach the doctrine of a good and wise providence ?

Yes ; that there is a divine providence, or in other words, that all events are under the divine guidance and controul, is evident from Ps. cxlv. 15, 16. Dan. iv. 35. Acts xvii. 25, 28. And while the wicked enjoy many undeserved mercies, and suffer far less than they deserve, there is no event which befalls the righteous (to whom the doctrine of providence more particularly applies), which is not the result of infinite goodness and wisdom ; Gen xlii. 36. xlv. 25—28. Job xlii. 12, 13. Rom. viii. 28. 2. Cor. iv. 17.

5. Why is this state of mind said to arise from a conviction of the goodness and wisdom of divine providence ?

To distinguish it from natural insensibility, natural cheerfulness, and a stoical unconcern. The first two are constitutional, and the last is the result of mere reason, or pride, or both. Such persons endeavour to keep themselves as calm as possible in all trying events.

“because (say they) we cannot alter the state of things, and it is beneath the dignity of man to complain.”

6. How do these graces express themselves?

Contentment makes the person cheerful, and also thankful for what he possesses; in opposition to sadness and repining. Patience makes him composed, and likewise thankful that his sufferings are not greater; in opposition to restlessness of spirit, and complaining. Resignation makes the person composed, and sometimes cheerful, in reference to the issue of his present affliction, and also in reference to the unknown events of future life; and it likewise leads him to adopt language suitable to this part of the christian temper; 1 Sam. iii. 18. Luke xxii. 42. Acts xxi. 14. And where patience is very strong, the sufferer can praise God in the midst of affliction; Job i. 21.

7. What farther influence have these christian graces upon the temper and conduct?

(1.) They prevent envy.

(2.) They restrain from unlawful methods of improving our condition, or of avoiding the evils which threaten us.

(3.) They fit us for rightly discharging the duties of our station; while discontent and impatience tend to make us negligent, and also weaken our gratitude to God.

8. Does the word of God require us to cultivate these dispositions?

Yes; Jam. iv. 7. Heb. xiii. 5. Jam. v. 10, 11.

9. What means should we adopt for this purpose?

(1.) We should seriously and frequently consider their importance.—They honour and please God, as they contain a practical acknowledgment of his infinite goodness and wisdom in all his dealings with us, and likewise give a favourable view of him to others, who witness our contentment, patience, and resignation.—The exercise of these graces will also be found advantageous to ourselves. We shall then enjoy a happy state of mind, be more likely to obtain friends in our

distress, and perhaps much additional chastisement from God will be prevented.—The exercise of these graces is likewise beneficial to our fellow-creatures, by encouraging real christians, and impressing the minds of sinners with the reality and worth of religion. How pleasant also it is, to associate with the contented, and visit the patient when afflicted; but on the other hand, how painful, to associate with the discontented, and attend on the impatient!

(2.) We should also meditate much upon those considerations which more immediately tend to excite these dispositions. Of these considerations, the following are some of the principal.—The present state of things is short, and to the real christian, introductory to a state of eternal happiness.—The greatest portion of earthly good cannot give real satisfaction, and a large measure of it often proves injurious to the soul, by leading it astray from God.—All God's dealings with his people, are the result of infinite goodness and wisdom.—All the privations and sufferings which we endure, have a tendency to promote our purity; and this is God's design in every affliction which he lays upon us; Ps. cxix. 67, 71. Heb. xii. 10.

(3.) We should frequently set before us those bright patterns of submission, which are furnished by the word of God; particularly Aaron (Lev. x. 3.), Job, David, Paul (Phil. iv. 11–13.), and above all, our Saviour.

(4.) We should constantly pray for divine assistance.

CHAPTER II.

On our Duty to our Fellow-Creatures.

SECTION I.—*On our Duty to our Fellow-Creatures in general, including Love and its Effects.*

1. Are we required to love our fellow-creatures?

Yes; Mark xii. 31.

2. How must we love them?

As many of our fellow-creatures neither possess real goodness, nor have been good to us, the love which we are required to cherish towards men in general, can

only be a love of benevolence, that is, a desire of their happiness.

3. Are we required to love, not merely persons of the same town, county, or kingdom, but likewise all mankind?

Yes; Mark xii. 31. Luke x. 27, &c.

4. Are we required to love our enemies?

Yes; Luke vi. 27.

5. How should we manifest our love towards our enemies?

By meekness, forgiveness, and positive acts of kindness; Col. iii. 12. Matt. vi. 14, 15. Rom. xii. 20, 21.

6. What is meant by christian meekness?

It generally refers to some provocation received from a fellow-creature, and denotes that state of mind in which the feeling of anger is kept under proper restraint.

7. What restraint should be put upon anger, in order to constitute a person meek?

(1.) It should be kept from rising too soon. We should completely suppress it, till we have full proof that the injury done to us, or the respect withheld, of which we complain, was *intended*, or at least was occasioned by a criminal indifference to our welfare.

(2.) It should be kept from rising too high. To prevent this evil, most persons will find it requisite to suppress the passion as much as possible.

(3.) It should be restrained from proceeding any farther than is requisite to attain the object for which it was implanted in our nature. This object is self-defence, and is attained,

[1.] When, upon the receipt of an insult, or a slight injury, it makes us guard against the offender in future, by shunning his company, except he should alter for the better.

[2.] When, upon the receipt of a serious injury, it leads us to prosecute the offender. This may be both for our own good, and that of the public; because it has a tendency to deter men from such offences, and to reclaim the offender, should he not be cut off by capital punishment. But when anger leads us to call

our enemy by ill names, to implore the curse of God upon him, or to threaten to inflict evil upon him ourselves, it is sinful.

8. From what may christian meekness be distinguished?

(1.) From constitutional meekness, or that which springs from a temper naturally calm.

(2.) From that which springs from self-love only. In this case, the person restrains anger in its outward effects, merely because he is afraid of exciting the offender to new aggressions, or because he thinks retaliation will lessen his reputation. And if he endeavours to suppress the feeling of anger, it is because it destroys his peace of mind.

(3.) From that which leads the person to overlook an insult, or a slight injury, because he despises the offender, and therefore will not stoop to exercise his resentment towards him.—In distinction from each of these, christian meekness springs from love to God who requires it, and also from love to the offender, for whose happiness we feel concerned, as well as for our own. Concern for our own happiness, and a temper naturally calm, serve to strengthen it; but are not its sole causes, as in the first two instances.

9. In what cases does christian meekness appear to most advantage?

When exercised towards equals and inferiors. Prudence will generally lead us to restrain our anger towards superiors; but from our equals, and especially our inferiors, we have little to fear. If, therefore, we habitually treat such persons with meekness, when they offend us, it becomes much more evident, that our meekness springs from love to God and man, and so is real.

10. What are the means to be used in order to attain and increase christian meekness?

(1.) We should seek to obtain that change of heart which produces love to God and man; because christian meekness springs from this principle.

(2.) We should seriously and frequently consider the great importance of meekness.—It must be pleasing

to God, for he requires it (Matt. v. 22. 1 Cor. xiii. 5. Eph. iv. 26. Col. iii. 12.) ; and it makes us resemble himself ; for the patience of God towards both sinners and saints, is but another name for meekness.—It is beneficial to men, being at once agreeable to the feelings of the offender, and calculated to reform him ; and it also tends to give others a favourable opinion of religion.—It is likewise advantageous to ourselves, by affording a strong proof of our piety, preserving our peace of mind, and also preventing future injuries ; for few persons will inflict a second injury, when the first has been received with christian meekness.

(3.) We should learn to have low thoughts of ourselves, and a low esteem of the present world. “If we consider what poor contemptible things we are in ourselves, and what we have deserved, if not from men, yet from God, whose instruments they are for our correction, we shall be little concerned at what the world calls affronts, and easily reconciled to those who have wronged us. And if we have a low esteem of the present world, this will cut off the occasions of our animosities. If we aim at heaven, we shall not quarrel about any trifling interest in our way thither.”

(4.) We should endeavour to avoid the principal occasions of anger, as disputes about religion, politics, &c. ; especially with men of weak judgments, or of obstinate, passionate, or peevish tempers.

(5.) We should endeavour to suppress anger in its rising, by restraining the tongue, and withdrawing the attention from the insults and injuries we have received.

(6.) We should consider the command and example of Christ, and the obligation which his love has laid as under to follow them ; Matt. xi. 29.

(7.) We should continually pray to God for christian meekness.

11. But while we are required to love mankind in general, and even our enemies, are we not particularly required to love and assist real christians ?

Yes ; John xiii. 34, 35. Rom. xii. 10. 2 Pet. i. 7. Gal. vi. 10.

12. In what manner are we required to love our fellow-creatures ?

As ourselves; Mark xii. 31.

13. How is this language to be understood ?

Not strictly, but in a general sense. Love leads us to contrive, act, and also expend our money, for the happiness of the beloved object; but to do these things as much for others, and for all others, as for ourselves, is impossible; and were we to make the attempt, it would cause such a division of attention, exertion, and property, as would do good to none. Perhaps the best explanation of Mark xii. 31, will be found in Matt. vii. 12.

14. What influence will love to mankind have upon our conduct towards them ?

In proportion to its strength, it will prevent us from voluntarily injuring them, and also from doing it inadvertently, by leading us to guard against it; and it will likewise excite us to positive measures of attention, kindness, and beneficence, according to circumstances.

15. What are some of the principal things by which our fellow-creatures may be injured, and from which real love will lead us to abstain ?

These evils regard their persons, their property, the affections of others towards them, their reputation, their knowledge and confidence, their morals, and their tranquillity of mind.

16. What are the evils which regard the persons of mankind, from which we should abstain ?

The principal evil of this kind is murder. We should also abstain from all persuasions and bribes, which might induce persons unnecessarily to hazard their lives, or to adopt any course which might break their constitutions, and shorten their days.

17. What are the evils which regard the property of mankind, from which love will lead us to abstain ?

Theft, robbery, forgery; breaches of trust, contract, or promise; gaming, trespasses; and those evils which regard borrowing, bargains, and the contracting and paying of debts.

18. And ought we not also to make restitution, where we have unjustly deprived our fellow-creatures of any part of their property?

Yes; Exod. xxii. 1. Luke xix. 8.

19. How do you prove gaming to be an unlawful method of obtaining the property of others?

There are only two ways in which we can justly acquire the property of others, viz. by free gift, or by returning an equivalent, in money or goods; but that which is obtained by gaming is not acquired in either of these ways. The disposition also, with which the parties sit down to the game, is unjust. It is the desire and hope of each party, to obtain the property of the other for nothing; which is directly contrary to the tenth commandment.

20. And is not gaming a great evil, as it respects the individual himself?

Yes; for it is a sinful waste of his time, abilities, and property; for all of which, as a steward, he must give an account to God. It is also the direct road to many other evils. The gamester, from losing, soon begins to play unfairly; and when charged with it, first denies it, afterwards confirms the denial with an oath, and perhaps at length engages in a quarrel, or fights a duel, to vindicate his wounded honour; or reduced to beggary, and his mind racked with anguish and remorse, he commits suicide.

21. Is it lawful to engage in games, provided it be done for amusement, and not for money?

Without denying that it is lawful, it may be confidently asserted, that it is far from being desirable; for,

(1.) Such a practice will, as an example, be pernicious to others, who will not distinguish between playing for amusement only, and playing for money. Should they find that we do the one, they will feel no hesitation in doing the other; and if so, we are bound to refrain; Rom xiv. 20, 21. 1 Cor. viii. 13.

(2.) As an amusement, it is unnecessary and useless. It refreshes neither the mind nor the body; and, therefore, essentially fails of being a proper amusement. Better amusements can always be substituted

for it ; particularly, exercise, reading, and conversation ; and amongst amusements we ought to select the best.

(3.) In gaming, whether for amusement or money, there is a degree of the same unhappy influence exerted on the mind. This arises from the desire of victory, the reluctance to be vanquished, the pride of success, and the vexation of being overcome.

(4.) " Gaming for money is almost always the consequence of an addiction to gaming for amusement ; and the probabilities that we shall fall, where so many have fallen, are millions to one."

22. What are the principal trespasses which mankind practise on each other, and from which we ought to abstain ?

Making roads across fields where there ought to be none ; treading down corn or grass, instead of keeping to the proper footpath ; suffering cattle to go without restraint, which are accustomed to get wrong ; neglecting a person's walls, or hedges, and thus affording his cattle an opportunity to enter the fields of others ; and cutting down trees planted for use or ornament.

23. What are the evils which respect borrowing, from which we ought to abstain ?

Using what is borrowed in a different way to what was intended by the lender ; keeping it for an unreasonable length of time ; allowing it to be injured through negligence ; or, if returned in kind, doing it by what is less in quantity, or inferior in quality, or both.

24. What are the evils which regard bargains, from which we ought to abstain ?

There can be no fair bargain, unless an equivalent, either in money or goods, be given for what is received. In this, the selling or market price, is, in most cases, the best rule, and that to which most persons profess to be willing to conform. Men may therefore be injured as it respects bargains ;

(1.) When a person conceals or misrepresents the market price, in order that he may buy for less, or sell for more.

(2.) When the seller uses false weights or measures.

(3.) When he sells goods as sound, which he knows to be defective.

25. What are the evils which regard the contracting and paying of debts, from which we should abstain?

Contracting debts, when it is certain, or at least highly probable, that we cannot discharge them within any reasonable time; neglecting to pay our debts at the proper time; and, if paid by labour, being idle, or not doing the work as we ought.

26. May we not be guilty of injuring our countrymen by smuggling, or receiving smuggled goods, or by any other method of evading the payment of taxes?

Yes; by such conduct we not only lessen the revenue of government, but also injure every upright subject; because he is obliged to pay more than he ought, in order to make up the deficiency occasioned by our dishonesty.

27. What are the evils which often lead men to injure their fellow-creatures in their property, and from which, therefore, we should abstain?

(1.) Covetousness, or an inordinate desire of earthly things.

(2.) Pride, which prevents its possessor from coming down to his circumstances.

(3.) Luxury, or an extravagant mode of living.

(4.) Idleness.

28. Does not the word of God forbid us to do any injury to mankind, as it respects their property?

Yes; Deut. xxv. 13—16. Prov. xx. 14. Mark x. 19. 1 Cor. vi. 8, 10. 1 Thess. iv. 6.

29. How may mankind be injured as it respects the affection of others towards them?

As a particular affection subsists between husband and wife, children and parents, brothers and sisters, and also between friends; whoever, by slander, persuasion, or any other means, withdraws the affection of one party from the other, does one or both a very serious injury. This is particularly the case in reference to that affection which subsists between husband and wife; especially, when it leads to actual adultery, which is often the case.

30. How may a person be injured as it respects his reputation?

By slander or calumny.

31. May we not be guilty of slander when no words are used?

Yes; "when we are reasonably expected to give a fair character of another, we may easily and deeply slander him by our silence. We may also accomplish the same purpose by our actions; as, when we withhold our countenance from a man, who, in ordinary circumstances, might fairly expect to enjoy it; withdraw from him business, with which he has been heretofore intrusted; or turn him out of service, without alleging any reasons for our conduct. In these and the like cases, we give such proofs of suspecting him ourselves, as to entail upon him, in greater or less degrees, the suspicion of others."

32. What are the usual ways in which slander is committed?

(1.) By charging others with actions of which they are not guilty.

(2.) By using foul names to describe their actions, importing that they spring from bad principles, and have a bad tendency, when there is no appearance of either.

(3.) By a wilful misconstruction of their words, and by a partial representation of their discourse or practice, concealing some circumstances which ought to be stated.

(4.) By instilling sly suggestions into others, which tend to excite prejudice against them.

33. But are not others guilty of slander, as well as the person who raises the false report?

Yes; this is the case,

(1.) With those who listen to such reports, without any attempt to contradict them, when they have reason to suspect their correctness.

(2.) With those who repeat them, when they know or suspect them to be false.

34. Is it a sufficient excuse, in such cases, to say, that the report is true?

No; for if all the good properties of the best of men were kept out of sight, and only their faults and weaknesses brought forward, a very unjust representation of them would be given. Besides, to publish a person's misconduct must be greatly to his injury; and consequently love will restrain us from doing it, unless there be evident necessity.

35. What are those cases of necessity in which it is allowable to speak of the faults of others?

When individuals are in danger of being injured by such persons, it is our duty to caution them; and should the public at large be in danger, we ought to give them warning.

36. What are the best means to be used in order to avoid slander?

(1.) We should seriously and frequently consider the evil of it.—It is particularly hateful in the sight of God; Ps. xv. 3.—It is very injurious to mankind. It deeply wounds the feelings of the person slandered, hinders his advancement in the world, and obstructs the success of his efforts for the good of mankind; especially in the case of public characters. It also destroys the peace of families, churches, neighbourhoods, &c.—It is likewise highly injurious to the slanderer himself. It robs him of his reputation, excites the hatred of mankind, and if persisted in, will exclude him from heaven; Ps. xv. 3.

(2.) We should constantly guard against the immediate causes of slander; viz. pride, envy, party-spirit, passion, malice, levity, and loquacity.

(3.) We should pay much attention to the improvement both of the heart and understanding; for we shall then possess the inclination and ability for better conversation than that of scandal.

(4.) We should endeavour to realize the presence of God.

(5.) At the close of the day, we should strictly examine ourselves on this subject; for so powerful is the temptation to indulge in this evil, that we are almost sure to have been guilty, either less or more.

(6.) We should constantly pray for divine assistance.

37. How may a person be injured as it respects his knowledge and confidence?

By falsehood in declarations and promises, and by unfaithfulness. Almost all our knowledge is derived from the communications of others. If those communications are false, our knowledge must be false too; and this in many cases, must prove very injurious. "If we are falsely informed of business, we shall conduct it unhappily; if of the markets, we shall buy and sell with loss; and if of our duty, we shall perform it amiss." We are also indebted under God to our fellow-creatures for innumerable benefits; and if they repeatedly or habitually break their promises, or engagements, or in any way disappoint our reasonable expectations, we should soon be brought into a most deplorable state.

38. Is it criminal to elude the inquiries of others, and keep them in the dark, when no falsehood is spoken for that purpose?

No; "I may foresee that my silence, or forbearing to say all that I know of a matter, will lead my neighbour into a mistake, and yet may lawfully not inform him of the truth; yea, in some cases, it may be my duty not to do it: as when a greater good requires that he should be kept ignorant of it, or sometimes for the sake of his own good. Or, if a matter is intrusted with me as a secret, and another would fain discover it, who has no right to know it, if either by silence, or a partial but true account, I can divert his inquiry, it will not be a violation of truth; Jer. xxxviii. 24, &c. But to affirm any falsehood, in order to deceive others, is never justifiable."

39. But are there not some cases, in which concealing the truth, or offering a partial statement of it, is wrong, even when no falsehood is spoken?

Yes; whenever such conduct has a tendency to lead men into sin, or to cause the innocent to suffer, it is sinful. Abraham was guilty of such conduct on two occasions; Gen. xii. 11, &c. xx. 2, &c.

40. What are the principal ways in which persons are guilty of falsehood?

(1.) By the voluntary declaration of what is known to be false.

(2.) By colouring the subject of their declarations, so as to give it a different appearance from the true one.

(3.) By flattery, and excessive compliments.

(4.) By unjust censure.

(5.) By alleging in support of a doctrine, or a cause, arguments which in their view are unsound; or sound arguments, as having more weight than they believe them to possess.

41. Is it lawful to utter falsehood to insane persons, or little children, when it is for their good, and we cannot otherwise manage them?

No; for lying, without any exception, is plainly forbidden in the word of God (Eph. iv. 25.); and the practice of it, under any circumstances, has a powerful tendency to weaken our abhorrence of lying, and our regard to truth in all cases.

42. What are the best means to be used for avoiding falsehood, both in declarations and promises?

(1.) We should endeavour to obtain a deep and habitual sense of the evil of it.—It is highly offensive to God; Prov. xii. 22.—It is very injurious to the welfare of nations in general, and also to the interests of private individuals.—It is likewise highly injurious to the liar himself; as it exposes him to remorse of conscience, constant fear of detection, the hatred and contempt of mankind, and to the wrath of God in a future state; Rev. xxi. 8. xxii. 15.

(2.) We should resolutely guard against the principal inducements to falsehood; viz. an excessive love of sensual pleasure, riches, personal distinction, place, or high station, and power; also, party-spirit, passion, and loquacity.

(3.) We should studiously guard against every thing in our conversation and conduct, which we should feel ashamed or afraid to avow before the world; for this will cut off two strong inducements to falsehood, shame, and the fear of consequences.

(4.) We should refrain from mimicking the language, tones, and gestures of the person spoken of;

for, independent of other objections to the practice, the attempt is almost sure to fail, and consequently to involve us in the guilt of giving a false representation.

(5.) Before we begin to relate any thing particular, it would be well to call to our recollection the principal facts.

(6.) To avoid falsehood, as it respects our promises, we should make no promise while we are in a state of strong excitement; at all times we should make as few promises as possible; and when we do make them, it should be only in cases where we have a full persuasion of our ability to perform them, and we should employ some qualifying clause, expressive of the dependence of all events upon God; Jam. iv. 13.

(7.) We should pray to the God of truth, for the assistance of his Holy Spirit.

43. How may our fellow-creatures be injured by us in their morals?

By enticement and example. In the latter way, great evil may be done; and therefore, parents, masters, ministers, and all whose superiority in rank, &c., gives their example greater influence, should set the strictest guard over themselves, often examine whether there is any thing in their conduct which may mislead others, and also endeavour to attain the highest degree of excellence in every part of the christian character.

44. How may a person be injured by us, as it respects his tranquillity of mind?

By harshness, as opposed to gentleness and kindness; by reserve and haughtiness, as opposed to affability; by coarseness and indelicacy; by excessive familiarity; by every appearance of neglect; and by introducing those subjects in conversation, which will instantly bring to his recollection things of a painful nature.

45. You said, that love to mankind would not only prevent us from injuring them, but also lead us to adopt positive measures for their benefit, according to circumstances; what are those positive measures?

As this love prevents us from injuring them, as it respects their persons, property, &c., so it will likewise lead us to adopt positive measures to promote their happiness in each of these respects, as their wants require, and our circumstances admit. If sick, wounded, &c., and unable to obtain proper assistance, we shall either afford them direct aid, or support those benevolent institutions which are designed for the relief of such objects; or, if unable to do either, we shall sympathize with them, and show a readiness to perform all the kind offices in our power. If others are so completely destitute of property, as to be unable to obtain a supply of their wants, love will lead us to act a similar part. If suspicion and jealousy begin to rise up between friends, &c., we shall endeavour to remove them; and if friends are actually in a state of variance, we shall endeavour to reconcile them to each other. As far as truth will admit, we shall defend the reputation of those who are absent, from the tongue of slander; and also frankly acknowledge their good properties, on all suitable occasions. By our exertions, property, and influence, we shall endeavour to promote education, and to disseminate christian truth throughout the world.* And, instead of breaking in upon the tranquillity of mind which others possess, by doing violence to their habits and feelings, we shall endeavour to promote their comfort, by every effort of attention, kindness, and respect, consistent with truth, and with their lasting happiness.

46. Does the word of God require us to be courteous, by paying a proper attention to the habits and feelings of those with whom we associate?

Yes; Rom. xii. 10. Phil. iv. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 8.

47. Does it furnish any examples of this duty?

Yes; Gen. xviii. 2—8. xxiii. 6—12. xxxiii. 3—11. Acts xxvi. 25. Philem. 7—21.

48. How does christian courtesy differ from that of the world, or from mere worldly civility and politeness?

* See Note 5.

(1.) It springs from true benevolence, or a desire to promote the happiness of all about us; while that of the world is the result of mere good nature, or more frequently of education, habit, or the desire of being distinguished for good breeding; and sometimes it springs from an unlovely spirit of rivalry, or the base desire of seducing the innocent and unsuspecting.

(2.) Christian courtesy is free from flattery, and a connivance at sin; while that of the world is deplorably faulty in these respects.

(3.) Christian courtesy is uniform. It makes us attentive and kind to strangers, inferiors, and the members of our own family; as well as to superiors and equals, with whom we are acquainted.

(4.) Christian courtesy will lead its possessor to comply with the manners of those with whom he associates; but when the forms of good breeding are ridiculous, by their length, emptiness, &c., he will keep within the limits of sobriety and good sense.

SECTION II.—*On Relative Duties.*

§ I.—*On the Duties of Husbands and Wives.*

1. What is the first relation which mankind sustained towards each other?

That of husband and wife.

2. On what is this relation founded?

On marriage.

3. Is any thing more requisite to marriage than the consent of the parties?

Although the word of God does not impose any particular form of solemnizing marriage, yet "some legal and authenticated recognition is absolutely necessary, to distinguish this honourable union from all temporary and disgraceful connexions; for, the opinion, that the consent of the parties alone is essential to marriage, to which the outward ceremony can give no additional validity, is suited to answer the

purpose of libertines; and tends to multiply seductions, and to disseminate licentiousness."

