

**THE WORKS**  
OF THE  
**REV. EDWARD WILLIAMS, D.D.**

**VOLUME IV.**

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**THE WORKS**  
OF THE  
**REV. EDWARD WILLIAMS. D.D.**  
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**MISCELLANEOUS PIECES**  
ON

**MORAL SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ON**  
**DOCTRINAL AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY;**  
WITH

**PUBLIC LETTERS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.**

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\* [This syllabus was never published, but quoted not unfrequently. See Gilbert's Memoir of Dr Williams, p. 337; Dr Payne's Lectures on Christian Theology, vol. i., p. 250; First Lines of Christian Theology, by Dr John Pye Smith, p. vi. Mr Farrer, the learned Editor of Dr Pye Smith's volume, expresses himself in the following language:—"As early as the year 1798, he" (*i.e.*, Dr Pye Smith) "commenced writing a series of Theological Lectures on the basis of the Syllabus drawn up by the late Dr Edward Williams. This fragment is still in existence, and supplies the link of connexion between Dr Smith's completed system and that of his venerable instructor. Through the kindness of the Rev. John Hammond of Handsworth," (one of the few surviving pupils of Dr Williams,) "the Editor has been permitted to examine a copy of Dr Williams's outline. A comparison of this document with the manuscripts left by Dr Smith, clearly indicates the powerful influence which the eminent defender of Modern Calvinism exerted upon the whole cast of thought of his most distinguished pupil, while at the same time that this influence was not such as to involve a sacrifice of mental independence on the part of the latter." Many points of similarity between Dr Williams and Dr Pye Smith had struck my own mind before I saw the above paragraph. See note, p. 222.—ED.]

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I

## DISSERTATIONS.

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## DISSERTATION I\*

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF MORAL SCIENCE IN GENERAL

[i.e., IN

1808]—ACKNOWLEDGED DEFECTS—CAUSES OF DEFECTS ASSIGNED—SYLLABUS, DEFINITIONS, AND AXIOMS.

BY moral science I mean, a certain, as opposed to conjectural, knowledge, arising from intuitive and demonstrative evidence of virtue and vice, in their nature, causes, and consequences. In other words, moral science is a sure and exact knowledge of virtue and vice, as to what they are in themselves, from whence they spring, and to what they tend, respectively, as their ultimate results. It, therefore, brings us acquainted doctrinally with good and evil, God and ourselves, happiness and misery; not in the way of doubtful conjecture, but by the clear light of indubitable principles and infallible conclusions.

Comparing the above definition with the existing systems of moral philosophy, we may easily perceive what little progress has been made in the science. Abstracted from the didactic parts of theology, how little is found in moral writers even respecting *virtue*, as to its nature, proper cause, and genuine consequences; and as to the same predicaments of *vice* much less appears to be known. And that this is the fact has often been acknowledged and lamented by eminent philosophers. But while many of them despair of success in some essential parts of the science, others have expressed themselves in a more encouraging strain. Won-

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\* [The revered author had contemplated the publication of a volume on Moral Science, and had made considerable preparations, but the Almighty Disposer of life called him to his rest and reward before that purpose could be carried into effect. The first eight of the following Dissertations constitute all the chapters he had prepared for the project. They were written with great care, and even copied out by another hand for the press. No liberty has, therefore, been taken with the text. Those who are acquainted with the author's writings will recognise his own mode of thinking in every line.—ED.]

derful progress has been made in demonstrating the laws of matter and motion, and in mathematical knowledge in general. It is, therefore, an interesting question, What solid reasons can be assigned for the acknowledged failure of success in moral science?

For, though since the days of Bacon, and especially those of Newton, natural philosophy has been gradually on the advance, moral science has been stationary, or even retrograde. The progress of the former is universally ascribed to the mode of investigation proposed and employed by those great men. Instead of conjecture and hypothesis, they ascertained phenomena, and formed their system by induction. By pursuing the method of experiments the most solid foundation is laid for systematic superstructures. In physics, even supposing an hypothesis to be founded in truth, if it be not proved to be true by induction, it remains only as a conjecture. But if the same hypothesis (for instance, the Copernican in astronomy) be brought to the test of actual observation, in connexion with mathematical calculations, a glorious fabric of scientific knowledge is the result.

It had been, therefore, pretty generally supposed that the want of pursuing the same plan of philosophising with sufficient care has been the reason why greater progress has not been made in the departments of mind and morals. But we may ask, Has not this very method, so peculiarly successful in physics, been actually pursued by men of the first abilities, and in some instances with unremitting assiduity? How, then, are we to account for a failure of result so generally confessed? We are not, however, to suppose that the science of mind, or intellectual philosophy, is equally deficient with that of morals. By no means. There has been a far greater approximation to scientific certainty in what relates to the intellectual powers, than in what relates to the active powers of man, as they are sometimes distinguished. Any one who is acquainted with the writings of Dr Reid, for example, will easily recognise the truth of this remark. The reason seems to be that the laws by which the intellectual powers operate are in their nature more closely allied in some respects to physical mechanism than to freedom, which we may affirm without conceding anything to the doctrine of materialism. For the freedom which belongs to the doctrine of our active powers is more remote from the notion of cause and effect in physics than the laws by which the intellect is governed.

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There are sufficient reasons for concluding that there are principles influencing the operations of intellect which absolutely pre-

clude complete success on the plan which has been so much recommended; much less, therefore, can a successful result be found in the same procedure relative to the will and the affections of mind. Morals have immediately to do with our active powers and obligations; but the knowledge of phenomena, obtained by attentive observation on what is actually found in ourselves, and on effects in ourselves and others, affords no sufficient data in order to ascertain *what ought to be*. For were all the thoughts, volitions, and propensities of each individual of the human race clearly ascertained, the knowledge would be only that of facts, not obligations. Indeed inferences might be drawn of considerable advantage, and among others those of obligation relative to the well-being of individuals and of society; but this after all, however specious or partially useful, would contain little that is radical in moral science; nor in strictness would it deserve the name.

We may, therefore, conclude, that besides the intricacy of the subject,—the too general want of relish for moral truth and goodness, and the consequent want of popularity in the public estimation, which acts as a stimulus to diligent inquiry, and the moral taste indispensably requisite for a patient and persevering investigation,—the process itself, generally recommended and employed, is radically defective. It will be found as we proceed that the only legitimate and successful mode of arriving at demonstrative evidence in moral science is to begin with *axioms*, or first principles of knowledge. These principles, whether perceived intuitively or learned from Divine revelation, are in morals what experiments or observed phenomena are in physics. As morals imply obligation, obligation a law, law a governor, it plainly follows that if our knowledge of the governor and of his character be incorrect, our knowledge of morals will be so in proportion. Without this it is clearly impossible to arrive at a correct notion of either the law by which we are governed, or the nature of that obligation under which we lie as moral subjects. While theories have been formed with so much disregard to the true character of the Moral Governor, and the relations He bears to us, all that can be said on the subject of morals, from the nature of the case, can be nothing better than vague conjecture, or mere uncertain hypothesis.

When any theory labours under this radical defect, moral obli-

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gation can never be rightly understood. For what is an obligation without an obliger, or an obliger without a corresponding relative character, or a relative character without the ascertained ground of that character? Who can perceive with truth that either power, or wisdom, or benevolence, or all united, are adequate reasons of obligation? However glorious are these perfections of Deity, and however concerned in moral government, without the exercise of equity moral obligation is not conceivable. Nor is the knowledge of the real cause of the subject's happiness to be attained without a just conception of the Divine benevolence in its exercise.

Another defect of the most essential nature has commonly attended the pursuits of moral philosophy; I mean assumed notions of the doctrine of motives in moral actions. By close inquiry it will be found, in the light of evident first principles, that motive, or that which insures the volition of the free agent, is a complex notion, including not only the object of choice, but also a subjective ground,—that is, the state of the mind, arising from either a physical or metaphysical cause, according to the nature or moral quality of the volition. And this cannot possibly be but in the light of the relative characters of the governor and those who are governed. Until we have just evidence in what respects the Moral Governor is pleased to exercise benevolence and equity, and in what respects the moral subject is a passive recipient of benefits, and a free agent left to himself, without a pretermination to a virtuous choice, moral science is but an unmeaning term.

Nothing has brought greater confusion into systems of morality than a vague, undefined notion of what it is that constitutes the moral quality of an action. Until the term itself, *morality*, be accurately defined, and a definite idea connected with it, which is very generally overlooked, what prospect is there of certain knowledge in any of the subordinate parts?

Another very momentous defect has been the neglect of *sufficient principles* to explain the phenomena of virtuous and vicious actions. It is demonstrable that no principles which are, properly speaking, either physical or moral, or which are, in fact, so denominated, are sufficient to account for by far the most numerous of human moral actions. If we exclude metaphysical causes, an

impenetrable veil of obscurity and uncertainty will remain, and defy the efforts of the keenest penetration.

This, in fact, is the reason why so many fruitless attempts have

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been made to ascertain the true cause of the origin of moral evil. It should seem, from the many efforts made to solve this awful problem, that if the solution were but scientifically made, it would prove an important step towards the advancement of moral science. But, on the contrary, while this problem remains unsolved, it must needs continue radically defective. By some indeed this has been called a speculative question, as if no very important effect could arise from success in it. This, however, has never been proved, nor that I know of attempted, except by empty declamation. Thus heathen philosophers might declaim that the questions respecting the unity and perfections of Deity, and the future existence of human souls, were mainly speculative. But such objections arise from a vain hypothesis, that what we do not actually know, or have not sufficient evidence on which to form our conclusion, cannot be of importance to us even when known. At this rate, however, Christianity might be represented by the uninformed as of no value; and evidence of a resurrection to eternal life pronounced a speculative nicety. But what if there were involved in the solution the truest grounds of the most practical duties—humility, gratitude, and resignation? No one, however, can either prove or disprove this to be the consequence until he either know what the true solution is, or demonstrate that the solution is impracticable. To declaim on the limits of the human mind, and that it is not adequate to discover so mysterious a subject, without shewing any demonstrative reason for that conclusion, is to employ sophism for the purpose of strengthening prejudice, and proudly to set up a boundary, beyond which none must attempt to move, without assigning any just cause for the arbitrary restriction. Besides, in proportion as the problem appears not incapable of solution, and still more when actually solved, such declamation must appear perfectly frivolous.

The author has long been of opinion that the low state of moral science, and the endless varieties in philosophical intellectual systems, both ancient and modern, may be traced principally to this source—viz., the want of just views of passive power, or “meta-

physical evil,” and its relation to that which is physical and moral. Some indeed have affected to question its existence; but probably when they know themselves better, cultivate a better acquaintance with the only true source of humility, and the genuine ground of spiritual gratitude and scriptural prayer, they will think differently.

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## A SYLLABUS OF MORAL SCIENCE\*

### MORAL SCIENCE IN GENERAL.

Present state of moral science universally acknowledged to be extremely defective—Seasons for this assigned, and the remedy suggested. Definitions of terms and principles. Axioms. Different kinds of evidence, and principles of demonstration. Power—Its different kinds—Active power—Passive power. Other definitions and explanations of power—Particularly physical power—Metaphysical power, and its different relations. Moral power—Mistakes respecting it rectified. Will, volition, and desire explained and distinguished, and their efficient causes assigned. Voluntary operations. Final causes—Ultimate, chief. The distinctive characters of wisdom compared with knowledge and prudence. Liberty and necessity. True nature of liberty ascertained—Arguments for. The nature and different kinds of necessity—Physical—Metaphysical—Absolute and hypothetical. Arguments for necessity as it stands opposed to universal contingency. How absolute necessity in one respect, and absolute liberty in another, are perfectly compatible. Dr Reid’s objections examined. The nature of things—Different senses of the phrase explained, and hypothetical tendencies. Divine prescience. How the doctrine of *scientia media*, properly explained, may be rendered subservient to moral science.

### GOOD IS GENERAL—VIRTUE—MORAL OBLIGATION, AND THEIR PROPER CAUSES.

First Cause, or the evidence that there is a Being all-powerful, wise, and good, by whom everything which may be denominated good exists. The supposition that there is not such a Being is infinitely improbable when compared with *marks of design*, both in ourselves and in other beings around us. That there is such a Being is infinitely probable from the idea of *possibility*. A demonstration of the existence of God from the idea of existing *effects*. A demonstration of a First Cause as absolute Being, from the idea of contingent existence. Divine equity and benevo-

lence. The origin and standard of Divine equity, whether in the will or the nature of the Deity. Divine benevolence—how it stands related to the nature and the will of the Deity. Divine benevolent purposes—And whether there be anything purposed by the Deity which does not bear

\* [As the idea of a fitting monument to the memory of Dr Williams entered largely into the project of a complete Edition of his Works, and as this Syllabus, with the Definitions and Axioms that follow,—the outline of lengthened and repeated profound thought,—was an integral part of that monument, it has not been judged right to suppress it because of its merely outline character.—ED.]

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that character. Moral means, and the various principles of action in moral agents. The nature and influence of moral means—False notions refuted. Mechanical principles of action. Animal principles of action. Rational principles of action. Divine principles of action—Their distinctive character compared with the preceding. Motives in moral actions—Their nature—Mistakes concerning them—The importance of avoiding those mistakes. Moral obligation—Its true nature and cause—Different theories essentially defective. Real virtue—False notions exposed—Its true nature established and distinguished into comparative and absolute.

#### EVILS IN THE GENERAL, AND THEIR ULTIMATE ORIGIN.

Evils of different kinds—Physical—Metaphysical—Moral—and Penal. Different theories of the origin of evil examined. The Persian—The Manichean hypothesis examined and refuted. Ancient and modern systems of Fatalism—None of them account for the origin of evil. The decretive will of Deity is not the source of moral evil. The importance of ascertaining the real origin or cause of moral evil—As it relates to moral science and to the practice of virtue. The possibility of ascertaining it on the principles of strict demonstration, notwithstanding past failures. The cause and mode of evil's origination not to be confounded. The true origin of moral evil demonstrated. The nature of a demonstration suited to the subject. The origin of evil demonstrated in seven different ways. The true origin of moral evil demonstrated from the absurdity of denying the cause assigned.

#### HAPPINESS AND MISERY, AND THEIR RESPECTIVE CAUSES, BOTH IMMEDIATE AND REMOTE.

Happiness in general. *Summum bonum*—The source of mistakes respecting it—How satisfactorily ascertained. The means of happiness—Virtuous love—Fear—Humility—Resignation—Patience—Purity, &c.

The cause of happiness—Immediate and ultimate. Misery in general—Its proper and real causes—Vice—Inordinate self-love—Pride—Irreverence—Impatience—False attachments—Dishonesty—Depravity—Despair, &c. The *continuance* of happiness and misery—According to the principles of moral science. Heaven—Hell. Conclusions. Deductions from the whole.

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## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND PRINCIPLES.

## DEFINITION I.

The *morality* of any action is the manner of it, in reference to the end or ends proposed by the agent.

It is not enough that an action be *voluntary*, for so are confessedly innumerable actions which have no morality in them. Nor is it necessary, in this definition of morality in general, to include the motive; for the motive and its character can affect only the distinctive qualities, not the general nature of morality.

## DEFINITION II.

A morally *good* action is that in which the agent proposes to himself the chief good for his ultimate end, whatever that be, and all other ends in subserviency to it.

This definition includes that rectitude which is the rule of moral obligation; for any action possessing these qualities is morally good, irrespective of either the remoter cause, or of the immediate subjective part of the motive. And it includes the *virtue* of an action, which is a laudable means of happiness; for real happiness is included in the ultimate end, and laudable means in subordinate ends.

## DEFINITION III.

A morally *evil* action is that in which the agent proposes to himself a different end or ends from what the Moral Governor does.

This definition includes that obliquity or deviation from rectitude which constitutes a branch of moral obligation; for every action possessing these qualities is morally evil, irrespective of the remoter cause, or of the immediate subjective part of the

motive. And it includes the *vice* of an action, which is an effort to obtain happiness by means which are not laudable.

DEFINITION IV.

The *rectitude* of a moral agent is his conformity to the nature and will of the Moral Governor.

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From the preceding definitions, it is obvious, that in proportion as an agent deviates from rectitude, the character of his action partakes of the nature of vice. And it is further obvious, that no action is properly virtuous which is not perfectly conformable to rectitude. Therefore, partial conformity is virtue only in a partial and improper sense of the term, because it may be found in the most vicious characters, and therefore not at all connected with real and ultimate happiness.

DEFINITION V.

Moral *means* are objective considerations afforded by the Moral Governor as inducements to act morally well, and which in their own nature are suitable to promote that end.

Through want of precision in the use of terms, these are often called “motives,” while in strictness they constitute but one part of a motive, according to the proper use of the word. And sometimes the term “means” has been confounded with the proper cause of virtuous actions, though in reality perfectly different.

DEFINITION VI.

Moral *obligation* is the indispensable and equitable connexion subsisting between virtue and happiness, vice and misery.

In this definition, virtue and vice are the *antecedents*, happiness and misery the *consequents* respectively. The connexion subsists of hypothetical necessity; for it arises from the nature of things, which is ultimately the nature of the Moral Governor, that the removal of the consequent can take place only by the removal of the antecedent, and therefore the obliging power is equity. It may be further observed, though virtue and happiness are included in the definition, in order to avoid an unnecessary deviation from the common use of language, the term “obligation” is more strictly applicable to vice and misery. For it is more proper to say, a vicious person is *bound* to be

miserable, than to say, a virtuous person is *bound* to be happy. However, it is proper to say, he who would be happy is bound to be virtuous, and the obliging power is Divine equity; and from the same principle, the alternative is misery. In strictness, therefore, “obligation” expresses a hypothetical cause of equitable suffering.

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## DEFINITION VII.

A *principle* in moral science is that which legitimately accounts for any phenomenon relative to virtue and vice to which it is applied.

Thus a mere hypothesis, or conjectural cause, does not deserve the appellation of principle. There are, indeed, principles the full extent of whose application we may never be able fully to discover, but they are to be considered as such no further than they fairly account for phenomena.

## DEFINITION VIII.

A *physical* principle is the agency of either the First Cause, or of subordinate causes proceeding from the first.

The propriety of introducing a definition of a physical principle into moral science is obvious; because no moral act can possibly take place without it, as appears from the nature of morality before defined.

## DEFINITION IX.

A *metaphysical* principle is either absolute necessity or hypothetical necessity, which is the want of ulterior perfection.

Metaphysics, in general, is the science of possibles and impossibles. Absolute necessity belongs only to the First Cause, whose existence is as absolute as the impossibility of it is absurd. *Hypothetical* necessity is the truth of connexion between antecedents and consequents, which is ultimately reducible to God, who is the primary truth. The want of ulterior perfection is the characteristic difference of a creature compared with the First Cause as to self-existence, independence, and all-sufficiency.

## DEFINITION X.

A *moral* principle is that state of the mind which is adapted to render moral means the occasion of either virtue or vice.

In a less accurate sense, a moral principle is made to express that temper of mind which is the predisposing cause of virtue. But

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this last more properly is only *one kind* of moral principle; for bad morals have a principle as well as good.

DEFINITION XI.

A *motive*, in morals, is that which actually induces a voluntary determination, and which always consists of a compound ratio of moral principle and moral means proportioned to the effect.

The word “motive” is often used in a vague sense; denoting sometimes the objective consideration, and at other times the moral principle. But neither of these, separately considered, actually induces a voluntary determination, which determination, however, no other word so properly expresses. That it consists of a compound ratio proportioned to the effect will be shewn in a future definition.

DEFINITION XII.

Divine *benevolence* is that perfection of Deity which communicates good only.

To suppose that it communicates evil without desert, is to convert it into malevolence; or evil for desert, is to identify it with distributive justice. And between these there is no medium.

DEFINITION XIII.

*Sovereign* Divine benevolence is the right of dispensing benefits, according to wisdom, in one way or in one degree rather than another.

It is plain, nothing in the created subject itself can be the ground of benevolent communications; for the being and valuable properties of every created subject are the *fruit* of benevolence. It is also an indubitable fact, that benefits are dispensed in various ways and degrees; for which variety Divine wisdom is an adequate reason.

DEFINITION XIV.

Divine *equity* is that perfection of Deity which is disposed to give every one his due.

This definition includes universal being as one object of equity, both

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creatures and the Creator; for it would be unreasonable to suppose that infinite equity is not disposed to “give unto God the things that are God’s.”

## DEFINITION XV

The *chief good*, considered objectively, is God; and, subjectively considered, the greatest conformity to Him of which our nature is capable.

From this definition, it may appear why the discussions agitated about the *summum bonum* have often been so unsatisfactory and involved. If we do not distinguish between what the chief good is in itself, and our manner of possessing it, a confusion of ideas concerning it will unavoidably follow.

## DEFINITION XVI.

A moral *agent* is a being capable of enjoying the chief good; who chooses his chief good with deliberation and with perfect freedom.

This definition, it is obvious, includes the Supreme Being as well as every order of intelligent creatures. It also applies no less to the most depraved than to the most perfect.

## DEFINITION XVII.

*Freedom* or liberty in moral agency, abstractedly considered, is *exemption* from all control or interference in the morality of an action; or, in reference to good and evil, *exemption* from restraint and constraint.

Hence we perceive an essential difference between freedom in morality and spontaneity; for the latter belongs to brutes, though incapable of morality. It also keeps clear of the objection raised against the impropriety of ascribing freedom to the will, making it the power of a power, or the faculty of a faculty.

## DEFINITION XVIII.

*Physical power* in moral agency is an active will choosing the greatest apparent good.

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Whatever power is ultimately reducible to the First Cause or Supreme Agent is properly “physical,” being a part of the constituted laws of nature. A moral agent choosing the great-

est apparent good is no less a constituted law of nature, as appears from universal fact, than the principle of gravitation in the material universe.

## DEFINITION XIX.

*Passive power*, sometimes called metaphysical evil, in moral science, is a metaphysical principle which is the cause of fallibility, and which, when not counteracted by the exercise of sovereign benevolence, is an adequate reason why physical power and freedom will terminate in moral evil. It consists in the essential difference between absolute perfection and the want of it, as to self-existence, independence, and all-sufficiency.

That fallibility has a cause as well as infallibility, cannot be doubted; and to ascribe it to any other cause than what is here assigned is inconceivable and contradictory.

## DEFINITION XX.

*Moral power* is ability to produce moral effects with freedom, and belongs to every moral agent.

“Moral power” is often used to express actual good-will, but improperly; and since morality is only the manner of a physical act, whether morally good or bad, and vice is a moral effect no less than virtue, therefore to apply the words to actual good-will exclusively is an arbitrary deviation from propriety of language; and a deviation, too, without sufficient cause or apparent utility.

## DEFINITION XXI.

A Divine *decree* is the purpose of God respecting what He will effect.

To suppose a decree to extend beyond what He effects is absurd; for whatsoever comes to pass which He does not effect, may for the same reason come to pass without His decree; which is the same as to decree without reason.

## DEFINITION XXII.

Divine *prescience* is a certain or infallible knowledge of what is future.

Prescience differs from decree, in that it implies neither purpose nor efficiency; and from mere science or knowledge, in that it respects what has a certain futurity.

## DEFINITION XXIII.

*Decretive necessity* is that which arises from the purpose and efficiency of the Supreme Being.

This definition includes all the laws of nature, all miracles, and all the operations of benevolence. The connexion between the Divine purpose and operation is as necessary as it is necessary for infinite wisdom to be exempt from folly, and infinite power to be exempt from weakness.

## DEFINITION XXIV.

*Hypothetical necessity* is the infallible consequence of something supposed, whether the thing supposed be an object of a decree or not.

This is often termed, and not improperly, metaphysical necessity. The connexion between the supposition and the consequence arises from the nature of things—that is, eternal truth. Thus, a conclusion flows from premises, dependence from creation, &c.

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 AXIOMS IN MORAL SCIENCE.

Every science has axioms, or first principles, peculiar to itself, though some are common to all the sciences. By an axiom in morals is not meant that which cannot be opposed and controverted, (for what principle may not be controverted by the ignorant or perverse?) but *that* the denial of which is reducible to a self-contradiction.

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## AXIOM I.

There is a *First Cause*, whose existence is absolute, possessed of all possible perfections.

It may be shewn that the denial of this axiom is infinitely absurd.

## AXIOM II.

*All good* is ultimately from the First Cause, whom we call God.

The term “good” here includes all created existence, all amiable qualities, all virtuous actions, and all happiness. And all the good of creatures flows from Divine benevolence as the ultimate source, whatever be the secondary causes.

## AXIOM III.

Whatever is purposed and effected by the First Cause is *good* exclusively.

To suppose that any evil proceeds from God is the same as to suppose it is not evil, properly speaking. And this, indeed, is the fact respecting what is called evil, both in common language and in Scripture, of which God is the author. What is called *physical* evil is only relatively so; but, properly speaking, it is good, and worthy of God's purpose and efficiency.

## AXIOM IV.

All moral and metaphysical *evils* are from the *creatures* exclusively.

The former implies, as essential to it, a volition which does not accord with rectitude; and the latter, a want of ulterior perfection. To suppose that either of them proceeds from God is absurd.

## AXIOM V.

The cause of moral evil cannot be itself *morally* evil.

To assert the contrary is the same as to identify cause and effect, which is absurd.

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## AXIOM VI.

Every creature is essentially *defectible*, independently of any decree concerning it.

For what can be more self-evident than that indefectibility is not only essential to God, but peculiar to Him?

## AXIOM VII.

*Defectibility* has a cause, no less than actual defection.

For defectibility is not a simple idea on which the mind can rest as a first principle, and beyond which it would be absurd to seek another cause.

## AXIOM VIII.

The *cause* of defectibility is the essential difference between an absolute and a contingent nature.

Between absolute and contingent there is no conceivable medium. Here, then, we have a simple, specific idea, and the mind rests on a first principle. An absolute nature must be indefectible; and a contingent nature must be defectible, for the same

reason. A higher cause appears impossible; and to require one, therefore, is absurd.

AXIOM IX.

Every moral agent is *properly free* from all decreative necessity in the morality of his acts, when he adopts means of happiness which do not accord with rectitude.

This, properly speaking, is the only *freedom* which is essential to moral agency. For a creature to choose good in general is of decreative necessity, as a part of our constituted nature; and to choose according to rectitude proceeds from benevolent efficiency.

AXIOM X.

In every created moral agent freedom and the cause of defectibility are found *co-existent*.

No illustration, it is presumed, can make this axiom plainer if the term "freedom" be taken as before explained.

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AXIOM XI.

The adequate *grounds* of moral obligation are a physical, dependent power to produce moral effects, objective means of happiness and undisturbed freedom of choice.

A physical, dependent, or borrowed power to produce moral effects is, properly speaking, moral power, since the morality of an action is the manner of a physical act. To require more than what is here stated is unreasonable and contradictory. It would be to require from God what He actually withholds, and is, therefore, to charge Him with injustice, from which He is infinitely remote.

AXIOM XII.

The proper and immediate object of law and sanctions in a moral agent is the *will*, through the medium of the understanding.

This axiom is alike evident to reason, and confirmed by universal experience.

AXIOM XIII.

Objective means never determine the will irrespectively of the state of the mind.

This is plain from the very definition of *motive*, which is ever compounded of some objective consideration, and the subjective state of the mind.

AXIOM XIV.

A morally *good* volition, as such, has only a positive cause.

That is, it is ultimately reducible to the Supreme Agent, and is inseparably connected with Axiom II.

AXIOM XV.

A morally *evil* volition, including the whole of the act, has both a positive and a negative cause.

That is, as an act, physically considered, it is good, and, therefore, has a positive, decreative cause; but as an evil act, metaphysically and morally considered, it has only a negative or a deficient cause.

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AXIOM XVI.

There are hypothetical tendencies arising from the nature of God and the nature of a creature.

That is, if a nature infinitely good lie supposed, it has a tendency infallibly certain to produce a morally good effect; but if a nature not good *per se*, but only by participation, be supposed, a morally good result will be certain only in proportion to the participated good.

AXIOM XVII.

If a nature defectible *per se* be supposed to produce moral effects by virtue of its physical powers and freedom, without further participation, its actual defection will be certain from hypothetical tendencies—that is, from the nature of created existence.

AXIOM XVIII.

Whatever tendencies result from the nature of God, and from the nature of created existence, may be said to flow from the nature of things.

This is plain, for no nature of things is conceivable which is not ultimately reducible to either the nature of God or that of a creature.

## AXIOM XIX

A dissatisfaction with our nature, as possessing the cause of defectibility, is of the essence of rebellion.

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**DISSERTATION II.**

ON EVIDENCE IN MORAL SCIENCE—DIFFERENT KINDS OF  
EVIDENCE

—DEMONSTRATIVE AND PROBABLE—AND WHAT  
PRINCIPLES

ARE ADMISSIBLE IN MORAL SCIENCE.

IN natural philosophy, as well as in the elegant and useful arts, the evidence of sense is of confessed importance; in history, politics, commerce, and revealed religion, the evidence of testimony is an essential ingredient; but in the science of morals the evidence of intuition and of reason is of supreme consideration.

Demonstration is either direct or indirect. Direct demonstration establishes a positive conclusion from positive principles. Indirect demonstration establishes a conclusion equally certain, by shewing the impossibility of its being otherwise, or that the contrary supposition is absurd. To the science of morals as well as to mathematics both kinds are applicable. In general, the legitimate application of the former belongs to the nature, origin, and consequence of vice.

We should not confound evidence in morals with what is termed moral evidence. From want of precision on the point, some have rashly concluded that probable evidence alone, as opposed to strict demonstration, is applicable to the doctrine of morality. But this unreasonable prejudice must arise either from a wrong notion of morals, or the want of acquaintance with its essential principles.

Hence innumerable contradictory hypotheses, and the most absurd conclusions; hence fatalism, Manicheism, unfounded notions of liberty, and weak conjectures about merit and demerit. Hence also the arrogant assumption, that a demonstration of the origin of moral evil is impossible; that prescience necessarily implies foreappointment; and that liberty and necessity, though not

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in themselves irreconcilable, cannot be demonstrably reconciled by the human mind in its present state of existence. On false principles, indeed, this is the case; but no good reason can be assigned why demonstrable evidence is not attainable, if the principles are true.

In moral science there are *three sorts* of principles; and the exclusion or neglect of any one of them must leave a great number of subjects in a state of great embarrassment. These principles may be denominated moral, physical, and metaphysical.

*Moral* principles are not to be confounded with objective considerations, which stand immediately related to the intellect and free-will of the moral agent. These indeed are of great importance, as they constitute an essential part of our motives to action; and without which there could be no rational ground for persuasion or deliberation. In these moral means are founded the very existence of legislation, rules of conduct, and the sanctions of rewards and punishments. Without these, our active powers would be destitute of appropriate objects, and their existence an inexplicable paradox. To enumerate these moral means would be useless as well as difficult; for it is sufficient, in this place, to say, that they are all comprised in Divine laws and sanctions, or the exhibitions of good and evil,—what we are to adopt, and what to reject. But these, however strong, or clear, or interesting in their own nature, secure no result, independent of the state of the mind; and therefore are no *principles* of action. For opposite results may spring from the same objects.

Therefore, moral principles, properly speaking, are those from which a moral effect, good or bad, may be inferred with certainty, taking the moral means into the account. The very nature of moral government supposes that the best means, the most engaging or most alarming considerations, the most insinuating address, the most reasonable persuasions, may fail of success on the mind of a free agent. And we find, in fact, that contrary results take place when the method of persuasion is precisely the same. To ascribe this difference to chance or to some undefinable power, is the same thing as to declare our ignorance of moral principles.

But as every effect must have a definite cause, and that cause cannot be in the moral means, seeing the same means produce

opposite results, it is evident that the moral principle, as the cause of that difference, must be in the mind. Nor can it be admitted

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that the cause is in the will itself, or in any attribute of the will; since it is obvious, that the will is only an instrumental power, by which the soul produces moral effects. To ascribe to the will some undefinable, inexplicable source of power, independent of the previous state of the mind in the act of producing virtuous or vicious acts, is to shun the evidence of an adequate principle, to establish hypotheses without proof, and to recur to the deservedly exploded Peripatetic mode of accounting for effects. At that rate we might feign hypotheses without end, and call a chaos of conjectures philosophy and science.

If, on the contrary, according to plain common sense, we regard the will as a physical power essential to the mind, operating, according to the benevolent intention of the First Cause, in a manner ever conformable to the previous nature and state of the mind, we have a certain principle that satisfactorily accounts for all the phenomena to which it is duly applied, to the exclusion of a pretended occult quality.

*Physical* principles cannot be excluded from moral science without involving the greatest absurdities. A physical principle, as before defined, is either the First Cause, or subordinate causes proceeding from the first. In order to obtain demonstrative evidence, it is not necessary to ascertain the number or the order of subordinate causes; for whatever these may be, the ultimate source of causation remains as a fixed unalterable principle.

Thus the act of willing in general, irrespectively of the moral intention of the agent, is a physical principle of our nature, reducible to the benevolent will of the First Cause. From Him it flows, and cannot possibly proceed from any other source. And, as all good is from God, a morally good volition stands indissolubly connected with a physical principle. It does not signify what may be the subordinate cause; and whether there be any or not, it is an unshaken principle that the goodness of the act, no less than the physical act itself, proceeds from the First Cause.

But *metaphysical* principles, though indispensably necessary in order to a just solution of phenomena in morals, are not so easily perceived. Nothing, however, is more certain than their existence,

or more necessary to account for innumerable moral facts. A metaphysical principle has been defined to be, either absolute necessity or hypothetical necessity, or the want of ulterior perfection. *Absolute* necessity can belong only to the First Cause. And

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this is properly called a metaphysical principle, because metaphysics is the science of possibles and impossibles; and as the admission of an absolute cause cannot be shewn to be otherwise than possible, so the rejection of the principle must be ranked among the impossibles. If absolute existence be not certain, nothing can be certain; and if nothing be certain, universal scepticism is not certain, but a mere gloomy hypothesis without proof.

*Hypothetical* necessity is also a metaphysical principle; for, that a legitimate conclusion should not stand connected, in a manner absolutely certain, with its premises, is among the impossibles. In physics, or what we may term the succession of created existences, causes and effects, or antecedents and consequents, the connexion is the fruit of voluntary appointment, and the certainty of sequence is not metaphysical but arbitrary. It is no wonder, then, that those who confound physics and metaphysics, which is the manner of Hume and many others, should sceptically deny the doctrine of causes and effects. Only allow that cause is nothing else than a physical antecedent of some consequent, as what constantly falls under the observation of our senses, and a sophist may argue with apparent triumph, that the idea of cause is only a vulgar prejudice. But is it a vulgar prejudice, that if the antecedents of a right line falling on another right line be supposed, the consequents will be the formation of two angles equal to two right angles? Is it a vulgar prejudice, that the existence of a man is necessarily connected with limitation? It is not, indeed, metaphysically necessary that the sun, or the solar system, existing today, must exist to-morrow; but is it a vulgar prejudice that the sun exists on the condition of being finite? Is there any possibility, or conceivable supposition, of its being otherwise? Can equals added to equals have unequal results? Or, can the same thing be and not be at the same time, and in the same respects? To deny hypothetical necessity is, in fact, infinitely absurd. For no surer is it that the First Nature is absolute, than that every other nature is contingent, and destitute of absolute perfection.

That part of metaphysical necessity which has been defined to consist in the want of ulterior perfection, though not equally obvious, is equally real; and the neglect of it in moral science has been the cause of great perplexity and many unprofitable disputes. I may venture to assert (for what can be proved may be asserted without arrogance) that, numerous as are the phenomena

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of vicious acts, not one of them can be fairly accounted for without admitting it as a principle in moral science. As well may we suppose that light is the cause of darkness, power the cause of weakness, or wisdom the cause of folly, as suppose that physical principles, to the denial of metaphysical, are adequate causes of moral evil, or sufficient reasons to account for its existence. But a particular examination of this important branch of our subject is reserved for a subsequent part.

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### DISSERTATION III.

ON POWER AND ITS DIFFERENT KINDS—ACTIVE AND  
 PASSIVE  
 POWER—PHYSICAL POWER—METAPHYSICAL POWER—  
 MORAL  
 POWER.

MR LOCKE, in his long chapter “Of Power,” professes that his business there was not to search into the original of power, but how we come by the *idea* of it. On the contrary, my business is not to search how we come by the idea of power, but to ascertain its *original*. The latter alone belongs to moral *science*, the former to probable conjecture deduced from observation and reflection. Were his supposition respecting the mode of acquiring our ideas of power admitted in its fullest extent, it could never serve as a principle in the science of right and wrong. For what moral phenomena is it capable of explaining?

But notwithstanding this profession of Mr Locke, he enters pretty largely into the doctrine of power, in its different relations and properties. He acknowledges that power is twofold, “as able to make, or able to receive any change; the one may be called *active*, and the other *passive power*.” He adds, “Whether matter

be not wholly destitute of *active power*, as its author God is truly above all *passive power*; and whether the intermediate state of created spirits be not that alone which is capable of both *active* and *passive power*, may be worth consideration.”\* However, as to power in general, though he confesses that it includes some kind of relation, he classes it among our simple ideas, “being one of those that make a principal ingredient in our complex ideas of substances.”† In my view, at least as to my present purpose, it is of little or no moment whether the idea of power be simple or complex, and whether or not it be capable of a logical definition.

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\* Hum. Under., book ii., chap. xxi., §§ 2, 4. † Ibid., § 3.

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Perhaps the most radical and clear idea of what is vulgarly called “power” is suggested by the term *possibility*, or the term *cause*. Where, there is no possibility, there is no power, no cause; and where there is a possibility, there is power, or cause. But as possibility, cause, or power, are of different kinds, it is of much greater importance to have these accurately ascertained according to the reality of things. In most languages there is a poverty of terms; and the consequence is, that we are often obliged to employ the same term to express very different objects.

Dr Reid supposes that because the term “power” is well understood by the vulgar, an attempt to explain it needs an apology. But the fair question is not, whether those who understand the English language have a clear idea of many things expressed by that term; but, whether new ideas, the result of closer investigation, should be expressed by some new explanation of the term, or whether new terms should be coined on purpose. If the shades of difference in the ideas be not very essential, to adopt the latter method would be charged with affectation! The only alternative is to use the old term with suitable explanations. To prohibit all variation of idea, and all future improvement relative to the subject “power,” is a species of despotism which no liberal mind would choose to avow; yet next in degree is the prohibition of an explained variation from the vulgar sense in the use of the old term.

Dr Reid seems to take it for granted, that if a “logical definition” of power ought not to be attempted, no new idea ought to be formed, and no new explanation of the term ought to be given.

But if this be his real meaning, by what good reason can it be established? What though magnitude, thought, duration, number, and motion, “cannot be logically defined;” are there no new relations or properties of them ever to be discovered? Or, if discovered, are they not to be explained by a corresponding difference in the acceptation of the terms? Though this respectable author does not “attempt to *define* active power,” he says much on his *opinion* concerning it; and much, in my apprehension, that is far more exceptionable than would be an attempt to define it.

When the Doctor observes, that “power is not an object of our external senses,” and when he contends that it is “not even an object of consciousness,” the denial, if accurate, must depend on an equivocal use of the term power. No man, it is plain, can either know by his senses, or be conscious of *absolute* active power,

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as a property of himself, for it does not belong to him, but is peculiar to the “First Cause. But, for a similar reason, God is *conscious* of *absolute* active power. To man, however, belongs *hypothetical* active power, and of this he may be, and is, daily conscious. Absolute possibility being peculiar to God does not hinder the creature from possessing, and being conscious of possessing, conditional possibility of acting. I should be glad to know, if such knowledge be attainable, wherein “active power” in any creature differs from “a conditional possibility of acting?” I call this possibility (which, until better informed, I shall consider as synonymous with power) of acting, *conditional* or *hypothetical*, because of its dependence on the *first* possibility, power, or cause. To no creature can a higher active power than this belong—viz., an ability to act if God assist. Probably the want of attending to the difference between *different kinds* of power, led Dr Reid to form this distinction:—“I am conscious that I have a *conception* or *idea* of power, but, strictly speaking, I am not conscious that I have power.” He had a conception of *absolute* power, but could not be conscious of having it, because it is not a created attribute. But he had both a conception and consciousness of conditional, contingent, dependent active power in himself, which may be known with equal certainty as our existence. If we suppose that we have any consciousness even of our *existence*, as an absolute, and not a *contingent* thing, it must be owing to a great mistake; and that which might lead us into

that mistake is, that we are conscious of *continued* existence, but not of *continued* power. This, however, is no evidence against the nature of both being merely hypothetical. Our existence, as well as our active power, are equally dependent on the *continued energy* of the First Cause. Without this we have, in reality, no more existence than active power. The laws, indeed, according to which both are maintained are different; but these laws themselves, as well as their effects, are contingent things. Existence is a *perpetuated* effect of Divine causation, in order to answer the wise designs of the Creator; and active power is an interrupted and varied effect of the same absolute cause, in order to fulfil equally wise purposes. There is, therefore, no sufficient reason why *consciousness* should be ascribed to the one, and only *belief* to the other. Viewing both, in an *absolute* sense, we can have only a *belief* of them; but viewing both as contingent and dependent things, we are *conscious* of them alike, though not in a manner

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equally continuous. I am no less conscious of my having a power to write, to think, and to love, than I am conscious of my existence; but all are contingent things, equally dependent on the supreme will, though continued according to different laws. My active power is, indeed, more liable to be interrupted than my existence, in virtue of their respective laws; but I am as *conscious* of a *power* of loving an object apparently deserving of my affection, as I am of my very *existence*.

Consciousness, properly speaking, belongs to *present* time, in contradistinction to past and future. To extend it to the future, is to identify it with belief; and to extend it to the past, is to destroy the difference between it and reminiscence. I cannot be *conscious* that I shall exist in any future moment, because my existence is a contingent thing depending on the will of another; but I may *believe* it. In like manner, I cannot be *conscious* of possessing active power in any future moment, because my active power, like my existence, is a contingent thing; but I may *believe* it as a hypothetical fact. In both cases alike, the ground of belief is the *continued energy* of the First Cause, which continued energy is not in itself necessary, but a contingent effect depending on supreme will. Now, if conscious existence can belong to the *present* moment only, to the exclusion of the future, and if I have

at the *present* moment a conscious power of loving a lovely object no less than of my existence, Dr Reid's assertion, "that power is not an object of consciousness," is directed altogether as much against conscious existence as against conscious power. Would any one say that a person's own *existence* is not an object of his consciousness, but only its operations? Suppose, then, it were maintained that we are conscious of our existence *only* by its operations, still it would follow that we are as conscious of active power as we are of existence. The fact is, that both power and existence are only hypothetical effects, and stand precisely on the same condition—viz., the will of the First Cause. I have *now* a dependent existence and a dependent power, of both which I am *alike* conscious; and if it please the supreme will, I shall possess both in continuity.

From Dr Reid's account of "power," we are naturally led to conclude that he regarded it as some inexplicable *occult quality* belonging to the mind itself. "Power is no *operation* of the mind, and therefore no object of consciousness. Indeed every

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operation of the mind is the exertion of *some power of the mind*, but we are conscious of the operation only—the *power lies behind the scene*." If this power "behind the scene" be the *Divine energy* operating according to instituted laws, let it be frankly acknowledged, to the praise of the bountiful Giver. But if it be maintained that there is in the *mind itself* a hidden quality called "power," distinct from the Divine energy operating according to instituted laws, the *proof* should be produced. I will venture to affirm that it *cannot* be produced. That no more *causes* ought to be admitted than are legitimately sufficient to explain their phenomena, is a rule no less applicable to metaphysical and moral science than to the laws of motion. To seek for power as an *occult quality* in the mind, distinct from Divine energy as the *cause* of the operation, is unphilosophical, as it multiplies causes without either necessity or advantage. We know that all active power is ultimately reducible to the First Cause; until, therefore, it can be proved that the immediate energy of the First Cause is inadequate to account for the effect, or that it is unworthy of Him thus to exert it, it is not allowable to suppose that there is any such occult quality.

Dr Reid further asserts that “power” is one of those things “of which we have only a relative conception,” in opposition to *direct*. This representation, if applied to *one kind* of active power, conveys an important truth; but when advanced as a general rule, without distinguishing the objects, I conceive it will be found fallacious. Active power, as before shewn, is either *absolute* or *conditional*. Of the *latter*, it is allowed as a plain fact, our conception can be only *relative*. Its very existence stands necessarily connected with a *supposition*; and that supposition is a supreme continued will, without which as its. cause no contingent power is conceivable. But of *absolute* power our conception is *direct*; that is, in proportion as our conception of it is accurate. Some, indeed, may imagine that we have no direct conception of an absolute first power, because it is generally supposed we arrive at that conception by previous relative considerations. But the question is not by what previous relations we arrive at the conception, but whether the conception itself, when obtained, is *direct*? My conception of an object which stands necessarily connected with another object for its existence is *relative*. Thus the idea of a creator, a governor, a father, a friend,

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the idea of proportions, of bodies, and of situations, and indeed all our ideas of contingent existences, are *relative*; because a comparison of the object with some other is necessarily implied. In a sense, indeed, we say that our knowledge of some objects of sense is direct, but it is a lax sense. For instance, our idea of colour, suppose red, is called direct, as well as simple; but I believe that no one can have a conception of any colour, however simple, and however disengaged from all others by means of a prism, without considering it as *related* to some substance, or at least to some cause. But if I conceive of an object which does not imply any *other* object with which it stands necessarily connected, or the very existence of which implies no relation to any’ other, my idea of that object is properly *direct*. Such is my conception of absolute being, or of absolute active power.

Our idea of *active* power, whether in ourselves or in other creatures, is *relative* in more respects than one: it stands related necessarily to *absolute* power, and most commonly, if not always, to its *exertions* or effects; it stands related also to its *contrary*,

and we necessarily conceive of a *subject* to which it belongs. But absolute active power stands necessarily related neither to something prior as the cause, nor to exertions or effects, nor to its opposites,—since none are supposed to exist,—nor yet to a subject to which it belongs. Such is the First Cause—*absolute act*. When, indeed, we speak of this adorable object in a common, a comparative, and analogical sense, we say that power is an attribute of Deity, or of the Divine essence. But, properly speaking, power is not something *related* to God, but simple, absolute, infinite ACT ITSELF.

As I consider this representation of the supreme power to be more worthy of infinite perfection than any other, and that the denial of it is greatly dishonouring to God as making Him to be too much like ourselves, the reader will excuse me if I digress a little in order to examine what a celebrated writer has thought proper to say upon it. Dr Campbell, in his “Philosophy of Rhetoric,” when treating of the want of perspicuity, produces specimens of what he is pleased to call “the learned nonsense;” and among others, the following passage from Bishop Beveridge, which he had the misfortune of inserting in a *sermon*:—“Although we read of several properties attributed to God in Scripture, as wisdom, goodness, justice, &c., we must not apprehend them to be

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several powers, habits, or qualities, *as they are in its*; for as they are in God, they are neither distinguished from one another, nor from His nature or essence, in whom they are said to be. In whom, I say, they are said to be, for, to speak properly, they are not in Him, but are His very essence or nature itself; which, acting severally on several objects, seems to us to act from several properties or perfections in Him; where all the difference is only in our different apprehensions of the same thing. God is in Himself a most simple and pure act, and therefore cannot have anything in Him but what is that most simple and pure act itself; which, seeing it bringeth upon every creature what it deserves, we conceive of it as of several Divine perfections in the same Almighty Being. “Whereas God, whose understanding is infinite as Himself, doth not apprehend Himself under the distinct notions of wisdom, or goodness, or justice, or the like, but only as Jehovah.” The philosopher observes on this quotation:—“How edi-

fying must it have been to the hearers to be made acquainted with these deep discoveries of the men of science! Divine attributes, which are no attributes—winch are totally distinct, and perfectly the same,—which are justly ascribed to God, because ascribed to Him in Scripture, but do not belong to Him,—which are something and nothing,—which are the figments of human imagination, mere chimeras,—which are God himself,—which are the actors of all things,—and which, to sum up all, are themselves a simple act!” Is this the *philosophy* of rhetoric? Is it not rather the *abuse* of it? The writer asks, “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” Of these two winters, I conceive impartiality will pronounce—Dr George Campbell.

This kind of criticism (reasoning it cannot be called) is admirably well adapted to countenance licentious wits, to encourage the infidel and the sceptic to pour their profane ridicule on the most sacred subjects, and especially to justify the idolatrous notions of the *anthropomorphite*. Not to justify Beveridge in introducing his explanation in a popular address in the way he has done, and not to defend every expression he has employed, did Dr Campbell seriously believe that attributes ascribed to God in Scripture are powers, habits, or qualities *as they are in us*? Did he suppose that God is like an *infinite man*, as some modern enthusiasts have called Him, because, in Scripture, hands, eyes, and ears, a heart, bowels, and passions are ascribed to Him? Surely not. And yet

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his objection tends to defend this enthusiastic notion of Deity, however absurd:—“Divine *hands*, which are *no* hands, (might the enthusiast object, after the manner of Dr Campbell,)—which are *justly* ascribed to God, because ascribed to Him in *Scripture*, but do not belong to Him,—which are something, and nothing,—which are the figments of human imagination, mere chimeras,—which are God himself,—which are the actors of all things,—and which, to sum up all, are themselves a *simple act!*” He might add, “Who is this that darkeneth counsel by *words without knowledge?*” Why, truly, the OBJECTOR,—not he who maintains the spirituality and simplicity of the Divine nature.

#### ACTIVE AND PASSIVE POWER.

When the epithet *active* is employed, as connected with *power*, it must be, if used with any meaning, to *distinguish* it from some

*other kind of power.* But from what other kind of power *can* it be distinguished? Dr Reid replies:—"The term *active power* is used, I conceive, to distinguish it from *speculative powers.*" But is not this a distinction without a difference? Is not speculation an *act*? And is not the power of speculating an active power? To denominate the power of seeing, hearing, remembering, distinguishing, judging, reasoning, and the like, *speculative*, as distinguished from *active*, seems too much like a distinction invented, without any philosophical consistency, on purpose to avoid another more obvious distinction—*passive power.*

The following language of Dr Reid is worthy of a great philosopher:—"As there is no principle that appears to be more universally acknowledged by mankind, from the first dawn of reason, than that every change we observe in nature must have a cause; so this is no sooner perceived than there arises in the human mind a strong desire to know the causes of those things that fall within our observation. *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*, is the voice of nature in all men. Nor is there anything that more early distinguishes the rational from the brute creation than this avidity to know the causes of things, of which I see no sign in brute animals." \* We are, therefore, fully justified if we proceed to inquire a little further into the causes of existing phenomena. If, according to Dr Reid, power be denominated *active* only in contradis-

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\* Active Powers, Essay i., chap. ii.

inction to speculative; and if, according to common sense, what he terms "speculative powers" be fairly reducible to what may be properly called active power; and if, according to philosophic accuracy, all active power is derived from the first absolute power; from what power, or from what cause, proceeds that huge and deformed mass of moral evil which is acknowledged to exist? That there is a cause, or power of some kind, from which it proceeds cannot be disputed, as there is no effect without a cause. Is it an *active* or a *speculative* power? Are not *both* from God? Is *He* then the *cause* of all the moral mischief in the universe?

Dr Reid is very explicit in asserting that *all* our power is from God:—"All our power is, without doubt, derived from the Author of our being; and as He gave it freely, He may take it away when

He will. No man can be certain of any of his powers of body or mind for a moment; and, therefore, in every promise there is a condition understood: to wit, if we live, if we retain that health of body or soundness of mind which is necessary to the performance, and if nothing happen, in the providence of God, which puts it out of our power.”\* But if *all our power* is derived from the Author of our being, I repeat the interesting question, Are we to regard Him as the fountain from whence all our noxious streams of moral pravity continually flow? The supposition is infinitely absurd. There *must* be, therefore, some *other kind* of power to which innumerable existing facts are ultimately reducible.

Mr Locke distinguishes all power into *active* and *passive*; the former indicating a possibility of changing, and the latter a possibility of being changed. Dr Reid is not satisfied with this distinction, and supposes, through mistake, that Mr Locke is the first good author who has advanced it, though he expresses himself with some caution. His remarks on the subject deserve insertion in this place:—“Whereas he distinguishes power into *active* and *passive*, I conceive passive power is no power at all. He means by it the possibility of being changed. To call this *power*, seems to be a misapplication of the word. I do not remember to have met with the phrase *passive power* in any other good author. Mr Locke seems to have been unlucky in inventing it; audit deserves not to be retained in our language. Perhaps he was unwarily led into it, as an opposite to active power. But I conceive we call

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\* Active Powers, Essay i., chap. ii.

certain powers *active*, to distinguish them from other powers that are called *speculative*. As all mankind distinguish action from speculation, it is very proper to distinguish the powers by which those different operations are performed into active and speculative. Mr Locke indeed acknowledges that active power is more properly called *power*; but I see no propriety at all in passive power: it is a powerless power, and a contradiction in terms.”\* As Dr Reid is pretty generally supposed to have paid more attention to an appropriate use of terms than the generality of his predecessors, it is not surprising that this objection should have weight with

many of his readers. But, perhaps, it may be judged singular, that any one should suppose the tendency of his objection to be that of impeding the progress of moral science, and indirectly to encourage scepticism. Such, however, are my views of it; and probably the intelligent and candid reader will find in the following observations some reasons to conclude that I ought not to be condemned for this determination.

1. Dr Reid sets out with a *petitio principii*, that there is no *other kind* of power than *active* power, and then infers that *passive* power is no power! This is just the same as to say, that active power is not passive power! But what right had he to assume, that power, in the sense of possibility, or cause,—a sense of it by no means uncommon,—implies, exclusively, a principle of action? Is there not a *cause* of defect, and even of ceasing to exist, as well as of perfection and existence?

2. Mr Locke considers the idea of power to be the same as that of possibility: the *possibility* of being changed signifying the *power* of being changed, and the *possibility* of changing, or producing a change, the *power* of doing so. But Dr Reid advances no reason against this, contenting himself with merely observing, that it appears to him a misapplication of the word power. This is still begging the question, that *active* possibility or cause has no direct contrast.

3. The first business of a philosopher should be to ascertain the truth of ideas, and the next, how to express those ideas in the most significant language. Is it not an important truth, that the possibility of producing change, without the possibility of being changed, implies an *active* idea, or the idea of action in the agent to the exclusion of all passion? and does not the idea of a First

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\* Active Powers, Essay i., chap. iii.

Cause necessarily imply this? And is it not an important truth, that in all contingent beings, there is no possibility of producing change, which is not accompanied with a possibility of being changed, even to annihilation? Therefore, the possibility of being changed is *peculiar* to a contingent existence. And does not this necessarily imply a *passive* idea, or the idea of *passion* in the subject? The truth of these *ideas*, I conceive, cannot be contro-

verted. And is it not equally clear to every reflecting and unprejudiced mind, that the *causes* of action and passion are as directly contrasted as these effects themselves are?

4. Let us now attend more particularly to the terms by which these ideas may be best expressed. Instead of the term “change” employed by Mr Locke, let us adopt, for the sake of illustration, the term “being” or existence. Now a possibility to *be*, or a cause of existence, to the exclusion of a possibility not to be, or a cause of non-existence, is an *active* idea, and *peculiar* to absolute being; and a possibility not to be, or of ceasing to exist, is a possibility directly opposite to the other. But what can possibly be the direct opposite to *active* existence, or mode of existence, but that which is *passive*?

5. Instead of the terms possibility or cause, let us now substitute the word “power.” A power to be, or to exist, is *active* power; and a power (importing causality) not to be is its direct opposite. Now what can be the direct opposite of *active* but *passive* as connected with *power*? It follows, therefore, beyond all reasonable contradiction, that the phrase “passive power” is not only allowable, but highly significant. Were the same ideas which are intended to be conveyed by it expressed by any other terms, though in many respects synonymous, they would be more liable to misconception. Nevertheless, if by any terms or phrases the same ideas of radical and most important truths can be expressed to more advantage, I have not the least objection. To contend for words further than they are calculated to convey sentiments is but learned folly. Let but the ideas annexed to the phrase in question be accurately understood, and it is of little moment whether it be expressed by passive power, *malum metaphysicum*, possibility of change, negative cause, or any other. Yet in all scientific researches, the most comprehensive, concise, and significant, ought to be preferred. And as the idea to be expressed is that which stands, in point of causality, directly opposite to *active power*, I conceive

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there is a sufficient reason for preferring the phrase *passive power* in reference to moral science.

It must be allowed, that in the connexion in which it was employed by Mr Locke, the confined relation in which he seems to have considered it, and especially its application by him to physical

changes, its comparative value as a technical term is very small. But this is by no means the case in the science of morality, because the ideas it expresses in this connexion are infinitely momentous, and of course the terms by which they are expressed should be as accurate as possible.

It is observable, that Dr Reid's remarks are introduced in subserviency to another object. He supposes that Mr Locke's design in stating his idea of power in the way he has done was an attempt to reconcile this notion of power with his favourite doctrine, that all our simple ideas are ideas of sensation or of reflection. Supposing this to be Mr Locke's intention, as probably it was, it is not my wish to say a word in his defence. On this point of the origin of our ideas I have no controversy with Dr Reid.

However, from the manner in which this last author has delivered his thoughts on Mr Locke's language, there is reason for supposing, either that his reading on the subject in question was very partial, or that he had forgotten what he had read, or else that his notion of a "good author" was such as to be scarcely consistent with candour. The deservedly celebrated and eminently learned author of "The Court of the Gentiles" not only uses the phrase *passive power* in that work, but professedly shews how the idea conveyed by it is essential to every created existence.\* Brucker, in his "History of Philosophy," which Dr Enfield, who has given a valuable abridged translation of it, characterises as "a vast magazine of important facts, collected with indefatigable industry, digested with admirable perspicuity of method, and written with every appearance of candour and impartiality," expresses Aristotle's doctrine of BEING in these words, as translated by Enfield:—"Power is either *active* or *passive*: *active power* is the principle of motion or change acting upon another substance; *jussive power* subsists in the subject upon which active power is exercised."†

Dr Reid says, "Mr Locke seems to have been unlucky in

\* Court of the Gentiles, part iv., book ii., chap. xi., § 4, &c.

† Hist. of Phil., vol. i., book ii., chap. ix., sect. 1. Vide Turret., vol. i., pp. 206, 210, 226, 270, 484, Wolfius.

inventing it." But Mr Locke did not invent it, and I presume, from what has been advanced in the preceding pages, that the invention was not an "*unlucky*" one. Aristotle, it is true, has

many obscurities; in this particular, however, he seems abundantly more perspicuous than Dr Reid, and probably the term “deserves to be retained in our language,” in proportion as *moral science* is improved.

#### OTHER DISTINCTIONS OF POWER—PHYSICAL POTTER

On a subject equally interesting and profound, it may be useful to view the same thing in different relations and connexions. We have seen that Dr Reid distinguishes power into *active* and *speculative*; or, according to the titles of his two sets of essays, into *intellectual* or *active*. And it has been shewn that this distinction does not form any *contrast* as to the *kinds* of power, but is merely a something *indefinable* “behind the scene,” producing different effects by the medium of the *intellect* and the *will*. In his account, therefore, there is only *one kind* of power, which, I conceive, if expressed in one word, may be fitly called *physical*. But, though I am far from thinking that there is *no other* kind of power, for some reasons already intimated, and others to be produced more professedly, it may be proper to take a view here of physical power in its different relations.

The term “physical” is expressive of what is according to *constituted nature*, or the appointed connexion between the Divine will and its various effects in the great system of the universe. Between the Divine will and the subordinate effects there may be innumerable links; but to ascertain these links, their number and order, is at once difficult and unimportant. What is truly important in science is to know the *ultimate* causes of effects. This has an immediate influence on morality. To know, for instance, from what ultimate cause our blessings flow has great influence on the devotional temper; but controversies about the number or the order of subordinate agents, whether men or invisible beings, are matters of curiosity more than of real use.

Dr Reid institutes an inquiry, “Whether beings that have no will nor understanding may have active power?” A singular question, including, no doubt, the following, Whether a snail in pushing out its horn, or an oyster in opening and shutting its

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shell, effects this in virtue of active power? Or these, Whether a plant grows, water crystallises, a celestial orb shines, or matter gravitates, in virtue of active power? As preparatory to this

investigation, he says, "To know the *real efficient*, whether it be matter or mind, whether of a superior or inferior order, concerns us little." If by "real efficient" he means the *instruments* immediately employed in the production of an effect, the sentiment is, I conceive, just. But to call this the "real efficient" is difficult to reconcile with precision of language. What can a "real efficient" be, but that which *really effects* the change? and if all active power proceeds from a First Cause, what propriety is there in calling any other the "real efficient?" If he mean only what is the *immediate instrument* which God employs in producing any change in the universe of beings, it is obvious that, in point of scientific knowledge, it is a question of little moment; but if so, why confound *instrument* with *efficient*?

In the following short sentence Dr Reid conveys at once, I conceive, a great error and an important truth:—"The weakness of human understanding, which gives us *only* an indirect and relative conception of power, contributes to darken our reasoning." To suppose that human understanding, indefinitely, gives "only" an *indirect* and relative conception of power, I consider as a great *error*, for reasons before adduced; but that the sentiment, when admitted, "contributes to darken our reasoning" is an important truth. Hence it is that several sceptical conclusions are drawn in this connexion. "We perceive changes innumerable in things without us; we know that these changes must be produced by the active power of *some* agent; *but we neither perceive the agent nor the power*, but the change only. Whether the things be active, or merely passive, is not easily discovered. Thus it is with regard to all the effects we ascribe to nature: but if it be asked what nature is,—whether the first universal cause, or a subordinate one, whether one or many, whether intelligent or unintelligent,—upon these points we find various conjectures and theories, but *no solid ground on which we can rest.*"

On the contrary, they who distinguish power into *absolute* and *hypothetical*, who have a *direct* conception of the former, and only a *relative* one of the latter, *have solid ground on which they can rest*. They are completely satisfied, with demonstrative evidence, that absolute active power is the *only* real efficient in physical

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changes, and that all hypothetical active power is *only the instrument* of the other. And in the light of this truth they are furnished with sufficient cause for leaving the gloomy labyrinth of scepticism, and for choosing the plain path of certainty and satisfaction. They view God in all *physical* changes; and, however various and numerous may be the instruments which He employs, they are certain He is the primary agent. Whether the subordinate agents are called hypothetical powers, real efficient, second causes, instruments, nature, laws of nature, or by any other name, is of comparatively small moment. They know, on the surest principles, that it is God who “worketh all in all.” And, by the by, it is observable that this is the constant language of revealed religion.

We find, however, in *physical* or constituted nature a great *variety* of subordinate agents. Sometimes matter acts upon matter; at other times mind acts upon matter, or even matter upon mind; and, finally, mind acts upon mind. But whether this enumeration be sufficiently comprehensive or not, the conclusion is not affected by it; we may be as sure as we are of our own existence that God is the supreme agent, and all intervening agents between Him and the effect are only His instruments, which without Him would effect nothing. Nor does the circumstance of *voluntary* or *involuntary* alter the case. It is plain to unprejudiced reflection that if the *first agency* were suspended there would be no subordinate active power; all the wheels of nature would stand, for no assignable, no possible cause of their motion would remain.

1. It is obvious that in the system of nature matter acts upon matter, water acts upon the wheel, wind upon the sail, the sun upon the earth, the magnet upon iron, and one chemical substance upon another.

2. It is equally obvious that mind acts upon matter. Our own minds act upon our bodies, and the First Cause, who is a spirit, must have acted upon matter in its production, formation, and preservation. To suppose the First Power to be matter is absurd, as matter is evidently a contingent existence, liable to perpetual changes; and not less so to suppose that one contingent being has

active power to change another contingent being, independently of the first absolute power.

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3. It is also plain in fact that matter in some instances acts upon mind. Hence innumerable sensations of pleasure and pain, much of our love and fear, our joys and sorrows.

4. Mind acts upon mind. Hence the very existence of created spirits, their constant conservation, the cause of virtue, the nature and consummation of final happiness.

These are some of the changes incident to what I call *physical nature*. For the existence and changes of mind are a part of physical nature from its definition, no less than the existence and changes of mere matter; and to suppose that any part of the stupendous whole is possessed of any active power not reducible to the first is as *truly* absurd, though not so glaringly so, as any atheistical system of the universe ever invented. Only suppose for a moment a separation or suspension of the agency of the First Cause, with respect to the remotest effect, and no conceivable, or even possible reason remains for the existence of that effect.

Dr Reid observes very justly, that “whatever is the effect of active power must be something that is contingent. Contingent existence is that which depended upon the power and will of its cause.” But when he adds, “In certain motions of my body, and directions of my thought, I know not only that there must be a cause that has power to produce these effects, but that *I am that cause*,” the assertion is either untrue, or must be taken with great limitation. If the assertion mean the *instrumental* cause, it is very true, but not to his purpose; but if it mean an *original* cause, which in its very operation is not *dependent* on the first power for producing the intended effect, it is an assertion incapable of proof. For between absolute and contingent there is no conceivable medium, but every creature’s active power is contingent, because the creature itself and the very laws of its existence are so. Now to be contingent is to be *dependent* on “the power and will of its cause,” as Dr Reid allows; and if the very existence and essence of the creature be dependent, his active power and operation must be so *à fortiori*.

“Power to produce any effect,” says Dr Reid, “implies power not to produce it.” To allow this remark any force is either to

confound different kinds of power, or to admit a certain mistake. In reference to *absolute* and *metaphysical* power it is true, but in reference to physical active power it is demonstrably erroneous.

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It will not admit of a doubt whether wind has a power not to blow, or the sun not to shine; but it may be thought that the same does not hold respecting a being that has *will*. But let any one make the experiment, whether he has a power to produce a thought, which is an effect, or not to produce a thought; to produce a volition, or not a volition. I conceive repeated impartial trials will soon convince any competent judge that to prevent all thought, or all volition, will prove the fallacy of the proposition. Every created rational being has a power, hypothetically understood, of producing thought and volition, but he knows of no active power *not* to produce them.

It does not appear to be in the power of any being to choose evil as evil *to him*, or to refuse good as apparently *his good*. A being endowed with intellect and will has indeed a physical power contingently of choosing his *apparent* good, as a fixed law of his nature. But for the same reason, that it is a fixed law, he has no power of choosing the contrary, what is *apparently not* his good. He has active power to choose evil when it *appears* good, and of refusing good when it *appears* evil. But the reason *why* an evil in any particular instance appears good, or good appears evil, seems to have been beyond the sphere of Dr Reid's hypothesis. However, an *adequate reason* for this does exist—a principle of infallible certainty.

It is but proper to observe that Dr Reid answers the question, "Whether beings that have no will nor understanding may have active power?" in the negative; and adds, "that the active power, of which only we can have any distinct conception, can be only in beings that have understanding and will." Surely we have a distinct conception of *instrumental* power through universal nature on which the First Cause operates, and we have a *direct* as well as distinct conception of the active power that employs these instruments. *Matter* and *motion* are instruments acting on matter and mind; and *minds* are instruments acting on minds, and on matter and motion. But all are *alike* contingent things, and therefore alike dependent on the first active power in producing

those effects which are peculiar to active power. Whatever is the genuine effect of *pure* active power, or this power exclusively, is *good*, and worthy of the First Cause as the prime agent. To impute, therefore, the *physical* act of the will to some *occult quality* as its original source, rather than to the Supreme Agent operat-

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ing according to the representations of the intellect, is unphilosophical, because it multiplies causes without reason, and without evidence. It is true the laws of intellect and will producing change are different from those of matter and motion; but to suppose that the former are *lawless*, or that there are no certain principles in nature to which they are reducible, is no less absurd than the supposition of *absolute chance*. Such active power, if so it must be called, is “powerless power” to all intents. Its existence as active power has never been proved, and I may safely affirm it never can be. Consciousness assures us that we have hypothetical active power, by which we are enabled to act according to the representations of the intellect; and reason assures us that all active power proceeds from God, whose energy operates according to the different natures of secondary agents. But neither consciousness nor reason teach us that there is in our nature an *occult quality* called active power, which is neither Divine energy itself acting immediately upon our nature, nor yet a settled law employed by Him to produce the effect. It is good sense to say, I have active power to produce an effect if God please to give it efficiency, either by His *immediate* energetic will, or by the instrumentality of the laws He has appointed; but to say, I have active power to produce effects of *myself*, which power is reducible to neither, is at once contrary to common sense and to piety.

Spirits of the highest order, and worms of the meanest form, in point of *dependence*, are on an equality. This is evident as to their existence. But to suppose it true of their existence, and not of their operations, physically considered, is infinitely absurd; it is to identify absolute and contingent, Creator and creature.

#### OF METAPHYSICAL POWER.

There is great reason to suppose that Dr Reid’s efforts to establish an hypothesis of some *undefinable principle* which he calls active power, which is neither the immediate agency of God on

our nature, nor yet an intermediate agency by the instrumentality of stated laws, have been directed to counteract the supposed evil tendency of philosophical necessity as maintained by Hume and others. Their reasoning, in attempting to establish *universal* necessitation, is calculated to destroy the distinction of virtue and

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vice, and to poison the very source of moral obligation. An effort, therefore, to find an antidote to counteract so deleterious an ingredient in the writings of ingenious theorists, deserves commendation. But how does Dr Reid meet their theories and reasonings? By introducing an idea of *active power* which no one can define, which is not an object of consciousness, but something that “lies behind the scene,” of which we have no direct, but only a relative conception,—a conception relative to its exertions or effects. This active power, also, is a *quality* that exists in man as a subject to which it belongs,—a quality that may be varied, not only in degree, but also in kind, and a quality that has *no contrary*. “Vice is contrary to virtue,” he observes, “misery to happiness, hatred to love, negation to affirmation; but there is no contrary to power. Weakness or impotence are defects or privations of power, but not contraries to it.” And in all this account of man’s active power, an appeal is made to the common belief of mankind for its confirmation.

But is such an account of man’s active power anything better than a mere hypothesis without proof, leaving all the difficulties in moral science where it found them? Men of thought demand principles, and sound reasoning on such principles; and cannot put up with vague hypotheses, undefinable occult qualities, and a vague appeal to common belief. On the contrary, it is a fact, that man’s active power may be accurately and clearly defined; that it is an object of consciousness; and that of active power, speaking indefinitely, we have a direct conception. It is also a demonstrable fact, that active power in man is not a quality distinct from his will and the Divine energy,—a quality which he may vary in degree and in kind irrespective of that energy. And it is, moreover, a fact, that *active power* (which, in Dr Reid’s estimate, is the same thing as *power* indefinitely) has a *contrary*; the proof of which is the immediate design of this section, as the proof of the other facts has been advanced in the preceding ones.

When treating of metaphysical power, I shall consider the term “power” under the notion of a *cause*; which is an acceptation of the word at once proper and common. Physical power, as before shewn, is the Divine energy operating in every part of the universe according to the different natures of created beings. In those beings who are intelligent and voluntary, it operates according to the nature of intellect and will, giving efficiency to the will only

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when the intellect perceives the object willed. But a power or cause which is not included in the *constituted* series of causes connected with the effects which follow them, is properly and strictly *metaphysical*, because *beyond* that constituted series. And this power is of *three kinds*:—

*First*, The *absolute* cause, or active power, is *metaphysical*, because it is beyond, and every way independent of the constituted series of physical causes which proceed from it.