4. Is marriage of divine appointment?

Yes; Matt. xix. 3—6.

5. Can the union formed by marriage never be broken?

No; except by the death; or adultery, of one of the parties; Rom. vii. 2, 3. Matt. xix. 3—11. Mark. x. 11, 12.

6. Has God forbidden unchastity, both before and after marriage?

Yes; and will exclude the unchaste from heaven, unless they repent; Exod. xx. 14. Acts xv. 20. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 18. Heb. xiii. 4. Rev. xxi. 8.

7. Are the followers of Christ laid under any restriction respecting marriage?

Yes; they are allowed to marry only those whom they have good ground to consider as real christians; 1 Cor. vii. 39. 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

8. What latitude does this rule admit of?

It does not forbid us to marry persons, because they are not exactly of the same religious opinions, or because they are connected with another denomination of christians, or because they are not in full communion with any religious society. Still it is highly desirable, that on all religious subjects there should be a perfect agreement; and if persons marry who attend different places of worship, it is generally better, on many accounts, that they should afterwards both attend the same place; and propriety seems to require, that in this, the wife should act as is most agreeable to her husband; though, on his part, nothing of a compulsory nature ought to be used to induce her to do so.

9. When pious persons violate the scripture rule respecting marriage, what evil consequences will ensue?

These unscriptural marriages must always have a bad effect upon the piety of the religious party, are always a source of much sorrow in various ways, and where there are children, their religious education is rendered almost impossible.

10. How do professing christians attempt to justify such conduct ?

They generally allege, that the persons they are about to marry are very hopeful characters, and that they expect, by the blessing of God on their own efforts, they will be able to lead them to true conversion.

11. Can such a defence be admitted ?

No; for there are many persons who assume a religious profession, in order to gain the object of their choice; and, after marriage, soon appear in their real character. And if they really have some serious impressions, yet so long as their religious character remains doubtful, it is contrary to the scripture rule to marry them; and to do it in hope of God's blessing our endeavours, is presumption; for how can we expect his blessing where we have contradicted his known will in the most deliberate manner !

12. While piety ought to be the first consideration among professing christians, in forming matrimonial connexions, ought not several other things to be attended to ?

Yes; particular regard should be paid to good sense, prudence, and good natural temper; for they have great influence upon the happiness of the married state. It is also generally desirable, to marry persons of the same age, and of the same rank in life, and also of industrious and frugal habits.

13. Should children always marry according to the wishes of their parents ?

As parents, generally speaking, have the real welfare of their children at heart, and from experience are better able to judge what will be for their good in future life, and as their own happiness is often deeply concerned in the marriages of their children, it is generally desirable, that children should follow the advice of their parents on this subject, and particularly that they should refrain from marrying where the parents strongly advise them against it. But parents are too often under the influence of covetousness, pride, and partiality; and so are anxiously bent on

introducing their children to wealth, rank, or some favourite family, regardless of every other consideration. If, therefore, a pious child, by complying with their wishes, should marry an ungodly person, or one in whom there was such a disparity of age, disposition, habits, &c., that he or she could not feel that affection towards the person, which is absolutely necessary to the comfort of the married state;—in such cases, children are bound in duty to God, and by a regard to their own happiness, and that of the other party, to decline such connexions.

14. What are the duties which husbands and wives mutually owe to each other?

(1.) Mutual esteem.

(2.) Mutual affection.

(3.) Mutual forbearance, and self-denial:—Forbearance, in opposition to resentment; and self-denial, in crossing their own inclinations, in order to gratify those of each other.

(4.) Mutual encouragement in the promoting of individual piety, and also in the maintenance of family worship and discipline.

15. But are there not some duties peculiar to each party?

Yes.

16. What is the foundation of these duties?

They are founded upon that superiority which God has given to the husband; Gen. iii. 16; 1 Cor. xi. 3, 8, 9. 1 Tim. ii. 12—14.

17. What are the duties of the wife which arise from this consideration?

Reverence and subjection; Eph. v. 22, 24, 33.

18. What are the duties of the husband which arise from this consideration?

As his authority must have been given, for the temporal and spiritual advantage of his whole family, he is bound to use it for these purposes, by the constant exercise of a wise, and kind, but firm conduct; Eph. v. 25, 28, 29, 33. Col. iii. 19. Also, the superior strength, courage, and firmness of mind, with which as the head he is endowed, should be em-

ployed in providing for the wants, and defending the person and character, of his wife; and likewise in encouraging her to decision and perseverance in religion, in spite of every difficulty and danger.

19. What are the evils against which the husband should guard in the exercise of his authority?

He should guard,

(1.) Against caprice, obstinacy, sternness, and severity; and also against a temper too yielding in things of importance.

(2.) Against neglect. In all his looks, words, and actions, he should treat his wife in a respectful manner. This ought especially to be done, before her children, servants, and other persons in general. He should regard her as a helper, companion, and friend; and as such, consult her on important business, and also spend much of his leisure time with her; 1 Pet. iii. 7. Gen. ii. 18, 21—24.

(3.) Against unjust requirements and prohibitions.

(4.) Against preventing her from enjoying an equal share of those temporal advantages with which he is favoured. This rule is broken, when she has nothing to dispose of, either for her own accommodation, or for charitable purposes.

§ II.—*On the Duties of Parents and Children.*

1. What is the second relation which subsists between mankind?

That of parent and child.

2. What are the duties of children to their parents?

(1.) They should cherish lively gratitude towards them; because all their temporal mercies are, under God, derived from them.

(2.) They should exercise becoming reverence towards them; because they are their parents, and so their superiors; Lev. xix. 3. Eph. vi. 2, 3. This reverence should appear, in their language and conduct.

(3.) They should diligently attend to their instructions, and endeavour to remember them; Prov. i. 8, 9. iv. 1—4, 20—22. vii. 1—3.

(4.) They should cheerfully obey all their commands, except those which may be contrary to the word of God ; Eph. vi. 1. Col. iii. 20.

(5.) They should cheerfully support them, if necessary ; especially in old age ; Gen. xlvii. 12. Ruth iv. 16. 1 Tim. v. 4.

(6.) Through the whole of life, they should endeavour to act in such a becoming manner, as shall afford pleasure to their parents, and reflect honour upon them ; Eph. vi. 2.

3. Is the same regard due to both of the parents ?

Yes ; Lev. xix. 3. Prov. i. 8. Eph. vi. 2.

4. How should pious children act, in order to avoid the corrupting influence of the opinions, precepts, and example of evil parents ?

(1.) They should endeavour to obtain the most correct and extensive views of sin and holiness, that they may not, through ignorance, either do what is wrong, or refuse obedience in things which are lawful. To obtain such views, they should diligently read the Bible and other religious books, ask the advice of judicious friends, and above all, constantly pray to God for instruction.

(2.) They should keep a strict watch over themselves, and endeavour as much as possible to foresee the temptations which may await them.

(3.) They should pray for courage and meekness ; so that they may neither be guilty of making sinful compliances through fear, nor of refusing obedience in a disrespectful manner.

5. How should pious children act towards irreligious parents, in order to lead them to conversion ?

“ In general, children are not required to preach to their parents : at least, every word should be spoken with modesty, tenderness, and unassuming gentleness ; and they should rather aim to induce them to hear sermons, to read books, or to converse with pious and prudent christians, than themselves to give instructions, or to engage in arguments with them, except in very particular circumstances. The most conclusive argument which they can use, consists in an uniform

conscientious conduct, in obliging attention, silent submission to undeserved rebukes, diligence in business, fidelity to every trust reposed in them, and a disinterested regard to the temporal advantage of the whole family. When a young person uniformly acts in this manner, he will have opportunities of speaking or writing a few words, with weight and propriety; which, being joined with persevering prayer, may at length be crowned with the desired success: whilst the contrary conduct will close a parent's ear against the most conclusive arguments, and most zealous discourse." "Children are also bound, modestly, submissively, and discreetly, to remonstrate against the visible wickedness of their parents."

6. What are the motives to excite children to discharge their duty to their parents?

(1.) Such conduct is pleasing to God, as is evident from his requiring it.

(2.) It is beneficial to men.—It is a source of great pleasure to the parents, and children are bound in gratitude to do all they can to please them.—It may be beneficial to other parents, by leading their children to be obedient.—Obedience to parents is universally a thing of good report; and when pious children discharge their filial duties well, it brings honour to religion, and may prove a blessing to the souls of those who witness their conduct; Matt. v. 16.

(3.) It is advantageous to the children themselves. Those who are dutiful to their parents, will be dutiful to their employers, when removed from their parents. This will procure them esteem and confidence, and consequently advance their temporal interest. On the other hand, disobedience to parents is the cause of much evil to the person himself, by producing effects directly opposite; and also by exposing him to the curse of God in this world, and to eternal misery in the world to come.

(4.) Christ has left a lovely example of obedience to parents, and all children are bound to imitate him; Luke ii. 51, 52.

7. What are the duties of parents to their children?
They may be distributed under three heads. viz. the maintenance, education, and settlement of their children.

8. What is the duty of parents to children, as it respects their maintenance?

Where their circumstances will admit, they are bound to afford them both decent provision and clothing, till they are able to provide for themselves.

9. What is the duty of parents to children, as it respects education?

They should instruct them, and rule or govern them in a proper manner; Prov. xxii. 6. Eph. vi. 4. 1 Tim. iii. 4.

10. What are the things in which children should be instructed?

They may be distributed under the two heads,—common knowledge, and religious or moral knowledge.

11. What is meant by that common knowledge, in which children should be instructed?

The knowledge which is usually acquired at school, and which should include an acquaintance with reading, writing, and arithmetic; for these are almost indispensably necessary for every child. Without ability to read, the Bible is to him a sealed book, and he is consequently cut off from one of the most important means of preparing for the world to come; and to be ignorant of writing and arithmetic, must, generally, if not always, be very injurious to a person's interest in this world.

12. What is meant by that religious or moral knowledge, in which parents should instruct their children?

All the knowledge which is requisite to direct them in the discharge of their duty, to God, to man, and to themselves.

13. What are the truths respecting their duty to God, which a parent should teach his children?

(1.) He should endeavour to give them correct views of God. Particularly, he should teach them, that God is every where present, and so knows every thing about us; that he is perfectly good, holy, just, and true.

(2.) He should teach them, that they have souls, distinct from their bodies, which must live for ever after death, either in the greatest happiness, or in extreme misery, according to their conduct while on earth; and that there will be a day of judgment, when they and all mankind must give an account of themselves to God. The most simple way to convince them that they have souls, is, to tell them, that the soul is that by which they think, love and hate, hope and fear, and feel joy and sorrow.

(3.) He should endeavour to convince them, that they are sinners; and consequently, that they need pardon, and a change of heart. In order to do this, he should inform them, that it is their duty to love God in the highest degree, and also to love all mankind as themselves: that if they thus loved God, they would have a constant desire to please him; and for this purpose, would pray to him seriously, read and hear of him with pleasure; and also cheerfully do whatever he has commanded, and abstain from every thing which he has forbidden: and that, if they loved mankind, they would never wilfully vex or hurt any one, but be kind to all; especially, they would act thus towards their brothers and sisters, and also be very obedient to their parents. Every duty which children are capable of attending to, in reference to God, to man, and to themselves, should be clearly stated; and they should be shewn, how they have neglected it, and often acted directly contrary to it. The parent should then assure them, that they must have all their sins pardoned, and their hearts changed, otherwise they cannot go to heaven.

(4.) He must teach them, that the only way to obtain these blessings is, to pray to God for them through Christ. Here, he must shew them, that Christ came down from heaven, and died on the cross to save us; and that God the Father will not hear us, unless we pray through him. When the children are become capable of attending to it, he may give them a simple statement of the Trinity, by informing them, that both Christ and the Holy Spirit are distinct

persons in the Godhead, as well as the Father; and consequently, that Christ is both God and man.

(5.) He must, as far as means will go, teach them to love and reverence God, trust in him, and submit to all his will. For this purpose, he must labour to give them a deep conviction of the goodness, holiness, justice, and truth of God, of their own sinful and lost condition, and of God's readiness to save them, if they pray to him through Christ. He should endeavour to lead them to pray to God in their own simple language, especially when he is so happy as to make deep impressions on their minds. These means, under God, may produce an abiding change in them; and consequently lead to habitual love, reverence, trust, and submission. Young children may be led to understand something of the nature of these pious affections, from the love, reverence, dependance, and submission, which they exercise towards their parents.

(6.) He should lead them to pay a becoming respect to all the external duties of religion; such as, private, family, and public worship; grace at meat; and also a proper regard to the name of God, the Bible, and the sabbath day. As it regards personal prayer, it is desirable, that it should be in private, not in the midst of the family. The child should be prepared for it by a suitable address. If it is thought proper to use a form, there can be no doubt, that forms may be obtained much more suitable to the capacities of children than the Lord's prayer. Perhaps it may be best to use different forms, in order to prevent devotion from sinking into a mere repetition of words; and after all, a pious and judicious parent will endeavour to lead his children to pray without them, at least occasionally. This may be done, by the parent's using short and simple sentences of confession, petition, and thanksgiving, suitable to the wants of the child, and requiring it to repeat after him. At night, the children should retire to bed immediately after prayer, and should not be allowed to enter into trifling conversation as soon as they have risen from their knees. A suitable hymn read to the children who sleep in the same room, just

when leaving them, might please them, and also have a good effect.—In saying grace, using the name of God, and in family and public worship, they should be taught to act with great seriousness; and yet great care should be taken to prevent them from assuming the mere appearance of seriousness. They should be taught to spend the sabbath day in a serious manner; yet the religious exercises of that day, should be diversified as much as possible, in order to render them interesting.

14. What are the general rules to be adopted in the religious instruction of children?

(1.) It should be begun as early as possible. "The great and plain doctrines of religion should be taught so early, that the mind should never remember when it began to learn, or when it was without this knowledge. In the same manner ought its religious impressions to be begun. On the infant mind, every thing is powerfully impressed, because every thing is new. Every child easily imbibes at this period a strong and solemn reverence for his Creator. The conscience is, at this period, exceedingly tender. All the affections, also, are easily moved."

(2.) Children should be taught gradually. "The first things which children attain are words and facts. To these succeed, after no great interval, plain doctrines and precepts. This order of things being wrought in the constitution of the human mind, should be exactly followed." Facts impress young children most, and there is scarcely any doctrine which may not be taught them by means of scripture facts. This is particularly the case in reference to the attributes of God.*

(3.) They should be taught with constancy and seriousness; Deut. vi. 6, 7. Without the first, they will soon lose the knowledge they have obtained, and impressions made will soon be worn off. And unless the parent exercise both constancy and seriousness, the child will naturally conclude, that he considers

* See the Goodness, &c., of God.

religious instruction as of very little importance ; and consequently, little or no impression will be made.

(4.) They should be taught in the plainest manner. "The simplest language, the fewest and plainest words, and the most familiar illustrations, only, should be adopted."

(5.) They should be taught to consider the Bible as the word of God, and therefore absolutely true ; and all the instructions which are given them, should be shewn to be founded upon it ; and where distinct passages can be brought forward to support what the parent is teaching, it should always be done.

(6.) Religion should be presented to them in a pleasing, as well as a serious light.

(7.) They should be taught in an affectionate manner. This will be found the best way to obtain their attention, and to reach their hearts.

(8.) Parents should teach their children with unwearied patience. They "should be patient with their ignorance, their backwardness to receive instruction, their mistakes, their forgetfulness, and the doubts and difficulties which from time to time they suggest. In all this, the parents should manifest, not only quietness of mind, but cheerfulness, and willingness to repeat their instructions."

(9.) They should teach them in such a manner as to encourage the exercise of their own minds. For this purpose, conversation, reading, and catechizing, should be combined. Parents should endeavour by their conversation, to improve, to the spiritual good of their children, every passing event, the seasons of the year, and whatever comes under the notice of the children. They should also have times for more set conversation. The sabbath day at least, will generally afford an opportunity for this. In catechizing their children, parents should adopt different plans. They should set them to commit a suitable catechism to memory, and in proportion as their capacities will admit, they should be questioned respecting the meaning of the different answers which it contains. They should also be questioned respecting what they hear

from the pulpit, and what they read in the Bible and other books, and likewise encouraged to propose questions themselves.*

(10.) If they send them to a school from home, they should, if possible, select a pious master. "To commit children to the care of irreligious persons, is, to commit lambs to the superintendence of wolves. No man who does this, can say, that he has done his duty; or feel himself innocent of the blood of his child. No man will be able, without confusion of face, to recount this part of his conduct before the bar of the final Judge."

(11.) They should teach them by example.

15. What are those duties to mankind, which a parent should teach his children?

Truth, justice, kindness, civility, and sweetness of manners.

16. How should a parent act, in order to teach his children to speak the truth?

(1.) As children are in danger of falsehood, not only by flatly asserting or denying what is untrue; but also by making false excuses in order to lessen their own faults; by giving unfair accounts of disputes between themselves and other children; by giving incorrect accounts of transactions which they have witnessed; and by making promises, and not performing them;—every parent should keep a strict watch over his children, in each of these respects, and constantly and resolutely check falsehood whenever it appears in any of these forms.

(2.) He should shew on all occasions an inviolable regard to truth in his own conduct, and keep his children from the company of liars; for example has great influence on children. Towards the children themselves, he should use nothing of artifice or trick; but all his conduct should be fair and open. He should never make a promise, nor utter a threatening, which he cannot fulfil, or may not lawfully fulfil; and he

* See Note 6.

should strictly perform both his promises and threatenings.

(3.) The general treatment of his children should be mild and kind, not harsh and severe. The latter method tends to make children, not only timid and reserved, but artful and deceitful ; by leading them to use every artifice, in order to hide their faults, and avoid the merciless chastisement of an unrelenting father.

(4.) It is desirable, as far as possible, to manifest confidence in their veracity ; for when a child finds that he cannot be trusted, it is likely to break his spirit, and make him careless about preserving his character for truth.

(5.) When a parent has reason to suspect a child's having told a falsehood, he should endeavour to ascertain the fact, by his own investigation, or by the evidence of others, rather than by questioning the child himself, or by strongly urging him to confession ; for, by the latter plan, he would often lead him, if guilty, to repeat the falsehood ; or, if timid, to plead guilty to a fault which he had not committed.

(6.) The importance of truth to the welfare of society, and to their own reputation and success in this world, and also to their eternal happiness after death, should be frequently and seriously set before the children ; Prov. xii. 22. Acts v. 1, &c. Rev. xxi. 8.

17. How should parents teach their children justice ?

(1.) By setting them an example of strict justice. The child should never have to witness any injustice in their dealings with others ; nor have any ground to complain of their injustice towards himself, in not fulfilling their promises, &c.

(2.) They should see that the children practice strict justice among themselves. One child should not be allowed to use what belongs to another, without his consent ; should he injure, or destroy, or lose it, he should be compelled to make it good ; and if an elder child impose upon a younger one, by making a bargain greatly to his own advantage, the bargain should instantly be broken.

(3.) They should see that their children practice strict justice towards other children. Whenever they bring home any thing fresh, strict inquiry should be made how they obtained it. If it was borrowed, they should be required to return it at the proper time; and should they injure or destroy it, they should be compelled to make it good. If it was stolen, or taken by force, they should be compelled to return it immediately. If it was obtained by a bargain, in which they have evidently taken advantage of another child, the bargain should be broken; but if the disadvantage is on their side, it is better to let them abide by it, and to dissuade them against making bargains in future.

(4.) They should teach them the importance of justice to the welfare of society, and also to their own eternal happiness; 1 Cor. vi. 10.

18. How should parents teach their children kindness towards mankind in general, and especially towards the afflicted and needy?

(1.) By cherishing the natural feeling of tenderness, which all children possess in a certain degree. This may be done, by bringing them to the cradle or bed of one of the other children when sick, and using expressions of tenderness towards the little sufferer, and encouraging them to comfort and please him; by occasionally taking them to see other children when sick; by using them as messengers to carry relief to the distressed; by allowing them a certain sum for charitable purposes, and requiring it to be so employed; and by the parents' setting an example of kindness, both to man and beast; and, where no money can be given, doing every kind office in their power.

(2.) By strongly condemning every act of cruelty in others, which comes within the knowledge of the children; and by firmly and constantly checking every thing of the same kind in them, and, as the occasion may require, punishing them for it. But if they are allowed to act unkindly towards each other, or towards other children, or even to trifle with the sufferings and lives of insects, reptiles, and other animals, they will gradually become more unfeeling, and so more fit for greater acts of cruelty, when grown up.

(3.) By setting before them the infinite kindness of Christ, in coming from heaven and dying to save us; and also his kindness and compassion, as displayed during his abode on earth; Matt. xiv. 15—20. xv. 22—28. Mark x. 13—16, 46—52. Luke ix. 52—56. xxii. 50, 51.

(4.) "Among the exercises of kindness which are of prime importance, one of the most difficult to learn is, the forgiveness of injuries. On this account, it should be taught early, unceasingly, and strenuously. An unforgiving and revengeful spirit, on the contrary, should, however difficult and discouraging the task, be at all events broken down."

19. How should parents teach their children civility, and sweetness of manners?

(1.) They should constantly check every approach to rudeness, and every tendency to satire, ridicule, and mimicry.

(2.) They should set their children a good example.

(3.) As all contests for superiority powerfully tend to produce a behaviour directly opposite to civility and sweetness of manners, it highly becomes every parent to keep his children from all those sports which occasion such contests. Where children are fond of gardening, or any other employment which involves little or no contest, this inclination should be encouraged.

20. What are the duties of children to themselves, which parents should teach them?

Industry, frugality, good temper, courage, humility, the government of the tongue, and delicacy.

21. How should parents teach their children industry?

By furnishing them with a proper variety of suitable playthings, in order to excite them to be active during the hours of play; by providing them with histories of birds, beasts, &c., and the lives of pious children, to engage their attention, when they cannot be out of doors; by accustoming them to do every thing at the proper time; and by shewing them the value of time, as that by means of which all temporal and spiritual benefits are obtained.

92. How should parents teach their children frugality ?

By endeavouring to convince them of the worthlessness of those objects which most strongly tempt them to spend their money ; by leading them to lay out their money in more valuable articles, as clothes, books, &c. ; and by endeavouring to convince them of the importance of money, in procuring the necessaries and comforts of life.

23. How should parents teach their children to exercise a good temper ?

(1.) They should set them a proper example. There will no doubt be many seasons when the parent will feel an irritable state of mind ; but he should confine it within his own bosom. By this means, it will soon be suppressed, and his children will not be infected by it.

(2.) They should never unnecessarily provoke their children ; Col. iii. 21. Children may be unnecessarily provoked, by keeping them long in suspense respecting some object of desire, and after all refusing to give it them ; by frequently speaking to them in a peevish or austere manner ; by suddenly compelling them to leave their sports, without any necessity ; by punishing the smallest and the greatest faults with the same severity, and making no distinction between an accident and a fault ; by exposing their faults before company, and reproving or punishing them before those who have no concern in the matter ; and by inflicting punishment in such an angry manner, as to shew that it is done more to gratify the bad feelings of the parent, than for the good of the child.

(3.) They should not allow the children needlessly to provoke each other ; and they should keep them as much as they can, from all that society, and all those amusements, which have a tendency to produce irritation.

(4.) They should endeavour, on all suitable occasions, to impress them with the importance of an even and agreeable temper ; by shewing them that such a temper will be,

[1.] Pleasing to God ; Prov. xvi. 32. Phil. iv. 8.

[2.] The means of much comfort to all with whom they have any connexion.

[3.] A source of much inward peace to themselves; and will secure to them a larger measure of kind regard from others, whereas the contrary temper will make them many enemies.

24. What is meant by courage or fortitude, which parents should teach their children?

It denotes that firmness of mind, which prevents the dread of imaginary evils, and which enables us to meet and endure real evils.

25. How should parents act, in order to teach their children that firmness of mind, which will prevent or remove the fear of imaginary evils?

(1.) They should guard their children while young, from every thing likely to excite sudden alarm, or to terrify the imagination.

(2.) Perhaps it is generally, if not always, unwise, to excite an apprehension of sudden judgments from heaven upon them, on account of their faults; as it may have much more influence in terrifying the imagination, than in convincing them of the evil of their conduct.

(3.) In speaking to them of death, it is more desirable to dwell upon the happiness to which a holy child or adult person is gone, and then to encourage them to goodness; than to speak of the cold, dark grave, and of the body's being eaten by worms, &c.

(4.) When there is reason to conclude from the countenance, voice, or clinging of a child to his attendant, that something has excited his alarm, the matter should always be instantly examined. Merely to scold him for his cowardice, will rather increase his fear than lessen it.

(5.) "If a child dread the dark, he must on no account be forced into it, or left in bed against his will without a candle; at the same time, no opportunity of infusing a counteracting principle should be lost."