*Secondly*, *Necessary* truths, or those which are true independent of appointing will, are *metaphysical* causes. This is well illustrated by Dr Reid:—“That the planets of our system go round the sun from west to east, is a contingent (and physical) truth; because it depended upon the power and will of Him who made the planetary system, and gave motion to it. That a circle and a right line can cut one another only in two points, is a truth which depends upon no power nor will, and therefore is called necessary and immutable,” and we may add, being above and beyond *constituted* or voluntarily-appointed relations, is properly *metaphysical*.

It is here observable, that the second of these flows from the first as a necessary emanation. All necessary and immutable truth is included in the first truth, as water in a fountain, independent of will.

*Thirdly*, The *contrary* of physical active power is *metaphysical*. For physical active power, which pervades the universe of created beings, cannot *include* its contrary. Physical power, which is a contingent existence, may be compared to a parenthesis: what precedes it, is absolute power; what follows it, is necessary limitation, defect, or want of ulterior perfection, which is *contrary* to physical active power.

Dr Reid, indeed, *supposed* that active power has *no contrary*; but he was greatly mistaken, and that mistake involved him in a labyrinth of inconsistencies. He supposed that “weakness or impotence are defects or privations of power, but not contraries to it,” and therefore that active power had no contrary. But I would ask, is not privation an *effect*? Who can deliberately question it? As an effect it must have a *cause*. Is active power, then, the *cause* of its *own* privation? Again, weakness, or impotence, is a want of active power, and is an *effect*, and therefore must have a *cause*; but is active power the cause of the want of active power?

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Impossible. Moreover, *limitation* of active power cannot be *caused* by it; the same may be said of defect, or the want of ulterior perfection. To suppose active power, whether absolute or physical, to be the *cause* of the defect or want of *itself*, is absurd in the extreme. The true cause of these effects is properly termed *metaphysical* power or cause; as being *beyond* the sphere of physical causes, and founded in the nature of things according to the highest import of that phrase, irrespective of all will.

Now, as the *effects* of this metaphysical cause are the direct *contrary* to those of active power, the two *causes*, or powers, must be so too. Hence also the propriety of calling this metaphysic power, passive power, being the direct opposite and contrary to active power. According to Dr Reid we have no conception of active power but from its relation to effects; on his own principles, therefore, from contrary effects we may infer contrary causes. And he who would deny the existence of metaphysic power, to be consistent, should also deny the existence of active power; for they stand on similar evidence. As this principle is of the utmost importance in moral science, I shall enter into the evidence of it a little further; whence it will appear, I conceive, why many ingenious theorists have utterly failed in attempting to account for numerous moral phenomena.

All being is either absolute or contingent; absolute being is uncaused, but contingent being is caused. It is the necessary property of a contingent being to exist and operate *only* by the will and energy of that which is absolute. This necessarily implies *universal dependence*. To create an independent being, or independent laws of continued being and operation, involves a

contradiction. For the laws of a created nature are evidently no less contingent, and therefore no less dependent on their author, than the created being himself. Dependence therefore on the First Cause is of metaphysical necessity; the contrary involving a plain contradiction. It matters not how many laws, how many secondary or occasional causes, are imagined, they are all alike *dependent*, as to being and operation, on the first energy, and its continuance.

Now *universal dependence*, as to being and operation, is an *effect*, and there can be no effect without a *cause*; I ask, what is that cause? Is it active power? Is it the supreme will? To suppose the supreme will to be the *cause* of dependence involves

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this contradiction, that the creature might have been *independent*, on a par with the Creator in that respect, had He not *willed* the contrary. No will therefore, and consequently no active power, can be the *cause* of dependence; what then, I repeat the inquiry, is *that cause*? It is the *contrary* to active power, for the *effects* are contrary. The effect of active power is the continued existence and operation; but the effect of the contrary is a *cessation* of the one and the other. These effects are *contrary*, and so must their causes be. The cause of the one is *active* power; the cause of the other is properly and strictly *metaphysic* power or cause.

Annihilation, it is true, is not an *actual* effect, because the contingent laws of conservation are still continued; but this alters not the case in the science of possibles and impossibles. We know that without a creating energy the existence of the universe would have been *impossible*: this we know on the same ground of intuitive certainty as the axiom, That there can be no effect without an adequate cause; or with the same certainty as that a circle is not a triangle. With equal evidence we know, that IF conserving energy were to cease, the effect of annihilation must *necessarily* follow. To suppose the contrary involves the contradiction, that contingent and absolute being are the same; that the caused and uncaused beings have the same properties.

But this necessarily implies a *tendency* to the effect, even when the effect is not *actually* produced. If the effect of ceasing to exist must *necessarily* follow, were preserving energy not continued, there must be in the preserved existence a *tendency* to that

effect during the whole period of that existence. This tendency cannot possibly arise from active power; for it is a tendency to an effect *contrary* to that produced by active power, and therefore the *cause* of that tendency must be contrary to active power; which cannot possibly be anything else than metaphysic power or cause.

It may be observed, that this *want* of ulterior perfection, as it may be called,—the want, for instance, of self-existence, independence, and all-sufficiency, —is not the want of *due* perfection. For as they are not *possible* in a contingent being, it is manifest they are not *required*. The defect is the necessary condition of created existence, which no will could possibly ordain to be otherwise. For to perform contradictions is no object of Omnipotence.

Hence we perceive what answer should be given to the question, Has metaphysic power a *cause*? It is the same as to ask, What

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is the *cause* of *difference* between an absolute and a contingent nature, or between a circle and a square? The difference is evidently founded in the *nature of things*; that is, in the nature of God and of a creature, in the essential properties of the one and of the other. This metaphysic power, therefore, has no *cause* but what is included in the idea of contingent existence. It is a relative idea, but the relation is essential.

CONCERNING MORAL POWER, WILL, VOLITION, DESIRE,  
AND THERE  
EFFICIENT CAUSES.

The morality of any action (Def. I.) is the *manner* of it, in reference to the end, or ends, proposed by the agent. And a moral power, properly speaking, is a power of producing an action which has a moral quality. In order to this, it is agreed there must be *understanding* and *will*: an understanding to represent an object of choice, and a will to choose according to that representation. A power to will according to that representation, without any physical intervening cause to prevent the effect, is the *liberty* of a moral agent. To say that he *in free*, or possessed of *liberty*, is to say that he is not *prevented*, by any interference of the Moral Governor, from choosing his own end, or ends, as he thinks best, all things considered.

The understanding may be called a moral power in this respect, that without it no moral effect can take place; because it is the

power that represents what the will chooses. But, more properly, the will itself is the power from which the effect immediately arises. The understanding represents a variety of objects and ends, but the will fixes on the one or the other, and stamps the moral character of the action. Liberty, in strictness, is not a power of the mind, but a condition, denoting the absence of all constraint and interference between the intention of the agent and his act. He who acts as he pleases is free.

Moral power, if we use the term with precision, is not a power of the mind *sui generis*, but a physical power in a specific relation—its relation to a moral effect. The supposition of a power strictly moral, as the language of some writers appears to imply, prior to any exercise of the will, arises from a false notion of the nature of morality. The same may be said of what is often termed a moral principle; the principle itself is not, strictly speaking, moral, but

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the predisposing cause of morality. It is the will, a physical power, that gives existence to the moral quality of an action; the principles, however they may predispose or influence the manner of the volition, can be only physical or metaphysical. The action when I morally good proceeds from a physical, when morally bad from a metaphysical principle, as will be afterwards proved.

The terms *will*, *volition*, and *desire* should not be confounded. The will properly denotes an active power by which we choose an object or an end; volition, the very act or exercise of the will; and desire expresses a conscious state, or temper, or exercise of the mind, relative to some end or object, under the influence of its principles, either prior to, or even irrespective of its volitions. That desire is a state, or temper, or exercise of the mind, we know from consciousness; and in the same manner we know that it stands related to some object or end. It may not be equally plain, though it be equally true, that desire arises from the influence of those principles, either physical or metaphysical, from whence proceed our volitions. Without principles as the source, there could be no desire any more than an exertion of will. “We have the same evidence for the one as for the other.

The mind is conscious of desire *prior* to volition, when the object of the will and of the desire is the same. As there must be contemplation before will, so must there be desire. But neither

contemplation nor desire is always followed by an exercise of will. The mind contemplates two or more things with a view to choice, when only one thing is chosen. Of this every person must be conscious, that he contemplates a thousand things without exercising either will or desire concerning them; and also, that he desires many things which he does not will.

The immediate object of desire is the possession of an object, or the enjoyment of an end, irrespective of the choice of means in order to secure it. The immediate object of volition is the means chosen in order to secure the end contemplated. If the end be good, and the choice of the means be laudable, the action is virtuous; but if the end be unworthy, or the means chosen to secure it be not laudable, the action is vicious.

If when in pain we desire ease, when hungry we desire food, when confined we desire liberty, when in want we desire competence, such desires arise from the mere principles of our nature, to which no one thinks of attaching blame. These are ends in-

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nocently contemplated, and innocently desired; but if a man desire these or similar ends by a voluntary adoption of illaudable means, the blame attaches to that voluntary adoption. Thus, for instance, if he desire ease by means of suicide, if he desire food by means of theft, liberty by fraud or falsehood, or competence by any species of dishonesty, he becomes a criminal. On the contrary, when these ends are sought by laudable means, the conduct is praiseworthy.

Thus it appears, that the *same* end may be the object of desire and of will. But desire contemplates the end only, while the exercise of will respects also the means of obtaining it; and this last alone stamps upon the act a moral quality of good or evil, as these means adopted are either laudable or the contrary. It must, however, be observed, that if the object of desire be unworthy, a *voluntary approbation* of that desire is criminal; for the exercise of volition is implied, and one essential part of a virtuous act of the will is wanting, that is, the choice of laudable means; for to constitute a vicious act, the want of either a worthy end or of laudable means is sufficient.

Again; when the object of desire is worthy, and this is followed by voluntary approbation, that approbation is laudable, and coin-

cides with virtuous love or delight. When the object of desire is the chief good, objectively considered, and a voluntary approbation follows, that approbation coincides with resignation and devotion. But when the object or end is unworthy, and this is followed by a voluntary act of disapprobation, that disapprobation is laudable, and coincides with virtuous hatred or disgust.

Moreover; as we often exercise our *own* volitions in order to obtain a desired end,—that is, when we suppose the means of obtaining it are in our power,—so, when we consider the necessary means to be in the power of *another*, we use entreaties, supplications, or requests. Thus when we desire the Divine favour as the end, conscious that this is not dependent on our mere choice, we present prayers and supplications.

As desire, from this account of it, is not, properly speaking, a modification of the will, much less are our appetites, passions, and affections in general, which some philosophers have supposed, If the will be that power of the mind by which we determine our actions in reference to an end contemplated,—which, I conceive, cannot be rationally controverted,—it is improper to call, for

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instance, hope or fear, joy or sorrow, modifications of the will. These, as all our affections, passions, and appetites, arise from an apprehension of different objects in connexion with the different principles of our nature, independent on the power of acting in reference to an end, and therefore are not the modifications of that power. Indeed, a voluntary approbation or disapprobation of the objects by which these feelings are excited, may succeed,—as, for instance, of the objects of love or hatred,—which may be the occasion of our confounding the feeling with the voluntary act. The feelings (under which term I here include all our appetites, passions, and affections) may exist antecedent to any voluntary determination concerning them or the objects by which they are excited; but the will is an original power of the mind, which may or may not fix upon them the stamp of approbation or disapprobation, as they appear calculated to subserve the end of our happiness. The truth of these remarks, any one, I presume, may recognise in his own consciousness, by carefully attending to his individual feelings.

Though we may reflect upon our feelings, our feelings do not imply reflection; they are found in us prior to all reflection and deliberation: though by these they are capable of being cherished and increased, as well as diminished and subdued. “A healthy child,” says Dr Reid, “some hours after its birth, feels the sensation of hunger, and, if applied to the breast, sucks and swallows its food very perfectly. “We have no reason to think that, before it ever sucked, it has any conception of that complex operation, or how it is performed. It cannot, therefore, with propriety, be said that it wills to suck. Numberless instances might be given of things done by animals, without any previous conception of what they are to do—without the intention of doing it. And though there is an end evidently intended by the action, this intention is not in the animal, but in its Maker.”

This is plain good sense. But when the author adds, in the same connexion, that “they act by some blind impulse, of which the efficient cause is hid from us;” he draws a veil of obscurity over what he had before illustrated. We know that all physical acts proceed from God, and we know that their immediate production is not unworthy of Him; why then should we *suppose* that there is any other efficient cause? Between the First Cause and the effect there may be a chain of secondary causes, consisting of

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many links; but I see no propriety in calling the one immediately preceding the effect the efficient cause, rather than the first, seeing all the effect must proceed from the first. Much of Dr Reid’s reasoning, on different subjects, depends on the *assumption* that the secondary cause immediately preceding the effect is the proper efficient. But it ought to be no more granted him, than we should grant a lecturer on electricity that the *efficient cause* of the electric shock is the last link of the chain that conveys it.

It is the province of natural philosophy to investigate the nature and order of the *secondary* causes of phenomena; but in moral science, our inquiry should be after the *ultimate* causes of moral events, as of prime importance. An Atheist may be a profound mathematician, a great astronomer, an eminent chemist, a proficient in any or all the parts of natural philosophy, or the fine arts; but in moral science, he cannot take one step without betraying his folly. If at any time on that subject he talk sense, it must be at

the expense of his own principles. Without recognising a *First Cause* of all physical effects, and of all moral effects worthy of Him, as of all goodness and virtue, it is impossible to recognise either religion or moral science. The recognition of a *First Cause* and its energy is the very root and life of both. Without this, what meaning can there be in prayer or praise, adoration or worship, pious resignation, genuine humility, virtuous love, reverential fear, and the like? To regard God as the *efficient cause* of all physical effects, or those which are produced according to the course of nature, is not an *hypothesis*, but a demonstrable reality.

When the illustrious Newton says, “Hactenus phænomena cælorum et maris nostri per vim gravitatis exposui, sed *causam* gravitatis nondum assignavi,” he evidently means a *secondary* cause of gravity intervening between the First Cause and that effect, because the investigation of secondary causes, in reference to their effects, is the true province of natural philosophy. Hence he adds, “*Rationem* vero harum gravitatis proprietatum ex phænomeis nondum potui deducere, et *hypotheses non fingo*.” His province as a natural philosopher was to ascertain secondary causes from phenomena; gravitation was discovered to be a uniform secondary cause of innumerable effects; but whether gravitation itself had *another* such cause intervening between it and the First Cause, Sir Isaac could not deduce from phenomena, and as a judicious *natural* philosopher he was not authorised to *suppose* it. But whether God

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was the *primary* agent was no cause of doubt with him, concerning whom he says, “In ipso continentur et *moventur* universa, sed sine mutua passione.”

In physics, therefore, there is a propriety in calling the principle immediately preceding the effect the *efficient cause* of it, because the sphere of inquiry is confined to secondary causes. But in moral science, in which the *First Cause* is necessarily introduced, He alone is the *efficient* as to active power and physical effects, because it is demonstrable that His energy is the only adequate cause of such effects. And here, I conceive, Dr Reid, and many other philosophers, have greatly erred in making the laws and language of natural philosophy the standard of moral science. As an inquirer into *secondary* causes, it would not be sufficient to say, God is the efficient cause of thunder, lightning, an earthquake, or the like; but

as an inquirer into *ultimate* causes, which is the province of moral science, the first philosophy, and theology, the language is strictly proper. Hence the propriety of regarding God as the *efficient cause* of our moral power, will, volition, desire, affections, passions, and appetites, considered as physical acts.

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#### DISSERTATION IV.

##### ON VOLUNTARY OPERATIONS. FINAL CAUSES OR ENDS— ULTIMATE—CHIEF. TRUE WISDOM.

FROM the preceding observations it is obvious, and the appeal might be made to every man's consciousness, that there are many operations of the human mind which are not voluntary. Those operations which are properly termed voluntary are the effect of deliberation; but there are innumerable acts which are preceded by no deliberation at all. The principal secondary cause of such actions is that instinctive principle which mankind possess in common with the brute creation, of which God is the efficient cause. The laws of our created nature are only the instruments by which His energy exerts itself. The natural philosopher may inquire into the nature and number of the intermediate links of causes, but in the light of moral science these are of little, and often of no account.

Our present object is to inquire into the nature and causes of those voluntary operations for which we are accountable. It is plain that to desire happiness in general has neither praise nor blame attached to it, because it arises from an instinctive principle independently of all volition in the proper acceptation of this term; but when happiness is sought by a deliberate use of means which appear calculated to promote that end, the operation is voluntary, and the effect becomes morally good or bad.

Every accountable act of the will supposes some object which may be called a final cause or *end* to be attained, for to act for no end is a merely animal or instinctive operation. It supposes a choice of *means* conclusive to that end, for no one is *obliged* to seek an end when he has no alternative in the choice of means. An accountable act, moreover, supposes *deliberation* in reference

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both to ends and means. This also implies *liberty*, which is the last thing supposed in our moral or accountable acts.

With respect to ends, or final causes, there is an important difference between what is *ultimate* and what is *chief*. Our voluntary actions may have a great variety of ultimate ends, but there can be in the view of the agent only one chief end. Thus the ultimate end of a military commander in undertaking a campaign may be the conquest of a country, and if he succeeds, the end is accomplished. When the same person sits down to a banquet, his ultimate end is to be regaled. That end being finished, he proceeds to accomplish a variety of others in succession. But something different from them all may be his *chief* end in *all* his actions. The ultimate end of a mechanic may be to complete a piece of work according to some given price, or some standard of excellence; that of a merchant in making a contract may be to realise a certain definite sum. The ultimate ends of the one and of the other maybe as numerous as the objects they may thus have successively in view to be specifically attained, but all may be under the influence of some one *chief* end peculiar to each agent.

Persons of *opposite* moral characters may be engaged together in pursuit of the *same* ultimate end. But this cannot be said of persons who pursue the *same chief* end. When a number of artists are engaged in completing similar works; or a company sit down to a repast, aiming, respectively, at the satisfying of their corporeal appetites; their *chief* ends may be as numerous as their persons. And it is by this, principally, their moral character is denominated.

The pursuit of happiness, in general, is instinctive; but the first concern of a moral agent is to ascertain in what *object* that happiness is included, and by what *means* he may best attain it. If we fix upon an end which, when attained, is not perfective of our nature, to choose it for that purpose is the worst and most dangerous kind of folly. As the business of prudence is to calculate the probability of events, and to provide accordingly; so the office of wisdom is to fix upon a worthy end, and to seek it by laudable means.

Can any one question whether the *chief end* of a moral agent *ought* to be his *chief good*? Probably not, while he has the power

of reflecting. But what is the chief good? This question has greatly puzzled heathen philosophers. A great part of the per-

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plexity seems to have arisen from the stating of the question, however short or simple it may appear. Good is either absolute or relative—what is good in itself, and what is good for the agent. In the present state of moral science, every one must acknowledge that there is but one absolute good, whom we call God, who is infinitely perfect. He therefore, objectively considered, must be the only chief end on which the mind can rest with satisfaction, and consequently the only one perfection of our nature.

But if the inquiry be, What is our chief good subjectively? it cannot be doubted that the right answer is—*happiness*. Hence the complex question is fairly answered, that our *happiness in God* is the chief good. This is what the moral agent *ought* to adopt as his chief end. And when he seeks this end by the use of commendable means, he may be denominated *truly wise*. He who neglects this end is chargeable with the greatest folly, however wise he may be in adopting suitable means, in order to attain any other end he chooses to adopt. The skill displayed in seeking an unworthy end by means the best suited to attain it, in any department of life, is *partial* wisdom; the other alone is essentially *virtuous*.

A hero, a politician, or a merchant, may be partially wise; but as a moral agent, he cannot be virtuously wise if the chief good be not deliberately chosen as his chief end. A person may be wise, in the partial sense of the term, to do evil; because he seeks an unworthy end with skill and address. And it too often happens that the most worthy end is sought by means that stamp the agent's character with partial folly. The highest part of wisdom, however, consists in the choice of a worthy end; and the greatest part of folly in choosing one that is unworthy. Then is wisdom most complete, when the best end is sought by the best means; and then is folly the most consummate, when it seeks the most unworthy end by the most unsuitable means.

## DISSERTATION V.

### ON LIBERTY AND NECESSITY. LIBERTY—ARGUMENTS FOR. NECESSITY—ARGUMENTS FOR.

#### SECT. I.

#### *Of Liberty.*

THERE are few subjects in moral science that have been more clouded and perplexed by philosophers than the doctrine of moral liberty.\* By this term I understand that kind of liberty which is essential to a moral agent in the exercise of volition, or that which

\* There are three questions on this intricate subject, the true solution of which seems to have been but little, if at all, noticed:—

I. What is the *immediate cause* of determining the mind's *volitions*? In general, it is admitted by all, that, as the proper object of the understanding is truth, so the proper object of the *will* is good. Yet—

1. Were it always the *real* good that the mind perceived, the volitions would always be accurate; but this is contrary to universal experience. A good infinitely real is proposed in words; but the mind often chooses what is of little or no value, in preference to it. Nor is it enough to say—

2. That the mind chooses the greatest *apparent* good, which is the common answer to the question. This is insufficient, because it leaves us in the dark respecting the true *cause* why real good does not appear to be so. Therefore—

3. It is submitted to the attention of the learned, whether the actual state of the mind in the scale of *rectitude* be not the immediate cause of determining the will. I take "rectitude" here as applicable to all acts, both natural and moral. I said, the "cause" of determining the will, not the *occasion*. The "object," whether it be really or only apparently good, is not the cause; for, from an *exhibition* of the same object,—yea, the *contemplation* of the same object,—*contrary* effects follow in different minds, and the same mind at different times. The object, therefore, is only an *occasion* of determining our volitions. A rectified mind, or a mind in a right state, perceives objects presented to it for moral choice *as they are*; and the volitions will be accordingly. With these remarks the next question stands closely connected:—

II. What is the *immediate cause* of the mind sinking or rising in the scale of

is indispensably requisite for the production of accountable acts. But as the doctrine of liberty, in general, may contribute to shew

rectitude? The true answer to this question will bring us to the root of the subject. But how has it been commonly answered?

1. Some, from supposed experience, from the acknowledged fact of much evil existing, and the high improbability that God should determine those volitions which are wicked, and perceiving no medium between ascribing *all* determinations to God or to ourselves, have strenuously maintained that the mind is determined "by its own sovereign pleasure." According to this hypothesis, the state of the

mind in reference to the scale of rectitude is caused by (*ἄτεξουσία*) *self-sovereignty*, or a *self-determining power*. According to them, by a wrong choice our minds become erroneous, criminal, and wretched; but by a right choice they become rectified, virtuous, and happy.

2. Others, perceiving the incongruity of such an hypothesis, which ascribes to the human mind what they do not experience, and which denies to God the honour of directing, with infallible certainty, the universe He hath made to a happy issue, have adopted the doctrine of *universal necessity*. According to this hypothesis, as commonly held, the immediate cause of the state of the mind, as found in the scale of rectitude, is the *object itself*, which begets, first, sensations or consciousness, then ideas and associations, and hence volitions, habits, and character. It is not surprising that those who think thus should also maintain that God sees no evil in the world, and therefore that *there is none* but in our *feelings*,—that sin, an evil improperly so called, shall be at length annihilated, and therefore men and devils will be made ultimately happy. For how can that be evil which *God causes!* Or why should God cause evil as felt by us to be so, but in order to make us thereby, as by a wholesome discipline, finally happy?

On the *pro* and the *contra* of these hypotheses what loads of learning, ingenuity, quibblings, and quarrels have been committed to paper, and issued from the press! During the last century the advocates of liberty have been weakened, and those of necessity have gathered strength, by the labours of Edwards, Toplady, Priestley, Crombie, and a host besides, against Whitby, Fletcher, Gregory, &c. On the principles hitherto employed to bring the controversy to a decisive issue, it is much more difficult to discover the source of the truth than it is to find the source of the Nile.

3. With deference,—which in no instance is more becoming than in this, after the labours of so many eminent characters on the subject,—it is proposed to consideration, whether every *right choice* has not one uniform cause of determination, and a *wrong choice* another uniform cause, totally different from the other? My answer to the question is, the *immediate cause* of the mind *sinking* in the scale of rectitude, or, which is the same, deviating from the line of rectitude into errors or crimes, is *liberty*; and the immediate cause of the mind maintaining its rectitude, or else rising in the scale, is *necessity*. If this be admitted, as I believe it must, every human being on earth is at once, in different respects, the subject of liberty and necessity. All *decretive* necessity is from God; and its object is all natural and moral good, in its various degrees and combinations, to the utter exclusion of all moral evil. But all *hypothetical* necessity is not of God, which Necessarians in general seem to overlook. The evil of imperfection and the evil of sin are of hypothetical necessity, but not of God—any more than a shadow is of the light, or falsehood of the truth. Again, *passive power* (by which I mean a *tendency to defection* essential to every *contingent* existence, physically as to *being*,

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the true nature of moral liberty in a more advantageous light, I shall offer some observations on it.

and morally as to *well-being*) is not of God, yet of hypothetical necessity; and so is the *origin* of moral evil.

Decretive necessity does not *exclude* liberty, hut employs it; yet liberty may exist without decretive necessity, and the result will be hypothetically certain. *This* hypothetical certainty arises not from positive appointment, hut from the ascertainable tendency to defection, perceived by the Divine mind with infinite precision, as a relative contrast. Another question remains:—

III. Is there any one instance in which the mind can choose otherwise than it

does? A solution of this question will explain the chief difficulty. To this end, observe—

1. In *every* instance of *wrong* choice the mind is uninfluenced by *decretive* necessity, and consequently free from all “foreign cause or consideration whatsoever offered to it.” Yet—

2. In every such instance there must be a cause *in the mind itself*, which renders the event subject to hypothetical necessity. If the mind stand high in the scale of rectitude from decretive necessity, it is hypothetically necessary that the choice will be good in the same proportion. But *if* the mind stand low in the scale, (as it always will, from its freedom and passive power, when not decretively supported,) it is hypothetically necessary, or absolutely certain, that the choice will be wrong. Thence—

3. If the mind be placed *exactly in the same state*, the object and the representation being the same, the choice cannot be *different*. This is a law of universal application. To be free from it would be no excellence, but the reverse. It is the glory of God that He *cannot* lie, and the disgrace of the offender that he *cannot* cease from sin. While God is infinitely holy, for that very reason His choice will be infinitely right. As the *existence* of God is of *absolute* necessity, and therefore infinitely glorious, so His *volitions* are of *hypothetical* necessity, and infallibly good.

4. From these remarks we see how far, or in what respect, a liberty of *contradiction* and of *contrariety* can be applied to the human mind. When the *state* of the mind is *meliorated* by a necessitating cause or influence, a *real* good will be chosen, which, identically considered, would otherwise have been rejected. On the contrary, when the *state* of the mind is *deteriorated* by passive power and an abuse of liberty, the evil which otherwise would have been rejected will be chosen. In these cases we have a liberty not only of contradiction, but of contrariety, if we regard the *object itself*. That is, a man may not only cease to choose, but choose the contrary, if he be *otherwise minded or disposed*. If he be otherwise minded for the *better*, it must be from a decretive, necessitating cause, otherwise God would not be the cause of *all* good; but if for the worse, it must be from passive power and the exercise of liberty, else man would be self-sufficient. But to suppose that any man has a power of choosing the contrary at the *same instant*, without being otherwise minded, seems equally incompatible with fact and reason.

*First Corol.*—Decretive *necessity* (the purpose, energy, and gracious influence of God) is the *sole* parent of good; but *liberty*, in union with *passive power*, the parent of all moral *evil*.

*Second Corol.*—That to be morally free, in some cases at least, is a great evil. It was so to *Ephraim*:—“Ephraim is joined unto idols: let him alone,” (Hosea iv. 17.) And to be deprived of this freedom, in some instances, must be a great

Liberty, generally speaking, denotes exemption from restraint. This liberty is either *external* or *internal*. That which is external, is properly the liberty of performing any action according to our wish; that which is internal, is the liberty of choosing according to our conviction. They may, therefore, be conveniently denominated *executive* and *elective*.

*Executive* liberty may be viewed in reference to the *individual* himself, or in reference to *society*. As every action of the agent, morally considered, is either good or bad, then alone is liberty of

acting the *right* of the *individual* when it is conformable to law, or at least not injurious in its consequences. In an upright being whose internal liberty is not perverted, the right of exemption from restraint is no less in the executive than in the elective sense of freedom; but no one can plead a right to *injure* either himself or others, when others can prevent it without equal injury. Thus a child about to hurt himself by taking a deadly potion, or handling an edged tool, cannot plead for executive liberty when a parent or a friend restrains.

And in reference to *society*. When the laws of society are conformable to virtue, no man or body of men can have a *right* of exercising executive liberty without restraint. This, I conceive, is too much overlooked by those who plead for the “rights of man” in society, and still less is the ground of the distinction understood. In things virtuous, or things indifferent as to injurious consequences, no man or society of men has a right to restrain another in the exercise of his freedom. Interference, in such case, degenerates into tyranny, whether personal or social

This shews the vast importance of a constitution and laws being so formed as to be conformable to virtue. When the good of society is made to consist in any particular which is not compatible with virtue, the consciences of individuals are insulted, and

bleeding. So it was to Saul the persecutor, when arrested in his mad career on the way to Damascus.

From what has been advanced it would also follow, that in *no case*, if we consult *merely* the happiness of the agent, is the freedom above defined desirable, though the ends of moral government may be answered by it; and that an infringement of it from Divine interposition is *always* desirable in order to our security and happiness, as being that alone by which an abuse of liberty is prevented, and which is never exercised, properly speaking, but for our good. In strictness, actions are determined by the will, the will by the disposition, and this last by either God’s efficient energy or by passive power.

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their liberties unjustly controlled. Laws are made for the disobedient, on purpose to prevent their being injurious. Who can doubt that it is right to restrain a man from murdering himself or others, from dishonouring his neighbour’s bed, or from taking away his property, however he may plead that his liberty is infringed upon? But if the restraint proceeds so far as to compel the agent to abstain from what is virtuous, or to do what is

vicious, there tyrannic influence is exerted. The laws that require this are unjust, and the government becomes despotic and cruel.

*Elective* liberty is quite of another kind. It is the unalienable right of a free agent. To restrain it by any external force, or to attempt its restraint, is inconsistent with moral government. Accordingly it is found, in fact, that even the Supreme Governor, who has the highest claim on the obedience of moral subjects, does not exercise external force in preventing our elections. And indeed the very essence of elective liberty consists in exemption from it. The means He employs to prevent crimes are declarations of danger, awful warnings, persuasions, and threats; and when He means to *insure* obedience, (and who can question that He actually does this in some instances?) it is by an influence perfectly compatible with free agency. Light in the mind will insure conviction, and this conviction will rectify the choice.

Mr Locke maintains that liberty does not belong to the *will*, but to the *man*. This, I apprehend, is not accurate, except on the supposition that liberty is a *power*, as well as the will. The power of a power, he observes, is not compatible. Very true; but if liberty be exemption from restraint, it must belong to the will in the most direct manner. If the exercise of volition be exempt from control in the morality of our choice, the will is equally free with the agent. This eminent author seems to have taken it for granted that liberty is a *power*, and therefore, to avoid an evident absurdity, transferred it from the will, which is a power, to the agent.

Dr Reid also, who differs from Mr Locke in his conclusions, seems to agree with him in this notion of liberty. With what propriety we shall now examine. “By the *liberty* of a moral agent,” says he, “I understand a *power* over the determinations of his own will.”\* It is but natural to ask, Who can form an idea of such *power*? Dr Reid anticipates the question. “The only distinct

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\* Active Powers, Essay iv., chap. i.

conception I can form of *active power* is, that it is an attribute in a being by which he can do certain things if he wills. This, after all, is only a relative conception. It is relative to the effect, and to the will of producing it. Take away these, and the conception

vanishes.”\* Respecting his notion of active power, whether we can form a direct as well as a relative conception of it, I need say nothing here, it having been considered before.† Here, it is plain, he considers *liberty* as a, *power*, active power, in the strictest sense of the term. And as he considers active power to be an attribute in a being, he must consider *liberty* to be such an attribute; and, after all, he says it is only a relative conception,—a conception relative to the effect, and to the will of producing it.

In reply to this notion of *liberty*, I appeal to the *experience* of every reflecting person. Does any one, in fact, find in himself, relative to moral acts, anything more than an *apprehension* of the object to be chosen, and a *will* exempt from control in its election? There is no reason to suppose that the minds of some men are formed without, and others with such an attribute. I may therefore lodge my appeal in the breast of any man, that he has no power, no attribute, besides an apprehension of an object, and a will unrestrained in choosing or refusing it.

In the next place, I appeal to every person’s *reason* whether an active *will*, choosing or rejecting according to the representation of the intellect, be not *sufficient* to account for every moral act, without *supposing* another power of which we have no experience? It is not philosophical to multiply causes beyond what are sufficient to account for the phenomena. I may therefore conclude that the notion of Dr Reid is an unproved and useless hypothesis. Liberty, indeed, does belong to every moral agent, but not as an active power distinct from the will, instinctively seeking the greatest apparent good, as the effect of Divine causation.

I acknowledge that to *will* an apprehended good, or to reject an apprehended evil, is the effect of an original power or attribute of the human mind, and essential to it. This is a power worthy of the great Author of our existence, and a benefit that calls for our gratitude. And that this power should be exempt from restraint, control, or any interference whatever, in the moral agent, is essential to his accountability; and to require any other power

\* Active Powers, Essay i., chap. v. † See Diss. III. on Power.

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to constitute our liberty is as unphilosophical as the Aristotelian hypothesis of substantial forms and occult qualities.

All active power is from God. A moral agent's power, therefore, "over the determinations of his own will" can be nothing else but the Divine energy rendering the will effectual in the choice of apprehended good, or the refusal of apprehended evil. This, however, is perfectly consistent with *principles* of action, according to which the mind apprehends, and subsequently chooses or refuses. But *power* and *principle* should not be confounded. That the mind is influenced by its principles, whether good or evil, is a great truth; but these constitute the *state* of the mind, not a power or attribute.

## SECT. II.

### *Arguments for Liberty.*

The liberty of which I now treat is the *elective*, consisting of exemption from restraint in the choice of our apprehended good, and from coercion in the choice of real evil. A man may be deprived of *executive* liberty, whilst his freedom of choice in his intention to act still remains. An intention to murder, to steal, or to deceive, is an accountable act in a moral agent, though the intended effect be prevented by restraint. The agent is not indeed accountable for the *effect* so intended, which he never executed; but the *design* of producing it partakes of moral turpitude, and often amounts to a great degree of criminality. Accordingly, in many cases, the intention proved against the agent is amenable to justice by Divine and human laws.

To deny to man this *elective* liberty, in virtue of which he adopts an end and the means of attaining it, according to his *conviction*, is a virtual denial of *moral government*. Without this liberty moral government is but an illusion, a name without an essence. Government implies law with sanctions; and law, exemption from restraint in choosing ends and means, and from coercion when we act amiss. Were all our evil actions from decreative or mechanical necessity, there would be no alternative, no law, no government; and consequently no moral or penal evil.

Without this moral or elective Liberty there could be no *moral obligation*. The very nature of moral obligation implies liberty I in fixing our own end, and adopting our own means of attaining

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it. How could there be any punishment, or any penal evil whatever, for adopting what we were constrained *decretively* to adopt? Indeed, to be placed by Divine appointment in circumstances, and to be mechanically *induced* by a predisposing principle to embrace our own happiness, is perfectly consistent with benevolence and equity, and with every part of the Divine character. But how shall we account for the existence and turpitude of moral evil without moral obligation? or for moral obligation, with freedom from compulsion?

Without this *elective* liberty we could be the subjects of neither praise nor blame, *virtue* nor *vice*. Virtue consists in the adoption of right ends by laudable means; and vice consists in the adoption of any end whatever by means that are not laudable. But to be restrained from the choice of good without an alternative, or urged by constraint to adopt an evil, takes away the essence of virtue and vice. A *principle* of action indeed may be the effect of Divine causation, by which the intellect may represent a real, and not a merely apparent good; but a forced will, in choosing criminally, not only destroys the very character of virtue as well as of vice, but also implies a foul aspersion of the Divine government.

For the same reasons, *rewards* and *punishments*, without this elective liberty, could have no existence. Happiness, indeed, might be secured, on the supposition of constraint on the will; but happiness obtained without freedom could not be called *reward*. And evil may be imagined as the effect of constraint, as in the brutal creation; but that evil could not be penal, and the very existence of moral evil would be impossible. As no penal evil is conceivable without moral evil, so moral evil is not conceivable without freedom from constraint in our blamable elections.

Without this elective liberty, as before explained, there could be no *guilty conscience*. To be guilty of adopting means which we were decretively forced or necessitated to adopt, involves a contradiction. It is to suppose guilt attached to our executing the will and obeying the energy of the omnipotent and holy God. Guilt supposes an alternative, and an alternative in our culpable elections implies freedom from constraint.

If we have no elective liberty, *deliberation* could be of no real use. There could be no room for any such thing. Deliberation

supposes a contemplation of different ends and means. But why deliberate, if determined by an irreversible appointment to choose

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an evil action? The power to deliberate, on that supposition, is only the power of being tantalised. Dr Reid observes very properly, that we have, by our constitution, a natural conviction or belief that we act freely;—a conviction so early, so universal, and so necessary in most of our rational operations, that it must be the result of our constitution, and the work of Him that made us.”\* He indeed considers this freedom a *power*, but I would call it a *privilege* only. While, therefore, I oppose the sentiment which he opposes, I consider his own notion as no less objectionable.

The reader will perceive that I do not maintain a freedom from all necessity, as shall be further explained in the following sections. But the liberty for which I plead is that which clears the Divine character from necessitating evil, and which condemns the guilty in the choice of it. The want of this distinction, I conceive, has been the source of much useless controversy, and, if disregarded, must ever prove the occasion of endless confusion. Without it, we can never ascribe to God what is His due, nor fairly establish the sentiment of just demerit.

### SECT. III.

#### *Of Necessity.*†

The term *necessity* is extremely ambiguous, signifying very different ideas in different connexions. And the neglect of accurate

\* Active Powers, Essay iv., chap. vi.

† The distinction [viz., infallible foreknowledge may *prove* the necessity of the events foreknown, and yet not be the thing which *causes* the necessity] is of great importance in the present controversy; and the want of attending to the true ground on which it stands has been, we presume, the principal cause of Dr Whitby's objections, and those of most, if not all, other Arminian writers. They seem to consider in this argument no other *necessity* but the *decretive*, as maintained by their opponents, and therefore infer that to allow any kind of necessity is the same as to allow an infallible *decree*. From this view, the transition is easy to another conclusion—viz., that if anything is foreknown *because* it is decreed, *every* thing is decreed on the same ground, or for the same reason. And then, this proving too much,—the decretive appointment of all the *evil* in the universe, which, they are sure, is incompatible with the Divine character, and therefore impossible,—they reject the whole doctrine of necessity as a ground of foreknowledge, and suppose that, though they cannot clearly *disprove* what is advanced against them, they infer that there is somehow a sophism in the reasoning of their opponents, or some false principle assumed, were they but happy enough to detect it. But our author, [*i. e.*, President Edwards,] in this reasoning, does not maintain that the

connexion by which *every* event is evidently certain, and therefore necessary, is so because *decreed*. The truth is, that some events are foreknown to be certain

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distinctions on this head has proved peculiarly embarrassing to writers on moral philosophy. All necessity is either *physical* or *metaphysical*.

because foreordained, and *others* because of the tendency there is in the nature of the things themselves. Should any, in the way of objection, assert that the nature of things themselves is derived from the Divine will or decree, we apprehend that there is no evidence to support such an assertion. For instance: is it owing to a decree that the nature of any created being is dependent on the First Cause?—that a creature, however exalted, is not infinite?—that any relation should subsist between the Creator and the creature?—or that if equal quantities be taken from equal quantities, the remainders will be equal? Is there room in thought for a supposition of any decree in the case? Nay, more, does it appear possible for a decree to have made such things otherwise?

Let it be observed, however, that God is the almighty Sovereign over nature; not, indeed, so as to alter the nature of things,—which in reality is no object of power, any more than to make spirit to be the same thing as matter, and *vice versa*, or the working of contradictions, is an object of power,—but by the position of antecedents and established premises. To illustrate this, let it be supposed, if God create a world, that world must depend upon Him as a necessary consequence. To deny this, is to deny the nature and identity of things. For what is it to create, but for an independent cause to impart, *ad extra*, a dependent existence? So that to deny dependence, is to deny creation. But though the consequence be necessary if the antecedent be established, yet the antecedent itself is not necessary, except from decree; for there is not in the nature of things any antecedent necessity that a world be created,—that is, to suppose its non-existence implies no contradiction, it being evidently the effect of sovereign pleasure. Hence, to deny the consequence on supposition of the antecedent, is to deny the nature of things, and to assert a contradiction, though the antecedent itself be not necessary. And hence, also, in the instance now specified, among others innumerable, the antecedent is an object of decree, but not the consequence. It is absurd to say that God decreed the dependence of the world upon Himself, as it is to say He decreed that two and two shall be equal to four rather than to five.

These remarks, duly considered in their just consequence, will abundantly shew that some things are necessary because decreed,—as the creation, the preservation, and the government of the world, the redemption, the purification, and the salvation of the Church; and that other things, as all imperfections, dependence, relations, and especially moral evils, come to be necessary, and so capable of being foreknown, only by connexion or consequence,—that is, if the antecedent which is under the control of the almighty Sovereign be admitted, the consequence follows infallibly from the nature of things. But if another antecedent be established, another consequence will follow with equal certainty also from the nature of things. For instance, if holiness be given and continued to a redeemed creature as an antecedent, excellence, honour, and happiness are the necessary consequences. But if sin operate without control as the antecedent, dishonour and misery must be the necessary consequence from the same cause.

Foreknowledge infers necessity, such a necessity as exists in the connexion of a consequent with its antecedent; and President Edwards has represented in various lights how the most contradictory and absurd conclusions follow from the opposite hypothesis. But as his argument, strictly speaking, did not require a

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PHYSICAL necessity denotes the certainty of an effect by an impelling cause. Whatever effect, or event, takes place in consequence

further explanation or distinction of the principles on which it rested, which yet are important, it may not be improper in this place briefly to inquire into the *rationale* of those principles, by which his reasoning may appear with additional evidence, and the radical principles themselves be confirmed by their connexion with others. As these remarks are presented in the form of a series analytically disposed, we shall prefix to them the corresponding ordinal members:—

(1.) Any kind of necessity is a sufficient ground of foreknowledge in the view of Omniscience; but as is the kind of necessity, or the nature of the connexion between cause and effect, so is the nature of the foreknowledge. But this difference in the nature of the connexion affects not the *certainty* of the event, but the *mode* of causation, or from what cause the certainty arises. (2.) All necessity, or certainty of connexion between antecedent and consequent, must arise from one of these two sources—viz., the nature of things, or the decree of God. Chance is nothing; and nothing has no properties, consequently has no causal influence. (3.) The necessity which arises from the nature of things is either absolute or hypothetical. Absolute necessity belongs only to the First Cause, or God. He exists absolutely; and to suppose Him not to exist, or not to have existed, is a contradiction. For the supposition itself is made by a confessedly contingent being; but a contingent being implies an absolute being with as much certainty as an effect implies a cause, and consequently a First Cause. (4.) The First Cause excepted, every other being, or mode of being, or any event whatever, is only of hypothetical necessity. Any event is necessary, only on account of its relation to the First Cause. This relation or necessary connexion between an event and the First Cause is either in the way of contrast or in the way of dependence. (5.) There are two things necessarily related to the First Cause by way of contrast: *passive power*, which is a natural evil, if limited existence, dependence, and insufficiency, in their necessary tendency, may be so called; and *sin*, which is moral evil, or something which, in point of obligation, ought not to be. (6.) The other mode of necessary relation to the First Cause, arising from the nature of things, is that of dependence. Every contingent being and event must necessarily depend upon God, as an effect depends upon its cause. Nor is it conceivable, without involving the grossest contradiction and absurdity, that any contingent being should *continue* to exist, any more than begin to exist, independent of the First Cause. *Sublata causa, tollitur effectus*, is justly entitled to be called an axiom in metaphysical science. (7.) It was before observed, that all necessity must arise either from the nature of things, or from the decree of God. What arises from the nature of things as a consequence, has for its antecedent either an efficient or a deficient cause. (8.) A defect, no less than an active efficiency, may be an antecedent, as founded in the nature of things, from whence a corresponding consequence must follow; but there is no defect in any antecedent but may be counteracted by a decree,—so far counteracted as that the defects shall not be an operative cause. (9.) The purposes of God are a series of antecedents, from whence follow, by the very nature of things, corresponding good consequences, and good only; but the defect which is inseparable from created existence, considered in itself, is also a cause in the sense of an antecedent, otherwise a created existence would be as indefectible as the creating or First Cause, which involves the most absurd consequences. (10.) Defect is either natural or moral; and each arises from the nature of things, as contradistinguished to decree, but in a dif-

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of will, appointment, purpose, or decree,—whether it relate to matter or motion, substance or mode, mind or principle, whether

ferent manner. Natural defect arises, from the nature of things, in the way of contrast to God's natural perfections, which contrast forms the primary difference between Creator and creature. (11.) This natural defect is different from defectibility, for defectibility expresses, in strictness, an effect, not a cause—a liableness to defection. But the question returns, What renders a creature liable to defect? To say, Its *liableness* to defect, or its defectibility, assigns no true cause; for the question returns as before, What makes it liable? what makes it defectible? (12.) Perhaps there is no term less exceptionable, in order to prevent circumlocution, than *PASSIVE POWER*, to express that natural defect which exists in a created nature, as a contrast to the natural, not the moral, perfections of God. (13.) Passive power is as inapplicable to God as it is applicable to a creature, for natural perfection is as applicable to Him as natural imperfection is to us. Therefore to say that a creature is not the subject of passive power, is the same as to say that it is perfect and indefectible in its nature as God is, which is the grossest pantheism,—the deification of every creature, of every atom that exists. (14.) All antecedents originate in either passive power or the Divine decrees. From the former proceed, according to the nature of things, all evil consequents; from the latter, all good. (15.) Moral defect is a contrast to the moral perfections, excellency, or holiness of God, and arises, as a necessary consequence, not from the Divine decree as its antecedent, but from the hypothetical nature of things,—that is, passive power,—if not aided by a decretive interposition, and if also united to liberty of choice in an accountable being. (16.) The removal of the antecedent is the prerogative of the Supreme Lord of nature; but if the antecedent be not removed,—that is, altered from what it was as to its causal influence,—the consequence can no more be prevented than the nature of things can be changed. (17.) That *nature* of things, or that necessity of consequence whereby the effect is infallibly connected with its cause, is nothing else but the essence of truth emanating from the First Cause, the God of truth, or the true God. (18.) We now observe that an event may be necessarily connected with its cause by a Divine *decree*. If the Divine will contemplate an *end*, and decree accordingly, it necessarily implies that the *means*, or the *antecedents* to this consequence, are decreed. (19.) Hence, an event may be *necessary* either because virtually *determined* by the Divine *will* IN a series of antecedents, or because the *nature of things* operates without being affected as to their causal influence by decretive antecedents. (20.) To suppose any sort or any degree of *defect* to be *decreed* is absurd in different ways. It is contrary to an established axiom, that *from good nothing but good can proceed*; and it is absurd to impute that to a Divine decree which antecedently arises from the nature of things. (21.) In reality, Divine decrees (as before hinted) are nothing else than a wonderful chain or *series of positions*, which are so many antecedents, counteracting defects arising from the hypothetical nature of things. Whence it necessarily follows, that *if there were no passive power, there could be no Divine decrees*. For if good, and only good, arose from the nature of things, the decree, which has good only for its object, would be superfluous, and therefore unworthy of Divine volition. (22.) Hence, also, whatever event is *in itself good* is an object of Divine decree *in its antecedent*; and the event itself is connected with the decretive position by the very essence of truth. But whatever is *in itself evil* arises from the hypothetical nature of things not counteracted by decretive positions. (23.) In God, His absolutely necessary,

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it belong to the material or spiritual world,—is by *physical* necessity. The same thing is often termed *mechanical* necessity,

eternal, infinite, and unchangeable *nature* is to be regarded as an *antecedent*, from which all possible happiness is the necessary consequence. Such an antecedent is not the result of mere arbitrary or decretive *will*, but of *absolute necessity*; but all antecedents in a creature, or every causal influence, of which good or happiness, whether natural or moral, is the consequence, must be the positions of decretive will, as the only possible mode of securing a good result. (24.) As the antecedent, so is the consequent; for the connexion is formed by eternal truth. If, therefore, a *good event*—for instance, a virtuous or holy choice—be the consequence, the antecedent is a *decretive position*. (25.) In reference to God, the proper and only ground of *infallible certainty* that His choice is good and praiseworthy is the goodness of His nature. Were we to admit in thought the possibility of a defective nature in Him, in the same proportion must we admit a possible failure in the goodness of His choice. And in reference to a created being, the proper and only ground of *certainty* that his choice will be good is the antecedent goodness of his nature or *disposition*. This alone is a sufficient causal influence; but the goodness of a creature's disposition can be secured, as a ground of certainty, only by decretive influence of a nature corresponding with the nature of the effect. (26.) From these principles and considerations, which can here be but briefly stated, as necessarily connected with their legitimate consequences, we infer that God foresees ALL GOOD, in every created being, in every mode, in every event, by the evidence of a decretive necessity—a necessity resulting from actual *influx* or perpetual *energy* in the position of *antecedents*, and the essence of *truth* connecting the causal influence with the effect. (27.) From the same principles we learn that God foresees or foreknows ALL EVIL (however blended with the good, as the different colours in a pencil of light are blended) in every being and in every event where found, by that necessity which is HYPOTHETICAL only—a necessity arising from the nature of things left to their own causal influence, which influence, in any given circumstances, will manifest itself either in the way of contrast, of dependence, or both united. (28.) Again; *volitions* are *acts* of the mind, and each voluntary act is compounded of a *natural* and *moral* quality. The natural quality of a voluntary act proceeds from *decretive necessity*; for there is nothing in it but what is good, decreed and effected by the First Cause. The moral quality of a voluntary act is either good or evil. (29.) A voluntary act *morally* GOOD is *altogether* of *decretive* necessity, both as to its physical and moral quality; and is therefore foreknown *because* of decretive appointment and energy. But a voluntary act *morally* BAD is partly of decretive and partly of hypothetical necessity, or that of consequence. (30.) The physical quality of a voluntary act *morally bad* is of decretive necessity, and is foreknown *because* foreappointed; but the MORAL QUALITY of the same act, or its *badness*, is foreknown only by relation, connexion, or consequence. Thus, *deformity* is the absence of beauty, and may be known by the standard of beauty from which it deviates; *weakness* is the absence of strength, and may be known by relation; a *shadow* is known by the interception of rays, and may be known in the same manner; *darkness* is caused by the absence of light, and may be known by the light excluded. (31.) How the bad *quality* of a moral act may be foreknown by the evidence of relation will further appear from the consideration of the nature of moral evil itself. For what is moral evil, or sin, but what ought not to be in point of *moral obligation*? Now, for at all knowing or foreknowing what *ought not* to be, which is incapable

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because the impelling cause operates by a similar *positive certainty*, however different might be the medium of operation to the mechanism of natural causes and effects. Nor is it any other than *decretive* necessity; the effect or event, as well as the means, being decreed to take place, according to Divine wisdom and irresistible energy.

Thus matter gravitates, water flows, the sun shines, the planets move, the soul seeks happiness, and shuns apprehended evil, instinctively; that is, from physical necessity. And, in short, the existence and instinctive operations of all our intellectual and active powers proceed from the will and energy, and consequently from the decretive purpose of God. Whatever God effects in time, He must have *purpose* to effect from eternity. And this belongs to all worlds alike.

This necessity may be also termed *natural*, if we consider the word (φύσις) *nature* to denote a constituted series of causes and effects by the supreme will. Thus nature is a wonderful machine, formed and preserved by creating energy, and directed to the best ends by unerring wisdom. The Divine will is the moving cause, however numerous the intermediate wheels. Not one of those wheels could possibly move, nor one effect follow, without the continuation of the original impulse. Everything in nature is contingent, and everything contingent is dependent in being and operation. The consecutive series of natural causes and effects is a chain formed by infinite wisdom; the chain may be long, but the longer it is, the more need there is of a first cause. Bather, we may say, nature consists of innumerable chains; all proceeding from the incessant operation of Divine providence.

METAPHYSICAL necessity, the other principal division of the subject, has two subordinate meanings. These are *absolute* and *hypothetical*.

*Absolute* necessity can belong only to the First Cause, His existence and nature; and those unalterable relations which are included in that infinite nature, irrespectively of all will. Nothing in *nature*, as before explained, is of absolute necessity; for that is the effect of will, and might have been different, had it pleased the Creator.

of being decreed, the proper medium or evidence is the knowledge of what *ought*

to be. (32.) If, therefore, *what ought to be* is known to the Omniscient by constituted relations or voluntary appointment, *what ought not to be* may be known by evident consequences.

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*Hypothetical necessity* denotes the *certainty* of any effect or event from a *supposed* antecedent. It is expressive of an infallible *connexion* between something existing, or the supposition of its existence, and its appropriate consequence. Thus, a creature existing, or supposed to exist, is dependent on the Creator for its being and created properties, by an infallible connexion. No will can be imagined to make this connexion fail; because the contrary implies a contradiction. But this is not the case with physical necessity. The connexion between a physical effect and its usual cause or antecedent may be interrupted by an interposing will, as in the case of miracles. Because a river has flowed, or the sun has shone, and the planets have revolved around him, for many ages, this constitutes no sufficient reason that these effects must always stand infallibly connected with their natural antecedent. Had Mr Hume properly understood the real difference between physical and metaphysical necessity, he never could have reasoned as he has done on the doctrine of *causes*, by absurdly arguing from the one to the other. A physical cause is altogether dependent on the supreme will, for a given time, “and in given circumstances. But a metaphysical cause, whether absolute or hypothetical, is subject to no such failure. Only suppose a being to be created, and no conceivable will can prevent its limitation of existence, of properties, and powers. Allow a figure to be a circle, and the equality of its *radii* follows by metaphysical (as including mathematical) necessity. Only grant that five may be added to five, and no miracle can prevent the sum being ten. If equal quantities be added to equal quantities, it is impossible to prevent their sums from being equal, without destroying the supposition; that is, without involving a contradiction.

It should be further observed, that, as in mathematics, (which is but a branch of metaphysics,) *negative quantities* are a ground of necessity of consequence, no less than those which are positive; so, *negative principles*, in created existences, may be an adequate ground of the same infallible certainty. Thus, the want of ulterior perfection may be the ground of infallible consequences, in given circumstances, as well as the contrary.

## SECT. IV.

*Arguments for Necessity.*

They who maintain that liberty is an active power of the mind, and at the same time contend that this liberty is subject to *no kind* of necessity, must, to be consistent, maintain the doctrine of absolute *chance*. There is no medium in this case. On the other hand, if liberty be, as we have defined it, exemption from restraint in the choice of good, and from compulsion in the choice of evil, chance is excluded, and the moral agent is fairly accountable for all his actions. What he adopts as the end and the means of his happiness, he adopts freely, that is, upon conviction as being best for him. But this conviction does not spring from *chance*. It is subject to *some kind* of necessity; but between chance and necessity, as the predisposing cause of virtue and vice, there is no possible medium.

I have stated that all necessity is either physical or metaphysical. The former, whether we call it mechanical, decretive, or natural, results from Divine will, and is the effect of Divine energy. Such are all created existences in all worlds, with all their active powers and operations. This glorious system of created nature no creature can alter or impede. To this necessity the holy seraph, the human free agent, the crawling worm, the growing shrub, the rolling tide, and gravitating matter, are alike subject. Without it, they could neither exist nor produce any effect.

To suppose that any creature, from the highest to the lowest, is exempt from this necessity, in the production of physical effects, is to suppose two original powers, which is infinitely absurd. Every active power is from God; He gives and continues it as He pleases. The laws of nature are no less dependent on the will and energy of the Creator, than the system of nature which is governed by those laws. They are equally contingent, and therefore equally dependent. Alan may modify materials formed ready to his hand, on supposition of existing laws; but all his art is dependent on those laws and materials, and all, himself included, dependent on Divine will and efficient power. To deny this, is to assert palpable contradictions. It is no less than to identify Creator and creature, as to the very thing wherein must consist their essential difference. A creature independent in his physical nature and

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operations! and the Creator dependent on the creature in the effects of those operations!

It was also stated that metaphysical necessity is either absolute or hypothetical. Respecting the existence and nature of God, it is presumed no one but a professed Atheist, who delights to sport with his own gross contradictions, can question the most absolute metaphysical necessity. Nor is it likely that any will maintain that wisdom *can* be made folly, falsehood be made a truth, a circle be made a square, or misery be identified with happiness. Were nothing *absolute*,—that is, of absolute *necessity*,—there could be nothing contingent. Without such necessity, neither ourselves, nor anything around us, could have an adequate cause. Not even chance itself, if by chance we mean anything, could possibly exist. Therefore, to deny absolute metaphysical existence and nature, is to deny the first principle of all reasoning, and the strongest possible evidence.

Hypothetical necessity also must be admitted, except we renounce the first principles of reason. If we deny a certain connexion between antecedents and their appropriate consequents, reason has no room to infer anything. Everything is the sport of chance, and that chance is nothing. No conclusion can follow from any premises, and the reasonings of an objector must be as unmeaning as his favourite contingency. Without this necessity mathematical truths are all illusive; great and small, beauty and deformity, truth and falsehood, have no distinction of character.

The intelligent reader will perceive that this necessity is extremely different from that which is physical or decretive. The truth of a conclusion from given premises is not the effect of decree; for no decree can be supposed that could make it otherwise. Only *suppose* the position of an antecedent, with which the consequent stands connected in the nature of things, and a decree must appear to have no place. Physical necessity follows from a constituting sovereign will, but metaphysical necessity from that nature of things which is no object of will—that is, from the nature of God and essential relations.

But here it is of the utmost importance to state, that good and evil have not the *same* cause. Good is worthy of Divine causation, but not evil, whether metaphysical or moral. What we call

physical evil is only relatively so; a real good becomes to individuals relatively an evil. Goodness in God is not an effect, but

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His essential nature; but goodness in a creature is an effect of His good pleasure. And as every effect of His production may be termed physical, it follows that our *good* of every kind, which can have no other cause ultimately than God, flows by physical necessity; our volitions, and the goodness of our volitions not excepted.

Dr Reid, when discussing this subject, objects in the following manner:—"If there be a better and a worse in actions on the system of necessity, let us suppose a man necessarily determined, in all cases, to will and to do what is best to be done: he would surely be innocent and inculpable, but, as far as I am able to judge, he would not be entitled to the esteem and moral approbation of those who knew and believed this necessity. What was, by an ancient author, said of Cato, might indeed be said of him: *He was good because he could not be otherwise*. But this saying, if understood literally and strictly, is not the praise of Cato, but of his constitution, which was no more the work of Cato than his existence." On this very singular, and in my view singularly erroneous passage, I would offer a few remarks.

Dr Reid allows that such a man would be *innocent* and *inculpable*, but denies that he would be entitled to the *esteem* and moral *approbation* of those who knew and believed this necessity. But with what propriety he denies this, it may deserve consideration. Is an action less entitled to esteem because it proceeds from a good cause? Surely not. The goodness of the cause can be no objection to its estimable quality. That it should proceed from *no* cause is absurd; and that it should proceed from a *had* cause is inconceivable; it must, therefore, proceed from a cause either derivatively or originally good. A cause originally good can be no other than God; man's goodness, therefore, is only derivative, and consequently the goodness of his volitions is from the Source of all good. It is in vain to urge that his actions would not then be in every sense his *own*. They are as much his *own* as it is *possible* for those of any creature to be. For the exertion of active power to be our *own*, *independently* of the first active power, and His continued energy, is absolutely inconceivable, and replete with contradictions. In performing a good act, though the goodness of

that act be traced to physical necessity, it is as much his *own* as he or any one else can require; for this plain reason, that for it to be his own in any higher sense is a metaphysical impossibility. He has intellect; he has a will unrestrained; he acts from convic-

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tion, and thus performs the good act. What more can be required? What more is conceivable to constitute the act his own? To require an original active power, in addition to these, is the same as to attempt the establishment of two independent principles, two original active causes,—a being dependent in his essence, but not in his operations, while, at the same time, it is plain that the operations cannot be more independent than the essence. Active power *originating* in a creature, rather than the *medium* of operation in producing effects by the will and influence of the first active power, is reducible to the grossest contradiction. It supposes a creature that has not the essential qualities of a creature; for if *dependence* in the exertion and right direction of his active powers be not essential to a creature possessed of such powers, the distinction between dependent and independent, derived and undervived, Creator and creature, is done away.

The subject of physical necessitation, it is acknowledged by Dr Reid, would be *innocent* and *inculpable*. In this position we are agreed, but widely differ in the inference deduced from it. Dr Reid would surely grant that he who has an intellect to perceive, a will to choose, and freedom from restraint in his moral acts, and in these circumstances does “what is best to be done,” bids fair for perfection in moral agency. And yet this very person may be the subject of physical necessity. His intellect and active will, being powers of the mind, can acknowledge no other than this necessity for their source. And to suppose their existence to be derived thence, but not their operations, is to recur to those absurdities which have been already exposed.

A person exercising his intellect and will, without restraint, according to his conviction of what is best for him upon the whole, is a free agent. To suppose some inexplicable original power, some occult quality, which has activity in some manner independent on the first active power, is at once to beg the question in debate, and to deviate from the acknowledged rule of philosophy—viz., “That no more causes ought to be admitted than those which are truly

sufficient to explain the phenomena.” This rule is so universal in its nature, that there is no good reason for confining it to matter and motion. It is alike applicable to physics and metaphysics. A free agent *doing* “what is best to be done,” is an *estimable* character, and is highly deserving of our approbation in his moral acts. He does what he *ought* to do. He acts according to pro-

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priety and *rectitude*. To act *innocently* and *unblamably* is the same thing as to act *estimably* and *commendably*. No medium, I believe, is conceivable.

When Dr Reid represents “a *man* necessarily determined in all cases to will and to do what is best to be done,” as “not entitled to *esteem* and moral *approbation*,” he ought certainly to have assigned some good reason for this assertion, since we all know that the volitions of the Supreme Agent are at once *necessarily* good, and yet perfectly *free* from all restraint; and at the same time deserving of the highest esteem and approbation. The truth is, and which Dr Reid was not sufficiently aware of, that it is the *nature* of an agent that *secures* the quality of his moral actions, and not some inexplicable power exercised over the determinations of his own will. Thus the Divine *nature*, being necessarily good, by the highest kind of necessity, and liable to no restraint in the exercise of volition, is “necessarily determined in all cases to will and to do what is best to be done.” And is not this the chief glory of the Supreme Agent? Because He is necessarily determined, by His holy nature, “in all cases to will and to do what is best,” is He nothing more than “innocent and inculpable?” Is He “not entitled to the esteem and moral approbation of those who know and believe this necessity?” Rather, should not our esteem and moral approbation rise in proportion to the strength of that necessity which preserves from *liability* to failure? And in proportion as the Great Supreme necessitates the *nature* of a subordinate agent to resemble His own, though in a small degree,—from whence arises the quality of his morally good actions, as the predisposing cause,—two consequences follow: first, that every good action is *necessitated*; and, secondly, that every such action is worthy of *esteem* and approbation, bearing a resemblance to the moral quality of the Divine acts, which are *necessitated* by a holy nature, and at the same time infinitely estimable.

What was said by an ancient author concerning Cato, had it been true, would have been, as it was intended, the highest praise. The more incapable any being is of moral failure, the more praiseworthy; that is, the more he resembles the pattern and source of excellence. However, there is reason to suppose that Dr Reid, as well as many others, objected to all necessity, principally, at least, because of the supposed *other* consequence—that the decretive necessity to good implies a similar necessity to moral evil. But

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this is the (πρώτον ψεῦδος) *fundamental error* of Dr Reid's doctrine. That a decretive necessity to good is not inseparably connected with a similar necessitation of moral evil, deserves particular consideration. For ought that I can perceive, it is a doctrine but very little known, though of the utmost importance in moral science and the purity of religion. This being the case, I shall consider it at large in a future part of this work. At present, however, it may be proper to notice the following objection, and in a brief manner to shew its futility. The objection is this:—"If a man be necessarily determined to do ill, this case seems to me to move pity but not disapprobation. He was ill, because he could not be otherwise. Who can blame him? Necessity has no law. If he knows that he acted under this necessity, has he not just ground to exculpate himself? The blame, if there be any, is not in him, but in his constitution. If he be charged by his Maker with doing wrong, may he not expostulate with Him, and say. Why hast Thou made me thus? I may be sacrificed at Thy pleasure for the common good, like a man that has the plague, but not for ill desert; for Thou knowest that what I am charged with is Thy work, and not mine,"\*

The intelligent reader will observe, that this language is applicable only to *decretive* necessity; and in that view, I admit its utmost force. To be thus necessitated to moral evil, is to destroy the very nature of such evil; and to be punished for it is an act of manifest injustice. Let the advocates for philosophical necessity, as commonly explained, answer the objection if they can, and urge as they please the propriety of the Supreme Being doing evil in this way that good may come. Their efforts will be vain. What God does, or decretively necessitates to be done, cannot be evil, nor can it be the object of punishment. His necessitation

exculpates from criminality, and exempts from being obnoxious to penal sanctions. But what has this to do with *hypothetical* necessity? This only requires that there should be *some* cause of moral evil, in opposition to perfect *chance*. And let it be even called chance, still *something* is a predisposing cause of evil, else we have an effect without *any* cause; than which nothing can be more absurd. To satisfy reason, I allow, it is highly desirable to ascertain this predisposing cause; and particularly to shew that it is not of Divine appointment This I hope to be able to do when

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\* Active Powers, Essay iv., chap. i.

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treating of the origin of evil. At present it is sufficient to shew that the denial of all necessity in moral actions is unreasonable and contradictory.

Dr Reid denies that moral actions are subject to any necessity, and yet he maintains that *liberty* is power, *active power*, and that we *derive* it from God:—"All our power is, without doubt, derived from the Author of our being; and, as He gave it freely, He may take it away when He will. No man can be certain of the continuance of any of his powers of body or mind for a moment; and, therefore, in every promise there is a condition understood: to wit, if we live, if we retain that health of body and soundness of mind which is necessary to the performance, and if nothing happen, in the providence of God, which puts it out of our power."\* Here we have in detail what implies the most direct contradiction to what he holds as a maxim; a maxim fundamental to his hypothesis. Active power, derived from, and continued by the sovereign pleasure of God, implies a necessitation of that power while it continues. Therefore, Dr Reid's notion of liberty itself is, that it is the offspring of necessity; while at the same time he maintains it is a fundamental principle that it is subject to no necessity, which is a direct contradiction. And indeed, if his maxim were admitted, and his concessions fairly analysed, his system excludes alike both liberty and necessity. For denying all necessity in moral actions, and maintaining that liberty is active power derived from, and continued by the first active power, he gets rid of both together. There is no necessity, and there is no

liberty. Such are the genuine consequences of his notion of active power, and of his denial of all necessity.

Such contradictions must ever attend those philosophers who ascribe the *same* source to good and evil, whether active power or anything else. To make actions morally good and actions morally bad proceed alike from the same ultimate or predisposing cause, is to make good fruit and bad arise from the same root, or water of opposite qualities flow from the same fountain. Indeed, as the *will* stamps the character of actions, and all moral actions proceed from the will, considered as a power of the mind, in that sense they have the same origin; but this is an argument that strongly proves a difference in the ultimate cause or predisposing principle from which the will acts. Were not this the case, there could be

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\* Active Powers, Essay i., chap. ii.

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no difference in the effect. For like causes produce like effects, as all just rules of philosophising require us to conclude, both in physics and metaphysics. To admit a diversity of effects without a corresponding diversity of causes, is the same thing as to admit an effect without an adequate cause; which is subversive of all reasoning, and of common sense.

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## DISSERTATION VI.

### ON THE NATURE OF THINGS AND HYPOTHETICAL TENDENCIES.

THIS phrase, “the nature of things,” is used in two different senses, according as the subject is either physical or metaphysical. In a *physical* sense, it denotes the whole system of created existences as constituted by the sovereign will of the Creator, whereby one thing differs from another, including an endless variety of antecedents and consequents which take place according to appointed rules. This comprehends the world of spirits as well as of matter. For their existence and active powers, as well as matter and motion, are a part of constituted nature, and are subject to appointed laws, though these laws are extremely different. It is a sophism which has too much influence on the human mind, that because the laws of mechanism, whether celestial or

terrestrial, are *very different* from those of minds and their operations, therefore minds are subject to no certain laws of any kind. Were this admitted, it would follow that minds and their operations form no part of the physical nature of things, and consequently are not within the jurisdiction of the Author of nature. To suppose minds and their operations to be subject to no certain laws, is to suppose that the Author of nature has made chance, or uncertainty itself, a part of His most accurate and certain plan. That God renders what men call chance, contingency, or uncertainty, subservient to His wise designs, is very true; but to suppose that anything is uncertain with Him before it take place, is equally false. It is a gross impeachment of supreme knowledge, wisdom, and power. Surely He who formed all beings, made them what they were, as differing physically one from another, cannot be supposed to be ignorant of their tendencies and operations, or to abandon them to absolute uncertainty, without any regard to one

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result rather than another. And it would be an insulting libel on the Divine power to say that though He knew and designed a certain result, yet He could not effect it, because that active power which is called *liberty* stood in the way. The truth is, that in the constituted nature of things, there is the most wonderful uniformity of design, amid an endless variety of means, concurring to produce the designed result. “Where there is most wisdom there is least chance,” is a maxim worthy of the first philosophy. From which it is but a just corollary, that perfect wisdom excludes all chance.

In a *metaphysical* sense, “the nature of things” denotes whatever belongs to God or to a creature which is not the effect of will. Thus the self-existence, independence, all-sufficiency, immutability, indefectibility, and infinitude of God, belong to Him, not as the result of *will*, but of *necessity*. And thus the contraries to these attributes—derived existence, dependence, insufficiency, mutability, defectibility, and limitation—belong to a creature, not as the effect of *will*, on the hypothesis of their having existence, but of consequent *necessity*. No will could possibly have made them otherwise, because the supposition is contradictory, and therefore can be no object of power. Hence that God has all possible perfection, and a creature the want of ulterior perfection, or the want

of something which may be conceived as more perfect, is founded in the nature of things; that is, in the idea of God and a creature. To suppose the contrary is to suppose that the nature of the one and of the other may be reversed. As sure as God is, so sure is it that His nature cannot be otherwise than illimitably perfect; and as sure as a creature is, so sure is it that his nature is essentially different from that of God. In brief, it is absolutely impossible that these things should be otherwise; which is meant when we say it is inconsistent with the nature of things.

But his cannot be said of the *constituted* nature of things; because; for anything we know, the series of created existences might have been otherwise, or the laws of nature, as they are called, may be suspended or reversed, and even that suspension or reversion be itself the effect of decretive design. Thus we conceive it possible that all the present laws of creation and providence may be completely altered in some future period, and others take the place of them.

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When, therefore, we speak of *hypothetical tendencies*, in refer-

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ence to the nature of things, in a physical sense, we can only mean, that while it pleases God to continue the same existences, and their operations, subject to the same laws of antecedence and consequence, such effects will follow. Thus while matter exists, and the same laws of attraction continue to operate, which is a constitution of sovereign pleasure, heavy bodies will tend to the centre of gravitation; and bodies specifically lighter will tend to recede from that centre. There are therefore hypothetical tendencies in *physical* nature; that is, things tend to certain results on *supposition* of the constituted antecedents.

But the *metaphysical* nature of things has also hypothetical tendencies. For IF there be a First Cause, He tends to be, and to be all that He is; and if there be a creature, he tends not to be, and not to be all that he has received. For this is the *nature* of the one and of the other; the one as absolute, and the other as contingent. To suppose an absolute being that tends not to be, or a contingent being that tends to exist, or to be what it is in any other way than by participation, involves a contradiction. The supposition is not less absurd than that a circle may become

a square, or a square a circle; for both alike are inconsistent with the nature of things.

The nature of things, in the metaphysical sense, is ultimately nothing else than the nature of God, which is prior and superior to all will, and the nature of a creature, which is essentially defective compared with ulterior perfection. Respecting the former of these, there will be no dispute; for no one imagines that the Divine *nature* is the effect of its own *will*. But the other truth, though necessarily implied in that now mentioned, and of infinite importance in moral science, is not so easily admitted, because not in so familiar a train of observation. Simple *existence* is a familiar idea, and needs but little effort to perceive it. But a *tendency* to exist requires a little more thought; because tendency, in reference to existence, depends on the *nature* of the existence in question; and different tendencies imply different natures. Hence the subject becomes more difficult.

Simple existence being the most obvious and familiar idea, and knowing that God exists, and the world exists, we too hastily infer that the terms or the manner of existence in each case have no difference of any moment; whereas, in reality, they are infinitely different. We also perceive that we *continue* to exist, and from

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thence naturally infer *some tendency* to exist; but for want of due attention we further erroneously infer, that this tendency does not essentially differ from a tendency to exist in the Divine nature. Whereas, in truth, we contingent beings and all the created universe, including all constituted laws, exist, and consequently *tend* to exist, only by the will of the Creator; but the Creator himself exists antecedently and irrespectively of any will. He therefore tends to exist *absolutely*, but we only *hypothetically*, on supposition of His continued will.

Hence it follows, if we compare the two natures and their tendencies with the idea of *absolute*, the one tends to be, and the other not to be. There is no conceivable medium. If the one exists and tends to exist *absolutely*, and the other not, this last must needs tend the *contrary* way. For if we suppose a *medium*, with respect to absolute and contingent,—a nature that has no tendency either to be or not to be, in itself considered,—we suppose as great a contradiction as a medium between being and not being.

What has been now said with respect to simple existence, and its tendency, is equally applicable to created *qualities*, and their tendency. Thus, for instance, holiness in a creature is a good quality, and its tendency to continue can no more be absolute than the existence of which it is predicated. Consequently, compared with absolute, the tendency is, for the same reason, the contrary way. If it does not tend to continue, in an absolute sense, it tends not to continue, in itself considered. Its continuance is merely hypothetical, on supposition of continued will. If this will be supposed not to continue, there remains no possible ground of its continuance. To deny this, involves the same palpable contradiction as before—that the same thing may be and not be at the same time and in the same respect.

Upon the whole, it is plain that our existence, our good qualities, and their continuance, being contingent things, depend necessarily on the will and continued energy of our Creator and Preserver; and to deny this is to contradict the nature of things. The tendency of the most exalted and the most holy creature, compared with absolute being and goodness, is, from the nature of things,—that is, from the nature of God and of a creature,—the *contrary* way. This consequence cannot be avoided, and an attempt to avoid it is the same as an attempt to identify natures infinitely different. The sum of what has been argued is this,

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that God alone is the bountiful Giver and continual Preserver of all the good in the universe, according to His good pleasure; and that the nature of things requires that they should have no tendency of their *own*, strictly speaking, either to existence or to goodness.

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## DISSERTATION VII.

### ON THE DIVINE PRESCIENCE AND *SCIENTIA MEDIA*.

FROM the doctrine of the nature of things, and hypothetical tendencies, the transition is natural to the consideration of the Divine prescience. The phrase itself is plain and common, and sufficiently indicates a certain foreknowledge of what is future. It is needless to enumerate *what* things are foreknown; for if moral

good and evil, which are the proper objects relating to moral science, are foreknown as certainly future, everything else must needs be. Nor is it necessary to discuss the question *how* the Supreme Being foreknows future events, or what is the *modus* of His knowledge. This would be to indulge a curiosity equally bold and unprofitable. Were the solution of this question within the grasp of a finite mind, (which I think it is not,) no peculiar advantage, that I can conceive, would accrue from it to moral science. The present subject of inquiry, therefore, is the *fact* of Divine prescience, relative to moral good and evil, and that there are *assignable grounds* for it in the nature of things.

It has been a notion too much taken upon trust, that the ground of the certain futurity of morally good and morally bad actions is the *same*. As this is a point of great importance, and the refutation of it is calculated to place the doctrine of Divine prescience in a proper light, I shall confine myself principally to these *two points*, and then proceed to make some remarks on the scholastic notion of *scientia media*.

A sufficient ground of the certain futurity of morally *good actions*, and therefore of their being foreknown to be certain, is their being the effect of Divine purpose. It is not conceivable that good actions should proceed from any other cause, ultimately, than the first active power, by the medium of an agent who is free

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from restraint in choosing them. All good is from God, whatever means He employs in producing it. Morally good actions have their character from the will of the subordinate agent; but the power of producing them is derived from Him who is absolute active power. It has been before shewn that an original active power of producing moral effects, which is not reducible to the First Cause, is an absurd hypothesis, involving the contradiction of two original powers of the same quality.

Whatever God produces in time, He must have intended to produce from eternity; and whatever future effect or event He had in design, He must needs know always. Therefore, the certain futurity of morally good actions, and the foreknowledge of them, must have an adequate ground in the Divine purpose of effecting them. It cannot be pretended that it is unworthy of God to *effect* what is good, and consequently of *purposing* to do

so. But it is evident that, in reference to such effects and purposes, prescience is necessarily implied.

The only plausible objection, I conceive, that can be made against what has been now advanced, is a supposed degradation of our active power. If we have not, it may be asked, an *original* power to perform good actions, does not this reduce *agency* into *instrumentality*? If the power be not *originally* mine, how can the good action be mine, or deserve commendation? However plausible this objection may appear at first sight, it has no real force, being fully answered by demonstrable fact. There is no medium between original and instrumental power; and as it is no less contradictory to common sense to admit two original active powers, than to admit two First Causes, it follows that, to claim for a creature anything more than an instrumental power of performing good actions, is to claim what is inconsistent with the nature of things.

As to *commendation*, it behoves them who give, and them who receive it, to keep within proper bounds, and not to ascribe that to a creature which is due only to the Creator. Truly virtuous characters have been ever careful to ascribe *all power*, as well as all glory, to Him. To an agent performing actions morally good, I would allow all the esteem and commendation which are consistent with the nature of things; what rational being could wish for more? And as to *agency*, to require for a moral agent some undefinable original active power, besides an intellect to represent.

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a will to choose objective good, and freedom from restraint, in reference to a good volition, while he acts from principle and conviction, is very unreasonable. It is to require an impossibility: two original active powers,—a creature acting independently of his Creator in the production of moral good.

A truly virtuous agent performing morally good actions is a fair image of his Maker. What better notion of the adorable Supreme considered as an agent can be formed by creatures than that He is possessed of an intellect to represent, a will to choose, with perfect freedom from restraint, with a nature infinitely good, according to which He ever chooses? His *power* is His *will*; and the indefectibility of His choice flows from the purity of His nature.

We should carefully distinguish between what is essential to *agency*, and what is the predisposing cause of the quality of moral actions. One being has a large intellect and a vigorous will, another has a narrow intellect and a feeble will; and both perfectly exempt from restraint as to good, and compulsion as to evil. They are *moral agents* alike. But what constitutes their *agency* is no sufficient ground for the *quality* of their actions. An intellect, however large, and a will, however vigorous and free, without a holy principle, would produce evil deeds. This is perfectly conformable to history and observation. And, on the contrary, an intellect, however confined, and a will, however feeble, with a holy principle or nature, will perform actions morally good.

These observations are made in order to shew that the decretive influence which is an adequate ground of prescience, with regard to morally good actions, does not imply any *superadded* impulse given to the will. More than what is included in a voluntary agent is not necessary. What *secures* the goodness of an action, according to Divine purpose and prescience, is not any *additional force*, vigour, or energy, imparted to the *will*, but the goodness of that *nature* according to which the will operates. Though free agency supposes a nature or principle, the quality of that principle cannot affect the existence of the agency itself. The best and the worst of beings are alike free agents, while their principles are directly opposite in quality. It is therefore plain, that a principle may be altered for the better and confirmed without any interference with free agency; or, in other words, while the agent continues perfectly exempt from any additional restraint or compulsion as to his will. Only let a good principle be secured by Divine purpose,

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and an *adequate ground* is assigned for the goodness of any moral action.

Let us now consider the Divine prescience relative to actions morally evil. This has always been considered the most difficult part of the subject. But I humbly conceive the difficulty is by no means insuperable. The perplexity has been occasioned by the adoption of false principles, and, particularly, from the assumption, that the certainty of all events, the good and the evil, proceeds from the *same cause*. It has been shewn, and particularly in the last Dissertation, that there are hypothetical tendencies ac-

ording to the nature of things. For illustration's sake, let us allow that the original state of a free agent is perfectly conformable to rectitude. He has not only what is essential to constitute free agency, as before explained, but also a goodness of nature and principle by participation. Yet the *continuance* of such goodness is only *hypothetical*, depending exclusively on the will of the first active power whether it shall be continued or not. To suppose that a created nature has an inherent absolute tendency to goodness, any more than to existence, is to contradict the nature of things, as before shewn. It is the same as to assert the existence of two indefectible natures; or else, which is no less absurd, to reverse the natures of Creator and creature.

But it may be asked, Is it worthy of God to *suffer* a defectible nature to fail of goodness? or, in other words, to *permit* a nature when holy to manifest that tendency which essentially belongs to it? This question admits of two answers.

1. It is plain from acknowledged *fact*, in connexion with the indefectibility of the Divine nature, that it was not unworthy of God to suffer, or not to prevent morally evil actions. It is absolutely impossible for an infinitely perfect nature to do anything unworthy of Himself; but He has, in fact, suffered the defection of some of His rational creatures; therefore, the suffering, or non-prevention of that result, was not unworthy of Him. Nor can it be doubted that He had infinitely wise reasons for conducting Himself in that manner towards His creatures, even were we left totally at a loss respecting the good ends to be answered by it. But we are not left without sufficient reasons for adoring His perfections, and admiring His conduct. His equity and benevolence are wonderfully displayed by it.

2. If it be worthy of God to create any being at all, and to form

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it indefectible is inconsistent with the nature of things, it cannot be unworthy of Him to leave any created being to its own essential tendencies. So that from the acknowledged fact of its being not unworthy of Him to create, we may fairly infer it is not unworthy of Him to suffer it to manifest its defectibility, while every thing essential to moral agency remains without infringement. We may therefore safely conclude, that as sure as it was worthy of Him to create an intelligent being at all, it was worthy of Him to

suffer his defection. That He was *able* to prevent that result is not disputed; but it is absurd to suppose that it is unworthy of Him not to do all He was able to do.

Enough has been said to prove that there are adequate assignable grounds for the certain futurition of acts morally evil, exclusive of any Divine necessitation, and therefore of the Divine prescience of such acts. He who beholds, with infinite precision, the nature of things, and all their tendencies, both absolute and hypothetical; He who sees His own tendency to in defectibility in every future period, and the contrary tendency of every creature, as included in the nature of things; and, finally, He who sees in what instances He will prevent that tendency from taking effect, and in what instances He will suffer it to operate,—He must needs foreknow every free action, both good and evil alike, though upon different grounds. And the reader will observe that these arguments are designed to shew, not merely the *fact* of the Divine prescience of all future events, but also the *assignable adequate grounds* of prescience. We may not only believe it as a truth worthy of infinite perfection, but we may also perceive sufficient cause why it must be so, from the-very nature of moral actions.

From the premises we may infer what judgment ought to be formed of the scholastic doctrine of *scientia media*, or hypothetical prescience. By this is meant a knowledge of what would follow On the supposition of any antecedent: for instance, how a free agent would act if placed in any given situation and circumstances. It is manifest that there is both a physical and metaphysical nature of things. The former implies a constituted series of antecedents and consequences. Now, He who appointed the present series could have appointed another; and for the same reason that He foresees the present, on the ground of His own appointment, He must have foreseen the other. But to suppose other antecedents in the present system than what are appointed, is the

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same thing as to suppose another system. If, however, we suppose partial changes with the continuance of existing laws, we may infer what consequents would follow. If, for instance, we suppose a large river to flow where there is now but a small rivulet, vessels of a given burden might sail on it. If a machine of a given form and character were made, we may infer its mechanical power. And

on suppositions of this nature all works of art must be formed. The continuance of the constituted laws of physical nature, gravitation, solidity, fluidity, action, and reaction, elasticity, &c., are always supposed. And if an artist foresees what would be the effect of a supposed antecedent, it is absurd to suppose that the Omniscient does not foresee the consequence of every possible antecedent on supposition of continued laws.

The same reasoning, *mutatis mutandis*, holds true respecting the metaphysical nature of things. If, for instance, a free agent be supposed to exist in given circumstances, the nature of things—that is, the nature of God and of a creature—continuing unchangeably the same, without any interposition *to* prevent the operation of the creature's essential tendencies in themselves considered, the consequence of any *supposed* case has the same ground of certainty and prescience as in any case that in fact exists. And the same holds equally true on *supposition* of an interposition to prevent the creature's own tendencies, by counteracting principles which may secure a different result. And indeed this last supposition coincides with physical antecedents and their appointed tendencies. So that, upon the whole, an adequate assignable ground of Divine prescience, with respect to actions *morally good*, is found in the Divine *purpose*, as in effects of a physical nature; and, with respect to actions *morally evil*, in the nature of things and their hypothetical tendencies.

The principal ground on which divines and metaphysicians have opposed the doctrine of *scientia media*, or hypothetical prescience, seems to have been a mistaken apprehension that good and evil have *uniform*, rather than *opposite* causes. Those who are jealous for the honour of sovereign grace cannot allow *good* works to be *only foreseen*; and those who are jealous for the honour of moral government cannot endure the thought of *sin* being *foreappointed*. Each, therefore, seems to possess half the truth. The hypothetical tendency of *good* is known in its *all-sufficient cause*; but that of *evil* in its *deficient cause*, the liberty and passive power of the creature.

**DISSERTATION VIII.**

OF A FIRST CAUSE; OR, THE EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS A  
 BEING,  
 ALL-POWERFUL, WISE, AND GOOD, BY WHOM  
 EVERYTHING  
 EXISTS—THAT THERE IS NOT, INFINITELY IMPROBABLE—  
 THAT  
 THERE IS, INFINITELY PROBABLE.

HOWEVER obvious the general truth that there is a First Cause, it is far from easy to produce the evidence of it in a convincing light. For my own part, I am as fully convinced that there is a Being, all-powerful, wise, and good, by whom everything exists, as I am of my own existence; yet the success of my attempt to demonstrate this to the conviction of others must depend on two things. The first is, the order and perspicuity of the *evidence* in itseK considered; and the second is, the *state* of the minds to whom it is presented. For to some persons, arguments, however convincing, will not produce conviction; the strength of prejudice, or confirmed associations, having prejudiced the cause. To a mind candid and open to conviction, I trust sufficient evidence will appear in favour of my conclusion.

It should be previously noticed that, as different subjects admit of different kinds of evidence, that only should be expected which is appropriate to the subject under consideration. The evidence of sense, for instance, is out of the question, because no one can suppose that a First Cause is an object of sense. Nor can the evidence of testimony, or that of consciousness, have a legitimate place in a professed demonstration.

In strictness, metaphysical evidence alone, in the comprehensive acceptation of the term, (*including* the mathematical,) can demonstrate. I call that metaphysical evidence which necessarily flows from some first principle; and this is the case with mathematical

conclusions, which do not depend on the accuracy with which a diagram is formed, but upon principles and consequences.

As in mathematics there are two kinds of legitimate demonstration,—the direct and indirect,—so in other parts of metaphysics. By the one mode, the conclusion follows by direct comparison of the thing asserted for proof with some first principle, or a truth before demonstrated. By the other mode, the denial of the proposition is compared with some first principle, or a truth demonstrated before, and thereby shewn to be absurd or impossible.

These two methods appear to me applicable to the subject under consideration, and in discussing it I shall avail myself of both. The direct mode, indeed, is regarded as more strictly demonstrative, but the other is not denied the honourable epithet. That the reader's mind may be gradually prepared for the more abstracted part of the evidence intended, I think it best to begin with what is indirect, by shewing the absurdity, or perhaps I should say the infinite improbability, of the sentiment that there is not a Being, all-powerful, wise, and good, by whom everything exists.

#### SECT. I.

*That there is not a Being, all-powerful, wise and good, by whom everything exists, is a supposition INFINITELY IMPROBABLE, when compared with MARKS OF DESIGN both in ourselves and other beings around us.*

Evidence of *design*, and, therefore, of intelligence, in calculations of probability, admits of indefinite degrees. This may be best illustrated by a few familiar similes. Suppose, for instance, I cast my eyes on a marble chimney-piece, and observe the appearance of *petrified animals*; I am not *certain*, from this appearance, whether they have been always in the stone, as a part of the system of nature, under an endless variety of resemblances, or whether these objects had once been animated substances, which, by some slow unknown process, or by some sudden convulsions in this terraqueous globe, were brought to this petrified state. But respecting petrifications on the mantel-piece, I have *more certainty* of confidence. Some appear evidently the result of a slow process in the laboratory of nature, (whether *this* could operate without a *designer* is another question,) but others bear the marks of imitative design and artificial polish.

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Again, suppose a person levelling a mound finds a *plain brick*, of the same colour, apparent texture, form, and dimensions, with those which are commonly used in the neighbourhood. He has *no doubt* remaining, nor has his more learned employer, that this is the work of *art*, rather than of nature, however inferior may be the value, or coarse the texture of the brick, compared with a polished obelisk of marble. Many considerations might be urged against the *probability* of an artificial brick being found in that situation. But probability is comparative, and, in this case, is borne down by stronger probability with irresistible force. A learned antiquarian might undertake to shake the confidence of one less learned than himself, by comparing this piece of matter with many circumstances; and particularly the various forms of bricks in different parts of the country, and in different periods of time. But no arguments deduced from negative considerations, from probable circumstances of locality, of time, or any other, with whatever learning or ingenuity they might be pressed, are calculated to move him, unless he can be prevailed upon previously to renounce an incomparably stronger degree of evidence on the contrary side.

Suppose, moreover, in order to illustrate the different degrees of probability, a number of persons employed on a new plantation in America, which, as universally believed, had never before been the seat of either wealth or civilisation. These persons are engaged in making a fish-pond at a little distance from the recently-erected mansion. Towards the bottom of the intended cavity, the workmen discover an urn full of gold and silver coins closely covered with a lid. But, what is very remarkable, there is no perceivable difference between the state, the firmness and quality of the soil about it, either perpendicularly or in any other direction, and that adjoining. There is not the least appearance of its having been disturbed, or of its having been lately deposited there by the hand of man; and yet there was the urn found, and there are the coins, without any possibility of trick or collusion among the workmen.

How to account for this fact is a great difficulty. All the men, however, are unanimous in one conclusion, that the vessel and its precious contents are the work of *design*. The gentleman on whose estate this extraordinary circumstance took place, invites a

number of literary friends, with a view to collect their learned opinions on so mysterious a point. One of these flippantly ob-

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serves, that it came there by *chance*. Another, with as little reason, but some ingenuity of remark, thinks it might be a *lusus naturæ*, or accounted for on the same principle as the *comn amonis* in stones. But the general body, who were examining in the meantime the coins and their inscriptions, think it as improbable that these were the work of chance as that their friend *himself* should be so, without either father or mother; and that they could be no more a *lusus naturæ* than the gentleman who thought them to be such.

Once more: suppose a person fixes upon a spot near his house for sinking a well; and though a thick stratum of hard rock must be penetrated, this he will not allow to be a sufficient reason for desisting. When the workmen have sunk the well to ten fathoms deep, and the last two of these were a solid rock, they find a gold box, perfectly square, in the heart of it, firmly closed and made as one piece. United to a fragment of the rock, they bring it up, and present it to their master. He examines the box, and has it opened; and, to his further astonishment, he finds a beautifully formed watch laid in a bed of cotton. He compares it with other watches, and finds that the parts are all perfect, and when wound, its movements are the same. Anxious to account for this surprising phenomenon, he consults all the naturalists and literati within the circle of his acquaintance, in order to decide on the point of *probability*—what it was, and how it came there. The first point to be decided with each is, whether it was actually found in the solid rock; but every part of the investigation confirmed the fact. The next question is, Which is most probable, that this watch was the work of nature or of art, the produce of *chance* or of *design*? They unanimously agreed that they could not possibly renounce the opinion that it was a work of human art, however impenetrable the mystery of its being found in that situation. This instance proves that evidence of *design* may be stronger than any miracle; for they could sooner admit a miracle in the case than renounce their general conclusion.

May we not, from these last instances, safely lodge an appeal to every rational being in the world, whether marks of design are not

calculated to produce irresistible conviction? Instances of such marks might be accumulated without end. Out of countless millions of objects, formed by human art, you may choose any one of them; and rationally infer that it is infinitely improbable

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that it sprung from chance, though you know nothing of the author, and never saw one of them made. And the evidence of an intelligent cause is equally clear to the illiterate and the learned, though the latter may be better able to discuss the subject than the former.

Now, marks of design no less decisive pervade the whole grand system of matter and motion; and if it is infinitely improbable that a small piece of mechanism should spring into existence without an intelligent cause, so it is, *à fortiori*, that the solar system should. Sooner may a house with all its furniture, with time-pieces, pictures, and books,—I may add, with a family to inhabit it,—spring up at once without a designing cause, than that the solar system, so full of exquisitely beautiful parts and proportions, should have done so. Nor is it at all necessary that the observer should be able to point out the design for which the grand system is formed, in order to receive conviction that it has an all-powerful, wise, and good Author, any more than that he should be able to decipher and read a book written in the Chinese language, in order to ascertain that it is the work of man. To know that a picture is the work of an artist, it is not necessary to know his person, his name, or the time in which he lived. We may be certain that a telescope or a microscope is the work of intelligence, though we are unable to explain their parts and uses. To a mind unperverted by obstinate, universal scepticism, or the most unreasonable sophistry, the conviction is complete as to authorship. The pleasure, indeed, would be increased, and our admiration of

I the author's art cherished, in proportion to our growing acquaintance with his design, and the consummate subserviency of every part to promote it. To see every part explained, the construction and principles accounted for, to an inquisitive mind would be highly gratifying; but still the original conviction of causation would remain the same. In this respect, the learned has but little advantage over the rustic; the latter is constrained to acknowledge *a cause* as well as the former, though not with the

same gratification. Ignorance of construction and design is no deduction from that which is adequate to induce the main conclusion. Though the philosophy of second causes may be wanting, religion, which has to do with the First Cause, is immediately subserved.

A design, not less evident to a rational, unprejudiced mind,

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pervades all the *organised* parts of the universe. To maintain that a flower or plant, a worm, a fly, a fish, a fowl, a quadruped, or a man, sprung up from chance, or a fortuitous combination, unconnected with any progenitor of the same species, would be quite as reasonable as the sentiment that the *first* of each species sprung up in that manner. To suppose a law of conformations is absurd if we exclude a lawgiver; for in that case “law” would be an unmeaning term, a mere nonentity. If it be ridiculous to suppose that a stone, a lump of clay, or quantity of earth, began to exist to-day, is it less ridiculous to suppose that this terraqueous globe began to exist in like manner? Or who that has not an impious cause to serve can persuade himself that the senses and organs of animals do not bear marks of design? Allow an intelligent designer of the eye, the ear, and other parts, and reason has a resting-place; deny this, and all is confusion and absurdity.

To assert an eternal succession without design, power, or wisdom, and the difficulty is rather increased than diminished. The weight of a chain is not lessened by multiplying links out of sight, for the longer it is supposed to be, the greater need there is of a primary support. By multiplying marks of design it is folly to suppose that a designer is less necessary. In reality, the longer the succession, the more exquisite the contrivance; as the longer a time-piece is made to go, without interference on our part, the greater is the skill of the maker. If an eye, an ear, or any other curious part of an animal, cannot be supposed to arise from non-existence to day, much less can the same be supposed to arise in that way countless millions of ages past. And to suppose these to be from eternity without design only augments the folly. It is only to evade the light of evidence by running into the dark. Sooner could I believe, on rational grounds, that a microscope or a drum were made by chance, than the eye or the ear of an animal; sooner that a ship and its sails were the effect of chance, than a

bird and its wings; sooner that a globe or an orrery had no author, than this earth and the solar system. I could sooner infer that the metropolis of a country came into existence without the aid of man, than that the heart of an animal has no marks of design; or that all the carriages that run from and to the metropolis move by chance, without any human will concerned, than that the blood of any animal is impelled from the heart to the arteries, and returns again by the veins, without the intention of a designing

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cause. I could sooner conclude that a lighted lamp, with its reflector, found in some solitary place, had sprung up that same hour out of nothing, without a maker, than that the sun and the moon had not an all-powerful, wise, and good Creator.

Were I introduced into a museum of curiosities, and shewn two automatons at work, forming different parts resembling those of the human body, it would not be possible for me to abstain from admiration of the ingenuity of the contriver. But what would be my surprise on hearing it asserted, that such was the contrivance of the machinery that these automatons would at length complete an image like themselves, as the sole effect of the complicated apparatus; and in order to produce in me a complete conviction of the truth of the assertion, I was permitted to watch, from day to day, the progress of the work, and the final effect in a well-proportioned figure very nearly resembling the two former! The supposition is not in itself impossible. What could I infer from this phenomenon but, as these automatons produced the third without knowing how, the skill of the contriver must be the more apparent? But this is not so wonderful as the formation of a human pair who should propagate their species; nor are the signs of contrivance so manifest. The various parts, their uses, their exquisite structure, are incomparably superior to the other, independently of the informing mind. In a striking respect these also are living automatons. They can produce nothing without the efficacy of a power superior to themselves. One family has no heir to possess a large fortune; another has more offspring than there is any prospect of rearing with comfort. Are they not in this respect as much dependent on a design above themselves as the third figure on the will of the inventor of the contrivance? The evident conclusion is, that it is infinitely improbable that the human race

should propagate their species without an intelligent Designer, who is all-powerful, wise, and good.

Should any still object, that the existence and propagation of every vegetable, and of every animal, however great, and however small, may *possibly* be all the effect of *chance*; this, in one view, may be only a dispute about a *name*, and resolvable to this question, Whether we may not “possibly” do right in denominating an all-powerful, wise, and good Designer by the term “chance?” But if the question be, Whether the universe and all its parts might not *possibly* have either arisen from nonentity without a design-

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ing cause, or been from eternity in a similar form? I scruple not to say that the evidence already produced, and which might easily have been increased indefinitely, amounts to an *infinite improbability* against the supposition.

#### SECT. II.

*That there is a Being, all-powerful, wise, and good, is INFINITELY  
PROBABLE, when compared with the idea of the POSSIBILITY  
of such a Being.*

The ideas of possibility and impossibility are quite familiar to every reflecting mind. Who is there that does not acknowledge it a *possible* thing for a unit to be so often added to a first unit that the number becomes a thousand? Or who is there that will not at once own, that it is *impossible* for the numbers two and one to be the same thing? Does any one suppose that a circle *can* be identified with a triangle? or that one triangle *cannot* be equal to another? Does any imagine that an oak-tree *may* in an instant, from mere chance, or without any will concerned in the case, be turned into a lion, or a man-of-war into a whale? What should we think of a man who maintained it to be a very *possible* thing for lions to live in the sea, and whales in a forest, without any alteration either in the constitution of these animals, or of the elements that surround them, or any *will* to effect it?

And yet the notion of an Atheist, who renounces the idea of a First Intelligent Cause, is far more absurd than any of these impossibilities, even in the proportion of one to innumerable units. And the absurdity is accumulated without bounds when he supposes the *impossibility* of a First Cause possessed of power, wis-

dom, and intelligence. This, however, is the *onus probandi* incumbent on an Atheist—that it is *impossible* there should have been an uncaused intelligent Former of the universe, and of the amazing varieties of animated substances. For to admit the *possibility*, is to admit the *fact*.★

★ [The hand that penned the preceding pages was arrested here by Infinite Wisdom, in the prosecution of the Treatise on Moral Science. They will, though only a fragment, possess, therefore, in the estimation of every one able rightly to appreciate a remarkably penetrating mind, characterised by the most exalted piety, that special value which the relics of departed worth and genius ever have on that very ground, even if on no other. The thoughtful reader will, however, find them, especially some portions of them, amazingly suggestive.—ED.]

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## DISSERTATION IX.

### ON A NECESSARY AGENT.

WERE the human mind, indeed, not the subject of either passive power, on the one hand, as the predisposing cause of vice, or of Divine, holy influence, on the other, as the predisposing cause of real virtue; and were the determining motive what some have represented it to be,—the object itself, irrespective of the changeable state of the mind perceiving it,—the objection that “a necessary agent is a plain contradiction,” or, in other words, that man is no proper agent, would be unanswerable. For the rank and place of man in creation, and his relative circumstances, in the arrangement of Providence, being the result of decretive appointment, if he himself were not liable to any change but by the same appointment, it would follow, that if the objects themselves determined him to choose, and to choose always according to the strongest motive, his very volitions in the acts themselves would be necessitated decretively, to the exclusion of all hypothetical or moral possibility of failure, and therefore could never be erroneous, any more than the First Cause could act erroneously. On such principles, moral evil, vice, or fault could have no existence. No effect could be otherwise than good, amiable, and perfectly innocent,—a moral possibility of failure being excluded by natural necessity. For the volition itself to be so necessitated, and not in a moral or hypothetical manner only, is the same thing as giving it no opportunity of choice or preference, or constraining it to choose one way by a settled purpose, with a natural impossibility of acting

otherwise. But if every act of man be thus the result of settled purpose, why should he be blamed for any one act whatever? He does nothing but what he is constrained, or decretively necessitated to perform, the contrary being rendered naturally impossible; and

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if he deserves no praise, he can incur no blame, any more than a clock for not keeping time. Such a necessary agent would be, indeed, a plain contradiction. There is much reason to apprehend that some philosophical Necessarians have no better notion of agency than that which Mr Chubb charges, and justly charges, with “a plain contradiction.” For those who hold the sentiment that every act, even as to its moral quality, and every event, are of decretive appointment in subserviency to ultimate good, must allow, in order to be tolerably consistent, that the Supreme Being is “the only proper agent in the universe,”\* and thus reduce human agency, and everything else called agency in a creature, to an appointed necessary choice, however odious in its nature, mischievous in its tendency, or painful in experience. Thus, according to them, God is the only proper agent in all foul crimes and horrid blasphemies on earth and in hell! They have a right to define their terms, and to say what they mean by agency in God, or in a creature, and to state their hypothesis accordingly; but others also have a right to deduce the genuine consequences of that hypothesis, and to shew wherein its error lies.

The design of these observations is not to excite a spirit of unprofitable controversy, but to assist the serious inquirer in detecting errors, and recognising truths of radical importance in ethics and theology; and it is hoped that to promote these ends the following observations may conduce:—

1. It is granted that, in reference to natural acts, the Supreme Being is the “only proper agent” in the universe, as they all spring from His energy. In this respect, He is the First Cause of all causes efficiently; and the description of the poet is philosophically just. He

“Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,  
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;  
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,  
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.”—*Pope*.

2. It is also granted that in all acts morally good the created agent is the subject of necessity several ways. He has an active nature from decretive necessity, which it is not in his power to alter. He is also, accordingly, compelled to some act of choice from the activity of his nature. He is, moreover, the subject of physical influence of a holy and purifying nature, whereby the

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\* Belsham's Elements of the Philosophy of the Mind, p. 254.

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goodness of his choice is infallibly secured, and without which there could be no assignable ground of certainty that any action would be morally good. There is also a necessity of connexion, arising from the nature of things or the essence of truth: first, between the disposition and the act, or that the act will be of the same nature, morally considered, with the disposition; and, secondly, between the act and the end or consequent, which is happiness.

3. It is, moreover, allowed, that in all acts morally evil the soul is passive in reference to that necessity of dependence which is inseparable from a created nature, which may be called passive power, without which the existence of moral evil would be impossible. This necessity also arises from the nature of things, not from decree; for no decree can alter its existence, (though it may, and actually does, counteract it,) any more than it can alter the state of a creature from dependence into independence on the First Cause. A creature without passive power involves the most palpable absurdities; for its very definition is, "that property in a creature whereby it differs essentially from the independence, self-sufficiency, and indefectibility of the Creator:" and to deny it is to suppose that a creature may be independent, self-sufficient, and indefectible,—that in these respects the creature and the Creator are on a par,—that a necessary and a contingent being are the same in those very things which constitute their essential difference! Were it not for this property in an agent, he could never sin; for all his acts would be physically necessary, without any hypothetical medium or moral alternative.

4. He is a moral agent whose volitions might have been otherwise than they are, if the motives, and consequently the state of his mind, had been otherwise. But to suppose that his volitions might have been otherwise than they are, the motives and state of

mind being the same, would be to make him in his volitions the sport of chance, or a mere nonentity.

5. He, then, is a moral agent who has, in reference to volition, a moral alternative, or a hypothetical possibility of a different choice. Where this alternative, or this possibility, is not, there the agent (if he may be so called) is not morally obliged, and therefore is not accountable.

6. But if so, where does the ground of such an alternative lie? It lies in the agent's mind, or the disposition whence the volition springs and whence its character is derived. If God influence the

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mind so as to make it, in a given degree, to resemble His own moral nature, in that degree would the choice made be morally good. But if passive power be not counteracted by such influence (which, being gracious, God is not bound in equity to do) in any given degree, the nature of things, the essence of truth, connects in a corresponding degree the state of mind with the volition.

7. Hence it is plain that moral influence, as such, effects nothing certain, but always requires a previous state of mind in order to insure a certainty of good effect; and that previous state of mind is effected by no other possible means but a physical energy or agency, producing assimilation. There must be a virtuous mind before a virtuous choice; the quality of the act is derived from the agent.

8. One thing which has been a source of much obscurity and confusion in reference to moral agency, is the supposition that the mind is equally free, in all respects, when choosing good and when choosing evil; in other words, that the one volition and the other becomes morally certain from the same sort of necessity. But this is not the real case. Indeed, the necessity of connexion between the previous state of the mind and the corresponding volition is the same, for it is, in each case, nothing else but the nature of things; but that necessity which effects a state of mind previous to good volitions is as different from the other necessity which effects a state of mind previous to volitions morally evil as light is from darkness. They proceed from opposite quarters, and operate in contrary directions. A holy disposition is generated by decreative holy influence; the other disposition (which ought not, however, to be called unholy) proceeds from the hypothetical

nature of things. Such a disposition, though not morally vicious, yet generates vice in union with free agency.

9. It is highly worthy of remark, that though a good volition must proceed from a good heart, morally considered, yet a bad volition does not, originally and necessarily, proceed from a morally bad heart. The reason is, that the one state of heart proceeds from God, from His decretive holy will; the other proceeds from passive power, which is only a natural, and not a moral evil. Besides, were the disposition which immediately precedes a bad volition necessarily, or in every case, evil, in a moral sense, either moral evil could have no place at all in the universe, no origin whatever, or else it must be the same as passive power.

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But passive power is a contrast, not to the moral perfections of God, but His natural, and has, when alone, no moral quality. And, seeing it belongs as a property to every creature as such, were it anything morally evil, moral evil would be essential to the very being of every creature, which is absurd.

10. Hence it is plain that freedom is experienced in a higher sense, or a greater degree, in bad volitions than in good ones; in such a sense, and to such a degree, as to justify this mode of expression—that man is necessitated to good, but free to evil. This, however, may need some explanatory qualification; for he is not so necessitated to good as not to be morally or hypothetically free, nor so free to evil as not to be subject to a necessity of consequence. He who acts or chooses amiss, without constraint, compulsion, or interfering voluntary force in that act, notwithstanding his passive powers, is properly a free agent; for in the moral quality of the act there is, properly and strictly, no will concerned but his own. But he who acts or chooses aright is subject to a physical, decretive necessity as to his disposition, and a physical concurrence of Divine energy in the natural act of the will. He is, indeed, morally free, inasmuch as his volition might have been of a different, yea, of an opposite moral quality, if the state of his mind had been different. Hence it is evident, that in a good will, choice, or act, man is an agent in a less proper or secondary sense; but in a bad will, choice, or act, man is an agent, a moral agent, a free agent, in the most proper and strict sense. And in the production of an act morally good, two wills are concerned, that of the agent, and the

decretive will of God; in that of evil, only one, the agent's own will.

11. If the Supreme Being is the only proper agent in the universe, either moral agency is no proper agency, or else man is not a moral agent; and if so, he is not accountable, and has no concern in religion and morals. Besides, if God be the only proper agent in the universe, how come there to exist evil deeds? God's agency is good, else we have no evidence that He is a good Being; but there are in the world evil deeds proceeding from evil minds, which common sense and universal consent allow, and the nature of the thing proves, to be properly evil agencies; consequently man is an agent, a moral agent, properly so called.

12. If there is no proper agent in the universe but the Supreme Being, there is no evil in the nature of bad volitions, but only in

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their effects. Sin, on that supposition, is not bad in its own nature, but only injurious in its effects on the sinner. Sin is not to be hated, it seems, on its own account, as odious, but only shunned as dangerous. But as this must arise, according to the system of its abettors, from a sovereign appointment, it follows, that millions of beings are by this very appointment doomed to the greatest sufferings in the universe, for that in which they had no proper agency, no possible alternative. Where is equity, or benevolence?

13. The only clue out of this labyrinth, and out of many others formed by writers on human agency, is, we are fully persuaded, a right view of passive power, in its nature, origin, and tendency, in conjunction with a morally or hypothetically free choice.

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## DISSERTATION X.

### MORAL OBLIGATION AND INABILITY.

WHY is moral *obligation* consistent with moral *inability*? The subject is professedly profound; but, perhaps, the following series of remarks may contribute in some degree to assist our inquiries, and to bring them to a satisfactory conclusion.

1. *Obligation*, if we regard the term, is a *binding power*, or an *irresistible force*; but, in reference to morality and voluntary

actions, obligation is expressive of a *hypothetical indispensable connexion between an antecedent and a consequent*, or between an end proposed and the means of obtaining it. Thus, IF a moral agent would attain the *end*, he is *obliged*, or bound indispensably, to use the required *means*. And, on the contrary, IF a moral agent adopt a *different* antecedent from what is required, not only he shall not attain to the proposed consequent, but *another* is to follow, indispensably connected with the antecedent actually adopted, by a necessity of consequence. Therefore—

2. The *consequent*, or the *end*, which is proposed by the Moral Governor, is always a supposed *good*; for it would be unworthy of a Governor wise and good to propose any other, especially as the antecedent prescribed and required is indispensably connected with it. But if the connexion be broken by the free agent, by the adoption of an antecedent naturally connected with a different consequent, he then becomes *naturally* obliged, or forced, to sustain a proportionable *evil*.

3. In the system of moral government, it is the prerogative of the Supreme Governor to propose the *consequent* of the indispensable connexion; and it is the part of the moral agent, who in the *act of choice* is left *free*, to choose the antecedent, which the Governor has objectively furnished, and indispensably required.

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To this choice he is morally, or hypothetically bound, yet is *naturally* free; and IF the required choice be made, the *good* follows; but IF NOT, the corresponding evil follows. For instance, if the forgiveness of sin be the consequent proposed, and repentance the antecedent required, the agent is *morally bound* to repent, but *naturally free*. If, however, he break through the moral bond, which is done by abusing his natural freedom, or continuing his wrong choice, forgiveness does not follow, but he stands exposed to the natural and threatened consequences of that wrong choice or impenitence.

4. Hence it is obvious, that in the system of providence, and the execution of all decreative designs, it is the prerogative of the Sovereign of the universe to *establish* the chain of all *antecedents*, and the consequents follow from the nature of things; but in the system of moral government, it is equally obvious, the reverse takes place, for here the Supreme Governor proposes, and *estab-*

lishes objectively, the chain of *consequents*, while the moral agent, or the obligee, establishes *optionally* the antecedents; and as the *actual* choice of an antecedent is, such will be the *actual* consequence. When the moral agent chooses that antecedent which is required, or which is conformable to rectitude, the proposed consequent is obtained by the nature of things; but when that which is not required, or is not conformable to rectitude, is chosen for an antecedent, the evil consequence flows from the same nature of things, that is, from the essence of eternal truth.

5. *Required* antecedents are either *a state of mind*, or *voluntary actions*, according as the particular consequent proposed may be. For example, if *happiness* be the end or consequent proposed, *holiness*, or a *holy state of mind*, is the means or antecedent required. If we would *see the Lord*, we must be *holy*, or *pure in heart*, by a new birth unto righteousness. If *justification* be the end proposed, *believing* is a means required; for to us *righteousness shall he imputed*, if we *believe*. If a subsequent *favourable treatment* of the obligee be the end proposed, *obedience*, or conformity to rule, is the means required.

7. When an agent is said to be obliged in or by any thing or consideration, that thing or consideration in or by which he is obliged is to be considered as the consequent proposed, and the state or act leading to it is the antecedent required. To be obliged in conscience, in duty, in law, in honour, &c., expresses the end to

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be obtained by a certain state or conduct as the means or antecedent required. Thus, for instance, if conscience be satisfied, if duty be discharged, if law be conformed to, or if honour be secured, the required antecedent means must be adopted, or such acts must be performed.

7. If the required antecedents be not performed, it is manifest that the free agent has voluntarily established other antecedents, and the injurious consequents of these last flow (as before observed) from the nature of things; which consequents will be similar or dissimilar to those proposed by the Supreme Governor, in proportion as the antecedent established voluntarily by the agent is similar or dissimilar to what was required. Hence we may see the true standard and measure of guilt, and of the different gradations of praise or blame.

8. Having considered the nature of moral obligation, let us now advert to the subject of it. This inquiry has more immediately for its object the qualifications of the moral agent, or those considerations whereby he stands obliged, in contradistinction to those beings in the universe that are not moral agents. An attentive and long-continued investigation of the subject has taught us that they are included in these three particulars:—(1.) A natural capacity of moral enjoyment; (2.) A sufficiency of suitable means; and, (3.) A freedom from compulsion in the choice of means. Whatever being is possessed of these qualifications is morally obliged, for he has a suitable ability to establish his own antecedents, as required, in order that the proposed consequents may follow.

9. The first qualification is a natural capacity of moral enjoyment. This belongs to no being that is not a free agent, but to every being who is so it inseparably belongs. This, more than any superior degree of reason, (however great and however forcible the influence from that superiority,) constitutes the chief and most essential difference between men and brutes. That such a capacity is an indispensably requisite qualification is clear. For free agency necessarily implies a consequent moral advantage, or a natural good to be morally enjoyed, either explicitly proposed by the Moral Governor, or fairly implied in the system of moral government; but this could not be proposed if there were no capacity of enjoyment, as now stated. And this consequent advantage may properly be called the perpetual enjoyment of God, the chief good, because the chief end of all subordinate enjoyments, as well as of all obe-

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dience, and the sum total of all happiness, is the conscious enjoyment of Divine favour and excellence.

10. The second qualification is a sufficiency of suitable means. This is indispensably requisite; for to require an end while the means are out of the agent's reach, or physically out of his power, and that under the forfeiture of the Governor's displeasure, is of the very essence of injustice. But the Divine Governor is a "God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is He." And that these means ought to be sufficient and suitable in their own nature to attain the end,—in other words, that the antecedents required to be adopted by the agent are infallibly connected with the proposed consequent,—is equally plain, for the same reason that

there should be any means at all. For means in themselves insufficient and unsuitable have no true connexion with the end proposed; even as a law, in itself bad, has no obliging power.

11. The third qualification is a freedom from constraint and compulsion in the choice of means, or in the voluntary establishment of means. By “constraint” and “compulsion,” we mean a physical interference with the free agent in his act of choice, in such a sense as that the choice would not be the genuine effect of the motive, or that the nature of the fruit should not correspond with the nature of the tree; but some extraneous force interposing would make the nature of the volition to be different from the nature of the mind or disposition, which otherwise would be its immediate cause.

12. Divine influence is admitted to be requisite, in order to prepare the state of the mind for a right choice, even as a good tree is requisite for good fruit; but this is no interference with the act of choice itself, nor has it the least tendency to break the connexion between motive and choice, or between the mind and its volition. Such influence, indeed, forms one glorious link of the decretive chain which the Sovereign Governor has established as so many antecedents; and a right choice, in a free agent thus divinely influenced, or formed anew, is the unrestrained and unimpelled effect which follows by a necessity of consequence. In other words, no bad choice can possibly follow but by a failure in the cause, the mind, or disposition itself.

13. On this principle it is that the Sovereign Being himself never errs in His choice. The source from which the act of choice proceeds is perfectly good, (an infinitely holy nature,) and the con-

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nexion between this cause and the effect, which is a right choice, is infallibly and, in the nature of things, necessarily secure. Hence it is that we never admit, or suspect, an error in His choice, however great His freedom; and hence we have a firm ground of confidence that the Judge of the whole earth will do right.

14. The three qualifications mentioned belong to man as a free agent; but we must not confound this idea with that of a subject of moral government. An infant may be the subject of government, both human and Divine, but cannot be, properly speaking, a free agent. Hence it follows that the first of the qualifications

mentioned alone is essential to constitute a subject of moral government, in the most extensive sense of the term; but in order to constitute that class of subjects who are also free agents, the other two are essential.

15. When these three qualifications are found in any free agent, nothing more is requisite to constitute moral obligation. An end is proposed; means firmly connected with that end are afforded, and required to be used; these means are physically in the power of the agent, who is also free from all constraint and compulsion in his act of choice.

If these qualifications are not sufficient morally to oblige, we are fully persuaded nothing can be sufficient. As to the notion that moral ability is necessary to constitute moral obligation, which is maintained alike by many Arminians and most Antinomians, (for extremes will sometimes meet,) President Edwards abundantly demonstrates its futility and absurd contradictions.\*

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\* See Freedom of the Will, sect. iv.

## DISSERTATION XI.

MORAL EVIL—ITS TRUE ORIGIN ASCERTAINED—NO  
INCONSISTENCY  
BETWEEN ITS EXISTENCE AND THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS—  
HAS  
AN ADEQUATE CAUSE—DIVINE DECREE NOT ITS CAUSE—  
NE-  
GATIVE CAUSALITY—THE FEDERAL CHARACTER OF ADAM.  
WHILE Adam stood in a sinless condition, his being- his well-being, his holiness and happiness, were entirely and exclusively the fruit of *sovereign* favour. For God *owes* to a *creature*, as such, nothing; but to an *accountable creature*, as such, He *owes* the *real grounds* of accountableness, otherwise His requisition of accountability would be capricious, arbitrary, and *unequitable*. The preservation of his *being* indeed is not his due, but if *that* be not continued, he ceases also to be accountable. What God *owes* to an accountable being, as such, is *intellect*, *will*, *freedom* from impulse (or decreative, positive causation) to sin, and *objects suitable* to his wants exhibited to his choice; in short, a *capacity*

for enjoying the chief good, and sufficient moral (or *objective*) means for that end. The *exercise of equity* is the giving to all their *due*; hence the being, or continuance in being, of an accountable creature *is not* a point of *equity*, because this cannot be called the creature's *due* from the Creator, but to give him precisely *neither more nor less* than is sufficient to constitute his grounds of accountability, or moral agency, is to deal with him in *pure equity*. There are *assignable reasons* why Adam, even in the state of original probation, possessing the *real grounds* of accountability, or moral obligation, if dealt with in *pure equity*, would *certainly* fall. *Superadded sovereignty*, indeed, which is a right to do everything not unequitable, and which never can be exercised but in *favour* of the creature, (otherwise it would be no longer *sove-*

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*reignty*, but *injustice*.) might have prevented his fall, as it has prevented the fall of angels; but this was not the case.

The exercise of *mere equity*, therefore, towards a moral agent, is the rigid operation of justice, to the *exclusion* of sovereignty; but the exercise of sovereignty is not incompatible with *equity*, though it is with *mere equity* towards the same person. All the possible dealings of the Divine Governor with man are reducible to either *equity* or *sovereignty* in different proportions. Equity engages to bestow *all* the good that is *due* to us, or that we can rightly claim; to give *less* would be injustice. But if its operation were equally and positively rigid on the other side,—that no creature should from any source have *more good* than is *due* to him,—the operation of grace and mercy would then be utterly excluded. Equity, therefore, never can distribute *more evil* or *more good* than is *due* to its object; but sovereignty may distribute *more good* than is *due* to it. Consequently, sovereignty may counteract the operation of justice by giving its objects *more good* than equity could do. This being the case, Adam was the subject of *passive power* and defectibility in his perfect state. This consists in that *tendency* to defection *physically* as to being, and *morally* as to well-being, (when united with freedom,) which is essential to all contingent or absolutely dependent existence. He also possessed the grounds of moral obligation before mentioned. If his sin was *certainly* future, in opposition to absolute contingence or mere chance, there must be an *adequate cause* of such an effect.

This brings us to the *source* of the difficulty, or the ORIGIN OF EVIL.

In this affair there are *three* objects of primary consideration—GOD, ADAM, and SIN. That God was a sovereign *cause*, *impelling* to the act, is evidently inconsistent with equity, or it would have been an act of *injustice*. To say that He interposed by sovereignty to *cause the event*, for the sake of *great consequent good*, does not mend the matter, but is to make Him the *author of sin*, the “doer of evil that good may come;” and implies a vain attempt to annihilate the nature of moral evil, or to sanctify abomination. But as all the acts of the Moral Governor towards a free agent must be the exercise either of sovereignty or of equity, and as sovereignty cannot impel to sin, and was not exercised (though it might have been) in the prevention of sin, it remains that *equity alone* was exercised on the part of God.

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The next object is ADAM, who may be considered as possessing *positive holiness*, *freedom*, and *passive power*. This positive *holiness* was the effect of *sovereignty*, and, had sovereign acts been continued, his fall would have been prevented. His *freedom*, in order to accountableness, was the effect of *equity*, for if he must account for his actions he might claim it as his rightful *due*; yet, abstractedly considered, it was a *natural* power, capable of being instrumental to the production of moral effects, either good or evil. His *passive power*, as before hinted, was that which constituted one essential difference between a necessary and contingent, and an independent and dependent being, implying a tendency to failure and defection in the use of liberty, except while preserved by sovereign goodness; and which it is not possible for *equity* to counteract, its NATURE being not the effect of *ivill*, any more than the eternal essences of things are so.

The remaining object is SIN, which must proceed from one or more of the sources now mentioned. Positive *holiness* must be out of the question; for from a positively good cause nothing but good can come. *Freedom* and *passive power*, therefore, neither of which is the offspring of sovereignty, as before shewn, must claim the origin of moral evil,—that is, it has been fairly excluded from *every other* source.

Now, it remains to consider whether either of these is exempt. *Freedom* cannot be exempt, it is plain from this consideration, for were there no freedom, man would not be accountable, and could not be guilty of actual sin; and *passive power* cannot be exempt, because its very nature is a tendency to defection, (though it would never terminate in moral evil without the union of liberty,) and it is not capable of being counteracted by equity. Sovereign favour alone can counteract its influence; but that was not exercised, for sin was not prevented. They are therefore *both* concerned; but in *what manner*, and in *what proportion*? Here lies the chief difficulty. Let it be recollected that *freedom* is a natural power which is capable of no *moral effect* where it does not terminate on a *subject*. From itself, unallied to a subject, no moral effect, either good or bad, can proceed; and the *subject* cannot be any other than the *disposition* of the mind. Freedom terminating on a *good* disposition, *supported* by sovereignty, produces *holy acts* alone; such were those of Adam while he stood, such are the acts of holy angels, such are those of renewed minds, and such

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are the acts proceeding from Divine freedom terminating on infinite holiness. But a mind or *disposition not supported* by sovereignty, but left in *equity* to its native passive power, being now the *subject*, and freedom terminating on it in that state, becomes instantly the seat of moral evil. Here it may be asked, Which of these two, freedom or passive power, has the greatest proportion of concern in the production of sin?

*Each* of them is *essentially* necessary to the effect; but as *freedom* is an evil in no sense *per se*, and *passive power* is a natural (though not a moral) evil *per se*, it should seem that the hateful progeny, *sin*, claims the *latter* for its *more immediate* parent.

To render this view of the *origin of moral evil* still more plain, let it be well considered, that LIBERTY is a mere *natural instrument*—in itself, unconnected with disposition, it is neither good nor evil, morally considered; that PASSIVE POWER, as before explained, prior to the action of liberty, remains morally innocent; that a RECTITUDE of disposition, which is the effect of sovereign influence counteracting passive power, and which is *antecedent* to the exercise of liberty, is *morally good*. That *rectitude* of disposi-

tion *is antecedent* to the exercise of liberty, is plain from the case of Adam, who was *holy, prior* to all volitions: the tree was good before it brought forth good fruit. The same ought to be concluded respecting angels; their *volitions* did not *constitute* them holy, but their dispositions being antecedently holy, their actions partook of the same character. And still more is this applicable to the great God, who is *holy antecedently* to all will, and therefore His voluntary acts are holy. The absolute First Cause is infinitely removed from passive power and infinitely secure of *antecedent* holiness in the highest perfection; His moral acts, therefore, must be *infallibly* and *infinitely* right.

The holy angels, who are absolutely dependent on the thrice-holy Jehovah, owe the continuance of holy acts to a sovereign communication of antecedent holy influence to secure a holy disposition. A suspension of such influence would leave them in the state of their proper passive power; and this towards a moral agent is to deal with him in *mere* equity. The exercise of equity terminated on Adam; but equity did not constitute him morally bad—it only left him to his passive power; liberty, however, acting on this latter, produced moral evil. The certainty of actions

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morally good is in proportion to that influence which counteracts passive power; and this has various gradations, from the smallest degree of saving subjective grace, to the highest holy character. *Corollary*—(1.) The conversion and salvation of a sinner can proceed from no other source than the sovereign, preventing, holy influence of God. (2.) The fall, sinful acts, and misery of a creature are entirely of himself.

NO INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE EXISTENCE OF  
MORAL EVIL AND  
THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

To say that the existence of sin is only a common difficulty, which belongs to every hypothesis; that though God is the author of sin in some sense, yet He is not the agent, therefore the phrase should be disliked and rejected; that though God wills the event of sin, yet He wills it not as an evil, but for excellent ends; that the events of moral evils are disposed by wisdom; that God may be the orderer and disposer of moral evil, which in the agent is infinitely evil, but in the orderer of it no evil at all; that in order

to a thing being morally evil it must be unfit and unsuitable, or of a bad tendency, or from an evil disposition, but that in willing the event of sin neither can be attributed to God; that if a wise and good man knew, with absolute certainty, that it would be best, all things considered, there should be moral evil, he might choose that it should be so; that the reason why he might not order it, if he were able, would not be because he might not desire, but only the ordering of that matter does not belong to him; and that, in the language of Turnbull, “there is no evil in the universe, no absolute evil; sins are evils only in a partial view, but with respect to the whole system they are not evil or mischievous, but good,” &c.;—to say these things, and more of a similar cast, is not calculated to satisfy a mind that wants the best evidence which the nature of the case will admit.

We have had occasion only to explain principles adopted; but we feel ourselves obliged to attempt, at least, to point out principles which we conceive are attended with no such embarrassment as to expose them to self-contradiction, and which represent the Great Supreme in an amiable light. The task is indeed arduous, but let it not be thought impossible, nor let the imperfection of language be confounded with the inadequacy of principles. And

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while we solicit the candour of the reader, whereby he will be prepared to make such allowances as the nature of the subject requires, and be prevented from drawing hasty conclusions of the impracticability of bringing the subject of inquiry to a satisfactory issue, or of presumption in attempting it, we no less demand a strictness of examination. The real inquirer after truth, the Christian divine, and the moral philosopher, should be solicitous, not to have “the last word” in controversy, but to make all possible advances in ascertaining the genuine grounds of acknowledged truths, in discovering radical principles, and in ascertaining their just bearings and tendencies.

1. The true point of inquiry is, not whether there be moral evil, or whether God be just; but how the actual existence of sin, or moral evil, in the universe, is to be reconciled with the moral perfections and character of God. Therefore, the thing wanted is a middle term, or argumentative medium, whereby it may be shewn

that this proposition is true—viz., There is no real inconsistency between the existence of sin and the moral perfections of God.

2. We may, therefore, consider the following propositions as first principles:—

*First Axiom.*—There does exist in the universe moral evil.

*Second Axiom.*—God is infinitely free from injustice, unholiness, and all imperfections. Hence—

*Cowl.*—There is no real inconsistency between the existence of moral evil and the moral perfections of God.

3. Now, the question returns, What is the best evidence that there is no such inconsistency? Those who are satisfied with these plain propositions, the axioms and corollary, may have the evidence of faith that there is no inconsistency between the subject and predicate of the last proposition. They may know so much of God as to be assured that the existence of sin in the world is no impeachment of the moral character of the Most High. For such evidence it behoves us to be thankful. Millions are now in heaven who enjoyed no other evidence while on earth than that of faith. But this is no sufficient reason why those who have opportunity should make no further inquiries into the subject. Some, indeed, suppose that no rational evidence is in the present state attainable by man. But why any should so conclude it is difficult to say, except it be that they wish to make their own minds the standard of all others, or their own attainments the *ne plus ultra*

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of moral philosophy. Such persons are not likely to acknowledge or perceive the real evidence, on supposition that it is laid before them, as their minds will be strongly prejudiced against all reasoning on the subject.

4. One thing, however, is incontrovertible, as necessarily connected with the axioms, that the existence of moral evil, and the spotless and infinitely excellent moral character of God, are perfectly consistent; and, therefore, there must be somewhere good evidence of it. And another thing is equally plain, that the brighter the evidence we have of the truth of the proposition which asserts the consistency of the two axioms, the more will be our acquaintance with God's real character, and the real nature of sin, which all must allow to be advantageous. To which we may add: that increased evidence of such a proposition is far from

being injurious may be further inferred from this consideration, that the higher any beings rise in holiness and happiness, the more clear will be that evidence to their view.

5. The terms of the question are so plain, and so generally understood, that it is scarcely necessary to notice them: we may, however, briefly observe, that moral evil is what stands in direct opposition to the moral character of God; and that this latter excludes universal rectitude, or holiness, and perfect benevolence. Therefore—

*Postulate.*—Whatever is perfectly consistent with universal rectitude, and perfect benevolence, is consistent with the moral perfections of God. The reader will observe, that what is asserted of rectitude and benevolence is different; the one is said to be universal, but not relatively so. Thus, His rectitude is both perfect in itself, and universal with respect to its object; but His benevolence, however infinitely perfect, is restricted as to its objects, both in extent and in degree. And this restriction is necessary two ways:—

6. First, The objects of benevolence, at least in this world, compose a system; and every system, whether natural or moral, implies a subordination and comparative superiority of parts; therefore the very idea of a systematic whole, implies a restriction of benevolence as to extent and degree.

7. Secondly, The exercise of benevolence is an exercise of will; and the exercise of will implies diversity of objects, and a preference of some rather than others to occupy the more excellent parts of the whole system; so that perfect universality, or a strict

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equality of benevolence, without a distinguishing preference, is necessarily excluded by the very nature of benevolence in exercise.

8. Divine benevolence, therefore, admits of gradations, from the smallest degree conceivable to the utmost extent of the system while rectitude admits of no such degree. Were we to attempt an illustration of so abstracted a subject by mental images, we might say, that rectitude in its exercise towards the creatures, may be compared to a plain surface, as widely extended as the universe, of infinitely perfect polish, and without a flaw in any part. Hence in its exercise, it is universal as its objects, and can no more admit of degrees than a perfect polish can admit of flaws. On the con-

trary, benevolence may be compared to a cone, in an inverted form, the vertex of which is in contact with a point of that plane, and which, from the least possible degree, is capable of rising at sovereign pleasure, in its exercise towards the universe, to such a height as that the base of it may be, or may not be, of equal extent with the plane below.

9. From just views of benevolence we may infer, that its exercise is purely free and undeserved by the creature, being the fruit of will, choice, and sovereign pleasure. The absence of it, with respect to creatures, implies no flaw in perfect rectitude. Every degree of benevolence, from the least to the greatest, must be altogether optional. Perfect rectitude with respect to created beings, and each individual creature, may subsist without any more benevolence than what is necessarily included in mere existence.

10. This being the case, the state of the universe, in reference to perfect rectitude, and irrespective of benevolence, may be further compared to a balance in perfect equilibrium. The least weight of benevolence makes it preponderate, proportionally in favour of virtue and happiness, but without which weight neither could take place.

11. But, according to what has been said already, every created being is the subject of passive power; which, with respect to its influence on the creature, is, in some respects, the opposite of benevolence. In some, not in all respects, benevolence is an exercise of will, and implies an agent; but passive power is a quality or principle inseparable from every creature, and from the universe at large. In reference to a former illustration, this may be compared to another cone exactly opposite, the vertex of which, from below, meets that of the other in the same plane. The intermediate point, and, indeed, every point in the same plane, may represent the perfect rectitude of God towards every individual;

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the inverted cone above, Divine benevolence; the cone below, passive power, with its base necessarily equal to the whole plane, as it respects the created universe.

12. Hence we may say that the neutral state of any being is placed in the plane; his degree of influence from passive power, the predisposing cause of vice, is represented by a corresponding given part of the cone below; and his degree of predisposition to virtue from Divine benevolence is represented by a corresponding-

given part of the cone above. Or, to change the comparison, if a perfectly-poised balance be made to represent perfect rectitude, then we may suppose weights at each end in all possible proportions, from the smallest to the greatest. Passive power not being the effect of will, but of the relative nature of things, and inseparably connected with one end of the balance, it is evident, that it can be counteracted in its tendency only by the weight of benevolence, or sovereign pleasure. Therefore, whoever on earth or in heaven rises to, and is confirmed in virtue, his attainment must be the effect of mere benevolence. And whoever on earth or in hell falls into, and is confirmed in vice, his deterioration must be the effect of passive power, as the predisposing cause of vice, which nothing in the universe can counteract but sovereign, free, unmerited benevolence.

13. Consequently, all the good and happiness in the universe is the effect of benevolence or sovereign pleasure, and exists above the plane of perfect rectitude; but all the evil and misery in the world is the effect of passive power, in union with free agency, and exists below the plane of rectitude. The one generates virtue, and raises to happiness and heaven; the other generates vice, and sinks to misery and hell.

14. Everything in the universe planned, decreed, and effected by Jehovah is a structure of benevolence. All He effects is good, and only good. The evil that exists is not His work. Benevolence has decreed an endless chain of antecedents, including the natural and moral worlds; and the consequents peculiar to them result therefrom with infallible certainty. But other antecedents, in this world and in hell, are constantly interposed by free agents under the influence of passive power, whose consequences also follow with equal infallible certainty. To the eye of created intelligence, these counter positions and opposite consequents appear blended in an inextricable manner, like the different rays of light in the same pencil, different gases in a given space, and

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different subtle fluids in the same body. But to the eye of Omniscience, they appear perfectly distinct, in their proper nature, in all their directions and bearings, in all their tendencies and effects.

15. Instead, therefore, of saying, "There is no evil in the universe," we should say, "There is much evil in the universe,"—there

is much on earth, and more in hell; but none of God's appointment. It is demonstrable, that passive power can be no more an object of appointment than the most direct contradictions; and yet it is equally demonstrable that such a principle is the inseparable concomitant of every creature. It is of prior consideration to moral agency; for whatever is a property of a created nature, as such, is of prior consideration to the agency of that creature. Consequently is a property neither divinely appointed, nor yet a moral evil.

16. Liberty, in one sense, bears the same relation to good and evil, as rectitude does to benevolence and passive power. Liberty, in itself, is equally a medium between good and evil, as rectitude is between benevolence and passive power; and the medium is of a nature perfectly distinct from both extremes. To which we may add, that liberty, united to, or under the influence of sovereign benevolence, generates virtue; but liberty, united to, or under the influence of passive power, generates vice.

17. From the premises it may be seen, that the existence of all evil, and especially moral evil, in the universe, is not inconsistent with the moral perfections of God. It is evident, also, that in no sense whatever, except by a total misapplication of terms, can God be said to be the "author of sin." Nor can it be said that God "wills the event of sin;" but the contrary is plain, that He does not will it, either in a decretive, a legislative, or any other sense.

18. The-great source of confusion into which many authors have plunged themselves is, that they draw too hasty an inference in attempting to make not hindering an event to be ultimately the same as willing it. Upon their data, indeed, it may be true, while they regard every event alike to be the effect of Divine energy, and even the worst, in order to answer a good end. And this will always be the case, for self-consistency requires it, until we see and acknowledge a metaphysical negative cause of moral evil, and an eternal nature of things antecedent to all will, with their infallible effects, when not counteracted by sovereign benevolence.

19. Let us now view the subject in the light of terms a little different. Much error often arises through the defect of language;

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and where there is danger of misapprehension, it maybe of use to change expressions. Hereby a difficult subject may be taken by dif-

ferent handles, or a reader may apprehend it by one handle, which he could not by another. Let us then substitute the word equity instead of rectitude, and undeserved favour instead of benevolence.

*Postulate.*—Whatever is perfectly consistent with equity, is also perfectly consistent with the moral character of God.

20. Whatever is the pure effect of equity and the nature of things, or essential truth, united, cannot be inconsistent with the moral perfections of God; the existence of moral evil in the universe is the pure effect of these; therefore, the existence of moral evil in the universe cannot be inconsistent with the moral perfections of God.

21. The only ground of hesitation here is, How moral evil is the effect of equity and the nature of things? Liberty itself is a natural good, and therefore is the fruit of Divine favour, and the mere exercise of liberty must be ascribed to the same cause. But he who is hypothetically free to good, must be in like manner free to evil. For this hypothetical freedom either to good or to evil is what constitutes the morality of his acts of choice. Take away this hypothetical freedom, and you take away the essence of moral agency. It is plain, then, that to possess this freedom and consequent moral agency is not inconsistent with the equity, rectitude, or moral perfections of God. Yet it is demonstrable that freedom cannot be influenced in its choice, so as to constitute it virtuous or vicious, holy or sinful, morally right or wrong, good or evil, but from two causes radically—Divine favour and passive power. If the agent be under the influence of Divine favour, a happy result, in the same proportion, is secured by the same essential truth as renders the choice of the great I AM infallibly good; which no one will say is inconsistent with the Divine perfections. For though favour raises the agent above what rigid or pure equity can do, there is no inconsistency between them, any more than between paying a just debt, and bestowing also a free gift in addition. But if the agent be not under the influence of undeserved favour, the only alternative is, that he must necessarily be under the influence of passive power. And as nothing can possibly secure a happy result but undeserved favour or benevolent influence, a negative cause becomes an infallible ground of certainty of an opposite result. Again—

22. When God gives to creatures what is their due, He deals

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with them in equity; but when God gives them less grace than is actually sufficient to secure from sin, or will in fact do so, He gives them their due. Were it otherwise, it would be impossible for any to sin. If to give them so much favour, or benevolent influence as would actually preserve them from sin, were their due, it is plain that the God of equity would give them their due, and preserve them from sin accordingly. But the fact is widely otherwise. They are not all preserved from sin, though all might be, through the interposition of sovereign favour; therefore it is not their due, or equity does not require it.

23. If it be said, It is owing to their own fault, it is very true; but how came any creature to be faulty? God made men and angels upright; and He has always dealt with every creature, however debased by sin, in equity. He has also given to every creature capable of sinning, liberty unconstrained. He often influences the disposition by benevolence, and the goodness of God, by providential and gracious dispensations, leadeth to repentance. But never has He dealt with any unjustly, or given them less than their due. Not a fallen spirit, however deeply sunk, can verify such a charge. Assuredly they have destroyed themselves, but in God is the only help. A principle of which God is not the author, as before explained, in union with the abuse of their liberty, satisfactorily accounts for the fact. Our evil is of ourselves, but all our good is from God.

24. From what has been said we may safely draw this inference, that the existence of moral evil in the universe is not inconsistent with the moral perfections of God. And the proposition would be equally true had the proportion of moral evil been greater than it is. But some will continue to cavil, it is probable, because every objection is not professedly answered, and some difficulties, or Divine *arcana*, will always remain. They will still be asking why benevolence is not more universal, and thereby moral evil altogether prevented? why the cone (to which benevolence has been compared) is not a cylinder, whose base is commensurate with the plane of creatural existence, and whose top rises *ad infinitum*? They might as well inquire, Why is not every atom a sun? why not every drop an ocean? why not every moment an age? why not every worm an angel? why not the solar system as large

as all material systems united? why the number of angels and men not a thousand times greater? And to complete the absurdity of demanding evidence for everything, as an objection against de-

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monstrable truth, Why is not any given part on the surface of a cone, a cylinder, or a globe, not in the centre? To all such inquiries—and, if advanced as objections, impertinent inquiries,—it is sufficient to reply, Infinite wisdom has planned a universe, in which Divine benevolence appears wonderfully conspicuous; and even the evils, whether natural or moral, which are intermixed, and which in their origin are equally remote from Divine causation and from chance, are overruled to answer purposes the most benevolent and the most wonderfully sublime.

*First Corol.*—The only possible way of avoiding the most ruinous consequences—moral evil and misery—is to direct the will through the instrumentality of its freedom to a state of union to God, submission to His will, and an imitation of His moral perfections, according to His most merciful appointment.

*Second Corol.*—To creatures fallen below the line of rectitude, and yet the subjects of hope, prayer to God for grace, undeserved favour, or benevolent influence, is an exercise the most becoming, a duty the most necessary and important, and a privilege of the first magnitude.

#### MORAL EVIL HAS AN ADEQUATE CAUSE.

It is indeed of infinitely greater importance to be acquainted with that celestial art, and that sacred influence, whereby we may emerge from the gulf of sin to holiness and heaven, than to be accurately versed in the science of its origination. And so it is far more important to see objects, and improve sight, than to be able to demonstrate the theory of vision; to recover health, and to use it aright, than to have skill to ascertain the cause and the symptom of disease; to contribute vigorously in extinguishing a fire that threatens to destroy our dwelling and ourselves, than to know the author of the calamity; to participate in the effects of varied seasons, than to understand astronomically the precise reason of those variations. The mariner may navigate without knowing why his needle points to the north; and the celestial bodies in the solar system were as equally regular in their motions before Sir Isaac Newton had existence as they have been since he has ascer-

tained those laws and proportions according to which they move. And yet the science of optics is not useless, the healing art is not to be despised, to discover an incendiary is desirable, and never is

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that philosopher who attempts to ascertain the causes of natural phenomena held up as blameworthy. In like manner, though millions are delivered from the influence of sin, and raised to the most exalted eminence of happiness, who never knew, or even sought to know, scientifically the origination of sin, this is no good reason that such knowledge is useless, or even unimportant.