26. How should parents act, in order to teach their children that firmness of mind, which will enable them to meet and to endure the real evils of life?

(1.) When the children are sick, the parents should beware of excessive sympathy, and endeavour to combine the tenderest attention with a proper degree of discipline.

(2.) Parents, by their own example, should encourage their children, when sick, to submit with firmness "to painful remedies, as tooth-drawing, taking medicines, and other means."

(3.) It will also prepare them for the evils which may await them, if the parents at once treat them with kindness, and yet endeavour to form them to hardy habits, as it respects their food, bed, &c.

27. How should parents teach their children humility, as opposed to vanity and pride, to which children and young people are so prone?

(1.) If their vanity and pride arise from a conviction of the rank and wealth of their parents, they should frequently be reminded, that these things add nothing to the real worth of their parents or of themselves; and that even those who pay them external respect, according to the custom of the country, would at the same time despise them in their hearts, if they were ignorant, foolish, or wicked.

(2.) If these vices arise from their persons, dress, or manners, they should be told, that if their persons are agreeable, they should be thankful to God for it; and that, as to their dress and manners, they should attend to them so far as to render themselves agreeable to others, instead of appearing singular and awkward, but that beyond this they are not worth a moment's concern; and that, should they pursue them beyond this point, they will displease God, and cause themselves to be despised by all sensible and pious people.

(3.) Parents should neither do, nor suffer any thing to be done, to their children, which is likely to excite vanity and pride in them. It may sometimes be proper, gently to commend their decent dress, and good behaviour in company, in order to guard them against the opposite evils; but it is always wrong to commend them for appearing *fine*, and it is worse still,

to promise them *new and fine* clothes for good conduct. And "if upon the entrance of children into a room, a general whisper of approbation go round the circle; if remarks be made on their persons, their carriage, and their manners; if their sayings be eagerly listened to, and repeated in their presence, the ill effect is inevitable."

(4.) Parents, and especially mothers, should set them a proper example, by appearing in a great measure indifferent about new clothes, and also about the particular colour or shape of them.

(5.) If their pride break out into a contemptuous treatment of servants, or other inferiors, such conduct ought to be strongly condemned; and, if very glaring, they should be punished for it.

28. How should parents teach their children the proper government of the tongue?

When they are found to have divulged things respecting their own family which they ought not, it might be of service, to turn them into another room, or out of doors, for a few times; when any thing particular is about to be spoken; and as often as they attempt to recite any thing improper, respecting other persons or families, they should instantly be checked, and told of the impropriety of it; and parents should set them a good example, by indulging in no conversation respecting others, but what is strictly proper.

29. How should parents teach their children that delicacy which stands opposed to what is gross and impure?

By observing the strictest delicacy in their own conversation and conduct; by checking every approach to indelicacy in the words and actions of the children, and manifesting their entire disapprobation of such conduct, in their countenance as well as their language; and by keeping the children from all places, and companies, and removing out of their way all books, pictures, or other things, by which their imaginations may be polluted, or their passions inflamed.

30. You have said, that parents should not only teach their children, but also rule or govern them:

what are the means by which parents should govern their children?

Praise and blame, rewards and punishments.*

31. What are the particular rules to be observed in the government of children by these means?

(1.) As it regards rewards and punishments, it will generally be found more efficacious, to state the particular reward or punishment, which shall attend a certain act of good or bad conduct.

(2.) "Correction, also, is not to be unnecessarily delayed or prolonged. Delay renders it less effectual, and more trying to the temper; whilst any needless continuance, in every way, increases the evils, and lessens the benefits, which might result from it."

(3.) Parents should beware of weakening their authority, by engaging in any contests with a child, in which they may be defeated; as when they say they will *make* him repeat his lesson, or commit his task to memory, or acknowledge his fault, and promise to do better in future. In these and similar instances, if the child be obstinate, he may, however punished, overcome the parent.

(4.) Instead of punishing a child till he has submitted, it is better to say nothing about submission, but to punish him in the way thought proper, and after he has sufficiently recovered himself, to speak to him in a serious and affectionate manner, when he will generally make all the submission that can be desired. After this he should be assured of the parent's forgiveness, and instead of being upbraided with his misconduct, he should be treated with the same kindness as if nothing had happened.

(5.) Reproof or punishment, should generally be given in private, unless the evil action was committed before the other children; in which case, it may sometimes be proper to punish the disobedient child in their presence, in order to deter them from acting a similar part.

* See Note 7.

(6.) When a child has been guilty of lying, theft, gross disobedience to parents, or any evil which is expressly forbidden by the word of God, it is very proper to produce those passages of scripture which refer to the subject, and thus convince the child, that God, as well as his parents, condemns his conduct.*

(7.) In dispensing rewards and punishments, parents should guard against any method which tends to excite the anger, or cherish the vanity, of their children.†

(8.) "If a child behave unusually well, or obtain some victory over himself, encouragement will leave a more beneficial and lasting impression, if, instead of saying any thing to him at the time, we take an early opportunity of bestowing some favour upon him, reminding him of the cause of this indulgence, and expressing our approbation of his conduct."

32. What are the general rules to be observed in the government of children?

(1.) The proper end of parental government should always be kept in view, viz. the temporal and eternal happiness of the children.

(2.) The government of children should be begun as early as possible; for, if they are taught to obey at first, they will easily be led to obey afterwards.

(3.) It should be administered with constancy; and in order to this, parents should guard against discouragement and sloth.

(4.) With decision, mildness, and kindness. Without decision, the parent's commands and threatenings will soon be disregarded; and without mildness and kindness, he will be hated rather than loved. Decision or firmness should be shewn, in inflicting the threatened punishment, however painful it may be to the parent's feelings; mildness, in a freedom from all passionate tones, language, and conduct; and kindness, in all the signs of inward regret, that the child should have rendered it necessary to inflict such punishment.

* See Note 8.—† See Questions 23, (2.), and 27, (3.).

(5.) With consistency and impartiality. Parents should manifest the same love to what is good, and hatred to what is evil, at all times, and towards all their children.

(6.) As it respects the instruction and government of young children, much depends upon mothers; who should therefore endeavour to get well qualified for their work, and by the help of God, endeavour to discharge it in a suitable manner.

(7.) In the instruction and government of children, both of the parents will have great need of divine grace; they should therefore unceasingly pray for it, and also for a blessing on their efforts.

33. How should elder children be treated?

"Parents ought to use every method to render their children, as they grow up, easy and happy in their company, and confident of a favourable reception in every attempt to please them; for this tends exceedingly to keep them out of temptation, to improve their minds, and to render the parental authority of wisdom and love, respectable and amiable in their eyes: and if they can allure their children to *choose* them for companions, counsellors, and friends, in all their undertakings, a most important point indeed will be carried."

34. Should parents controul their children as it respects their religion?

While they are young, the parents should take them to their own place of worship; but if, when they become capable of judging between different systems of doctrine, they express a conscientious desire to attend another place of worship, they ought by no means to be hindered. But if it be found, that they prefer another place of worship, because the doctrine is less strict, the people more fashionable, &c., the parent should seriously and affectionately remonstrate with them, on the sinfulness and danger of their conduct.

35. You have said, that the duty of parents to their children regards their settlement, as well as their maintenance and education: what is meant by the settlement of children?

It includes the choice of that business in which they are to spend their lives, assistance when they commence business for themselves, and marriage.

36. What is the duty of parents respecting the choice of a business for their children ?

In this they should consult their own circumstances, the talents and inclination of the child, the probability of his obtaining a comfortable support, and particularly the welfare of his soul.

37. Is it the duty of parents to assist their children in commencing business ?

"A child, when setting out in the world, finds himself surrounded by a multitude of difficulties, and is often discouraged, and sometimes broken down, when the helping hand of a parent would, with no real inconvenience to himself, raise him to hope, resolution, and comfort. That parents, so situated, are bound to assist their children in these circumstances, can need no proof. He who will not thus relieve the offspring of his own bowels, deserves not the name of a parent."

38. How should parents act towards children in reference to their marriage ?

"They should aim rather to caution and advise them, than to compel or restrain them in an absolute manner : remembering, that peace of mind, a good conscience, domestic harmony, and a connexion favourable to piety, conduce more to happiness even in this world, than wealth, or a confluence of all earthly distinctions."

39. What are the motives to induce parents to discharge their duty to their children ; particularly to educate them in a proper manner ?

(1.) Such conduct is highly pleasing to God ; Gen. xviii. 19.

(2.) It will be of great benefit to the children and others. It will be of great advantage to the children in this life ; and if they become truly pious, they will be rendered happy for both worlds. Many children, in consequence of receiving a religious education, have become eminent christians ; and the word of God gives great encouragement to parents in the discharge of

this part of their duty; Prov. xii. 6. Children religiously educated, may be expected to act with kindness towards each other through life, and also to become blessings to society, wherever they take up their residence; and when they become parents, it may be hoped, that they will educate their children as their parents educated them, and thus the good work of christian instruction be continued from one generation to another.

(3) It will be beneficial to the parents themselves; Prov. xxiii. 24, 25. Real piety will lead children to discharge, with pleasure, every duty which they owe to their parents.

(4.) Children and parents may soon die, and consequently all opportunities of instructing the former may soon cease. And how painful to a parent must it be, to consider, that he has neglected the religious instruction of his child, and that now the child is dead; or that he is about to die himself, and leave his children untaught, in a world of error and sin! Parents too must meet their children at the day of judgment, and give a strict account, how they have instructed and governed them.

§ III.—On the Duties of Masters and Servants.

1. What is meant by a servant?

The term is applicable, not only to hired servants, but also to apprentices, journeymen, and all who are subject to an employer in any line of business.

2. What are the duties of servants to their masters?

(1.) They should exercise a becoming degree of reverence towards them, which should appear in all their language and conduct; Mal. i. 6. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. 1 Pet. ii. 18. Tit. ii. 9. In cases where the master and servant are both pious, and both members of the same christian church, this reverence should still be exercised by the latter; for "equality in christian privileges, by no means implies equality in domestic life."

(2.) They should be faithful to every trust reposed in them; Tit. ii. 10. Fidelity requires them to employ their time in their master's service, instead of being idle, or employing it in working for themselves, except that portion of time which is allowed them for this purpose; to use nothing for food, &c., which they have reason to think would not be allowed if known; not to defraud their masters by pilfering, which is meant by purloining (Tit. ii. 10.), and not to suffer a fellow-servant, or any other person, to do it; and also to be careful that neither furniture, fuel, food, &c., be injured or wasted, through negligence or extravagance.

(3.) They should be obedient to their masters, in all things lawful and possible; except where the service to be performed is limited by previous agreement; and even then, as often as real necessity requires, they should afford all the assistance in their power; Col. iii. 22. But if they are required to do any thing contrary to the word of God, or above their strength, they may justly refuse to obey, and they ought to do so; for we should always obey God rather than man, and we are not bound to sacrifice our life or health, in order to please others. This obedience should also be instant, in opposition to being dilatory; exact, in opposition to negligence or self-will (Tit. ii. 8.); and cheerful, in opposition to reluctance or murmuring; Col. iii. 22, 23.—All this regard is due to a mistress, as well as a master; and in the case of female servants, it is more applicable to a mistress.

3. What are some of the general rules which servants ought to observe?

(1.) In choosing a place, they should give the preference to a religious family, even should the work be harder, or the wages smaller.

(2.) When they have been the means of injuring or destroying any thing, they should frankly acknowledge it, instead of attempting to conceal it.

(3.) Where there are young children, they should not allow them to do any thing which their parents forbid; nor should they conceal any important part of the children's conduct from the parents.

(4.) Where there are more servants than one, they should be obliging and kind to each other, instead of disputing and quarrelling.

(5.) As the care of many domestic animals, &c., devolves on servants, they should guard against cruelty, and neglecting to afford them a regular and sufficient supply of food.

(6.) When they remove to another place, they should not divulge the secrets of the family they have left.

(7.) Female servants should strictly guard against slovenly and wasteful habits; for without this, when they come to have families of their own, their houses will exhibit a wretched scene of dirt and poverty, instead of being clean and comfortable.

(8.) Wise servants will lay out no more of their wages on themselves, than what is requisite to render them comfortable and decent; but will reserve the remainder for sickness, marriage, old age, or to assist their parents, when they need assistance.

4. What are the motives to induce servants to discharge their duty to their masters?

(1.) Such conduct is pleasing to God; Eph. vi. 6—8. 1 Pet. ii. 20.

(2.) It is beneficial to men. The master and all his family are made much happier by it; and when the servant is a christian professor, his conduct may have a powerful effect upon an ungodly family, by convincing them of the excellence of religion; Tit. ii. 10. Matt. v. 16. It also sets a good example before other servants, which by its influence upon them, may produce much happiness in many families.

(3.) It is also advantageous to the servant himself. By this means, he gains the esteem and confidence of his employer, and frequently many favours in addition to his wages. It will be greatly to his advantage, should he wish to go to another place. It brings more comfort to his own mind; and if connected with other parts of the christian character, it will meet with a rich reward in heaven; Eph. vi. 8. Col. iii. 24, 25.

5. What are the duties of masters to their servants?

(1.) In the choice of servants, they should always give the preference to those who are truly pious; for on pious servants greater dependance may be placed, and they are of particular importance where there is a family of young children; whereas the example and influence of an ungodly and immoral servant, may do incalculable injury.

(2.) They should afford them a liberal supply of wholesome provisions; Luke xv. 17.

(3.) They should pay them equitable wages, and at the proper time; Mal. iii. 6. Deut. xxiv. 15.

(4.) They should instruct them in the principles of the christian religion, see that they religiously observe the sabbath day, and use every suitable means to promote their spiritual welfare (Gen. xviii. 19. Exod. xx. 10.): particularly, they should converse with them, pray with them, lend them suitable books, set before them a good example, and allow them some portion of time to attend to divine things, on other days besides the sabbath.

(5.) As they expect their servants to treat them with becoming respect, and to yield cheerful obedience to all their commands, they should act with such propriety in all their conduct, and with such kindness towards their servants, that the latter may have every inducement to respect them, and to obey their orders with cheerfulness.

(6.) When they have occasion to reprove them, it should be done with a mixture of mildness, affection, and firmness. The qualities of mildness and firmness ought to be exercised, in a proportion agreeing to the natural disposition, and the character, of the servant; and if the mildest reproofs be found ineffectual, it is then necessary to adopt a more decided tone. Perhaps, however, all masters are in danger of expecting too much from their servants; but if they consider, that servants are generally young persons, and that they themselves, even if truly pious, are very deficient in their obedience to their heavenly master, they cannot fail to see the propriety of bearing with many trifling

faults; Eph. vi. 9. Col. iv. 1.—The mistress of a family should act in the same manner, and particularly in reference to female servants.

6. Should a master require his servants to attend the same place of worship as he attends?

By no means; for this is to be guilty of the crying sin of the church of Rome, religious intolerance. While the king affords complete toleration to all his subjects, every master and every mistress is bound in honour, justice, and religion, to act the same part towards every servant.

§ IV.—*On the Duties of Children, Neighbours, and Friends, towards each other.*

1. What are the duties of children of the same family towards each other?

(1.) They should constantly exercise towards each other, truth, justice, and kindness.

(2.) They should endeavour to promote each other's spiritual welfare.

(3.) In cases of necessity, they should kindly and liberally relieve each other; especially, when that necessity is not occasioned by sloth, carelessness, or extravagance.

2. What are the duties which we owe to our neighbours?

We should speak freely and kindly to them; assist them with our advice and patronage, as we have opportunity; trade with them, and not entirely or chiefly with persons at a distance, especially when circumstances do not require it; not busily pry into their secrets; and endeavour to promote peace and religion among them. We should also beware of giving them unnecessary trouble, by frequently borrowing those things which we ought to procure for ourselves, and by frequently requesting their assistance, in things which we could easily do without them.

2. What are the duties of friends towards each other ?

It is entirely a matter of choice whether we form friendships or not ; but when we have formed them, these rules should be observed :

(1.) We should neither raise in others, nor indulge in ourselves, expectations beyond the nature and terms of the friendship. This rule is violated, when we profess friendship to all, or to many, in too strong language ; and when we declare our great and constant readiness to serve our friends, but never offer to do so.

(2.) We should answer all the reasonable expectations of our friends, whether in regard to secrets intrusted to us, private conversation unfit for certain companies, articles committed to our care, or business left to our management.

(3.) All our conduct towards our friends should be marked with kindness and respect. We should say nothing to them, or before them, which is calculated to wound their feelings ; and when they are absent, we should say nothing about them which may lessen their reputation ; but on the contrary, we should always defend their character, when assaulted, as far as truth will permit. Both parties should also guard against suspicion, and put the best construction on the language and conduct of each other.

(4.) Both parties should lay all flattery aside, as what is quite inconsistent with the design of friendship ; and advice and admonition should be mutually given, as occasion may require ; but in the manner, time, &c., which shall best correspond with true friendship.

CHAPTER III.

On our Duty to Ourselves.

1. What is our duty to ourselves ?

To love ourselves, or desire our own happiness, both for this world and the next ; so as to seek it, by endeavouring to preserve our health and life ; to provide for the present and future wants of our bodies ;

to maintain uninterrupted peace of mind; to improve our understandings; and to cultivate every holy affection, and discharge every duty, both towards God and man; Luke xii. 31. 1 Tim. vi. 12. Acts xvi. 28. Prov. iii. 13—18. Rom. ii. 7. 1 Tim. vi. 11, 12.

2. How should we act in order to preserve our health and life, and provide for the present and future wants of our bodies?

With prudence, temperance, chastity, industry, and frugality; Prov. xxii. 3. Eph. v. 18. 1 Cor. vi. 18. Prov. xiii. 4. John vi. 12.

3. How should we act in order to maintain uninterrupted peace of mind?

We should exercise constant faith in Christ (Rom. v. 1.); endeavour to keep a clear conscience (2 Cor. i. 12.); cultivate a calm and even temper, a spirit of humility, in opposition to vanity and pride (Matt. xi. 29.), and also a spirit of courage and fortitude, in reference to the unavoidable sufferings of life; be always employed, either in the active duties of life, or in reading, meditation, &c.; be prudent in our conversation, and also in our conduct, particularly in forming friendships, partnerships, and matrimonial connexions; avoid extensive speculations in business, and moderate our desires after all earthly objects; Matt. vi. 25, &c. Phil. iv. 5—7. Tit. ii. 12. 1 John ii. 15, 16.

4. Does not excessive love to the world interfere with our duty to God and man, and consequently expose us to future misery, as well as destroy our present peace of mind?

Yes (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. 1 John ii. 15.); for excessive love to the world, in its pleasures, riches, or honours, naturally gives rise to constant exertion, in order to gain the object of pursuit, connected with anxious care to seize every favourable opportunity, for that purpose; and where a person is thus completely employed, he will have little time, and less inclination, for the cultivation of piety towards God and Christ. As it regards his fellow-creatures, he feels no concern for their spiritual wants, and will do little or nothing.

to supply them ; nor is his conduct much better in reference to their temporal wants. Excessive love to the world also frequently leads to lying, slander, fraud, oppression, and murder.

5. Does attending theatres, or balls, interfere with our duty to God, to man, and to ourselves ?

All these amusements create such a spirit of dissipation, as completely unfits the mind for the exercises of devotion ; they rob us of our time and money, which might have been employed in improving our minds, relieving the distressed, and promoting religion both at home and abroad ; they are likewise injurious to health, and tend to excite unchaste feelings, and frequently lead to various other evils. As to the theatre, the plays generally performed, are so strongly tinctured with extravagance, profaneness, impurity, and revenge, that it highly becomes all who profess any regard to religion, to abstain entirely from it. All dancing in mixed companies must also be condemned, as well as balls, and for similar reasons ; and as teaching children to dance, places them under a strong temptation to do it in mixed companies, no parent is justifiable in encouraging or permitting his children to acquire this accomplishment ; especially, as a graceful movement, and genteel manners, may be learnt without it.

6. Does the Bible lay us under any restrictions respecting our dress ?

Yes ; 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. In its spirit, also, it forbids all dress which is not honestly procured ; which is immodest ; which requires an undue consumption of time ; which by its singularity attracts particular attention ; or which does not become our station, and is so costly, as greatly to abridge our ability to assist the poor, and promote the cause of Christ.

CHAPTER IV.

On the General Duties of Zeal, Courage, and Prudence.

1. What are those general duties which are connected with most, if not all, of our particular duties?

Zeal, courage, and prudence.

2. What is meant by zeal?

It includes an ardent desire of some particular object, and vigorous exertion to gain that object.

3. What is meant by courage?

It denotes that firmness of mind, which enables a person to pursue his object with steadiness and vigour, in spite of every difficulty and danger.

4. What is meant by prudence?

It denotes that cautious disposition, which leads a person to seize every opportunity of promoting the important object he has in view, and to guard against every thing which might endanger his success.

5. What is requisite to render zeal, courage, and prudence, truly virtuous or good?

They must spring from a proper principle, be exercised about proper objects, and in a proper manner.

6. From what principle should they spring?

From love to God and man; 1 Cor. xiii.

7. What are the objects about which they should be exercised?

The whole of our duty to God, to man, and to ourselves.

8. Is it possible for them to be exercised about these objects, and yet not spring from the right principle?

Yes; zeal and courage may spring from natural disposition, the love of distinction, party-spirit, and self-righteousness; and prudence may spring from natural disposition, and the fear of reproach, loss, and suffering.

9. In what manner should our zeal, courage, and prudence, be exercised, in order to constitute them truly good?

(1.) With meekness towards those who oppose us, instead of resentment, or revenge.

(2.) Zeal and courage should always be exercised in connexion with prudence; and in the exercise of prudence, we should guard against the commission of sin; because cases may occur, in which falsehood, slander, fraud, &c., might be found to be the most easy and speedy means of gaining our object; Jam. iii. 17.

10. You have said, that zeal, courage, and prudence, should be exercised about our duty to God, and man, and ourselves: can you shew more particularly, in what respects our duty to God, and man, and ourselves, calls for the exercise of courage and prudence?

This may be seen more clearly, by referring to courage, and prudence, separately.

11. In what respects does our duty to God, and man, and ourselves, call for the exercise of courage?

(1.) In the open profession of true religion, though exposed to ridicule and reproach on this account.

(2.) In defending religion when we happen to be thrown into the company of infidels or scoffers.

(3.) In practising unfashionable virtues, and refusing to comply with fashionable vices.

(4.) In undertaking the cause of the injured against an oppressive superior, and that of the innocent against the slanderer, who, in a public company, is attempting to lessen or ruin his character.

(5.) In prudently reproving sin in those with whom we have intercourse.

(6.) In attempting the reformation of families, churches, towns, and nations.

(7.) In refusing to comply with the wishes of employers and superiors, where conscience forbids.

(8.) In forbearing to adopt dishonest means for retrieving our affairs when embarrassed.

(9.) In continuing steadfast in our religious profession, though threatened to be deprived of our property, liberty, or life, on that account; and in doing this even when we have suffered privations.

12. In what respects does our duty to God, and man, and ourselves, call for the exercise of prudence?

This will more easily be seen by referring to each class of duties separately.

13. How should prudence be exercised in reference to our duty to God ?

(1.) In avoiding such indecencies and extravagance, in our outward behaviour in public worship, as might expose religion to contempt, and furnish sinners with an excuse for neglecting it.

(2.) In regulating the manner and length of our devotions, in private, family, and social worship, so as most effectually to promote real piety in ourselves and others.

(3.) In suiting the particular character of our devotions to particular circumstances, in regard to ourselves, our families, the church, the nation, and the world.

(4.) Prudence will restrain us from speaking much on experimental religion before irreligious persons, as they will consider it mere enthusiasm.

14. How should prudence be exercised in reference to our duty to our fellow-creatures ?

(1.) In order to promote their salvation, prudence will lead us to render ourselves agreeable to them, so far as it can be done without making sinful compliances ; Rom. xv. 2. 1 Cor. ix. 20—22.

(2.) Prudence must direct us, when to speak, and when to keep silence ; and how to accommodate serious discourse to different persons and seasons.

(3.) We should exercise prudence in contributing to the various benevolent and christian Institutions, in giving most to those which are most important, and which have the greatest need of support.

(4.) In doing good to the bodies of men, we should exercise prudence, in selecting the most proper objects of charity, in proportioning our bounty to the importance of the case, and in giving it in money or goods, as shall best attain the end we propose.

15. How should prudence be exercised in reference to our duty to ourselves ?

(1.) In making it our principal object to secure the salvation of our souls.

(2.) "In making the interests of soul and body consistent, as far as possible." By the exercise of

prudence, secret and family worship, the strict observance of the sabbath day, and even an attendance on some week night religious services in public, might, in most cases, be rendered strictly consistent with a due attention to business.

(3.) In shunning the temptations which are most apt to lead us astray.

(4.) In embracing the best seasons for strengthening our good habits, and for weakening and destroying those of an opposite kind.