As the basis of our present demonstration, we begin with proposing a few axioms.

*Axioms.*

1. No effect can exist without an adequate cause. On this truth are founded all reasonings and all metaphysical evidence.

2. Sin is an effect, and has a cause. On this truth are founded all moral means and all religious principles.

3. The origin of moral evil cannot be moral evil; or, the cause of sin cannot be sin itself. Except we admit this, the same thing may be and not be, at the same time, and in the same respect,—the same thing may be sin and no sin, cause and no cause,—or, contrary to the first axiom, a contingent event may be the cause of itself, or may exist without an adequate cause.

4. There is no positive cause but what is ultimately from God. If otherwise, something positive may begin to be without a positive cause, or something may exist without an adequate cause; which is the same as for an effect to exist without a cause, contrary to the first axiom.

5. There may be a negative metaphysical cause, where there is no decretive Divine operation to effect it. Were there no negative metaphysical causes, such ideas as absence, ignorance, folly, weakness, and the like, could have no metaphysical effects; contrary to universal experience. And we must renounce all ideas of congruity to suppose that such things are the mere effects of Divine decree and operation.

Having premised these positions as axioms not to be disputed, we proceed to make a few observations, which, though equally true, may not be equally obvious.

1. The origin of moral evil cannot be one principle; for were it one, it must be either a positive or negative cause. If positive, it would be ultimately from God; but this would exclude a moral alternative, the very essence of moral agency, and consequently

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be incompatible with the existence of moral evil. But if a negative cause, it must ultimately be referred to the prime negative cause, which can be no other than passive power, as before explained; which is nothing, independent of positive existence, and consequently can have no effect but in union with positive existence.

2. It remains, then, that the origin of moral evil is a compound of two causes at least. Yet not more than two, because, as we shall see, these are sufficient, and more would be superfluous, in order to produce the effect.

3. Now the question remains, What are these compounded principles? Are they two positive causes, two negative, or one of each? They cannot be two positive causes; for then they might be ultimately reduced to one, the First Cause, as before proved. Nor can they be two negative ones, for, ultimately, there is but one cause properly negative. Consequently—

4. The first entrance of sin into the world, or the true and precise origin of moral evil, may be found in two causes united—the one positive, and the other negative; but neither of which is morally good or morally evil. If the cause were morally good, the effect could not be morally bad; and if morally evil, it would be contrary to the third axiom and to common sense. These two causes are—first, liberty, a cause naturally good; secondly, passive power, a cause naturally evil. And these two causes are as necessary for the production of moral evil as two parents for the production of a human being according to the laws of nature.

5. Dr Clarke, whose brief account has been more implicitly admitted than any other, says, that moral evil “arises wholly from the abuse of liberty, which God gave to His creatures for other purposes, and which it was reasonable and fit to give them for the perfection and order of the whole creation; only they, contrary to God’s intention and command, have abused what was necessary for the perfection of the whole, to the corruption and depravation of themselves.” This extract from Dr Clarke (in his “Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God,” p. 113, 5th edit.) has

been advanced by celebrated writers, as “containing all that can be advanced with certainty” on the subject. But surely those minds must be easily satisfied who can be satisfied with such evidence. Dr Clarke allows and proves that liberty is a perfection rather than an evil. How came it, then, to produce evil? He answers, “This arises wholly from the abuse of liberty.” But

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what is the cause of this effect called “the abuse of liberty?” This, in fact, is the whole of the difficulty, and yet he leaves it untouched. The free agent fails in the exercise of liberty; this failure is an effect; but there is no effect without a cause; therefore this failure must have a cause; and this cause (not the abuse of liberty) must bring us to the origin of moral evil.

6. What Dr Clarke has left untouched may yet be ascertained. We think it has been fairly excluded, by what has been already advanced, from everything except liberty and passive power. Therefore, the abuse of liberty can arise only from its associate. But how can this operate as a cause of the abuse of liberty? In order to answer this question, we must recollect what liberty itself is—viz., a natural power, or instrument of the mind, capable of producing moral effects. Not a self-determining power, which would be contrary to the first axiom, and which President Edwards has abundantly demonstrated to be full of contradictions, and an utter impossibility. It must, then, be determined by motives. But motives, as will be shewn, are the objects of choice in union with the state of the mind, as a compound effect. Now, the cause why the real good, suppose the chief good, which is absolutely unchangeable, is not chosen, and an inferior good appears at the instant of choice preferable, and is, in fact, preferred, must arrive from that part of the motive which is the state of the mind.

7. Now, there are only two states of the mind conceivable whereby liberty can be influenced: the one, a state naturally evil; the other, a state morally good. Were we to say that the state was morally evil at the first entrance of sin, we should contradict the third axiom; and were we to say that the cause was only naturally good, we should contradict the first axiom. Therefore, the cause of the abuse of liberty is a state naturally evil. No other cause can possibly be assigned, without involving contradic-

tion. But what is a state naturally evil, and without any mixture of moral evil? It can be no other but a state under the influence of what we call passive power.

8. Let us view the subject in another light. Perfect liberty, in reference to virtue and vice, the scale of merit and demerit, and its attendant degrees of happiness or misery, is a medium standing between all extremes—between virtue and vice, merit and demerit, happiness and misery. If we regard Divine rectitude or equity,

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according to a former simile, in reference to the moral system, as a universal plane, liberty may be said to coincide with it. And, being a natural perfection, or, when exerted, a good which has a positive cause, it is the effect of benevolent energy. If the mind be under unmerited, sovereign, benevolent influence, its liberty attaches itself to real good; then the agent rises on the scale of excellence, and, therefore, of happiness. But if the mind be under passive influence, or the influence of passive power, (a depraved nature and confirmed vicious habits being now out of the question,) its liberty attaches itself to apparent good, in opposition to real; then vice is generated, the agent sinks on the scale of deterioration, and, consequently, of misery.

9. It appears, then, that the will, in the exercise of its freedom, when producing moral effects, is the instrument of the disposition, and that the character of the effect bears an infallible and exact proportion to that of the predisposing cause. Yet the will in the exercise of choice is so free, that all constraint, coercion, and impulse, are entirely excluded from that which constitutes the morality of the act. Here lies the essence of moral agency, and the ground of accountableness. The agent has a moral alternative: if he be differently minded, he may choose otherwise than he actually does. If under benevolent influence he will, in proportion, infallibly choose aright; if under equitable passive influence, the apparent good will not be the real one, and, consequently, the choice will be morally bad. Means, objects perfectly suitable and sufficient, are exhibited to view; but these of themselves would never determine the will, otherwise the same effect would always follow the same means. Temptations also are presented; these, in like manner, of themselves never determine the will, otherwise temptation and sin would be infallibly connected. Then the holy

Jesus could not have withstood the numerous and powerful solicitations of the tempter. But why did He withstand all? Because objects of temptation did not constitute the whole of motives; because objects operate according to the state of the mind; and because in Him benevolent influence counteracted passive power. Hence, when the prince of this world came, he found nothing in Him; and hence He rose to the greatest height of glory, having "a name above every name."

10. There is no end of objections and cavils, however demonstrative the proof; for such there have been against all the first

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principles of religion: the being of God,—a revelation of His will to the human race,—the doctrine of a future state, &c. Some may say, Why should sin be made to originate in these two things, liberty and passive power? We answer, it has been demonstrated that all metaphysical, positive, and negative causation, in reference to moral evil, is reducible to these two; and, therefore, they might as well ask, Why one and one make two, rather than any other number?

11. Others may say, Why not proceed from God alone? They might as well ask, Why is not the sun the cause of darkness? love, the cause of enmity? wisdom, the cause of folly? happiness, the cause of misery? order, the cause of confusion? But the effect, it may be said, is the same. We reply, the assignation of a cause, whether true or false, does not alter the nature of phenomena. It would be, indeed, a strange phenomenon, hitherto unknown and unknowable, for an hypothesis, however demonstrable, to alter the nature of the things in question. The effects are the same. Very true: but the question is not about the effects; the inquiry is about the true cause of those effects, in opposition to false philosophy. The effect of moral evil is misery, or deserved suffering. Now, does it make no difference, in justifying the ways of God to men, whether a rational, immortal being suffer deservedly or undeservedly? To suffer for moral evil is to suffer deservedly; but were sin and suffering from God alone, or the effect of constitutional laws, this could not be the case. To say that this partial suffering may be ultimately counterbalanced by a restoration, is begging the question that there will be a restoration; and if there were, what is it better than an apology for past in-

justice? To suffer undeservedly is to suffer unjustly; and to punish at all is an act of injustice, if undeserved, as well as to punish for ever.

12. It may be again asked, What advantage is there in fixing on this origin of moral evil rather than another? We reply by putting another question—Why should we put up with a false cause assigned for anything? Surely, phenomena more interesting, more alarming in their nature, and more awful in their consequences than moral evils, cannot arrest human observation. And it would be passing strange to suppose that the ascertaining of their true cause and origin is not an important part of philosophy, and deserving of the closest investigation. What can be more dishon-

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ourable to the moral character of Deity than to make sin originate in His will alone? Or, if this be its origin, how preposterous to call it moral evil, as distinguished from natural! How cruel and unjust, beyond precedent, to punish it; and how absurd the idea of threatening punishment for what was irreversibly appointed!

13. Some may say, “Why may we not be satisfied with the idea of permission? If properly understood, we acknowledge that this goes a considerable way. But we suspect few seem acquainted with the full implication of the term. God permits. True, if by it we mean He does not hinder. The free agent acts amiss when he is not hindered. This only shews that God might hinder if He pleased, but it assigns no cause why the agent acts amiss. Permitting, or not hindering, implies a cause distinct from Divine causation. And the question returns, What is the cause of sin taking place when not hindered? In vain do we fix on chance, or a self-determining power; these explain nothing, and in fact are nothing. In vain do we say, sin arises from the abuse of liberty. For the question recurs, What is the cause of that abuse? If this be not explained, nothing is effected. In vain shall we say it proceeds from the Cause of causes. For that Cause is good only. From such a Cause only good can proceed; and to ascribe sin to this Cause is as proper as to say that moral evil is a good thing, and ought to be rewarded rather than punished. If this be not a reprobable mode of calling “evil good, and good evil,” (Isa, v. 20,) we know not what is.

*Corollaries.*

1. Those who renounce the idea of passive power, as before explained, and its influence on the mind of a free agent as a negative metaphysical cause, can never find the true philosophical cause of vice and sin, and consequently of deserved suffering. As soon might they ascertain the laws of the planetary motions, while rejecting the principle of gravitation. If it be asked, What is the link of connexion between this principle and the event? we reply, essential truth, the same truth as connects  $2 \times 2 = 4$ , or  $2 - 1 = 1$ .

2. Those who renounce a sovereign, benevolent, physical, holy influence on the mind can never find the true philosophical origin of virtue and holiness, and consequently happiness.

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3. From the premises we infer that the highest wisdom, the best interest, and the greatest honour of a rational and accountable being is to employ his liberty and all his powers in the way of absolute submission to the Divine will; in supreme affection, fear, and love to the infinite majesty and self-existent excellence of God; and in the way of humble and diligent obedience, according to the manifestation which God has made of Himself.

## MORAL EVIL—DIVINE DECREE NOT ITS CAUSE.

Were the true origin of moral evil—that is, the adequate reason of its taking place as a consequence—more generally known, there would be less unprofitable disputing about the Divine decrees in general, and about predestination and election in particular. It is to the want of this knowledge that we must ascribe many things advanced by ancient as well as modern writers, who, in other important respects, are truly valuable and judicious. President Edwards appears never less at home than when he touches upon those points which are immediately connected with that knowledge, and his reasoning [upon them] is a striking specimen. The conclusion he draws is true in one sense, but not in another. It is applicable only to real entities, while it does not affect negative causations, and consequences flowing from them. That God “knows beforehand” all things, whether of a positive or negative kind, is an important truth, but things coming to pass or not coming to pass is no proper criterion of His “approving or not approving them.” He may approve of what does

not come to pass, and He may not approve of what does. He approves of all possible excellences, and He disapproves of all possible moral evil. But who will say that there are as many excellences among creatures, or as much moral evil, as it is possible there might be?

When it is said, "He either is willing they should be, or He is not willing they should be," the terms require a distinction, and the sentiment an explanation. If by "they" or "things" be meant real entities, it is very proper to say that God is either willing they should be, or not willing they should be; but if the former, they must exist from His will, and therefore are decreed; but if the latter, they must not exist, for there is no other adequate cause of their existence. But this reasoning is not valid when

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applied to negations and effects. For there are multitudes of things (as all failings, wants, and negative considerations) concerning which there is no decretive will exercised for their existence, (if existence it may be called,) nor yet any contrary will to prevent their existence. What intelligent person can suppose, for instance, that a mathematical point, a relative nothing, was decreed either to be or not to be? And yet, when it stands related to real entities, which are decreed, what innumerable demonstrative consequences follow from it.

By whomsoever sanctioned, it is an erroneous notion that a decretive will is implied in, or is at all requisite for the production of a negative cause. It is not less erroneous than to suppose that negative causes may produce real entities. That the latter is an erroneous notion may be easily made to appear. Millions of inhabited systems are among possible effects, but who would say that there must be a decretive will or any will to prevent their existence? Would they start into being of themselves if not prevented by an act of will? To suppose that an exercise of Divine will is requisite for confirming the negative consideration of their non-existence is an absurd idea, except these ideal possibles had an inherent tendency towards actual existence of themselves. And as there is no will requisite to prevent their existence, so neither is there any required to continue their non-existence. But though a negative cause, like a mathematical point, be a relative nothing, yet, on the supposition of existing free agents, in given

circumstances, millions of sins would come to pass, more than do in fact, were they not prevented by a counteracting will. This counteraction is very properly termed “restraining or preventing grace,” for the object of a decree which counteracts evil is the positive existence of an opposite good. And if moral evil be the object of prevention, it must be prevented by Divine gracious will and influence, which counteracts the operation of that negative principle in the agent from which the moral evil takes its origin. Therefore, our author’s conclusion, “to will that they should be is to decree them,” applies only to one sort of “things”—viz., real entities; but negative considerations, defects, and moral evils, no more imply a decree concerning their causation, and their appropriate consequences, than does absolute non-existence imply it.

The true notion of moral evil, or the sinfulness of a free act, is the absence or the want of conformity to rectitude. And if God

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were the decreative cause of moral evil, by “willing it should be,” the will of the agent would be only the instrument of the first will in producing an intended or decreed event. But if such event be decreed, and if there be no cause of failure in the agent but what is decreed, it is impossible to avoid the consequence that God is the primary author of sin. And how could He hate and blame the effect of His own causation any more than He hates natural evils, or blames volcanoes and storms, diseases and death? He is never said, or even supposed, to hate or blame these, because He is the primary source of them, according to established laws and instruments of His own appointment. If moral evil were decreed by Him, He must be the efficient of it; for whatever He decrees He effects, and notwithstanding any kind whatever of instrumentality in its production, the human will or anything else, He could no more disapprove of it than He does of lightning and earthquakes.

But if “willing they should be” denote not exercising a will to prevent moral evils, the expression is inappropriate, and implies a contradiction, for a decree implies the exercise of will; but not exercising a preventing will (by which alone the event can be arrested) is an idea directly contrary, and the two ideas are absolutely incompatible. The same intelligent cause, indeed, may produce effects different from itself; and this must be the case, as cause and effect cannot be identified, (for identity is that which

excludes difference;) but the same intelligent cause cannot produce effects contrary to itself. All the decrees of God are holy like Himself, but to suppose a decree of moral evil is to suppose an effect contrary to its cause; which is to suppose incompatible ideas to be a truth. The interventions of a secondary will make no real difference if there be not another cause of failure in the act, totally different from decretive will.

But is there any adequate cause or sufficient reason of the consequence, why moral evil takes place if we exclude a Divine decree of it? Most assuredly there is; as sure as all the decrees of God, and the exercise of those decrees, are holy, and as sure as moral evil is an effect which He blames and infinitely hates. And this cause is of such a nature, that if God decrees one kind of good but not another also, moral evil is certain to follow. That is, if He decree the existence of an active will, in perfect liberty from constraint to evil, together with a variety of objects, all of which are good in themselves, but at the same time has not decreed preserving

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grace,—a continued holy influence enlightening and purifying the mind,—the intellect will be certain (as chance is out of the question) to give a defective representation of good, because it is necessarily connected with the source of failure—viz., comparative defect, and therefore the want of infallibility. If the choice be right and virtuous, it is the infallible index of two good things decreed—the natural act, and a holy principle in the heart, which is the source of moral actions. If the choice be wrong and vicious, it is also an infallible index of two things—the natural act, which is good and therefore decreed, and a principle of limitation and failure, which neither is nor can be an object of decree. The negative principle in fallen angels and men is intimately connected and intermixed with moral depravity, yet in itself, abstractedly considered, it is not sinful, but is the cause of all sinfulness. It is an essential property of creatures in every state of their existence, and therefore cannot be in itself sinful; nor is it possible for anything sinful to be the origin of sin, for then sin would be the origin of itself or self-existent, which is infinitely absurd. How can the same thing be both before and after itself?

Here it may be asked, If the origin of moral evil be not itself sinful, why may not God be its origin? The reason is plain, be-

cause God is absolute perfection, and has not in Him a principle of defection, and therefore it is impossible for Him to impart what He has not. He can no more impart imperfection than He can impart falsehood. Why is He a God that cannot lie? Because He is absolute truth. Why cannot He impart imperfection, or decree sinfulness? Because He is absolute goodness and holiness. But though that principle which is the origin of sin is not sinful, it is not a perfection in any sense, but a relative defect. This is its real character, and such character must necessarily be the origin of moral evil. Were it sinful, it could not be the cause of sin, for this would be absurdly to identify the cause and the effect, or to ascribe to imperfection the perfection of self-existence. And were it a perfection, or something that was not an imperfection, the effect would be contrary to the tendency of its cause, which would be to subvert the first principles of knowledge, reason, and truth.

Moral evil, which is the sinfulness of a free act, is a defect, a failure of conformity to rectitude; and therefore, though a source of misery to the subject of it, (a misery generated by the defect

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itself,) it can no more be caused by the Divine will, than pure nihility, or a mathematical point, can be so caused. The entity of the free act is indeed effected by Divine will and energy operating on a secondary cause, but this constitutes no part of its defect, its failure of conformity, or sinfulness. Thus the very nature of sin proves that the Divine will neither is, nor can possibly be, the cause of it. To suppose that God decrees, or any way wills a defect or a failure of perfection of any kind, is even more absurd than to suppose that He decrees mere nihility; because it involves more absurd consequences, when compared with His declared opposition to sin. Though He counteracts nihility by actual creation, and providential preservation, it is no object of blame or holy hatred, as moral evil is.

As the point under discussion, though deep, is far from being a mere speculation which has no practical advantage, but has an extensive influence on many important theological subjects, and on the rational ground of experimental religion, it may be advantageous to view it in different lights. Still, it may be asked by some, If moral evil does not take place because "God wills it

should be," whence does it originate? It may be replied, its immediate origination is a moral agent's abuse of his free-will, or of his will acting freely, without restraint from good, or constraint to evil. But the question still returns, What is the ultimate cause of that abuse? Every one must allow that, as an effect, it must have some cause, some adequate reason why it takes place in a moral system, and it must be further allowed that this cannot be chance, or absolute contingency, for then there would be no ground of its being foreknown. To foreknow what is in itself uncertain is a direct contradiction, and a contradictory position cannot be an object of foreknowledge, because it cannot be an object of any knowledge, except as a falsehood. To attempt an evasion of this argument by recurring to the infinitude of the Divine knowledge is a weak subterfuge, for if anything be in itself uncertain, the more perfect the knowledge is, the more perfectly it is known to be uncertain. What is contingent with respect to us is only relatively so, because our knowledge is limited; but with respect to God, whose understanding is infinite, there is nothing contingent,—that is, there is no absolute contingency or mere chance in the nature of things. There must therefore, of necessity, be an origin of moral evil which is certainly foreknown, or fore-

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known as a certain fact; and it has been proved that it is not, and that it cannot possibly be, divinely caused; it must therefore originate in the creature, and in something of which he is the subject which is not an object of Divine causation.

It may still be objected, Is there anything in a creature, as such, which is not divinely caused? If by "thing" be meant what has positive existence, there certainly is not; but in another sense there certainly is, otherwise there would be a creature without any relative defect, compared with the Creator. If he has no defect or imperfection of any kind, then the Creator and the creature must necessarily be identified. For what can constitute the difference between a caused and an uncaused being, if not the absolute perfection of the latter, and the comparative imperfection of the former? And this comparative imperfection cannot be sinful, otherwise there could be no creature without sin; which is absurd in thought, and contrary to revealed facts. This relative defect, which constitutes an essential difference between a derived and an

underived existence, is an adequate (and, indeed, the only possible) origin of moral evil; but it is, however, only hypothetical, that is, on supposition that there is no decreed operation of a contrary principle to prevent the occurrence of moral evil as a consequence. And there can be no doubt that God actually does, in millions of instances, “overcome this evil with good,” in preventing the inhabitants of this world from being worse than they are. That interrogation, “Who hath made thee to differ from another?” is full of important meaning. It implies a strong affirmation, that God alone makes any man to differ for the better from another, and that no one has any excellence, either natural or spiritual, but what is a Divine gift. But, on the other hand, the agent alone makes himself to differ for the worse, whether from others or from his former self, otherwise he could not be the object of Divine displeasure and blame. It is not, however, the cause of sin that is the object of blame and displeasure in the exercise of holy government, but the sin itself, and the person who commits it.

It is of little moment by what words, or in what language, this essential principle is expressed,—whether by passive power, (perhaps the most significant and convenient as a technical term,) comparative imperfection, the evil of imperfect existence, metaphysical evil, the want of ulterior perfection, an essential tendency to defection, &c.,—the thing itself, as possessing a relative influence

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in the demonstrations of moral science, is absolutely certain. If we reject it, nothing in morality can possibly be the subject of scientific demonstration, any more than in geometry any proposition can be demonstrated if we reject that relative nothing, a mathematical point, which is implied in every diagram. But if we admit it, there is nothing important in moral science but is capable of being reduced to rigid and fair demonstration. It should, however, be carefully remembered, that though it is an adequate reason of the event, and is the only ultimate origin of moral evil as the consequence, it is suspended on this condition—“If the all-sufficient First Cause do not communicate to the agent’s mind a supporting holy influence.” Grant the agent (that is, a created, and, therefore, a dependent agent) active powers and freedom, (that is, freedom from decreitive constraint to an evil choice, and from restraint as to a good choice,) and nothing but

sovereign or arbitrary goodness can, in the nature of things, (that is, in the nature of God and of the creature,) prevent the consequence—moral evil. What an argument for godly fear, profound humility, and constant dependence on God all-sufficient! and what a proof of our need of gracious influence (even abstracted from the additional consideration of our sinful apostasy) to keep us from sin! and, considered as apostate creatures, what a powerful recommendation of a life of prayer and the gospel system of salvation!

*First Coroll.*—Hence we may see that a decree of good does not imply a decree of evil; predestination to life does not imply predestination to death; in other words, that a decree of election does not imply a decree of reprobation, as maintained by some of the Reformers. The 17th Article of the Church of England steers clear of this dangerous rock.

*Second Coroll.*—Since all the disputes between Calvinists and Arminians are founded in differing notions about the Divine decrees and free-will; and since these differing notions are thoroughly removed by a right knowledge of the origin of moral evil, which is capable of demonstrative evidence; we may infer, that in proportion as Calvinists and Arminians are capable of estimating absolute demonstration, their disagreement will be annihilated, and that nothing but ignorance and prejudice can prevent their harmonious-coalition. O happy period, when all God's people shall "see eye to eye!" Let the Calvinist, from full conviction, assure his opponent that God decrees only good, whether natural, moral, or spiritual, but

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in no sense whatever decrees or any way wills moral evil; let him further state, that the origin or cause of moral evil is in the creature, in such a manner as to be neither created nor willed by the Author of our being, but yet is inseparably related to our existence; and let him further insist that God could, if He saw it best, prevent by His grace the commission of sin, in every possible instance, while He leaves the human will perfectly free; and that to Him alone we should look for assistance to enable us to avoid sin, as well as for pardon and acceptance. Firmly persuaded of these things, on the clearest ground of evidence, let him invite his opponent to give him the right hand of fellowship. If, after all, the Arminian draws back, he must, in the view of every intelligent mind, appear either profoundly ignorant or most unreasonably

bigoted. In this case, though not blameless, he should be the subject of pity and of prayer.

MORAL EVIL—NEGATIVE CAUSALITY.

The phrase, “to will to permit,” could never have obtained currency among either moral, theological, or metaphysical writers, had they duly considered the subject of negative causality—its peculiar nature, its relation to what is positive, and its appropriate consequences. By “causality” is meant, an adequate reason for a certain, as opposed to a mere probable consequence; which causality, it is maintained, may be negative as well as positive, passive as well as active. A positive and active causation must be from the First Cause, but not that which is negative and passive. That the latter is connected with consequences which are infallibly certain, will be shewn in the course of this discussion, which is intended to vindicate the Divine character and government from undeserved imputations.

The word “permit” must either include an act of the will or not include it. If the former, to will to permit must be “to will to *will*” something, or to will some act of the will. If it be said that the phrase means a will in general to exercise some other will in particular, it is replied that this does not constitute any difference of will, except as one thing is subservient to another in the series of decrees. But a little consideration will shew the impropriety of applying the word in this manner. The Divine decrees must necessarily be direct or indirect as there is no medium; and

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the former must be of those objects which are excellent for their own sake, but the latter must be made respecting objects for the sake of something else which is excellent. Nothing can be the object of a direct decree but what terminates in God, as well as emanates from Him in a direct manner, as goodness, holiness, truth, &c.; and nothing can be an object of an indirect decree—as the creation of a material world, the appointment of its laws, &c.—but what terminates in Him in an indirect manner as subservient to the other. For “of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things” decreed by Him. Thus far most agree. But the word “permit,” in reference to moral evil, cannot mean, in any consistency of language or thought, even an indirect decree or will; for it would involve a decree of *opposite* objects, and thereby

contradictory causations. God decrees the holiness of His creatures in order to their happiness, and their happiness for His own glory. But were we to say that He decrees the creature's comparative defect for the sake of his moral failure, and the latter for the sake of shewing His justice, He must, on that supposition, decree *opposite* things, and thereby put the stamp of approbation upon the evil as well as upon the good. To say that sin is willed for the sake of good does not mend the matter; for still, on the supposition, it would be *willed*, and consequently decreed, as a contrary object. That an inferior good should be willed, in subserviency to another superior, is very just; and that the laws of nature, which are good, should be the occasion of harm to individuals is not unworthy of the holy Author of those laws; but moral evil stands *directly opposed* to His rectitude and infinitely holy nature. According to the doctrine here controverted, God would be the fountain of good and evil alike, and he who commits a sin may as justly ascribe it to God ultimately as another may ascribe to Him the goodness of his deeds. If the latter is called to exercise gratitude, the former is entitled to plead exculpation. Nor is it sufficient to say that the sinner aims at an end in transgressing different from that which God aims at; for, on the hypothesis, his circumstances, without one exception, are decreed from whence the sin arises, and, indeed, the very existence of sin must proceed from the Divine will. But that the sinner should be blamed for doing what was decreed to be done, including his defects,—the ground of fallibility,—whence proceed his wrong ends in sinning, is to subvert all-proper ideas of justice, right and

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wrong, good and evil. Some will allow that the difficulties which their hypothesis involves are inexplicable,—at least, by our contracted minds in the present state,—but yet hold that we are forced to determine thus, in order to avoid still greater difficulties; for, say they, we must either adopt this plan or deny God's foreknowledge. But this is a hasty and illegitimate inference, and which is owing, as before intimated, to the want of properly ascertaining the doctrine of negative causality. If this be overlooked, embarrassments will be sure to follow, nor can the most subtle penetration be of any avail to effect a disentanglement. This oversight is the cause why many anxious inquirers after

truth have met with a mortifying disappointment in endeavouring to reconcile what otherwise is demonstrably irreconcilable; and this is the reason why many have drawn back with disgust from a science with which, the more they viewed it, the more they were perplexed. They neglected, or did not sufficiently perceive, the *only* principle by which the greatest difficulties in moral science may be satisfactorily explained, and by the aid of which some of the most important truths [principles?] of revealed religion which appear to clash may assume a beautiful consistency, and may be shewn to be founded in eternal truth. Faith, indeed, may live and even triumph without a scientific knowledge of its objects; but it may grow stronger, and triumph still more, (*cæteris paribus*,) in the front of daring opposition, or when insidiously attacked by the “opposition of science,” falsely so called, when possessed of demonstrative evidence of the harmony of Divine perfections and of truths which depend on that harmony. But before we come to state and illustrate more particularly the principle in question, we must not lose sight of the other idea included in the term “permit.”

If the phrase, “to will to permit,” cannot mean “to will to *will*,” or “to will to decree,” an act of the will is not included in the term “permit.” And this exclusion of an act of will, undoubtedly, enters into its only justifiable acceptation in reference to the present subject. To permit, is not to hinder what has, or appears to have a tendency to take place. To will to hinder, to prevent, to oppose, to counteract, or to effect anything, is strictly proper, when a contrary effect or tendency of any kind is implied. But to will to hinder a dead man from walking is nonsense. When a person has an inclination or a tendency of any kind, and when it is in

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the power of another to hinder its operation, but does not hinder, it is proper to say he permits it; that is, he does not will the contrary. An exercise of will is both useless and unmeaning where only to permit is intended; for the event is supposed to take place if not prevented. For one man to permit another to do a good or a bad action, when it is in his power to prevent it, is good sense; because it implies an inclination in the person permitted. But why is it improper to say that God permits a man to do his duty? It is because He neither would, nor could,

do it by mere permission. If permission implied an act of will, there would be no impropriety in a language which yet all allow to be absurd—viz., that God permits a man to be good! But to permit evil is good sense, and approved language. Why? Because no exercise of will on the part of the permitter is required; or because it is implied that it would take place if not prevented. To decree the continued existence of the world in its present form for a given time, expresses a clear and consistent idea; but to say that God has decreed that He will not do the contrary during the same period, is unmeaning language. When a declaration is made that God will not do a thing, as drowning the earth with another deluge, &c., the plain meaning is, that it expresses the non-existence of an imagined event. But the non-existence of an imagined event no more implies a decree concerning it, than does the non-existence of other imagined worlds, or another fancied First Cause. To prevent implies will in counteracting the intended effect, but to permit is not to will the counteraction. Therefore “to will to permit” is the same thing as “to will not to will,” which both in meaning and in language is alike indefensible. And when we say that God permits moral evil, if we have any consistent meaning, it must intend that He does not will to hinder it, except in a legislative sense; and if so, what possible room is there left for any exercise of will in permission? Infinite perfection forbids it. Man, indeed, may determine not to do a thing; but this must refer either to a former intention of doing that thing, which now is altered, or to some expectation of the contrary. But nothing of this kind can belong to God, who “is of one mind.”

Can any sin then take place without God’s will and concurrence? It is replied, if by “sin” be meant the act of the sinner in its concrete form, the Divine will and concurrence are implied. But we should remember that in every act, however morally evil, there

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is, and necessarily must be, a natural good included. The natural powers and energy of the mind are of that quality proceeding from the Divine will, and without which there could be no moral act either good or bad. But the sinfulness of the act (which is often expressed by the shorter word “sin”) cannot possibly, except from some defect, which therefore must be a negative cause, and which no more needs the Divine will for its production than does mere

nihility need it. The idea of perfection and of will is positive; but that of imperfection and of permission is negative. And as perfection admits of degrees, considered as existing in creatures, so does the want of perfection. The former is the effect of Divine will, but the latter needs no will nor can admit any. Nay, for a creature to exist without any want of perfection is the same as a self-sufficient creature, (for then alone could he be without imperfection,) which is infinitely absurd.

We may further observe, that if there were nothing good in an act concretely sinful, no evil could attach to such act; for what is moral evil, if not the perversion of that which is naturally good? If the natural powers and their acts, abstractedly considered, were not in themselves good, moral evil would be impossible. And were there no negative cause, or some kind of defect in the agent, all his acts would be morally, as well as physically good, and that infallibly, as those of the absolutely perfect Being. In the Deity there is no defect of any kind, nor any negative cause of any effects or consequences; and, therefore, no liability to moral evil.

But how can we conceive of a negative cause affording a demonstration of an infallible consequence? Is there anything analogous to it in the nature of things? And if there be, what importance can be attached to it? Let us coolly endeavour to furnish a reply to these questions. We can easily conceive of a mathematical point, and it is universally allowed that it has no dimensions,—it has neither length, breadth, nor thickness,—and therefore is a negative idea. It implies a negation of everything that has positive existence. It is therefore pure nihility under a relative consideration. But though in itself it is nothing positive, yet that nothing, when it stands related to a line which has positive length, becomes a source of innumerable demonstrations. For, if we take into the account, together with a point, a circumference and equal radii, we have the positive idea of a circle, com-

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posed of a centre and circumference. And without this relation subsisting between a relative nothing and a positive something, the idea of a circle is not possible; and, consequently, the ideas of the properties of a circle (which are innumerable) are absolute impossibilities. So nearly allied, and so perfectly similar, are the

very first principles of geometrical and metaphysical science. For as without the negative idea of a mathematical point, (for points are the boundaries of lines,) constituting an adequate reason of an infallible consequence, not a single demonstration in geometry can be effected; so without the negative idea of passive power, as the opposite to that power which is active and positive, not one demonstration, properly so called, can be effected in metaphysical and moral science. This may appear to some a bold assertion, but it is not more bold than true. He who would dispute the fact, may just as well dispute the truth of the very first definition in geometrical science—viz., that of a point. He may indeed raise objections, and plead that we can see a point, and therefore it must have some dimensions; or if it be nothing, it can be no cause, no adequate reason of anything as a consequence, &c. But if he attempt seriously to vindicate his objections by argument, he cannot avoid shewing himself perfectly ridiculous to those who understand the subject. And equally ridiculous must he appear who would attempt to disprove the fact of negative causation in moral science.

But how can we admit that there may be two co-existent causes in the same subject, one positive and the other negative? We are obliged to admit it from a due consideration of stubborn facts. For what fact can be more plain, than that from the same agent may, and actually do, proceed effects, virtue and vice, which are diametrically opposite to each other? And surely such effects must proceed from opposite causes. If, therefore, virtue proceeds from a positive cause, as all must allow, vice must proceed from a negative causality. This evidence is demonstrative. Yet the inquisitive may ask, Is there any phenomenon in the nature of things analogous to this? Though an answer to this question is not necessary to the end of establishing the fact, it may serve, *ex abundantia*, for illustration. For this purpose, then, we may appeal to a mathematical line which has positive length, with a negation of breadth; and without this negative causality no geometrical demonstration can be established. And the same may be said of

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a plane superficies, the boundaries of which are lines. Thus, a negative causality enters into every geometrical demonstration, in conjunction with what is positive. But the reader should keep in

mind that these instances are adduced for illustration, not professed proofs of the doctrine. The latter is founded on direct evidence from the very nature of God and that of a creature.

That a comparative defect is a negative cause, in the sense before explained, is evident, when we consider, (as before intimated,) that in no creature can it be found without a comparative good conjoined with it; and that in free agents this good, which consists chiefly in the natural intellect and will, is capable of opposite directions—one conformable to rectitude, and another opposed to it. Now, it is clearly impossible that these directions—one for the chief good, and the other against it—should proceed from the same cause, whether good or bad. The direction of the will towards rectitude cannot be caused by defect, any more than something positive can proceed from nihility. Nor can the direction of the will against rectitude be caused by perfection of any kind or degree. But intellect and will in all beings, whether original or derived, are perfections, and therefore cannot be the cause of a direction against perfection; for then there would be a cause repugnant to itself, which is impossible. The wrong choice, therefore, which is a wrong direction of the will, must proceed from a negative cause, for in causes there is no medium between positive and negative.

But though infinite perfection cannot be the cause of imperfections of any kind or degree, for reasons which have been already adduced, yet perfection affords occasion, an innocent occasion, for imperfection to shew itself by way of contrast. Thus, if absolute perfection were to produce no creature, no occasion would be afforded for comparative imperfection to shew itself; and without the latter, moral evil would be impossible. The inference, therefore, is irrefragable, that moral evil originates from a negative causality, or that defect in the agent which is the want of ulterior perfection. Yet here it may be proper to add, as of the utmost importance to be taken into the account, that though effects may proceed from negative causes as well as from positive, and with equal certainty, yet there is this important difference—the former is only hypothetical, the latter absolute, originally considered. The First Cause is positive existence independent of will, and un-

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conditional, and every other positive cause must emanate from the First Will; but a negative cause, consisting in defect, cannot possibly take place, with respect to causality, but on conditions—viz., the condition of a created nature, and that of permission, in the explained sense of the word. A positive cause may counteract the tendency of a negative one, but not *vice versa*.

Hence is derived the proper notion of permitting moral evil to take place; the negative cause is not hindered from taking effect, for reasons infinitely good and wise. But to represent this permission or sufferance as willing or decreeing the negative as well as the positive part of sin, is an-infinite absurdity; for the sinfulness of an act being the direct opposite to infinite perfection, such representation makes infinite perfection to oppose itself. Thus all good in every kind and degree, every *quantum* of created nature, from the greatest to the least, together with all positive and active causality, are from God. “He is light,” knowledge, and purity, “and with him is no darkness at all,”—no ignorance, no want of holiness. And thus, also, all moral evil proceeds from the offender, who is the subject at once of a *quantum* of derived, and therefore limited perfection, and of comparative defect. And these two things (perfection and defect) enter into the very notion of a created nature.

Is it necessary to say anything more in confirmation of the general theorem, That there is in the human mind a negative causality, from whence may flow a certainty of consequence? It may tend to the further satisfaction of the reader if we advert to another argument founded on free-will. The term *will* designates a power of the mind which is positive and active; but the term *free*, connected with it, expresses a negative idea, for it expresses, when properly used, the absence of coercion and restraint, but in different respects. The complex idea of *free-will* is resolved into this plain proposition, The will is free; that is, the will is not constrained in one respect, and is not restrained in another. It is neither decretively constrained to evil, nor decretively restrained from good. No other freedom can be predicated of the will as the cause of moral effects; and it is as much a relative nothing as a mathematical point. We may, therefore, safely affirm, that among the countless millions of moral effects which

take place, not only among men, but also in the created universe of free agents, there is not one but what is beholden to a negative

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causality for its existence, in connexion with what is positive; for if freedom be excluded, no act can have a moral quality.

To conclude this discussion, which has already exceeded the limits first intended, we must observe once more, and it cannot be too strongly inculcated, that there is no case or circumstance in which moral evil might not be prevented by the supreme will, were it employed for that purpose. For as God is all-sufficient, and as His control over His creatures for their good is absolute, His power to effect a prevention of moral evil is undoubted. Nor can there be any question that this power, in pursuance of Divine decrees, does in fact, and in instances which to us are inconceivably numerous, counteract the tendencies of negative causes to prevent moral evil. But if it be inquired, why in any instances it is permitted to take place when God might with infinite ease prevent it, it is sufficient here to say, that God is infinitely wise as well as powerful, and equitable as benevolent. But a further answer to this inquiry would lead us to consider the ultimate reasons of moral government, or why a moral system is at all established; and the question has been discussed in the first volume of President Edwards's works, to which the reader is referred.

*First Corol.*—Negative causality, in connexion with what is positive, is an essential principle of moral science. If either be excluded, we can have no clear and adequate idea of any moral act, much less a demonstration of its cause.

*Second Corol.*—These two principles, relatively connected, furnish us with sufficient data, and the only sufficient ones for a demonstrative solution of this problem—What is the origin of moral evil?

*Third Corol.*—In these principles we have the means of demonstrating the origin of all evil whatever, as well as of all good.

*Fourth Corol.*—We may further infer, that Mr Locke was not mistaken when he said, "I am bold to think that morality is capable of demonstration, as well as mathematics," (Essay, book iii., chap, xi, § 16.) And again, "The idea of a Supreme Being, infinite in power, goodness and wisdom, whose workmanship we are, and on whom we depend; and the idea of ourselves as under-

standing, rational beings, being such as are clear in us, would, I suppose, if duly considered and pursued, afford such foundations as might place morality among the sciences capable of demonstration; wherein I doubt not, but from self-evident propositions, by

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necessary consequences as incontestable as those in mathematics, the measures of right and wrong might be made out to any one that will apply himself with the same indifferency and attention to the one as he does to the other of these sciences," (Book iv., chap, iii., § 18.) Once more, "This gave me the confidence to advance that conjecture which I suggested (chap, iii.)—viz., that morality is capable of demonstration, as well as mathematics. And I doubt not but if a right method were taken, a great part of morality might be made out with that clearness, that could leave, to a considering man, no more reason to doubt, than he could have to doubt of the truth of propositions in mathematics which have been demonstrated to him," (Book iv., chap, xii., § 8.)

*Fifth Corol.*—As geometrical evidence proceeds upon the supposition of points, lines, angles, &c., and the province of the demonstration is to shew the consequence resulting from the supposition; so the above-stated principles afford the means of demonstrating moral consequences, on the supposition of effects being given to shew their necessary causes, or of causes being given to shew their necessary effects. If the *quantum* of moral good, or of moral evil, in any given act be supposed, the business of a demonstration is to shew the relative proportion it bears to its appropriate cause or causes; or, on the other hand, if the *quantum* of causal influence be supposed, to shew, as a demonstrative consequence, the nature and relative proportion of moral good or evil in the act. This is the true province of moral science, as contradistinguished from conjectural observations and a set of rules. These, in their proper place have an important use for the purpose of moral conduct; but they can by no means furnish data for scientific knowledge.

*Sixth Corol.*—There is one inference more that must not be omitted—viz., That the true principles and demonstrative consequences of moral science are incomparably more important in themselves, and ought to be more interesting to all mankind than any others, because they lead us in a more direct manner than any others to the knowledge of God and ourselves. They point out to us

at once the sources of good and evil, happiness and misery; they afford motives for devout affections of the noblest kind; and in proportion as they are properly applied, they stimulate to the practice of the sublimest virtues, and the most circumspect conduct. Without a Divine revelation, indeed, it is highly probable, that the true principles and relations of moral science could never have been dis-

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covered by mankind; but that circumstance, while it has no tendency to depreciate the evidence, demands our gratitude to Him who is the only source of "every good and every perfect gift."

#### MORAL EVIL—THE FEDERAL CHARACTER OF ADAM.

1. It is probably more philosophical, as well as more intelligible, in describing the two kinds of principles possessed by Adam, to say that the inferior ones were those faculties in man which constituted him a moral agent; rather than calling them "the principles of mere human nature." The superior ones are very accurately described, by calling them "supernatural principles;" yet they may more properly be termed Divine, benevolent, sovereign influence superadded to those faculties which constituted Adam a moral agent. This representation leads to the essential relations that subsist between God and His creature man. "Mere human nature" and "supernatural principles" convey no distinctive character of relation. "Faculties which constitute a moral agent" express the *ground* of relation between equity in God and accountableness in man; and "benevolent influences" express the ground of relation between sovereignty in God and forgiveness in man.

2. That Adam had such qualifications or faculties as rendered him a moral agent independently of his spiritual knowledge, righteousness, holiness, dominion, honour, and glory,—in other words, his Divine light, holy life, and supreme love to God,—is self-evident. For after he had lost these excellences, he confessedly was no less a moral agent, and accountable to his Divine Governor and Judge for his temper, thoughts, desires, words, and works than he was before he lost them.

5. The philosophical cause, or the true origin of Adam's defection was his liberty, in union with passive power. For an explanation of these terms and the proof of the proposition just laid down,

we must refer the reader to the preceding discussion, where the subject is professedly treated.

4. The true and ultimate *cause* of the first sin of Adam, of all his subsequent sins, and those of his posterity, whether infants or adults, is not essentially different. If the principles, as President Edwards calls them, or the faculties and qualifications which constitute moral agency and accountability, be left to themselves,

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whereby they become influenced by passive power, not counteracted by sovereign, benevolent, or holy Divine influence, the effect will be the same, though attended with different circumstances.

5. When the cause of Adam's integrity, perfection, spirituality, and happiness in his paradisaical life was no longer operative for his preservation, defection ensued; which consisted in the loss of the chief good, together with that disorder, confusion, and conscious exposedness to a continuance in that state, whereby happiness was necessarily exchanged for a restless uneasiness called misery.

6. This was the case of Adam in his own person. But President Edwards (see Works, vol. ii., pp. 342–364) excellently shews that Adam and all his posterity were strictly one. This union we may call a systematic whole. For mankind, or the whole race of man, has a *constituted* connexion no less than a seed with its plant; for instance, the acorn with the oak plant, and that with its future branches. We justly called it the same tree from the time it was planted to its utmost longevity, though some of its branches came into existence a hundred years or more after the first shoot. This union of Adam with his posterity is no less a constituted union than that which connects the solar system or any other systematic whole, as an animal body, which is regarded as one from its birth till its death. For instance, nothing but a constitution founded in the sovereign pleasure of God caused the body of Methuselah to be the same, regarded as the same, when in infancy and above nine hundred years after. The parts of his body, at least most of them, were as different in old age compared with his infancy, as any of his posterity are different from Adam. In each case alike, the appointment of God in forming a course of nature, or His operations according to a constituted plan, could make the body of Methuselah to be the

same body from the first to the last, and the posterity of Adam the same with himself.

7. In every vital system there is a vital part; and in every system as such one part is more essential than another. Adam was the vital part of the system of mankind—the root of the tree, the foundation of the building, the mainspring of the machine, the sun of the system. We his posterity are but so many members of a body, and are all dependent on him as on our head or heart; but not so on one another. There may be the amputation of a limb

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while the other limbs are not injured; but if the head or heart be deprived of life, all the members are deprived at the same time. A branch of a tree may be lopped off without injury to the other parts; but if the root, the vital part, be affected, all the branches are also affected as a necessary consequence. A dead root and a living tree are incompatible, though a dead branch and a living-branch of the same tree are not. A watch is a system formed on principles of mechanism: the index may be mutilated, or the cog of a wheel may be broken or detached, without affecting the more essential part; but if the mainspring be broken, the whole system as to its designed use is destroyed. A building is a system: a slab or a chimney may be blown down, without affecting the foundation; but if the whole foundation be undermined, the whole fabric must fall to ruin. The solar system might subsist, for aught that appears to the contrary, though a comet, a satellite, or a planet were annihilated; but if the sun were annihilated, ruin and confusion must ensue.

8. Whatever Adam lost by transgression, he could have no claim either in equity or by promise—that is, he could have no claim at all—for a restoration of it. And what he could have no claim for himself, could not be claimable by or for his posterity, any more than a branch or a member could obtain life when the root of that branch or the head of that member had ceased to live; or any more than the subordinate parts of any system, when the radical, vital, fundamental, and essential parts had failed.

9. What Adam lost was divine *life*, and the happiness implied in it as a favour granted on a condition. Observing this condition, he was to have it continued; but on breaking the condition, it was to be forfeited Adam may be compared to a lord in waiting,

who should have free access to every room in the king's palace, one excepted. By abstaining from this intrusion, he should have his house and dignity preserved and confirmed to his heirs for ever; but by offending as to the condition prescribed, he must sink to the rank of a common subject, stripped of all his former dignity. How absurd would it be for the heirs of such a lord to step forward and claim what he had forfeited! Equally absurd is it to say that Adam's posterity are no sufferers by his transgression.

10. If we would form accurate notions of Adam's transgression, original sin and the imputation of guilt, it will be of the utmost importance to consider the Divine law, by which is the knowledge

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of sin, under a twofold consideration: as a rule requiring conformity and obedience in every period of our existence, or the measure of moral obligation; and as a covenant, the condition of which was perfect conformity and obedience, under a forfeiture of a special favour. The law as a rule may be transgressed times and methods innumerable; but as a covenant it could be transgressed only *once*. For the very first offence was a breach of the condition, and a forfeiture of that favour which depended on the performance of that condition. It is possible for the transgressor of the law as a rule to become, through grace, a perfect character, and therefore perfectly conformable to that law. But to be perfectly conformable to the required condition, once broken, is impossible; as impossible as to recall time once passed, or to make transgression to be no transgression.

11. President Edwards very justly remarks that "there is not the least need of supposing any evil quality infused, supplanted, wrought into the nature of man by any positive cause or influence whatsoever, either from God or the creature; or of supposing that man is conceived and born with a fountain of evil in his heart, such as is anything properly positive." But, however just this remark, there is reason to fear that many [persons] have imbibed a notion of original sin considerably different from what is here asserted. It is not improbable that the terms by which the evil has been commonly expressed, without a due examination of the idea intended, have had no small influence to effect this. The frequent use of such analogical and allusive terms as pollution, defilement, corruption, contamination, and the like, seems to intimate something-

positive, as these expressions in their original meaning convey an idea of something superadded to the subject. Whereas other terms, though equally analogical and allusive, imply no such thing, such as disorder, discord, confusion, and the like. We do not mean to condemn the use of the former, or recommend the latter to their exclusion, but only design to caution against a wrong inference from a frequent use of them.

12. On the subject of the imputation of Adam's offence to his posterity, [President Edwards has written] very ably and fully. But we here observe, that it is of the greatest importance to have just views of what is called *original guilt*. It is to be feared that many form very confused notions of the subject when it is said, "we are guilty when born," or "we are guilty of Adam's

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transgression," or "the guilt of Adam's offence is ours." Though we conceive these and similar propositions to be expressive of an important truth, yet we are not less liable to be led astray from the true idea referred to by these expressions than by others employed to represent moral depravity.

13. It may contribute to clearness of conception on the subject if we keep in mind that Adam was guilty by his first offence under a twofold consideration. He was guilty of a breach of law considered as a rule of rectitude, and of the same law as a covenant, enjoining the observance of a special duty, which was the avowed and express condition of it. The performance of the condition was to secure not merely moral purity and innocence, but also the favour or gracious benefit which he possessed on the footing of a sovereign grant. This was his federal privilege. Now by the transgression of the law considered as a covenant this favour was forfeited; and for God to treat him as one deprived of this favour is the same thing as to treat him as guilty. For how could he be treated otherwise when every condition on which he retained the favour was broken?

14. Whatever Adam possessed beyond those considerations which constituted him a moral agent, was the fruit of sovereign benevolence. Hence arises the propriety of regarding the possession of his privilege on the observance of a specified condition, under the term covenant. For if Adam possessed some spiritual principles or benevolent influences, as a person possesses immuni-

ties and privileges by charter for himself and his heirs, and if these chartered benefits be retained on condition of not offending in a specified manner, it follows that a privation of such benefits belongs as much to the heir as to the individual offending. But if they are treated, for breach of such covenant or charter held on condition, as persons included in the forfeiture, it is manifest they are regarded so far guilty, or worthy to suffer such loss.

15. From these considerations, it follows that Adam's breach of law as a rule, which brought guilt upon him as an individual, is not the guilt imputable to his posterity. During his long life, no doubt, he was guilty of innumerable offences after the first transgression, but not one of these is imputed to us; the reason is, that after he broke the condition of the charter he stood upon the bare ground of personal moral obligation. But personal guilt, on

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such ground, cannot in equity be transferred from one to another. The sins of the father, whether the first father or any other, considered merely as a personal deviation from rectitude, or a breach of moral obligation, cannot be imputed to the children.

16. What Adam, therefore, suffered for breach of covenant was a privation of chartered benefits. The unavoidable effect of this was death,—a privation of spiritual life, which, continued, is death eternal, and a privation of that protection and care which would have preserved from temporal death. There seems little room to doubt that even the corporeal or elementary part of Adam underwent a great change by the fall. However, having forfeited his charter of preservation by transgression, he and all his posterity became exposed to the natural operations of this world and its elements. Matter and motion in animals and vegetables, in the natural state of things, insure a dissolution.

17. Much has been said by some divines about the probability of Adam, had he kept the condition, being promoted to some situation still more exalted. But there is reason to suspect that such a sentiment proceeds on the supposition of Adam possessing a less exalted situation than he really did possess. The idea seems to be founded on a probable promotion for continued obedience. But what could be a greater reward than a continuance of his chartered privileges? and what a greater loss than their forfeiture?

18. It would not be difficult to demonstrate that Adam, dealt with on the ground of strict equity, would have been not less liable to defection than his posterity are when they begin to exercise moral agency; therefore, the objection against the constitution of Adam and his posterity being regarded as one is deprived of all force. For whatever creature, in whatever world, was dealt with in strict equity, without benevolent influences to counteract passive power, he would have no advantage against a liability to defection above the race of man after the fall; the only difference is, that Adam once actually possessed an exalted privilege, and fell from it. And if his posterity, rendered so far guilty as to be deprived of chartered benefits with him, cannot be raised to happiness from their fallen state without the exercise of benevolent sovereign influence in the plan of salvation, it should be recollected that Adam himself could not have maintained his standing but by

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the same benevolent sovereign influence, though exercised in a different way.

*Corol.*—Hence the propriety and the true ground of the well-known distinction of a believer in the second Adam not being under the law (*i. e.*, the condemnation of the law) as a covenant, though under the law as a rule. It is found, as to its true reason, in the state of Adam as above explained.

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## DISSERTATION XII.

### MOTIVES, DEFINITION OF—SINCERITY AND INSINCERITY IN EXHOR- TATIONS AS MOTIVES—NOT INCONSISTENT WITH NECESSITY.

OUR author [President Edwards] does not mean by “motive” the object presented to the mind according to its intrinsic worth, but he takes into the account also the state of the mind itself in reference to that object, according to which will be the appearance of it. Therefore, strictly speaking, the motive, as he has intimated at the commencement of his work, denotes the object as it stands in the view of the mind. If we do not maintain this distinction, the dispute will soon degenerate into a confused logomachy; and

we should be forced, in defending this position,—that the will is “necessarily determined by the strongest motive,”—to adopt this, the most absurd of all conclusions, that the will of every man in the present state always chooses what is really best, or never errs in its elections. Whereas the world is full of errors and delusions; things the most excellent in themselves are commonly rejected, and others the most worthless are preferred. But this could not happen except on this principle, that the reality of worth differs, in these instances, from the appearance of it. In such cases the difference is not in the object, but in the mind, when the choice takes place. For instance, suppose the blessed God, in His true character, as revealed in the Scriptures, the chief and an unchangeable good, be proposed to the contemplation of a wicked man, and his will rejects that good. Now, as the mind is incapable of rejecting a good, or of choosing an evil, as such, it is plain that the proper and immediate cause of difference between the reality and the appearance of good is in the state of the mind. Here lies the essence of an erroneous choice—the will preferring an object which is ap-

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parently, but not really, preferable. Hence it follows irrefragably, that the state of the mind is the true and proper source of a right and wrong choice. This it is that influences the appearance of an object, so as to stand in the apprehension and practical judgment of the mind as worse or better than it really is. Therefore, the true state of the mind and the real state of the object of choice, united, are the genuine parents of the objective appearance in the mind, morally considered, or according to the qualities of good and evil; and this offspring—objective appearance—is what [is meant by] the “strongest motive.”

On the subject of sincerity or insincerity in prohibitions, commands, counsels, invitations, and the like, in cases where God foreknows that the event will not take place by the compliance of the moral agent addressed, we may remark a few particulars in [connection with the doctrine of motives]:—

1. The sincerity of prohibitions and commands, counsels and invitations, and the like, is founded, not in the event of things as good or bad, or the knowledge of events, or the purpose that secures some, or the necessity of consequence from which others flow, nor in the moral ability of the agent, but in the very nature

and tendency of the things themselves which are prohibited, commanded, or proposed, as good or evil, either intrinsically, if of a moral nature, or else relatively, if of positive appointment. Therefore—

2. Whether the event be compliance or non-compliance, the command, invitation, &c., is perfectly sincere. For, in truth, these are neither more nor less than testimonies respecting the goodness or badness of the things in question, in the sense before mentioned, and the consequent obligations of the agent respecting them, under a forfeiture either declared or implied. Consequently—

3. Insincerity can attach to a command only on supposition that the goodness or badness of the event were the ground of the signified will, while, at the same time, another event, diverse from that which actually takes place, was proposed by the same will. But—

4. Strictly speaking, no events, as such, are the objects of purpose; but rather the purpose respects the good antecedents, whereby good events, following by necessity of consequence, are infallibly secured. Besides—

5. It is highly absurd, as must appear from the nature of law

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and obligation, to suppose that the sincerity of legislative or inviting will should depend on the event of compliance or non-compliance. Surely the sincerity of a lawgiver is not affected, whether all obey, or only some, or even none. Legislation is a testimony, with sanctions, that the thing prohibited is evil, or the thing commanded is good to the party. Hence—

6. The consequent, whether good or bad, is objectively established, or hypothetically proposed, by the legislator; and the antecedent is supposed to be within the reach, or, physically considered, placed within the power, of the agent. Therefore—

7. The agent's abuse of his physical power, in reference to the antecedent, constitutes the criminality, and the right use of it constitutes the virtue, of an action. And then alone is physical power, in fact, used aright, when it is the instrument of moral rectitude, or a right state of mind. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree [as such]

cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree [as such] bring forth good fruit.”

The true reason why counsels, exhortations, &c., commonly called motives, are consistent with the doctrine of necessity held by Calvinists, may be here noticed, in addition to some hints before given. In order to this, we must guard against ambiguity in the word “motive,” which at one time is intended for the object exhibited, abstractedly considered; at another, the object concretely, as it stands in the view of the mind. The opposers of that necessity for which [we] plead must, in order to make even a show of consistency, understand the word “motive” in the first of these acceptations.

And if so, it is nothing marvellous that they should maintain the existence of a power in the human mind, which can, on the one hand, successfully oppose the strongest possible motive; and, on the other, be determined by a weaker, and even sometimes by the weakest motive. For how often is the most insignificant bauble preferred to infinite excellence! But consistent Calvinists do not understand the term in any such manner, but rather as an effect compounded of the state of the mind and the real object. And, seeing the object, in itself considered, is not changed by mental perception, the difference of the effect, or change of mental view, must arise from the mind itself. Hence one motive, in the Armi-

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nian sense, may produce, in the other acceptation of the term, a thousand different motives, according to the different mental states to which the object is presented.

Therefore, counsels, exhortations, invitations, &c., are most rationally employed by Calvinists; for that which determines the human will to action is the motive as it is perceived, or that which results from an application of the object to the mind. According to them, without an object presented there can be no motive; any more than there can be a motive without a mind to which it is presented. Without evangelical truth, and an evangelical mind or disposition, there can be no evangelical determining motive. Consequently, if the mind be at all roused from ignorance and apathy, determining motives must be produced in it by a representation of objects, by counsels, exhortations, invitations, expos-

tulations, &c. These will succeed, or fail of success, morally, according to the state of the mind.

But, as the agent is free from coercion, constraint, and compulsion in the act of choosing, the true inference is, not that such use of the means is unsuitable or inconsistent, but that here is clearly implied the necessity, the rationality, and the perfect consistency of prayer to the God of grace for success in the use of means. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase. To influence the mind without moral motives is the prerogative of God. All hearts are in His hand to form them as He pleases. If the tree be good by sovereign influence, or a new birth, the fruit of love to God, and hatred to sin, holy fear, unfeigned faith, humble hope, &c., will follow, according to the objects presented. A crop will not follow without the union of two things—seed and soil. If both be good, the crop will be good, but not otherwise. That motive which determines the will cannot arise from any other cause than the object and the disposition united. And then only can the determining motive be good when it results from a good object apphed to a good disposition or state of mind. These things, duly considered, will sufficiently prove why Calvinists use counsels, exhortations, invitations, &c.

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### DISSERTATION XIII.

VIRTUE AND VICE—THE ESSENCE OE VIRTUE AND VICE,  
WHERE?

—VIRTUE, ITS NATURE.

THE [following] may appear to some to be an identical proposition:—"The essence of a thing lies in its nature." But it is not wholly so, and the whole of the proposition is exceedingly important, on account of the negative part, or the incidental proposition it contains—viz., The essence of virtue and vice lies *not* in their cause. A single consideration may be sufficient to shew the truth and importance of one part of this last proposition.

If the essence of virtue lies in its cause, how could the First Cause, or the uncaused nature, be virtuous? If, therefore, the First Cause be virtuous, or have the essence of virtue, as all theists will allow, it is plain that essence must lie in the nature of that cause itself. Hence, as God is the standard of all moral excellence,

created natures are morally excellent in proportion as they resemble Him. And as virtue is an imitable excellence, and as no good reason can be assigned why the resemblance should not hold in this particular, it is highly probable, *a priori*, that, in reference to created natures, the essence of their virtue lies not in its cause.

Again, as the essence of virtue lies not in its cause, so neither does the essence of vice lie in its cause. But the philosophical ground of this part of the general proposition demands more particular attention. And as this proposition, "The essence of vice lies not in its cause," affects the whole system of morals, and indeed of theology, we beg leave to propose a series of remarks which, it is hoped, will cast some light on the subject.

1. Causes are of two kinds, and of two only—either positive or negative. Positive causes produce positive effects, from the First

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Cause through all secondary causes; and these positive secondary causes are nothing else but so many decretive antecedents, which act physically, and their consequences follow from the nature of things; even as number follows the repetition of units, or happiness results from true virtue.

2. The term "cause" is applied less properly to express a negative idea; for it expresses merely an antecedent of a consequent.

For instance, if we say that a man cannot read because he is blind, or cannot walk because he has no legs, or cannot go to heaven because he does not love God, and the like; it is manifest that blindness, want of legs, and want of love to God, are "causes" only as antecedents are causes to their consequents, without positive influence.

3. Negative causes, though they have no positive operation in producing their consequents, are no less the ground of certainty than those causes, properly so called, which exist in physical operations. For the consequent follows the antecedent with equal certainty, whether the connexion be formed by decretive will and energy, as in all positive causes, or by the nature of things only, which is essential truth, as in all negative causes.

4. The cause of vicious acts is a vicious disposition; in other words, it is the want or the absence of a virtuous disposition. The essence of the vicious act, however, is not in the cause or disposition. The vice of the disposition is one thing, and the vice of

the act is another. For as the nature of the disposition and the nature of the act are different, so the vice or moral badness of the one is a different badness from that of the other. The one and the other is a bad thing, whatever be the cause, and irrespective of any. Hence—

5. Evil dispositions or acts should be denominated such, not from their cause, but from their nature. Were it otherwise, personal fault or blame could never exist; for the vicious act would transfer the blame to the disposition, and the disposition to the cause of that; whereby persons would be free from blame, and this would attach to principles only. But to suppose a moral agent incapable of blameworthiness, which on the supposition would be the case, is a gross absurdity. It would be to suppose an accountable being, who at the same time can be accountable for nothing; and it would be to impute blame to principles, or a principle, which is incapable of moral agency.

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6. The cause of virtuous acts, or, if we may so speak, the soil in which they grow, is a previous inclination or disposition to good, before any actual choice takes place. This may be called a virtuous inclination or disposition. But the original and predisposing cause of that is Divine energy, influx, or influence; in other words, an assimilating emanation from the holy nature and decretive will of God.

7. Nevertheless, this is not a good or a virtue attributable to man, until he is actually possessed of it, or it becomes his as a quality of his nature. God, the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift proceedeth, is the cause of that virtuous disposition; but while the virtue remained in the cause, and not in the man, it was no human virtue. Nor does the essence of human virtue lie in the communication itself, for this was the effect of Divine will; but no will can alter the nature of virtue; therefore the essence of virtue consists not in the cause, whether we understand by “cause” the will that communicates the virtuous disposition or the communication itself. Consequently, the absence of virtue is so completely confined to the disposition of the agent and the consequent acts, as to exclude everything else that may be termed its cause.

8. The cause of vicious acts, whatever it be, is opposite to the cause of virtuous acts, for these acts have diametrically opposite effects. That vicious acts have a cause, as well as virtuous ones, cannot be denied by any reflecting person; for this plain reason, that there is nothing in the universality of things, beings, qualities, &c., but has a cause, either positive or negative, as before explained. Neither degree, liberty, nor anything else, considered as an effect or a consequent, can exist without a cause or antecedent. The denial of this, and universal scepticism, are the same thing. Then all reasoning and all common sense vanish; then body and spirit, cause and effects, good and evil, &c., are huddled up in endless confusion, without either first or last, great or small, order or proportion.

9. The original, predisposing cause of a vicious disposition is the very opposite of the original, predisposing cause of a virtuous disposition. This last, it has been shewn, is Divine energy, which is a positive cause; the other, the opposite of this, is a negative cause. The cause of good, as before observed, is a cause properly so called, in the way of physical influence; but the cause of evil

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is called a “cause” improperly, as it implies no physical influence, but only stands as an antecedent to a consequent; from which, however, the consequent may be inferred with as much certainty as if the influence were physical and mechanical. Whether you suppose positive quantities or negative quantities, consequences are equally certain: it is no less true that  $5 - 2 = 3$ , than that  $3 + 3 = 6$ . Whether you say, If the sun were not, it would cause darkness, or say, If the sun shine, it will cause light, the difference is only in the nature of the cause, as either positive or negative, not in the certainty of the consequence.

10. It would be very absurd and contradictory to say that the cause of vice is vicious; for that would be the same as to say that a thing was before it existed. To be vicious is to have vice; and for this to be the cause of vice is for it to be the cause of itself, or self-caused, which is absurd. It is, therefore, impossible that the cause of vice should be vicious; consequently the essence of vice is nowhere but in its own proper nature, to the exclusion of every cause whatever; and yet, as it is an effect, it must have a cause.

11. The principal question to be determined in this investigation is, What is precisely the original, predisposing negative cause of a vicious disposition? The answer is plain and short: It is that property of a creature which renders it absolutely dependent for its being and well-being. Or, it is that property which is the very opposite to independence, self-sufficiency, and immutability; and, therefore, is a property peculiar to a creature, and cannot belong to God.

12. Nor can this be said to be an actually existing property from eternity, since it cannot belong to God; and nothing, the only alternative, has no property. It is not, therefore, the Manichean eternal evil principle, if by this be meant anything actually existing as coeval with a good principle. Good is a principle positively eternal; but what we speak of is a mere negative principle, and owes its existence as a property to a created nature; and were every creature annihilated, this property would also cease to be.

13. But what shall we call this principle, property, or predisposing cause of vice? Shall we call it defectibility, defect, limitation, or imperfection of existence? Not the first, for the question would return, What makes a creature defectible? Not the second, for the term is ambiguous, as there are several kinds of defect, natn-

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ral and moral; and, therefore, as the word is of common use, and of frequent occurrence, it would require perpetual explanations. Not the third or the fourth, for the same reason. A term, therefore, not ambiguous, and sufficiently expressive, should be employed, as we employ technical terms to express a specific object. For this purpose, no term, perhaps, is less objectionable, or more suitable, than PASSIVE POWER; for it is free from ambiguity, and is sufficiently expressive of the idea already explained. The idea of passivity is clearly implied in the name, as in the thing; and the term power seems preferable to property or quality, because less ambiguous, and yet more expressive to convey the intended idea of metaphysical influence of cause and effect.

14. To which we may add, that "passive power" is by no means a new-coined expression, but has often been used to express the very idea to which it is here applied. Thus, above a century and a-half ago, that eminently pious and profoundly learned divine, Theophilus Gale, in his "Court of the Gentiles,"

says:—"The root and origin of all creatural dependence is the creature's passive power, and God's absolute dominion over it. Now, all limits, as to nature and essence, speak a mixture of nihility, passive power, and dependence resulting therefrom; whence Damascene adds, *Μονον γαρ το Θειον απαθεζ εστι*, 'The Deity alone is impassible,'—namely, because exempt from nihility, passive power, and dependence. This nihility or nothingness of the creature is the same with its passive power, either physic or metaphysic, natural or obediencial, whereby it is limited and confined to such or such a degree of entirety, existence, and operation," (Court of Gent., part iv., b. i., chap. xi., § 4.)

15. Now that the essence of vice consisteth not in this property is plain, in that passive power is essential to a creature; which vice neither is nor can be. It is the soil in which vice grows, and without which it could not grow or have existence, but is not itself vicious; otherwise we should be forced to seek the cause of that cause in perpetual retrogradation, and move from one difficulty to another into endless absurdity. The predisposing cause of vice, therefore, is passive power, which in itself is not vicious, or morally evil. But how moral evil came to exist, and what is its true origin, will be more conveniently considered in a subsequent part of this work.

16. As the essence of the virtue and vice of dispositions and

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acts lies not in their cause, so neither does it lie in their effects; that is, dispositions and acts are not to be denominated virtuous or vicious on account of their effects or consequences, such as their being productive of happiness or misery. For as the properties of anything must be different from those of its cause, however similar, so roust those properties differ from their effects. The immediate effect of virtue is, not happiness to the individual, for instance, but that the agent is approvable or praiseworthy. But were the essence of virtue to consist in "its tendency to ultimate happiness," as some have affirmed, immediate approbation and praise could not be safely given to any individual act or disposition, as its relation to ultimate happiness could not be ascertained but by the final event. If the essence of the virtue or vice were not in the act or disposition, but to be denominated from its effects, many other absurdities would follow. For instance—

17. On that supposition, the supreme excellence of Jehovah would not be approvable and praiseworthy on its own account, or its intrinsic excellence, but only because of its effects and consequences. On that principle, to hate God would be nothing bad, it would have no intrinsic demerit; or to love God would be nothing good, nothing in itself praiseworthy, were it not for consequences; which is not only absurd, but blasphemous also, and shocking.

18. That sentiment is evidently founded on the supposition that everything, property, quality, and event, is the fruit of Divine will, and therefore that everything must be equally good in itself, though relatively good or bad to the individual; even as matter and motion, and their laws, are equally good in themselves, but not relatively so to the individuals who suffer from them. But this is a great mistake, as it confounds things totally distinct in their nature, such as positive and negative causes, natural necessity and moral certainty. Decretive positions and their consequences are one ground of certainty, negative causes and their consequences are another; therefore, from the certainty of result in the Divine view, we cannot rightly infer that all results are decreed. Decretive positions comprehend neither negative causes nor the nature of things. For an intelligent being to love God is agreeable to the nature of things; it is what ought to be independent of any decretive position or legal demand in reference to the case. In like manner, for an intelligent being to hate God, is a

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voluntary contradiction to the nature of things, or the essence of eternal truth, which is above all will, or is not founded in will, as well as to constituted law. Again—

19. To deny the “intrinsic merit and demerit of voluntary actions independent of their consequences,” as some do, is to deny the nature of things; and this is nothing less than an attempt to divide eternal unity, to give the lie direct to essential truth, and to convert the first uncaused essence into contradictory contingences. The nature of things is nothing else, radically, but the nature of God, which is essential truth as well as essential goodness. Decretive positions, or an arbitrary constitution of things by Divine will, therefore, can no more alter the intrinsic merit or demerit of actions, affections, habits, or characters, than

Divine will can alter the character of essential truth, or choose real contradictions. Moreover—

20. Ultimate happiness is the effect or consequence of virtue as a reward. Now, to make the merit or excellence of virtue to depend on ultimate happiness, which happiness is the reward of virtue, is most inconsistent; it is to reward for nothing rewardable. If virtue be not of intrinsic worth, it must be a mere moral nothing as to rewardableness, and therefore ultimate happiness would be a reward for a mere moral nothing, that is, happiness would be no reward; which is contradictory.

21. As to vice, its consequence is punishment. If indeed this consequence were the mere effect of arbitrary positions or sovereign appointment; if it were the plan of God first to cause the existence of vice, and then to punish the subject of it, as what the good of the whole required, there would be great plausibility in the sentiment we oppose.—But the assumption itself is fundamentally erroneous. It confounds hypothetical antecedents, as the whole of decretive plans may be termed, with that eternal truth which connects them with their consequences. To suppose the hatred of God, for instance, to have no intrinsic demerit in it, or that it is bad only as dependent on its consequences, is the same as to say, it is agreeable to the nature of things, conformable to eternal truth, that God should be hated, and therefore that He must approve of it,—only to the agent it is attended with bad consequences; that is, on the supposition, God has appointed misery as the consequent for doing nothing that is in itself bad, yea, for doing what is perfectly innocent, agreeable to the nature of things, conformable to eternal truth, and

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acceptable to God, as everything which He appoints must be. Whether such a sentiment be nearest akin to “profound philosophy,” or to something else, let the competent reader judge.

#### VIRTUE, ITS NATURE.

1. Virtue, if we regard the use of the term (*ἀρετή*) among the Greeks, seems to have been appropriated as much to the idea of martial courage as the English term is appropriated to that of female chastity. Not that it was used exclusively in the former case any more than in the latter. It often signifies power, energy, efficacy, and excellence, but by moral writers, both ancient and modern, it has been unanimously adopted to represent a very

general moral idea. It would be easy to produce a great number of definitions from moralists and divines, but this is neither necessary, nor does it comport with our present purpose.

2. If we mistake not, there is no just definition of virtue which is not reducible to this general one: Virtue is a laudable mean of real happiness. Cicero, indeed, says of it, that it is “*affectio animi constans, conveniensque laudabiles efficiens eos, in quibus est, et ipsa per se, sua sponte, seperata etiam utilitate, laudabilis,*” (*Tuscul. Quæst, lib. iv., § 15.*) But virtue being laudable from its very nature, independently of any advantageous result, does not hinder it from being “a laudable mean of real happiness.”

3. Now happiness being the uniform and voluntary end of intellectual existence, a desire of it being inseparable from our nature, we become liable to err, not only by adopting wrong means for accomplishing the end we propose to ourselves, but also by forming a false estimate of the nature of happiness, or the end itself. If the happiness be not real but imaginary in the contemplation of the agent, however well adapted the means may be in order to attain it, they deserve not the epithet virtuous.

4. To discover the nature of true happiness the light of wisdom is requisite; and while desire is blind, false estimates will be made. But every one thinks himself wise and prudent enough to prescribe his own happiness till such folly be shewn him by the wisdom which is from above; and he who supposes himself adequate to fix the end cannot be very diffident about the means to be employed.

5. Hence, there is room for as many representations of virtue

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as there are kinds of happiness which men think to lie real; in addition to as many means employed to accomplish their proposed end, as they judge to be laudable.

6. From these preliminary remarks, it appears that the nature and real character of virtue must arise from the nature of the end proposed, and of the means employed for securing it. We shall now attempt to illustrate the ground of numerous representations of virtue by a comparison.

7. Let the different kinds of happiness which we propose to ourselves, whether those which have been classified by moral writers, or any others, be represented by so many concentric circles. For instance, let happiness be considered as personal and relative, pri-

vate and public, domestic and national, temporal and eternal, or the like; and for every species of happiness let there be a corresponding circle drawn. Let the filling up of that circle express the virtue requisite to attain the happiness thus represented.

8. Suppose, for example, that health, friendship, domestic unanimity, national prosperity, the welfare of the human race, and our individual conformity to God in His moral excellence through eternal ages, or the happiness implied in these respectively, be represented, by the concentric circles above mentioned. Then the happiness implied in health, in a small circle, will be filled by corresponding virtues, when the end is sought by laudable means; such as temperance, moderation, chastity, government of the passions, &c. The circle representing the happiness implied in friendship will be filled by corresponding virtues, when the end is sought, as before, by laudable means; such as benevolence, fidelity, prudence, sympathy, &c. The circle of domestic happiness is filled by the virtues of kindness, meekness, patience, industry, economy, &c. That of national prosperity, by diligence in business, honesty, justice, truth, liberality, conscientious submission, fortitude, real patriotism, &c. The circle representing the welfare of the human race, as the common offspring of one progenitor, and who are regarded by the Supreme Parent as the children of one family, is filled by the virtues of philanthropy, expansive benevolence, zeal, self-denial, public spirit, passive courage, &c. And the circle of that happiness which is implied in our individual conformity to God's moral excellence,—in other words, that happiness which is ultimate and supreme,—is filled by nothing

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short of supreme love to God, or in language more philosophically accurate, consent of will to being in general, benevolent attachment to universal being.

9. Now, who can question whether temperance, fidelity, meekness, honesty and liberality, philanthropy and public spirit, should be ranked among the virtues? And who can doubt that they are calculated to secure the happiness implied in health, friendship, national prosperity, and the welfare of the human race respectively? And yet, if we exclude the disposition which is required to fill the largest circle,—benevolent attachment to universal being,—which of those virtues may not an Atheist actually possess? Nay,

may not an Atheist possess them all? For may he not promote his health by temperance, moderation, chastity, and the like? May he not exercise friendly benevolence, fidelity, prudence, sympathy, and similar virtues? Have not Atheists been great patriots, if by patriotism we mean a supreme regard for the prosperity and glory of the nation to which they belonged, manifested by severe studies, by the lightning and thunder of their eloquence, the fatigues of war, and a willingness to shed the last drop of their blood in defence of their country? Nay, more; may not an Atheist possess the virtues of generous philanthropy, and, to a certain extent, of benevolent zeal for the welfare of mankind in general, expressed by an attempt to remove their ignominious chains, to promote the civilisation of savage nations whom he has never seen, to alleviate the sufferings, and to enhance the comforts of all mankind?

10. Far be it from us to suppose that Atheists are favourable to virtue in these inferior acceptations of the term. The reverse is abundantly evident. But this is what we assert, that such virtues as those above mentioned are what an Atheist may possess without inconsistency; and that they have no moral worth, no direct connexion either with the complacency of God in them, or with the ultimate happiness of the agent. However attentive a man may be to practise virtues in subservience to his health, while he repels those of friendship, while he repels others which are conducive to domestic, national, and universal happiness, his virtues, if the name be retained, are those of a *bad character*. Some have been conspicuous and zealous patriots, while determined foes to philanthropy and general good-will to mankind, as such. And how many have fought with the most patriotic zeal and courage in the field of

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honour, though tyrants at home, and in private life trampling on those virtues which constitute a good husband, a good father, a good master, a good neighbour, a good friend, or a good anything. In short, were a man "to give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned," out of zeal to promote some public good, yet without love to God, without benevolent attachment to universal being, he is morally nothing, or worse than nothing.

11. What are called virtues, without a disposition to embrace universal *being* and excellence, are, morally considered, lifeless

images. To compare them to a series of decimal figures, which however increased, will never amount to a unit of moral worth, is to place them in too favourable a view; they are more like ciphers. But let these unmeaning ciphers be preceded by a figure, let these images have an informing and invigorating principle, let these dry bones have the spirit of life in them, and they will acquire a moral excellence,—they will deserve the name of real virtues.

12. Some have defined virtue by calling it “a tendency to ultimate happiness.” If the meaning of this definition be, “a tendency to God, in whom our ultimate happiness is found,” it may be admitted; otherwise it seems not admissible on many accounts. Tendency may be considered as either voluntary or involuntary. In the first place, let us suppose it to be voluntary. We then observe that it is not rational, nor even compatible with common sense, to say that virtue is a voluntary tendency to a quality of our own mind, as happiness evidently is. For happiness, from its own nature, is a relative state or quality of mind which is the result of enjoying an object suited to our wants. And to desire ultimate happiness without including the object of choice from whence happiness results, is the same as to seek happiness in nothing. If it be said that happiness itself is the object sought, then virtue consists in a voluntary tendency to seek happiness in happiness; which is absurd.

13. Ultimate happiness has been defined “the durable possession of perfect good.” If this be a just statement, which few or none will question, what is the perfect good possessed? If it be answered, the Supreme Being, to this there is no objection. But if it be said, the ultimate happiness itself is the perfect good enjoyed, then the happiness to which the choice is directed is both cause and effect at the same time. Both the thing enjoyed and the

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enjoyment itself are the same thing; which is no less absurd than for a man to assert that the stock of a tree and the fruit on its branches are the same thing; or that his relish of food is the same as the food itself. A tendency to happiness resulting from no object of that tendency is the same thing as a tendency to no happiness. In other words, according to this definition, supposing the tendency to be voluntary, virtue is a desire of ultimate happi-

ness. And this will reduce it to another absurdity; for, as a desire of ultimate happiness is an inseparable property of intelligent beings, the most vicious being in existence is virtuous. These consequences, however just, will not be thought very extraordinary when compared with the following declarations:—"The following seems to be at present the true moral state of the world. In every moral agent the number of virtuous actions greatly exceed that of vicious ones. In by far the greater number of moral agents, and even amongst those who are considered as most vicious and profligate, the number of virtuous affections and habits greatly preponderates over the vicious ones. A character in which there is preponderance of vice is very rarely, if ever, to be met with," (Belsham's Elements, p. 400.) And to advance one step further in this hopeful way, as this desire belongs to all intelligent beings alike, all intelligent beings are alike virtuous!

14. In reality, a mere desire of ultimate happiness is no virtue, has nothing laudable in it, but is a mere instinct of intellectual nature, and belongs alike to the best and the worst of intelligent beings. But virtue consists in the choice of, or a disposition to choose, laudable means in order to arrive at this end. A bad man in his choice of objects, or a virtuous choice itself, aims at ultimate happiness; but the means are not laudable, and this wrong choice of means constitutes the very essence of his vice.

15. If it be said that virtue is a tendency to ultimate self-enjoyment as constituting happiness, then it follows that self is the perfect good desired; and then every one is himself all-sufficient to constitute his own happiness. Let any rational person judge whether this be not a definition of sordid vice rather than of virtue, and whether such a disposition would not be a tendency to insubordination, anarchy, and confusion, rather than to happiness—the very temper of an apostate spirit.

16. If it be said, moreover, that "a tendency to ultimate happiness" does not refer to the will, desire, or choice, but expresses

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anything which in fact tends to ultimate happiness; this leads us to suppose, secondly, that the tendency is involuntary. It seems, then, on this supposition, that the means employed to acquire ultimate happiness need not be laudable. This is the genuine result of that account of virtue which is here animadverted upon, and

which the abettors of it are forced to admit. The doctrine of “intrinsic merit or demerit of actions independent on their consequences,” they call an “absurd supposition,” (Belsham’s *Elements*, pp. 309, 372, 373.)

17. It seems, then, we are all bound to be virtuous at our peril, and yet we must wait the result of all our actions before we can know what is virtuous and what is not. For if virtue and vice have no intrinsic character of good or evil, but actions, affections, habits, or characters are either good or bad from their ultimate consequences, then we must wait for those consequences as the only expositors of virtue and vice.

18. Can anything more be necessary in order to show the absurdity of such a notion of virtue? Happiness, it is allowed, is a consequent of which virtue is the antecedent. But what is the moral nature of this antecedent? Is it anything good, beautiful, or laudable *per se*? No, say they; it has no nature besides tendency, which has no intrinsic merit or demerit; and consequently that which has no moral nature is a moral nothing; that is, virtue is a moral nothing, or nothing moral. And whether this character of virtue be not totally distant from the dictates of right reason, philosophic accuracy, common sense, and Christian piety, let the reader judge.

It is with some reluctance that we [are constrained to] notice in this place a writer who, by his masterly attack on modern infidelity and atheism, has, rendered such important service to the cause of truth and virtue, but who seems either to have been dissatisfied with these reasons, or to have omitted a strict examination of them when duty required it. “We shall not here inquire into the candour of Mr Robert Hall’s remarks, in associating President Edwards with modern infidels on the subject of virtue; nor on the congruity of the business whereby a definition implying, and an explication declaring, the love of God to be essential to true virtue is made to coincide with a definition adopted by infidels, and consistent with atheism itself. These are his words:—

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“It is somewhat singular that many of the fashionable infidels

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have hit upon a definition of virtue which perfectly coincides with that of certain metaphysical divines in America, first invented and defended by that most acute reasoner Jonathan Edwards. They

both place virtue exclusively in a passion for the general good, or, as Mr Edwards expresses it, love to being in general, so that our love is always to be proportioned to the magnitude of its object in the scale of being; which is liable to the objections I have already stated, as well as to many others which the limits of this note will not permit me to enumerate. Let it suffice to remark—

“(1.) That virtue, on these principles, is an utter impossibility, for the system of being comprehending the Great Supreme is infinite; and therefore, to maintain the proper proportion, the force of particular attachment must be infinitely less than the passion for the general good. But the limits of the human mind are not capable of any emotions so infinitely different in degree.

“(2.) Since our views of the extent of the universe are capable of perpetual enlargement, admitting the sum of existence is ever the same, we must return back at each step to diminish the strength of particular affections, or they will become disproportionate, and consequently, on these principles, vicious; so that the balance must be continually fluctuating by the weights being taken out of one scale and put into the other.

“(3.) If virtue consist exclusively in love to being in general, or attachment to the general good, the particular affections are, to every purpose of virtue, useless and even pernicious; for their immediate, nay, their necessary tendency is to attract to their objects a proportion of attention which far exceeds their comparative value in the general scale. To allege that the general good is promoted by them will be of no advantage to the defence of this system; but the contrary, by confessing that a greater sum of happiness is attained by a deviation from, than an adherence to its principles; unless its advocates mean by the love of being in general the same thing as the private affections, which is to confound all the distinctions of language, as well as all the operations of mind. Let it be remembered, we have no dispute respecting what is the ultimate end of virtue, which is allowed on both sides to be the greatest sum of happiness in the universe. The question is merely, What is virtue itself? or, in other words, What are the means appointed for the attainment of that end?

“There is little doubt, from some parts of Mr Godwin’s work

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entitled 'Political Justice,' as well as from his early habits of reading, that he was indebted to Mr Edwards for his principal arguments against the private affections; though, with a daring consistence, he has pursued his principles to an extreme from which that most excellent man would have revolted with horror. The fundamental error of the whole system arose, as I conceive, from a mistaken pursuit of simplicity,—from a wish to construct a moral system, without leaving sufficient scope for the infinite variety of moral phenomena and mental combination, in consequence of which its advocates were induced to place virtue exclusively in some one disposition of mind; and, since the passion for the general good is undeniably the noblest and most extensive of all others, when it was once resolved to place virtue in any one thing, there remained little room to hesitate which should be preferred. It might have been worth while to reflect that in the natural world there are two kinds of attraction,—one which holds several parts of individual bodies in contact, another which maintains the union of bodies themselves with the general system,—and that, though the union in the former case is much more intimate than in the latter, each is equally essential to the order of the world. Similar to this is the relation which the public and private affections bear to each other, and their use in the moral system," (Modern Infidelity Considered, p. 62, &c., note, 6th edition.)

On this note, so very uncongenial with the body of the work, —we were going to say, as unseemly, when connected with the discourse, as a deforming wart on a fair countenance,—justice constrains us to make a few remarks:—

1. "Singular" indeed would it be to find an Atheist, or an infidel, who should even approve of Edwards's definition, and still more "singular" to find them maintaining, in conformity with his explanation of that definition, that supreme love to God is of the essence of true virtue. But so far are their definitions from "co-inciding" "that they differ *toto cælo*. A passionate attachment for the welfare of a country, or "a passion for the general good," in any sense wherein this expression can be ascribed to infidels, is a representation not more different from that of President Edwards than Mr Hall is different from Voltaire or D'Alembert. Our author's meaning, as explained by himself, is as truly sublime as

theirs is truly selfish and contracted. For their definition had no regard to the Being of beings; but this adorable Being is neces-

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sarily included in Mr Edwards's definition, and essential to it. We say "is included," because the Supreme Being, together with every derived existence, is contained in "being in general."

2. If by a "metaphysical divine" he meant "a most acute reasoner," we feel no objection in having the term "metaphysical" applied to our author, for few, if any, have deserved it better. If error and absurdity appeal to metaphysical discussions, and involve the truth in a labyrinth of sophisms, surely hard would be the case of a man who should be called by an opprobrious name for venturing into that labyriuth by the light of essential principles, in order to detect and expose the false reasoning.

3. Mr Hall objects to the sentiment "that our love is always to be proportioned to the magnitude of its object in the scale of being." We presume, however, he will allow that the whole system of being is in itself the most worthy of being prized, other things being equal. But if so, the nature of true virtue requires this regard to the whole system of being, compared with its parts. Nor does it follow from this that the same principle in the process of its operations disregards the smaller circle of attachments. Surely a virtuous person, loving God supremely, is not on that account less qualified for personal and domestic duties. Besides, Mr Edwards does not maintain that our love is always to be proportioned to the magnitude of its object in the scale of being, except where these things are equal. This he expressly and repeatedly mentions—"other things being equal." To this important distinction Mr Hall does not appear to have adverted; his representation of the case, therefore, is defective, and calculated to mislead the unwary.

4. Mr Hall's statement, in the first objection, does not distinguish between the nature of the attachment and its force or degree. A little reflection will fully shew that these are entirely distinct considerations. The greatest force, or the highest degree of attachment may exist when the nature of it is not at all virtuous. If, indeed, attachment be made to include accurate knowledge, a Divine relish, and deliberate esteem, in appreciating the worth of any object, then the degree of attachment may be justly considered as

proportionate to the “magnitude of the object in the scale of being,” but not otherwise. A truly virtuous mother, for instance, may have a great force of affection for her child, or husband, and be more conscious of it than of her love to God; but let her be put

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to the test of deliberate esteem, and she would sooner part with child, husband, or life itself, than renounce her supreme love to God.

5. Our author’s representation of true virtue by no means implies, as Mr Hall supposes, that the degree of force or attachment in its operation should bear an exact proportion to the magnitude of its object. The nature of virtue indeed is to be denominated according to its object, but its degree must necessarily be measured *pro captu agentis*. The nature of love to God may be the same in the heart of a child as in that of an angel, because the object of it is the same; but the degree of it will be as differently varied as the views and capacities of the subjects. It is not a little surprising how Mr Hall came to imagine that our author held the sentiment he is pleased to ascribe to him,—a sentiment so absurd as to be held, we apprehend, by no person in the world,—a sentiment which requires an infinite force of affection from a finite being, an affection equal in degree to that of his Maker.

6. So far is the exercise of virtue, according to Mr Edwards’s definition, from being an impossibility, that we think he has fully proved there can be no true virtue on any other principle. To illustrate this, suppose a man has a strong attachment to himself, but none to his family; will that force of affection constitute him virtuous? Again, suppose his affection, with any assignable force, be extended to his family, but repels the well-founded claims of a whole nation; can that be virtuous? Or, if he extend his force of affection to a whole nation, if it repels all the human race beside, can it be virtuous? Moreover, suppose his ardent affection embrace the whole human kind; can it be virtuous while it repels all other created beings? Or if, together with himself, he feels an affectionate attachment, in different and proportionate degrees, to every created being, but repels the Creator of all; can that forcible and orderly affection be denominated truly virtuous? If the reply be in the affirmative, then an Atheist may be virtuous; which is

absurd. Therefore, attachment to the Supreme Being, or to being in general, is essential to the very nature of true virtue.

7. No one yet denied, except those who deny the being of a God, that supreme love to Him is virtuous, if anything be so. The Great Supreme is infinite; and if He ought not to be loved according to His greatness, what constitutes the crime of idolatry? And if supreme love to an infinite Being were inconsistent with

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subordinate attachments, we ought to extinguish the supremacy of our love to God before we could discharge our duty to our fellow-creatures; which every one must allow to be preposterous.

8. As the second objection is founded on the same principle which was assumed in the first, it has been already virtually answered. But it may be controverted on another account. That “extended views” diminish the strength of particular affections, does not appear consonant with experience. Is it consistent with experience that the acquisition of a second friend must rob the first of a moiety of his friendly affection? Does a parent experience any diminution of affection to a first child in proportion to a subsequent increase of number? Has a tenth child but a tenth part of a mother’s former affection to her first? Does a man love his neighbour the less because his views are extended to an infinite object? Or when the heart, or supremacy of affection, is fixed on God, is virtuous affection to man diminished?

9. Besides, this objection proceeds on another gratuitous principle—viz., that there may be true virtue, or virtuous affection, when our views of existence do not include God. For if we view Him, we view an object infinite and unchangeable, who is all in all, and the sum of existence. That our views of the extent of the created universe are capable of perpetual enlargement, is no good reason why “particular affections” should fluctuate, become disproportionate, vicious; any more than the love of God should constitute the love of our neighbour criminal. So that there is no necessity for “the balance to be continually fluctuating by the weights being taken out of one scale and put into the other,” except it be by correcting past mistakes, as those do who, when grown up to manhood, put away childish things.

10. Virtuous love, however forcible to one’s-self, to relatives, to a nation, to mankind, or to the whole created universe, is not vir-

tuous because of this particular, private, or limited attachment, but because of its tendency to God, except we prostitute the term virtue to signify something claimed equally by the worst and the best of men. And this general attachment, or love to God and universal being, does not at all counteract, or even lessen, the commendable force of private ones, any more than the force of general gravity tends to destroy the force of cohesion.

11. Mr Hall's third and last objection, like the preceding ones, rests on a mistaken apprehension of Mr Edwards's real sentiment.

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Mr Hall still confounds the nature of attachment with its degree. If virtue, according to Mr Edwards, consists exclusively in love to being in general, his meaning is, that no force of affection which has not universal being for its ultimate object can be virtuous in the most proper sense of the word. He cannot mean that there is no virtuous love to particular beings; for in perfect consistency with his views even a love of ourselves may be virtuous, as well as a love of our neighbour. What he maintains then is, that the love of ourselves, of our neighbour, our nation, or any private system whatever, if detached from a tendency of affection to universal being, is not truly virtuous. And what is this more or less than what all judicious divines have maintained, that he who really does not love God does not truly love his neighbour? If Mr Edwards uses language more philosophically exact, and investigates the principle on which a commonly received truth is founded, he certainly deserves commendation rather than blame.

12. On Mr Edwards's principles, the particular affections are so far from being "useless," that their operations are not at all affected by those principles, except in being more exalted and refined. When the heart is enlarged to the love of being in general, it includes all particular objects; and then the attachment to them is for the sake of the whole system of being. Thus a truly virtuous love of our neighbour springs from our love to God; or without a supreme regard to God, there is no genuine, or, in the highest sense, praiseworthy love to our neighbour. And so far are particular affections from being "pernicious" on Mr Edwards's principles, that they are highly useful. Those objects which contain, or are apprehended to contain, only a secondary beauty attract a particular affection, which is useful in various respects, as

explained by our author; and those which contain the primary beauty attract affections still more useful. For governors, and subjects, and friends, and relatives to feel attachment to their subjects, governors, friends, and relatives, must be useful, even when not virtuous; but when these attachments are animated, regulated, and enabled by the love of God, or benevolence to universal being, they must be still more so. Benevolent affections are like a pleasant flame,—a flame which is not lessened by an addition of fuel. Zeal at home is not found, in fact, to be weakened by the extension of zealous and benevolent affections abroad. National reform and religious revival will not be impeded by a truly benevolent

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missionary spirit. Neither will the love of God nor-of universal being prove detrimental to “particular affections.”

18. Respecting the “particular affections,” Mr Hall remarks that “their immediate, nay, their necessary tendency is to attract to their object a proportion of attention which far exceeds their comparative value in the general scale.” But surely “attention” is a very different thing from “attachment!” A man who is about to buy a horse has his attention attracted very forcibly to the size, the shape, the age, and the action of the animal; but does this imply attachment? The word Satan may attract our “attention” to the malevolent being signified by it; but does this prove that the “immediate, nay, the necessary tendency” of the word is to attract to this object any degree of “attachment?” It would be difficult to find either man, woman, or child but has much attention attracted to what he does not esteem, and to which he feels no attachment. If a person feels an attachment to any object not founded on the “comparative value” of that object, let the “particular affection” be denominated as we please, but let us not attach to it the idea of true virtue. For why should we be tempted to call that truly virtuous which has no relation to God, the object and fountain of all excellence?

14. It is but justice to our author to say that his definition of virtue, against which Mr Hall objects, by no means countenances that perversion of our powers which is but too justly ascribed to modern infidels. No one acting on the principles of this Dissertation will be less amiable in private life than while acting on any others which Mr Hall might point out. This hypothesis, which

we believe is the scriptural one, and which in substance has been maintained by theological writers and holy men of every age, pours no chilling influence on the affections, encourages no unscriptural disregards or antipathies in society, nor does it countenance any neglect of private duties under pretence of public utility. We are assured by an authority from which, in the view of Christians, there lies no appeal, that “to love God with all our heart” is the first and great commandment. We would fain know, if knowable, wherein this requisition differs from that which is implied in Mr Edwards’s notion of true virtue? Moreover, whether loving God with all our heart is calculated to render “the particular affections to every purpose of virtue useless, and even pernicious?” And, once more, whether that act of the mind, which is compatible

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with a rejection of what the Divine oracle thus requires, can in any propriety of language, among Christians, be termed virtuous?

15. “To allege,” Mr Hall observes, “that the general good is promoted by them will be no advantage to the defence of this system.” We apprehend he means that some may be disposed to allow that the private affections, though not virtuous, may yet promote the general good, on some other account. But the objector is under a mistake, if he suppose, as he apparently does, that Mr Edwards held any notion of true virtue which will admit no private or “particular affections” to be virtuous. In fact the system explained in this Dissertation excludes no particular affection; but fully admits that any, yea, that all of them, may be virtuous, by a proper direction. Supreme love to God, or attachment to universal being, is virtue *per se*; but any other affection, however public or private, particular or general, is a virtue only relatively,—that is, only so far as it is a tendency to universal being. When the affection terminates on any particular object, without any relation in its tendency to universal existence, it is not a means of ultimate happiness in itself commendable, and therefore is not virtuous.

16. “We have no dispute,” says Mr Hall, “respecting what is the ultimate end of virtue—the question is, ‘What is virtue itself?’” Very true; what is it? We say a love, an attachment, or a tendency of mind, to general or universal existence, whatever be the immediate object of the will or the affections. If the affection be,

for instance, that of a parent to a child, however strong in its operation, it is no further truly virtuous than there is a regard to God in it, or a tendency to general being. But what is virtue itself, according to Mr Hall? The answer is not given. Had Mr Hall thought proper to give us, a definition of virtue, we might compare notes, and form an estimate. It is much easier to find fault than to amend it; but this we feel disposed to promise, that if the objector produce what he thinks a better definition than what he opposes, we will endeavour to examine it with impartiality.

17. Mr Hall supposes that the author of the work entitled "Political Justice" was "indebted to Mr Edwards for his principal arguments against the private affections." Surely that author must possess a most perverse kind of ingenuity, who could deduce anything from the works of President Edwards against the

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private affections; such ingenuity as an infidel sometimes employs when he is indebted to the writers of the Old or New Testament for his principal argument against religion, and in favour of infidelity.

18. "A mistaken pursuit of simplicity," Mr Hall supposes, "attaches to their system, whereby its advocates place virtue exclusively in some one disposition of mind." We conceive there is just as much propriety in this remark as in the following: A mistaken pursuit of simplicity led a certain writer to place conformity to law "exclusively" in some one disposition of mind, where he says that the law is fulfilled in one word, love. "We are not aware that it is a matter of doubt, whether moral acts, and consequently virtue, proceed from the will or the heart; and as every exercise of will or affection is not virtuous, it requires no long "pursuit of simplicity" to determine that the virtuous character of the affection must arise from its nature, rather than its degree; and from its being directed to a worthy rather than an unworthy object.

19. Mr Hall illustrates his meaning by two kinds of attraction; and so does Mr Edwards illustrate his. Private affections or instincts, irrespective of their various qualities, may be represented by the attraction of cohesion, whereby the several parts of bodies are held in contact. A truly virtuous affection may be represented by the attraction of gravitation, which maintains the union of bodies

themselves with the general system. And “though the union in the former case is much more intimate than in the latter,” and “each is equally essential to the order of the world;” yet private affections, irrespective of their tendency to God, can with no more propriety be respected as virtues than cohesion can be termed gravitation.

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#### DISSERTATION XIV.

##### ON GOD’S ULTIMATE END IN CREATION.

1. A CLEAR and comprehensive view of the universe, or the “world,” will lead us to observe two grand divisions, which may be termed physical and moral. And though in both the glory of God is the chief end, yet this end is not attained by the same means in the moral as in the physical department.

2. By the creation and disposal of the physical part of the universe, the glory of God’s natural perfections, as of sovereign wisdom, power, and goodness, is chiefly, displayed. But by the creation and government of the moral part, the glory of the moral perfections of Deity, that is, of infinite moral rectitude, or equity, and of sovereign benevolence and mercy, is made to appear.

3. God being an infinite sovereign, controlled by no consideration but infinite rectitude, or a regard to the consistency of His own character,—and a created universe being capable of two forms, and it should seem, for ought that appears to the contrary, of two only, physical and moral,—a full emanation and display *ad extra* of the moral perfections of Deity could not be made without a moral system in all its capabilities of relation.

4. The physical part of the universe, even including the physical operations of intelligent beings, may subsist, it is evident, without requiring any other display of glory than what is included in sovereign wisdom, power, and goodness; and it is equally plain, that there would be no opportunity of manifesting strict equity, much less mercy, to existent beings, without a moral system. Therefore—

5. If strict or absolute equity, and sovereign mercy, be manifested, a moral system was necessary. To exercise strict, unmixed, or absolute equity, whereby is given to its object what is due to it,

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(a capacity for moral agency being supposed,) and yet to preserve that object,—that is, a moral agent,—from being liable to sin, involves a contradiction. For it is the same as to say, a free agent is not free to sin, though fully permitted to follow his own tendencies. And this is the same thing as to say, an accountable creature is not liable to fail; in other words, a moral agent is no moral agent, and a moral system is no moral system. Man would be impeccable, and the very existence of sin impossible.

6. If it be asked, Might not the whole of the moral part of the universe have been preserved from sin? we reply, undoubtedly it might, if sovereign benevolence had thought proper to interpose, in order to counteract the exercise of strict, unmixed, and absolute rectitude or equity; but then it must have been at the expense of eternally concealing the glory of this Divine perfection—absolute rectitude.

7. To permit the creature to sin, and to exercise absolute equity, is the same thing; in other words, to exercise this glorious perfection, and not to permit the creature to sin, are incompatible ideas. If this perfection be exercised, there is, there can be, no principle belonging to a moral system” which preserves it from being liable to sin. Nor is there any principle belonging to it, independent of sovereign benevolence, which is adequate to preserve that liability to sin from actual defection. But to appeal in the way of objection to the alternative of sovereign benevolence, which alone can preserve from sin, is the same as to concede what the proposition asserts.

8. Equity, in one view of it, is indeed compatible with the exercise of sovereign benevolence towards the same object, and at the same time. To question this, would be to question God’s proper sovereignty, and, therefore, His right of creating and preserving the universe, and of beatifying any creatures He hath made. For neither of these effects could take place but by sovereign benevolence as a cause. But if sovereign benevolence were not compatible with justice or equity, in one view of it, God could not be benevolent without being unjust; which is absurd.

9. Yet equity, in another view, stands as a contrast to benevolence. Strict or absolute equity is that which excludes all sovereign benevolent influence; and when moral agents are its object,

(their being and natural capacities, or their moral capabilities, being supposed,) the exercise of absolute equity must necessarily

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exclude benevolent sovereign influence. Thus among men we find some resemblance of this abstract but momentous truth. In one view, justice and generosity are compatible; while one deals justly with another, he may also be additionally generous. But in another view, these are incompatible; for strict, absolute justice, is the same as justice and nothing more, and, therefore, must exclude generosity.

10. Therefore, equity, in the one view, implies the exclusion of injustice; and in the other, the exclusion of undeserved favour or sovereign benevolent influence. The exercise of rectitude in the former sense might have been without the permission of sin, but not so in the latter sense. If perfect absolute rectitude towards a moral system be made to emanate *ad extra*, to the full development of the capabilities of such a system, the permission of sin is not only equitable, but even metaphysically necessary. That is, it involves a contradiction to say that such a Divine perfection may be so displayed, or its glory made to appear *ad extra*, and yet not to permit the existence of moral defect, or, in other words, to actually hinder its existence.

11. The very idea of a moral system, in which the permission of defect is excluded by equity, is one of the most absurd that can be conceived. For it is the same as to say that God was bound in equity not to permit sin, while, at the same time, He constituted the agent free, and accountable for the exercise of his freedom; and, as He has in fact permitted the introduction of sin into the world, such an idea would be the same as to charge Infinite Perfection with want of equity.

12. We may, therefore, safely conclude that the glory of the Divine rectitude towards the intelligent and moral part of the universe, considered as accountable and to the full extent of its moral capabilities, could not be manifested without the permission of sin. The full exercise of equity must necessarily leave the moral system to its own tendencies and operations.

13. To permit the event of sin, or not to hinder it, implies that the cause of defection is not in the Permitter, but in the permitted, not in the Governor, but the governed. There is in the moral

part of the universe a cause why an event which ought not to take place will take place, if not hindered. If there be such a cause in the system, how could the event take place on permission? If it be said there is a chance that it may not take place, and there is

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a chance of the contrary; it is but fair to ask, Is this chance something which has a cause, or has it no cause? If the latter, the concession itself reduces chance to a mere nothing; for a contingent event, as the operation of chance is supposed to be, without any cause, is a metaphysical impossibility. If the former, what is the cause of what the objector calls chance? Is it something external or internal? What is its nature and character? To say that liberty of indifference, or a self-determining power, is the chance which requires no preceding cause to produce the event, is to contradict absolute demonstration, if ever there was a metaphysical demonstration of any subject, as [President Edwards] has abundantly shewn in his "Essay on the Freedom of the Will."

14. It is, therefore, inaccurate and unintelligible language to say that either chance, liberty of indifference, or a self-determining power, independent of any antecedent cause, is adequate to account for the event of sin, or a deterioration of a moral system. God, therefore, permitting, there is an inherent adequate cause of failure distinct from Divine causation. What this cause is, and what is its nature, has been shewn and proved in [the Dissertation on Moral Evil]

15. Permission is an act of equity, or it is the exercise of rectitude to the exclusion of benevolent influence, whether we regard that influence as preventing the event of sin, or as delivering from its power. Sovereign benevolence prevents the fall of angels; and it delivers, restores, and eternally saves a goodly number of the human fallen race. Without the permission of sin, restoring benevolence or the exercise of mercy would have been impossible; and, consequently, the glory of that perfection, which can be fully displayed only by its exercise towards the miserable, would have been eternally concealed.

16. If, therefore, equity be a glorious attribute of God, its emanation and exercise must be glorious. But the exercise of equity, in the strict sense, includes the permission of sin, as before proved.

And, here we may add, if not to hinder be an exercise of strict rectitude, the continued existence of sin is not inconsistent with it.

17. It will be allowed by every one, that, as mercy itself is a glorious attribute, so is the exercise of it a glorious thing. But this would have been impossible, if sin had no existence; nor could sin have had existence, if not permitted to exist: and sin could not have been permitted, if strict equity had not been exercised;

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nor could strict equity have been exercised, if the exercise of preventing sovereign benevolence had not been excluded in those instances wherein moral defect actually took place.

18. *First Corol.*—The ultimate and chief end of God in the creation and government of the moral part of the universe is the glory of His moral perfections, which are virtually included in strict rectitude and sovereign benevolence.

19. *Second Corol.*—If strict rectitude be exercised towards the degenerate part of the system, the restoration of those who are the objects of it is not possible; that is, to suppose it possible involves a contradiction. Therefore—

20. *Third Corol.*—If any degenerate moral agent be restored, it must necessarily be by the exercise of that sovereign benevolence which we call mercy.

21. *Fourth Corol.*—“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them who fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” Goodness and severity are but other words for sovereign benevolence and strict equity, the glory of which is abundantly conspicuous in the various Divine dispensations towards the children of men ever, in this life, but will appear still more transcendent in the day when God shall judge the world in righteousness, and in the day of eternity.

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## DISSERTATION XV.

WAR—CIVIL EIGHTS—PUBLIC GOOD—REVENGE—CYPRIAN  
ON—  
NATIONAL *SUMMUM BONUM*—OFFENSIVE—FULLY  
PERSUADED  
ON ITS CAUSE—OFFICERS OF HIGH RANK—INNOCENT  
SUBJECTS  
—PERSECUTION.

THERE can be no doubt that civil rights, liberties, and privileges are great *blessings*, and therefore ought to be secured by all fair and *lawful* means. But the question is, Whether it becomes the Christian character to secure these things, any more than other desirable enjoyments, by *destructive violence*? Christians are to be thankful to Providence for blessings, and so are they for *sufferings* too, as of that number, when endured in the way of righteousness. It is but a fair question, Would the Christians have done right, supposing it had been in their power, to dethrone Nero in favour of another more promising emperor, while the probable sacrifice of lives in the achievement, including both sides, was less than the number of innocent Christians who should be sufferers by Nero? But before the decision is made, let Rom. xiii. 1–5 be read and well considered.

### WAR—PUBLIC GOOD.

To make the *public good* to consist in civil rights, freedom from slavery, and privileges promised by express contract, and then to make the *probable* advancement of such public good to be the *rule* of conduct *at all events*, may pass for good doctrine with secular politicians, but surely spiritual Christians have not so learned Christ. If, indeed, any kind of considerable improvement could be effected without inflicting any *real injury*, as voluntarily to deprive men of life is, it is plain that no law either of nature or of Chris-

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tianity prohibits it. Even *coercive* measures in the way of disciplinary corrections, and the prevention of social mischief, are not only innocent, but to be commended and encouraged by suitable rewards.

## WAR—REVENGE.

Nor is it necessary that a judge, even one appointed to pronounce the deathful sentence dictated by a black inquisitorial court on the innocent, should have “any degree of *malice*” against the injured victim; it is effected according to a certain legal process, and private *revenge* is out of the question. But *ought* he to be thus employed because the higher powers appoint him, or because the “public good” requires it? The previous question with him should be, Are they *right* in making such appointment? and is *that* public good which requires this of me consistent with the laws of Christ?

## WAR—DESPERATE VILLANY.

This representation\* gives but a very confined and partial view of the subject in debate. It leaves no alternative between deathful force and the most infantile or idiotic helplessness. But is it a fair inference from the doctrine of the unlawfulness of war, that it “would make every desperate villain irresistible, and consequently would give up all the property and lives in a city or province to one such person?” Nothing less; though he were a Goliath in arms, or a Polypheme for human victims. He *must* have *food*, he also *must* have *sleep*; and, though a sword, a pike, or a bullet, might save time, trouble, and money, yet were there a thousand guineas reward for taking him a *living* prisoner, depend upon it we should soon behold many a courageous champion equipped with helmet, shield, and habergeon, and soon should we find him safely lodged in a prison. An argument so improbable deserves not a more serious reply.

\* Viz.:—“The following scriptures are often referred to as *countenancing*, if not vindicating arms: Luke iii. 14, Matt. viii. 30, Acts x. 1, &c. But it is an argument of much greater importance, that the doctrine [viz., of the unlawfulness of war] we have here been opposing would make every desperate villain irresistible, and consequently would give up all the property and lives in a city or province to one such person. ... The common law, therefore, of benevolence to society, requires an assault on such a person, which does not imply any such malevolence to him as is inconsistent with the Christian temper in its greatest heights.”—See *Doddridge*, vol. v., p. 280.

He who would disallow of *magistracy* must be strangely inattentive to the wants of human nature, the necessity of subordination, and the real welfare of mankind, as well as the whole tenor

of revealed religion. But cannot “the decree of the magistrate against a *desperate villain* regularly take place before he has been brought to trial,” &c., consistently with the principle of the unlawfulness of war? Why not? May not a magistrate, on the pacific system, which all Christians expect will one day take the place of the *martial* one, *decree* that every desperate villain, as well as every disorderly person, should be apprehended? May he not decree, that those whose immediate office it would be should have *ample* rewards in securing them without injury to their persons, but *none* if they killed them in the attempt? Lives might occasionally be lost, but *always* by an *unlawful* hand; and all *rewardable* courage would be in *saving* men’s lives, not destroying them. After all, the number of human victims, if the sacrificers of such victims were branded as *illegal* and *dishonourable*, and also deprived of all selfish interest, would not, in all probability, be one in a hundred of those who fall on the current system.

But the most formidable objection to that system which *opposes the necessity* of war—a system which consistent Christians expect will be put in practice at some distant period, and which, therefore, it may reasonably be expected ought to begin with individuals—is the difficulty of keeping free from the insults of external foes. In the present state of society, pacific men form but a small portion of any state; much less have they the formation and direction of public arrangements. They, therefore, have given no provocation, their advice is neither sought nor valued; they may therefore consistently say, Let those who war upon the principle of utility abide by the consequences; and let those who act on the pacific principle, from conscience, prepare for the result with undaunted fortitude, yet with humble dependence on almighty providence and all-sufficient grace. But when in any future period the principle in question is adopted by a majority, and the rulers of a state, war will be shunned as worse than a pestilential contagion; the attention will be turned to a revision of existing laws, moral and religious education will share largely in the national encouragement and bounty, and evangelical virtue will be set up as the national good. Wisdom, a soft answer, prudence, moderation, an appeal to the universe in a cause of import-

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ance, will generally preserve the neutrality of any state without further insults. But suppose the worst; shall we suppose the adventures of Huns, Goths, and Mohammedans to be repeated? The fury of conquerors is evermore directed more against the warlike and wealthy, than the peaceable and moderate. An instance or two will tend, perhaps, more effectually to illustrate this remark than a volume of abstract reasoning.

Among furious conquerors of ancient, middle, or modern times, it would be difficult to select one more lost to humanity than Attila. This warrior, after having brought into subjection all the northern nations, began, as his ambition had no bounds, and his arms had hitherto been attended with wonderful success, to entertain thoughts of reducing not only the Goths settled in Thrace, but the Romans themselves, and making himself master of the whole empire. With this view, having drawn together a vast army, without any regard to an existing treaty which his uncle Rouas had entered into with the Emperor Theodosius II, he passed the Danube, and, entering Thrace, put all to the sword, without distinction of sex, age, or condition. Elated with the success of conquest, he sent to Theodosius a messenger with haughty claims, adding, that there was no time to be lost, since he could no longer restrain or moderate the ardour of his troops thirsting after blood and spoil. Theodosius at first chose rather to try the chance of war, but afterwards more wisely concluded a peace with Attila. According to Priscus, no prince ever subdued such numerous countries in so short a time. His authority was acknowledged by all the states and princes from the Rhine to the most northern boundaries of the Persian empire. What views he had of his own superiority may be gathered from this contemptuous observation of his, "that the emperors had slaves for their generals, whereas his generals were upon a level with the emperors themselves." He had a passion for war; but depended more upon his council than his sword, employing not only force and menaces, but frequently craft, and sometimes low artifices, and even falsehood, to obtain his end. He was constantly forming new projects, and vast designs, aspiring at nothing less than the monarchy of the universe. He was so elated with his great power and success as not to hearken to reason, however clear and evident. The pride and

haughtiness of his mind appeared in all his actions and motions, in his gait, eyes, and look; insomuch that no one could behold

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him without concluding that he was sent into the world to disturb its repose. His presence, joined to the reputation he had acquired, struck all who beheld him (though low in stature, with small eyes) with such awe and terror, that very few ventured to approach or speak to him. We are told, however, that an ambassador sent to him by Valentinian III. appeared quite unconcerned before a man who made the world to tremble. As the ambassador had justice on his side, he was not intimidated by his wild and menacing looks; but, in spite of the rage to which he abandoned himself, he answered all his complaints without betraying the least fear, leaving him at his departure calm and capable of reason, though he had found him quite outrageous and intractable.

Let those who have to do with an Attila follow the example of this illustrious ambassador of Valentinian.

While the Romans carried on a war against the Volsci, under the generalship of Camillus and L. Furius, military tribunes, they made themselves masters not only of the field of battle, but of the enemy's camp. Among the prisoners were discovered some Tusculans, who confessed that they had aided the Volsci by order of the public, and the authority of their magistrates. The senate, on this report, thought it necessary to declare war against Tusculum, and charged Camillus with that expedition. The Tusculans opposed the Roman arms by a method entirely new, that made it impossible to commit hostilities against them. When the troops entered their country, the inhabitants neither abandoned their places upon their march nor desisted from cultivating their lands. A great number of citizens, dressed as in times of peace, came out to meet the generals. Camillus having encamped before the gates, which were open, and desiring to know whether the same tranquillity prevailed within the walls as he had found in the country, he entered the city. All the houses and shops were open, and all the artificers were intent upon their trades. The schools resounded with the voice of children at their books; the streets were full of people going backwards and forwards on business, without any sign of terror, or even amazement, and not the least trace of war. Everything was tranquil and pacific. Camillus, surprised at such

a sight, and overcome by the enemy's patience, caused the assembly to be summoned by the magistrates. "Tusculans," said he, "you are the only people who till now have found out the true arms and forces capable of securing them against the anger of the Romans."

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Such probably will be the conduct of future Christians, on gospel principles, as an introduction to the glorious millennium—the empire of universal tranquillity, under the spiritual government of the true Solomon, the *Prince of Peace*.

#### WAR—CYPRIAN ON.

The excellent Cyprian saith expressly, when shewing the obligations of Christians, *quibus occidere non licet*,—that it is not lawful for them to kill their enemies, (Epist. 58, Ed. Fell.) The Christians of his day are further described in these words:—"Hoc ipso victos esse, quia mori non timent; *nee repugnare contra impugnantes, cum occidere innocentibus nec nocentem liceat*; sed prompte et animas et sanguinem tradere;"—"They are invincible, because they dread not death; and they make no warlike resistance, because, though innocent, it is not lawful for them to kill an aggressor," (Epist. 60.) Tertullian, in his "Apology for the Christians against the Gentiles," says:—"Christianus etiam damnatus gratias agit. ... Aristoteles familiarem suum Hermiam turpiter loco excedere fecit; *Christianus nec inimicum suum lædit*;"—"A Christian, though condemned, [and we may be sure unjustly,] gives thanks. ... Aristotle behaved haughtily to his intimate friend Hermias, but a Christian does not injure even his enemy," (Cap. 46.) And again:—"Male enim velle, male facere, male dicere, male cogitare de quorum, æquo vetamur;"—"To wish ill, to do ill, to speak ill, or even to think ill, with respect to anything, we are justly prohibited," (Cap. 36.) "Si inimicos jubemur diligere, quem habemus odisse? Item si læsi vicem referre prohibemur, ne de facto pares simus, quem, possumus lædere?"—"If we are commanded to love our enemies, whom have we to hate? In like manner, if when injured we are prohibited a retaliation, lest we degrade ourselves like them, whom can we injure?" Once more:—"Cui bello non idonei, non prompti fuisset, etiam impares copii, qui tam libenter trucidamur, si non apud istam disciplinam magis occidi liceret quam occidero?"—"What war are we not prepared for, though with unequal forces, since we are in the habit of cheerfully meet-

ing death, were it not the genius of our religion that we should suffer ourselves to be killed rather than to kill others?"

Origen says in reply to Celsus:—Οὐκετι λαμβανομεν ἐπ' ἔθνος μαχαίραν οὐδε μανθανομεν ἐπι πολεμειν, γενομενοι δια τον Ἰησουνη

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υῖοι εἰρηνης,—“We no longer take the sword against any nation, nor do we learn the art of war, being made by Jesus the sons of peace.”

#### WAR—PUBLIC WELFARE.

On the other side—of this question\* it has been pleaded that no benevolent person holds war to be desirable *for its own sake*, if the public welfare can be secured without it;—that the public welfare *may* be secured on pacific principles directed by wisdom without war, to such a degree as is consistent with the real interest of Christians, though probably not so far as to secure national aggrandisement, or any one uninterrupted form of government;—that if, in *any* case, the distinguishing protection of a superintending providence may be expected, it must be while exercising the most benevolent dispositions towards our enemies;—that there is a manifest difference between the Christian dispensation and all preceding ones with respect to the exercise of justice and mercy: the prominent feature of each preceding dispensation was that of *justice* divinely executed, and often in the way of resistance, retaliation, and death; but that of the gospel is benevolence tempered with *mercy* towards all men, and most expressly to our enemies;—that the language of *prophecy* concerning the design of the gospel, and the genuine effects of its prevalence, is highly pacific, with which accords the angelic anthem at the Saviour's birth;—that the spirit and language manifested in our Lord's doctrine and discourses, and those of His inspired servants recorded in the New Testament, are full of those principles which are utterly *inconsistent* with fighting;—that the manner in which they *exemplified* their principles clearly shews that they resisted not evil to the real injury of any;—that, on the contrary principle, no one can be a *martyr* to doctrinal or moral truth; for to fall in a contest because *weak*, or destitute of means to *crush* the adverse power, is not martyrdom;—that it is unreasonable to expect the fulfilment of prophecies in a state of universal peace while the pacific system is rejected; for there will always remain, in the

best of men, so much imperfection as will be construed by their neighbours, equally imperfect, injustice; and if injustice be a sufficient cause of fighting, there never can be a prospect of con-

\* Viz., that “cases may occur in which opposing force to force may tend to public good—*i.e.*, in which virtue may allow and require us to engage in war.”

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tinued peace in this world;—that those who have adopted the pacific side from conscience have actually found the smiles of Providence, and, in case of suffering, an inward feast;—that moreover, those who hold the unlawfulness of fighting, may consistently *defend* themselves, in the proper sense of the word; that is, so far as defence can be effected without offering *offence* or *irreparable injury* to another;—that the pacific principle, which discards all threats and hostile menaces, is conciliating, by the exercise of benevolence, meekness, wisdom, reason, by negotiations, concessions, and self-denial;—that it does not prohibit a Christian from holding the reins of civil government, so long as they can be held without bloodshed;—that it does not forbid *coercion*, while the life is preserved and the lasting welfare of the individual is consulted.

#### WAR—NATIONAL *SUMMUM BONUM*.

It is of some importance to observe that the “public good” is a phrase of very equivocal import. If by it we understand extensive territory, strict independence, stationary or growing wealth, a powerful navy, a war establishment, a flourishing commerce, valour, honour, patriotism, liberty, and life SECURED AT ALL EVENTS, and the possession of these the NATIONAL *summum bonum*, it is plain that destructive violence, or *war*, may be sometimes necessary. But if we place the “public good” in righteousness, peace, virtue, industry, frugality, benevolence, justice tempered with mercy, a humble dependence on Almighty Providence for protection from evil and for all needful prosperity,—if these be the NATIONAL *summum bonum*, while extensive territory, strict independence, wealth, trade, commerce, liberty, and life are only *subordinate* considerations, it is equally plain that destructive violence may in no case be necessary while the end may be fully attained. And it may deserve consideration whether these heavenly mandates are binding on collective bodies of men, even the largest nations, as

well as individuals:—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things [all subordinate comforts] shall be added unto you." "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you." If every event in the course of Divine providence, every transaction in society, and every temporal enjoyment be considered as only *subordinate* to

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*real virtue*, which is here supposed to be the true national *summum bonum*, the *degree* in which the subordinate or secondary objects are possessed or enjoyed is cheerfully referred to the overruling wisdom and distributive pleasure of God, to whom such a nation would commit itself in well-doing. It is not improbable that a peculiar blessing would attend a nation acting on those principles, and that prophecies will be fulfilled, and the full blessings of the gospel introduced among all nations, in that way. "Righteousness exalteth a nation." "Who is he that shall harm a people who are followers of that which is good?" "If men's ways please the Lord, he maketh even their enemies to be at peace with them." But where the other objects have been made the *principal*, as in all the renowned warlike empires of antiquity, and others in modern times, the proposed end *has not* been attained. "Who can ascertain what *real advantage* has accrued to the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Eoman empires, not to mention others of later date, from having proposed to themselves such a standard of "public good" as made it necessary to employ destructive force in its support? The *evils* are but too obvious and shocking. On the other plan, states might, indeed, be less powerful and formidable, wealthy and splendid; but it is morally certain they would be more virtuous, and more under the protection and approving smiles of Providence.

#### WAR—OFFENSIVE.

The term "defensive war," though commonly used, seems to border on solecism in language, if not contradiction in terms. "War implies an "endeavour by open violence to hurt and destroy;" and therefore the phrase in question denotes defensive violence, defensive hurting, defensive destruction, or *defensive offence*. *War* is violent, hurtful, destructive, and offensive; but *defence* is innocent, consulting only self-preservation, warding off

injury, but not returning it. Christ and His first followers used self-defence, but never warred or fought.

Substitute the word *arms* for *war*, and the proper import of the word “defensive” will appear.

*Defensive arms* are such as *preserve* the person from being injured, as helmets, breastplates, and shields; but *offensive arms* are those which are used to *injure* others, as the sword, bayonet, mus-

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ket, &c. Properly speaking, persons who are only on the *defensive* cannot be said to be in a state of *war*.

#### WAR—BEING FULLY PERSUADED ON THE SUBJECT.

It will easily occur to the reader that an “unjust *war*” and an unjust *cause* are very different considerations. A man may have *justice* on his side, if simply the point of right or wrong be considered, while his *fighting* for it may be a very *unjust* thing, even on supposition that he could have *no other* mode of redress from the civil power, or were *commanded* to adopt that mode. To be “fully persuaded,” therefore, that an enemy is unjust in his demands or provocations, cannot be a sufficient reason why fighting with him is a just thing; except it could be shewn that it is proper to fight on *every* provocation, or that *every* act of injustice ought to be punished that way. For the question would still return, What *degree* of injustice can warrant such conduct, whether on a private or public scale? Whether any degree of injustice can be greater than what Christ and His disciples endured with patience, meekness, benevolence, a forgiving temper, and intercessions for the offenders? And whether their conduct ought not to be regarded as a proper example to be imitated by all Christians?

#### WAR—OFFICERS IN THE HIGHER RANKS ACT A PART OF MUCH GREATER IMPORTANCE.

The argument of this scholium\* has been thought to prove too much; for on this principle virtue may require that two or more armies, provided neither of them be “fully persuaded” that the war on their side is unjust, may face each other as enemies; and as virtue requires that an army should obey the orders of the commanding officers, so it may require that two or more armies may

design, at the command of their chiefs, the destruction of each other, on the supposition, *all* fight under the banner of virtue,

\* Viz.:—"Subjects may not, even when commanded by their prince, engage in any war which *they are fully persuaded is unjust*; but if it appears a dubious point to them, the same obligation does not hold, for otherwise common soldiers could hardly engage at all, since they seldom have, or can have, a full view of all the circumstances of the affair. ..."—*Doddridge's Lectures*, 83, § 19.

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and may be required to charge and kill each other; that is, virtue may oppose and crush itself, which is absurd.

#### WAR—INNOCENT SUBJECTS.

The argument of this scholium\* proceeds on the supposition, that the refusal of an "equitable satisfaction" is a just cause of war. The necessary distinction between a cause *just* in some degree, and a cause that *justifies war*, is overlooked. However, the question returns, What is equitable? The parties differ in their views of equitable satisfaction. One observes:—"Let any man coolly and impartially examine the history of the past and the present times, and say whether *every* dispute between nations might not have been settled by negotiation, *if the parties had been so disposed*." But suppose *one party* be so disposed and the other not, *how much* is to be given up to prevent violence? Suppose the equitable balance in the view of one party amount to a million of money, an island, or a province; the other views the affair in negotiation perfectly equitable, exclusive of the claimed balance. Now, the true question is, not who has *equity* on his side, but whether a million of money, an island, a province, and thereby an accession of more wealth, influence, power, or liberty; nay, more properly, whether the *chance* of gaining this be *really worth* the certain expense of money, the probable sacrifice of innocent lives, family afflictions, the cessation of industrious labour, the agitation of the public mind, and, above all, the *moral evils* ever attendant on actual war?

#### PERSECUTION IN ITS RELATION TO WAR.

Persecutions are of two kinds—private and public. *Private* persecutions are the scintillations of pride, envy, hatred, malice, and false zeal, without public authority. *Public* persecutions are a fire fed by the supreme power, maintained systematically and

deliberately, upon principle, or legal reasons of state. They bear a similar relation to each other as partial quarrels, affrays, or con-

\* *Viz.*, That “he who offered the injury may defend himself, when the party injured has refused an equitable satisfaction proposed: in that case the party injured becomes the aggressor; much more may subjects defend themselves even when their prince has been to blame, if the enemy endeavour to avenge the quarrel, not on the person of the prince, but on his innocent subjects.”—See *Doddridge’s Lectures*, as above.

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bats bear to national wars. Systematic persecution attacks persons not by a transient passion, but merely as transgressors against *established rites of public good*. When the unity, honour, or supposed purity of the Church is in danger; when uniformity of professed doctrine or mode of worship is violated, and this violation is supposed to have great influence on the public temper and habits, which constitute or affect a great part of the public good; and when everything inconsistent with it must be crushed by violence, it is a plain case that persecution is unjustifiable only in proportion as a wrong NATIONAL *summum honum* is adopted, and this must be SECURED AT ALL EVENTS. Confessors and martyrs prosecute an *end* which is inconsistent with what the persecuting state has fixed. Each party attains its end respectively: the one by violence, the other by patient suffering; one obeys the *national* will, the other the apprehended *Divine* will.

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## DISSERTATION XVI.

### INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

ON this subject, a work, entitled “A View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion,” by Soame Jenyns, Esq., deserves a perusal. The author was once an infidel, “but having some leisure, and more curiosity, he employed them both in resolving a question which seemed to him of some importance: Whether Christianity was really an imposture founded on an absurd, incredible, and obsolete fable, as many suppose it? Or whether it is, what it pretends to be—a revelation communicated to mankind by the interposition of supernatural power? On a candid inquiry, he soon found that the first was an absolute impossibility, and that

its pretensions to the latter were founded on the most solid grounds.”

The author undertakes to shew, among other things, that from the New Testament may be collected not only *doctrines* of religion, but also a system of *ethics*, in which every moral precept founded on reason is carried to a *higher degree of purity and perfection* than in any other of the wisest philosophers of preceding ages; that every moral precept founded on false principles is *totally omitted*, and many *new precepts* added, peculiarly corresponding with the new object of this religion; that such a system of religion and morality could not possibly have been the work of any man, or set of men; and that, therefore, it must undoubtedly have been effected by the interposition of Divine power. The work, though not faultless, abounds with valuable remarks, some of which are here inserted:—

1. In all former religions, the good of the *present life* was proposed as the *first object*; in the Christian it is but the *second*. In those, men were incited to promote that good by the hopes of a

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future reward; in this, the practice of virtue is enjoined in order to *qualify* them for that reward. Hence it is that Christianity insists more strongly than any preceding institution, religious or moral, on *purity of heart* and a *benevolent* disposition, because these are absolutely necessary to its great end.

2. The *personal character* of the Author of this religion is no less new and extraordinary than the religion itself. For instance, He is the only founder of a religion in the history of mankind which is totally unconnected with all human policy and government, and therefore totally uncondusive to any worldly purpose whatever. All others, Mohammed, Numa, and even Moses himself, blended their religious institutions with their civil, and by them obtained dominion over their respective people; but Christ neither aimed at, nor would accept of any such power. He rejected every object which all other men pursue, and made choice of all those which others fly from and are afraid of. No other ever made his own sufferings and death a necessary part of his original plan, and essential to his mission.

3. Before the appearance of Christianity there existed nothing-like religion on the face of the earth, the Jewish only excepted;

all other nations were immersed in the grossest idolatry, which had little or no connexion with morality, except to corrupt it by the infamous examples of their imaginary deities. They all worshipped a multiplicity of gods and demons, whose favour they courted by impious, obscene, and ridiculous ceremonies, and whose anger they endeavoured to appease by the most abominable cruelties. In the politest ages of the politest nations in the world, at a time when Greece and Rome had carried the arts of oratory, poetry, history, architecture, and sculpture, to the highest perfection, and made no inconsiderable advances into those of mathematics, natural, and even moral philosophy, in religious knowledge they had made none at all; a strong presumption that the noblest efforts of the mind of man, unassisted by revelation, were unequal to the task. They sometimes talked of virtue carrying men to heaven and placing them amongst the gods, but by this virtue they meant only the invention of arts or feats of arms; for with them heaven was open only to legislators and conquerors, the civilisers or destroyers of mankind. This was, then, the summit of religion in the most polished nations in the world; and even this was confined to a few philosophers, prodigies of genius and literature, who were little at-

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tended to, and less understood, by the generality of mankind in their own countries, while all the rest were involved in one common cloud of ignorance and superstition. At this time Christianity broke forth from the east like a rising sun, and dispelled this universal darkness.

4. Christianity has taught doctrines as inconceivable to the wisest of mankind antecedent to its appearance, as the Newtonian system is at this day to the most ignorant tribes of savages in the wilds of America; doctrines which human reason never could have discovered, but which, when discovered, coincide with and are confirmed by it, and which, though beyond the reach of all the learning and penetration of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, are now clearly laid open to the eye of every peasant and mechanic with his Bible in his hand. These are all plain facts too glaring to be contradicted, and therefore, whatever we may think of the authority of these books, the relations they contain, or the inspiration of their authors, of these facts no man who has eyes to read, or ears to

hear, can entertain a doubt, because there are the books, and in them is this religion.

5. Christianity enjoins, with peculiar plainness and authority, piety to God, benevolence to men, justice, charity, temperance, and sobriety, with all those duties which prohibit the commission of the contrary vices, all which debase our natures, and, by mutual injuries, introduce universal disorder, and, consequently, universal misery. But it entirely omits precepts founded on false principles, those which recommend fictitious virtues, which, however celebrated and admired, are productive of no salutary effects, and in fact are no virtues at all *Valour*, for instance, is for the most part constitutional; and so far is it from producing any salutary effects by introducing peace, order, or happiness, into society, that it is the usual perpetrator of all the violences which, from retaliated injuries, distract the world with bloodshed and devastation. It is the engine by which the strong are enabled to plunder the weak, the proud to trample upon the humble, and the guilty to oppress the innocent. It is the chief instrument which ambition employs in her unjust pursuits of wealth and power, and is, therefore, so much extolled by her votaries. It was, indeed, congenial with the religion of Pagans, whose gods were, for the most part, made out of deceased heroes exalted to heaven as a reward for the mischiefs they had perpetrated upon earth; and therefore with them

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this was the first of virtues, and had even engrossed that denomination to itself. But Christians are so far from being allowed to *inflict* evil, that they are forbidden even to *resist* it; they are so far from being encouraged to *revenge* injuries, that one of their first duties is to *forgive* them; so far from being incited to *destroy* their enemies, that they are commanded to *love* them, and to serve them to the utmost of their power. *If Christian nations, therefore, were nations of Christians, all war would be impossible and unknown amongst them.*

6. *Patriotism* also, that celebrated virtue so much practised in ancient, and so much professed in modern times,—that virtue which so long preserved the liberties of Greece, and exalted Rome to the empire of the world, must also be excluded, because it not only falls short of, but directly counteracts the extensive benevolence of this religion. Christianity commands us to *love all man-*

kind; patriotism, to *oppress all* other countries in order to advance the imaginary prosperity of our own. Christianity enjoins us to imitate the *universal benevolence* of our Creator, who pours forth His blessings on every nation upon earth; patriotism, to copy the *mean partiality* of a parish officer, who thinks injustice and cruelty meritorious, whenever they promote the interests of his own inconsiderable village. This has ever been a favourite virtue with mankind, because it *conceals self-interest* under the mask of public spirit, not only from others, but even from themselves, and gives a *licence* to inflict wrongs and injuries not only with impunity, but with applause; but it is so diametrically opposite to the great characteristic of this institution, that it never could have been admitted into the list of Christian virtues.

7. Of those new precepts in this religion peculiarly corresponding with the new object of it,—that is, PREPARING US FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN,—the chief are, poorness of spirit, forgiveness of injuries, and charity to all men; to these we may add, repentance, faith, self-abasement, and a detachment from the world,—all moral duties peculiar to this religion, and absolutely necessary to the attainment of its end. By *poorness of spirit* is to be understood a disposition of mind, meek, humble, submissive to power, void of ambition, patient of injuries, and free from all resentment. This was so new, and so opposite to the ideas of all Pagan moralists, that they thought this temper of mind a criminal and contemptible meanness, which must induce men to sacrifice

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the glory of their country, and their own honour, to a shameful pusillanimity; and such it appears to almost all who are *called* Christians, even at this day, who not only reject it in practice, but disavow it in principle, notwithstanding this explicit declaration of their Master. We see them revenging the smallest affronts by premeditated murder, as individuals, on principles of honour; and, in their national capacities, destroying each other with fire and sword for the low considerations of commercial interests, the balance of rival powers, or the ambition of princes; we see them with their last breath animating each other to a savage revenge, and, in the agonies of death, plunging with feeble arms their daggers into the hearts of their opponents; and, what is still worse, we hear all these barbarisms celebrated by historians, flat-

tered by poets, applauded in theatres, approved in senates, and even sanctified in pulpits. But universal practice cannot alter the nature of things, nor universal error change the nature of truth.

8. Another precept, equally new, and no less excellent, is *forgiveness of injuries*. The wisest moralists of the wisest nations and ages represented the desire of revenge as a mark of a noble mind, and the accomplishment of it as one of the chief felicities attendant on a fortunate man. But how much more magnanimous, how much more beneficial to mankind is forgiveness! It is more *magnanimous*; because every generous and exalted disposition of the human mind is requisite to the practice of it: for these alone can enable us to bear the wrongs and insults of wickedness and folly with patience, and to look down on the perpetrators of them with pity, rather than indignation; these alone can teach us, that such are but a part of those sufferings allotted to us in this state of probation, and to know, that to overcome evil with good is the most glorious of all victories. It is the most *beneficial*; because this amiable conduct alone can put an end to an eternal succession of injuries and retaliations: for every retaliation becomes a new injury, and requires another act of revenge for satisfaction. But would we observe this salutary precept, to love our enemies, and to do good to those who despitefully use us, this obstinate benevolence would at last conquer the most inveterate hearts, and we should have no enemies to forgive. This noble and useful virtue is an obvious remedy for most of the miseries of this life, and a necessary qualification for the happiness of another.

9. *Detachment from the world* is another moral virtue consti-

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tuted by this religion alone; so new, that even at this day few of its professors can be persuaded that it is required, or that it is any virtue at all. But such an unremitted and perpetual anxiety as engrosses our whole time and thoughts is forbidden, because it is incompatible with the spirit of this religion, and must utterly disqualify us for the attainment of its great end. The Christian system forbids all extraordinary efforts to obtain wealth, care to secure, or thought concerning the enjoyment of it: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." The chief object of the Pagans was immortal *fame*: for this their poets sang, their heroes fought, and their patriots died; and this was hung out by

their philosophers and legislators as the great excitement to all noble and virtuous deeds. But what saith the Christian Legislator to His disciples on this subject?—"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." Nothing has so much contributed to corrupt the true spirit of the Christian institution, as that partiality which we contract from our earliest education for the manners of Pagan antiquity: from whence we learn to adopt every moral idea which is repugnant to it; to applaud false virtues which that disavows; to be guided by laws of honour which that abhors; to imitate characters which that detests; and to behold heroes, patriots, conquerors, and suicides with admiration, whose conduct that utterly condemns. From a coalition of these opposite principles was generated that monstrous system of cruelty and benevolence, of barbarism and civility, of rapine and justice, of fighting and devotion, of revenge and generosity, which harassed the world for several centuries with crusades, holy wars, knight-errantry, and single combats, and even still retains influence enough, under the name of *honour*, to defeat the most beneficent ends of this holy institution. A man whose ruling principle is *honour*, in the common acceptance, however virtuous in a sense he may be, *cannot be a Christian*, because he erects a standard of duty, and deliberately adheres to it, *diametrically opposite* to the whole tenor of that religion.

10. Every one of these propositions, I am persuaded is incontrovertibly true; and if true, this short but certain conclusion must inevitably follow—that such a system of religion and morality could not possibly be the work of any man, or set of men, much less of these illiterate and obscure persons who actu-

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ally did discover and publish it to the world; and that, therefore, it must have been effected by the supernatural interposition of Divine power and wisdom—that is, that it must derive its origin from God. If any one can believe that these men could become impostors for no other purpose than the propagation of truth, villains for no end but to teach honesty, and martyrs without the least prospect of honour or advantage; or that, if all this should have been possible, these few inconsiderable persons should have been able, in the course of a few years, to spread this their

religion over most parts of the then known world, in opposition to the interests, pleasures, ambition, prejudices, and even reason of mankind; to have triumphed over the power of princes, their intrigues, the force of custom, the blindness of zeal, the influence of priests, the arguments of orators, and the philosophy of the world, without any supernatural assistance;—if any one can believe all these miraculous events, contradictory to the *constant experience* of the powers and dispositions of human nature, he must be possessed of much more *faith* than is necessary to make him a declared Christian, and remain an *unbeliever* from *mere credulity*.—On the evidences of Christianity in general, and the internal ones in particular, the reader is referred to Archdeacon Paley’s work, entitled “A View of the Evidences of Christianity,” and more especially vol. ii., chap. ii–v.

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### DISSERTATION XVII.

#### JUSTIFICATION—VITAL UNION WITH CHRIST— JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH—BY WORKS.

THE word “union” in this connexion is both more intelligible and more appropriate than the word relation, since in this connexion the latter is the consequence of the former. As the doctrine of a vital union to Christ is fundamentally important in Christianity, and inseparable from the doctrine of justification, a few observations upon it may appear needful.

1. The Scriptures are not only full of the fact, but they abound with illustrations of it. The first part of John xv. is full and explicit to this purpose.

2. What the Scriptures assert and illustrate is abundantly corroborated by the reasonableness of the thing. To suppose the reality of vital religion without a corresponding vital union, is to suppose an important effect without an adequate cause, as shall be further shewn.

3. The question then is, what is the immediate cause of this vital union? Now as the union subsisting is between the Spirit of Christ and man, the immediate cause must be in the one or the other of these, or in both at the same instant, or in neither. If the immediate cause be in man, he makes his approach to Christ

either as a carnal or a spiritual man, for there is no conceivable medium. But the idea of a carnal man uniting himself to Christ in order to form a vital union is both unscriptural and unreasonable. It is unscriptural, for the Scripture asserts that “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” How then can it be the cause of a vital union? “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus;” “And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” It is not therefore the carnal man that unites himself to Christ, or quickens

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himself in order to effect it. It is also unreasonable, for it supposes a glorious effect without an adequate cause. The effect is spiritual, while the cause is carnal; which are not only different, but even directly opposite. What ideas can be more contradictory, or sentiments more unreasonable?

4. The supposition of two simultaneous causes, the one being the Spirit of Christ, and the other the carnal man, involves the same inconsistency; for how can the mere circumstance of time, irrespective of causal influence, make any difference? If the carnal mind be adequate to unite itself to Christ at one time, why not at another time as well, except some causal influence makes the difference? For surely no one can suppose that some individual moment of time, as distinguished from others preceding, constitutes the cause of difference.