(5.) In guarding against those improprieties, and needless provocations, by which good men have too often excited the opposition of sinners.

16. What means should we adopt in order to increase our zeal, courage, and prudence?

(1.) As they spring from love to God and man, as well as to ourselves, we should endeavour to have this love strengthened.

(2.) We should seriously and frequently consider the importance of these graces.—They must be pleasing to God; for he has expressly commanded them; Gal iv. 18. Rev. iii. 15, 16, 19. Matt. x. 28. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Matt. x. 16. Col. iv. 5.—They are beneficial to men, by furnishing a proper example to christian professors, and by leading us to that conduct towards sinners which is eminently calculated to bring them to God.—They are likewise advantageous to ourselves. They promote our knowledge and holiness in general. Persevering zeal and courage are strong proofs of the reality of our piety; and consequently must strengthen our hope of heaven; and in proportion as we abound in these graces, from a proper principle, our reward there will be great; Rev. ii. 10. Luke xix. 12, &c.

(3.) We should constantly set before us bright examples of these graces. Such examples of zeal, may be seen in Nehemiah, David, and Paul (Neh. v. 6—13. Ps. lxxix. 9. cxix. 136, 158. Rom. ix. 1—3. x. 1. 1 Cor. xv. 10.); and of courage, in the three Jewish captives, Daniel, the apostles, and the christian Jews; Dan. iii. 16, &c. vi. 10, &c. Acts v. 28, 29. xx.

22—24. xxi. 13. 2 Cor. vi. 3—10. Heb. x. 32—34. xi. 35—38. The Lord Jesus Christ is the brightest example, both of zeal, courage, and prudence; as may be seen in almost every page of the four gospels.

(4.) We should constantly pray to God for help.

(5.) To promote our prudence, the proverbs of Solomon should be frequently and attentively read.

17. As the greatest hindrance to christian courage is a strong fear of temporal evils, to weaken this fear must be of great service: what are the best methods of doing this?

(1.) We should consider the eternal sufferings of the next world, which will certainly become our miserable portion, if we commit sin in order to escape persecution; Matt. x. 28. Rev. xxi. 8.

(2.) We should endeavour to obtain and preserve a comfortable persuasion of our piety, as we shall then have that hope of heaven which will support us amidst all the opposition of our enemies; 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. 2 Tim. i. 12. Heb. x. 34. xi. 26.

(3.) We should endeavour to obtain a deep and abiding conviction, that all events are completely under the controul of God, so that no enemy can hurt us without his leave; Ps. xlv. Dan. iv. 35. Matt. x. 29—31.

(4.) We should get well acquainted with those parts of the word of God which suit our case, when we are exposed to danger on account of our religion; Ps. iii. xlv. cxxii. Isa. xl. 10—13. xliii. 1—5. li. 12, 13. liv. 17. Rev. ii. 3.

(5.) We should endeavour to live detached from the world; for the fear of losing its blessings would then affect us but little.

(6.) In times of danger, we should pray to be delivered from distressing fears; Ps. xxxiv. 4. cxxxviii. 3.

PART IV.

ON THE EXTERNAL ECONOMY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

On the Nature, &c. of a Christian Church.

1. What is meant by the word church, as used in the scriptures?

It is used to denote,

(1.) The whole number of God's people in heaven and on earth; Heb. xii. 22, 23. Eph. v. 25—27.

(2.) The collective body of professing christians throughout the world at one time; 1 Cor. x. 32. xv. 9. Eph. iii. 21.

(3.) Any particular society of professing christians; Acts xiv. 23. 1 Cor. i. 2. xi. 20.

2. Does the New Testament contain a complete set of rules for the government of christian churches, in all their minute concerns, as the Old Testament did for the Jewish church?

No; but it contains general principles, in the form of precepts and precedents, which will be found sufficiently explicit and minute.

3. What are those general principles, respecting the formation and government of christian churches, with which we are furnished by the New Testament?

(1.) Such churches should be composed of those persons only, who profess and appear, in a prevailing degree, to be possessed of faith, and all those christian graces which are connected with it, and who have also received christian baptism; Acts v. 14. 1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. i. 1. Acts ii. 41.

(2.) There should be such a number of persons thus qualified, as can conveniently assemble in one place; Act xiv. 27. 1 Cor. xi. 20. xiv. 23.

(3.) These persons should be united in church-fellowship by their own choice; Acts ii. 44, 46. v. 12, 13.

(4.) Each society should have the management of its own concerns, free from all foreign controul, except that of Christ, the Great Head of the church, to whom they should be subject in all things; Matt. xxiii. 9. Acts x. 36. Eph. v. 24.*

4. What are the principal concerns, of which each church ought, under Christ, to have the sole management?

It should,

(1.) Choose its own officers, which are bishops or pastors, and deacons; Acts vi. 3. xiv. 23.†

(2.) Exercise the power of admitting fresh members, when suitable persons are proposed for that purpose; Acts ix. 26. Rom. xiv. 1. xv. 7.

(3.) Exercise suitable discipline towards all its members, by settling disputes which may arise between any of them (1 Cor. vi. 1, 5, 6.), and excluding such as persevere in any wicked or disorderly course; 1 Cor. v. 13.

5: How should a pastor or deacon enter upon his office?

When a church has made choice of a person to fill one of these offices, he should enter upon his office, by being publicly commended to the special blessing of God. Where there is a pastor, a deacon may be set apart to his office, without any foreign assistance; but, in the setting apart of a person to the pastoral office, especially when there is no other pastor, the assistance of a few neighbouring ministers should be obtained, who, by their attendance, acknowledge the new pastor for a brother, and give their sanction to the proceedings of the church. The Jewish custom of appointing persons to office, and commending them to the special blessing of God, by imposition of hands, was followed by the apostles and others, in the appointment of officers in the christian church, though perhaps not on

* See Note 9. † See Note 10.

all occasions ; Acts vi. 6. xiii. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 14. v. 22. Acts xiv. 23.*

6. What are the qualifications for pastors and deacons ?

The qualifications for a pastor may be learnt from 1 Tim. iii. 1—7. Tit. i. 5—9 ; and for a deacon, from 1 Tim. iii. 8—10.

7. What are the duties of a christian pastor to his flock? He should,

(1.) Instruct them in every divine truth, both by preaching and other means ; 1 Tim. iii. 2. v. 17. Acts vi. 4. xx. 20, 21.

(2.) Pray for them, and with them ; Acts vi. 4. Col. i. 9. Acts xx. 36.

(3.) Administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper ; Matt. xxviii. 19. 1 Cor. x. 16.

(4.) Watch over them, and maintain scripture discipline among them ; 1 Thess. v. 12. Heb. xiii. 17.

(5.) He should set them a good example in all things ; 1 Tim. 4. 12.

8. What are the duties of a deacon ?

The word deacon denotes a servant, and the proper work of a deacon is, to assist the pastor, both in temporal and spiritual things ; Acts vi. 1—4. 1 Tim. iii. 8—10. The deacons should provide what is necessary for the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, hand the bread and wine to the communicants, receive the contributions for the minister's support, and where there are many poor members, and the alms of the church are considerable, they are the proper persons to receive and distribute them ; but where this is not the case, the pastor may easily make such distribution, when he visits his flock. The deacons are also the proper persons to take the lead, in the settling of disputes among the members, respecting property, &c. As it regards spiritual things, in the absence, sickness, or want of a pastor, it belongs to the deacons, to visit and pray with the sick members, and

* See Note 11.

others who may desire it; to pray with the church in public, and read or preach to them, as they are able; to preside at the church meetings, for the admission and separation of members; and, if agreeable to the church, to administer baptism and the Lord's supper.*

9. What are the duties of church-members to their pastor?

They should,

(1.) Regard him with high esteem, on account of his office, as being solely intended for the spiritual benefit of mankind, in connexion with the glory of God; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. 1 Tim. v. 17.

(2.) Attend as constantly as they can upon his public ministry, and, as far as practicable, comply with every suitable method of instruction, which he may think fit to employ for their spiritual benefit, or that of their families; Acts ii. 42. Heb. x. 23, 25. xiii. 17. 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. Jam. i. 21.

(3.) Cordially co-operate with him in the reception of members, and in admonishing, or expelling those who act inconsistently; and they should likewise meekly submit to the discipline of the church, which he may have to exercise towards themselves, provided that every thing be done according to the will of Christ; 1 Thess. v. 12, 14. Heb. xiii. 7.

(4.) Carefully follow his example, so far as it agrees with the precepts of the word of God, and the example of Christ; 1 Cor. xi. 1. Heb. xiii. 7.

(5.) Fervently and constantly pray for him, from the consideration of the difficulty of his work, and that God only can bless his labours to their spiritual improvement, and to the conversion of sinners; 2 Cor. ii. 16. 1 Cor. iii. 7. 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

(6.) If able, contribute to his support, in such a manner, as shall enable him to devote all his time to the work of the ministry, and yet to provide for his family in a decent manner, assist the distressed, and co-operate with others, in general plans of usefulness;

* See Note 12.

Gal vi. 6. 1 Cor. ix. 7, 13, 14. Matt. x. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 4. Rom. xii. 17. 1 Tim. iii. 2.

10. What are the duties of church-members to their deacons?

(1.) When the deacons are called to supply the minister's place, they should not despise them, but rather give them every encouragement.

(2.) When deacons are engaged in obtaining contributions for the support of the pastor, or for the poor, &c., the members should receive them kindly, contribute cheerfully, and according to their ability; and, in all pecuniary matters, give them as little trouble as possible.

(3.) They should also constantly pray for them, particularly that they may be endowed with great zeal and prudence.

11. What are the duties of church-members to each other, and to the church in general, to which they belong?

(1.) They should cherish a sincere and fervent love to each other; John xv. 12. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 John iii. 18.

(2.) They should endeavour to promote each other's spiritual improvement (1 Thess. v. 11.), by praying for and with each other (Acts i. 14.); by conversing together on divine subjects (Col. iii. 16.); and by affectionately exhorting and admonishing each other, as the case may require; Heb. iii. 13.

(3.) They should sympathize with each other in affliction, and relieve each other in distress; Rom. xii. 13, 15.

(4.) They should endeavour to maintain the peace and harmony of the church to which they belong, by discouraging all those who are of a contentious disposition (Rom xvi. 17.); by guarding against giving and taking offence (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. Eph. iv. 31. Col. iii. 12.); by receiving admonition with meekness (Ps. cxli. 5.); by a readiness to forgive injuries, and settle disputes, without going to law (Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 1, 5, 6, 7.); by exercising mutual submission (1 Pet. v. 5.); and by avoiding rash judgments, tale-bearing, and every thing which

might occasion the least unhappiness to each other ; 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 7. 2 Cor. xii. 20.

(5.) They should endeavour to maintain the purity of the church, by a mild and persevering resistance against all attempts to introduce unscriptural doctrine, especially in the essential truths of the gospel (Col. ii. 6—8. Phil. i. 27.); or to introduce any thing into public worship which would rob it of its simplicity and spirituality (1 Cor. xi. 2. Col. iii. 8.); or to introduce improper persons into the church, or retain those who ought to be expelled; Acts ix. 26. 1 Cor. v. 2, 13. And, in order that they may oppose nothing but what ought to be opposed, they should endeavour to obtain clear views of all the truths of christianity; Acts xvii. 11. Col. iii. 16.

(6.) They should endeavour to promote the increase of the church, by constant prayer to God for a blessing on the means of grace (Pa. cxxii. 6. Isa. lxii. 7. 2 Thess. iii. 1.); by using all prudent means for the conversion of sinners (Jam. v. 19, 20.); by proposing suitable persons to the pastor or deacons, for admission into the church; and by unitedly opposing any mode of admitting members which is unscripturally severe, and which therefore tends to keep back those who ought to be admitted; Gal. v. 1.

12. But if, when any subject is brought before the church, there should be a division amongst the members, how should the matter be determined?

It is generally allowed, that the majority has a right to decide any practical question which is brought forward; but 'it is sometimes expedient that the majority should decline the exercise of this right, especially in the admission of members, and the choice of a pastor. In both of these cases, it is highly desirable, for the sake of the peace and prosperity of the church, that the greatest unanimity should prevail.*

13. What may justly be required by christian churches, from those who wish to be admitted as members?

* See Note 13.

They should be required,

(1.) To possess a general knowledge of the most important truths of christianity, and of the design of church-fellowship.

(2.) To declare their faith in Christ as their only Saviour (Acts v. 14. Gal. ii. 16); that their design in seeking admission is, to promote the spiritual objects which the church has in view; viz. to partake of the Lord's supper, encourage each other in the ways of God, and maintain the truths and worship of God, in their purity, among men; and that they will meekly submit to the discipline of the church, so far as it shall appear scriptural; 2 Cor. ix. 13.

(3.) To afford satisfactory evidence, that such declarations express the real state of their minds; for if the church has reason to conclude, that the person seeking admission, either speaks wilful falsehood, or is under the power of self-deception, it is fully justified in refusing to admit him; Acts ix. 26—28.*

14. When a church-member removes to a distance, how is he to be taken into another church?

It is sufficient for this purpose, that the church which he leaves, should give him a note of recommendation; Rom. xvi. 1, 2.

15. Does the word of God afford any directions respecting the treatment of those church-members, who either offend or injure their fellow-members, or, in any other way, act inconsistently with their christian profession?

Yes.

16. Is any difference to be made between private and public offences?

Yes.

17. How should private offences be treated?

When one church-member receives a personal offence from another, or becomes acquainted with some instance of misconduct of which the other has been guilty, he should go and admonish him in a private manner; Matt. xviii. 15.

* See Note 14.

18. Are church-members bound in duty, to admonish each other ?

It is a duty from which nothing can discharge them; because it is plainly commanded in the word of God (Lev. xix. 17. Heb. iii. 13.), and is likely to prove beneficial to both parties.

19. When is our Saviour's rule respecting private offences broken ?

When the offended person goes to his brother, but instead of going to him *first*, previously mentions the offence to others; or, when one church-member hears of something objectionable in the conduct of a brother, and, instead of going directly to him, makes inquiry about the matter in a circuitous manner, and by this means makes it public.

20. What are the evils which result from such conduct ?

(1.) " Though those to whom we communicate the ground of our offence, should have the prudence not to mention it to others, it is apt to excite in their minds a certain degree of prejudice against the offender. This tends at least to weaken their love to him, if it should do nothing more; and thus proves injurious to their own minds."

(2.) " If, as frequently happens, it should come to the ears of the individual who has offended us, that we have been speaking of his conduct to others, before we came to himself, it throws a great obstacle in the way of reconciliation. We come as the party offended to him, conceiving that we have nothing to do but receive satisfaction. He, on the other hand, feels himself aggrieved by our conduct, and considers himself, though originally perhaps in the wrong, as entitled to some acknowledgment of our impropriety. When such cases happen, unless there is a great readiness, mutually to acknowledge whatever is blamable, confidence and cordiality cannot easily be restored."

21. What are the rules to be observed in giving reproof, either to church-members or others ?

(1.) We should reprove with mildness and affection.

(2.) We should use great prudence respecting the time, place, and every circumstance, which can either hinder or promote the success of our reproof.

(3.) Reproof for a personal offence should be given with great meekness; and in order to this, we should endeavour to look upon the offence in as favourable a light as possible. We may indeed easily go too far, in justifying the conduct of a christian brother, when it does not directly injure us; but perhaps it is not possible to go too far, in endeavouring to mitigate, in our own minds, what appears to us a personal injury.

22. How should a person act who is thus dealt with by a fellow-member?

He should, if guilty, frankly and humbly acknowledge his fault, and not attempt to evade the charge, or to advance some countercharge against his accuser, in order to excuse or lessen his own fault; and, if it is a personal offence, he should immediately make reasonable satisfaction. "And if he is not guilty, he should employ every means in his power, to satisfy his brother of his innocence, and to remove all unfavourable impressions."

23. But what must be done, should he refuse, either to acknowledge his fault, or to employ suitable means, in order to prove his innocence?

In this case, the person who gave the reproof "must take with him one or two of his fellow-members (Matt. xviii. 16.), who must endeavour to obtain all needful information respecting the case; treat each party with christian kindness; guard against partiality; and endeavour to procure every concession and explanation which may be requisite to restore peace," and christian affection. If the case requires it, both should be exhorted to make suitable concessions. The persons called in on these occasions, should be distinguished for wisdom, gentleness, unblamable character, and also above all suspicion of partiality to the offended person; for, unless they are persons of this description, their assistance will seldom be of much use.

24. But should their united efforts prove unsuccessful, what course must then be taken?

The matter must then be brought before the church; and the offender must be solemnly reproved before his fellow-members, and required to acknowledge his offence, and also to make reasonable satisfaction, if it is a personal offence; and should he refuse, after being allowed a suitable time for reflecting on the subject, he must be excommunicated; Matt. xviii. 17.

25. How should public offences be treated?

If the offence is known to only two or three church-members, it is perhaps the most proper for them to unite in admonishing the offender; but if the offence is so public as to be generally known and spoken of, the reproof ought to be given before the church; 1 Thess. v. 14. 1 Tim. v. 20.

26. But should this public reproof fail in producing its proper effect, what must be done?

A second reproof must be given; and should this prove unsuccessful, the person must be excommunicated; Tit. iii. 10, 11.

27. But are there not some cases, which require a church to excommunicate the guilty person immediately?

If the person, instead of having merely fallen into sin, through the force of a sudden or powerful temptation, has lived in the practice of some scandalous sin, and his conduct is become notorious, he ought to be expelled from the church immediately, with no other reproof than that which accompanies the separation; Gal. vi. 1. 1 Cor. v. 1—5, 11—13.

28. What cautions ought to be observed, respecting offences which are brought before the church?

No subject should be allowed to come before the church, unless it admits of being distinctly stated, together with all its material circumstances. These particulars should also be communicated to the person accused, and sufficient time should be allowed him for preparing a defence, should he be disposed to make the attempt.

29. What cautions should churches observe, in order to come to a just decision on any case of discipline which is brought before them?

They should always act in strict agreement with the scripture maxim, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established;" Dent. xvii. 6. Matt. xviii. 16. According to this rule, should a case occur in which one member has full proof, that another member has done some sinful action; yet, if he has no evidence to offer except his own declaration, and the other should flatly contradict him, the church cannot lawfully proceed against the offender. The same rule applies in all personal offences which are known only to the two individuals concerned.

30. Should such a case occur in any church, is the individual who is fully satisfied of the criminality of the person he accuses, at liberty to withdraw from the church, because it will not proceed against the offender?

No; for no person has a right to leave a society which he views as a church of Christ, unless he discovers something in the conduct of its members as a body, which he has reason to condemn, and which notwithstanding all his remonstrances they will not correct; but a church is not blamable, for not excluding those, against whom sufficient evidence of their criminality cannot be brought forward.

31. How should a church act towards one whom it has excommunicated?

(1.) He should be excluded from the Lord's table, and from all religious fellowship with the church; but, in common with others, he is at liberty to attend its ordinary meetings for prayer and preaching; 1 Cor. v. 5—8.

(2.) All familiar intercourse with him should be suspended (Matt. xviii. 17. 1 Cor. v. 11.); and yet, so long as there is any hope of success, every proper means should be used to restore him.

32. What are the principal benefits, which christian churches derive, from a proper attention to discipline?

(1.) By this means, christian churches are rendered more pure; inasmuch as unsuitable persons will seldom venture to join them, and unworthy members will, generally, either be expelled, or retire of their own accord.

(2.) It is the way to preserve brotherly love amongst the members; because it removes those offences which obstruct that love.

(3.) It is the best method for recovering the backslider from his evil way; 1 Cor. v. 4, 5.

(4.) It powerfully tends to preserve the other members from falling into sin; 1 Tim. v. 20.

(5.) It tends to preserve the character of the church unblemished in the eyes of mankind, and consequently to promote their salvation, by impressing them with the reality, nature, and importance of religion; Matt. v. 16.

33. How should one christian church act towards other churches of the same description?

It should cheerfully receive their members, when properly recommended (Rom. xvi. 1, 2.); maintain friendly intercourse with them (Col. iv. 15, 16.); afford them pecuniary aid in seasons of distress (2 Cor. viii. 1—4, 7.); assist them in supporting their ministers, if requisite (Phil. iv. 15, 16.); and unite with them in public exertions for the promotion of religion, at home and abroad.

34. How should the members of a christian church act towards persons connected with christian communities which are not of the same description?

They should beware of prejudice, in judging and speaking of their character and exertions (Mark ix. 38—40.); regard with christian affection all those who appear to be truly pious (Gal. vi. 15, 16.); administer to their relief in times of distress (Acts xi. 29, 30.); and cordially unite with them in plans of general usefulness, where no sacrifice of principle is required.*

* See Note 15.

CHAPTER II.

On Baptism.

1. What are the two holy ordinances which Christ has instituted to be observed by his followers?

Baptism and the Lord's supper; Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xiv. 22—24. 1 Cor. xi. 23—25.

2. What is baptism?

It is that ordinance in which, by the application of water to the baptized person, in order to signify the necessity of his being purified from guilt and depravity, he is dedicated to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

3. Are not baptized persons placed under particular obligations?

Yes; every person who receives christian baptism is bound to regard each of the sacred Three, according to his peculiar character and work, and to receive and act according to that system of doctrines and precepts which the Triune God has revealed.

4. How should baptism be administered?

Either by dipping, plunging, pouring, or sprinkling; John xiii. 26. 1 Cor. x. 2. Dan. iv. 33. Heb. ix. 10.†

5. Who are the proper subjects of christian baptism?

Adult believers (Acts ii. 38. viii. 37.), and also infants, especially the infants of believing parents.

6. How do you prove, that the infants of believing parents are proper subjects of baptism?

From the nature of the covenant which God made with Abraham, from the practice of the apostles as recorded in the New Testament, and from the testimony of christian writers, in the early ages of the church.

7. What evidence does the covenant made with Abraham afford for the baptism of the infants of believers?

* See Note 16. † See Note 17.

In this covenant, Jehovah engages to be the God of Abraham, and of his seed, to bless and save them; and requires them to be his people, to love and serve him; Gen. xvii. 7, 10—14. This covenant was renewed with the Israelites under Moses (Deut. xxvi. 7. xxix. 9—15.); and it is the same covenant which is made with the church under the christian dispensation; Jer. xxxi. 31—34, compared with Heb. viii. 7—13. Acts ii. 38, 39. The covenant made with Abraham required him to be circumcised, and all his male descendants through successive generations were to be circumcised when eight days old (Gen. xvii. 11, 12.); and as it is the same covenant which is made with the church under the christian dispensation, circumcision must still be required, as it respects infants, unless it can be proved that God has substituted baptism for it. That circumcision is not *now* required of those converted from heathenism, is evident from Acts xv. 24—29; and that baptism was intended to be a substitute for it, is evident from Acts ii. 38, 39. Matt. xxviii. 19.*

8. What evidence does the practice of the apostles, as recorded in the New Testament, afford for the baptism of the infants of believers?

In the Acts of the apostles we are informed, that Lydia was baptized and her household (Acts xvi. 15.), and that the jailor was baptized and all his (Acts xvi. 33.); and Paul tells us, that he baptized the household of Stephanas; 1 Cor. i. 16.†

9. What evidence does the testimony of christian writers, in the early ages of the church, afford for the baptism of the infants of believers?

“Ireneus, who lived in the second century, and was well acquainted with Policarp, who was John’s disciple, declares expressly, that the church learned from the apostles to baptize children. Origen, in the third century, affirmed, that the custom of baptizing infants was received from Christ and his apostles. Cyprian

* See Note 18. † See Note 19.

and a council of ministers (held about the year 254), no less than sixty six in number, unanimously agreed, that children might be baptized as soon as they were born. Ambrose, who wrote about 274 years from the time of the apostles, declares, that the baptism of infants had been the practice of the apostles themselves, and of the church till his time. The catholic church every where declared, says Chrysostom, in the fifth century, that infants should be baptized; and Augustine affirmed, that he never heard nor read of any christian, catholic or sectarian, but who always held that infants were to be baptized.”*

10. What evidence can you adduce for the baptism of infants in general?

As all the Jews, independent of their piety, or particular profession of piety, were required to circumcise their children when eight days old, it may be presumed, that whenever a country becomes a christian country, by renouncing every other religion for that of Christ, baptism ought to be administered to infants in general, when the parents request it.

11. Is the salvation of children endangered by their dying before they are baptized?

No; for baptism is now required instead of circumcision, and as circumcision was not performed upon a child till it was eight days old (Gen. xvii. 12.), David's child must have died uncircumcised, and yet he speaks of it as gone to a place of happiness; 2 Sam. xii. 18, 23.

12. What improvement should those who are grown up, make of the ordinance of baptism, when administered in their presence?

Whenever they see a child dedicated to God in baptism, it should lead them to dedicate themselves to God afresh; and as baptism is a symbol of purification from actual sin, in pardon, through the blood of Christ, and from inward depravity, by the Holy Spirit, they should examine whether they have obtained these blessings; and if not, they should seek them, in the use of prayer, and other means of grace.