5. To suppose a spiritual man, whether by the exercise of his faith or by any other mental act, *in* the cause of a vital union, is no less inconsistent than the former suppositions. For how came he to be a spiritual man without a spiritual causal influence? But if such influence be admitted as a predisposing cause of his vital acts, it is incumbent on the objector to shew that such causal influence may take place without vital union. This, I am persuaded, no one can do. It is contrary to all analogy, and to every sound principle of true philosophy. It is contrary to Christian experience and revealed statements. What effect in physical nature can be produced which does not imply a causal union? Does not the Divine energy pervade all second causes, in the way of union with them in order to the production of their effects? and what miraculous effects have ever been produced without a present uniting cause? For instance, when Lazarus came forth from death to life, was there not a uniting causal influence to produce the change?

And if we appeal to an experienced intelligent Christian, will he not own, will he not maintain, according to his views of revealed truth, that the powerful, the quickening, and uniting presence, the vital and transforming energy of the Spirit of God or of Christ in him, was the cause of his own vitality? Nay, would he not be shocked to hear any one maintain the contrary?

6. Perhaps it may be thought, that though in the great laboratory of physical nature, in the bowels of the earth, and in the surrounding atmosphere, a causal union be necessary to produce chemical effects,—and that though in all works of mechanism a causal union

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is requisite to the existence of mechanical effects,—and that, moreover, though the sun by his light and heat produces an effect upon objects by a causal union with them,—yet what shall we say of one body affecting a change of situation in another at an immense distance? Does not the sun powerfully attract all the planets that surround him however distant? and how can this be by causal union? This objection admits of two answers:—

7. First, It has never been proved that there is no causal union between these bodies adequate to the effect, while, on the contrary, several philosophers have at least attempted to shew its existence. The solar system, for aught we know, may be perfectly mechanical, though we should never be able to perceive the intermediate parts.

8. Secondly, As the universe in general depends on the causal presence of the First Cause, so must every part of it. Scripture and reason assure us that in God we live, and move, and have our being. Therefore, whether there be any intermediate cause of gravitation or not between the effect and the First Cause, causal union is still necessary to the effect. What difference there is lies against the objector. For if there be no intermediate cause of gravitation, the presence, the energy, the causal union of the First Cause is proportionally the more immediate.

9. Having shewn that neither the carnal man nor the spiritual man is the immediate cause of the union subsisting between Christ and the Christian, it remains to be ascertained what else is the cause. If it be not man, it must be the Divine Spirit, either as the Spirit of the Father or of Christ. In one view, this difference is not very material; but in another it is of considerable importance. Allow it to be from the Holy Spirit, in either sense it

secures the great point of salvation by grace in opposition to our own merit. But, as it respects the nature of Christ's mediation, and particularly His federal headship and suretyship, it is of moment to ascertain whether He or the Father economically be the immediate cause of the vital union.

10. The Scripture fully declares that the influence of the Spirit on the minds of men is from Christ. "The Lord from heaven is a quickening Spirit;" "He quickeneth whom He will;" "He sends the Holy Ghost;" "He gives repentance," or the spirit of repentance; "In Him was life," (without whom nothing was created), "and this life is the true light of men;" "He shines into the heart, but grace and strength constitute our sufficiency," &c. These, and other passages

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innumerable, shew that quickening influence proceeds from His fulness of life and grace.

11. That other passages ascribe spiritual effects to the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, is of no force, except with such as deny the Divine nature of Christ, who are confuted on other grounds. But supposing His divine nature in union with humanity, the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and *vice versa*; and in the Divine economy of grace, Christ is the head or source of influence to the Church. It is He who gives gifts to the rebellious, who endows with the Spirit of life, and who bestows the living water to which Divine influence is compared.

12. And how beautifully consistent must this appear when we consider that as a covenant head He is the surety of His chosen people. The office of a surety engages to perform what is requisite in behalf of a person or persons as required by another. Thus Jesus not only brought in an everlasting righteousness in behalf of His people as their federal perfection, in lieu of those who could never attain to it by any obedience of their own, but it also belonged to His office to secure for them a voluntary, penitential, believing obedience to the equitable requisitions of the Divine Governor. This can be effected only by Divine influence, and that influence must needs proceed from Him as the immediate cause, otherwise we make the creditor and surety to be the very same. God, as Governor, demands obedience from all the subjects of His government; and Christ, as the Surety of those who were given Him, enables them to comply with those demands,—that is, to

submit, to repent, to believe with the heart, to love God, and to walk with Him.

13. From the premises it follows plainly, that the immediate cause of vital union is the Spirit of Christ, which He bestows in the exercise of His office as the federal head of influence, and in virtue of His suretyship for His Church and people. He, as the true vine, communicates life to the branches; and, as the head of His Church, brings dead souls to be His living members. Faith is a fruit of the Spirit, and not the cause of a spiritual existence. Yet—

14. We maintain that faith forms a consequent union. Man being a subject of moral government, and therefore a free agent, at liberty to choose his end and means of happiness, for which he is accountable; and God, in infinite mercy, proposing Jesus as the

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way, the truth, and the life, the all-sufficient and only Saviour, of sinners, in whom we are required to believe, and to trust with confidence, and whom we are encouraged to receive into our hearts, that He may dwell there by faith; the regenerate soul, by believing, unites itself to this object.

15. The former union is the immediate effect of sovereign favour; the latter union is the immediate effect of exercised grace in the performance of an incumbent duty, or the discharge of moral obligation. Now, since men are exhorted, warned, directed, reasoned, and expostulated with, on the ground of what they ought to do or abstain from doing, the Scripture abounds with such addresses. But lest any false inferences should be drawn, derogatory from the honours of sovereign grace, we are assured that every good and perfect gift cometh from the Father of lights. “When we have clone all, we are unprofitable servants.” “Work out your own salvation,” says Paul, “with fear and trembling. For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.” “No one can come unto me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him;” that is, without Divine influence; “and whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.” “Ye are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” Among many other parts of Scripture, where grace and obligation are strikingly intermixed, and illustrative of

the preceding remarks, the reader is particularly referred to the sixth and fifteenth chapters of St John's Gospel.

16. *Corol.*—The old mode, adopted by many orthodox divines, of distinguishing the vital union between Christ and His people, first, on His part, and, secondly, on their part, is founded on Scripture and the reason of the thing; and the former is the cause of the latter. And, therefore, as the cause must ever precede the effect, the first union not only may be prior to the second, as in the case of happy infants, but also must be so in the case of adults.

#### JUSTIFICATION—BY FAITH.

A few observations on this intricate subject may probably assist the reader in seeking scriptural and consistent notions:—

1. Justification implies a charge, a plea, and a virtual declaration of approval.

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2. The charge against Adam and all his posterity is twofold—including a breach of covenant, or a failing in federal perfection, and also disobedience in transgressing a Divine rule. These considerations are perfectly distinct in their nature. A rule may be momentarily transgressed for a long series of years, as it was by Adam, and constantly is by his rebellious descendants; but a federal failure was, from the nature of perfect righteousness, the very first act of delinquency.

3. No plea can be valid against a federal delinquency, as was the case in Adam, but a participation of a federal perfection. Nothing less can answer the charge, and nothing more is requisite. This averts condemnation, and entitles to a virtual approval in reference to that part of the charge.

4. No plea can be valid against disobedience to Divine authority, or the rule of moral government, but a personal, voluntary, actual compliance with that authoritative rule of government; which we find, by Divine revelation, to be, in reference to fallen man, submission to the righteousness of God, or, as differently expressed, believing on the Son of God, receiving Him as the Lord our righteousness, &c.

5. No man has possessed a federal perfection, except by imputation, besides the first Adam, while he obeyed without failure, and the second Adam, when He had completed His work of humiliation. For no eminence of grace in a mere descendant of Adam could

possibly attain to federal perfection from the very nature of such perfection. Nor, indeed, can the perfect obedience of glorified saints rise higher than a conformity to the Divine law as a rule; their federal perfection is still derived from their union to Christ, and a consequent imputation which implies a virtual approval. Hence—

6. The federal perfection of Messiah is the proper and sole ground of an actual interest in reconciliation and justification. In other words, the righteousness of Christ, His perfect obedience unto death as our substitute, is that alone on account of which we can stand before God with acceptance, in reference to the charge of a federal failure in Adam.

7. An actual interest in this federal perfection is obtained only by a vital or an effectual union to the Lord our righteousness. This is plain from Scripture, and is perfectly rational. It is compared to the union of a vine and its branches, the head and

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members of the human body, &c. That a participation of nature between Christ and us, or an effectual union, is requisite for a ground of imputation, is evident not only from scriptural comparisons, and the rational consistence of such an idea, but also from the fact of the Saviour's incarnation. Without this union to us, our sin could not have been imputed to Him; and without a vital union, His righteousness could not be imputed to us. This is fairly and fully implied in many parts of Scripture, as might be shewn if necessary. From whence it is plain, that union is the indispensable ground of imputation.

8. Whoever is the subject of a vital union to Christ is in a justified state, as partaker of a federal perfection, prior to the performance of any moral duty whatever. But in order to explain and prove this, it is requisite to attend to the following particulars:—

9. Union to Christ is of two kinds—on His part by His Spirit, and on our part by faith, as explained in a preceding note. In the former we are passive, and in the latter we are active. In the one He acts as a sovereign dispenser of benefits, in the other we act as accountable creatures.

10. By the order both of nature and of time, the union begins with Him who is a quickening spirit; and that of faith is consequent upon the other, and is the proper effect of it.

11. By His uniting act, which may be termed effectual calling, the enmity of sin is destroyed in the soul, and the spirit of Christ is imparted, which, as occasion offers, will manifest itself as the spirit of faith, of love, &c. Hence—

12. To the soul thus in Christ, whether infant or adult, there is no condemnation arising from federal delinquency, for this charge is answered by the union on his part, and righteousness is imputed.

13. From the premises, it follows that the generally-received theological maxim is perfectly just and plain—viz., that justification and regeneration are simultaneous. Union is the immediate cause of both; and because the one is a relative and the other a vital effect, there is no interference as to the order of time. Thus a union of a tree and a branch by engrafture, is attended with two simultaneous effects, the one relative and the other vital: it is related to the tree as a branch, and at the same time partakes of

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the vital sap. The union, however, must precede both, as to nature and time.

14. But where two effects are both real, as distinguished from relative, the one must precede the other, both as to nature and time. Thus union precedes vitality, and this of necessity must precede vital acts; and regeneration, as the act of the Spirit of Christ, must necessarily precede believing, which is one mode by which a vital principle operates. For to suppose that the operation produces, or is prior to the principle, either in nature or in time is a direct contradiction.

15. If the preceding steps of these remarks be thoroughly weighed, it will be found that justification, according to Scripture, and just reasoning upon it, has, for its foundation, the federal perfection of Messiah, and takes place as the immediate result of union to Him.

16. But since union is twofold,—the one as the effect of the other, that is, union by faith is the effect of union by the Spirit of Christ, and these, cause and effect, cannot possibly be simultaneous,—there must necessarily be a twofold justification as the

result of the corresponding unions. Though in that union which is first in the order of nature and of time, the person, whether infant or adult, is passive; the result, however, is the imputation of righteousness, which is Messiah's federal perfection, and which entitles to life eternal. And by that union which is the effect of the other, and consequently posterior to it in the order both of nature and of time, (and of which infants cannot be partakers,)—that is, by the union effected by believing,—the result is the imputation of the same righteousness in circumstances totally different.

17. These two different circumstances clearly perceived will develop the seeming difficulty. In the first, the person, whether infant or adult, is the passive possessor of decreed benefits—union, righteousness, and life; in the second circumstance, the adult person, as a free and accountable agent, is required to determine for himself on what to found his plea of acceptance with God. If he found his plea on his own obedience, past or intended, whether moral, ceremonial, or both; he shews at once both ignorance and rebellion. Ignorance: that he supposes it even possible for him, by his own obedience, to attain to that federal perfection which is justly required by the righteous Governor; and also in that he does not perceive the love and wisdom, the

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superabounding grace and wonderful mercy of God as a sovereign Benefactor in providing the needful remedy. Rebellion: in that he rejects the counsel of God, and resists by obstinate unbelief the Divine authority requiring submission to this righteousness as the way to favour and life. Hence—

18. As all reasonings, expostulations, threats, promises, and encouragements, all testimonies, declarations, appeals, inducements, and sanctions, are addressed to men as moral agents, with whom, in the business of accountability, it rests what mode they will adopt for obtaining acceptance with God,—whether by doing the work themselves, or by believing His testimony, and receiving His gift,—it fully accounts for justification by faith being the great point argued in the apostolic writings.

19. And it further appears that justification by faith alone should be strenuously urged by all gospel ministers, while they have to do continually with persons whose inquiry is, "What shall we do to be saved?" To such as thus inquire after the way

of salvation, who seek acceptance with God, who are about to choose for themselves “the way they will take,” what answer can be given in effect but what is contained in the apostle’s words? “To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” The above statement not only agrees with these words, but also, as I humbly conceive, explains their import; and the embarrassment respecting the office and influence of faith in justification is removed, without expunging faith, or the act of believing, from the class of moral duties.

20. It may be objected, If there be any justification before believing, then an unbeliever may be justified; whereas the Scripture saith, “He that believeth not is condemned already.” This objection arises from a mistaken notion of the true meaning of such passages of Scripture. Condemnation, in the real import of Scripture, is levelled against the rejecters of Christ, or of the Divine testimony, and these only considered as free agents in seeking acceptance with God and final happiness. These, not believing in Christ, while prevailingly devoted to Moses or Mohammed, moral obedience or ceremonies, or indeed any other object whatever, reject in fact the testimony of God and His righteousness, and expose themselves to a double condemnation. They are condemned as being destitute of a perfect righteousness, and also for

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their actual disobedience to the Divine authority. The sentence of the law is against them, both as a covenant and a rule, and the gospel, which they reject, will be a witness to prove the wickedness of their heart. But this can never take place in one who is vitally united to Christ. All allow that infants, not believing, are not to be ranked with unbelievers. To them no testimony is proposed, and therefore no testimony is rejected by them. Nor does any adult united to Christ reject the Divine testimony even before he believes. Let but the object of faith be presented to him, and his vital union secures the exercise of the living principle towards the proposed object, in proportion as the terms are understood. A testimony not presented, or one presented in an unknown tongue, cannot be believed, notwithstanding the principle of faith. The existence of a principle does not necessarily imply its exercise, whether it be sense, reason, or faith. Men are not necessarily

conversant with the objects of sense because they possess the senses requisite for these purposes; nor are they always exercising the powers of the mind, however essential these powers are to human nature. In like manner, not exercising faith is a very different thing from not possessing the principle. A vital union and the spirit of faith are inseparably and essentially connected; but a vital union and believing are connected *secundum quid*, in certain circumstances. Without the circumstances of adult age, or a capacity of understanding, believing is impracticable. But how absurd would it be to say that a sinner cannot be justified because he has not arrived at a certain advanced portion of understanding, or has not learned some language, as if a title to heaven depended on age, or knowing a language! And equally absurd is it to suppose that Christ cannot effect a vital union because the sinner's voluntary consent to it is wanting, as if God's high sovereignty were bound by the human will! That God requires the sinner's consent, as a matter of obligation, is a solemn fact; but God has not laid Himself under any obligation that He will never unite a soul to Christ for justification of life but by the sinner's previous consent. He has declared, however, that the continued unbeliever, who is properly a wilful rejecter of Christ and His righteousness, shall be condemned. Hence it is evident that to make believing essential to a vital union on the part of Christ, and to make the exercise of faith on a Divine testimony essential

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to its existence, are erroneous conclusions, derogatory to gospel grace, and founded on wrong notions of moral government.

21. To make this, if possible, still more plain, the gospel finds men, as apostatised with Adam, in a state of condemnation; infants and adults alike are under the condemnatory sentence which is the result of a breach of covenant. This evil can be removed, and a restoration to favour be effected, only by an act of sovereign grace, whereby Christ becomes vitally united to the soul. Without this vital union there is, there can be, no faith. This being the case, a vital union is formed before faith can have any ground of existence; and consequently a justification, which is a necessary result of this union, takes place. For to him who is thus in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation, but he is passed from death into life, as an object of mere grace and mercy.

In this respect an adult and an infant are perfectly on a par while justified and regenerated for the kingdom of God. But God, in the character of a Moral Governor, has a further claim on every free agent. He exhibits to the view, and solicits, yea, demands, a voluntary compliance with the plan of mercy through the blessed Redeemer, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. The regenerate person that is capable of acting for himself, as the subject of commands and invitations, complies; he becomes an active recipient of the appointed righteousness, which he now pleads in opposition to all charges presented against him. By faith, or believing God's testimony, he makes his appeal, and by faith alone he is justified. An investigation of the *rationale* of Christian doctrines is not necessary for popular use, but may be peculiarly useful as a guard against inconsistencies, and a means of strengthening our attachment to those doctrines.

#### JUSTIFICATION—BY WORKS.

To him that is in Christ Jesus by a vital union there is no condemnation; and there is no medium between condemnation and justification. He who is in Christ is justified, or "accepted in the beloved" Saviour. That union which Christ effects by His quickening Spirit makes the tree good, and believing with the heart in order to receive the promised righteousness is the fruit of

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consequence of believing is only the manifestation of union, even as justification by works, as asserted by St James, is manifestative of a living faith. As without works there is no sufficient evidence of union to Christ on our part, so without faith in Christ as our complete righteousness there is no sufficient evidence of union with Him on His part.

The true Christian's works are "works of faith and labours of love," performed in obedience to God's authority, directed to His glory, and inspired by gratitude for the blessings of His grace; and this is the first of all such works, called "the work of God,"—even to believe on Jesus Christ, in whom alone is righteousness and life. By believing we receive the Divine testimony concerning a gratuitous righteousness, and renounce all hope of obtaining justification by any other way.

The justifying righteousness is only one; but the appointed ways of becoming interested in it are divers. One way is by the will of God our Saviour; the other by the will of man, the accountable agent—each in its own order. The will of God gives the fundamental interest, and the will of man the consequent and manifestative interest. In the first way, we are interested in Christ's righteousness by one act continued, commencing with, and permanent as the primary vital union; in the other way, it is by repeated acts, commencing with the first act of faith in Christ, and repeated with every succeeding reception of Him.

Among persons who have made any, even the smallest progress in Christian knowledge, there can be no dispute respecting the fundamental cause of justification. All such acknowledge that the righteousness or federal perfection of Jesus Christ is that for the sake of which any of the fallen race of Adam can be justified.

The difference of sentiment arises from the appointed method of obtaining an interest in this meritorious cause. For want of consideration, we too hastily infer that if the Scripture states one appointed method, it must be an exclusive appointment. Hence, one pleads from Scripture, and especially St James's Epistle, that this appointed method is by works,—that is, evangelical obedience, of which faith is a leading part; another pleads from Scripture that it is by faith, not as an act of moral obedience, but as a suitable bond of union, to the exclusion of all works; and a third, from the same Scripture, pleads that we are justified by an eternal

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immanent act of God, and that faith only brings us to enjoy a privilege which belongs to the elect from eternity.

Now, each of these schemes overlooks the important truth that the immediate ground of justification is the vital union between Christ and the soul. Justification from eternity precedes vital union; justification by works denies the fact of a vital union being an adequate ground of a justifying sentence; and justification by faith alone, or believing in Christ, to the exclusion of a prior vital union on the part of the Spirit, confounds the work of man and the work of God. This last being the most difficult part of the subject, I beg leave to make a few observations upon it:—

1. The claims of God in reference to justification are twofold. In the first instance, He claims from man a federal perfection; and in the second instance, He claims compliance with His method of bestowing an interest in it. The former claim may be answered by the Surety, and, in fact, is answered by His act of a vital union on His part. By this He gives an interest in Himself to the soul He savingly adopts. Thus there is no condemnation to you that are in Christ Jesus. But the latter claim can be answered only by the believer himself, when he actually receives Christ as his righteousness, and so answers the Divine requisition. Thus, he that believeth in Christ is justified from all things. In the first instance, Christ pleads His own righteousness in behalf of the adopted sinner; in the last instance, the believer pleads the same righteousness in his own behalf.

2. The obligations of man in reference to justification are also of two kinds. In the first place, he stands obliged to be conformed to the law as a covenant which demands a sinless perfection; and in the second place, he is obliged to conform to the law as a rule. Now, whatever God enjoins as a duty is a part of this rule, whether it be to hate sin, to love God, to believe in Christ, or to observe whatever Christ hath commanded.

Our obligation to be conformed to the law as a covenant is discharged by Christ only as our Surety; and our ability to discharge our obligation of being conformed to the law as a rule is from Him. We are obliged to believe on Him as our justifying righteousness, under pain of God's displeasure; but man will ever continue in unbelief until Christ slays his enmity, and enables him to believe. But to slay a sinner's enmity, to change his nature, or to give him ability to believe, is the effect of a vital

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union; for as there is no such ability without gracious influence, so there is no gracious influence without union to the source of spiritual life. When thus enabled, man exercises repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Receiving Him by faith alone, as our righteousness and life, the law is obeyed as the voice of God, requiring the obedience of faith.

3. The method of mercy in reference to justification includes the substitution of the Saviour, and our acceptance in Him, without any works of righteousness on our part. In this respect, "not

by works of righteousness which we have done," whether faith, repentance, or any kind of obedience, "but according to His mercy He saveth us," provides a Saviour, and gives us a saving interest in Him. Grace provides, and grace applies the remedy. Mercy imputes to Jesus our sins, and imputes to us His righteousness. He who knew no sin was by sovereign mercy made a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Mercy laid the foundation, and placed us on it, that we might become living stones on Him, and, in consequence, find Him to be precious.

4. The rule of moral government in reference to justification is that we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the end of the law for righteousness. For this end is the gospel proclaimed to all nations, even for "the obedience of faith." This is the language of Divine government: "He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned." The unbeliever is condemned already, because he rejects the counsel of God, and neglects so great salvation. Mercy hath provided an adequate and all-sufficient remedy; and government requires our closing with it as the only ground of hope left us. An endeavour to set up our own obedience instead of the righteousness of Christ is rebellion against the authority of God, and undervaluing His wisdom and grace. None deserve condemnation more than those who reject the only remedy. And even they who believe have no ground of boasting; for we are saved by grace, and justified by faith; and that is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God.

The influence of works in justification our author has well explained.

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## **ACADEMIC EXERCISES.**

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- I. HINTS TO THE STUDENTS.
- II. SYLLABUS OF LECTURES.

## ADDRESS TO THE STUDENTS ON ENTERING THE COLLEGE,

CONTAINING HINTS OF ADVICE.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS,—You are come to this place professedly as candidates for preaching the everlasting gospel, and administering Christian ordinances in the Church of the living God. You may well exclaim, Who is sufficient for these things! Be assured that no natural gifts, no mental abilities, no acquired learning, however desirable in their proper place, can be found sufficient either for pleasing God, satisfying your own minds, or profiting your fellow-men.

The leading design of your academical pursuits is usefulness to immortal souls in reference to a future life. If you fail here, your acquisitions in literature will be but a poor compensation in the eye of our Divine Master, and in the prospect of another, an eternal world. If destitute of a suitable temper, of godliness, of that mind which was in Christ, humility of heart, a devotional temper, simplicity of aim, fervour of spirit, and zeal to be useful,—what can be a sufficient substitute?

That literature and science are useful handmaids to theology, and that the acquisition of these is one important object to be aimed at by students who are trained up for the work of the Christian ministry, is very evident; but it is equally plain, that solid improvement, such as may promise usefulness to the souls of men, depends much on the state of the heart,—more by far than is

generally imagined. Even reason in its highest improvements, and knowledge in its largest and brightest forms, are but the instruments of the heart.

Study, therefore, above all things, your own hearts and the doctrine of salvation, by the light of God's word and the Holy Spirit. Seek truth with a humble-heart, with diffidence of yourselves, but with filial confidence in Divine assistance. Strive every

day to shew more convincingly than before that you are born of God, united to Christ, and thirst after purity, humility, meekness, and love. Improve time as incalculably precious, not only in order to acquire the knowledge of languages, of liberal arts, of composition, of science, and of systems; but more especially for the higher purposes of spirituality and heavenly-mindedness. This is to enrich the soil, in order to insure, with the increase of God, a profitable crop of holiness and usefulness,—to go forth, though weeping, bearing precious seed,—to humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, that you may be exalted in due season.

Then alone may you expect to become fishers of men, when you “follow Christ,”—when you enter most into His views, imbibe most of His Spirit, learn well what He teaches, communicate to others what He prescribes,—and, finally, when you cultivate that noble simplicity of manner which He recommended and adorned. Ye are the salt of the earth; but if you retain no savour of Christ, how worthless your profession, and how contemptible your character! Oh, flee youthful lusts, that war against the soul’s best interest!—perfect holiness in the fear of God. Guard against an idolatrous love of fame, or unsanctified popularity. It is a subtle poison to the new man, and exposes it to much danger. It is high full sail to a ship; and what will be the consequence without suitable ballast? Watch against levity, the sin that so easily besets the social intercourse of young people. Cultivate a courteous and obliging disposition towards one another, and derive it from Him who was meek and lowly in heart. Remember that too great freedoms and familiarity among yourselves, even in moments of relaxation, cannot fail to operate unfavourably. Habituate yourselves to the love of order, in all the branches of your engagements. Do not suppose that there is any virtue in carelessness and negligence, or that purity of heart and cleanliness of person and apparel are inconsistent. Suppress passion. This advice I must earnestly repeat: suppress, on its first appearance, every unworthy passion,

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every irritating word. Remember in whose bosom wrath resteth, and is fostered. If we are indispensably required to love our enemies, how much more should we cultivate the love of the brotherhood, on Christian principles! Shun every mean or even suspicious action. Abstain from every appearance of evil; that

your good may not be evil spoken of. Shine as lights in the world, as lamps kindled with fire from heaven, supplied with the oil of grace, and burning with a bright and steady flame. Regard yourselves as dead to sin; but as the living children of God, as the honoured members of Christ, as called by Him to an honourable work, and whose faithful diligence will be approved by a Sovereign whose gracious bounties are beyond our calculation.

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## A SYLLABUS OF LECTURES ON THE MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECTS IN THEOLOGY.\*

### LECTURE I.

#### ON THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY.

##### PART FIRST.

##### *On the Importance and Relative Views of the Subject.*

How may the sacred science of theology be best defined?—in the most general notion of it?—also that which is called natural, revealed, and particularly Christian?

In this introductory lecture it will be proper to consider the importance of the subject, some relative views of it, the most eligible

\* [Mr Gilbert, in his *Life of Dr Williams*, gives the following account of the design of this Syllabus of Lectures:—"Besides the Lectures, of which Mark's "Medulla," or Turretine's "Compendium," was the subject for reading, the students wrote a course of compositions founded on a Syllabus of Questions. The object of this plan was to call into exercise their own powers, to oblige them to think, to form an acquaintance with books, and to accustom them at the same time to write. The Doctor delivered no lectures on the commonplaces of sermons-divinity, but in the praxis drew the attention of his pupils to a general survey of theology in its history, its principles, its doctrines, its morals, and its administration." The Syllabus is not, therefore, to be regarded in any light as a system of divinity. Its design was to call forth the ability of the student on the various topics introduced, while giving him such hints as he might need for the prompting and guidance of his own thoughts. For such a purpose it is sufficiently systematic and extensive. It abounds in suggestions, while it is not wanting in plan and consecutiveness.—Ed.]

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method of treating it, with some general cautions to the student.

I. From what *topics* may be evinced the importance of the subject in general.

This may be shewn by attending to its principal objects, its proper subject, its important design, its chief properties, and its peculiar effects. Reflect—

First, What are principal *objects* of theology?

Here may be introduced, in a brief manner, God's nature, glorious attributes, and perfections—His wonderful works of creation, providence, and grace—and His eternal purposes appointing all the good, and overruling all the evil in the universe.

Second, How may the *importance* of the subject be deduced from its proper subject—man?

This may be shewn from its reference to his nobler parts, his intellect, will, and conscience, through the whole period of his everlasting existence.

Third, What is the immediate *design* of theology?

Here may be remarked how it has a direct reference to *happiness*, the immediate end of intellectual existence—our own happiness, and that of others—happiness of the best kind, and in duration the most permanent. Of all subjects this has the most direct reference to the Divine glory, the chief end of creation; and that in the most effectual manner, compared with all other modes of displaying it, since God graciously revealed Himself for that end.

Fourth, What are some of the chief *properties* of this subject?

It plainly teaches knowledge the most sublime, interesting, and improving to the mind, and recommends a *practice* the most pure, peaceable, and useful; and while it requires faith, it contributes to exalt reason.

Fifth, What are some of its peculiar *effects*?

It promotes the best *wisdom*—a wisdom which involves our greatest good through endless duration; it leads to purity and peace in the most direct and effectual manner, and to the most profitable self-acquaintance; exalts the *affections* of the mind, generates the best kind of philanthropy, and the most generous universal benevolence.

To be well versed in divinity contributes to ministerial pleasure and advantage; is useful in order to shun, detect, and confute error, and to establish the faithful, since truths seen in their connexion and harmony are more confirming than in their detached form.

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II. What are the *chief relative views* of the subject?

It may be considered either as *exegetical, polemical, casuistical, experimental, ecclesiastical, or systematic*.

First, What may be understood by *exegetical* divinity?

Here, after explaining the *term* and the thing intended, its *principal uses* may be pointed out, and a few of the best *helps* for improvement in it.

Second, What is the proper notion of *polemic* theology?

Here should be explained the *term* and the *subject*, and shewn in what cases it may be useful, and how it has been, and is always liable to be abused.

Third, What is the import of *casuistical* divinity?

Mention its very superior utility to a minister of the gospel, and what have been some of the chief abuses of it when employed by arbitrary men, and practised on ignorant credulity.

Fourth, What is the true notion of *experimental* divinity?

The allusion implied in the term should be explained and applied; it is often used in a lax and less proper sense; its comparative importance for Christian ministers is considerable.

Fifth, What is intended by *ecclesiastical* theology? and what advantage may be reaped by a minister being acquainted with it?

This differs but little from the history of religious opinions as held by the Church in all ages.

Sixth, What is designed by *didactic* or systematic divinity? and what advantages may be derived from the study of it?

Whether we consider ourselves as Christians, or more particularly as Christian ministers.

#### PART SECOND.

*Of Method, and the most necessary Cautions.*

III. What is the most eligible *method* in which the student may investigate the subject of divinity in a systematic manner?

Notice who they are that plead for discarding all systems of religion, under pretence of exalting the Holy Scriptures; and with

how little consistency, since the Scriptures are in theology what experiments are in philosophy, which do not preclude, but rather assist us in forming a systematic view of the phenomena.

The end we propose to ourselves should regulate our method; this ought to be well settled by every student, and for this purpose different methods should be compared, as conducive to a given

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end. Glance at the most useful or popular methods in which theological systems have been drawn up, with a view to form a more comprehensive view of the subject.

Meditate on the valuable end that might be answered by each of them respectively. That which is here adopted is inimical to none, but subservient to all—calculated only to furnish the mind with ideas and suitable terms, which may be applied as occasion offers, not only to public teaching in the ministry of the word, but also to every other valuable purpose of Christian instruction.

IV. What are some of the most necessary *cautions* for a student in pursuing his theological studies?

Reflect closely and devoutly on the following particulars:—

First, The importance of admitting nothing for sacred truth without that kind of evidence which is appropriate to its nature; and why all our inquiries after Divine truth, the chief good, and religious duty, should be sought from the Holy Scriptures; and why our investigations into the nature of things, and the dictates of reason, should be conducted in the light of revelation.

Second, The utmost importance of keeping a strict guard on the imagination, by which we are ever liable to be seduced and betrayed.

Third, The danger of being biased by unfounded prejudices, and especially those which arise from an unsubdued mind, the pride of superiority, and a corrupt heart.

Fourth, The reason why a critical and extensive acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures contributes to form the sound judicious divine, and the useful preacher—Scripture language—figures of speech—local customs, &c.

Fifth, Why aim at a comprehension of mind, improved by meditation—humility of heart—the love of truth—evidence and consistency—and the holy tendency of each doctrine.

## LECTURE II.

## ON THE AVOWED ENEMIES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

## PART FIRST.

*Of Atheists, Deists, Semi-Deists, Mohammedans, Modern Jews,  
and Heathens.*

Since wickedness necessarily implies opposition and enmity to

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sacred truth and moral goodness, why is not that enmity oftener and more openly avowed? Reflect, what are some of the general steps by which error has got so great and daring an establishment in the world.

Who are the chief avowed enemies of revealed religion, and especially of the Christian theology?

It is not meant to inquire into the real or the pretended reasons of the conduct of merely profane opposers, who aim to injure by violence, and not to argue, but into the avowed reasons of literary opposers. Eeneet, whether there are any others besides Atheists, Deists, Semi-Deists, Mohammedans, modern Jews, heathens, and false Christians.

I. Who may be fairly deemed *Atheists* in the proper sense of the term?

Reflect, were there ever any who did effectually discard all notion and consciousness of a Supreme Author and Supporter of the universe? Who have been reputed the most conspicuous Atheists among the ancients, and especially in modern times? Consider what are the chief probable causes of avowed Atheism in general, and especially of late in France, and in other countries?

How ought such enemies of Christianity to be dealt with? How far are the avowed opposers of all religion cognisable by the civil magistrate?

II. What is the proper acceptation of the term *Deist*?

Who of these have been, both in ancient and modern times, the most subtle and plausible, or the most daring and popular opposers of Christianity, and what are their chief objections?

What is the wisest conduct of serious Christian ministers towards them?

Reflect, to what may be ascribed principally the growth of Deism at different periods, and especially in the present day? and what are the most likely means of checking it?

III. Who may be properly denominated *Semi-Deists*?

How far do the most open and daring heretics of past ages deserve that name?

Can the Ebionites, Gnostics, Manichees, and the like, be exculpated from that charge?

Who of modern date may be denominated Semi-Deists? Reflect, how far the modern Unitarians, who reject some parts of the present canon of Scripture, can be acquitted of this charge? and especially the followers of Swedenborg? What line of conduct should a minister of the pure gospel observe in reference to such characters?

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IV. What are the leading truths of the *Mohammedans*? and on what pretences do they oppose Christianity?

Consider to what practical use may an acquaintance with the religion of Mohammed be applied, especially by a minister of the gospel in this part of the world? What are the principal facts among the Mohammedans? What were the chief pretended evidences of Mohammed's mission as a prophet? What are their greatest prejudices against Christianity? And reflect what steps might be taken by the Christian world with a view to their conversion? Have the Unitarians any advantage over the Trinitarians in this respect?

V. What have been the chief objections of the *Jews* to Christianity, particularly those who lived at the first promulgation of it, and those of more modern date?

What should be the conduct of a gospel minister towards persons of this persuasion, when in the course of providence he has communication with them? What arguments, in general, may be most properly urged for their conviction? and what should be the conduct of persons of influence in reference to their avowed principles and their naturalisation? Does the light of prophecy afford us any assistance relative to the probable continuance of their opposition to Christianity.

VI. In what respects may the *heathens* be considered as the enemies of the Christian religion?

Learn what were the principal grounds of opposition made by the heathen on the first propagation of Christianity, and especially by the Greeks and Romans; also in subsequent ages, where Christian missionaries have been sent, especially among the Chinese, Brahmins, Indians, &c.

What parts of the world appear most inimical to the gospel message?

Reflect, and learn what are the principal difficulties a Christian missionary has to encounter, and what should be the qualifications of such, at least the most essential.

PART SECOND.

*Of False Brethren, or Pseudo-Christians.*

VII. But Christian soundness of doctrine has enemies in the very bosom of the visible Church, who may be termed "*false brethren*" or *Pseudo-Christians*.

Observe, that hitherto have been noticed the external enemies of the Christian religion; but now a view may *be* taken of those who avow themselves to be "of the truth" in word and pro-

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fession, and yet in reality are enemies to some of its essential parts. When the revolt is total, they are apostates—when it is only partial, it is either schism, heresy, or both.

First, What is the scriptural acceptation of the word schism? Whence comes the appellative schismatic?

Does it mean anything more when applied to a person than one who makes or causes a division in the Church of Christ? Learn what were some of the principal schisms in the Christian Church from the first century to the present time. Reflect, what is the most common source of all schism—by what steps it commonly proceeds—and what is the best antidote to this evil?

Second, What is the scriptural import of the word heretic?

Does it mean anything more or less than one who maintains a false opinion from obstinacy, faction, or hypocrisy? or may he also be accounted one who holds error of considerable magnitude, while conscious of no unworthy motive?

Third, Though a more particular account of heresies belongs to ecclesiastical theology or church history, yet it may be proper to

pay some attention to the subject hi this connexion. Inquire in a general way what were the chief sources of the heresies which appeared in the first centuries.

Wherein consisted, in brief, the principal errors of Simon Magus, the Nicolaitans, the Corinthians, Ebionites, Basilidians, of Saturninus, Carpocrates, and Valentinus. Learn what were the errors of Cerdon and Marcion, Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, Novatian, the Manichees, Arius, Macedonius, Priscillianus, and especially Pelagius, whose opinions are continually springing up as weeds in the garden of the Church.

Fourth, What have been the most considerable heresies from the primitive ages of the Church to the reformation from Popery?

Fifth, What have been the chief heresies from the Eeformation to the present time?

Sixth, What are those errors of the present day that appear most alarming in the world, especially in Britain?

Reflect how a faithful minister of the gospel should endeavour to counteract, as favourable opportunities offer, every growing and rising error. Here, of course, will be recognised the Pelagian leaven under various imposing names, as well as new editions, with fine titles, of Socinianism and Hobbism.

### LECTURE III.

#### ON THE NECESSITY, PROBABILITY, TRUTH, AND NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

##### PART FIRST.

##### *On the Necessity and Probability of a Divine Revelation.*

This lecture treats of the actual existence of religion in general, or moral obligation—the insufficiency of natural religion—the probability of a revelation *à priori*—the actual evidences of revealed religion, and of Christianity in particular; also, the distinguishing-nature of the Christian religion.

I. By what arguments may it be shewn that man is the sbject of religion or moral obligation?

In order to give a judicious answer to this question, reflect very closely and seriously what moral obligation signifies. Recollect that obligation is a binding force—that physical and moral obligation are essentially different; that the one binds absolutely or unconditionally, the other hypothetically or conditionally; that the one force leaves no alternative by the intervention of choice, the other supposes an intervening choice or free act of the will.

Consider by what process may a person of mature thought ascertain his own accountableness to God as a Moral Governor? Are all the human race, without exception, the subjects of moral obligation?

First, What properties or qualities in the subject constitute or insure moral obligation?

Reflect, is anything more necessary than intellect, will, freedom from constraint in the act of choosing, and suitable objects of choice?

Second, Is it proper to say that, rewards as well as punishments constitute the objects of the binding force of moral obligation?

Reflect, is not the force which insures our happiness rather physical than moral? or is it proper to say, If you choose aright, you shall be forced to be happy? and is not the case different when we say, If you choose amiss or do wrong, you shall be forced to be a sufferer for it?

Third, What is the proper and consistent import of being-obliged in justice, in conscience, in honour, in duty, and the like?

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Can anything else be intended but that if justice, a good conscience, honour, duty, &c., be preserved, he must adopt one method rather than another?

Fourth, What is the binding force itself, in virtue of which the free agent becomes a sufferer on the abuse of his free-will?

Can this be anything else than Divine equity and power, or Divine power employed by equity?

II. By what considerations may it be made to appear that natural religion is insufficient to lead us to the chief good, or all the happiness of which we are capable?

In order to determine this question, distinguish between what has been actually attained in religion without Divine revelation,

and what is attainable; also ascertain the difference between the light of nature and the law of nature. Reflect, that though natural religion may afford sufficient premises for inferring the certain existence of a First Cause, yet it is insufficient to point out the true character of God to man in his present state. And though natural religion may teach the reasonableness of paying some homage to the Supreme Deity, yet it can afford no satisfactory aid in order to an open, consistent, steady, and fiducial manner of solemn worship. Consider how the fact stands, and has always stood, in reference to religious worship, where Divine revelation was unknown; and especially how incompetent is the light of nature to teach men, whether in public or in private, to pray as they ought.

Here may be inquired, what were the highest attainments of the best heathen moralists, in reference to the chief good, and whether they were not beholden for the best notions they had to Divine revelation? Some of their own concessions prove their painful uncertainty or gross mistakes.

To this may be added, an appeal to constant unprejudiced observations of the wisest men, and undisputed facts respecting the moral character of such as appear the advocates of natural religion to the exclusion of Christianity. Wherein has appeared the most important deficiency of such individuals as have rejected the religion of Jesus in favour of them pretended natural religion, in ancient and in modern times, especially the French and English infidels? and how is the national character of a people affected and formed by the propagation of such tenets?

III. What probable ground is there on which to expect a Divine revelation *à priori*?

Consider well the difference between the evidence of probability and demonstrative evidence, and the great importance of not confounding them; ascertain what is the precise intent and

utmost use of the former. Can the argument for the probability of a Divine revelation *à priori* be advanced any further than to prove that no absurdity can be fairly urged against the supposition, antecedently, of a revelation from God to His ignorant and guilty creatures? It may be noticed whether the

analogy of nature and providence in providing for our corporeal wants, does, or does not, afford some room to expect provision, for the acknowledged wants of our souls? Reflect also, whether man has any rational grounds for his conduct in killing animals for food without a Divine warrant? Consider especially how far it is reasonable to expect a Divine revelation from a consideration of the Divine benevolence? And what use are those advantages which reason suggests would attend, such Divine interposition?

PART SECOND.

*Of the Truth, or Evidences, and the Peculiar Nature of  
Christianity.*

IV. What are the principal arguments in favour of the truth of Christianity as a Divine revelation?

In reply to this very important question, it will be necessary to descend to particulars.

First, How far may it be assumed as a principle, that if Christianity be not credibly Divine, no other religion can be so?

Nearly allied to this question is another, May it be assumed, or may it not, that if Christianity be true, the ancient Jewish religion must be so too?

Second, Is there anything in miracles antecedently incredible?

Consider what might be objected with the greatest plausibility against the credibility of miracles; and more particularly what have infidels (Hume, &c.) mostly argued, and what is the most solid reply to such objections.

Third, How does this evidence, which may be produced as the united indubitable testimony of heathen as well as Christian writers, in proof of the great sufferings of the first propagators of Christianity, on account of their adherence to miraculous facts, prove the sincerity of their belief respecting those facts?

Consider also, how far is a belief so attested, by a number so considerable, as all must allow, to be competent in any other case when a miracle is not in question, worthy of credence by rational impartiality?

Fourth, How far is the reformation, and the refined sublime

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morality of the first publishers of the religion of Jesus, as coeval with their profession, an argument for the truth of their testimony and the religion they taught?

Fifth, What are the principal arguments in proof of the authenticity of the New Testament canon in general?

Learn which of these books were thought by some to be not of canonical authority—on what pretences—and with what reason.

Sixth, What evidence does there appear for the truth of Christianity from the topic of prophecy?

Consider what are the most decisive prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Christian religion and its Founder; and what are the most conclusive as to the present argument contained in the New Testament already fulfilled.

Seventh, How far may the success of the gospel in the world, in connexion with the means employed for that purpose, be fairly urged as an argument for the Divine origin of the Christian cause?

Eighth, Are there any other arguments of importance besides those which may be derived from the topics above mentioned?

Here, for instance, reflect how far the effects which universally follow a cordial approbation and sincere practice of the religion of Jesus form a proof.

V. What is the proper nature, and what are the distinguishing internal characters of Christianity, as contradistinguished from every other code of religion?

Particularly notice the representation it contains of the Supreme Being, of human nature, of moral obligation and government, of the chief good, &c.

First, Wherein consist the peculiar excellence and unrivalled glory of the personal character of Jesus?

Second, Wherein consist the extraordinary moral sentiments He taught? and wherein they differ from the highest attainments of preceding sages?

Third, In what respects did Jesus exemplify what He taught—with what exactness and dignity—in every situation of life and death?

Fourth, What advantages are derived from Christianity towards forming a rational and consistent view of the Divine nature, perfections, character, providence, and operations?

Fifth, What aids are afforded by the Christian revelation towards ascertaining the true notion of Divine legislation, moral government, and holy influence?

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Sixth, What helps are derived from the New Testament for our forming rational and consistent views of human nature, and the history of mankind?

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#### LECTURE IV.

##### ON THE GENUINE PRINCIPLES OF THEOLOGY.

Remember that the word *principle* is used in this connexion as denoting source or authoritative ground. Reflect how many different prevailing opinions are there on this head; what reasons may be assigned against the Jewish and Popish account of tradition as a principle of revealed religion.

Consider what may be assigned against the sufficiency of what some call “the light within” as superior to Scripture testimony; also, what is the nature, the use, and the value of “the moral sense,” as used by moral philosophers.

I. How may it be best proved that a Divine revelation, as the Christian religion has been shewn to be, is the only safe principle or genuine source of true theology?

But in order to reduce this general notion of revealed authority to practical use, it will be necessary to ascertain its proper limits; and while the Christian, the Protestant, the consistent divine, holds that “the Bible alone” is the principle of which we speak, it is requisite that a precise and determinate idea be annexed to the term “Bible.”

II. How is the canon of Scripture to be determined?

Here consider what are those criteria by which it may be known that any book is of canonical authority; and how far do these criteria belong to *all* the books which are included in the current editions of the New Testament.

III. In what sense may it be said that any part of the Old Testament is abrogated or “disannulled,” and on what account?

Reflect how the declared abolition of the “old covenant,” its “decaying, waxing old, and being ready to vanish away,” may be reconciled with that declaration of Jesus,—“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled,” (see Heb. viii., and Matt. v.) and in what respect we are obliged neither to “add to” nor “diminish from” the Sacred Word, or any part of it.

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IV. In what respects are the canonical Scriptures the only rule of faith and practice?

Observe the peculiar importance of this phrase at the time of the reformation from Popery, when the claims of contrary authorities (tradition, the apocryphal books, the Pope’s infallibility, &c.) ran high. How far may it be said that revealed religion does not oppose what is properly called natural religion, or the authority of Scripture that of right reason? Hence reflect what is the proper use of reason in matters of religion. Particularly, is reason, in any sense, the basis on which faith is founded? Is reason anything more than the power by which we compare ideas, and draw inferences from that comparison? Does not reason suppose antecedent principles, without which it could have no exercise? How far is inferential reasoning allowable on subjects of revelation?

Connected with this inquiry are the following:—How far is reason useful in comparing, not only what is revelation, and what is not, but also the several parts of revelation with each other? How far to be employed in illustrating the general import of revealed truth, and in shewing that no truth divinely revealed can be contrary to right reason, though above its adequate comprehension?

What was the comparative authority of the unwritten revelations given to the Patriarchs?

Nearly allied to this inquiry are the following considerations:—Has all revelation absolutely ceased since the closing of the New Testament canon? Are we warranted in saying that every impression supposed by the party to be a Divine revelation must necessarily be either imposture or delusion?

V. To what ought we to extend the infallibility of the New Testament writers, as to persons, things, and expressions?

Consider whether this infallibility be affected by the Scriptures having been conveyed down from age to age by a fallible channel, and whether or not by the present *varice lectiones*. Here inquire, in what texts of the Scriptures extant may we expect to find the Divine revealed will in the most pure and authentic form? and what reasons may be urged against the pretended superior authenticity of the Latin Vulgate?—the comparative claims of the Septuagint version? In this connexion further inquire, how far is the authenticity of any book affected by the circumstance of the author's name not being certainly known?

VI. How far may it be useful, in order to constitute a judicious exposition, to be well satisfied respecting the periods of time when the several books were written, the occasions of writing them, both local, moral, &c.

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VII. Have any books divinely inspired, or such as were entitled to the name canonical, been ever lost, either entirely or for a time?

It may be noticed here, how far those books which were extant and canonical in the time of Ezra were altered by him, and what he probably did in the affair; also inquire into the source and bounds of his commission for such an undertaking.

VIII. Are the Hebrew points coeval with the *Matres Lectiones* and consonants? What are the principal arguments against the points being of Divine original?

Here, as opportunity, the student should avail himself of the arguments of Morinus, Capellns, Grotius, Walton, Lewis, Hutchinson, &c.

What are the principal reasons assigned in favour of the points as of equal standing and authority with the consonants?

On this consult, when convenient, the Buxtorfs, Schultens, Boston's "Tractatus Stigmalogicus," and P. Whitfield's "Dissertation on the Hebrew Vowel Points;" especially Dr Owen "De Punctationis Hebraicæ Origine," in his "Theologoumena."

IX. What is the chief advantage that may be expected from comparing any versions, whether ancient or modern, with the original, in ascertaining the sense of a passage?

What versions are of greatest authority, or of most repute, of those that are called ancient, also modern?

Here some remarks might be made on the character of our English current version, with the disadvantages attending the habit of always correcting it in public exercises, by appealing to the original.

For an account of the numerous translations of the Bible into English, see Lewis's "Complete History of the Several Translations," &c.

X. What are some of the best rules for interpreting or obtaining the true sense of the Holy Scriptures?

Notice in this connexion what is the analogy of faith, how to find and preserve it.

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## LECTURE V.

### CONCERNING THE BEING, EXISTENCE, AND NATURE OF GOD.

Seeing theology presupposes the being and existence of God, its

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proper subject,—as the first and chief part of it, from whence all the other parts flow, under which they are all virtually contained, and to which they all finally refer,—of what use is it to a divine to study the evidence of this acknowledged truth?

Though every science presupposes one or more first principles, and Christian theology does this, "There is a Being of infinite perfections," yet important advantages may be derived from digesting well the evidences of the all-momentous fact.

I. How far is it proper to admit the Cartesian maxim—"Incumbit philosophanti dubitare?" rather, what evil consequences would follow from this mode of investigation?

II. What are some of the most necessary cautions for a profitable inquiry into this most fundamental subject?

Consider well the extent of human understanding—the magnitude of the object—our proneness to conceive of infinities after the manner of unites, and the danger of it in theological subjects—our strong bias to moral evil or to the side of error. Here, too, shew how reasonable to expect objections of great difficulty, and what temper of mind is most suitable to the inquiry.

III. Wherein consists the import of the argument for the being and existence of God from the “position of sufficient causes?” and how far solid?

On this principle, it may be noticed, proceeded Locke,—“That something must have existed from eternity;” but the universality of which Clarke would not grant. Baumgarten removed objections to it, and Pestorius attempted to complete the evidence.

IV. What is the celebrated Cartesian argument for the existence of God? and how far demonstrative?

V. What arguments, if any, in proof of a First Cause, *a priori*, are the most convincing and incontrovertible?

VI. What are those arguments, *a posteriori*, which are best calculated to convince a subtle and rational inquirer?

Here it is obvious that the argument of the “position of sufficient causes” is the basis of all appeals to effects. That argument admitted, every object in nature is an argument sufficiently demonstrative. Without it, to appeal to facts, however numerous or marvellous, is inconclusive. Hence the vast importance of the essential difference between an absolute and contingent being.

VII. What is the most just and worthy representation of the Divine nature.

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How far are the terms existence, knowledge, and power, well adapted to express it? or the terms life, light, and love? or the term spirit? What other signs or names are most expressive of this glorious object, particularly scriptural ones, which, for various reasons, must be most appropriate?

VIII. What useful inferences flow from the subject now discussed?

First, Mark the folly of material representations of the Divine nature. As the systems and practice of idolaters must be the result of thought and design, how is the existence of such a folly to be accounted for?

Second, Shew the danger of a more refined or ideal representation of the Divine nature. Is Locke’s doctrine of ideas sufficiently guarded on this point?

Third, From the superior evidence of this doctrine as a part of Christian theology, compared with the absurd notions and glaring

inconsistencies of the most enlightened heathens, in connexion with its being on all hands confessed as a principle the most fundamental, mark the great excellence and incomparable worth of the sacred writings, whence the superior evidence proceeds.

Here might be introduced a few of the many sublime passages of Holy Writ which appear so strikingly superior to all the heathen descriptions of the Supreme Being.

Fourth, What are some of the many bad consequences that naturally follow from the denial of this first principle? What security to human government or society of any kind? Eeligion, ever deemed by the most amiable of men their glory and support, would be irrational and impossible; and virtue, which in every age has extorted the approving admiration of its very enemies, would shrink into the contracted insulated selfishness which has been universally despised.

Fifth, How may the unity of God be inferred from His nature? and how it applies to His essence but not to His attributes and personalities?

From *an fit Deus* follows the infinite importance of *Quis fit Deus*, as in our next.

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## LECTURE VI.

### ON THE ATTRIBUTES AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

If there be a God; as before proved there is,—and since our capacity to do this also implies our accountableness to Him in a manner different from other creatures, who have no ability to think and reason concerning Him, and who have not theopathic affections,—it must be highly interesting to us to be acquainted with His attributes and perfections, His true character, equitable government, and sovereign prerogatives.

Observe that the same cautions that were needful in our inquiries respecting the being of God, are also needful in treating of His attributes.

I. What is intended by the terms “attributes” and “perfections,” when applied to God?

After explaining the import of the terms, shew that these infinite excellences of Deity are inseparable from the Divine essence—and from each other—especially since all Divine attributes are essential to God.

Hence the properties of God may be shewn to be not accidental. Though a creature may be divested of this attribute, or that quality, and yet not cease to exist; yet to deny God perfection of power, wisdom, holiness, &c., would be tantamount to the denial of His existence.

Nor should we conceive of God's perfections as component parts of the Divine nature; but their plurality is analogical, by way of allusion and resemblance to our own conception of other objects, and in order to assist our own minds as finite.

II. How does it appear that the attributes of Deity cannot differ as one created thing differs from another?

Here shew that the attributes of God are in reality the same thing with the essence, and the distinction arises not from anything in God, but from our limited mode of conception; yet this is not formed without a certain regard to the thing itself. i\or should this our mode of apprehension be denominated wrong, so much as imperfect—not false, but rather deficient.

Hence we ought not to confound these attributes, or their effects, but carefully define and distinguish; thus goodness and beneficence differ as cause and effect; as do also justice and punishment. The attribute is necessary, but the effect is free.

III. In order to assist our imperfect conceptions, how may the Divine attributes be most conveniently arranged?

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First, How far does the distinction of incommunicable and communicable answer the proposed end? Ascertain the just import of the terms in this connexion.

Second, Enumerate and explain those attributes which are termed “incommunicable.”

Third, Also those that are “communicable.”

Fourth, How far does the distinction of the Divine attributes and perfections into the uncaused and causing assist us?

Fifth, What are those attributes which are most eminently expressive of God as a Being uncaused?

Here an attempt should be made to reconcile the seeming inconsistency there is between the doctrine before advanced on the “position of sufficient causes,” and that attribute of Deity which asserts His being “uncaused.”

Is the difficulty sufficiently solved by saying that though unites necessarily require a cause, infinities admit of none? If this be not a sufficient reply, what is?

Sixth, “What are those attributes which are implied in the consideration of God being the “cause” of every other thing?

Seventh, How far does the distinction of the Divine perfections into natural and moral elucidate the subject?

Eighth, What are those “natural” perfections of God which most eminently imply and constitute His moral character?

Ninth, What other distinctions might be serviceable to assist our conceptions in reference to the Divine perfections?

Here might be noticed a distinction in the terms employed—as proper and figurative, negative and positive.

Also as to the relations themselves—as inimitable and imitable, absolute and relative, &c.

IV. “What are those attributes of God which the corrupters of Christian theology are most given to misrepresent?”

First, Wherein lies the greatest danger of mistake with respect to the Divine goodness or benevolence?

Here might be noticed that representation of benevolence which makes the certain and final happiness of creatures the chief end of its operations.

What other misapplications of this Divine attribute should be guarded against? For instance, it has been said, “We can see no reason why He should wish to make His creation at all, and not wish to make it as happy as possible.”

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Again, it has been argued, “Since all evils are necessarily connected with some good, and generally productive of it, all the works of God appear to Him at all times very good, happiness greatly abounding on the whole.”

Second, In what respects are the attributes of mercy most likely to be misrepresented?

Notice here the notion of absolute mercy, irrespective of the rights of government and legal sanctions, and how far such a notion tends to sap the foundation of moral government. Other abuses.

Third, As justice also is liable to be misrepresented, wherein lies the greatest danger of this? Distinctions of justice.

Perhaps the greatest danger here arises from wrong notions of the objects of justice. For instance, one who allows the attribute of justice in Deity, and its adequate operations, may yet greatly misrepresent the effects on account of wrong views of its objects.

Fourth, From what quarter, and on what accounts, should we expect an opposition to the doctrine of Divine sovereignty, especially considered as an attribute of Deity?

Perhaps in nothing are we more liable to rest satisfied with inconsistent notions than in the relation subsisting between justice and sovereignty; the accurate discrimination of their objects, and their precise effects respectively.

Fifth, What are some of the abuses of the Divine prescience?

It has, for instance, been asserted, "That God will not know, and much less determine, anything concerning the employment of the wicked in their miserable eternity." And respecting the blessed and their acts, it has been said that God "foresees in general, without limiting or determining anything particularly concerning these acts, or their rangings and infinite multiplicity of combinations."

To what, therefore, does the Divine knowledge extend? Are free actions and contingencies, in the proper, or any acceptance of the word, included?

What is the difference between the theological acceptations of *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ* and *scientia visionis*? And what is the doctrine of *scientia media*, and wherein is it defective?

Sixth, What are the chief sources of mistake respecting the Divine infinity?

Here maybe noticed the mode of judging by analogy; the attempt of acquiring an idea of the infinite by a progressive series of

finite conceptions. How far may that idea be called the idea of God? or is it not essentially defective?

Therefore, what is the mode of attaining the true notion of infinite, as in God?

Seventh, What other attributes of Deity are liable to be mistaken or to be misrepresented, and in what respects?

## LECTURE VII.

### ON THOSE ATTRIBUTES WHICH ARE COMMONLY DEEMED INCOMMUNICABLE.

It is observed by one, that “man when he speaks of God is but as a blind person describing the light.” And again:—“The most proper answer we could give to the question, ‘What is God?’ would be to observe a profound silence; or if we should think proper to answer anything, it ought to be something next to this absolute silence—viz., God is, which gives a higher and better idea of Him than anything we can either express or conceive.”

The above is highly expressive of great reverence and modesty, but should not operate to the full extent of the representation. But why? Is there not some real advantage to be found in humbly studying the Divine perfections?

I. What are those attributes in Deity which are so strictly and entirely incommunicable, that nothing in the creature bears the smallest resemblance or analogy to them; and, therefore, with equal propriety may be called inimitable?

II. Is independence an incommunicable attribute? Is it absolutely so, or only in part?

Here might be noticed a question of the utmost importance, Whether it be a proper object of Omnipotence to impart any degree of independence of Himself to a creature?

III. What is the best definition of the Divine simplicity, and whether this be an attribute incommunicable?

What arguments chiefly conclude that God is a being utterly remote from, and infinitely incapable of, all composition and division?

Here note an objection that may be made against the Trinity, as in-

consistent with the simplicity of the Divine nature. This has no force but on the supposition of a plurality of essences, whereas absolute simplicity does not stand opposed to modifications, which perhaps is the most proper notion of a Divine per-

sonality. To which might be added, that simplicity is no more inconsistent with a trinity of Divine hypostases, or personal modifications, than it is with the attributes of power, wisdom, and goodness. Simplicity respects the essence, trinity the modifications. Notice and answer the objection which may be made to the Divine decrees from the simplicity of God; from the former implying deliberation and freedom.

IV. What is the just notion of the infinity of God? and whether it be an incommunicable attribute?

Distinguish between the proper and the improper sense of the term: that may be said to be infinite in respect to us which is not so in itself; but here the inquiry is concerning infinity in the most absolute sense. Infinity, with regard to us, as when applied to quantity, extension, divisibility, &c., is properly nothing more than a denial of comprehended bounds.

By what arguments may the proper, positive, absolute infinity of the Divine essence be proved?

Here might be shewn why God, although infinite in the highest sense, cannot produce an infinite effect; why no creature can comprehend this infinity; and how the supposition of God perfectly comprehending Himself is consistent with His being thus infinite.

If all creatures are infinitely remote from the Divine perfection, how may we prove that there is, at the same time, an inequality of remoteness; or avoid the consequence, that all creatures are equally perfect?

V. What is the proper difference between infinity and immensity, when we apply the terms to the Divine attributes?

It may be observed, that, as infinity has an immediate and more direct reference to the Divine essence, so immensity has a more immediate reference to place, or the infinity of the Divine essence with respect to place. Does this differ from omnipresence?

Here mark the difference between the immensity or the omnipresence of God, as to its virtue and operation, on the one hand, and the same, as to its essence, on the other.

By how many ways may it be said that God is present with His creatures,—at least, more eminently?

In reference to this subject, it will be of service to consider the following theological distinctions:—A being may be said to

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be in a place either circumscriptive, definitive, or repletive; and God may be said to be in a place ἐνεργητικῶς, νοητικῶς, οὐσιωδῶς.

By what arguments may it be best proved that God is immense as to His essence, as well as *per potentiam* and *cognitionem*?

Is God more present in heaven, essentially, than elsewhere?

How does it appear worthy of God to be present in all persons and places, without exception?

Here distinguish between an efficient and preserving cause, on the one hand, and, on the other, a physical contact, mixture, or composition. In what sense may it be said that God is far from the wicked?

How are we to reconcile those expressions in Scripture concerning God,—“The Lord ascended, descended, came, went, &c.?”

VI. How may the real and absolute eternity of God be described?

Here observe that as immensity, with respect to our mode of conception, refers to place, so eternity stands related to time.

Shew the difference between eternity in an improper and relative sense, and in a proper and absolute sense.

How may this attribute be proved to belong to Deity?

How are we to understand difference of time, as applied to God as He who is, was, and is to come?

Many comparisons have been used to illustrate the difference between eternity and continued time. As the sun co-exists with all the days of time, but these days do not co-exist among themselves, but each one in his own order successively; so, though time were to co-exist with eternity, it would be only as days co-exist with the sun.

The beginning of a line or of time may be called a mathematical point; the smallest extension either of bulk or of time may be called a physical point; but that which denotes a negation of extension and divisibility may be denominated a metaphysical point. In this last sense time may be called a point in eternity, a channel and stream, &c.

VII. Wherein consists the immutability of God? Does it extend to thought, as well as essence? to possibility, as well as

act? How may it be proved that God is thus absolutely immutable?

How may the immutability of God be shewn to be consistent with the facts of creation, providential acts, &c.?

Here notice the difference between “to change the will” and “to will a change.”

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VIII. What are some of the most important inferences deducible from the incommunicable attributes of Deity?

First, From all in general?

Second, From each in particular?

Are there any other known attributes of Deity which may be called, in the same sense with the foregoing ones, incommunicable?

## LECTURE VIII.

### ON THOSE ATTRIBUTES WHICH ARE CALLED COMMUNICABLE.

In what sense may any Divine attributes be called communicable?

I. What are those attributes of God which may be called communicable?

How far is that distribution just which refers them all to intellect, will, and power?

How far is the following distribution proper—viz., life, wisdom, will, and power?

Or this—viz., knowledge, goodness, justice?

Or this—viz., wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth?

II. How may the Divine intellect be most properly represented?

Here shew wherein consists the analogy or faint resemblance of something in created intelligent natures to this perfection of God.

And observe that the life of God, considered under the notion of “intellect,” implies both knowledge and wisdom.

III. What is the proper account that may be given of the Divine knowledge?

In order to this, it will be proper to shew the difference between knowledge and wisdom. While the former is the act of the intellect alone, the latter implies an act of the will also.

First, What is the mode of Divine knowledge?

In this it is eminently distinguished from all finite knowledge, since God knows all things perfectly by His own essence, and not by external appearance,—intuitively, and not by outward search,—distinctly, without any possibility of exception or mistake,—immutably, for as He continues immovable while He gives mo-

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tion to all things else, so He sees the various changes of things with an immutable knowledge.

Second, What are the objects of Divine knowledge?

Here the following objects may require some notice:—God himself, and all things out of Himself, both universally and individually; all things which may be, which He wills to be, and which He does, which He either wills or suffers to be done by His creatures; all causes, modes, and circumstances,—present, past, and future, great and small; the thoughts of rational creatures; the recesses of the mind; words, endeavours, and actions, in their beginning, progress, and end.

Perhaps a distinction should be here made, that God knows Himself *per se*, and directly,—His own production *extra se*, indirectly,—and moral evil *per contraria*, as a shadow is known by light and substance.

So that God knows all things, under all possible considerations, whether of quantity, quality, time, state, &c.

Third, For what reasons ought we to extend the Divine knowledge to future contingencies, as they are called?

Here notice the different acceptations of the term “contingent,” as when any being or event is the effect of will, in opposition to absolute necessity; and in this sense every created being is contingent,—or, more commonly, that event is contingent which is not certainly produced by second causes only. A contingent future event is a complex notion: as an event, it is certain; as it is contingent, the mode of its production is implied.

Fourth, How may it be proved that physical contingencies,—that is, those events which are contingent with respect to second causes,—are known to God in the most certain, determinate, and infallible manner?

Fifth, What are the most prominent outlines of the much-controverted subject of *scientia media*?

In order to this, observe that *scientia*, when applied to God, is properly distinguished into *scientia simplicis intelligentiæ*, and *scientia visionis*; the former having respect to things merely possible, the latter to things certainly future. The one, therefore, may be called natural knowledge, the other free; the former is to be considered as antecedent to all decree, the latter subsequent to a decree, and, as to real entities, the proper effects thereof.

Some learned Jesuits, dissatisfied with the above-represented kinds of Divine knowledge, invented another, which they supposed to be a medium between them, and therefore called it *scientia*

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*media*. Among these, one of the most notorious was Molina.

This representation of the subject was opposed with great spirit by the Dominicans, and afterwards by the Jansenists. One of the first and most noted opposers of the Jesuitic notion of *scientia media* was Alvarez, and, of our countrymen, Dr Twiss, who published a folio volume, “De Scientia Media,” in answer to Gabriel Penott and Francis Suarez.

The chief question is not, whether God knows future contingent events? but, by what medium, and particularly by any other knowledge than the natural and the free?

Perhaps this intricate subject is capable of more accurate statement by means of a just notion of passive power and the origin of moral evil.

IV. Wherein consists the proper difference between Divine wisdom and knowledge? also between wisdom, will, and power?

Here observe that knowledge belongs to the intellect only; wisdom implies an act of the will also. Wisdom directs, the will governs, and power executes.

V. What are some of the most important questions relative to the Divine will?

First, May we say that God wills anything necessarily? What are those things?

There can be no question whether God wills some things freely, seeing all His decrees or purposes are originally the free acts of His will.

The question, therefore, relates not to hypothetical, but absolute necessity; therefore—

Second, What things may He be said to will freely?

Third, What is the proper difference between what is called the will of purpose and the will of precept,—the hidden and revealed?

Fourth, By what arguments may it be proved that this distinction is well founded?

Does this differ from the distinction of the will into decretive and rectoral?

Fifth, Can there be any cause assigned for the exercise of the Divine will?

By “cause” is meant, not a reason of the Divine will, but a something which moves it to choose this or the other; in other words, whether the will of God be itself the supreme cause of all things? For if it be, it can have no cause of its exercise. Yet of things willed, one thing may be the cause of another, though it

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has been maintained by sound divines that for the act of willing no cause can be assigned. Shew the reasons on which this conclusion is suspended.

Sixth, Closely connected with the former question is the following—Is the will of God the primary rule of right?

What has given rise and importance to this inquiry, even among divines otherwise agreed, was the difference in their views of the causation of moral good and evil. They who refer all good and evil to the Divine will, must make the Divine will the rule of right, and *vice versa*.

Hence, a thing is good, according to them, because God chooses it. And moral evil, they say, as chosen by Him, is not evil; but when chosen by us, it is evil, because God wills and declares it to be so.

VI. By what arguments do you prove that there is in God what may be properly called the attribute of vindictive justice? and wherein is it different from equity?

First notice the term “justice,” and the different ways in which it is used—as universal and particular, distributive, remunerative, penal, &c.

Then prove the existence of vindictive justice in God, from different topics of argument.

VII. What is the proper difference between the goodness, love, grace, and mercy of God?

In order to this, define the just character of each, whence follows the relation and differences.

VIII. Wherein consists the power of God?

Here shew the true nature of power in general, and in reference to God. What is intended by omnipotence?

What are the proper objects of omnipotence?

IX. What is the just nature and definition of Divine sovereignty and right?

First, By what consideration may it be proved that God is possessed of such an attribute as that of sovereignty? Second, Are there any limits to sovereign right?

X. What is the proper nature and definition of the holiness of God?

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## LECTURE IX.

### CONCERNING THE TRINITY OF PERSONS IN THE DIVINE ESSENCE.

In treating on this awfully mysterious, but highly important subject it is requisite that all the terms which relate to it be carefully, and accurately explained, as there is reason to suspect that most of the controversies which have been agitated in the Church and in the world on the subject have been greatly owing to neglect in this particular.

I. Explain these terms which stand closely connected with the present subject, among which are the following:—

First, What is the proper import of the word essence, in reference to God?

Second, When the term substance is applied to God, what is the import of it?

Third, The term subsistence, as it stands closely connected with the subject of this lecture, should be very particularly noticed. What is the difference between to exist and to subsist?

Here may be noticed the Greek words used by the Christian fathers in the Trinitarian controversy, ὑπαρξις and ὑπ'στασις, and their precise import shewn, and wherein they differ from οὐσία.

Fourth, But as the term person has been most objected to, and the greatest occasion of offence to Anti-Trinitarians, the sense in which it is taken, when properly employed in this controverted subject, should be very accurately ascertained.

To this end, shew the senses in which it is not taken; and that a scriptural person, in this Trinitarian sense, is alike remote from a Divine attribute, and a separate being. Since God is but one essence and being, His attributes are innumerable, and His personalities only three.

II. What is the substance of the present subject according to Scripture?

In this investigation it will be useful to recollect, that it is highly reasonable, even *a priori*, to regard the Divine existence as differing essentially from all created existence. Nor is there any reason against extending this difference to the mode of existence.

First, By what considerations may it be shewn that there is no

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impossibility in what the orthodox maintain, no contradictory inconsistency, no improbability *à priori*.

Second, Enumerate the principal particulars of the distinguishing doctrine.

Among others the following may be noticed:—

That an orthodox Trinitarian disclaims *Tritheism* no less than a Unitarian.

That the Divine essence, or nature, subsists in a threefold mode.

That nominal characters and relations differ from personal subsistence; and that the latter is essential to the orthodox doctrine.

That each Divine subsistence assumes to itself peculiar personal properties, which are not applicable to the others.

Yet that perfections peculiar to Deity are ascribed to each; —which implies that each mode of being, or subsistence, or person possesses or partakes the Divine essence.

III. How far is the doctrine of eternal generation, or emanation of personality, declared or implied in the Holy Scriptures?

Notice what is intended by those who maintain the doctrine of eternal emanation; which may be expressed in some such way as this: an eternal communication of the same numerical

essence from the Father to the Son, and from the Father and the Son to the Spirit. But it cannot be too much inculcated that this communication, emanation, or generation, is not the effect of mere will, but necessary.

Perhaps the want of duly attending to this distinction has been the chief hold of Arianism, in opposing the orthodox; for if the communication be the effect of will, wherein does it differ from creating act?

It is also probable that the terms “begotten” and “generation,” often used in this controversy, have greatly contributed to keep out of sight, what of all other things should be much attended to—viz., that the communication or emanation of personality is necessary, in opposition to contingency, and dependence on will.

Another consideration of great moment, but very much kept out of sight in this debate, is the strict co-existence of personalities.

For want of due attention to the nature of the subject, the mind is deceived by the sound of terms; for no sooner is it said that the Son is the “only-begotten of the Father,” than we form the idea of priority in the Father, and of posteriority in the Son, analogous to the relations of men.

And even among men, notwithstanding the infinite disparity between an infinite spirit and a worm of the earth, and between the voluntary acts of a creature and an essential property of

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God, as this emanation may be called; it would be difficult, nay impossible, to form an idea of such relation of father and son but as simultaneous.

One may exist as a man before his son, but not as a father of such a son; and this is what most consistent Trinitarians hold.

In the order of time or existence, as conceived by us, the notion of essence is prior to that of personality; nor is there any more impropriety in this representation than in our considering the Divine attributes in an order subsequent to the Divine essence.

But as to personal relations, and the mode of subsistence in Deity, there is no more reason to suppose priority, than there is in saying that goodness in God is prior to wisdom, and power subsequent to both.

Through carnal associations, we find a difficulty in preserving the subject itself, and that to which it bears a partial analogy, sufficiently distinct. Thus, among men a father has a personal subsistence prior to his fatherhood; but not so in the other case. In the sacred orthodox doctrine, no personal subsistence is to be conceived prior to fatherhood and sonship; nay, these relations constitute the personalities. If there be no son there is no personal father, and *vice versa*. Here may be noticed that the term “Father” is not always used in a personal sense, either in Scripture or among divines,—as, “Our Father who art in heaven,”—but answers often to the word Creator, because we “are His offspring;” or Governor, because we are His family, &c.\*

\* The proper use of illustrations by comparison is not to *prove* the doctrine, but to shew from analogy the *possibility* of what is apprehended to be the collected meaning of revelation on the subject. Suppose, then, the infinite mind, as to essence, to be necessarily active, or *life* itself; is there anything unreasonable in the thought of a *terminus a quo*, and a *terminus ad quem*, relative to this essential energy and life antecedent to will? Is it impossible that these *termini* should contribute relative properties, which may not improperly be called subsistences or persons? Is it not possible that this infinite and infinitely active *life* should be denominated, according to the collective sense of revelation, as a relative property *a quo*, the *Father*; and the *same life*, as a relative property *ad quem*, the *Son*; while the essential energy of this life terminating *ad quem* is eternal generation, or begetting? Again, is there anything absurd in the supposition that this infinitely active life, proceeding *hi medio a duobus terminis*, should constitute another distinctive relative property called *Spirit*?

In all works *ad extra*, the effects of power and will, no one person acts exclusively of the other; therefore no work *ad extra*, whether creation, redemption, or any other whatever, can be the *distinguishing cause* of these relative properties. Is it not, then, a possible and a rational notion, and intelligible language, when it is said, that Father, Son, and Spirit, (into the name of whom Christians were to be baptized,) are these positive, real, or personal modes of subsistence in God, or one infinitely active life? and that the Son of God, by eternal generation, assumed our nature into personal union with Himself, thus constituting a glorious

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In proportion as our observations are just respecting the emanation of the Son, and the co-existent personalities of the Father and Son, as the results of a necessary essential cause, so will they apply to the personality of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Supposing the substance of the doctrine to be scriptural, how far is it justifiable to use terms not used in the Scripture, to express a doctrine of mere Divine revelation? for instance, in the word Trinity, &c.?

There is a great difference between unscriptural terms and terms not used in Scripture: thus, the terms “trinity” and tri-  
plicity are alike not used in Scripture; but the former, we  
conceive, is perfectly consistent with Scripture, (as the Greek  
Τριάς,) while the latter is unscriptural.

In like manner the much-controverted terms ἰσοϋσιν and ἰσοιο-  
ούσιν, &c.

V. How far is the doctrine of the Trinity a fundamental article  
of faith?

Here it will be necessary to distinguish between ignorance and a  
denial of the doctrine; also between the several degrees of  
knowledge in the enjoyment of the same means.

If, therefore, after proper distinctions, and candid allowance made,  
the doctrine of the Trinity be fundamental, or indispensably  
necessary to salvation, by what arguments may it be proved to  
be such?

How far was this doctrine revealed under the Old Testament eco-  
nomy, and the probable highest attainments of ancient saints?

In this connexion it will be useful to notice the difference between  
a doctrinal fact and its manner.

Mediator between sinners and the Divine nature, which, though in itself love, is  
consuming fire to offenders?

The sentiment of eternal generation, and that which represents Father, Son, and  
Spirit, as terms of distinctive personal relations, seems much less exceptionable to  
many who have long considered both sides than that which holds these terms as  
expressive of works or offices *ad extra*, while yet a Trinity of Persons is acknow-  
ledged. For it may be urged, either these Divine persons have essential distinct-  
ive characters, or they have not; if not, with what propriety can they be called  
*three persons*? The idea of three distinct *beings* is disclaimed, and yet here are  
supposed *three persons* without any *difference* of distinctive characters; that is, a  
diversity without any assignable ground of difference. But if they have essential  
distinctive characters, what are they if not those held by consistent Athanasians,  
in some respects corresponding with the terms *begetting*, *begotten*, and *proceeding*,  
as before explained? If it be said, the works of redemption; it may be replied,  
these are works *ad extra*, and therefore belong to *each* person. Is any Divine  
perfection, as love, goodness, mercy, wisdom, power, or the like, a sufficient ground  
of personal distinction? Surely that person is not Divine that possesses not each  
alike, and in an infinite degree.

How far does the formula of Christian baptism imply the doctrine  
of the Trinity, and the design of the Institutor to teach those  
who were to be initiated into the Christian Church both the  
doctrine itself and its fundamental importance?

Here notice the practical tendency of the doctrine—the different views of good men concerning it—and how far that difference affects its fundamental character.

VI. What seems to have been the most common view of the subject before the Council of Nice? At what rate should the opinions of these fathers be estimated?

VII. What are the principal objections that have been made to this doctrine, and the replies respectively?

Shew what are the chief objections of the Socinians, Arians, Semi-Arians, or any others, the most plausible, and the best answers.

AVhat are of all these objections the most weighty in your mind?

VIII. What are some of the most interesting practical uses of the doctrine of the Trinity consistently maintained?

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## LECTURE X.

### CONCERNING THE DEITY OF THE LOGOS, AND THE DEITY AND PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We now proceed to a much-controverted subject, in discussing which much diligence, accuracy, knowledge of the Scriptures, and unfeigned humility, are highly requisite.

I. What have been the principal opinions of considerable extent and duration, concerning the person of Jesus Christ, from the commencement of the Christian era to the present time?

In prosecuting this inquiry, it will not be necessary to enter minutely into the dogmas of the ancient heretics; but rather to shew, with all due conciseness, the prominent and most distinguishing features of the varieties.

II. What are the most prevailing opinions of Christian professors, at the present period, respecting the person of Christ, and what the comparative degree of prevalence?

The same brevity is recommended in the present case as in the preceding one; but the utmost care in ascertaining the precise views of those who may be supposed as the most dangerous opposers of the true Scripture doctrine.

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III. To what must we ascribe this variety of opinions respecting the person of the Redeemer? Is it to the nature of the subject—the language of Scripture—the state of the mind—to all these, or to some other cause or causes?

IV. How far is the supposed increase of opposition to the proper deity of the Saviour an argument against the truth of it?

V. What is the most proper mode of investigating this important subject?

As this awful and mysterious doctrine is confessedly to be decided by a right understanding of the Scripture testimony concerning it, is there any better way than to collect all the passages which treat directly of the subject, and then to collect all the other passages from whence the truth may be fairly inferred?

VI. What are the chief arguments in proof of the proper deity of the Redeemer?

First, How far is the Saviour's deity inferable from the names and titles ascribed to Him, which are usually ascribed to God?

Second, How far is the same conclusion to be drawn from the attributes, properties, or perfections which are assigned Him in Scripture?

Third, Are the works which the Holy Scriptures ascribe to Christ, such as creation, upholding all things, and the like, conclusive arguments in the present question?

Fourth, What are we to infer on the present subject from the adoration and praise which are in Scripture ascribed to the Saviour?

Fifth, How may we infer the deity of Christ from the fact of His resurrection compared with His assertions?

Sixth, How far do the orthodox doctrines of a proper atonement, imputed righteousness, vital union and influence, if granted, imply the Saviour's deity?

Seventh, What argumentative and real force is there in the consideration of Christ's universal empire, towards establishing the point of Christ's Divine nature?

Eighth, How far may the same inference be drawn from His being our Judge at the last day?

VII. How far does the title "The Son of God" imply His divinity?

First, Is this expressive only of His mediatorial office, or of His mode of relative subsistence?

Second, If the latter, how far is it an argument for His proper deity?

VIII. What evidence is there from Scripture testimony that the Holy Spirit is possessed of divinity and personality?

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Here the same topics may be introduced as before in reference to the deity of Christ—titles, attributes, works, worship.

IX. What have been some of the most plausible and weighty objections made to the subject of this lecture?

X. What are some of the practical uses of the doctrine?

## LECTURE XI.

### CONCERNING THE DIVINE PURPOSES OR DECREES— THEIR NATURE AND OBJECTS.

Having treated of the nature, perfections, and personalities of the Godhead, we proceed to discuss the profound and awful subject of the Divine decrees.

As the Scriptures use various terms, expressive of purposes or decrees, as *πρῶγνωσις*, *πρῶθεσις*, *ῶρισμένη βουλή*, *εὐδοκία*, or the like—

I. What is the most scriptural and theological definition of the Divine decrees?

To form an accurate definition, it should be remembered that God has been called, and not improperly, *Actus purus et simplicissimus*.

Also, that the Divine decrees are among the acts of God—that these acts are eternal, in a sense absolute, and essential—that they partake of some other properties and differences.

II. What are the chief properties of the Divine decrees?

Though the hints given under the former head were chiefly designed to assist in forming a definition, they may be of further use to ascertain the properties of the Divine decrees. Here it will be proper to bring together as into a focus all those properties

that properly belong to a Divine decree, whether mentioned in the definition or not.

III. By what arguments may the existence of such decrees as before defined and explained be proved?

It will be necessary here to produce those passages of Holy Writ where the different expressions are used which imply the doctrine of the decrees.

The consideration also of the Divine perfections may be advanced, and especially omniscience. Our absolute dependence as

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creatures may be also urged, or the dependence of second causes on the first.

IV. Wherein does a decree differ from a resolution, which is the result of reasoning?

It is obvious that the principal difference must be sought from the infinite simplicity of the Divine nature and the intuitive nature of infinite knowledge, compared with the infinite deficiency of our minds in these respects, and the consequent discursive manner of ratiocination.

V. Wherein do the Divine decrees differ from those acts of the Divine nature which constitute its personalities?

VI. Wherein do they differ from the *fate* of the heathen?

Here insert that notion of fate which has been supposed to come nearest the doctrine of Divine decrees according to the Holy Scriptures.

VII. How far may a decree be termed the efficient cause of whatever things are future?

Here distinguish upon different objects of the decree, or rather the qualities of events. Is sin or moral evil in any respect an object of Divine decree? If not, on what principle?

VIII. Can it be supposed that God in any case changes His decree?

How may we reconcile the perpetual changes that take place in the creatures with the Divine decrees? To which may be added the solution of objections from some declared purposes of God not taking place; as, for instance, the destruction of Nineveh.

IX. Whence does it appear that the Divine decrees are intrinsically one, and not divers? If intrinsically one, whence the propriety of using the plural term?

X. How far may a decree be termed the exemplary idea of things future? And when ideas are ascribed to God, wherein do they differ from those of creatures?

Our ideas, it is evident, are impressed. Are those of God so in any respect?

XI. How may it be proved that the Divine decrees are eternal? If eternal, may they be considered by us as first or last? and can they be considered as eternal *à posteriori*.

XII. Are we to consider the Divine decrees as in God essentially, or only accidentally? If they are the immanent acts of the Divine will, how can they be said to be essential to God? May we

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infer from the supposition that they are *ipsa essentia volens*, that therefore they may be identified with the essence? But if a decree be an essential act of God, how can it admit of freedom, which seems to be implied in the idea of a decree? And again, if essential, how does it appear that a decree is not the same as God himself?

XIII. Are any of the Divine decrees conditional? If they are, in what sense? But if not so, *à priori*, for what reasons?

Here also notice the difference between the decree itself being conditional, and the thing decreed; also, how we may reconcile conditional promises and threatenings with the unconditional decrees concerning them; and shew that the distinction between the secret and revealed will of God is well founded, not only as implied in Scripture testimony, but also in the nature of things.

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## LECTURE XII.

### ON LIBERTY AND NECESSITY.

The subjects of this lecture have long agitated the ingenuity of the inquisitive and the learned. Much difficulty has arisen from too hasty an assumption that liberty and necessity are inconsistent. Whereas the same subject may be free in one respect while necessitated in another.

I. How many different kinds of liberty are there?

Here may be shewn the most general notion of liberty, denoting freedom or exemption from compulsion to evil, and from restraint, where good is the object to be chosen, but not from hypothetical necessity.

Notice the principal kinds of liberty, and shew wherein liberty of action differs from that of choice.

II. What is the difference between the liberty of moral agents and the spontaneity of brutes? Is there, or is there not, any difference between what is called instinct and spontaneity? And is this consistent with decretive necessity. Hence infer to what extent man is free, and what constitutes free agency.

III. By what arguments may the self-determining power of the human will be defended or disproved? And *vice versa*, by what

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arguments may the real freedom of man, such as is essential to moral agency, if proved?

IV. What is the best definition of necessity in general?

First, What is absolute necessity, and wherein different from the *fate* of heathens?

In the highest sense this is applicable to the Divine nature; in another sense, to mathematical and metaphysical relations.

Second, What is hypothetical necessity, and wherein does it differ from absolute? To what things applicable, and to what not?

V. To what necessity are free agents subject, and in what respects?

They are subjects of Divine decrees, and therefore to necessity in several respects; though in other respects, as before shewn, perfectly free.

VI. What is the best mode of reconciling liberty and necessity?

Here may be shewn that the same thing may be said to be at once contingent and necessary in different respects, particularly moral evil: contingent as not decreed or compelled, but necessary in a metaphysical sense.

VII. What is the true and ultimate origin of moral evil?

It must be either in God or in ourselves. Not in God, therefore in ourselves; not in ourselves as a concreated principle, for then it would be of God. In what sense, therefore, in ourselves?

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## LECTURE XIII.

## ON PREDESTINATION AND ELECTION.

The subject of this lecture is truly awful, yet, rightly understood, far more amiable than it has commonly been represented; for it implies nothing capricious, nothing inconsistent with wisdom, goodness, or equity.

I. Define the terms predestination and election, according to the import of the original, and in what respects they differ.

The first may also be considered as a genus, and the latter a species of it.

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II. What is the commonly-received doctrine of reprobation, as used by several of the Reformers, Calvin, Perkins, &c., and how far is that representation scriptural or unscriptural?

Many writers subsequent to the first Reformers have followed the same track, in Europe and America.

III. What is the precise import of the 17th Article of the English Episcopal Church on predestination?

Who were the framers of these Articles?

IV. Who are the objects of benevolent predestination in the scriptural sense?

The Scriptures mention two sorts of beings, angels and men, as the objects of benevolent purposes. Are any of them predestinated to sin as the means, and to suffering as the end?

V. How is predestination (not the term, but the thing) defined as applied to men?

Its genus is a decree, and therefore a Divine act. And this Divine decree is not to be confined to one Divine person, though economically it is attributed to one rather than another. It must partake of the same properties as the other decrees—as absolute, independent, and eternal, and yet most wise and free.

Here observe, that it does not regard merely the end but also the means.

VI. Wherein does election differ from predestination?

Here should be included a definition of the thing.

VII. What are the most direct proofs of the doctrine of election from the Scriptures?

Carefully distinguish between passages which treat of national and personal election; also some which treat of personal election to privileges and offices.

VIII. What are some of the strongest proofs by way of Scripture inference or analogy?

May not the scriptural account of the fallen, helpless condition of all men be some evidence? also the doctrine of Divine influence, regeneration, God justifying the ungodly, &c.?

IX. What are the most plausible objections to predestination to life, and the Calvinistic doctrine of election? and how best answered?

X. How may this awful doctrine be best improved for the purposes of devotion and practical godliness?

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Every Scripture doctrine has this tendency, and this doctrine evidently so, as the apostolic writings testify, especially the epistles to the Romans, Ephesians, &c.

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## LECTURE XIV.

### ON THE WORKS OF CREATION AND PROVIDENCE.

#### PART FIRST.

##### *Of the Works of Creation.*

Having considered the perfections and purposes of God, His works come next to be considered. And, among all the Divine works, those of creation and providence claim the first notice.

I. Define the terms creation and providence; then the things intended by them.

II. How would you prove, independent of revealed authority, that the world could not be from eternity?

III. What are the leading features of the Platonic, Aristotelian, Epicurean, and Spinozian systems respecting the origin of the world?

IV. What is the real system of Moses with respect to creation?

Here notice whether Moses in his *Principia* treats of the solar system exclusively, or also of the material and intelligent universe, and on what grounds.

V. What influence has the Mosaic doctrine of the creation on the philosophic axiom, so generally received among the ancients, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*?

VI. How far may it be said that a created nature is possessed of real entity?

If the affirmative, how is the consequence avoided that something is added to the sum total of existence, or to that of the First Cause? If the negative, wherein does the creature differ from pure nihility?

VII. Is creating power communicable to a creature in any degree.

If not, wherein does the power of working miracles really and properly differ from creating power? And how do the Arians

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extricate their sentiment from difficulty, when they allow that all things were created by Jesus Christ?

VIII. When was our world created according to the Mosaic account?

In what year of the Julian, period, and at what time of the year, or in what part of the zodiac, it is most probable did the sun first appear to Adam?

IX. Which is the most probable hypothesis—that the chaos of the world was created instantaneously, or else in the space of one day, after the manner (*mutatis mutandis*) of a chemical process?

Here also may be conjectured in which of these ways the work of each day is most probably to be understood; and why Moses observes at the close of each day, “and the evening and the morning were,” rather than “and the morning and the evening were.”

X. What was the doctrine of the pre-Adamites? and how may it be briefly and solidly refuted?

#### PART SECOND.

##### *Of the Works of Providence.*

I. Having before defined what is meant by providence, now prove the reality of a Divine providence.

The topics here are innumerable; but fix on those which have the greatest weight in your own mind.

II. How far is the doctrine of Divine providence implied in the doctrine of Theism?

Or how far is the denial of a Divine providence chargeable with Atheism?

III. What are the objects of providence?

In general all created things; but notice particularly the extensive scale of beings, the amazingly distant extremes of celestial intelligences and animalcules, and the innumerable intermediate ranks.

IV. How far is providence extended to the actions of creatures? The actions of irrational animals, from the largest to the smallest, from the most to the least sagacious. The actions of men are either involuntary or voluntary, either indifferent or accountable.

First, How far is providence concerned in actions morally good?

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Second, How far, also, in actions morally bad?

V. Having considered the objects of providence, proceed to its works.

First, Wherein consists providential preservation?

Does this preservation extend to the physical acts and the very being of its object?

Second, Wherein consists providential government?

How may the reality of these providential works be best proved?

VI. What are the chief properties of Divine providence?

VII. How far is the usual distinction of providence into ordinary and extraordinary, common and special, accurate or useful?

Here may be noted the proper nature of a miracle, its possibility, and the probability of its being employed in any given case.

VIII. Mention some of the most natural and interesting inferences from the doctrine of providence, and how it ought to be practically improved.

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## LECTURE XV.

CONCERNING MAN IN HIS STATE OF ORIGINAL  
PROBATION.

Man, being the last and noblest work of God in our world, requires our particular attention. Self-knowledge has ever been deemed an object of study the most important. Γνώθι σεαυτοῦ, was an ancient oracle; and one of our own poets says, “The proper study of mankind is man.” For man to be unacquainted with himself may be well thought a matter of surprise, especially when favoured with a Divine revelation. “What!” says an apostle, “know ye not your own selves?”

I. Give some account of Adam and Eve as a noble part of Divine workmanship.

Notice the more obvious part of man first—his body, corporeal faculties, &c. Give a sketch of the human frame with respect to its obvious design—the adaptation and suitableness of the parts to answer the ends of comfort, safety, duty, and happiness. A minute anatomical detail would be misplaced, and a bare, uninteresting, general notice insufficient. It is desirable to touch, therefore, on the principal parts and uses, with a view

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to display the Divine wisdom, power, and goodness. For this purpose Paley’s “Natural Theology” will be of great use; and Fénelon “Sur l’Existence,” &c.

Then may be noticed the faculties of his mind—his intellectual and active powers, his powers of perceiving, judging, reasoning, and classifying his ideas; understanding, will, affections, and conscience.

II. Give some account of man’s moral state.

Particularly wherein consisted that image or likeness of God after which man was formed.

III. “What was the law under which man was first placed, and whether it should be considered as a covenant?”

Law is properly a rule of action, with sanctions. The moral law results from the nature of God and of man, and cannot be abrogated but by the destruction of our nature. Covenant is an appointment: between men, mutual; but with God mutual

agreements are useless, because He is incapable of appointing objectionable conditions and consequences.

IV. Wherein consisted the proper power of man in his state of integrity?

Was it borrowed, or else a self-determining power? And was his liberty, in reference to his accountable actions, of a different character before and after his fall?

V. What was the condition upon which Adam was to have a continuance of the Divine favour?

In what sense was the tree of the forbidden fruit called “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?” What was the tree of life?—why so called?—and what was its use?

VI. As Eve was not a descendant of Adam, nor yet a covenant head, how was she regarded, or in what situation are we to consider her in reference to the covenant?

VII. In what spot of the earth most probably was the garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve were first placed?

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## LECTURE XVI.

### CONCERNING THE SIN OF MAN, AND ITS PUNISHMENT.

Having shewn the nature, state, and powers of man, consider how he abused his advantages.

I. What is the true and formal nature of sin, in the abstract, and in the concrete?

Shew also wherein it differs from guilt and moral impotence. Reflect how far, if at all, is consciousness, knowledge, or will essential to the being of sin; or ignorance an exemption or excuse; and how far sin can belong to the body.

II. What is the ultimate and proper origin or cause of sin in general, and that of man in particular?

Is it probable that sin has a different origin in different creatures?

What was the radical part of Adam’s first sin?

III. How far is the phrase “efficacious permission of sin” admissible, if at all?

Connected with this question is another expression sometimes used, “to decree to permit;” is it appropriate?

IV. What is the scriptural doctrine of the sin of our nature, prior to actual transgression?

In other words, what is original sin? How far is the sin of Adam laid to the account of his posterity? or, wherein consists the imputation of guilt? Does original sin differ from original defect? Does it enter into the substance of the soul, making it essentially different from what it would be had not the parents been sinful? Does it differ from the want of original righteousness, and the want of a Divine principle? or does it include a positive bias to evil, distinct from the active powers, operating by degrees while destitute of a Divine principle?

V. In what manner are we to understand that the sins of parents are conveyed to their children?

VI. What is it that chiefly constitutes the aggravation of sin?

VII. What constitutes the unpardonable sin, and what is the reason of its being unpardonable?

VIII. What is the proper notion of penal evil, or that punishment which is the demerit of sin?

Here inquire whether sometimes one sin may be said in any sense to be the punishment of another.

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IX. What is the just notion of the punishment of hell, and wherein it consists? and what evidence is there that it will be perpetual?

Here notice the principal arguments for the affirmative, and what are the chief objections to it, and how they may be best answered?

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## LECTURE XVII.

### CONCERNING THE COVENANT OF GRACE, AND ITS VARIOUS ECONOMIES.

Having considered the state, the progress, and consequences of sin, we now turn to the more pleasing and delightful contemplation of grace. Give a concise view of the proper nature of grace in general, and different acceptations of the term, and scriptural

ideas conveyed by it. It may be also shewn how it forms a contrast with sin, on the one side, and with desert, on the other.

I. What is the nature of the covenant of grace?

Explain the term “covenant,” and its principal acceptations in the Scriptures. Shew the parties concerned, and the conditions to be fulfilled.

II. Wherein does the covenant of grace differ from that of Adam before his transgression, commonly termed “the covenant of works,” and from the Jewish covenant of peculiarity?

III. In what sense may we say, if at all proper, that God enters into a covenant of grace with men?

IV. What is the import of the words “dispensation” and “economy” when they stand connected with covenant.

V. Enumerate the principal dispensations of the covenant of grace from the beginning of time to the present period, and sketch the distinct peculiarity of each before that of the gospel.

VI. What are most of the distinguishing features of the gospel dispensation?

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## LECTURE XVIII.

### CONCERNING THE MEDIATOR OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

Ascertain the scriptural import of the term (Μεσίτης,) Mediator; then define the proper office of Mediator, and explain the parts of your definition.

I. What is the proper and important difference between a mediator and a surety?

Shew also in what sense could Moses be called a mediator, and why he could be a surety.

II. Whence does it appear that a mediator is necessary for fallen man?

Shew this first on the part of God, and then on the part of man.

III. Why was it necessary that the Mediator of the covenant of grace should be partaker of the human and Divine natures in one person, and of spotless purity?

IV. What are the principal arguments to prove that the claims of Jesus Christ to the office of Mediator are well founded?

These arguments should be principally directed against the objections of the Jews. A mediator they acknowledge, but differ from us about the person.

V. How is this passage, "There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," to be reconciled with the received scriptural sentiment, that both natures are necessary to constitute a mediator?

Here shew what is intended by the term "man" in the passage, (1 Tim. ii. 5.) Are all men, or only the elect, intended?

VI. What is the ultimate source of the mediatorial plan, and what is the proper nature of that gracious constitution?

VII. What are the principal blessings of the covenant of grace?

VIII. In what respects, if at all, are any of these blessings suspended on terms or conditions to be performed by us.

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## LECTURE XIX.

### OF THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

In treating of the person of Jesus Christ, it will be proper to notice those names by which He is most commonly represented in Scripture.

I. What is the proper import of the name Jesus, and how far peculiar to the Messiah?

Under this question will occur the signification of the Hebrew term, and the names given to the son of Nun, and the son of Sirach, &c.

II. What is the just import of the term Christ, and is it peculiar to the person of the Mediator?

Here notice both the Greek term and the Hebrew corresponding with it, and on what occasions the latter was employed.

III. What other names of the greatest note are given to the same person?

IV. Is it proper, or how far is it proper, to say that the Divine nature is become incarnate? and what is implied in the phrase "the human nature of Christ?" Also, in what manner, or to

what degree, was He the subject of its infirmities, if this expression be at all admissible? Moreover, is it proper to say that Jesus Christ is, or was, a human person? If not, for what reasons?

V. Who have been the chief opposers of the true doctrine of the person of Christ, and wherein did this error consist?

Among these will be found the Docete, Appollinarians, Nestorians, Eutychians, Monothelites, Arians, Socinians, Swedenborgians, &c.

VI. Wherein consists the hypostatical or personal union of the two natures of Jesus Christ, or how may this union be defined?

On these subjects, all curious and unprofitable distinctions of terms without meaning, after the manner of the schoolmen, should be studiously avoided. This is that mystery of godliness which is without controversy great, and should be rather contemplated in the spirit of humility and devout adoration, than scholastically discussed; yet, under the influence of a Christian temper, it may be profitable to ascertain the truth of ideas—particularly to consider the commencement and continuance of this hypostatical union; and what there is in the complex person of Christ of a miraculous character.

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VII. How far is the human nature of Jesus Christ a partaker of the Divine, and of the gifts of the Spirit?

VIII. How far, or in what respect, may the Mediatorial works of Christ be called Divine works, or the works of God-man?

This question claims a particular notice of those actions which appear common to mankind. In this connexion may be noticed the import of the phrase *communicatio idiomatum*, as used by divines, and how far conformable to Scripture evidence of facts.

IX. Is it right to ascribe adoration to the human nature of Christ? If not, shew on what principle He ought to be adored as Mediator?

Here the inquiry much depends on the consideration, what in Jesus Christ is the formal ground of worship?

## LECTURE XX.

## ON THE DIFFERENT STATES AND OFFICES OF CHRIST.

Having considered the person of Jesus Christ, proceed next to His different states and offices.

I. What is the Scripture account of His pre-existent state?

Here notice the occasional appearances of the Logos, in a corporeal form, to the patriarchs, &c.

II. What is included in His state of humiliation, contrasted, on the one hand, with His prior, on the other, with His subsequent glory?

Notice the principal parts or degrees of it. His descent to hell,—what?

III. What is Implied in His state of exaltation?

Shew also, as introductory, what in Christ is capable of exaltation—whether the human nature only not. What are the principal parts or designs of Christ's exaltation? Here treat of His resurrection, &c.

IV. Why should the offices of Christ be confined to three—the prophetic, sacerdotal, and regal?

Man, it is granted, is the subject of ignorance, guilt, and slavery; and the Saviour has undertaken to proclaim, procure, and apply salvation to His people; but is there any other more probable ground for that statement of offices?

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V. What is the prevailing opinion of the Socinians respecting these offices, and the cause of it?

VI. What is the proper nature, and what are the chief parts or acts, of Christ's prophetic office?

Here, also, shew what are supposed or implied qualifications for such an office, and in what manner He exercises it, and during what period.

VII. What is the proper import of the term priest? what is the nature of the sacerdotal office, as applied to Christ? and what does it require or imply?

VIII. What are the principal parts or acts of this office? Where treat of His oblation, its nature, and extent, and intercession.

IX. What is intended by “a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec?” Where some inquiry may be made after the person of Melchisedec, and the perpetuity of Christ’s priesthood?

X. What is the nature of Christ’s regal office?

This must be sought from the nature of His kingdom, which must be ascertained.

XI. What are the requisite qualifications for this office, and also the parts or acts of it?

Notice also the term or period of His reign.

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## LECTURE XXI.

### OF EFFECTUAL CALLING.

Having considered the Mediator, as to His person, the states through which He passed, and the offices He sustains in general, pass on to ‘consider that part of His work which consists in the application of new covenant blessings to the elect, by Him as their Surety. And the first of these is effectual calling.

I. Define and describe effectual calling.

Here shew, first, the propriety of the term in the theological sense of it. Ascertain the difference (if there be any) between this calling and conversion: the Father’s drawing—quickening from a death in sin—a new creation, and the like; also, wherein this calling differs from all others which are ineffectual.

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II. Shew who is the proper author of this work—whether, economically, the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit.

III. In what sense may it be said, if said at all, that God’s calling (whether taken as merely outward, or else including somewhat internal) is sufficient for any besides the elect?

IV. How far may the Divine call be said to be effectual, irrespective of the subject’s compliance or co-operation? or, is he passive *in toto*?

V. As to the order of time, does it precede or follow regeneration?

Here assign the reasons for the sentiment adopted.

VI. Is this effected by a higher degree of moral suasion, or by some superior and supernatural agency?

VII. How far may this work be termed irresistible?

Here explain those texts which are usually adduced as objections to the doctrine of irresistible grace; as Acts vii. 51.

VIII. Shew the consistency of this doctrine with that freedom of will which is essential to our accountableness.

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## LECTURE XXII.

### ON JUSTIFICATION.

Though justification, as an act of sovereign grace, might with great propriety have been considered before effectual calling, yet, as an act of the Moral Governor, it more properly follows effectual calling. However—

1. Define justification: in which may be noticed, that it is an act of God towards us, and not a work in us.
2. From the definition will appear its importance—as also from the apostolic writings—the preaching and works of the Reformers from Popery—and each revival of religion.
3. What was the main question in dispute in the days of Paul, when he wrote upon the subject?
4. What things are principally supposed in justification? What charge is lodged against the person? What plea is used to ward off condemnation? and what is the substance of the justifying sentence?

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5. Is there any sense in which justification may be said to be eternal?
6. Is there any sense in which justification was effected by the resurrection of Christ?
7. Explain the doctrine of the justification of saved dying infants, in a manner consistent with your definition, with the scriptural doctrine of justification, and the analogy of faith.
8. In what sense may the elect of God be said to be under condemnation, though Christ died for them and rose again?

9. Is repentance, as well as faith, required to justification by God as a Moral Governor?
  10. Wherein are these requisitions different from the demands of moral conformity to the law of our nature?
  11. How do you understand the following representations of the subject:—First, Horn. iii. 24, “justified freely by grace;” second, Gal. ii. 16, “by Christ;” third, Rom. v. 9, “by His blood;” fourth, Isa. liii. 11, “by His knowledge;” fifth, Rom. iii. 28, &c., “by faith;” sixth, James ii. 21, 25, “by works;” seventh, Matt. xii. 37, “by words.”
  12. What is meant by “God justifying the ungodly?” (Rom. iv. 5.)
  13. When it is said that “the doers of the law shall be justified,” (Rom. ii. 13,) what is meant?
  14. What is meant by the “free gift coming on all men to justification?” (Rom. v. 18.)
  15. How should this doctrine be represented in a popular, profitable, and summary way, by preachers?
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### LECTURE XXIII.

#### ON REGENERATION, CONVERSION, ADOPTION, RECONCILIATION, AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

I. How may regeneration be best defined, and its parts and its properties explained?

Is it the effect of moral suasion, or of supernatural agency, in a physical way? Is the subject of it entirely passive or not? What is the immediate design of it? Is it instantaneous or progressive? Does it extend to all the powers of the soul, or only to some part?

II. What is the time of regeneration—before or after justification?

If before, then a soul is regenerated and condemned at the same moment; if after, how is justification said to be by faith?

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III. Is regeneration wrought by the instrumentality of the word, or immediately without such instrument?

IV. In the sacred economy, which Divine Person (Father, Son, or Spirit) is the immediate agent of regeneration?

V. How may conversion be defined? Wherein does it differ from regeneration?

How are those terms, *terminus a quo* and *terminus ad quern*, to be understood and explained in reference to this subject?

VI. What is adoption? Define it.

To what does it allude? What is implied in it? Wherein does it differ from effectual calling and justification? Economically considered, whose act is it?

In point of time does it precede or follow justification? Or are the elect of God adopted as justified, or as not justified? What are the chief privileges connected with it?

VII. What is that benefit of the covenant which is called reconciliation? Define it.

Wherein does it differ from effectual calling, justification, and adoption? What is implied in it? Does it differ from the aforementioned privileges as to time, or only in point of relation?

VIII. What is Christian liberty, in the notion of deliverance and redemption? From what enemies are they freed, and into what privileges are they brought?

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## LECTURE XXIV.

### ON SANCTIFICATION, PERSEVERANCE, AND GLORIFICATION.

#### PART FIRST.

##### *Of Sanctification.*

Sanctification may be considered as either initial or progressive. Define and distinguish each.

I. Who and what are the subjects of progressive sanctification? Body, soul, spirit?

II. Who is the author and immediate cause of sanctification? Father, Son, Spirit?

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III. What are some of the principal terms by which the Scripture expresses the progressive work? Likeness of God, Divine nature, inward man, &c.

IV. What is intended by the distinction observed by divines, when they speak of negative and positive sanctification? Forbearance, self-denial, benevolence, brotherly kindness, &c.

V. What are some of the chief properties of sanctification?

VI. What are some of the principal means appointed and calculated to promote it?

VII. What are some of the principal effects of it?

VIII. Wherein does sanctification differ from holiness and from morality and good works?

IX. To what degree is it capable of arriving in a saint on earth?

Here might be noticed the doctrine of perfection, and its proper limits ascertained. The acceptation of the term will be different when applied to different objects. It is applicable more properly to state, parts, desire, habit; but less properly to grace, degree, pursuit, act.

PART SECOND.

*Of Perseverance.*

Define perseverance, and state the doctrine.

I. Shew what is *not* maintained: such as that the saints are incapable of committing heinous offences; that their perseverance is owing to their own strength or steadiness, or that it is the mere nature of grace.

II. Shew what is maintained, and prove—

First, That those who are saints indeed shall persevere in that state; or that there is an infallible connexion between grace and glory.

Second, That those who do not die saints never were saints.

III. How far may the topic of the Divine purpose be urged in favour of this doctrine?

IV. What other topics are the most weighty in this argument?

V. What are some of the strongest objections against this doctrine?—with replies.

PART THIRD.  
*Of Glorification.*

Define the term and the thing.

I. What other terms are nearly synonymous?—such as a crown—a kingdom—salvation—fulness of joy; and whether any difference is to be noticed between them.

II. What will be the difference between the glorification of a saint at death, and at the resurrection?

III. What is included in the glorification of the soul?

IV. What arguments may be adduced in favour of immediate glorification, in opposition to purgatory?

Here state and confute the doctrine of purgatory, and answer the Popish objections.

V. What is included in the glorification of the body?

Here state and prove the doctrine of the resurrection, and notice the change of qualities in the raised body.

VI. How will the saints, in soul and body, be glorified in judgment?

VII. Wherein will the final and eternal glory of the saints consist?

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LECTURE XXV.

ON GOD'S REQUIREMENTS OF MAN IN GENERAL, AND  
PARTICULARLY  
WORSHIP, LAW, AND RELIGION.

Hitherto we have considered God's works for and in man; we now proceed to treat of His requirements of us.

On what grounds is it reasonable that God should require the obedience of man; especially in his present state of moral impotence, and in those very things which Divine influence alone in fact produces?

I. Consider the worship of God in spirit and in truth.

Here shew, first, what the worship of God is, or how defined; and, second, why God requires it, or wherein consists its equity, necessity, and use. Third, Who is the object of reli-

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gious worship. Fourth, What is the rule by which it is to be directed?

II. Concerning the law of God, the rule of His requirements.

First, How may that law of God, which is the rule of duty, be defined? Second, How many kinds of Divine law are there? Here may be noticed the distribution of moral and positive, &c. Third, What do you mean by the phrases “the sanctions of the law,” “penal sanctions,” and “remunerative sanctions?” Fourth, Is there any difference between the moral law, the law of nature, and the decalogue, or do they all denote the same thing? Fifth, What were the seven precepts of Noah? Sixth, What is the moral use of Christianity? Seventh, Was the decalogue given as “the rule of gratitude,” or was it designed as a “mere rule of right?” Eighth, When it is said that the commandment or the law is disannulled, what is intended by it? (Heb. vii. 18.) Ninth, Is the decalogue a perfect rule of moral obligation? Tenth, Are any things indifferent—*i. e.*, any actions neither wrong nor right, in themselves, or to the agent?

III. How may religion be denned?

First, How may we determine what are the fundamental articles of religion? Is it necessary or prudent to ascertain the number of them? Second, What are the distinguishing marks of true religion? Third, What are the characteristic marks of the Reformed religion as opposed to Popery? Fourth, What are the chief reasons for rejecting religious establishments? Fifth, Give a brief account of the history and principles of Nonconformity, or the religion of Protestant Dissenters, as to their distinguishing difference.

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## LECTURE XXVI.

## ON THE DECALOGUE AND GOOD WORKS.

## PART FIRST.

*Of the Decalogue.*

Having treated of God's requirements of man in a general way, and of religion, law, and worship, we proceed to consider the decalogue.

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I. Shew the import of the term, and what is implied by it. This will include a definition of the thing as well as of the word.

II. What is the primary design of the decalogue as given to Israel? Is it to exhibit a summary of moral obligation to men as accountable, or a summary of the Jewish constitution, or of the Mosaic covenant?

III. What is principally intended and particularly implied in the introductory part or preamble of this Divine statute?

IV. What is the principal design and parts included in the first table?

Shew that the decalogue may be considered as conveniently divisible into two parts; that the first of these contains four precepts,—the second, six precepts; then the particular answer to the inquiry.

V. How far does the decalogue, especially the first part of it, contain the language of grace and mercy?

VI. What arguments are there to shew that it is of perpetual obligation to Christians?

VII. As these commands are expressed in the prohibitory form, what is to be inferred from it?

VIII. What is the precise difference between the import of the first and second commandments?

IX. By what considerations do the Romanists and other advocates for image-worship evade the force of the second commandment?

X. What is meant by the name of the Lord which is not to be taken in vain?

XI. What may be said for and against taking an oath, either before a civil magistrate, or in making a religious vow?

XII. On what principles are Christians to be justified in keeping the first day of the week instead of the seventh? and are they who keep both to be commended or blamed? and on what principles?

XIII. By what arguments may it be proved that the change of the day does not affect the spirit and substance of the command?

XIV. By what considerations may we judge of the degrees of honour due to parents?

XV. What are some of the chief arguments for and against killing our fellow-men in case of personal assault, in deliberate war, and by the magistrate?

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XVI. Is adultery to be punished by the civil or only left to the Supreme Judge? and if punishable here, what appears the most equitable punishment?

PART SECOND.

*Of Good Works.*

I. What is the best definition of “good works,” or what constitutes a work evangelically good?

II. How far is the term “work” to be extended, or what is implied in its comprehension in a moral and spiritual sense?

III. What is the rule of a work evangelically good?

IV. What is the cause or motive of it?

V. What is the end of a good work?

VI. How far may the virtues of heathens be called “good works?”

VII. Is any work in the present state meritorious? if not, for what reasons?

VIII. Is any work in this life perfectly good?

IX. In what sense is a man justified by works?

X. Are good works in any way necessary to salvation? In what persons and respects?

XI. What are some of the principal obstructions and helps to good works?

XII. How far may faith and repentance, rather believing and repenting, be denominated good works?

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## LECTURE XXVII.

## CONCERNING FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

## PART FIRST.

*Of Faith.*

- I. What is the best definition of faith?
  - II. May faith be properly called a duty as well as a grace?
  - III. Is there any sense in which faith may be called a condition of the covenant?
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IV. What is the difference between the faith of miracles, the historical, temporary, and saving?

V. What is meant by the term faith when we are said to be justified by it?

VI. In what sense “cometh faith by hearing?” Is faith “the gift of God?”—is it “the work of God?”

VII. What is the precise difference between “believing God” and “believing in God?”

VIII. What are the essential acts of faith?

IX. In what respect does faith work by love?

X. What is the difference between the direct act of faith and the reflex?

XI. Is there any act of assurance essential to faith?

XII. Is it essential to the “believing to the saving of the soul” that there should be a persuasion or satisfactory certainty that the Lord Jesus Christ and eternal life are ours in grant already?

XIII. How far may saving faith “fail?”

XIV. What are the principal fruits of faith?

## PART SECOND.

*Of Repentance.*

I. What is the best definition of repentance? In which it may be useful to notice the Greek and Latin names.

II. What are the principal objects of repentance?

III. What is the precise difference between legal and evangelical repentance?

IV. What are some of the special acts of repentance?

V. Wherein does the orthodox account of repentance differ from the Catholic penance?

VI. How far is restitution a part or concomitant of repentance?

VII. What are the principal fruits of repentance?

VIII. Is it the duty of ministers to call men promiscuously to repentance? If so—

IX. How may the objection be solved, “That the impotent and non-elect would be only tantalised by such a call?”

X. In treating of faith and repentance in a popular way, which ought to be represented as first in order?

To ascertain this, in a judicious manner, is a matter of difficulty,

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and requires accurate distinctions. The following hints may be useful:—

First, If faith be taken, in the more general sense, to signify assent to a truth, it must precede all repentance. What we are sorry for, we believe to be true.

Second, If faith be taken in a special sense, to signify the reception of gospel blessings on the Divine testimony and warrant, it must be after repentance. For we are conscious of danger before we receive the remedy.

Third, Legal conviction and repentance may exist without a Divine testimony, or even a knowledge of revealed law—*i.e.*, from consciousness and reflection.

Fourth, Evangelical repentance, which includes a regard to the Divine mercy, presupposes faith in a Divine testimony.

## LECTURE XXVIII.

### CONCERNING THE INSTRUMENTAL AIDS OF DEVOTION.

#### PART FIRST.

##### *Concerning Prayer.*

I. Define the term and the thing, and shew briefly the necessary use, and the superior excellence of prayer, compared with most other helps of devotion.

II. What is the difference between δέησις, προσευχή, ἔντευξις, and εὐξαριστία—prayer, supplication, &c.?

III. How far is it necessary to the being and nature of prayer to include words and posture, especially in private? Also, what posture is most becoming, and to be recommended in public?

IV. It is universally allowed that God is the proper object of prayer; but how do you shew that no created intelligences may be addressed in prayer in a subordinate sense? How would you answer this objection, which has been often urged: though our petition is ultimately made to a king, we make our first application to him through his ministers and officers?

V. In what respect is each person in the Trinity an object of prayer, and particularly when applied to Jesus Christ?

VI. Who are to be prayed for, or who are not to be prayed for,

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among men or spirits? Why may not departed souls, &c., be prayed for?

VII. How far is it lawful or unlawful to imprecate Divine judgments on blasphemers and reprobates, as such?

VIII. In what light ought we to view the imprecatory parts of David's prayers?

IX. What are those graces and tempers of mind that ought to be especially engaged in prayer?

X. How far are liturgies and forms of prayer, public and private, to be approved or censured, especially the Lord's Prayer?

XI. How far should stated times of prayer be recommended for private edification?

XII. How far may the silent waiting of the Quakers be reckoned prayer or worship?

XIII. What are the principal parts of prayer, especially of the Lord's Prayer?

#### PART SECOND.

##### *Fasting, &c.*

I. Define the term and the thing, according to the different acceptations of it.

II. On what Scripture evidence is the duty founded, both public and private?

III. How far has the magistrate a right to enjoin a public fast?

IV. How far is it incumbent on churches or congregations to set apart a day of fasting on particular occasions? By what rule should this be determined?

V. What is the most profitable plan of discharging this duty in a private way, to promote Christian edification, and answer the avowed end of it?

VI. What other instrumental aids of devotion are most worthy of attention.

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## LECTURE XXIX.

### ON THE POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS OF RELIGION, PARTICULARLY BAPTISM.

#### PART FIRST.

##### *Of Baptism, particularly the Subjects of it.*

I. Clearly explain the nature and obligation of positive institutions abstractedly considered.

II. "What institutions in Scripture, under every successive dispensation, may be denominated "positive?"

III. Is baptism, as enjoined by Jesus Christ, an institution entirely positive? If not, in what degree is it so?

IV. What is the most radical argument in favour of Pseudo-baptism?

V. What is the most popular argument in its favour?

VI. What are the principal passages of Scripture that may be urged in support of it, especially those of the New Testament?

VII. Shew the importance of the distinction between fact and right in evidence of this subject.

VIII. What is the verdict of Christian antiquity, or the practice of the Church in the first ages, on the subject, and how far this consideration ought to weigh in controversy?

IX. What is the nature and design of baptism?

X. What are the facts or blessings represented by Christian baptism?

XI. How far is the practice of John the Baptist, as to the subject or the mode, of importance in this inquiry?

XII. What are some of the principal arguments for and against Jewish proselyte-baptism, and of what weight is it in the Paedobaptist controversy?

XIII. What argument may be founded on the Abrahamic covenant in favour of the church-membership) and baptism of infants?

XIV. How far may the ordinance of circumcision be pleaded in evidence?

XV. What are the most weighty objections of Anti-Pædobaptists in this controversy?

XVI. What are the principal uses of Pædobaptism?

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PART SECOND.

*Of the Mode of Baptism.*

I. What is the precise point in controversy between the Baptists and Pædobaptists?

II. How far should the use of the terms βαίπτω and βαπτίζω, in profane writers, be a guide in order to ascertain the biblical import of them?

III. How far is it admissible to vary the mode, or to grant a latitude in the use of water?

IV. How far should primitive usage, in either case, or the present practice of the Greek Church, influence the present question?

V. What are the principal arguments in support of aspersion as the mode?

VI. What are some of the chief objections urged by the Baptists, with appropriate answers?

VII. Give a brief summary of the arguments for, first, the baptism of infants; and, second, for baptizing in the way of sprinkling.

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LECTURE XXX.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Many controversies have arisen in the Church through wrong views of the sacred Supper. Hence define the thing intended, and enumerate the various names by which it has been represented.

I. What is the comparative propriety of the following terms, as applied to this ordinance:—The Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, the Communion, the Breaking of Bread, the Ordinance, &c.

II. How came the word "mass" to stand for the Lord's Supper? and what is the mode of administering it?

III. What is the instituted design of the ordinance?

Here notice that it is to represent, to seal on the part of Christ as testator, and to communicate: these on the part of God. But, on the part of the communicants, to commemorate, to shew forth or exhibit, and to hold communion with Christ and one another.

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IV. What are the most suitable elements? or what bread and wine should be used as most conformable to the Institutor's design?

V. What is the most proper manner of conducting the service?

On the part of the minister:—Should sacramental addresses be always used, or only occasionally? what the length and frequency of prayer? should this be in the form of supplication, thanksgiving, or both, and praise? How should the words of the institution be used? what words? whether once, or oftener, and when? Should spectators be admitted and addressed—constantly, or at certain times? How far proper to urge the well-disposed to unite in fellowship? On the part of the people:—In what posture should the elements be received? in what quantity? how should the mind be exercised?

VI. What is the most suitable preparation, and subsequent improvement of the sacred rite, and how often should it be observed?

VII. Expose the folly of transubstantiation and consubstantiation.

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## LECTURE XXXI.

### ON SINGING AS A PART OF DIVINE WORSHIP.

Give a short history of sacred music, in the different dispensations of religion to the present time, and the general obligations to the exercise.

I. What is the true character of that singing which is most edifying?

II. How far should the prevailing taste and practice of a people be indulged, though deviating from that standard?

III. Which ought to be most regarded—the melody or the harmony of the music?

IV. What steps appear best calculated to raise or to reform psalmody?

V. How far should a minister *de jure* consider this part of Divine worship, in public, under his direction or control.

VI. How far is it right to encourage children, and persons destitute of real seriousness, to join in singing?

VII. Is it best to adhere to a few tunes, with a constant endeavour to improve in the manner, or to adopt a great variety? What is the proper standard in this respect?

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Connected with this is another inquiry, Which is best, when a new tune is introduced, to sing it much, or sparingly?

VIII. How far is instrumental music justifiable?

Thus far about the music; now about the words.

IX. What are the arguments for and against adhering to the letter or literal translation of the Psalms by Christians?

X. On what principle may hymns of human (or uninspired) composition be sung in acts of worship?

XI. What is the proper character of such compositions?

XII. How far is it lawful to dispense with singing in family worship?

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## LECTURE XXXII.

### ON THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

Having considered the doctrines and duties, the privileges and institutions of the gospel, we now proceed to the last thing to be noticed—viz., the church itself, the house of God, where these things are to be attended to.

I. What is the church of Christ?

Here distinguish between the different acceptations of the term *ἐκκλησία*, the more extensive or confined import of it, and what is a church of Christ?

Here the terms universal, particular, visible, invisible, triumphant, militant, &c., will be discussed.

II. Who are fit members of these churches respectively?

Here will be considered in what light should be viewed unbaptized believers, unbaptized infants, baptized infants; well-disposed

baptized persons before they join any particular church; persons excommunicated from any particular church, &c.

III. Point out the arguments *pro* and *contra* ecclesiastical establishments?

Where will be discussed how far any have been, are now, or may be, useful or injurious to real Christianity; especially, what may be said for or against our British ecclesiastical establishments.

IV. What are the genuine characteristic marks of a true particular church?

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How far, it may be here inquired, do the Church of Rome, the Russian, or other national Churches, deserve the denomination “a Church of Christ?”

V. What is the best form of ecclesiastical government? Inquire whether there is any one invariable form enjoined in the

New Testament; and of all the forms in use, which comes nearest to the Divine directory, or the mind of Christ?

Here, of course, the Papal, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent, &c., forms will be noticed, and their respective pretensions and merits considered.

VI. What are the officers, and their respective works, in a well-organised church?

Shew how these are to be chosen and set apart.

VII. Wherein consists the communion of churches?

Where glance at councils, synods, associations, and how far their mandates, or recommendations, ought to operate?

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## CHURCH-FELLOWSHIP.

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## A HELP TO CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP; OR, SCRIPTURAL DIRECTIONS AND RULES TO BE

OBSERVED BY MEMBERS OF CHRISTIAN SOCIETIES,  
 ESPECIALLY THOSE OF THE INDEPENDENT  
 DENOMINATION,  
 AS GREATLY CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR CONSISTENCY,  
 USEFULNESS, AND COMFORT.

THIS manual is drawn up, not with a view to promote uniformity of religious observances, however desirable that may be in a good cause, so much

as to promote consistency of character and conduct, social usefulness, and

personal advantage. It was undertaken in consequence of long observation, and a strong conviction that the general state of Christian fellowship greatly calls for some such help. It is but too evident to persons even of moderate reflection, that many have joined Christian societies who appeared

once to possess necessary qualifications for such an important connexion, but by their subsequent conduct proved otherwise, often through ignorance or inattention. Others offer themselves while destitute of the necessary qualifications, but who, by reason of some amiable qualities, are often

rejected with difficulty, or not rejected at all, chiefly for want of suitable helps to point out to them and the society what are the solemn requisitions of reason and Scripture with respect to church-membership; and many, even of those who are suitable subjects, have but a very contracted notion of the nature and extent of their obligations and privileges, whereby

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solid edification, social comfort, and the prosperity of churches have been

great sufferers. They seem to have no other view than to join the people of God as a creditable step, to sit down at the Lord's table, and to enjoy all the means of grace peculiar to such. But who that reads the New Tes-

tament with tolerable attention, can help seeing that the obligations of professing Christians are much more extensive and minutely particular than persons of this description imagine? Who can but see that the design of all religious ordinances and means of grace is to promote conformity to

the will and image of Christ in spirit and conduct? And if so, it must appear desirable that persons should have a consistent, concise, familiar view of their Christian obligations before they engage in such an important undertaking, especially of those obligations which are so commonly overlooked in the present day. To avoid these evils, and to effect these good ends, are the avowed objects of this publication. As such, it will be

serviceable not only to put it into the hands of those who *propose* themselves for church-fellowship, but also as a help to self-examination in the

*closet*; that serious Christians may mark their conformity or want of conformity to the *spirit* of the gospel, or the *mind that is in Christ*.

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I. *General Remarks tending to shew what are usually EXPECTED from Persons who propose themselves for Church—communion.*

It is an acknowledged principle, in the present day of better information, that every person, *individually* considered, has a right, without the control of his fellow-creatures, to think and act for himself in religious matters. As such, he may form a system of faith and practice for the regulation of his own religious concerns without being accountable to others.

What a person *individually* has a right to do, a *number* of persons, of similar views, may do with equal right in a collective or social capacity. It is strangely inconsistent and imperious for any one, adopting different views and conduct, to *insist* on admission into a Christian society. On his principles, such a society would have the greatest cause of complaint, for they do not interfere with his individual right or liberty, nor yet with his associating with any body of people of the same views with himself. Besides, every society, of whatever description, actually claims this right, and accordingly expects at least *something* from its admitted members; *Something* also is expected by a Christian church

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united in bonds of holy fellowship; and that is what Jesus Christ our Supreme Head and Lord has enjoined in His revealed will. The avowed end of religion is the glory of God, and the happiness of men; if so, it is not to be imagined that it is a matter of indifference what views or conduct we pursue. If *this* end be not

answered, of what use is it to make any pretensions to religion? On the contrary, if this end be pursued, God must be the best judge of the line of conduct which is to be adopted by us. This He has given us in His Holy “Word, by precept and example, in a plain, particular, and decisive manner.

According to this Divine standard, Christian obligations are usually divided into those of *doctrines* to be believed, and *duties* to be performed. But the design of this publication is not to furnish the reader with a system of *doctrines*, however valuable a scriptural and consistent system may be, so much as to point out the *practiced part* of religion relating to church-membership; seeing the practical part of religion, among those who are orthodox in sentiment, is much less attended to than the doctrines. It is therefore supposed, or taken for granted, that those for whose use these thoughts are penned are sound in the faith on account of the ministry which they attend, and the people with whom they seek particular fellowship.

These things being premised, it will be proper to enumerate the particular qualifications usually *expected* in such as are candidates for church-fellowship:—

1. It is expected, as hinted before, that persons proposing to join a Christian society formed according to the gospel, entertain views essentially the same with those into whose fellowship they wish to enter.

2. That they have a comfortable persuasion that they are the subjects of a gracious and real change.

3. That they make a declaration of this to the satisfaction of the society, by writing, or by word of mouth, as the circumstances of the person may direct.

4. That they come to a resolution to break off all connexions and practices inconsistent with gospel obedience, and openly to avow themselves to be decidedly on the part of God.

5. That they have given evidence of this, for a reasonable time, by their conduct in the world and in their families.

6. That they declare a willingness to attend ordinances, and

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seek the interest of Christ in that particular connexion to which they belong, in contradistinction to every other society.

7. That they lay aside the pretensions to superiority on account of worldly circumstances, learning, or gifts, if any be so distinguished, in matters relating purely to church-fellowship.

8. They are expected to endeavour, by example and other methods, to support the ministry and the honour of religion in the place and society to which they belong.

9. If they have been members of another society, formed in a similar way, a letter of *recommendation* from that society or church is expected when they apply for *occasional* communion; but if the application be made for *full* communion, a *dismissal* is expected.\*

10. Finally, that they engage to comply with whatever shall appear to be the will of Christ as revealed in His “Word, though not specifically mentioned in these rules.

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## II. *On the Scriptural Design of Entering into Full Communion.*

1. The chief end of every human society, as well as of every intelligent being, ought to be this—viz., to glorify God, or to represent Him as glorious in all His perfections and ways. No human society, of whatever kind, is exempt from this obligation. For a society is only an aggregate of individuals; and as every individual is obliged to do this in all his actions, he is therefore thus obliged in his social capacity. This obligation arises from the respective natures of God and the creature, and it is clearly enjoined in the Holy Scriptures:—“Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” But—

2. The distinguishing subordinate end or special design of any

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\* Every one who has not been a member before, enters, of course, into *full* communion; but when persons are taken from another church, they may be received into the one or the other according to circumstances. If admitted to *full* communion, they must be *dismissed* from their former connexion, and, in consequence, admitted professedly into full communion. If to *occasional* communion, they need only a *recommendation*, not a *dismissal*; in this case, they have no *rote* in the new connexion, but have in the old.

society must designate its peculiar nature, whereby it is best adapted to promote that end. Though every society is bound to seek the one chief end, yet every social union is not adapted to answer all social ends. Societies of a religious, moral, charitable, scientific, or political design, must have members of a correspond-

ing character, otherwise the proposed end cannot be answered. The qualification of the members must have an aptitude to promote the design.

3. The distinguishing design of a society denominated a church evidently is to promote religion. Numbers are united by Divine appointment to maintain religion,—to exhibit before the world real Christianity,—to encourage those who seek the right way,—to edify one another, and the like. Such particulars we gather from the Sacred Scriptures:—“Striving together for the faith of the gospel;” “That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, [resembling Him,] without rebuke, [or cause of rebuke,] in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life.” A church of Christ is appointed to shine in a dark world,—to be blameless and harmless among the crooked and perverse,—to imitate God, as far as practicable, while among the children of the wicked one,—to give no offence to those who are without or those who are within the church,—to hold forth and to hold fast the word of life by doctrine, by discipline, and by practice. “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.” Provided a person be desirous of Christian fellowship, and is possessed of so much knowledge, so much experienced efficacy of the truth, and so much good conduct, as is calculated to answer in a prevailing degree the design of a church being at all formed, let him not be rejected. “Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.” This is done by mutual instructions, exhortations, prayers and praises; by watchful discipline and the exercise of religious gifts; by friendly offices and acts of Christian kindness.

4. The preceding particulars are produced only as *instances*; but in order accurately to ascertain the special end of Christian fellowship, in full communion, *all* the passages in the New Testament relating to the subject ought to be included. For until the revealed special design for which a church of Christ is instituted

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be ascertained, it is obviously not possible to ascertain the precise nature of the society, and consequently the qualification of its members. However—

5. We will suppose that, by an appeal to all the passages of the New Testament, the precise design is known, from whence the nature of a church is deduced; the question returns—Is there any general rule that may form an invariable standard by which all qualifications of candidates may be measured? There undoubtedly is; for this plain reason, because a church is a society instituted for specific ends revealed in the New Testament. Now, as these ends are matters of Divine record, and not of human opinion, the standard is invariable.

6. We will further suppose that the general rule by which to measure qualifications for full communion is, The scriptural design for which a gospel church in full communion is divinely instituted. No party, however they may differ about other things, can object to this rule with any colour of reason. To deny its claims, they must either subvert the evident principles of all voluntary societies, or else hold that a Christian church is not instituted in the New Testament for any specific end. But this no reasonable person, much less a serious Christian, will maintain. Hence—

7. Those candidates for full communion, and only those, who are conformed to this rule, are fully qualified. But here it is of essential importance to observe, that though a rule is, and from its very nature must be, fixed and invariable, the qualifications of individuals are variable things, admitting of less or more conformity to it. The conjecture» of men, however ungenerous and plausible, cannot be admitted as a rule, because they are variable; but the rule must be deduced from the design itself of instituting a church, which evidently is a matter of pure Divine pleasure, and could not be known without a revelation from God. A rule, then, must be sought from the sacred oracles by an induction of particulars relating to the point in question, and from their harmonious agreement; and it is the business of every Christian church, minister and member, to search the Scriptures in order to ascertain it. To contend about qualifications, before this is agreed upon, is to contend about the dimensions of different things before a standard is fixed upon by which to measure them. But the constituent parts of the qualifications in candidates cannot be found in

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Scripture; they must, most evidently, be sought in the characters of the individuals, which are evidently invariable. To suppose that

the character or actual attainment of each candidate is revealed in Scripture, is too absurd to be maintained by any rational mind. Therefore—

8. What remains for a church to do in judging of qualifications, is to compare the proficiency of the candidate with the scriptural rule. The former admitting of indefinite degrees of approximation to the standard, must be learnt from the person himself, from his conduct, and from the testimony of others. His profession, his declared experience of Divine truth, his deportment in society—in short, his general character, is to be viewed in comparison with the evident design of God in forming a church.

9. Should it be objected, that different persons or churches might fix upon a different standard, by adding more texts of Scripture, out of which a various general result should arise; it is answered, that therefore this is the point to be first settled. When any disagree about the rule, they cannot, of course, agree about the qualifications. There are many texts, such as those above produced, concerning which there can be no disagreement. The rule, therefore, should be admitted as far as it goes. A measure of a foot long may, as far as it goes, be a standard of straightness and of measure, as well as a yard or a fathom. Or, to change the comparison, a small measure of capacity may be equally accurate to a certain degree as a larger measure. Let the church of small attainments act charitably, and wait for brighter evidence. If any lack wisdom, let them ask of God, who giveth liberally. “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.”

10. The scriptural rule is not only invariable, but also perfect in its kind, as dictated by infinite wisdom for the noblest ends. But no human character in the present state is perfect, so as to comport universally with the standard. Therefore, no candidate for communion is perfectly qualified,—that is, his qualifications are only comparative. One may be qualified in a greater, and another in a smaller degree. One is qualified to fill his place eminently, another moderately well. One may be strong, and another weak

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in the faith. Yet he who is weak in the faith may be comparatively qualified. Therefore—

11. Since qualifications are so various, and admit of indefinite approximations to the perfect standard, or deviation from it, we are bound to accede to another conclusion—viz., That whatever kind or degree of qualification appears to *befriend* rather than to oppose, to *honour* rather than to discredit the scriptural design of full communion, ought to be admitted by the church. When a candidate for communion is proposed to a church, its immediate business is to consult the scriptural design of communion, and then to consider how far the qualifications of the candidate appear to befriend and to honour it.

12. From the premises it follows, that to reason from qualifications for communion in the Jewish church, to those for a full communion in a gospel church, must needs be uncertain and inconclusive; except it could be first proved that the revealed design of each was the same. But it requires no great labour to shew, by an induction of particulars, that the design was very different; and, consequently, that what would be a suitable qualification for the one would not be so for the other.

13. We may further infer, that when a church requires a probable evidence of grace as the measuring rule of admission, and directs nearly all its attention to ascertain this point, its proceedings are irregular, unscriptural, and, therefore, unwarrantable. The rule of judging, as before shewn, must be in the Scripture, and not in the candidate.

14. We may therefore infer, from the preceding observations, that a probable evidence of grace in a candidate is not the precise ground of the qualifications, however desirable that evidence may be; yet because, ordinarily and most probably, the absence of saving grace implies the absence of the precise ground of answerableness to the scriptural design of full communion, such probable evidence is of great importance. However nice the distinction may appear to some, the want of attending to it seems to have constituted the chief difference between President Edwards and his antagonists.\* And in fair investigation another question, different from what was agitated, ought to have been first

\* In the painful controversy that led to the removal of President Edwards from his pastoral charge at Northampton, Massachusetts.

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settled—viz., Whether any person who is not visibly the subject of saving grace can “befriend rather than oppose, can honour rather than discredit the scriptural design of full communion?” Fairly to answer this question in the negative, it is not enough to prove that such a person cannot answer *fully* the scriptural design. But it ought to be proved that no person destitute of such probable evidence of saving grace, in any circumstances whatever, can be found who might befriend and honour the scriptural design of communion rather than the contrary. This is the real hinge of the controversy.

15. It is an unscriptural notion, too much taken upon trust, that the immediate business of a church is to form an opinion respecting the spiritual state of a person before God; as, whether he is the subject of saving grace? whether he has a principle of sincerity? whether his motives are spiritually pure? &c. Whereas, a church ought not to act the part of a jury on the candidate’s real state towards God, but on his state towards the church. They are to determine whether he is, or is not, eligible to answer the scriptural ends of such a society, and, indeed, of that particular church. For as the circumstances of divers churches may be very different, there may be cases where the same person may be eligible to one church and not to another. In one church he may promote its welfare, in another hinder it. This may greatly depend on his peculiar tenets, and the zeal with which he may be disposed to maintain them. In one society he may be a source of disquiet and confusion, but in another the reverse.

16. Hence it is evident, that a visibility of saving grace, though it claims the Christian love and respect of the church, does not in all cases constitute eligible qualifications. For whatever has an evident tendency to produce disputes, animosities, and divisions in a church, ought to be kept out of it. But the admission of a person who appeared zealous for sentiments and customs opposite to those held by the church, would have this apparent tendency, notwithstanding his possessing a visibility of grace on other accounts. Therefore, though a visibility of grace in some cases may be sufficiently plain, yet an apparent failure in other respects

may be sufficient to shew that a person is not qualified for full communion. In short, if the church have not good reason to think that his admission would do more honour than good, he

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should be deemed unqualified for membership in that society, though he may be entitled to a charitable opinion or even Christian love on other accounts; and, on the contrary, if the church have good reason to think that his admission would do more good than harm, he should be deemed qualified for membership, even though he may be less entitled to a charitable opinion of his state toward God than the other.

*Corollaries.*

1. Any candidate who appears, in the charitable judgment of a Christian church, likely to give a favourable representation of Christianity to the church and the world, to encourage the desirous by his knowledge and tempers, and to give and receive Christian edification in that communion, is in the Scripture sense qualified for communion.

2. Personal religion in the sight of God is to be deemed necessary only for the sake of enabling the candidate to answer such ends, as far as membership is concerned; but as final salvation is concerned, personal religion is indispensably necessary, this connexion being clearly revealed, as well as founded, in the nature of things.

3. A Christian minister may consistently exercise holy jealousy over some church-members, and warn them of the danger of hypocrisy, without threatening them with exclusion from their membership; because only their *overt acts*, including sentiments, tempers, and conduct, are objects of discipline, as they were of admission.

4. Some persons, though in a safe state toward God, may not answer the forementioned ends of membership better than others who are not in such a state.

5. A person may be qualified for the society of heaven while not qualified for full communion in a Christian church, because the natures of the two societies are different, and consequently the scriptural ends of their admission into each. For infants or idiots, &c., may be qualified by grace for the society of heaven, but are totally unqualified for full communion in the church on earth.

6. Were Christian churches always to act on these principles, much bitter strife and useless discussion would be avoided in the

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admission and exclusion of members. For in neither the one nor the other would the church pronounce on the state of the persons towards God: for when any were admitted, no handle would be afforded to the presumption that membership below is a qualification for heaven; and when any were excluded, no occasion would be given to the excommunicated person or to the world to pass the censure of uncharitableness on the church; for every voluntary society has a right to judge according to its own appropriate rules who is, and who is not, qualified to promote its welfare.

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## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG.

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I. AN ESSAY ON EDUCATION.

II. THE EVANGELICAL CATECHIST, IN THREE PARTS.

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### AN ESSAY ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS AND TEACHERS.

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§ 1. The design of the essay. § 2. Good schools do not supersede parental duty.

§ 3. The capacity of children to learn and to be impressed developed early.

§ 4. The duty of a mother, of a nurse, illustrated. § 5. The consequences of neglect in this world and in the next. § 6. The necessity of guarding against discouragements. § 7. Distinction between preparation for instruction and the work itself. § 8. The language of the passions is first and uni-

versal. § 9. Exciting groundless fears and hopes to be sedulously avoided.

§ 10. Good health, spirits, and tempers favourable to religious impressions.

§ 11. Example, the importance of.

§ 1. MY DEAR FRIENDS,—There is nothing in which Christian parents are more wanting to their children than that *religious care* of them which the Scriptures call *the bringing of them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. To what can this be owing? Not to the want of *natural affection*, that principle which is common to *all* animals. If sometimes children are so depraved as to be *without natural affection* to their parents, or each other, seldom is the principle lost in the parents towards them. Is it owing to a total want of benevolence? By no means. For benevolence is essential to that Christianity which the persons now addressed are supposed to possess. It must then be owing to the want of a proper *attention* to the subject of education, and, of course, *unskilfulness* in the work, by virtue of which every transient wish of excelling therein proves abortive, To contribute a little towards remedying these defects is the design of this essay.

§ 2. The custom of sending your children to school, to qualify

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them for business and active life, is, in its proper place, commendable. But has not the idea of giving them a good school education relaxed your own efforts? It is common to observe parents extremely anxious to fix upon a good seminary where to place their children; teachers of skill and ingenuity are sought, their abilities, dispositions, and methods of teaching are scrupulously inquired after; and this is commendable. But happy are those parents who prove, by their own practice, that this concern proceeds not from the selfish motive of excusing themselves from an important part of Christian duty.

§ 3. Will any say, Since it is proper to send out our children for education, how is it in our power to instruct them? While at a distance from you, it is true, your influence over them for the time is lessened, the consideration of which justifies your solicitude for a good school. But the greater number of you send your little ones not to boarding but to day-schools, in which case your opportunities of assisting them are sufficient. Besides, the dispositions and minds of children are capable of improvement sooner than most parents are willing to allow; at least, the oppor-

tunities of mothers and nurses open at a very early period. To urge the incapacity of a child of two or three years of age, will be thought, by better judges, to be but a weak attempt to cover either ignorance or indiscretion, or both.