* See Note 20.

CHAPTER III.

On the Lord's Supper.

1. What is meant by the Lord's supper ?

It is that ordinance of Christ, in which bread is broken and eaten, and wine is poured out and drunk, in remembrance of his death ; Matt. xxvi. 26—28. 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.*

2. What does the broken bread signify ?

The body of Christ, which was wounded, put to great torture, and which suffered death for us ; 1 Cor. xi. 24.

3. What does the wine signify ?

The blood of Christ, which was shed for our sins ; Matt. xxvi. 28.

4. Why must the bread be eaten, and the wine drunk ?

To represent the method by which we become partakers of the blessings of the gospel, viz. by faith in Christ.

5. In what respects is the Lord's supper intended to preserve the remembrance of Christ's death ?

It is intended to preserve the remembrance of the love displayed in it, and of its design, which was to make an atonement for sin.

6. But while the principal design of the Lord's supper is to preserve the remembrance of his death, does it not also answer several other important purposes ?

Yes ; for,

(1.) It is the medium of our communion with Christ, by faith and love, and by a participation of the blessings of his salvation ; 1 Cor. x. 16.

(2.) It is a token of mutual affection among professing christians ; 1 Cor. x. 17.

* See Note 21.

(3.) It is a means by which the disciples of Christ make a public profession of religion, which is the duty of every christian; Matt. x. 32, 33. Luke xii. 8, 9.

(4.) It represents the happiness of heaven; Luke xxii. 18.

7. Who are the persons that are authorized to partake of this ordinance?

(1.) As the principal design of this ordinance is, to preserve the remembrance of the love displayed in the death of Christ, and of the atonement made by it, those who partake of it, should be distinguished by genuine faith in Christ, and sincere love to him.

(2.) As this ordinance is a pledge of mutual affection among professing christians, those who partake of it should give satisfactory evidence of their piety; for if there is no evidence of piety in the person who wishes to attend this ordinance, those who are pious cannot view him as a brother, nor cherish that brotherly love towards him, which ought to be powerfully felt at the Lord's supper.

8. What preparation is necessary to our attending the Lord's supper in a proper manner?

(1.) There should be an habitual preparation, which consists in having the proper qualifications, viz. faith in Christ, love to him, and visible piety.

(2.) There should be an actual preparation, which consists in having a suitable frame of mind when we attend this ordinance. When we are at the Lord's table, our minds should be the seat of deep humility, of lively faith in Christ, and of ardent love to him; of strong feelings of brotherly love to our fellow-members, and of love to all mankind: and therefore, actual preparation must consist, in having a state of mind strongly disposed to the exercise of these graces. In order to cultivate such a state of mind, we should read suitable hymns, and portions of other suitable books, meditate seriously upon them, and also upon the death of Christ, and our own sinfulness and demerit; and we should pray that our hearts may be duly affected with these important subjects.

9. Ought we not when attending the Lord's supper, to form fresh resolutions respecting our future conduct?

Yes ; for "all obedience is, to a great extent, dependant for its existence, continuance, and vigour, on the resolutions of him who obeys. Such resolutions are stations, whence our obedience sets out ; guides, by which its course is directed ; remembrancers, which warn us of our sloth, wanderings, and backslidings ; and powerful excitements to diligence and faithfulness in our duty. A solemn resolution is, perhaps always, given up with reluctance. A resolution often renewed, and rendered habitual, is hardly given up at all. But the Lord's supper both requires, and enables us, to form resolutions of obedience to his commands, with a power which may be pronounced singular. We here form them at the foot of the cross ; by the side of our expiring Redeemer ; in the full prospect of his last agonies ; and with the strongest conviction of the immeasurable love which induced him to undergo them. Here therefore our resolutions will be solemn, ardent, firm, and faithful."

10. When may a person be said to partake of the Lord's supper unworthily ?

(1.) The Corinthians appear to have done this, by partaking of it as if it was a common feast, instead of viewing it as a sacred ordinance ; 1 Cor. xi. 20—22.

(2.) It is done by those who are satisfied with the mere act of partaking of it, without regarding the bread and wine as representing the sufferings and death of Christ as an atonement for sin ; 1 Cor. xi. 29.

(3.) By those who rely for salvation on their own act of partaking of it, instead of relying on that Saviour whom this ordinance sets before us.

(4.) By those who partake of it without habitual preparation ; and also by those who partake of it without actual preparation ; but actual preparation admits of degrees, and no christian has his mind so well prepared as he ought, when attending the Lord's supper. This consideration should always keep him humble, but should not be allowed to distress him.*

* See Note 22.

11. How often should this ordinance be administered?

How often it should be observed, cannot be precisely ascertained from scripture; though it is evident, both from reason and scripture, that it should be administered frequently; 1 Cor. xi. 26.

12. Is it necessary that this ordinance should be observed in the evening?

No; for, though the passover, which Christ and his apostles had been observing just before he instituted this ordinance, was always kept in the evening, because the deliverance of the Israelites from the sword of the destroying angel in Egypt, which it commemorated, took place in the evening; yet, as the death of Christ for our redemption, took place before the evening came on, it is quite as proper to observe the Lord's supper at an earlier part of the day. The Saviour's crucifixion commenced about nine o'clock in the morning, and he expired soon after three in the afternoon; Mark xv. 25, 34—37.

13. What are the motives to induce christians to a regular attendance upon this ordinance?

The due observance of this institution is,

(1.) Pleasing to God and Christ. This is evident from Christ's having commanded it (Luke xxii. 19.); and likewise from the consideration, that it honours God and Christ, by the pious feelings to which it gives rise, and also by the public testimony which it bears to the truth and importance of the gospel, and the obligation of mankind to embrace it.

(2.) Beneficial to those who adopt it. At the Lord's table their drooping graces are revived, and their doubts removed. Now they are sure that they do trust in Christ, and that they do love him and hate all sin, and therefore are enabled to cherish the delightful hope of spending a happy eternity with Christ in heaven.

(3.) Eminently calculated to benefit those who witness the administration of this ordinance; by leading them to reflect upon their sinful and lost condition, the amazing love of Christ, the atonement he has made,

the necessity of faith in him; and their obligation to devote themselves to his service, and make a public profession of religion. These considerations should induce those who hear the gospel, to attend as spectators at the administration of this ordinance.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Christian Sabbath.

1. What is meant by the word sabbath?

It signifies rest, and when applied to the weekly sabbath, it denotes that day of rest which occurs once in seven days.

2. Is such a weekly sabbath required?

Yes; Exod. xvi. 23. xx. 10.

3. When was the sabbath instituted?

Immediately after the creation; Gen. ii. 2, 3.

4. What is meant by God's sanctifying the sabbath day?

It signifies his setting it apart as a day of religious worship.

5. Is the sabbath of perpetual obligation, or was it binding only upon the Israelites till Christ came?

It is of lasting obligation, as appears,

(1.) From its original institution. It was instituted in paradise, and so had no more reference to the Israelites than to the rest of Adam's posterity; but is binding upon all, through all ages, unless it has been repealed by God; but no proof of this can be brought forward.

(2.) From its having a place among the ten commandments, which are acknowledged to be of lasting obligation.

(3.) From its being of equal importance in all ages. The particular design of the sabbath was, to promote the knowledge and worship of God, and the practice of every duty; and to secure these objects it will always be found indispensable.

(4.) From Ps. cxviii. 24. Isa. lvi. 6—8, which refer to gospel times, when the Jewish dispensation had ceased.*

6. But admitting that the sabbath is of perpetual obligation, why have christians transferred it from the seventh day of the week to the first?

They have sufficient evidence to conclude, that it is the will of God that this alteration should be made, though they are not favoured with any express declaration on the subject.

7. From what does this evidence arise?

(1.) From the example of Christ after his resurrection. He rose on the first day of the week, and in the evening of the same day he appeared among the disciples when assembled for prayer. In the evening of the succeeding first day of the week he repeated his visit (John xx. 19. 26.); and it is probable that he continued this practice till he ascended to heaven.

(2.) From the example of the apostles and the primitive churches; John xx. 19, 26. Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. From the last passage it is evident, that all the churches of Asia, as well as the church at Corinth, observed the first day of the week as the christian sabbath, which must have arisen from the example and instruction of the apostles.

(3.) From the first day of the week being called the Lord's day; Rev. i. 10. That this phrase refers to the first day of the week, will not be questioned; and if this day is called the Lord's day, it plainly intimates, that our Lord had appointed it to be the sabbath day to all his followers.

(4.) From God's having from the beginning remarkably blessed this day to the good of souls. The day of pentecost, when the preaching of Peter was so remarkably blessed (Acts ii. 41.), was the first day of the week, as appears from Lev. xxiii. 15, 16.; and it is certain, that the christian sabbath has been the principal means of promoting true religion amongst

* See Note 23.

mankind, from the time of the apostles to the present day.

8. How should the sabbath day be spent?

The sabbath is called a holy sabbath, or rest (Exod. xiii. 23.); which shews that we should diligently employ the whole day in the worship of God, and in promoting christian knowledge and piety, in ourselves and others.

9. Should not the greatest part of the sabbath day be spent in public worship?

Yes; for the sabbath must have been given with this design, as by requiring all to abstain from labour on the same day, it affords them full opportunity of spending the whole day in this manner.

10. What is requisite to a profitable attendance on public worship?

The rules to be adopted for this purpose, regard our conduct before we attend public worship, while engaged in it, and after we retire from it.

11. What are the rules to be adopted before we enter on public worship?

(1.) We should keep the proper end in view, which is to honour God, and increase our knowledge and piety.

(2.) Our attendance should be early and regular.

(3.) The state of mind with which we attend should be collected, serious, and devout.

12. How should we act during the time of public worship?

(1.) We should steadily resist all intruding thoughts.

(2.) We should engage in the exercises of prayer and praise, with seriousness, sincerity, and fervour; and we should listen to the word of God with attention and seriousness.

13. How should we act when we retire from public worship?

(1.) We should guard against every thing which might weaken the impressions that have been made upon our minds.

(2.) We should meditate on what we have been engaged in, and pray for a blessing upon it.

(3.) When opportunity is afforded, we should make it the subject of serious conversation.*

14. Is it not wrong to make the sabbath day either a day of pleasure, or of business?

Yes; Isa. lviii. 13. Exod. xx. 9, 10.

15. How is the sabbath most commonly broken in these respects?

(1.) By walking or riding merely for amusement.†

(2.) By spending all or any part of the day in visiting.

(3.) By travelling, and by writing letters of friendship, or business, when there is no necessity.

(4.) By reading books, &c., which are not religious; as histories, books of travels, newspapers, &c. And even books on religious subjects, which are merely controversial, or which abound in abstruse discussions, are not very suitable to the sabbath day, as they have very little tendency to excite devotional feelings.

(5.) By posting accounts, making bargains, and receiving or paying money, either in trade or as wages.

(6.) By sabbath funerals. These cannot be justified, except in cases of necessity; and when it is considered, that they generally keep great numbers of people from public worship, they must be allowed to be serious evils.

(7.) By removing cattle to fresh pastures, examining crops, going with servants and labourers to give directions about work to be done, and making bargains with the latter respecting it.

16. Are we not also required to refrain from worldly thoughts and language on the sabbath day?

Yes (Isa. lviii. 13); and in order to avoid these evils, we should keep as much as possible from worldly society, and set a strict guard upon ourselves, even when in the company of pious people.

17. But may nothing of a worldly nature be done on the sabbath day?

Yes; works of necessity may be done; such as fleeing from, or defending ourselves against, an enemy;

* See Note 24.

† See Note 25.

quenching fires; working ships at sea (but weighing anchor from harbour cannot be justified, except on extraordinary occasions); preparing provision, when done in the most expeditious way; preparing medicines for the sick, and attending upon them; taking care of young children, and of aged persons who cannot be left with safety; feeding cattle, and rescuing them from danger; with other things of a similar kind; Luke vi. 1, &c. Matt. xii. 10—13. Luke xiii. 15, 16.

18. But ought we not to use some caution in attending to works of necessity?

Yes; we should spend as little time in them as possible, and endeavour, as far as such engagements will admit, to have our minds employed about divine things.

19. Is it allowable, in bad seasons, to plow and sow the ground, or to reap its produce, on the sabbath day?

No; for such conduct is a practical denial of the truth of God (Gen. viii. 22.), and is also expressly forbidden by God (Exod. xxxiv. 21.); but if hay or corn is in danger of being destroyed by a sudden overflow of water, it is lawful to remove it.

20. What general directions should we observe, in order to keep the sabbath in a proper manner?

(1.) We should exercise foresight, in order to have all our worldly business finished before the sabbath arrives.

(2.) We should anticipate the sabbath, by studying to have our minds prepared for its solemn engagements.

(3.) We should endeavour to make the most of the sabbath, by a proper attention to reading, meditation, and prayer at home, as well as by attending the house of God.

(4.) We should strictly examine ourselves at the close of the sabbath, to see how we have spent it.

(5.) We should endeavour to carry the impressions of the sabbath through the week.

21. What are the motives to induce us to observe the christian sabbath in a proper manner?

(1.) Such conduct is pleasing to God; as is evident from his requiring it, and also from the glory which is

thereby given to him, in the public and private devotions of his people.

(2.) It is beneficial to ourselves; by promoting our knowledge, holiness, and happiness; by securing to us the divine blessing in different ways (Isa. lviii. 14. Jer. xvii. 24—27.); and by preserving us from those temptations, by which many have been led into a course of sin, and at length brought to an ignominious death.

(3.) It is beneficial to others who witness our conduct; by continually reminding them of the important concerns of religion, and inducing great numbers to attend public worship, which is rendered effectual to the conversion of many, and serves to keep others from gross impiety and immorality.

CHAPTER V.

On Prayer.

SECTION I. — *On Secret Prayer.*

1. What is prayer?

It is the offering up of our desires to God, for some blessing of which we feel our need.

2. But prayer is generally used in a more comprehensive sense: when this is the case, what are the different parts of it?

Adoration, or an acknowledgment of the existence and attributes of God, as his eternity, unchangeableness, &c.; confession, or an acknowledgment of our ignorance, sinfulness, and helplessness; supplication or petition, in which we intreat a supply of all suitable blessings, both for the body and the soul; intercession, in which we intreat for blessings in behalf of others, whether individuals, families, towns, churches, the nation, or the world; and thanksgiving, in which we express our gratitude for all the mercies that we have received.

3. In what manner should we pray?

(1.) It should be for things which God is willing to bestow. According to this rule, we may pray for whatever God has promised, or commanded; and also to be kept from whatever he has forbidden. We may likewise pray for a suitable supply of temporal blessings; but whenever we pray for any particular temporal blessing, it should be with submission to the will of God; Matt. vi. 11. xxvi. 39.

(2.) With great seriousness.

(3.) With the greatest sincerity. In adoration, confession, &c., there should be a strict agreement between the feelings of our hearts, and the language of our lips.

(4.) With fixedness of mind, in opposition to wandering.

(5.) In the name of Christ; that is, pleading his blood as the only ground of our hope; John xvi. 23.

(6.) With faith, or confidence in God, that he will hear us, according to his promise; Matt. vii. 7. xxi. 22.

4. What means should we adopt, in order that secret prayer may be offered up in this manner?

We should endeavour to know our own particular wants and sins, and in general, we should read a few verses of scripture, and meditate upon them, and it may be well to read also a few verses of a suitable hymn.

5. What are our obligations to practise secret prayer?

(1.) We have our Saviour's command; Matt. vi. 6.

(2.) We have the example of eminent saints, as Jacob, David, Daniel, &c.; and also of Christ himself; Matt. xiv. 23. Luke v. 16. Mark i. 35.

(3.) Each person has particular sins to confess, and particular blessings to intreat, which he cannot do except in secret.

6. How often should we pray to God in secret?

We have no express command on this subject. David and Daniel prayed three times a day (Ps. lv. 17. Dan. vi. 10.); and every person ought to pray at

least twice a day. Morning and evening suggest themselves to every person of reflection as suitable times for this exercise.

7. What are the advantages to be derived from secret prayer?

Secret prayer, in common with other kinds of prayer, is the means by which we obtain blessings from God adapted to our wants; and it has also in itself a beneficial tendency.

8. In what respects has it a beneficial tendency?

It is eminently calculated,

(1.) To give us a deep impression of our sinfulness, demerit, and helplessness; by leading us to speak on these subjects before the supreme Being, against whom we have sinned, and who is perfectly acquainted with our character and situation.

(2.) To draw forth our love, reverence, humility, confidence, and submission; and also to quicken our consciences, and thus excite us to diligence in duty, and circumspection in avoiding sin, by the near view which it gives us of God, in all his glorious attributes.

SECTION II.—*On Family Prayer.*

1. How do you prove family prayer to be a duty?

(1.) From reason. As families, we receive many mercies, and feel many wants; and therefore, as families, we should daily assemble to present our thanksgivings and petitions to God.

(2.) From scripture declarations; Josh. xxiv. 15. 2 Sam. vi. 20. Gen. xviii. 19. Eph. vi. 18. Heb. x. 25.*

2. What means should a person use, in order that he may be able to pray in his family in a proper manner?

He should endeavour to obtain a familiar acquaintance with scripture language, and with scripture

* See Note 26.

truths in general, and also with the state of his family; and diligently cultivate personal religion.*

3. What general directions should be attended to, in order that family prayer may be well conducted?

(1.) It should take place at stated times in the morning and evening, and where there are children, the hour of assembling in the evening should be early.

(2.) The whole family should be present, if possible.

(3.) In general, the scriptures should be read, and it is well to sing a psalm or hymn, when this can be done.

(4.) The prayer should be simple, in order that it may be adapted to the comprehension of children and servants; and likewise short, lest they should become weary.†

(5.) The practice of the person who conducts family worship, should be suitable to his instructions and prayers; otherwise an injurious, instead of a beneficial impression, will be made upon the irreligious part of the family.

4. What are the advantages which attend family worship?

(1.) It promotes domestic order, by calling the family together, at stated times, morning and evening.

(2.) It strengthens parental government, by inspiring the children with a greater degree of reverence for him who conducts family worship.

(3.) It powerfully tends to promote religion amongst the children and servants, and other members of the family.

(4.) It may be expected to draw down the blessing of God upon the family, both as it regards temporal and spiritual things.

* See Note 24.

† See Note 25.

PART V.

ON THE PROSPECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

1. WHAT are the principal motives to induce men sincerely to embrace the christian religion ?

The certainty of death, the strictness of the final judgment, and the important result of both, in a happy or miserable eternity, according as we have embraced or rejected christianity ; Acts xvii. 30, 31. Rom. ii. 5. Heb. ii. 2, 3. 2 Thess. i. 7—9.

2. Is a mere assent to the truths of christianity, and an attendance upon its public ordinances, sufficient to deliver us from eternal misery, and bring us to eternal happiness ?

No ; it must be such a faith in Christ as is connected with love to God and man, and the practice of every christian duty ; Gal. v. 6. Jam. ii. 26.

3. How should we act in order that these motives may have this influence upon us ?

We should frequently and seriously meditate upon them, and earnestly pray to God to render them efficacious.

4. What is death ?

It is the cessation of action in the animal functions of our nature, when the body becomes cold, and is soon reduced to corruption and dust, and the soul deserts it, and enters on a new state of existence.

5. Will death thus come upon all mankind ?

Yes ; Heb. ix. 27. Rom. v. 12.

6. Why does death thus come upon mankind ?

On account of sin ; Gen. iii. 17—19. Rom. v. 12.

7. Is any thing known respecting the time of its coming ?

God has determined the time, as it respects each individual (Job. vii. 1. xiv. 14.) ; at the longest it will

come soon (Ps. xc. 10.), and it may come much sooner than we expect. We have no certainty that it will not come the next day, the next hour, or even the next moment. This is evident, both from scripture (Matt. xxiv. 44.), and also from the sudden deaths which are continually taking place.

8. What effect has death upon our connexion with the present world?

It terminates,

(1.) All our worldly projects and affairs; Ps. cxlvi. 4.

(2.) Our worldly condition, whether prosperous or adverse; Luke xii. 18, &c. Job iii. 17—19.

(3.) All the seasons of divine grace; Luke xvi. 26, &c. xix. 42. 2 Cor. vi. 2.

(4.) All our opportunities of promoting the cause of God, and the welfare of mankind; Eccl. ix. 10. John, ix. 4.

9. Does the soul at death immediately depart to a state of happiness or misery?

Yes; Luke xvi. 22, 23. xxiii. 43. Acts vii. 59. 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 23.

10. What effect should these views of death have upon us?

(1.) Will death come upon us all, and reduce our bodies to corruption? This consideration should lead us to check every tendency to pride, prevent undue concern for the body, and moderate our confidence and fear, in reference to any human being; Ps. cxlvi. 3, 4.

(2.) Does the time of our death fall under the determination of God? This should lead good men to suppress all inordinate fear of sudden death; and men in general, to restrain all repining thoughts at the death of relatives or friends; and to beware of indulging in sin, lest they should provoke God to take them away by sudden death.

(3.) Does it terminate all our worldly projects and affairs? This should moderate our estimate of their importance, and our eagerness in the pursuit of them.

(4.) Does it terminate all our worldly enjoyments and sufferings? Then let christians increasingly seek their happiness in divine things, and bear their sufferings with patience.

(5.) Does it terminate our time of probation, and have we no security against it for an hour or a moment? Then all should immediately prepare for it, by embracing the gospel; Matt. xxiv. 44. Acts xvi. 30, 31.

(6.) Does it terminate all our opportunities of promoting the cause of Christ, and the welfare of mankind? Then we should improve the present time, with the greatest diligence; Eccl. ix. 10. John ix. 4.

* 11. As the body is a part of our nature, and the instrument of the soul in doing good or evil, it seems proper that it should share with the soul in its future happiness or misery: will this be the case?

Yes; and for this purpose, the bodies of all mankind will be raised from the dead, and be again united to their souls.*

12. How do you prove that there will be a general resurrection?

From Dan. xii. 2. John v. 28, 29. Acts iv. 2. 1 Cor. xv.

13. When will the resurrection of the dead take place?

At the last day, or when the world is just about to end; John xi. 24.

14. What will be done respecting those who shall then be living?

Their bodies will undergo a surprising change. This will especially be the case with the people of God, in order to fit them for heaven; 1 Cor. xv. 52.

15. Will the bodies of the righteous, after the resurrection, be any way superior to what they were previous to their death?

Yes; for,

(1.) They will be incorruptible, or incapable of decay or death; 1 Cor. xv. 42.

(2.) Glorious, or remarkably bright and splendid in their appearance; 1 Cor. xv. 43. Phil. iii. 21, compared with Matt. xvii. 2. and Rev. i. 9, &c. There will be a

diversity of glory in the bodies of the saints, perhaps according to their previous degrees of piety; 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42.

(3.) Powerful; 1 Cor. xv. 43.

(4.) Spiritual; 1 Cor. xv. 44.*

16. What will immediately follow the general resurrection?

The general judgment, when the doom of all mankind, and likewise of the fallen angels, will be finally fixed; Rom. xiv. 12. 2 Cor. v. 10. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude vi. Rev. xx. 12.†

17. Who will be the judge?

Jesus Christ; Acts xvii. 30, 31. 2 Cor. v. 10, 11.

18. What are his qualifications for this important office?

Christ, being God as well as man, possesses every qualification in the highest degree. Earthly judges often fail in administering justice, for want of a correct knowledge of the case brought before them; but Christ is well acquainted with every person, and with all his actions, and all their circumstances. Earthly judges sometimes fail for want of power; they cannot bring the criminal to punishment, or they are prevented from making the attempt, by the dread of consequences; but Christ being Almighty can with infinite ease, punish sinners according to their desert, however powerful or numerous they may be. Judges have too often failed for want of a firm regard to justice. Hence, they have passed judgment in favour of their friends, of the rich, or of those who have bribed them; and have condemned the poor, or those whom they disliked for their religion, politics, &c.: but Christ has an inviolable regard to what is right (Heb. i. 8, 9.); and consequently all his decisions will be just, without the smallest partiality or prejudice.

19. How will Christ make his appearance at the day of judgment?

In a most glorious manner; Matt. xxiv. 30, 31. Rev. i. 7.

* See Note 30.—† See Note 31.

20. Will the righteous be judged before the wicked?

Paul informs us, that the righteous will judge both men and angels (1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.), which can only mean, that they will unite with Christ in the judgment, which he will pass on wicked men, and the fallen angels; and if they do this, they must have been previously tried and acquitted themselves.

21. Who will be the witnesses against the wicked at the day of judgment?

Christ, as omniscient, will be a witness; their own consciences will be witnesses; and also their righteous neighbours and acquaintance, their wicked companions, and Satan himself.

22. What will be the rule of judgment?

The law of God, and the gospel. The law, as requiring perfect love to God, and sincere love to man, and the discharge of every duty to both, is the proper rule of judgment. If tried by this rule, all would be condemned, for all have sinned; Gal. iii. 10. Jam. ii. 10. The gospel finds us in a state of depravity and condemnation, and proposes to pardon, sanctify, and eternally save, all who believe in Christ. Consequently, in the day of judgment, the great inquiry will be, whether we have believed in Christ, so as to become pre-eminently holy; Gal. v. 6. 1 John v. 4. If we have, we shall be considered as believers, and so shall be acquitted; but if not, we shall be condemned. And as the only appointed way of escaping the curse of the law, is to embrace the gospel, all who wilfully reject it, must be tried simply by the law; and as they have broken the law in unnumbered instances, their condemnation is inevitable.

23. What will be the immediate consequence of the day of judgment?

The bodies of all mankind being again united to their souls, the righteous will immediately ascend to heaven, and the wicked be driven down to hell; Matt. xxv. 46.

24. What does the Bible teach us respecting the state of the wicked in hell?

The Bible generally speaks of both heaven and hell in figurative language, from which we may learn the perfect bliss of the former, and the extreme misery of the latter.

25. What are the figurative terms by which hell is described ?

It is called,

(1.) Outer darkness, and the blackness of darkness ; Matt. viii. 12. Jude 13.

(2.) A furnace of fire, a lake of fire, and the fire prepared for the devil and his angels ; Matt. xiii. 42. Rev. xix. 20. Matt. xxv. 41.

(3.) Death ; Rom. vi. 23. Rev. xxi. 8.

(4.) The wrath of God ; Rom. i. 13.

26. But may we not also learn something respecting the misery of the wicked in hell, from the nature and operations of the soul ?

Yes ; we may learn, that their misery will consist in part,

(1.) Of remorse of conscience. The soul will always have before it a view of all its sins, with all their aggravations, as being committed against knowledge, warnings, God's boundless goodness, and its own resolutions.

(2.) Of a deep sense of their amazing folly ; in knowingly, deliberately, and perseveringly, exposing themselves to the loss of heaven, and the miseries of hell, for the unsatisfying and fleeting pleasures of sin.

(3.) Of raging desire, which cannot be gratified. While the soul is bearing the wrath of God, without interruption or mitigation, it will naturally feel the greatest rage against God ; but he is completely above its reach. And the happiness of saints and angels in heaven will fill it with tormenting envy ; but it can neither ascend to them, nor drag them down to it.

(4.) Of the evils which will result from hatred and opposition amongst the lost themselves. In hell, there will be no love, but perfect hatred, and nothing to controul it. On earth, natural disposition, self-interest, the fear of reproach, and the dread of consequences in a future state, prevent much contention and cruelty ;

but in hell, the wicked will be free from all these restraints, and their ungratified rage against God, and envy at the happiness of saints and angels, will increase their rage and cruelties towards each other.

27. Will there be various degrees of punishment in hell, according to the degrees of men's wickedness?

Yes; Matt. xi. 22, 24. Luke xii. 47, 48. Heb. x. 29.

28. Are the miseries of hell eternal?

Yes; as appears,

(1.) From scripture declarations; Matt. xxv. 46. 2 Thess. i. 9.

(2.) From the manner in which those miseries are stated in scripture; Matt. v. 26. Mark ix. 43, 44. Luke xvi. 25, 26. John iii. 36. Rev. xiv. 11.*

29. What are the figurative terms by which heaven is described?

"It is often represented under the notion of a kingdom, a throne and crown; to intimate to us, the honour, nay perhaps the authority, to which glorified saints are advanced; Matt. xxv. 34. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Rev. iii.

21. Sometimes it is set forth under the emblem of a house and a city; to intimate to us, not only the stable continuance of it, but the full provision made for our happiness, in the suitable accommodations and desirable converses of the heavenly society; 2 Cor. v. 1. Heb. xi. 16. Sometimes it is represented as a rich treasure, and a pearl of great price, nay, as a vast inheritance; to intimate to us, the abundance of all suitable good we shall there enjoy, and the invaluable worth and excellency of it; Matt. xiii. 44—46. 1 Pet. i. 4. Sometimes it is represented under the emblem of white robes, and palms; to intimate the innocence, the victory, and triumph of the blessed; Rev. vii. 9. Sometimes it is represented under the similitude of a great supper, and particularly of a marriage feast; to intimate to us, the great satisfaction and delight which the members of Christ shall enjoy, in that state of nearest union to, and intimate communion with, their

* See Note 32.

exalted Head and Lord; Luke xiv. 16. Matt. xxii. 1, 2, &c. Sometimes it is represented as a paradise, in allusion to the earthly paradise, in which Adam was placed: to intimate to us, the rich affluence of all those solid delights, which can give agreeable entertainment to our refined and enlarged capacities; Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. xii. 3, 4. Sometimes it is represented to us under the emblem of light and glory; to intimate to us, the true excellency of our nature, when advanced to its highest perfection; and that all the objects we shall there converse with, will be as charming and delightful to our minds, as the splendour of luminous bodies is to our eyes; Col. i. 12. iii. 4. And it is often represented under the notion of life; because that is in the common estimate the most valuable blessing, and the foundation of all others we enjoy."

30. But does not the Bible likewise give us a more distinct view of the happiness of heaven?

Yes; it represents it as consisting in an exemption from all evil, and the actual enjoyment of all positive good; 2 Cor. iv. 17. Ps. xvi. 11.

31. What are the principal evils from which the inhabitants of heaven will be exempted?

They may be divided into two classes, viz.,

(1.) Sin, and all the temptations to it which here assail us; Eph. v. 27. Heb. xii. 23. Rom. xvi. 20.

(2.) The bitter consequences of sin. A distressing sense of God's displeasure on account of sin, and tormenting fear of hell, will both cease for ever. Want, and also pain in all its forms, will be known no more. All our fears and sorrows which arise from our concern for ourselves, our families, relatives, and friends; and also from our connexion with a wicked world, and an imperfect church; will be completely done away; Rev. vii. 14. &c.

32. From what will the positive enjoyments of heaven spring?

(1.) From our amazing knowledge of God, his works, and ways; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Of angels, as it respects their nature, orders, and employment, we shall then have a distinct view; and we shall probably

obtain a knowledge of many worlds, respecting which, at present, we can only form suppositions. Especially, we shall become acquainted with all the different generations of pious men who have lived in our world, and with the goodness and wisdom of God in all his dealings with them. Angels will inform us of all their kind offices towards us while on earth (Heb. i. 14.), and each individual will see that the goodness and wisdom of God constantly attended him in his earthly pilgrimage. All that we learn from every quarter will conspire to display the perfect goodness, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, and truth of God. Then, perhaps, we shall understand more clearly the mysterious union of the three persons in the sacred Trinity, and the peculiar work of each person in the scheme of redemption; and of redemption itself, in all its parts, we shall obtain new and most delightful views.

(2.) From the manifestation of the love of God and Christ to us, and our return of pious affection, worship, and obedience; Rev. vii. 17. v. 9, &c. The constant and enrapturing manifestation of the love of God and Christ to us, will be united with a constant return of perfect love, reverence, and confidence. In the exercise of these affections, and in the praise, and cheerful obedience, to which they will continually give rise, we shall feel unspeakable delight.

(3.) From the affection which will subsist between all the inhabitants of heaven. "Heaven is the world of friendship; of friendship unmingled, ardent, and entire. The disinterested love of the gospel dwells here in every bosom. Selfishness, since the ejection of the fallen angels from these delightful regions, has been here unknown and unheard of, except in the melancholy tidings, which have reached the happy inhabitants, of its deplorable effects on our apostate world. Here, every individual, in the strictest sense, fulfils the second great command of the moral law; and literally loves his neighbour as himself. Wherever the mind roves through the immense regions of heaven, it will find, among all its innumerable millions, not an enemy, not a stranger, not an indifferent heart, not a

reserved bosom. Disguise, here, and even concealment, will be unknown. The soul will have no interests to conceal, no thoughts to disguise. A window will be opened in every breast; and shew to every passing eye the rich and beautiful furniture within. All will be friends; and the soul will, like the happy region in which it dwells, contain ample room for the admission of all."

33. Will there be various degrees of happiness in heaven, according to the degrees of men's piety while on earth?

Yes; Matt. v. 11, 12. x. 41, 42. Luke xix. 12, &c. 1 Cor. iii. 8. 2 Cor. iv. 17. ix. 9. Rev. xxii. 12.

34. Will the happiness of heaven be eternal?

Yes; Matt. xxv. 46. 2 Cor. v. 1. 1 Thess. iv. 17.*

* See Note 33.

NOTES.



NOTES.

NOTE I.—p. 53.

Pardon, justification, reconciliation, and adoption, are all spoken of in scripture, in a similar manner (Acts xiii. 38, 39. Col. i. 21—23. Gal. iii. 26.); which shews, that while there may be some shades of difference in the meaning of these terms, they are all used to denote that state of acceptance with God, into which we are brought through faith in Christ (Eph. i. 6.); the consequences of which are, a supply of all necessary blessings while on earth, deliverance from hell, and an entrance into heaven.

NOTE II.—p. 54.

While each of these terms appears to be used to denote the same great change by which we are recovered from our depraved state, there are, no doubt, shades of difference in them. Regeneration, as well as the other figurative terms, creation, quickening, and resurrection, leads us to view the change, principally as being divine, inward, and universal; repentance, or at least the Greek word usually translated repentance, teaches us, that it is a change of heart, or moral feeling, productive of practical consequences, and originating

in a change of views, the soul having new and affecting views of its sinfulness and danger, and of the mercy of God in Christ: and conversion refers us to its effects, as giving rise to the *exercise* of new and holy affections and conduct.

NOTE III.—p. 63.

The points in dispute between Calvinists and Arminians were formerly considered five in number, and were therefore called "the five points;" but it will be found on examination, that in reference to the evangelical Arminians of the present day, these points may be reduced to two; viz., effectual grace, and the perseverance of the saints. By evangelical Arminians is meant, those who hold the doctrines of human depravity, regeneration, and justification by faith alone, to which class belong the Wesleyan Methodists, and also a number of the evangelical ministers in the Established Church. The five points, which it has been remarked may be reduced to two, are, election, the total depravity of human nature, particular redemption, effectual calling or effectual grace, and perseverance. Persons are elected to heaven as the end, and to effectual grace and perseverance as the means; and therefore it cannot be necessary to consider election as distinct from effectual grace and perseverance.—On the subject of human depravity, both parties hold substantially the same opinions.—Redemption is both general and particular. It is general. Christ died for all; so that God invites men indiscriminately, to come for salvation through him and exerts some degree of influence on their minds to excite them to do so; 1 John ii. 2. John iii. 16. Rev. xxii. 17. Phil. ii. 13. Heb. x. 29. Redemption is also particular. Christ died for certain persons, or the elect; so that God for his sake will absolutely convert them and also keep them to the end, or in other words, give

them effectual grace, and likewise grace to secure their perseverance in his ways; John x. 15. Acts xx. 28. Eph. v. 25. Tit. ii. 14. John vi. 37. Eph. i. 4. 2 Tim. i. 9. Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39. Phil. i. 6. The Arminian holds general redemption, but denies particular. The moderate Calvinist holds both; but from the statement just given, it is obviously unnecessary to separate particular redemption from effectual grace and perseverance. Thus it appears, that the real points in dispute are, effectual grace, and perseverance; and it is presumed, that the truth of these doctrines has been satisfactorily proved in the chapter to which this note refers. It may however be proper to add a few remarks. The Arminian contends, that when God works by his Spirit on the minds of men, they are free either to embrace salvation or reject it; or, that they can do either. That they *can* embrace salvation, is not denied; for if they could not, how could they be condemned for not embracing it; John iii. 18, 19. v. 40. Heb. ii. 3. 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. That they *can* reject salvation, is evident from the fact that too many do so; and though it is not denied, that the elect *can* reject salvation, it is asserted, that not one of them *will* do so; John vi. 37. Rom. viii. 30. Eph. i. 3, 4, 1 Thess. i. 4—6. They *will not*, because God will continue to work on their minds, till opposition and reluctance cease. They are not converted against their will, as every converted person knows; and therefore it is more correct, to call that grace which produces conversion effectual grace, than to style it either irresistible or invincible grace. The Arminian admits, that God knew where the grace he purposed to give would lead to conversion; but he denies, that God intended *absolutely* to produce conversion by such grace. The Calvinist asserts, that he did; and adduces Rom. viii. 29, 30, and Eph. i. 4, as decisive proof. The phrase “whom he did foreknow” can mean only, whom he before regarded; Ps. i. 6. John. x. 14. To explain this phrase by saying, “whom he foreknew would improve the grace which he intended to give them, so as to be conformed to the image of Christ, he predestinated to be thus

conformed," would be to make the apostle guilty of absurdity. As it respects perseverance, the Arminians, on Rom. viii. 35, &c., generally assert, that though none of the things enumerated in these verses can deprive the christian of the love or special regard of God, sin, which is not a creature, may do it. But is life or death any more a creature than sin? Besides, how can any of the things enumerated separate the soul from God's love, except by leading it into sin? When it is said, that they shall not separate God's people from his love, it is clearly implied, that his people will not, by any or all of these things, be led to fall from their state of holiness. To such passages as Phil. i. 6, it is common for the Arminians to add, "if we are not wanting in ourselves," or "if we are careful to improve the grace given;" but is not this adding to the word of God, contrary to Rev. xxii. 18? If the Arminian be allowed to make these additions, the Hyper-Calvinist has a right to add the word "elect," where he sees it necessary to support his opinions. It is admitted, that we persevere in the use of means; but the same God who secures our perseverance, also secures the proper use of means; and, if we become negligent, he can, by leaving us a prey to doubts and fears, or by personal afflictions, &c., easily recover us from our backsliding; Ps. lxxxix. 30—33. Isa. lix. 1, 2. Arminians have always shewn a strong disposition, in this controversy, to appeal to the early christian writers. This very circumstance renders their opinions doubtful; for if founded upon the word of God, why not fearlessly appeal to it, as the Calvinist does? The Bible, not the opinions of fallible men, in any age or country, must decide the controversy; Isa. viii. 20. Matt. xxiii. 8. The first uninspired christian teachers appear to have written in a very spiritual, but not in a very distinct manner; and their statements on the points in dispute, are not sufficiently explicit to decide the controversy, were both parties willing to abide by their decision. In two or three hundred years after Christ, the christian church had so much degenerated, that most of its ministers were mere moral preachers

and writers, and apparently destitute of the true spirit of christianity; and surely no christian can wish the controversy to be decided by the opinions of such persons. In the year 354 was born the famous Augustine, whose sentiments, as appears from his writings, were decidedly what are called Calvinistic; and from that period to the present time, these doctrines have always been maintained in the christian church.

From what has been advanced, it appears, that the peculiarities of genuine Calvinism, may be expressed in a positive form, in the following manner. It is the purpose of God to work upon the minds of certain persons, by the influence of his Holy Spirit, so as absolutely to convert them, and preserve them to the end; and consequently their conversion, perseverance, and final happiness, are certain.

Should it be asked, whether all Calvinists differ from Arminians, only in reference to effectual grace and perseverance, it is frankly acknowledged, that there are some who differ from them in other points. These persons are generally styled High-Calvinists, or Hyper-Calvinists. *Hyper* signifies above, and Hyper-Calvinists are so called, because their system is above genuine Calvinism. The Hyper-Calvinist holds the particular design of Christ's death, but denies its general design; whereas moderate or modern Calvinists, as they are called, hold both. An Antinomian may perhaps be called a consistent Hyper-Calvinist. The word Antinomian is derived from *anti*, against, and *nomos*, a law; and is applied to persons who hold doctrines which tend to discourage holiness. The Hyper-Calvinist holds such doctrines. He admits that the death of Christ is sufficient for all, and that all receive many temporal mercies through him; but he denies that the death of Christ was in any respect intended for the salvation of all; and therefore he does not invite all to believe in him for salvation, but preaches to saints and *before* sinners, and leaves God to apply the word to his elect people. Some Hyper-Calvinists, however, are so inconsistent as to invite sinners, because they perceive that the sacred writers

do so. Other Hyper-Calvinists proceed much further than abstaining from invitations to sinners. They multiply the points in dispute, state each in the most extravagant form, and in a way which tends to discourage the use of any means for the conversion of sinners, either in the family, the neighbourhood, or the world at large. "God," say they, "will take care of his own elect; he will convert them in his own time; the work is his, and he must have all the glory." As might be expected, under the idle pretext of ascribing the work and the praise of conversion to God, they excuse their own indolence and avarice. The Hyper-Calvinist endeavours to support his opinions, respecting the death of Christ, and invitations to sinners, thus:

1. In those passages of scripture in which Christ is said to die for every man, for all, or for the world, he inserts the word elect; so as to read, every elect man, all the elect, the elect world. Thus he adds to the word of God, contrary to Rev. xxii. 18.

2. As it respects invitations, he contends, that they ought only to be given to the willing, and appeals to John vi. 37. Rev. xxii. 17; but perhaps it is not possible to use more general or extensive language than is used in these two passages. The Hyper-Calvinist calls moderate Calvinists Arminians, or at best Baxterians. Their system, however, is that of Bates and Howe, Doddridge and Watts, Williams, and Scott; men with whom it is an honour to be ranked.

It has been justly observed, that preaching, in order to be scriptural and profitable, should consist of a due proportion of doctrinal, experimental, and practical statement. The Hyper-Calvinist almost entirely overlooks the last. As to doctrine, his preaching is in a great measure confined to the peculiarities of Hyper-Calvinism; and as it regards experience, that which he preaches is of a spurious kind. Genuine experience consists in the exercise of love, reverence, humility, trust, and submission to God; but experience, in the opinion of the Hyper-Calvinist, consists chiefly, if not entirely, in confidence of a person's acceptance with

God, assured hope of heaven, and joy arising from both. Of course, this state of mind must by all means be maintained, and doubts and fears steadily guarded against, as what it would be very sinful to indulge. Such notions are both very erroneous, and awfully dangerous. Confidence, hope, and joy, in reference to our present state, and future prospects, are not primary, but secondary feelings of religion; and wo to the man that indulges them, without finding himself the subject of that love, godly fear, and other graces mentioned above. The latter feelings terminate in God, and are suited to his character, and likewise necessarily lead to universal obedience; but the former terminate in ourselves, and are often found in connexion with gross disobedience.

The Hyper-Calvinist pretends, that he is a genuine follower of the great reformer Calvin; but this is more than doubtful. The sentiments of Calvin appear much higher in his Institutes, written when he was a young man, than in his Commentary, which was written at a later period, and therefore when his judgment was become more mature. Candour undoubtedly requires us, to judge of his sentiments by the latter work; but it is to be regretted, that in this few have done him justice. On Matt. xxvi. 28., he says, "Under the name of many, not a part of the world is intended, but the whole human race." The same sentiment may be seen in his notes on John iii. 15, 16. 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. Rom. v. 15. "Although Christ suffered," says he, "for the sins of the whole world, and is offered by the kindness of God to all indiscriminately, yet all do not lay hold of him." These statements agree with moderate, but not with Hyper-Calvinism. As the number of Hyper-Calvinists is at present very small, what shall we think of the candour of those, who preach and write as if the whole body of Calvinists were of this class? If our opponents will dispute, let them do it fairly. Let them first refute the Hyper-Calvinist, who denies that the death of Christ was in any respect intended for the salvation of all. They may do this, by adducing,

1. Those scripture passages which directly assert that Christ died for all, John iii. 16, 17. 1 Tim. ii. 6. 1 John ii. 2. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

2. Those passages in which salvation is asserted to be free for all; John vi. 37. Luke xxi. 47. Rev. xxii. 17.

3. Those passages in which the future misery of sinners is attributed to their rejection of salvation; John v. 40. Heb. ii. 3. 2 Thessa. i. 8, 9.

Let them then attack the moderate Calvinist, and prove that effectual grace and perseverance are both of them unscriptural. To do this, will be found no easy task; but till it is done, the moderate Calvinist will still maintain, that genuine Calvinism is yet unrefuted.

It has frequently been the lot of Calvinistic ministers, to be charged with believing and asserting the future punishment of those who die in infancy, or at least of a part of them. That, generally speaking, there is no foundation for such a charge, is certain. The writer never so much as heard of one Independent minister who held this opinion. If it is supposed, that the doctrine of election involves this opinion, the supposition is false. If election applies to such infants, it is presumed that all are elected. But suppose some of them are not elected, what is the consequence? Men do not perish because they are not elected, but on account of their sins; and as those who die in infancy or early childhood, have no personal sins to condemn them, they cannot be punished in a future state. The salvation of all who die in infancy or early childhood, may be proved,

1. From the character of God, as a being of infinite goodness. His goodness is always exercised in promoting happiness, where it is not prevented by the claims of justice; and as infants and little children cannot, for want of knowledge, sin personally, justice has no demands upon them, and therefore goodness must secure their eternal felicity.

2. From various scripture passages, in which God expresses the tenderest concern for the happiness of

infants and young children in this world (Jer. xix. 3—5. Jonah iv. 11.); for, if he is so tenderly concerned for their temporal happiness, he cannot himself inflict future and eternal punishment upon them.

3. From the conduct of Christ towards them, and his language respecting them; Matt. xviii. 10. Mark ix. 36, 37. Matt. xix. 13—15. Mark x. 13—16. Luke xviii. 15—17.

Should it be said, that the transgression of Adam has closed the gate of heaven against them; it is replied, that the merits of Christ have opened it for their admission. Should it be asserted, that they want a holy nature to fit them for heaven; it is answered, that the goodness of God will supply this want.

While the author has endeavoured to state and defend the doctrines of Calvinism, he can sincerely say, that he loves real christians of all denominations; and also, that it is his decided opinion, “that the questions at issue,” to use the words of the Rev. R. Hall, “between the Calvinists and Arminians, as such, are not of the nature of fundamentals; that upon either system, the foundation of hope remains unshaken; and that there is nothing in the contrariety of views entertained on these subjects, which ought to obstruct the most cordial affection and harmony among christians.”

NOTE IV.—p. 68.

In connexion with reverence, it may be proper to notice “the kindred virtue of humility; an attribute which seems to differ from reverence, not so much in its nature as in its object. God is the object of reverence; ourselves, of humility. The state of mind in the exercise of these christian graces seems to be the same. It is hardly possible that he, who is now employed in reverencing his Maker, when casting his eye

towards himself, should fail of being deeply humbled by a view of his own circumstances and character."

NOTE V.—p. 87.

It may here be proper to make a few remarks, respecting the proportion of our property which should be given for charitable and religious purposes. When by property is meant the capital itself, perhaps in most cases, men are not required to contribute any part of it for charitable and religious purposes, as it might involve them in difficulties. But where the capital is large beyond all necessity, perhaps what is superfluous ought to be given away, when the public good requires it; and Mr. Robert Haldane, of Scotland, and the late Mr. Reynolds, of Bristol, are examples of persons who have acted according to this rule. The latter, besides the surplus of his income, distributed about twenty thousand pounds of his capital among the poor in London, in a season of distress; and the former sold his patrimonial estate, and gave a considerable portion of the purchase money for the promotion of religion at home and abroad. But when by a person's property is meant his income, the proportion of it which he should give away, depends upon various circumstances; as, whether it arises from a capital, or from a capital and salary, or the profits of trade, combined; or merely from a salary, or the profits of trade or business; what the number of his family is, and what their situation is likely to be after his death. If his income arises solely from a capital, and he has no family; all his surplus money, after his yearly expenses are paid, should be given away. If it arises principally or solely from a salary, or from the profits of trade, and if he has a considerable family dependant upon him; he has a right to make some provision for them, if he can, and for himself and his wife in the decline of life. But should he be in the

middle class of society, he can scarcely be justified in attempting to raise his children higher. And if he has no family, instead of attempting to raise a capital, the interest of which will support himself and his wife in declining years, it may be sufficient to raise a small capital, and subscribe to a friendly society, life insurance, &c., to make up the deficiency.

Another means of ascertaining what proportion of our income should be devoted to charitable and religious purposes, is, "reflection on the portion of our substance which we expend on what may be termed the comforts, the luxuries, the superfluities of life. How far it is consistent with christian duty, to spend any part of our property in what, strictly speaking, comes under the two last denominations, is a subject which deserves grave consideration, by all who would live 'as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye;' but the observation must carry with it intuitive conviction to every mind; that that person is not liberal in his pecuniary contributions to religious purposes, who does not devote to this object more, much more, than he does to what, even in the station he occupies, must be considered as luxuries and superfluities."

On the whole, we should strictly guard against covetousness, and distrust of God's providence (Mal. iii. 10. 11.); and also recollect, that there is much more danger of giving too little, and too seldom, than the contrary. And if many professing christians can contribute but little to the cause of God while they live, let them not forget it when they die. It is matter of deep regret, that so few bequeath any part of their property to charitable and christian institutions. And let not dissenters forget their own institutions, especially their colleges, and two excellent institutions in London, one for assisting aged and infirm ministers; and the other, ministers whose salaries are very small, of which description it appears there is a great number.

NOTE VI.—p. 100.

On the historical books of the Bible, children may be catechized at an early age. Suppose the first chapter of Genesis has been read, the parent may ask, Who made the heaven and the earth? Ans. God. When did he make them? Ans. In the beginning. What did God make in the beginning? Ans. The heaven and the earth. Thus the parent may go from verse to verse, till he has finished the chapter. Afterwards, or to elder children, he may propose similar questions; but first from one part of the chapter, and then another. After all, it must be acknowledged, that this plan of catechizing only makes children acquainted with the *words* of the Bible; the things intended by those words must in many cases be pointed out by the parent, else the child will remain ignorant of them. The following little works have been composed to aid parents and others in the business of catechizing.

The Bible the Best Teacher. Questions and Answers selected therefrom for every day in the Year. By a Parent, for the use of his children. Third Edition, 1s. Westley.

Five Hundred Questions (without Answers) on the Books, Facts, and general Doctrines of the Old Testament. By the Rev. S. Barrow. Price 1s. Whittaker.

Five Hundred Questions (without Answers) on the various Books, Facts, and leading Doctrines of the New Testament. By the Rev. S. Barrow. 1s. Whittaker.

The Bible Teacher's Manual; being the Substance of Holy Scripture, in Questions on every chapter thereof. By Mrs. Sherwood. Parts 1, 2, and 3; extending to the close of Numbers. Price 1s. each. B. J. Holdsworth.

The Child's Scripture Examiner and Assistant. Parts 1, 2, 3; containing Questions on the Gospel according to Matthew, Luke, and John. By J. G. Fuller. Price 1s. each. The Bible Catechism, arranged in Forty Divisions: all the Answers to the Questions being in

the exact words of Scripture. By W. F. Lloyd. 2s.
The Abridged Bible Catechism. 4d. Westley. The
Catechizer's Assistant. 1½d. Tract Society.

NOTE VII.—p. 108.

The following remarks on corporeal punishment should be attended to by every parent. "As blows and stripes brutalize and harden, more than other punishments, let them, if practicable, be avoided. They appeal to mere corporeal feeling, without that mixture of reflection and moral feeling, which most other punishments, even of a corporeal nature, tend to excite. During an imprisonment, within a room or a house, a boy will probably be led to think; but during a whipping, he seldom reflects. The difference is also apparent, when the alternative is between a whipping and some fine or privation. Another evil, attending blows and stripes, is, that they not only so occupy the mind by corporeal suffering as to leave little or no room for other motives; but they are apt to discompose the mind, both of parent and child; and unfit the one to urge such motives, and the other to attend to them in a proper manner, and with a prospect of advantage. After all, in some cases, nothing will answer the purposes of punishment but blows and stripes. These cases, however, will seldom if ever occur, I apprehend, in families where education has been properly conducted. Wherever they do occur, they ought to be treated with great temper and deliberation; and punishment ought to be accompanied, by a clear exposition to the culprit of the necessity of its use, in consequence of other means having been found ineffectual; and, by a deep and cordial expression of concern, that such a punishment should be necessary. And the infliction should be solemn; but not such as to excite overwhelming terror, which would obliterate any impression made by the preceding con-

version, and aggravate evils without a corresponding benefit. After the punishment, great pains should be taken, to derive every attainable advantage from it, to remedy any evils it may have produced, and prevent the necessity of its repetition. With this view, the parent should conduct himself towards his child, with openness and affection; and shew that he has a pleasure in giving him rewards for good conduct, in gratifying his innocent wishes, and in consulting his happiness. But this must be done with moderation and simplicity; and care must be taken, that the child shall not be led to think, that the parent is making his peace with him, or granting him indulgences, merely because he was punished. When the child's mind is tranquillized, and his affections appear to flow in their usual course, the parent should avail himself of good opportunities of convincing the child of his former sin and folly, of the unseemliness of his fault, and the beauties of the opposite virtue, and of the pain occasioned, not to the child only, but to the parent himself, by the infliction of the punishment; and this pain should be contrasted with the happiness which all would have enjoyed, had the child behaved well. He should do his utmost to make the child feel the force of higher motives; the pleasure which attends the performance of duty, and the approbation of relations; and, above all, the peace which passeth understanding, and the bright sunshine of soul, which flow from the favour of God, as foretastes of the everlasting joys reserved for those who yield themselves to the guidance of his Holy Spirit, and are renewed in his image. At the same time, temptations to former faults should be lessened as much as possible, the beginnings of evil should be carefully watched, and immediately checked; and every endeavour should be used, to make the progress in good, easy and pleasant."—*A Practical view of Christian Education.*

NOTE VIII.—p. 109

“Seeing a cottage at a distance, I walked up to it, entered it, and told its inmates the cause of my being there. I was most kindly received. Seven sweet children were stationed around the homely board; yet sadness seemed to pervade the whole circle. On asking the cause, the mother informed me, that one of the children had been telling a falsehood. Upon this, a little girl was instantly covered with blushes, and a tear started from her eye. ‘Robert,’ said the father, ‘bring the Bible, and shew your sister who it is that she has offended.’ The little boy, younger than herself, read the ninth commandment, and the eleven first verses of the fifth chapter of the Acts. This being done, every member of the family brought a proof from scripture of the sin and danger of lying. The father then, with much affection, shewed them, that this sin was as offensive to God now, as it was when he struck Ananias and Sapphira dead, and that it was of the Lord’s mercies we were not consumed. He then sung the fifty-first psalm, read a portion of the word of God, frequently making pious and solemn observations as he went along, and afterwards prayed with his children most devoutly. On rising from prayer, the offending child wept bitterly. She approached her father, with pensive looks, begged him to forgive the offence, and withdrew that she might pray alone to God, for his forgiveness. I was of course highly gratified. I returned home under a deep impression of the awfulness of the sin of lying, and could not help wishing, that all parents should correct their children in a similar way, whenever they offended in a similar manner.”—*Bruce’s Juvenile Anecdotes.*

NOTE IX.—p. 126.

Should any person imagine, that the decree of the church at Jerusalem respecting the church at Antioch (Acts xv. 28, 29.), is opposed to the notion that christian churches are completely independent, except in reference to Christ, let him consider the following remarks of a very sensible writer. "The brethren at Antioch submitted their controversy to the judgment of this church, and that other churches acted in the same way, is highly probable. But the foundation of this authority was not so much in the church of Jerusalem, as in the apostles of Christ who presided over it, and were by Christ's appointment, judges of things of a religious nature. It was the apostles properly, not the church of Jerusalem, whom the other churches consulted; although the church itself, when the apostles were absent, might in doubtful cases, have been consulted in preference to other christian societies. For at Jerusalem, many more than in the other churches, were endowed with divine illumination, and other heavenly gifts; since the Holy Ghost fell *miraculously*, not only on the apostles, but on all the people, who then professed the faith of Christ in that city; Acts. ii. 1, &c. Equal authority no doubt belonged to the church of Ephesus, among the Asiatic churches, while John lived in it; and it may also be granted, that to all apostolic churches, that is, such as the apostles themselves had reared and instructed, this was for some time given, that when new opinions concerning religion happened to be started, and disputes raised, they were consulted. Of this custom many proofs may be collected from the writers of the second century. For the teachers of that age were of opinion, and not wholly without reason, as times then were, that none should know better how to think and speak of religious subjects, than those who had received instruction from the very ambassadors of

Jesus Christ. The churches, therefore, in which the apostles had long continued, enjoyed, in early times, great respect: yet this will remain most certain, that they had no command, no power of governing the rest as they thought proper."—*Ewing's Lectures on Acts* xv.

NOTE X.—p. 126.

Elder or presbyter, bishop or overseer, and pastor or shepherd (for each original term admits of this twofold translation), all denote the same church officer; as appears from Acts xx. 28. Here the persons addressed are styled *elders*, and are commanded to take care of the *flock* over which the Holy Ghost had made them *overseers*. A flock supposes a *shepherd*, and to feed and take care of a flock, is the work of a shepherd. Should those who contend for the superiority of bishops to pastors or elders, refer us to the postscripts, one at the end of the Second Epistle to Timothy, and the other at the end of the Epistle to Titus; in which it is said, that Timothy was ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians, and Titus the first bishop of the church of the Cretans; it is answered, that these postscripts have been acknowledged by church-men themselves to make no part of the inspired volume, and therefore afford no proof of the point contended for.*

Should the friends of episcopacy argue from Rev. ii. 1, &c., compared with Acts xx. 17, 28, that the angels of the seven churches of Asia, mentioned in the former passage, were bishops who presided over the common elders, pastors, or bishops; it is replied, that, admitting all these churches once to have had a plurality of pas-

* See MILNER's Church History, Vol. I., p. 56.—SCOTT'S Bible, Rom. xvi. 1.

tors, the point contended for by no means follows; for all these pastors might now be dead, with the exception of one in each church, or the epistles might be addressed to the eldest pastor in each church, or to one whom the pastors might have chosen for their president, in order to facilitate business. Such a president would act as chairman, when the pastors met for business, and he might take the lead in all important affairs; but without exercising any authority over his brethren. In these respects, he would resemble the chief ruler of the synagogue, who, it is said, was sometimes called the angel of the synagogue, but had no authority over the other rulers. Christ expressly forbid his apostles to exercise authority over each other (Mark x. 42, 45.), and surely this rule must apply to inferior ministers.

That christian churches have a right to choose their own officers, may be proved from Acts vi. 3, 5. From this passage we find, that before the apostles appointed any persons to the office of deacon, the brethren, at their command, chose certain persons for that purpose; and if this rule was observed in reference to deacons, why not in regard to pastors also? It is true, we are told, that Paul and Barnabas, during one of their journeys in Asia Minor, ordained elders in every church (Acts xiv. 23.), and that Titus was left in Crete that he might ordain elders in every city (Tit. i. 5.), without any thing being said respecting the choice of the churches; for the writer cannot place any stress upon the original word, as it stands in the first passage, which is rendered ordained. Still no intimation is given, that these elders were ordained over the churches, without the choice or consent of the latter; and it may be worthy of remark, that the original word which is rendered *ordain* in Tit. i. 5, is the same as that rendered *appoint* in Acts vi. 3. If, therefore, the brethren chose certain persons for deacons, before the apostles *appointed* them for that office, might not the churches choose certain persons for their pastors, before Titus *ordained* them? It is, however, freely admitted, that the apostles, as persons under the

inaliable direction of Christ, the great Head of the church, had a right to ordain pastors over the churches, without their previous choice or consent; and if those who now impose ministers on christian churches, could give sufficient proof that they act under the guidance of Christ, it would be the duty of those churches to receive such ministers.

The right of christian churches to choose their own pastors, is also implied, in the cautions which are given to beware of false teachers (1 John iv. 1. 2 John 9, 10.); and it is likewise inseparably connected with the nature of such churches as voluntary societies. As such, they have the same right to choose their own officers, as is possessed by any Philosophical or Bible society; and it is certain, that in the purest ages of christianity, this right was always exercised by the churches. Cyrian, who lived as late as in the middle of the third century, speaks in the plainest terms of the liberty of the people in the choice of their own ministers.*

NOTE XL.—p. 127.

At the setting apart of a person to the pastoral office amongst the Independents, which is called an ordination, a few neighbouring ministers are always invited to attend the service; when one of them, in answer to certain questions, receives from the person about to be ordained, a statement of the doctrines which he intends to preach, of the work of religion on his own heart, and of the manner in which he intends to conduct himself amongst the people of his charge. He is then commended to God in solemn prayer, generally with the imposition of hands. After this, one of the

* See TOWNSEN'S Social Religion Exemplified.

ministers delivers a discourse to him, on the duties, &c., of his office, which is called a *charge*; and another preaches to the people, on the duties which they owe to their pastor, and to each other.

NOTE XII.—p. 128.

There is some reason to think, that in the church of Corinth, both of these ordinances were administered by gifted brethren, approved by the people; for it does not appear certain, that they had either pastors or deacons when Paul's epistles were written to them.

That deacons, and other christian brethren, as well as pastors, may preach, if qualified, is evident from Acts vi. 5, 8, 10. viii. 1—5. 1 Cor. xiv. 1—3. 1 Pet. iv. 10, 11. Many persons incompetent to preach, might render themselves very useful, by reading good sermons composed by others, especially in villages which are little favoured with evangelical instruction.

NOTE XIII.—p. 130.

As the office of pastor refers to the church exclusively, the pastor ought to be chosen by the members of the church alone. But the pastor, in the capacity of preacher or public instructor, stands related to the congregation in general; and it is highly desirable, that all his hearers should approve of his labours, as without this, they will either cease to attend his ministry, or else hear with prejudice, and consequently to no good purpose. The church, as a collective body, is called to vote in the choice of a pastor; but it is dangerous to encourage those who are hearers only,

and not church-members, to act as a collective body ; for it is the direct way to make them powerful ; and they may at length abuse their power, by insisting on the privilege of voting for a minister equally with the members of the church, and if refused this privilege, they may cause the most serious disturbance. The church ought carefully to guard the exclusive right of choosing its own pastor ; otherwise it may soon be called to witness the introduction of a minister to the pulpit, who neither preaches the gospel, nor possesses true religion. At the same time, it should be as conciliating as possible to the congregation, in reference to the choice of a pastor ; both on account of the support which they afford to the cause, and also out of regard to their spiritual welfare.

NOTE XIV.—p. 161.

Evidence of the candidate's sincerity, may be obtained, partly, from a view of his general conduct, and partly, from the minister or others repeatedly engaging in free conversation with him. In order to put the church in possession of satisfactory evidence, it may, in some cases, be quite sufficient, for the minister to state the substance of such conversations before them Acts ix. 26—28. ; in other cases, where the person is able and willing, he may be requested to speak before the church in person, or to deliver in a written account of his religious views, his motives in seeking admission into the church, and the steps by which he was led to do so. Where persons possess ability to speak, or write, one of these two methods of affording evidence of personal piety, will give the most complete satisfaction to the church, and also render its church meetings highly interesting.

NOTE XV.—p. 196.

Those who embrace the views of church government which have just been given, are generally styled Independents, because their churches are entirely independent, as it respects each other, and all human authority. That the first christian churches adopted the independent mode of church government, is unequivocally asserted by a learned historian, who cannot be suspected of any partiality to the Independents. Mr. Gibbon's language is as follows: "The scheme of policy, which, under their (the apostles') approbation, was adopted for the use of the first century, may be discovered from the practice of Jerusalem, of Ephesus, or of Corinth. The societies which were instituted in the cities of the Roman empire, were united only by the ties of faith and charity. Independence and equality formed the basis of their internal constitution. The public functions of religion were solely intrusted to the established ministers of the church, bishops and presbyters; two appellations, which, in their first origin, appear to have distinguished the same office, and the same order of persons. The name of presbyter was expressive of their age, or rather of their gravity and wisdom. The title of bishop denoted their inspection over the faith and manners of the christians who were committed to their pastoral care. In proportion to the respective number of the faithful, a larger or smaller number of these episcopal presbyters guided each infant congregation, with equal authority and with united counsels. Every society formed within itself a separate and independent republic; and although the most distant of these little states maintained a mutual, as well as friendly intercourse of letters and deputations, the christian world was not yet connected by any supreme authority or legislative assembly."*

* See GIBBON'S *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. II. p. 324—328.

The Independents, when viewed in reference to the Established Church, are called dissenters; because they have entirely separated themselves from its communion. Were there no established church, there could be no dissenters. In America, there are no dissenters, because all denominations of christians are placed on a level. Should it be asked, why the Independents have separated themselves from the Church of England, it might be sufficient to refer the enquirer to the Chapter on the nature, &c., of a christian church, and the preceding Notes connected with it; from which he will learn, that their opinions are so directly at variance with those which are held by the members of the Church of England, that they could not conscientiously continue in connexion with it. But for the sake of candid readers of both parties, who may not have paid much attention to the subject, the author will shew more particularly, why the Independents have separated themselves from the Church of England.

1. They object to it as an established church, in common with all other established churches. Should it be asked, what is comprehended in the notion of an established church, it is replied, in the words of Dr. Paley, "A clergy, or an order of men secluded from other professions, to attend upon the services of religion; a legal provision for the maintenance of the clergy, and the confining of that provision to the teachers of a particular sect of christianity." The following objections to such a church are submitted to the attention of the candid reader.

(1.) "The establishment of any religion involves an authoritative decision on the part of the civil power, upon the matter of religious truth; for it takes one religion, or one sect, as the only true one; or as more true than all the rest: and all such authority is beyond the limits of any human tribunal."

(2.) "The establishment of any religion involves violence and persecution, as it obliges all the people to afford pecuniary support to that religion, however they may disapprove of it."

(3.) "Establishments include the absurdity of a pecuniary bounty for certain opinions, by exhibiting the lure of worldly interests, honours, powers, and riches; and therefore, are inimical to truth and sincerity, and promote prejudice and hypocrisy."

(4.) "Establishments inevitably tend to the secularization of the clergy; to the rendering of them independent of the good-will and affections of the people; and to their general degradation, as servants to the state, friends to arbitrary power, and foes to the independence and liberty of the people."

(5.) "They have never failed to impede the spread of christianity. The clergy of an establishment are a body, whose interest and honour and happiness, are in no way necessarily connected with the promotion of the gospel: the first, the mightiest, and the most general impulse they feel, arises from the apprehension that the church is in danger. They are the last to encourage reform, and the first to impeach innovation."

The arguments in defence of an established church may be reduced to three. In the first place, it has been said, that such an establishment is lawful. In defence of the lawfulness of such an establishment, it has been said, that the government, or supreme magistrate, has a right to form one; yea, that it is his duty, because it is for the temporal advantage of his subjects.

In reply to this argument, it is observed, that it might be for the temporal good of his subjects, if the superfluous property of the wealthy were distributed among the poor operative manufacturers, labourers, &c.; throughout the kingdom; but this does not give the supreme magistrate a right to compel the rich to make such distribution, or to give up a part of their property for that purpose. A portion of our property may be justly demanded, to support the government in protecting the lives, liberties, reputation, and property, of the inhabitants in general; for these are the proper ends of civil government; but if it is lawful to demand our property, to support a religious establishment, it is also lawful to seize the superfluous property

of the rich, and distribute it amongst the poor. Again, if the supreme magistrate has a right to create a religious establishment, he must possess infallibility, to judge which is the true religion; for surely he has no right to establish a false religion. Perhaps it will be said, that he has authority to establish only that religion which the majority of the nation considers true; or else, that which he himself considers true. If the first statement is chosen, it is replied, that it may happen that the supreme magistrate is one who thinks the religion of the majority not the true religion, or at least, not the most true. In this case, as an individual, it is his duty not to encourage it; and yet, as the supreme magistrate, it is his duty to establish it, and consequently to give it the greatest encouragement. If the latter statement is preferred, then, whatever the supreme magistrate's views of religion may be, he has a right to create an establishment to promote them; and thus socinianism, popery, mahometanism, or idolatry, may be established, just as he happens to think any of them true. Should it be said, that nothing can justify the supreme magistrate in establishing a false religion, the answer is, then, he ought to establish no religion, unless he can be rendered infallible, which no one expects.

In defence of the lawfulness of an established church, it has likewise been argued, "If an established church were a thing fundamentally unlawful, would Jehovah himself have instituted such a precedent?" To this it may be replied, that "so far from the Israelitish polity, either in church or state, being *instituted as a precedent*, it was designed as an *exception*; had its reasons in the special purposes of Jehovah; was designed but for a limited period; was wholly abrogated by Christ, without any attempt to imitate its principles in his church, or any intimation to his accredited servants, that it would be lawful for them to contract a similar alliance with any of the merely human governments of the world."

In defence of the lawfulness of an established church, it has also been said, "How was it that our Lord

never warned his disciples against such a profanation? And how happened it, that his apostles never forbid governors to interfere with the concerns of religion, if such interference was unlawful? To this it may be replied, "upon the only valid principle which a protestant can adopt against all the long established and sanctioned innovations of popery, that to shew the unlawfulness of any principle of religion, it is not necessary to require a direct command against it; it is abundantly sufficient to shew, that it is not commanded." "If," says Dr. Stillingfleet, "I believe, that the scripture is my only rule of faith, as I most firmly do, will any man, who considers what he says, require me to make negative articles of faith, that the pope is not, tradition is not, councils are not, a private spirit is not? For all these things are necessarily implied therein. And so for all particular doctrines rejected by us on this principle. We do not make them negative points of faith, but we therefore reject the belief of them, because not contained in our only rule of faith. On this account, we reject the Pope's supremacy, transubstantiation, infallibility of the present church in points of faith, purgatory, and other poperies imposed on the belief of christians."

The second argument in defence of established churches, is, that they are expedient, so that christianity could not be so extensively promoted amongst a people without them.

To this argument it is replied, that ecclesiastical establishments have been shewn to be unlawful; and therefore, however expedient, they ought not to be formed. But even their expedience is more than doubtful. Facts prove, that they have the worst effect upon the ministers; that churches may be built, and ministers provided, and yet few persons attend their ministry; and that those who do attend, are generally inferior in knowledge, piety, and morals, to those who frequent mere voluntary assemblies.

Not content with defending established churches on the ground of expedience, some have gone so far as to assert their absolute necessity. It has lately been said,

by a minister of the Church of Scotland (Dr. Inglis), "that without ecclesiastic establishments, there is no security, either for the doctrines of religion continuing to be taught, or for the ordinances of religion continuing to be administered among men."

This argument stands opposed to the following declarations of scripture; Ps. ii. 1—8. Matt. xvi. 18. 1 Pet. i. 25. It is also opposed to facts. Christianity not only existed, but greatly flourished, during the first three centuries, when there was no establishment, and much persecution. It has not only kept alive, but has prospered, amongst different denominations in America, where there is no establishment, and where it has been tried for upwards of two hundred years; and the number of ministers and congregations is continually increasing in England, amongst the Independents, Baptists, and Methodists, though these are not established sects. The population of America is about ten millions, and the number of christian preachers, including four thousand local preachers amongst the Methodists, is near twelve thousand, which gives more than one preacher to every thousand souls.*

2. The Independents object to certain offices held in the Church of England; as those of arch-bishop, bishop, arch-deacon, dean, prebendary, canon, minicanon, chancellor, vicar-general, commissary, official, surrogate, proctor, &c.; offices which are not sanctioned by the New Testament, "but are the effect of an unnatural alliance of the Church with the state, and mostly of popish original."

3. They object to the imposition of a stated form of prayer, which is called the Liturgy, and to many things contained in it. They allege, that the Bible is silent as to the necessity, or expediency, of using forms of prayer; that it is unreasonable for ministers to be confined in their prayers any more than in their

* See BRIERLEY'S Thoughts on the Anglican and Anglo-American Churches.

sermons ; that forms of prayer tend to promote indolence in ministers, and lifeless formality in the people ; and that they cannot be adapted to the state of different societies, and different events which may occur, and which ought to be noticed in prayer. To the Liturgy of the Church of England in particular, they object, that it is imposed by human authority, and cannot be altered in any case, however necessary, without an act of parliament ; and they also consider many things in the Liturgy itself objectionable. Particularly, they object, that the several prayers, collects, &c., have no connexion ; that the parts into which the Liturgy is divided are too minute ; that it is full of needless repetitions ; that the confession, and also the petitions and thanksgivings, are much too general, and the whole of the service much too long. They also consider the baptismal service, the service for the visitation of the sick, and the burial service, very objectionable in point of doctrine. In the first, every baptized person is said to be regenerated ; in the second, he is absolved from all his sins ; and in the third, he is asserted to be gone to heaven. Facts abundantly shew, that these assertions are generally made without evidence, and often in direct opposition to it ; and therefore they must tend to deceive souls, and make men careless in preparing for a future state.

4. They object to the pretended right of the church, to enjoin ceremonies not commanded in the word of God, as indispensable terms of communion.

5. They object to the terms on which ministers are admitted to their office. In order to this, they are required to subscribe to the thirty-nine articles of the Church ; to declare their belief, that there is nothing in the Book of Common Prayer, and the Book of Ordination, contrary to the word of God ; and to swear obedience to the Bishop, the Ordinary, and their successors, in every thing required in the Canons. Should it be said, that this belongs exclusively to the clergy, it is answered, that the laity ought to bear their decided testimony against such unreasonable impositions ; especially as the emoluments connected

with subscription, are strong temptations to prostration, and tend to bring those men into the church, who are most unfit to have the charge of souls, as well as to keep out some of the most conscientious and able ministers.

6. They strongly object to the want of liberty in the people to choose their own ministers.

7. They object to the corrupt state of the discipline of the Church. "No persons whatever are refused admission to her communion, who have been confirmed by the Bishop, and are not excommunicated, though they be guilty of gross immoralities; and many are permitted, yea obliged, to receive the Lord's supper, merely as a qualification for a civil office."

It may also be noticed, that the deplorable want of evangelical preaching in the Church of England, which in a great measure arises from its being an established church, has led great numbers to become dissenters; but this objection does not apply in all cases; for there have always been a few evangelical ministers in the Church, and there is now a considerable number.

NOTE XVI.—p. 137.

Every adult person who receives the ordinance of baptism in a proper manner, thereby declares the need he has of being purified from guilt by the blood of Christ, and from inward depravity by the Spirit of Christ; and also dedicates himself to the worship, love, and service of God; Acts xxii. 16. Matt. xxviii. 19. Hence, baptism may be called the rite of purification and dedication. Most, if not all the scripture passages in which the term baptism occurs, may be explained by substituting purification for it, and sometimes both purification and dedication; as appears from the following examples: "And were

purified and *dedicated* to God of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his *purification*, &c.," "I indeed *purify* you with water unto repentance; but &c.: he shall *purify* you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;" Matt. iii. 6, 7, 11. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, *purifying* and *dedicating* them in &c.;" Matt. xxviii. 19. "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers *purifications* and *dedications*, &c.;" Heb. ix. 10.

NOTE XVII.—p. 137.

While the Baptists contend that adult believers are the only proper *subjects* of baptism, they also insist upon dipping or immersion, so as to put the whole body under water, as the only proper *mode* of baptism. In attempting to prove that dipping or immersion is the only proper mode of baptism, great stress is laid upon the Greek term *bapto*, and its derivative *baptizo*, the latter of which is usually rendered to baptize. It is contended by the Baptists, that the *primitive* meaning of these terms is, to dip, or immerse. From a careful perusal, however, of the work of Dr. Williams on baptism, the author is fully convinced, that the *primitive* meaning of the terms in question is, to wet, tinge, dye, or colour; and that their *secondary* meaning is, to dip, immerse, pour, or sprinkle; a thing being wetted, tinged, dyed, or coloured, either by applying it to the liquid matter, as in dipping or immersion; or by applying the liquid to the object, as in pouring or sprinkling. The primitive meaning of the terms may be seen in the Greek version of Dan. iv. 33. Ezek. xxiii. 15, and their secondary meaning, in 2 Kings v. 14. John xiii. 26. 1 Cor. x. 2, compared with Ps. lxxvii. 17. Dan. iv. 33. But the real question is not, what is the primitive signification of *bapto*, and

its derivative *baptizo*; but what is the meaning of *baptizo*, in reference to the *ordinance* which it is intended to describe? In order to perceive this, we must consider the nature of the ordinance itself, and the command given to the apostles respecting it. Baptism is a rite of purification, and the administration of it was enjoined upon the apostles, but without any *mode* being specified. The apostles were Jews, and as such their minds would naturally turn to their own modes of purification, which were various; Heb. ix. 10. Mark vii. 3, 4. Lev. xiv. 2—9. xv. 7—13. Num. xix. 14—19. The last passage describes one of the most common modes of purification among the Jews, which was sprinkling the unclean person with the water of purification; for the bathing in water appears to refer to the clean person who sprinkled the water upon the other. When it is considered, that the apostles must have been perfectly familiar with this mode of purifying, and also with the purifications of the Jews recorded in Mark vii. 3, 4; it is almost certain that they would administer the rite of baptism, not by dipping or immersion, but by sprinkling or pouring. It is also worthy of remark, that the sacred writers, when speaking of the purification of sinners from guilt and depravity, by the blood and Spirit of Christ, of which purification, baptism is a symbol, use the terms *sprinkle* and *pour*, but not *dip* or *immerse*; Heb. ix. 13, 14. xii. 24. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. Acts ii. 17, 33. Tit. iii. 6.

The Baptists contend, that the phraseology of scripture in reference to the point in dispute, is altogether in favour of immersion, especially where it is said, that John baptized *in* Jordan; and that he baptized in *Ænon*, because there was *much water there*; that Philip and the eunuch went down *into* the water; that Jesus when baptized came up *out of* the water; and that we are buried with him by baptism. As to John's baptizing *in* Jordan, "it is replied, that the Greek preposition *en* is more than a hundred times, in the New Testament, rendered *at*; and in a hundred and fifty others, it is translated *with*. If it is rendered

So here, 'John baptized at Jordan,' or *with* the water of Jordan, there is no proof that he plunged his disciples into it." It may also be noticed, that the phrase "in Jordan," may mean no more than, between the banks of the river; Exod. xiv. 22, 29; 1 Cor. x. 2. And as to John's choosing a place for baptism where there was much water, "it is answered, that as there 'went to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,' by choosing a place where there were many streams or rivulets (which the Greek phrase signifies), it would be more expeditiously performed by pouring; and that it seems in the nature of things highly improbable, that John should have baptized this vast multitude by immersion, to say nothing of the indecency of both sexes being immersed together."

The text which speaks of Jesus' coming up out of the water, "is no proof of his being immersed; as the Greek term *apo* often signifies *from*; for instance, 'Who hath warned you to flee *from* the wrath to come;' with many others which might be mentioned."

As to Philip and the eunuch, "if the expression of their going down *into* the water necessarily includes dipping, then Philip was dipped as well as the eunuch. The preposition *eis*, translated *into*, often signifies no more than *to* or *unto*; Matt. xv. 24. Rom. x. 10. Acts xxviii. 14. Matt. xvii. 27. iii. 11. So that, from all these circumstances, it cannot be concluded, that there was a single person of all the baptized who went into the water ankle deep. As to the apostle's expression, 'hurled with him by baptism,' it has no force, and it does not allude to any custom of dipping, any more than our baptismal crucifixion and death has any such reference. It is not the sign, but the thing signified, that is here alluded to. As Christ was buried and rose again to a heavenly life, so we by baptism signify that we are cut off from the life of sin, that we may rise again to a new life of faith and love." Besides, the tomb of Christ was in the side of a rock, not in the earth, and therefore his burial has little or no resemblance to dipping or immersion.

To conclude this note, it is observed respecting dipping or "immersion, that as it carries with it too much of the appearance of a burdensome rite for the gospel dispensation; that as it is too indecent for so solemn an ordinance; as it has a tendency to agitate the spirits, often rendering the subject unfit for the exercise of proper thoughts and affections, and indeed utterly incapable of them; as in many cases the immersion of the body would in all probability be instant death; as in other situations, it would be impracticable, for want of a sufficient quantity of water; it cannot be considered as necessary to the ordinance of baptism."

NOTE XVIII.—p. 138.

From the first of these two passages, the Jews would naturally conclude, that baptism had now the same relation to their infant offspring as circumcision had in former times; and from the same passage, it appears farther evident, that wherever God's promise, or covenant of mercy through Christ, should be made known, and the people urged to embrace it, they were also bound to receive christian baptism, and obtain the same for their infant offspring. According to the latter passage, when viewed in connexion with the former, the apostles were to teach or *disciple* all nations, by bringing parents and children into a covenant relation to God by baptism. Not that they were to force the people to be baptized. They could only urge a moral claim, or assure them that God was now ready to become their God through Christ, and that he required them to dedicate themselves to his service through the blood of his Son, and by the assistance of his Spirit; and also to receive for themselves and their offspring christian baptism, as a seal of the covenant, to assure them of God's faithfulness in fulfilling its promises, and of their obligation to comply with its requirements.

NOTE XIX.—p. 138.

It has been shewn, in a most satisfactory manner, by the author of "Facts and Evidences on the subject of Baptism," that there are two words used by the sacred writers, and also by other Greek writers, one of which should invariably be translated house or family, and the other household. The word *oikos*, which should be translated *house or family*, always signifies, kindred of the nearest degree; and therefore primarily children, in all the stages of life; whereas *oikia*, which should be translated *household*, includes every individual that belongs to the person's establishment. According to this statement, the household of Lydia means the house or family of Lydia, and the household of Stephanas the house or family of Stephanas; for in both of these instances the original word is *oikos*, not *oikia*. And when it is said, that the jailor and *all his* were baptized, it is most natural to consider the language as referring to his family or children; for these might more properly be called *his*, than either hired servants or slaves. But if the phrase refers to his *oikia*, or whole establishment, it includes his children, if he had any; and that he had children, is evident from its being said, that he brought the apostles into his house, or family apartment, and that he rejoiced, believing in God with *all his house or family*. Should it be said, that as *all his house or family* rejoiced with him, they must have been believers as well as himself, and consequently neither infants nor little children; it is replied, that little children are capable of uniting with their parents in expressions of joy, at two or three years of age; and as to *all his house* rejoicing, it is common to say that of the whole, which in the nature of things can only apply to a part; as when it is said, that unruly teachers subvert whole houses (Tit. i. 10, 11.), where no more is meant than that these unruly teachers led astray whole families, so far

as these families were capable of being seduced by them, which was not the case with infants. It is plain from this statement, that the families of Lydia, of Stephanas, and of the jailor, were all baptized; and the only question which remains, is, whether these families were all of them composed of children grown up, or whether some part of each, or any of them, consisted of infants or little children. That these families did contain infants or little children, is certainly more probable than the contrary; and where absolute proof cannot be obtained, we are bound to take that side of the question on which the evidence is the strongest; and as it respects the family of the jailor, the probability is very strong, for it appears that *all* his family was baptized (Acts xvi. 33. 34.), which shews that *all* his family lived with him, and consequently, that it was a young family; for it will almost universally be found, that as children grow up, some of them at least are sent from home.

NOTE XX.—p. 139.

With regard to the baptism of the children of christian parents, it is worthy of remark, "that there is not a single instance recorded in the New Testament, in which the descendants of christian parents were baptized in *adult* years."

NOTE XXI.—p. 140.

As baptism and the Lord's supper are designed to represent spiritual things, they may with propriety be called symbolic ordinances. The author prefers the phrase *symbolic ordinance* to the word *sacrament*; because he thinks it better adapted to afford a dis-

ting view of the nature of these institutions, and less calculated to excite superstitious notions respecting them.

NOTE XXII.—p. 142.

As to the consequence of partaking of this ordinance unworthily, Paul informs us, that "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself;" 1 Cor. xi. 29. The original word for damnation, in this place should have been translated *judgment* or *punishment*. In regard to the Corinthians, facts shew, that this punishment was only temporal, as appears from the next verse, in which the apostle tells us, that on account of the profanation of this ordinance, many were visited with wasting diseases, and many died; but as their death is called a *sleep* it is hoped that their souls were saved; 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. To engage in any religious service in a careless or hypocritical manner, is very sinful, and if persisted in, will assuredly bring the soul at length to eternal misery. It must also be admitted, that as this ordinance is eminently calculated to excite devotional feelings, to attend it in an hypocritical, careless, or irreverent manner, is more sinful than to attend other religious services in the same way; but still pardon may be obtained for this, as well as other sins, when sought by prayer through Christ.

NOTE XXIII.—p. 145.

By those who wish to prove that the sabbath is not of perpetual obligation, it is asserted,

1. That Gen. ii. 3, does not contain an account of the original institution of the sabbath. In proof of

this assertion, it is said, that we have no account of the sabbath's having been kept by mankind, and no command to keep it, till the Jews were on their journey from Egypt to Canaan; Exod. xvi. 23. It is replied, that we have no account of the sabbath's having been kept from Moses to David, a period of about four hundred and forty years; and yet no one disputes whether the sabbath was kept during this time. Gen. viii. 12. and xxix. 27, strongly intimate, that, at this early period, time was divided into weeks, or portions of seven days. This method of dividing time appears also to have prevailed in many heathen nations in subsequent ages. Among these, a seventh day was considered holy, when labour was suspended, and schools for the instruction of children were closed. And though in these early ages, many might break the sabbath, as many do now, we may still reasonably presume, that it would be kept by pious people.

2. That the account of the institution of the sabbath is found in Exod. xvi. 22—30, and consequently that it was binding only upon the Israelites, and only so long as the dispensation of Moses continued. But all that can be justly argued from this passage is, either that the sabbath was now to be altered from that day of the week on which God rested from all his works of creation, which was the original sabbath day, to that in which he delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, in order that they might constantly recollect this great deliverance, though some suppose that both of these events took place on the same day; or else, that through the deplorable ignorance of the Israelites, occasioned by their slavery in Egypt, they had lost the knowledge of the sabbath, at least so far as to be uncertain about the particular day to be observed, according to its original institution; and that Moses was taught by God to fix upon the next day as the proper day for that purpose. If the sabbath itself was now instituted, and not merely the proper day fixed upon, it is surprising that the elders

made no enquiry respecting the institution, especially as it was intended to engage one seventh part of their time.

NOTE XXIV.—p. 147.

It is much to be regretted, that most of those who attend public worship on the sabbath day, entirely absent themselves from it on week evenings. For this neglect, no satisfactory reason can be assigned. The word of God requires us to assemble for public worship, but makes no distinction, in this respect, between the sabbath day and other days; Ps. c. 4. Heb. x. 25. If therefore it is admitted, that we ought to assemble for public worship on the sabbath day, because it is a day of leisure, it must also be admitted, that we ought to do this on week evenings, when we have opportunity. How often such week-night assemblies should be held, every person must judge for himself; but to neglect them entirely, admits of no excuse, except on the ground of necessary business, excessive fatigue, sickness, or distance from the place of meeting.

NOTE XXV.—p. 147.

Perhaps a short walk, by persons much confined during the week, cannot be condemned; provided it be taken to promote the devotion of the mind, as well as the health of the body. But if taken at all, it should be during the intervals of worship, and with suitable company, or else alone; and after all, there is so much danger of leading others, by our example, to spend the greatest part of the day in this manner, that a good man will be very cautious in availing himself of this liberty.

NOTE XXVI.—p. 151.

Should it be said, that none of these passages, in direct terms, requires family prayer, it may be answered, that neither public, family, nor personal prayer, is ever commanded in the Bible, in direct terms; and therefore, if this is a solid objection against one kind of prayer, it is so against the other two kinds. The word of God states the fact, that all these kinds of prayer have been adopted, exhorts to prayer in general, and also gives express commands respecting the season, manner, &c., of prayer; such as, that it should be frequent, sincere, fervent, and in the name of Christ. That personal wants should be expressed by individuals in private; family wants, by family prayer; and the wants of a collective body, by public prayer; is so evident, that no upright mind can seriously doubt the obligation to practice each of these kinds of prayer. And objections to family prayer generally, if not always, arise, not from doubts respecting the obligation to practice it, but either from an aversion to religion itself, or a fear of the reproach which the strict profession of it may occasion.

NOTE XXVII.—p. 152.

Considerable advantage may also be derived from Watts' Guide to Prayer.

NOTE XXVIII.—p. 152.

It is apprehended, that many well meaning, but injudicious persons, greatly err on this subject. They exhaust the patience of children and servants, and

even of pious persons, by a common-place prayer of ten or fifteen minutes long. If any thing can create in children and servants a ~~disgust at religion~~, it is this. Perhaps in general, five minutes are quite sufficient to devote to the prayer. It is not enough for a person to say, that he cannot tie himself in respect to a few minutes. Let him firmly resolve not to exceed a certain time, if possible, and for a few times look at his watch before and after prayer, and the work will be accomplished. And surely we should study by all means, to pray so as to profit those who unite with us.

NOTE XXIX.—p. 155.

It is not pretended, nor does the word of God warrant us to expect, that our bodies when raised from the dead will contain exactly the same particles as they did when life became extinct. While on earth they are not exactly the same for two hours together, but are continually losing some particles and gaining others. Besides, a person may pass from childhood to manhood, and from a spare habit of body to extreme corpulency, and yet he considers himself the same person, others consider him the same, and for all the purposes of justice, he is treated as the same person. Similar to this will be the state of things at the resurrection.

NOTE XXX.—p. 156.

Perhaps their being incorruptible, glorious, and powerful, is owing to their being spiritual; and yet it is impossible for us to form any conception of a spiritual body. It must, however, be a body refined to a high degree, as not to need the supports of an animal

body, as food and sleep; and to be capable of passing from place to place, with a rapidity and ease inconceivable to us in our present state.

NOTE XXXI.—p. 156.

As the soul of every individual at its departure from the body, immediately goes to heaven or hell, it may be thought that there is no occasion for a general judgment to try mankind afresh. God, however, sees it to be requisite, and we may see a propriety in it for the following reasons :

1. It will shew to all mankind, that God is really the moral Governor of the world; though many while on earth have denied it in opinion, and more in their practice, by openly violating his laws, and endeavouring to lead others to do the same.

2. It will give all an opportunity of witnessing the perfect justice of God, in acquitting the righteous, and condemning the wicked.

3. As the lives of the righteous and the wicked, while on earth, have generally been open to the inspection of all, it seems proper, that the former should be honoured with a public acquittal, and the latter disgraced by a public sentence of condemnation. These things, by a general judgment, can be done, and no doubt will be done; Matt. xxv. 31, &c.

NOTE XXXII.—p. 159.

Future punishment, as a motive to induce men sincerely to embrace the gospel, derives much of its force from its being eternal; and therefore, the denial of its eternity, must have a direct tendency, by lessening

the fears of sinners, to confirm them in their wickedness. Of those who deny the eternity of future punishment, there are two classes, the Destructionists, and the Universalists. The first are so called, because they believe, that the wicked will be annihilated; and the second, because they believe, that all shall finally be restored to happiness, not excepting even the devils. All the Socinians or Unitarians are understood to hold the doctrine of universal restoration; and some of them, as well as some other persons, in whose creed the doctrine is a leading article, have published their views. The apprehension, that some of these productions, or others of a similar kind, may fall into the hands of some of his readers, induces the author to offer the present long note.

The Destructionists support their opinion by those scripture passages which represent future punishment under the notion of destruction and death; Matt. x. 28. Rom. vi. 23. 2 Thess. i. 9. Rev. xx. 14. In refutation of this opinion, it is observed, that the Bible speaks of future punishment as what is deeply *felt* (Matt. xxiv. 51.), and also as having different degrees of suffering (Luke xii. 47, 48.); and therefore destruction and death cannot mean a total cessation of existence; for that implies no feeling of suffering, much less different degrees of suffering. And should it be argued, that this cessation of existence is preceded and attended with different degrees of suffering, according to the previous character of the individual, the argument is not satisfactory; for, that the sinner shall ever cease to exist, is contrary to those scripture passages which speak of future punishment as eternal. To say, that destruction and death evidently denote a cessation of existence, is not enough; for these words, as applied to the separate spirit after the death of the body, or to the whole man, including both body and soul, are plainly figurative; and literal words ought not to be explained by those which are figurative, but the contrary. Destruction and death, when applied to future punishment, must be understood to denote, that it is a state of *complete ruin*, and that it is the *final or last*

state of man; and so prove nothing for the Destructionist, and are quite against the Universalist.

The advocates for universal restoration adduce several arguments in favour of the doctrine.

1. They produce those passages of scripture in which Christ is said to die for all; 2 Cor. v. 14. Heb. ii. 9. To this argument it is answered, that Christ's dying for all, must be understood in the same sense as the atonement which was said to be made for all Israel; 2 Chron. xxix. 24. In both instances, all those to whom the atonement, by the death of the victim, is said to refer, have perfect liberty to avail themselves of it, by seeking salvation through it; but if the atonement of Christ be rejected, instead of saving us, it will only expose us to greater misery; Heb. x. 29.

2. They contend, that a state of endless suffering is inconsistent with the goodness and justice of God. This is denied. A state of endless suffering cannot be proved to be contrary to the goodness of God. Goodness in a governor leads him invariably to desire and pursue the general peace and happiness of the nation; and that goodness appears particularly pure, when to secure these ends, he uniformly punishes transgressors, in such a manner as is found to be necessary. Now, as we cannot prove, that the *threatening* of eternal misery is unnecessary to prevent men from destroying each other's happiness, and displeasing God by sins committed more directly against himself; or that the *infliction* of that misery is unnecessary, as a moral means of preserving the saints in heaven, or the inhabitants of other worlds, in a state of purity; so we cannot prove, that either the threatening or infliction of endless misery is contrary to the goodness of God. Facts shew, that the threatening of eternal misery is not unnecessary; for notwithstanding the numerous passages of scripture which speak of such a state of misery, men are not deterred from sin. And if God threatens men with eternal punishment, he is bound as a God of truth to inflict it, though not in the same way as to fulfil a promise; for a promise gives the

person to whom it is made a *right* to the blessing promised, but no one will say that he has a right to the punishment threatened.

Nor can a state of endless suffering be proved to be contrary to the justice of God. As a just Governor, it is requisite, that he should act with impartiality, by inflicting an equal measure of punishment upon all persons whose crimes are equal; that he should proportion the punishment to the crime, instead of punishing greater and lesser offences with the same severity; and that these punishments should not be more heavy than the ends of government require; which are, the obedience, and consequent happiness, of the persons governed. The present controversy regards only the last of these particulars, and it has been already shewn, that it is impossible to prove, that either the threatening, or the infliction, of eternal misery, is not necessary to secure the ends of the divine government.

3. They assert, that future punishment is corrective, or designed to lead the sinner to repentance; and that, as it may be expected, at length, to have this effect upon all, so all will ultimately be placed in a state of happiness. That the *threatening* of future punishment is designed to lead sinners to repentance, none will deny; but that the *infliction* of it is designed to have this effect, cannot be proved: on the contrary, much may be alleged against it.

(1.) Some of God's dealings with men in this world are against it. On some occasions, he smites the daring sinner with instant death; and in some instances, sin, by the natural course of things, deprives the individual of reason or life. These punishments could not be designed to lead the person to repentance, for they place him beyond the reach of it.

(2.) The condition of the fallen angels is against it; for they have now been in a state of torment at least near six thousand years; and when the day of judgment arrives, sentence of punishment will again be passed upon them; and if so, they cannot have been led to repentance; 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6.

(3.) The manner in which the Bible speaks of repentance, and the future punishment of the wicked, is opposed to it. Solomon evidently views repentance as impossible in the next world; Eccl. ix. 10. Nothing was said to Dives about repentance, nor does he appear to have had any idea of being delivered from misery, either by that or any other means. When punishment is designed to reform the sufferer, it is usual to deliver to him warnings, exhortations, &c.; but in the sentence which will be passed upon the wicked at the day of judgment, we do not find a single word of this kind; Matt. xxv. 41.

4. They assert, that the terms everlasting, for ever, &c., do not necessarily signify endless duration, but are to be qualified by the subject to which they refer; and therefore, they must in the present case be taken in a limited sense. "Here," say they, "the subject is a sinner; but as his punishment will at length purge him from all his sins, and so make him a saint, these words can mean no more than, that the sinner will be punished as long as he continues a sinner, whether that period be long or short." In reply to this argument, it is candidly admitted, that the meaning of the words everlasting, for ever, &c., must be determined by the subject to which they refer: they denote the longest period of which that subject is capable. "Thus, 'a servant for ever,' is, a servant during the longest period in which he can be a servant, that is, during his life. 'An ordinance for ever,' is an ordinance continuing through the longest time in which it can be an ordinance, that is, throughout the whole continuance of the dispensation of which it is a part, viz. the Mosaic dispensation. In the same manner, the everlasting hills, and the everlasting mountains, denote hills and mountains enduring throughout the longest period which is predicable of them; to wit, while the earth endures." The subject in hand, to which this rule is to be applied, is man. It is the everlasting punishment of man; and the only way to prove that this punishment will have an end, according to the plan laid down by our opponents, is

to prove, that man's soul will have an end. But this cannot be proved, and if it could, it would not serve the purpose of the Universalist, but only of the Destructionist; for instead of proving, that all the wicked would be finally restored to a state of happiness, it would only prove, that they would cease to be miserable, because they would cease to exist. The Universalist avoids this conclusion; but it is by a false method of reasoning. "The subject of this punishment," says he, "is a sinner. Future punishment is designed to purge him from sin, and when this is done, he ceases to be an object of punishment." To perceive the fallacy in this reasoning, we must observe, that a sinner denotes, either one whose character is decidedly sinful, or one whose past conduct has been sinful. In the last sense, it is equivalent to the word criminal. In the above argument, it is taken in the first sense; which cannot be allowed in the present case. The criminal suffers not for what he is, but for what he has *done*; and in like manner, the sinner will be punished for "the deeds done in the body," or while he was upon earth: at the same time, his character is sinful, and will ever continue so. The above argument also takes it for granted, that the design of future punishment is to lead the sufferers to repentance; but it has been already shewn, that we have every reason to conclude, that this is not its design; and consequently, that it never will produce this effect in a single instance.

NOTE XXXIII.—p. 162.

As many persons disposed to read and purchase a few religious books, are often at a loss in making a proper choice, the following list may be found useful. It contains no works but what the author can safely recommend. Some of the books may be obtained in a larger size, but at an increased price. Where differ-

ent works on the same subject are inserted, it is left to the reader to make his own choice. Any work may be obtained from a country bookseller, by giving him the title, &c. of the work, as inserted below.

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