§ 4. To give you some idea of what ought to be done by a mother attentive to her duty, and whose *heart is turned to the child*,\* to use the words of a prophet, take the following hints:— Education, remember, without arrogating to itself the production of effects which ought to be ascribed to the sovereign grace of God alone, is, nevertheless, in the order of appointed means, of the utmost moment. Let this maxim be well understood, and well digested in your mind. View the child, whether a toy or a girl, with an eye of pity and affection: *mournful pity*, not only because of the dangers that attend its future steps in life, but principally because of its native sinfulness and propensity to depart from God, goodness, and happiness; *benevolent affection*, because your God and Saviour views it so, and because, without this disposition, be assured, all rigorous measures and rule of constraint will disappoint your expectations.

§ 5. Accurately weigh not only your own obligations as Chris-

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\* Mal. iv. 6.

tians, but also the probable consequences of your attempts, or neglect, both in this world and in the next. In the course of an all-wise Providence you are the instruments of their existence; and is there any room to hope that you may be instrumental of rendering that existence everlastingly happy? There is,—blessed be God, *there is*. It behoves mothers to reflect how much it lies with them, as the medium, to render the manners of rising generations either amiable or the reverse; and what a blessing to her posterity is a wise, religious, skilful mother! If the regular movements of a family be compared to a well-formed machine in motion, she is the main spring. Even supposing the father to have a superior degree of desire and zeal to promote the same end; yet, especially in these younger years, by reason of her destination by Providence to a more constant residence in the family, and the more delicate and minute attentions for which she is formed, her opportunities, and probability of success, are far greater. Your

influence, you see, in doing good or harm to your children is very great. You are made capable of doing your dear little ones great service by *example before* they are capable of verbal instruction, as well as in connexion with it. Have you attended to it? Christian families are the nurseries of particular churches. Do you *aim* at bringing up your children for Christ, and the societies which profess to unite themselves to Him? It is no less your privilege than your duty; and though the period be distant, still keep it in view. Have you resigned them to Christ in their baptism? Act a consistent part, until conscience be completely satisfied that you acted therein from a higher principle than the slaves of mere custom. Or, if then too inattentive, prove that you have now juster views.

§ 6. You are perhaps ready to say, We are convinced of the importance of the undertaking, but how shall we, in the best manner, put it in practice? Be assured that a *sincere desire* of succeeding, if that be permanent, carries you more than one half the way to the end of your course of duty. You cannot be too much upon your guard against the various discouragements that present themselves; and this is not the least, the supposed small success your efforts meet with. No temptation is more dangerous, if it operates to any other purpose than to quicken your attentions and your diligence. Are you a Christian? Then let this part of your conduct, as well as others, be by faith in God's promises of a blessing on your endeavours.

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§ 7. You should make a distinction between instruction, properly so called, and a *preparation* for instruction. The one requires a little enlargement of capacity, whereas the latter belongs to the tenderest infancy; and chiefly consists in that suitableness of voice and gesture, and by degrees articulation and pronunciation of words, which are best calculated to engage the best imitation. It was well remarked by a heathen,—from whom, in this instance, Christian parents should not disdain to learn,—that “the morals of children ought to be the primary consideration, but yet that it is requisite they should speak with propriety. The speech of a nurse is the first the child hears, and he lisps out an imitation of her expressions. We are naturally very tenacious of what we imbibe when very young, even as new vessels retain the flavour of the first liquor. When wool is once dyed, it is not to be restored

to its native whiteness. And the more vicious a habit is, the closer it will adhere; for good habits are easily changed into bad ones, but where do you observe a vicious habit become a good one? A child, therefore, should be habituated to nothing in his infancy which afterwards he must be at the pains to unlearn.”\* This writer recommends the same care with respect to the play-fellows and companions of young children; and if at any time an impropriety of expression or behaviour is observed in the child, the immediate and only remedy is to take care that it grow not into a habit. Who can doubt of the amazing aptitude of children to follow the example of those about them, who reflects on the short time they require to learn a language, however difficult, provided it be in constant use. It is a matter of indifference to them whether it be English or Welsh, French or Italian, Greek or Hebrew, Arabic or Chinese. Let it be but always used, and accurately pronounced in their hearing, and set right when they make any mistakes, and they will soon talk it with ease, and leave far behind them the most learned and ingenious foreigner, whose habits are already fixed. These remarks may serve to shew how susceptible young children are of strong impressions, and of what influence on after life are early habits.

§ 8. There is another language which we may call universal, and which a child is capable of learning before any other—that of the passions. Observe how the infant smiles when you smile, and if you frown, how its countenance lowers before it can articulate, or

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\* Quintil, lib. i., cap. i.

even understand the import of a single word. Do you employ endearing gestures, it stretches itself into your arms. Do you menace it, or offer constraints, it becomes immediately sensible of it, and shuns your embrace. All that is now necessary is to direct this early promptitude in the best manner. It is easy to give it a predilection to one person rather than another, and to prevent a temptation of attachment to any whose characters are suspected of vice, or conduct of impropriety. “By the very different airs of your countenance, and by the tone of your voice, you may represent to them with horror those persons whom they have seen in a rage or any other disorder; and may assume the serenest counte-

nance and the softest tones, attended with admiration, to represent to them whatever they see that is wise, good, and modest.”\* These, it is true, are the days of small things, but yet ought not to be despised; for, as one observes, “every hour saved in infancy is so much acquired to youth.”†

§ 9. Considering the force with which impressions are made on the minds of children, no doubt can remain of the impropriety of exciting groundless hopes or fears. If expectations be raised, let deceit have no share in it; and if at any time you excite fear, never employ for the purpose imaginary objects, but real evils. Little capable as young children are of exercising reason, nothing that is in itself unreasonable is to be instilled into them. Let not this tenderness and susceptibility of their frames, and pliability of their dispositions, therefore, be abused to purposes which they will have occasion in future to lament. And above all, endeavour to render goodness and religion, in all their forms and expressions, amiable, pleasing, and advantageous. If this order be not diligently observed, it will be difficult for parents to exculpate themselves from the charge of tempting Providence and corrupting their children. Would you, for instance, make them sensible of the glory of heaven and its inhabitants? connect with it the mercy of God, and the true religion which He requires. Is it thought expedient to make them sensible of the gloom and horror of hell, and the misery of its inhabitants? Pail not to shew them that it is not owing to any cruelty in God that angels and men suffer there, but wholly to their own obstinate wickedness and persevering disobedience.

§ 10. With the blessing of God, equally necessary for success in

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\* Fénelon on the Education of a Daughter. † Quintil., ut sup.

every period of life, the introduction of religious ideas and impressions will be not a little facilitated by a due care of the health, spirits, and tempers of children. And to these desirable ends other things have great influence; such as regimen, cleanliness, gentleness of manner, order in conduct, and in all things moderation and temperance. Food, when clean and wholesome, cannot be too plain. And let early rising and moderate exercise be the only temptations to appetite. It would not be amiss, occasionally, to

inculcate upon a child the true end of eating, which is health; and the right improvement of health, that thereby we may the better discharge our duty. Thus, let the bread of careful assiduity be *cast on the face of the water* of infancy, and you may hope, without presumption, to *find it after many days* with abundant increase. It was the remark of a great man, that “the little, or almost insensible impressions on our tender infancies, have very important and lasting consequences; and there it is, as in the fountains of some rivers, where a gentle application of the hand turns the flexible waters into channels that make them take quite contrary courses; and by this little direction given them at first in the source, they receive different tendencies, and arrive at last at very remote and distant places.”\*

§ 11. It is a well-known maxim, that example is more forcible than precept. The precept often makes our depraved nature revolt, while example imperceptibly leads to imitation. Hence it maybe truly said, that the single example of Jesus Christ has had greater influence in forming holy characters than all the precepts of Moses. And a living example is more forcible than a verbal description of one. But as it is not easy to have always at hand that *view* of a living character which we desire them to notice, the best substitute is a collection of anecdotes and stories from real life. Next to these, artificial ones, drawn up in an agreeable manner. Nor are fables without good use.

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\* Locke on Education, § 1.

## THE EVANGELICAL CATECHIST, ETC.\*

FIRST CLASS.

THE YOUNG CHILD'S FIRST CATECHISM;  
OR,

## THE PARENT'S HELP.

- § 1. Concerning our first parents. § 2. Cain and Abel. § 3. Noah and his family.  
 § 4. Abraham. § 5. Lot and his family. § 6. Moses. § 7. Samuel and Eli.  
 § 8. David. § 9. Elijah. § 10. Elisha. § 11. Jonah. § 12. Daniel and his  
 three companions. § 13. John the Baptist. § 14. Jesus Christ. § 15. Lazarus  
 and his sisters. § 16. Eutychus. § 17. Timothy.

§ 1. Concerning our first parents.—Gen. i.—iii.

1. Question. What is your name?

Answer. A. or B.

2. Q. Can you tell me who was the first man?

A. Adam.

\* “The Evangelical Catechist,” in three parts, is designed to answer, more immediately, three important purposes:—

First, To furnish the memories of children with the leading principles of religion.

Secondly, To settle the judgments of youth respecting truth and error.

Thirdly, To exercise the consciences of professing Christian's with regard to the influence of Divine truths.

It is, therefore, published not only in three separate parts, for the several ages in life, for which it is intended, but also in separate classes. What is here called “The Scripture Catechism, or, A Familiar Introduction to the Divine Dispensations,” is the first class of the second part.

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3. Q. Of what did God form the body of Adam?

A. Of the dust of the ground.

4 Q. Can you tell me what was the first bad thing he did?

A. Eating the forbidden fruit.

5. Q. Who was the first woman?

A. Eve, Adam's wife.

6. Q. Of what did God form her body?

A. Of one of Adam's ribs.

7. Q. And did she do anything that was bad?

A. Yes, she took of the fruit before Adam did.

8. Q. And what else did she do?

A. She tempted her husband to eat with her.

9. Q. What harm was there in eating that fruit?

A. It was a very great sin.

10. Q. Why was it a great sin?

A. Because they were plainly told not to eat of it.

11. Q. Who told them that they must not eat of it?

- A. The great God who made them.  
 12. Q. What became of them afterward?  
 A. They were turned out of the garden of Eden.  
 13. Q. And was the great God angry with them?  
 A. Yes, very angry.  
 14. Q. Did He leave them without hope of pardon?  
 A. No, for He promised them a Saviour.

§ 2. Concerning Cain and Abel.—Gen. iv.

1. Q. Can you tell me who was Cain?  
 A. Adam's eldest son.  
 2. Q. What very wicked thing did he do?  
 A. He slew his brother Abel.  
 3. Q. Why did he slay him?  
 A. Because Abel was good, and himself wicked.  
 4. Q. And what became of Cain after he slew his brother?  
 A. God Almighty punished him.  
 5. Q. What became of Abel's soul?  
 A. It went to heaven, to the good and merciful God, and the good angels.

§ 3. Concerning Noah and his family.—Gen. v.—viii.

1. Q. Can you tell me who was Noah?  
 A. The father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.  
 2. Q. What great work did he do when God ordered him to do it?  
 A. He built a very large ark, somewhat like a great ship.  
 3. Q. Who was saved in the ark, when the deluge came?  
 A. Noah and all his family.  
 4. Q. How many persons were there?  
 A. Eight persons: Noah and his wife, his three sons and their wives.  
 5. Q. And what else was preserved alive?

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- A. Some fowls, cattle, and creeping things.  
 6. Q. What became of the men and living things of the earth that were not in the ark?  
 A. They were drowned in the great waters.  
 7. Q. Why were all men drowned but Noah and his family?  
 A. Because they were very wicked, and did not believe what God said to them.

8. Q. What did Noah do after the clanger was over?

A. He was very thankful.

9. Q. How did he shew his thankfulness?

A. By offering sacrifices to God.

§ 4. Concerning Abraham.—Gen. xxi., xxii.

1. Q. Can you tell me who was Abraham?

A. He was the father of Isaac, and the grandfather of Jacob.

2. Q. In what was he remarkably good?

A. He believed everything that God said to him.

3. Q. Why was Abraham called the friend of God?

A. Because God shewed him very great favours; and he chose God for his best friend, and loved Him much.

4. Q. What did Abraham do with his son Ishmael who mocked Isaac his brother?

A. He turned him out of his house as not fit to live in the same family.

§ 5. Concerning Lot and his family.—Gen. xiv.–xix.

1. Q. Who was Lot?

A. Abraham's nephew.

2. Q. Where did he live?

A. In wicked Sodom.

3. Q. What became of Lot's wife?

A. She was turned into a pillar of salt.

4. Q. Why was she thus punished?

A. Because she was very wicked, and God made her a public example.

5. Q. What great wickedness did she do?

A. She looked back to Sodom and Gomorrah, though she was plainly told not to do so; and she minded earthly things more than God.

6. Q. What became of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the people that lived there?

A. They were burned with fire and brimstone.

7. Q. What became of their wicked souls?

A. They went to hell, to Satan and his companions.

8. Q. What became of righteous Lot, who was so much grieved at them?

A. He was kept safe by the great and gracious God, and at last taken to heaven.

## § 6. Concerning Moses.—Exod. ii., xiv., xv.

1. Q. Who was Moses?

A. The brother of Aaron and Miriam, and a faithful servant of God.

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2. Q. What did his parents do with him when he was a babe?

A. They put him in a small ark of bulrushes daubed with pitch, and laid him in the flags by the river's brink, and his sister watched him.

3. Q. Who found him there?

A. Pharaoh's daughter, with her maidens.

4. Q. What did she do by him?

A. She put him out to nurse.

5. Q. And who was his nurse?

A. His own mother, as Providence would have it.

6. Q. Where did he live afterwards?

A. With Pharaoh king of Egypt.

7. Q. And which did he prefer, the wicked Egyptians, with all their riches and fine things; or the people of God, with all their afflictions and

poverty?

A. He preferred the people of God.

8. Q. What became of cruel Pharaoh who drowned the little children?

A. He was himself drowned in the Red Sea.

9. Q. Who were drowned with him?

A. All the Egyptians who wanted to destroy Moses and his friends.

10. Q. And what became of Moses and his friends?

A. God Almighty saved them by opening the sea before them.

11. Q. What did they do after they were out of the awful danger?

A. They sang a hymn of praise to God their Saviour.

12. Q. What part of the Holy Scriptures did Moses write?

A. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

## § 7. Concerning Samuel.—I Sam. I.—iii.

1. Q. Who was Samuel?

A. He was the prophet whom God called when he was very young.

2. Q. Where was he when God called him?

A. He was in the house of Eli.

3. Q. Who was Eli?

A. He was a priest, and a good old man, upon the whole, but sinfully neglected his children.

4. Q. How did he neglect them?

- A. By not properly correcting them for their great faults.  
 5. Q. What did the good child Samuel say when God called him?  
 A. He said, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth."  
 6. Q. How did the Lord honour him?  
 A. He was made a great prophet, and a judge in Israel.

§ 8. Concerning David.—1 Sam. xvii., &c.

1. Q. Who was David?  
 A. The youngest son of Jesse.  
 2. Q. How was he employed when young?  
 A. He kept his father's sheep.  
 3. Q. Who was the giant he slew?  
 A. Goliath the Philistine, a proud boaster.

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4. Q. How did he slay him, seeing he was so big?  
 A. With a sling and a stone, and the extraordinary help of God.  
 5. Q. What became of David after this act of valour and piety?  
 A. He was made a king and a prophet.  
 6. Q. What was the character of Absalom, one of his sons?  
 A. He was very proud and disobedient.  
 7. Q. What became of him with his pride and disobedience?  
 A. He was caught by his bushy hair in a tree, and Joab slew him.  
 8. Q. What was the general character of Solomon, another son of David?  
 A. He was the wisest of men, though he had his failings.  
 9. Q. What part of the Bible did Solomon write?  
 A. The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles.

§ 9. Concerning Elijah.—1 Kings xvii., &c.

1. Q. Who was Elijah or Elias?  
 A. He was a very zealous prophet.  
 2. Q. Who was the wicked king whom Elijah reproved and threatened by the command of God?  
 A. Ahab, the son of Omri, and the husband of wicked Jezebel.  
 3. Q. When Ahab wanted to take away the life of this very good man, where did he go?  
 A. He hid himself by the brook or small river Cherith.  
 4. Q. What did he do for meat and drink in that solitary place?  
 A. God commanded the ravens to feed him.  
 5. Q. What could they bring him which was eatable?

A. They brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening.

6. Q. And what had he to drink?

A. Water out of the brook.

7. Q. When there was no water in the brook, what did he do?

A. He went to Zarephath to a widow woman and her son.

8. Q. When the son of the woman fell sick, and his sickness was so sore

that there was no breath left in him, what did Elijah do to him?

A. He took him and laid him upon his own bed, and prayed to the Lord

that He would cause the child's soul to come into him again.

9. Q. And did the Lord grant Elijah's extraordinary request?

A. Yes; for the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

10. Q. How did Elijah reprove Ahab, and convince Baal's prophets?

A. Having told Ahab of his faults, he challenged all Israel, and all the false prophets, to meet him on Mount Carmel, where he confounded them

with a miracle.

11. Q. When Jezebel wanted to take away his life, where did he go?

A. He went into the wilderness, a day's journey from Beersheba, and sat

under a juniper-tree.

12. Q. Was he not in great trouble there?

A. Yes, very great; but an angel came to comfort him.

13. Q. Where did he go from thence?

A. He went to Mount Horeb and lodged in a cave.

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14. Q. And what became of Elijah after all his troubles?

A. He was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire by a whirlwind.

§ 10. Concerning Elisha.—1 Kings xix., &c.

1. Q. Who was Elisha?

A. He was the son of Saphat, whom Elijah appointed to be a prophet in his room.

2. Q. What were the miracles he wrought?

A. He first divided the waters of Jordan and went over; and, in a few days after, he healed the water-springs of Jericho.

3. Q. When he went up to Bethel, what did the wicked children of the place say to him?

A. They said to him in ridicule, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head."

4. Q. How were they and their parents punished for their bad behaviour to this good man?

A. Two she-bears came out of the forest and tore forty and two children of them.

5. Q. What other miracles did Elisha perform?

A. A great many. He multiplied the widow's oil, raised to life the Shunammite's son, increased the virtue of twenty barley loaves, made the axe-head to swim, and some others.

#### § 11. Concerning Jonah.

1. Q. Who was Jonah?

A. The prophet who wanted to flee from the presence of God.

2. Q. How did he want to flee?

A. He wanted to go to Tarshish, instead of to Nineveh, where God commanded him to go.

3. Q. And did he prosper?

A. No; for the Lord raised a mighty tempest in the sea.

4. Q. And what became of Jonah?

A. The mariners cast him forth into the sea.

5. Q. Why did they cast Jonah rather than any other?

A. Because the lot fell upon him, and the Lord would have it so.

6. Q. Did Jonah utterly perish in the sea?

A. No; for the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow him up.

7. Q. How long was Jonah in the belly of the fish?

A. Three days and three nights.

8. Q. Was he sensible where he was?

A. Yes; for his soul prayed to God very earnestly.

9. Q. Did God hear and answer him?

A. Yes; for He made the fish throw him up on dry land.

10. Q. What became of him afterwards?

A. He went to Nineveh to preach.

11. Q. What success had he?

A. The people of Nineveh believed God, and repented at Jonah's preaching.

§ 12. Concerning Daniel and his three companions.

1. Q. Who was Daniel?  
A. An Israelite in Babylon.
2. Q. Who were his companions?  
A. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.
3. Q. What did Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans do to them?  
A. They were cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.
4. Q. What for?  
A. Because they would not worship a golden image.
5. Q. Were they burned to death?  
A. No; they were not burned at all.
6. Q. How could that be?  
A. God, who made the fire, hindered it from burning them.
7. Q. What became of them afterward?  
A. They were promoted to greater honour.
8. Q. And what did the princes and presidents of Babylon do to Daniel?  
A. They had him cast into the den of lions.
9. Q. What was it for?  
A. Because he would not leave off praying to God.
10. Q. Did the strong, fierce lions kill him?  
A. No; for God sent an angel to shut their mouths.
11. Q. What became of those who accused Daniel?  
A. They were cast into the lions' den.
12. Q. And what did the lions do to them?  
A. They had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces.
13. Q. Why did not God send his angel to save them, as he did to save Daniel?  
A. Because they were wicked, and would not pray to God; but Daniel prayed, and believed in his God.
14. Q. What became of Daniel after this?  
A. He prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

§ 13. Concerning John the Baptist.—Matt, iii., &c.

1. Q. Who was John the Baptist?  
A. He was a great prophet, and was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.

2. Q. What was his principal work?

A. To make ready a people prepared for the Lord—that is, to preach repentance towards God, and faith in the promised Messiah about to be revealed.

3. Q. Why was he called the Baptist?

A. Because, by God's appointment, he baptized with water the people who flocked to him confessing their sins.

4. Q. What sort of baptism did he teach the people to look for from Jesus Christ?

A. The baptism of the Holy Spirit.

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5. Q. And do people now need anything more to make them good and

happy Christians than to be baptized with water?

A. Yes; they need the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

6. Q. What became of John after his great labour and faithfulness?

A. He was beheaded by the command of Herod, king of Galilee.

7. Q. "What was the cause of that ungrateful and cruel command?"

A. Herod's rash promise to his wicked niece, the daughter of Herodias.

8. Q. Who was Herodias?

A. The wife of Philip, Herod's brother; who had a quarrel against John,

and would have killed him; but she could not.

9. Q. Why did Herodias quarrel with John?

A. Because he had said unto Herod, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife;" for Herod had married her.

10. Q. Was Herod happy after this?

A. No; his mind was greatly troubled.

#### §14. Concerning Jesus Christ.

1. Q. Can you tell me who is Jesus Christ?

A. The Son of God, and of the Virgin Mary, and the Saviour of sinful men.

2. Q. Had He himself no sin?

A. No; He was holy, harmless, undented, and separate from sinners.

3. Q. Was He in being before He became a man, and took upon Him the

form of a servant in our world?

A. Yes; for the Word was God, and all things visible and invisible were made by Him.

4. Q. And was He really a man as well as God?

A. Yes; for He was the man Christ Jesus, as well as the true God and eternal life.

5. Q. If He was a person so great and divine, how did He behave to His

mother Mary, and her husband Joseph, when a child?

A. He was very dutiful, and always obeyed every lawful command.

6. Q. How did He love learning, and improvement in wisdom?

A. He grew in knowledge daily, as He did in stature, and was very wise

as well as very good.

7. Q. Did He ever pray to His heavenly Father?

A. Yes; He prayed much Himself, and hath taught us to pray often and

with importunity.

8. Q. Though He was a person of such heavenly rank, was He not very

humble?

A. Yes; He was meek and lowly of heart, and hath taught us to be so.

9. Q. When He was ill-used and reviled what did He do?

A. When He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He

threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.

10. Q. When any wanted Him to do what was wrong, how did He act?

A. He obeyed God rather than men, and told them their faults in a becoming manner.

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11. Q. When He was grown up to a man, did He despise little children, as below His notice?

A. No, for He said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid

them not; and He took them in His arms and blessed them.

12. Q. Seeing He was so good, and went about doing good to the bodies

and souls of men continually, how was He treated by them at last?

A. He was crucified between two thieves.

13. Q. Had they any plausible reason for treating Him in this ungrateful and cruel manner?

A. No, for He did no sin; nor was guile found in His mouth.

14. Q. How did He behave to His murderers?

A. He prayed for them with great tenderness and compassion.

15. What was His prayer

A. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

16. Q. And can you tell why God suffered wicked men to shed the blood

of Christ, and put Him to death?

A. He was wounded for our transgressions, and His death is of unspeakable value.

17. Q. When He was buried, how long did He continue in the grave?

A. A part of three days.

18. Q. And after His resurrection, how long did He continue on earth with His disciples?

A. Forty days and nights.

19. Q. And where did He go after?

A. He ascended above all heavens, where He even now appears in the presence of God for us.

20. Q. Shall we ever see Him again?

A. Yes; all shall see Him, and He will judge all, according to what they do in this world.

§15. Concerning Lazarus and his sisters.—John xi.

1. Q. Can you tell me who was Lazarus?

A. He was a very good man, who lived at Bethany near Jerusalem, and

who enjoyed Christ's particular friendship.

2. Q. What proof did He give of that friendship?

A. He visited him, wept over him when dead, and raised him to life again.

3. Q. Who were the two sisters of Lazarus?

A. Martha and Mary.

4. Q. What is said of Martha?

A. That she paid more attention to the entertaining of Christ in the family and less to His instructive discourse than was proper.

5. Q. And what is said of Mary?

A. She was more attentive to what Christ said, and diligently minded the one thing needful.

§ 16. Concerning Eutychus.—Acts xx.

1. Q. Can you tell me who was Eutychus?

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A. He was a young man who slept under a good sermon.

2. Q. Who was the preacher when he so fell asleep?

A. The apostle Paul.

3. Q. Where was it at that St Paul then preached?

A. In an upper chamber, which was well-lighted, at a place called Troas.

4. Q. At what time did he preach?

A. When it was late in the evening, on the first day of the week, which is the Christian Sabbath.

5. Q. And what happened to him when he slept so under the sermon?

A. From the window in which he sat, which was in the third loft, he fell down, and was taken up dead.

6. Q. And did he continue dead, as might be expected?

A. No; for when Paul went down and embraced him he revived, which was a great comfort to them all, while it was a solemn' warning against drowsiness in Divine worship.

§17. Concerning Timothy.

1. Q. Can you tell me who was Timothy?

A. He was the son of Eunice, and the grandson of Lois.

2. Q. What was he remarkable for when a child?

A. For his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

3. Q. Had he grace as well as knowledge?

A. St Paul was persuaded he had unfeigned faith.

4. Q. And what became of him when he was grown up?

A. He became a preacher of the gospel, and St Paul was very fond of him.

5. Q. What was his distinguishing character as a gospel minister?

A. He was remarkably faithful, and free from selfish ends in the great work.

# THE EVANGELICAL CATECHIST.

## PART THE SECOND.

### CLASS I.

#### THE SCRIPTURE CATECHISM; OR,

#### A FAMILIAR INTRODUCTION TO THE DIVINE DISPENSATIONS.

§ 1. Of the creation. § 2. Of the state of the world when finished, particularly man. § 3, 4. From Adam to Noah. § 5–13. From Noah to Moses. § 14–41. From Moses to Solomon. § 42–56. From Solomon to Malachi. § 57–77. From Malachi to John the apostle.\*

§ 1. Of the creation of all things, and the day of rest.

1. What was the first day's work of creation? Gen. i. 1–5.
2. What was the second day's work of creation? Gen. i. 6–8.

\* The Scripture history naturally divides itself into the five following general periods:—

PERIOD I. From Adam to Noah; or, from the creation to the deluge,	1656
„ II. From Noah to Moses; or, from the deluge to Israel's egress from Egypt, when it became a distinct state,	857
Carry forward,	2513

3. What was the third day's work? Gen. i. 9–13.
4. What was the fourth day's work? Gen. i. 14–19.
5. What was the work of the fifth day? Gen. i. 20–23.
6. What was the work of the sixth day? Gen. i. 24–31.
7. What is remarked of the seventh day? Gen. ii. 2, 3.

§ 2. Of the state of the world when finished; particularly  
man.

1. What is observed of the state of the creation, on the third, fourth, and fifth days? Gen. i. 10, 12, 18, 21, 25.
2. At the close of the work of creation, on the sixth day, what was God's remark on the whole? Gen. i. 31.
3. What was the original state and dignity of man? Gen. i. 26–28.
4. What grants and privileges did God originally favour man with? Gen. i. 29, 30.

§ 3. Of Adam and Eve; their disobedience, and what  
followed it.

1. Of what materials were the bodies of Adam and Eve made? Gen. ii, 7, 21, 22.
2. When the serpent, as the instrument of Satan, accosted the woman, what conversation passed between them? Gen. iii. 1–5.
3. What was the immediate consequence of Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit? Gen. iii. 7, 8.
4. What was God's address to Adam, to Eve, and to the serpent respectively, in consequence of the first transgression? Gen. iii. 9–19.
5. What was God's appointment concerning man in his fallen state? Gen. iii. 23, 24.

§ 4. Of the patriarchs from Adam to Noah.

1. What were the offerings that Cain and Abel brought to the Lord, and how were they received? Gen. iv. 3–5.
2. What was the immediate punishment of Cain, when he slew his brother Abel? Gen. iv. 11–16.
3. How old were Adam, Seth, and Enos, respectively, when they died? Gen. v. 3–11.
4. What was the character and end of Enoch? Gen. v. 21–24.

Brought forward, 2513  
 Period III. From Moses to Solomon; or, from Israel's egress to the partition  
 of the Jewish kingdom into that of Judah and of Israel, 516  
 „ IV. From Solomon to Malachi; or, from the partition of the king-  
 dom to the close of the Old Testament, 578  
 „ V. From Malachi to John the apostle; or, from the close of the Old  
 Testament to the close of the New Testament, 493

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5. How old were Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah when they died? Gen. v. 25, 32, ix. 28, 29.

§ 5. Of Noah and the deluge, with the causes and consequences of it.

1. What was the moral and religious state of the world in the days of Noah? Gen. vi. 5, 11–13.

2. What was the character of Noah? Gen. vii. 1, 5, viii. 20, ix. 20, 21.

3. What were the materials, dimensions, and form of Noah's ark? Gen. vi. 14–16.

4. What was preserved with Noah in the ark, and what perished? Gen. vi. 17–22, vii. throughout.

5. How long did the deluge continue? Gen. vii. 11, viii. 13, 14.

6. What method did Noah take to know if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground? Gen. viii. 6–12.

7. What covenant token did God give to Noah, after the flood? Gen. ix. 12–17.

§ 6. Of the patriarchs from Noah to Abraham.

1. How many sons each had Japheth, Ham, and Shem? Gen. x. 2, 6, 22.

2. What part of the world did Japheth and his posterity inhabit? Gen. x. 5.

3. Whose son and grandson was Nimrod, what his character and his dominions? Gen. x. 6, 8–10.

4. Whose son, grandson, and brother was Peleg; and what remarkable thing happened in his days? Gen. x. 24, 25.

5. At what place, and by what means, was the one language of the descendants of Noah confounded? Gen. xi. 1–9.

6. How old were Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, and Eber when they died? Gen. xi. 10–17.

7. How old were Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, and Terah when they died? Gen. xi. 18–26.

§ 7. Of Abraham and Sarah, and their family.

1. Who were the father, grandfather, and brothers of Abraham? Gen. xi. 24–27.

2. What was the first promise that God gave to Abraham? Gen. xii. 1-3.
  3. What happened to Abraham and Sarah when in Egypt? Gen. xii. 10-20.
  4. Upon what occasion was it that Abraham and Lot parted, and where did they both settle? Gen. xiii. 7-12.
  5. By what means did Abraham rescue Lot and his property from the four kings? Gen. xiv. 14-16.
  6. What passed between Abraham and Melchizedek, on his returning from the slaughter of the kings? Gen. xiv. 18-20; Heb. vii. 1-10.
  7. By what sign was Abraham certified that his posterity should
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8. What advice and encouragement did the angel of the Lord give to Hagar, when gone out of Abraham's family? Gen. xvi. 7-13.
9. Who were the persons that Abraham circumcised, according to God's command? Gen. xvii. 10-14, 23-27.
10. In what manner did Abraham entertain the strangers that appeared to him in the plains of Mamre? Gen. xviii. 1-3.
11. By what arguments did Abraham plead with the Lord in behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah? Gen. xviii. 23-33.
12. What passed between Abraham and Sarah, and Abimelech, king of Gerar? Genesis xx. throughout.
13. In what manner did Abraham and Sarah deal with Ishmael and his mother, and what was the event? Gen. xxi. 9-21.
14. What was Abimelech's covenant with Abraham, and how was it ratified? Gen. xxi. 22-34.
15. How did God tempt or try Abraham with respect to his son Isaac, and what was the consequence? Gen. xxii. 1-19.
16. What is related of Sarah's age, death, and burial? Gen. xxiii.
17. What charge did Abraham give his servant about getting his son Isaac a wife; and what success attended him in that journey? Gen. xxiv.
18. What is recorded of Abraham's age, death, and burial? Gen. xxv. 7-10.

#### § 8. Of Lot and his family.

1. In what manner were the two angels, who came to Lot in Sodom, entertained by him, and by the men of the city; and what was the event? Gen. xix. 1-11.

2. What advice did the angels give to Lot and his family with respect to

Sodom? Gen. xix. 12–23.

3. What became of Sodom and Gomorrah? Gen. xix. 23, 24.

4. What became of Lot and his wife after this wonderful deliverance? Gen. xix. 25–30.

§ 9. Of Isaac and Rebekah.

1. Was there anything remarkable belonging to the birth and infancy of

Isaac? Gen. xxi. 1–8.

2. How was Isaac employed when he saw Rebekah coming from Mesopotamia to be his wife, and what was the manner of this interview? Gen. xxiv. 62–67.

3. Who were the relations of Rebekah? Gen. xxiv. 24–47, xxv. 20.

4. What befell Isaac and Rebekah while they dwelt at Gerar? Gen. xxvi. 1–22.

5. What comforts and troubles did they meet with at Beersheba? Gen. xxvi. 23–35.

6. What was the age of Isaac when he died? where and by whom was he buried? Gen. xxxv. 27–29.

§ 10. Of Esau and Jacob, Leah and Rachel.

1. What was there remarkable in the birth and character of Esau, and of

Jacob? Gen. xxv. 21–28.

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2. In what manner did Esau sell his birthright to Jacob his brother? Gen. xxv. 29–34.

3. Can you relate how Esau was sent by his father for venison, and how Jacob was instructed by his mother, and obtained his father's blessing? Gen. xxvii. 1–29.

4. How did Esau resent the disappointment, and how did Jacob avoid his resentment? Gen. xxvii. 30–45.

5. When Jacob went from Beersheba toward Haran, what remarkable dream or vision had he? Gen. xxviii.

6. How many children had Leah, and what were their names? Gen. xxix. 31–35, xxx. 17–21.

7. How many children had Rachel, and what were their names? Gen. xxx. 22–24, xxxv. 16–18.
8. What was Jacob's covenant with Laban? Gen. xxx. 27–36.
9. What was the reason of Jacob's leaving Laban? Gen. xxxi. 1–21.
10. In what manner did Jacob prepare to meet Esau? Gen. xxxii. 1–23.
11. How was Jacob employed when he was left alone? Gen. xxxii. 24–32.
12. Can you relate the manner in which Jacob and Esau met? Gen. xxxiii.
13. What was the occasion of Jacob ending his days in Egypt? Gen. xlv.

§ 11. Of the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob.

1. Wherein was the conduct of Simeon and Levi, the second and third sons of Jacob, criminal? Gen. xxxiv. 23–31.
2. How came Joseph, Jacob's eleventh son, to be envied by his brethren? Gen. xxxvii. 1–11.
3. In what manner did his brethren conspire against Joseph, and by what means did he go to Egypt? Gen. xxxvii. 12–36.
4. What family had Judah, and what was there amiss in his conduct? Gen. xxxviii.
5. Which of Jacob's ten elder sons appears to be the most humane and considerate? Gen. xxxvii., xlii.
6. Which of them was detained as a hostage in Egypt by his brother Joseph? Gen. xlii.
7. Which of the brothers went surety for Benjamin, the youngest? Gen. xliii. 8–14.
8. What sons had Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, when they went with their father to Egypt? Gen. xlvi. 8–11.
9. What sons had Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, when they went to Egypt? Gen. xlvi. 12–15.
10. What sons had Gad and Asher when they went to Egypt? Gen. xlvi. 16–18.
11. What sons had Joseph in Egypt, and Benjamin when he came to Egypt? Gen. xlvi. 19–22.
12. What sons had Dan and Naphtali? Gen. xlvi. 23–27.
13. What was the prophetic character of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi? Gen. xlix. 3–7.

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14. What was the prophetic character of Judah, Zebulun, and Issachar? Gen. xlix. 8–15.

15. What was the prophetic character of Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali? Gen. xlix. 16–21.

16. What was the prophetic character of Joseph and Benjamin? Gen. xlix. 22–33.

§ 12. Of Joseph and his family.

1. What was the occasion of Joseph being put in the king's prison in Egypt? Gen. xxxix.

2. What befell Joseph while in the prison? Gen. xl.

3. By what means was Joseph released from the prison, and advanced to honour and authority? Gen. xli.

4. In what manner was Joseph's dream concerning his own sheaf and his brethren's fulfilled? Gen. xxxvii. 5–8, xlii. 3–9.

5. How did Joseph behave at first to his brethren to try them? Gen. xlii.–xliv.

6. In what manner did he make himself known to his brethren, and what was the consequence of it? Gen. xlv.

7. When Joseph, with his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, paid a visit to his father Jacob a little before his death, what passed between them? Gen. xlvi.

8. Can you relate in what manner Joseph took care of his father's funeral? Gen. i. 1–14.

9. How did Joseph behave to his brethren after his father's death? Gen. i. 15–21.

§ 13. Of the Israelites from Joseph to Moses.

1. To what bondage were the Israelites put, when Joseph was dead, and his good services forgotten? Exod. i. 7–14.

2. What tyrannical method did the king of Egypt use to lessen their number? Exod. i. 15–21.

3. When the expedient failed, what other method did he take to prevent their increase? Exod. i. 22.

§ 14. Of Moses and Aaron.

1. By what means came Moses to be brought up in the court of Pharaoh, since the king was so great an enemy to the Israelites? Exod. ii. 1–10.

2. How came Moses to leave Egypt, and to dwell in the land of Midian? Exod. ii. 11–22.

3. How came he to leave Midian, and to attempt so great a work as the deliverance of Israel from Egypt? Exod. iii. 1–12.

4. What was the commission of Moses, as God's ambassador to Pharaoh? Exod. iii. 13–22.

5. When Moses objected to so arduous a task, how did God remove his scruples? Exod. iv. 1–17.

6. How came Aaron and the Israelites to be acquainted with then' intended deliverance? Exod. iv. 27–31.

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7. What success did Moses and Aaron meet with when they delivered their commission to Pharaoh? Exod. v.

8. When Moses complains to the Lord of their ill success with Pharaoh and with Israel, what further encouragement and instructions are given them? Exod. vi. 1–13, vii. 1–9.

9. What were the miracles performed by Moses and Aaron, which the magicians of Egypt imitated? Exod. vii. 10–25, viii. 1–7.

10. What were the miracles performed by Moses and Aaron which the magicians could not mimic, and what effect had they upon Pharaoh? Exod. viii. 16–33, ix.–xii. 29–33.

11. What ceremony did God, by Moses, institute, to commemorate their deliverance out of Egypt, and how was it observed? Exod. xii. 3–28, 43–51, xiii. 1–16.

12. What number of Israelites was there in Egypt when they began their march under the conduct of Moses and Aaron? Exod. xii. 37–39.

13. How long had the nation been in Egypt before this deliverance? Exod. xii. 40–42.

14. By what course, and in what manner, did God lead the people, with Moses and Aaron before them, to the Bed Sea? Exod. xiii. 17–22.

15. By what means did Moses and the people escape the persecuting rage of Pharaoh and his host? Exod. xiv., xv.

16. What advice did Jethro give to Moses concerning Israel? Exod. xviii.

## § 15. Of the Mosaic law first enacted.

1. What laws did God himself deliver to Israel in the wilderness of Sinai, and how were the people prepared to receive them? Exod. xix., xx.

2. What law did God give by Moses respecting temporary altars? Exod. xx. 24–26.

3. What laws were given by Moses concerning servants? Exod. xxi. 1–11.

4. What crimes were to be punished with death? Exod. xxi. 12–17, xxii. 18–20.

5. What further laws were, given respecting those who would strike and hurt others, and what were the punishments inflicted? Exod. xxi. 18–27.

6. What laws were given respecting goring oxen? Exod. xxi. 28–36.

7. What laws were enacted further concerning theft, fire, things intrusted, or borrowed, and seduction? Exod. xxii. 1–17, 25–27.

8. What laws were enacted respecting strangers, the widow and fatherless, and the magistrates? Exod. xxii. 21–24, 28, xxiii. 9.

9. What laws were given about false reports, the practice of the multitude, the beasts of enemies, the cause of the poor, and bribery? Exod. xxiii. 1–8.

10. What injunction were given concerning the seventh year, and the seventh day? Exod. xxiii. 10–12.

11. How did Moses preserve these laws for the use of the people? Exod. xxiv. 3–7.

12. Who attended Moses when he was called of God to receive the laws of the tabernacle, and the tables of stone? Exod. xxiv.

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## § 16. Of the directions God gave to Moses to make the tabernacle.

1. What materials for the tabernacle did God accept as a voluntary offering from the people? Exod. xxv. 1–9.

2. What were the appointed materials and the form of the ark, the mercy-seat, and the cherubim? Exod. xxv. 10–22.

3. What were the prescribed substance and form of the table of shewbread, the candlestick, and the altar of incense? Exod. xxv. 23–40, xxx. 1–10.

4. What were the prescribed matter and form of the inner curtains and outer coverings of the tabernacle? Exod. xxvi. 1-14.

5. What were to be the number, size, and form of the boards and bars, or solid parts of the tabernacle, with the separating vails? Exod. xxvi. 15-37.

6. What were to be the matter, size, and form of the altar of sacrifices, the court of the tabernacle, and its hangings? Exod. xxvii. 1-19.

7. What provision was to be made for supplying the lamp or golden candlestick which was to burn always? Exod. xxvii. 20, 21.

§ 17. Of directions concerning the priesthood.

1. Who were the first persons that were appointed to be priests, and what were their garments, the high priest's ephod with its precious stones? Exod. xxviii. 1-14.

2. What were the breastplate, the robe, and the mitre? Exod. xxviii. 15-39.

3. What were the common priests' vestments? Exod. xxviii. 40-43.

4. What were the directions given for the consecration of the priests, and the altar? Exod. xxix. 1-37, Lev. viii.

§ 18. Of the prescribed sacrifices and offerings.

1. What daily sacrifices were the priests to offer? Exod. xxix. 38-42.

2. What was the appointed daily offering on the table of incense? Exod. xxx. 6-10.

3. What was the ransom money which the people were to offer, and to what end? Exod. xxx. 11-16.

4. How were Aaron and his sons to prepare themselves for their offerings and ministrations? Exod. xxx. 17-21.

5. What directions were given for making the sacred anointing oil, and the incense for the golden altar? Exod. xxx. 22-38.

6. What further laws did God give Moses, when he spake to him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, particularly concerning burnt-offerings? Lev. i, vi. 8-13, vii.

7. What were the matter and the manner of the meatofferings which were offered by themselves, as unconnected with animal oblations? Lev. ii. 1-11, vi. 14-23, vii.

8. What were the matter and the manner of voluntary offerings of the first-fruits? Lev. ii. 12-16.

9. What was the law of peace-offerings? Lev. iii., vii.

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10. What was the law of sin-offerings? Lev. iv., vi. 24–30, vii.

11. What was the law of trespass-offerings? Lev. v., vi. 1–7, vii.

12. In what manner were these laws, concerning sacrifices and offerings, first put in practice? and what was there very remarkable that attended it? Lev. ix.

13. What part of the offerings were prescribed to the priests for food? Lev. vii. 22–27, x. 12–20.

§ 19. Of meats clean and unclean.

1. What laws were prescribed to the Israelites at large with respect to food; particularly what cattle were deemed clean? Lev. xi. 1–8.

2. What fishes were clean, or to be eaten? Lev. xi. 9–12.

3. What fowls, flying insects, and creeping things were pronounced unclean to them? Lev. xi. 13–24, 29, 30, 41–44.

4. What was the law with respect to eating of blood? Lev. vii. 26, 27, xvii. 10–16.

§ 20. Of purifying rites.

1. How was the purification of men and things for their consecration performed? Exod. xl. 9–15.

2. How were men and things, made impure by the carcasses of unclean animals, purified? Lev. xi. 24–40.

3. What was required of a woman, after child-birth, for her purification? Lev. xii. 6, 8.

4. How were persons and things purified from the plague of leprosy? Lev. xiv.

5. How were other pollutions of the flesh purified? Lev. xv. 29, 30.

6. What was the great annual purification of the Jews, and how was it performed? Lev. xvi.

§ 21. Of sundry holy times: sabbaths, feasts, and the jubilee, &c.

1. Wherein consists the great law of the weekly Sabbath? Exod. xx. 8–11, xxiii. 12, xxxi. 12–18, xxxv. 1–3, Lev. xxiii. 1–3.

2. What was the law of the Sabbatical year? Exod. xxiii. 10–13; Lev. xxv. 1–7, 20–22.

3. What was the feast of unleavened bread? Exod. xii. 15–20; Lev. xxiii. 6–8; Num. xxviii. 16–25.

4. What was the feast of Pentecost, (or the fiftieth day,) otherwise called

the feast of harvest and of weeks? Lev. xxiii. 15–25; Exod. xxiii. 16; Deut. xvi. 9–12, 16.

5. What was the feast of trumpets, and how was it observed? Lev. xxiii. 23–25; Num. xxix. 1–6.

6. What was the feast of universal atonement, and how observed? Lev. xxiii. 26–32; Num. xxix. 7–11.

7. How was the feast of tabernacles to be observed? Lev. xxiii. 33–44; Num. xxix. 12–40.

8. How was the year of jubilee to be observed? Lev. xxv. 8–17.

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§ 22. Of the miscellaneous laws.

1. What law was given about reaping and gleaning? Lev. xxix. 9, 10.

2. What was the law respecting fruit trees? Lev. xxix. 23–25.

3. What laws were given concerning tale-bearing, reproving, bearing a  
a  
grudge, and wizards? Lev. xxix. 16–18, 31; xx. 6, 27.

4. What laws were given concerning the aged and the stranger? Lev. xx. 32–34.

5. What was the law against cursing and blasphemy? Lev. xxiv. 13–16.

6. What were some of the laws of retaliation? Lev. xxiv. 17–23.

7. What were the laws of dedicating and redeeming persons and things? Lev. xxvii.

§ 23. Of the men of war, their number and order.

1. What was God's command to Moses about numbering the warlike  
men  
of Israel? Num. i. 1–46.

2. What tribe was exempted from being numbered with the others,  
and  
why? Num. i. 47–54.

3. In what order were the Israelites to be stationed in their camp? Num. ii.

§ 24. Of the Levites and their offices.

1. What was the law with respect to the appointment of the Levites? Num. iii. 1–39.

2. What was the law with respect to exchanging the first-born of the Hebrews for Levites? Num. iii. 40–51.

3. What was the appointed service of the Levites, and their particular charge in bearing the tabernacle? Num. iv.

§ 25. Of the passover.

1. Wherein consisted the institution of the passover? Exod. xii. 1–14; Num. ix. 1–5.

2. What further directions concerning it did Moses give to the elders of Israel? Exod. xii. 21–28.

3. Who were to partake of the Passover? Exod. xii. 43–51.

4. What new law was enacted for observing the passover on account of ceremonial defilement? Num. ix. 6–14.

§ 26. Of the miraculous cloud, the manna, the water out of the rock, and brazen serpent.

1. Wherein consisted the privilege of the miraculous cloudy pillar? Exod. xiii. 20–22, xiv. 19, 20, 24; Num. xiv. 14; Deut. i. 33.

2. How did the Lord miraculously provide *food* for the camp of Israel? Exod. xvi. 1–15.

3. What orders were given concerning it? Exod. xvi. 16–36.

4. In what manner did God provide *water* for the camp of Israel in the wilderness? Exod. xvii. 1–7.

5. What happened to Moses and Aaron and the congregation of Israel when they wanted water at Meribah? Num. xx. 7–13.

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6. What were the occasion and design of erecting the brazen serpent in the wilderness? Num. xxi. 4–9.

§ 27. The rebellion and calamities of Israel in the wilderness.

1. Upon what pretence did the Israelites make and set up an idolatrous golden calf? Exod. xxxii. 1–6.

2. What passed between God and Moses on this occasion? Exod. xxxii. 7–14.

3. What passed between Moses, Joshua, and the people, on this occasion? Exod. xxxii. 15–20.

4. By what pretence did Aaron excuse himself? Exod. xxxii. 21–24.

5. In what manner did this rebellion end? Exod. xxxii. 25–35.

6. What were the crime and the punishment of Nadab and Abihu? Lev.

x. 1–7.

7. What was the consequence of the people complaining after they departed from the mount three days' journey? Num. xi. 1–3.

8. What followed the people's murmuring against the manna and for want of flesh? Num. xi. 4–35.

9. When Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses, what followed? Num. xii.

10. In what manner did the rebellion of the Israelites begin and terminate upon the discouraging report of the spies? Num. xiv. 1–35.

11. How were the wicked spies dealt with, and those who believed their false report? Num. xiv. 36–45, xxvi. 63–65.

12. How was the presumptuous Sabbath-breaker punished? Num. xv. 32–36.

13. What were the rebellion and the punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their accomplices? Num. xvi.

14. How were the Israelites seduced by the Moabites, and afterwards punished for it? Num. xxv.

#### § 28. Of Balak and Balaam.

1. What were the import and the effect of Balak, king of Moab, sending his first messengers to Balaam, the sorcerer of Mesopotamia? Num. xxii. 1–14.

2. What were the import and the success of the second message of Balak to Balaam? Num. xxii. 15–41.

3. In what manner, and with what success, did Balak and Balaam labour to ruin the Israelites? Num. xxiii.

4. How was Balak finally disappointed by Balaam? Num. xxiv.

#### § 29. Of the affairs of Israel from the appointment of Joshua to the close of Moses's administration.

1. What were the occasion and the manner of Joshua being appointed to succeed Moses, as the leader of Israel? Num. xxvii. 12–23.

2. In what manner, and for what reason, did the children of Israel punish the Midianites? Num. xxxi.

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3. What was the proposal made by the tribes of Reuben and Gad to Moses

concerning a settlement, and what was the consequence? Num. xxxii.

4. What was the charge the Lord give to Moses concerning the Canaanites? Num. xxxiii. 50–56; Dent. vii.

5. What directions were given about fixing the boundaries of Canaan? Num. xxxiv.

6. When Canaan was divided, how were the Levites provided for? Num. xxxv. 1–5.

7. What orders were given to Moses concerning the cities of refuge, and

for whom appointed 2 Num. xxxv., Deut. iv. 41–43, xix. 1–13.

§ 30. Of the repetition of the law by Moses, his dying exhortations, and prophetic blessings.

1. What are the chief things of which Moses reminds the people, before their entrance into Canaan? Deut. i.–iii., ix. 7–29, x. 1–11, xi. 1–7.

2. What is contained in the solemn charge of Moses to the Israelites, and by what argument does he enforce it? Deut. iv. 1–40, viii., x. 12–22, xi.

3. What does he inculcate on the subject of family religion, and education? Deut. vi., xi. 18–21.

4. How does he guard them against idolatry? Deut. xiii., xvii. 2–7.

5. What directions were given by Moses about mourning, food, and feasting? Deut. xiv.

6. What directions were given with respect to debts, the poor, and bond-servants? Deut. xv. 1–18.

7. What does Moses say concerning prophets? Deut. xviii. 15–22.

8. What military directions does he give the Hebrews? Deut. xx.

9. How were stubborn and rebellious children to be dealt with? Deut. xxi. 18–21.

10. In what manner were the laws to be made more public on their entrance into Canaan? Deut. xxvii. 1–10; Josh. viii. 32.

11. How were their consciences alarmed, and their affections moved, that they might not slight the Divine laws? Deut. xxvii. 11–26, xxviii.

12. In what manner did the Israelites renew their covenant with God? Deut. xxix.

13. What peculiar encouragements to repentance and circumspection does Moses give at the close of his long public exhortations? Deut. xxx.

14. What familiar advice does he give with respect to the conquest of the promised land, and their attention to the written laws? Deut. xxxi.

15. What were the instructions principally conveyed to Israel, in the divine song which Moses addressed to them a little before his death? Deut. xxxii.

16. What are the prophetic blessings pronounced by Moses upon the Hebrew tribes? Deut. xxxiii.

17. What account have we of the death, burial, and the character of Moses? Deut. xxxiv.

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§ 31. Of Joshua, and the passage over Jordan.

1. What evidence had Joshua that he was to succeed Moses in the government of Israel? Josh. i. 1–9.

2. What was the first step Joshua took in the discharge of his office? Josh. i. 10–18.

3. By what means did Joshua procure information of the condition of Jericho, and what was the result? Josh. ii.

4. By what means did they get from Shittim, on the one side of Jordan, to Gilgal on the other side? Josh. iii., iv.

5. What tokens of the Divine favour attended Joshua and the people while at Gilgal? Josh. v.

§ 32. Of subduing the Canaanites.

1. In what manner was Jericho besieged, taken, and destroyed? Josh. v.

2. What was the reason that a detachment of Israelites received a defeat at Ai? and what was the consequence? Josh. vii.

3. In what manner was Ai finally taken and demolished? Josh. viii. 1–29.

4. What solemn transaction took place on mount Ebal? Josh. vii. 30–35.

5. What reception had the Gibeonites when they came to the Israelitish camp at Gilgal? Josh. ix.

6. Under what pretence did Adoni-zedec, king of Jerusalem, and his associates, declare war against Joshua, and what followed? Josh. x. 1–27.

7. What other conquests were made by Joshua before he returned unto the camp at Gilgal? Josh. x. 28–48.

8. What were the occasion and the consequence of the very important engagement at the waters of Merom? Josh. xi.

9. What kingdoms were conquered on the eastern, and also on the western side of Jordan, for a settlement to Israel? Josh. xii.

10. What kingdoms of Canaan were left unconquered by Joshua? Josh. xiii. 1–6.

§ 33. Of distributing the land to Israel.

1. What part of the conquered country was assigned to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh? Josh. xiii. 8–33.

2. What was the inheritance allotted to the tribe of Levi? Josh. xiii. 14, 33.

3. In what manner was the land divided to the nine tribes and half-tribe? Josh. xiv. 1–5.

4. What part of the conquered country did Caleb enjoy, and on what account? Josh. xiv. 6–15, xv. 13–19.

5. What part did Judah possess? Josh. xv. 1–12, 63.

6. What part did the children of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, possess? Josh. xvi., xvii.

7. In whose lot was Shiloh, and how long did the tabernacle stand there?

Josh. xviii. 1; 1 Sam. iv.; Ps. lxxviii. 60.

8. Where was the lot of Benjamin situated? Josh. xviii. 11.

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9. Where was the lot of Simeon? Josh. xix. 1, 9.

10. In what manner were the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh discharged by Joshua; and what was the consequence? Josh. xxii.

§ 34. Joshua's exhortation and death.

1. What was contained, principally, in the solemn charge Joshua gave to the Israelites a little before his death? Josh. xxiii.

2. What was contained in his farewell address to all the tribes convened at Shechem? Josh. xxiv.

3. How old was Joshua when he died, where buried, and what circumstances attended the event? Josh. xxiv. 29–33.

§ 35. Of the Israelites, from Joshua to Samson.

1. After the death of Joshua, what success had Judah, Simeon, and Ephraim in extirpating the Canaanites? Judg. i.
2. What deliverance was wrought for Israel by means of Othniel, and how came they to want his aid? Judg. iii. 1-11.
3. What deliverance was wrought for Israel by Ehud and Shamgar; and how came they to want their aid? Judg. iii. 12-30.
4. By what means were the Israelites delivered from the oppression of the Canaanites, in the time of Deborah? Judg. iv.
5. What are the chief topics of Deborah's triumphal song? Judg. v.
6. What services did Gideon render to Israel against the Midianites, and by what steps were they accomplished? Judg. vi.-viii.
7. What was the parable of Jotham, and how was it verified? Judg. ix. S. What was the deliverance wrought by Jephthah, and what gave occasion to it? Judg. x.-xii.

§ 36. Of the Israelites, from Samson to Ruth.

1. What remarkable circumstances preceded the birth of Samson? Judg. xiii.
2. What was Samson's riddle, the occasion of it, its explanation, and the consequence of his wife's treacherous discovery of it? Judg. xiv.
3. How did Samson retaliate the perfidiousness of his wife's family? Judg. xv. 1-5.
4. How did he revenge the cruelty of the Philistines to his wife's family? Judg. xv. 6-20.
5. By what steps was Samson reduced to the weakness of a common man? Judg. xvi. 1-20.
6. What became of him after he was thus reduced to weakness? Judg. xvi. 21-31.
7. What have we recorded of Micah, the idolatrous Ephraimite? Judg. xvii., xviii.
8. What remarkable account have we of a certain Levite of Mount Ephraim, and his concubine, and how they were used by the Gibeonites? Judg. xix.

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9. How were the Benjamites of Gibeah, and the whole tribe of Benjamin that espoused their scandalous cause, treated by all Israel? Judg. xxi.

10. How was the remnant of Benjamin treated by their victorious brethren? Judg. xxi.

§ 37. Of the Israelites, from Ruth to Saul.

1. What was the occasion of Ruth, the Moabitess, going to live at Beth-lehem? Ruth i.

2. What reception had Ruth at Bethlehem, from Boaz, her husband's kinsman? Ruth ii.

3. How came Boaz to marry Ruth, while another had a prior claim to her? Ruth iv.

4. What is recorded of Samuel's parentage, birth, and dedication to God? 1 Sam. i.

5. What are the principal things contained in Hannah's soliloquy at the presentation of Samuel? 1 Sam. ii. 1-10.

6. What is recorded of Samuel's childhood and early youth? 1 Sam. ii. 10, 18, 21, 26, iii. throughout.

7. What was the reason why God denounced judgments and ruin on the family of Eli? 1 Sam. ii. 12-36.

8. In what manner was the threatening against Hophni and Phineas, the sons of Eli, executed? 1 Sam. iv. 1-11.

9. What occasioned the death of Eli and his daughter-in-law? 1 Sam. iv. 12-22.

10. In what manner were the Philistines constrained to return the ark, and how was it received at Beth-shemesh? 1 Sam. v., vi. 1-18.

11. How came the ark to be placed at Kirjath-jearim? 1 Sam. vi. 19-21; vii. 1, 2.

12. What occasioned the Philistines to attack Israel at Mizpeh, and what was the consequence? 1 Sam. vii. 3-17.

13. Under what pretence did the Israelites demand a king, and what reply did God make by Samuel? 1 Sam. viii.

## § 38. Of Saul and Jonathan.

1. What account have we of Saul prior to his being appointed king? 1 Sam. ix.
  2. By what steps was Saul further pointed out as king, and fully inaugurated to his royal office? 1 Sam. x., xi. 14, 15.
  3. What was the first victory obtained by Saul, and what was his conduct towards his domestic enemies on that occasion? 1 Sam. xi. 1–13.
  4. When Samuel resigned the government of Israel in favour of Saul, and made his monitory address to the people, on what topics did he insist?  
1 Sam. xii.
  5. By what means were Saul and his subjects brought to a state of confusion and the utmost distress? 1 Sam. xiii.
  6. How came Jonathan into a state of imminent danger from his father, and how was he delivered? 1 Sam. xiv. 1–46.
  7. What misconduct of Saul caused his being rejected as king, and what was the conduct of Samuel on the occasion? 1 Sam. xv.
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## § 39. Of David to the death of Samuel.

1. What account have we of David, before he was anointed king by Samuel? 1 Sam. xvi. 1–13.
2. How came David's music to be solicited, and what effect had it on Saul? 1 Sam. xvi. 14–23.
3. How came David to be taken notice of at Saul's court? 1 Sam. xvii.
4. How came David to be much disliked by Saul, but caressed by Jonathan and the people? 1 Sam. xviii.
5. What service did Jonathan render to David, when his life was repeatedly threatened by Saul? 1 Sam. xix. 1–7, xx. throughout, xxiii. 16–18.
6. Of what service were Michael and Samuel to David, when in danger of his life? 1 Sam. xix. 8–24.
7. By what stratagem did David impose upon Ahimelech, the chief priest at Nob, and Achish, the Philistian king at Gath? 1 Sam. xxi.
8. How were Ahimelech and his family treated by Saul, on account of his friendly behaviour to David? 1 Sam. xxii.
9. What befell David at Keilah and Ziph? 1 Sam. xxiii.

10. What instances of generosity did David shew to Saul, and with what effect? 1 Sam. xxiv.

§ 40. Of David, from the death of Samuel to his being crowned king.

1. How did Abigail appease the anger of David, and what was the consequence of it? 1 Sam. xxv.

2. When David went into Saul's camp, what was his conduct toward Saul, and what was the effect of it? 1 Sam. xxvi.

3. Why did David go to Gath a second time, and what was the consequence of it? 1 Sam. xxvii.

4. What made Saul consult the witch at Endor, what answer did he receive, and what effect had it on him? 1 Sam. xxviii.

5. What was the reason of Achish dismissing David, and in what manner was it done? 1 Sam. xxix.

6. What were David's troubles and exploits at Ziklag? 1 Sam. xxx.

7. What was the end of Saul and his sons? 1 Sam. xxxi.

8. By what means was David informed of Saul's death, and how was he affected by it? 2 Sam. i.

§ 41. Of the reign of David.

1. When David was anointed king over Judah, what immediate opposition did he meet with, and what became of his servant Asahel? 2 Sam. ii.

2. What was the cause of Abner's revolt from Ishbosheth to David, what was his end, and how was he lamented? 2 Sam. iii.

3. What was the end of Ishbosheth, and what was David's conduct on the occasion? 2 Sam. iv.

4. When David was anointed king over all Israel, what were his first successes against his enemies? 2 Sam v.

5. When David proposed to convey the ark from Kirjath-jearim to Jeru-

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salem, what wrong step was taken, and what was the consequence? 2 Sam. vi. 1-11.

6. When the former mistake was rectified, how did they proceed with the ark, and what is recorded of David, and Michal the queen, on the occasion? 2 Sam. vi. 12–23.

7. What conversation passed between David and the prophet Nathan, concerning the erection of a temple for the ark? 2 Sam. vii. 1–17.

8. What was the purport of David's prayer on this occasion? 2 Sam. vii. 18–29.

9. What conquests did David gain over the Philistines, Moabites, and others, soon after this conference with Nathan? 2 Sam. viii.

10. In what manner did David shew kindness to Mephibosheth? 2 Sam. ix.

11. In what way were David's messengers abused by Hanun, king of the Ammonites, and what followed? 2 Sam. x.

12. By what shameful and wicked conduct did David *displease* the Lord?

2 Sam. xi.

13. What conversation passed between David and Nathan on this occasion, and what became of David immediately after? 2 Sam. xii.

14. On what account, and in what manner, did Absalom cause Amnon to be murdered, and how was David affected with it? 2 Sam. xiii.

15. By what contrivance of Joab is Absalom's pardon and introduction to court procured? 2 Sam. xiv.

16. By what means did Absalom meditate a conspiracy against his father, and what was the effect of it? 2 Sam. xv.

17. How was David treated by Ziba and Shimei? 2 Sam. xvi. 1–14.

18. What was Hushai's contrivance in favour of David, and Ahithophel's conduct in favour of Absalom, with the result thereof? 2 Sam. xvi. 15–23, xvii., xviii. 1–8.

19. What were the circumstances of Absalom's death, and how did David express his concern on the occasion? 2 Sam. xviii. 9–33, xix. 1–8.

20. What is recorded of David during his return to his throne from the seat of war, the wood of Ephraim? 2 Sam. xix. 9–43, xx. throughout.

21. What was the cause of a three years' famine in Israel, and what was done, before the Lord was entreated for the land? 2 Sam. xxi. 1–14.

22. What exploits were performed by David and his servants against the Philistines? 2 Sam. xxi. 15–22.

23. When the Lord had delivered David out of the hand of all his enemies, on what topics did he dwell in his exulting song of praise? 2 Sam. xxii.; Ps. xviii.

24. What are the contents of David's last words? 2 Sam. xxii. 1-7.

25. What were the most remarkable exploits of David's valiant men? 2 Sam. xxii. 8-23.

26. What concern had David with Araunah, the Jebusite, and what was the cause of it? 2 Sam. xxiv.

27. How was Adonijah's usurpation defeated, and how was he treated by Solomon? 1 Kings i.

28. What was David's dying charge to Solomon? 1 Kings i. 1-11.

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§ 42. Of the reign of Solomon.

1. When Solomon sat upon his throne, how did he execute justice upon

Adonijah, Abiathar, Joab, and Shimei? 1 Kings ii. 12-46.

2. What was the import of the night-vision which Solomon had at Gibeon? 1 Kings iii. 4-15.

3. What was the first instance of Solomon's wisdom in his public capacity? 1 Kings iii. 16-28.

4. What account have we of Solomon's court, purveyors, subjects, horses, and of his fame for wisdom? 1 Kings iv.

5. What agreement passed between Solomon and Hiram king of Tyre, and what was the result of that agreement? 1 Kings v.

6. When Solomon had built the Lord's house, what palaces did he build for himself? 1 Kings vii. 1-12.

7. What further account have we of Solomon's intercourse with Hiram king of Tyre, of his buildings, servants, sacrifices, and navy? 1 Kings vii. 10-28.

8. What is recorded of a visit which the queen of Sheba and others paid Solomon? 1 Kings x. 1-13, 24.

9. What account have we of the wealth of Solomon? 1 Kings x. 14-29.

10. In what instances did Solomon displease God, and what was the consequence of it? 1 Kings xi.

## § 43. Of Solomon's temple.

1. What account have we of the temple built by Solomon, from the time when it was begun to the finishing of it? 1 Kings vi.
2. What *sacred furniture* did Solomon provide for the temple? 1 Kings vii. 13–57.
3. What is recorded of the *dedication* of Solomon's magnificent temple? 1 Kings viii.
4. What was the purport of Solomon's second vision which he had in answer to his building of the temple, and his late supplications for it? 1 Kings ix. 1–9.

## § 44. Of the kings of Judah.

1. What answer did Rehoboam make to the Israelites when seeking a redress of their grievances, and what was the consequence? 1 Kings xii. 1–24.
2. What was the character of Rehoboam and his subjects? 1 Kings xiv. 21–24.
3. What were the acts and character of Abijam? 1 Kings xv. 1–8.
4. What were the acts and character of Asa? 1 Kings xv. 9–24.
5. What concern had Jehoshaphat with Ahab king of Israel against the Syrians, and what was the event of that alliance? 1 Kings xxii. 1–36.
6. How was he delivered from Moab and Ammon? 2 Chron. xx. 1–29.
7. What were the remaining acts and the character of Jehoshaphat? 2 Chron. xx. 41–50, xviii. 3.
8. What were the acts and character of Jehoram? 2 Kings viii. 16–24; 2 Chron. xxi.

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9. What were the conduct, the character, and the fate of Ahaziah? 2 Kings is. 27–29; 2 Chron. xxii. 1–9.
10. What were the adventures and character of queen Athaliah? 2 Kings xi. 1–16; 2 Chron. xxiii. 1–15, xxii. 3, 10–12, xxiv. 7.
11. What was the history of Joash, otherwise called Jehoash, from his birth to his coronation? 2 Kings xi. 2–12.
12. What was the conduct of Joash before and after the death of his uncle Jehoiada the priest, and his end? 2 Kings xii.; 2 Chron. xxiv. 1–26.

13. What were the exploits, character, and death of Amaziah? 2 Kings xiv. 1–22; 2 Chron. xxv. 1–28.

14. What were the reign and the character of Azariah, otherwise called Uzziah? 2 Kings xv. 1–7; 2 Chron. xxvi. 1–10.

15. What were the conduct and the character of Jotham? 2 Kings xv. 32–38; 2 Chron. xxvii.

16. What were the acts and character of Ahaz? 2 Kings xvi.; 2 Chron. xxviii.

17. What were the first acts of Hezekiah's reign? 2 Kings xviii. 1–16. 2 Chron. xix.–xxxi.

18. What was the impious conduct of the Assyrian generals towards Hezekiah and his messengers? 2 Chron. six. 17–37.

19. What was the conduct of Hezekiah on this occasion, his encouragement, and the event? 2 Kings xix.

20. What were the last events of Hezekiah's reign? 2 Kings xx.

21. What were the government and character of Manasseh? 2 Kings xxi. 1–18; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1–20.

22. What were the conduct and character of Amon? 2 Kings xxi. 19–26; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 20–25.

23. What were the acts and character of Josiah? 2 Kings xxii., xxiii. 1–30; 2 Chron. xxxiv., xxxv.

24. What is recorded of Jehoahaz? 2 Kings xxiii. 31–34.

25. What is recorded of Eliakim, afterwards Jehoiakim? 2 Kings xxiii. 34–37, xxiv. 1–6.

26. What is recorded of Jehoiakim? 2 Kings xxiv. 8–16.

27. What were the acts and fate of Mattaniah, otherwise called Zedekiah? 2 Kings xxiv. 17–20, xxv. 1–21; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12–21.

#### § 45. Of the kings of Israel.

1. What is recorded of Jeroboam before he was made king? 1 Kings xi. 26–40, xii. 2–20.

2. What were the acts and the general character of Jeroboam? 2 Kings xii. 25–33, xiii., xiv. 1–20; 2 Chron. xiii.

3. What is recorded of Nadab's reign? 1 Kings xv. 25–31.

4. What is recorded of Baashah? 1 Kings xv. 16–22, 27–34, xvi. 1–7.

5. What is recorded of Elah? 1 Kings xvi. 8–14.

6. What account have we of Zimri? 1 Kings xvi. 15–20.

7. What account have we of Omri? 1 Kings xvi. 21–28.

What were the first acts of Ahab's reign? 1 Kings xvi. 29–34.

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9. What was Elijah's first message to Ahab, and what was the consequence of it? 1 Kings xvii.

10. By what means was Elijah introduced to Ahab the second time, what his message, and the consequence? 1 Kings xviii.

11. What was the conduct of Jezebel the queen towards Elijah, and what followed? 1 Kings xix.

12. What were the transactions between Ahab and Benhadad, king of Syria? 1 Kings xx.

13. What was the conduct of Ahab and Jezebel towards Naboth the Jezreelite? 1 Kings xxi.

14. What was the character of Ahab, and the circumstances of his death?

1 Kings xxi. 1-40; 2 Chron. xviii.

15. What were the acts of Ahaziah's reign, especially his conduct towards Elijah, and the consequence of it? 1 Kings xxii. 51-53; 2 Kings i.

16. What were the circumstances of Elijah's translation? 2 Kings ii. 1-12.

17. What miraculous proofs did Elisha give of his being appointed to succeed Elijah in the prophetic office? 2 Kings ii. 12-25.

18. On what account, with what assistance, and in what manner did Jehoram go to war with the Moabites, and what was the success? 2 Kings iii. 4-9, 21-27.

19. In what manner were the armies of Jehoram, Jehoshaphat, and the king of Moab relieved when greatly distressed? 2 Kings iii. 9-20.

20. What were the miracles Elisha performed in favour of a poor prophet's widow, the generous Shunammite, the sons of the prophets, and a company of a hundred men? 2 Kings iv.

21. What was the conduct of Elisha towards Naaman the Syrian, and Gehazi his own servant, and what were the miracles he performed on those persons? 2 Kings v.

22. What miracles did Elisha perform in favour of one of the sons of the prophets, the king of Israel, and for his own safety, in favour of Samaria? 2 Kings, vi., vii.

23. What kindness did Jehoram shew to Elisha's generous friend the Shunammite? 2 Kings viii. 1-6.

24. What passed between Elisha and Hazael at Damascus, and what was

the event? 2Kings viii. 7–15.

25. How did Jehoram end his reign, and what was his character?

2 Kings iii. 1–3, viii. 28, 29, ix. 14–26.

26. By what means was Jehu made king, and what were his exploits at

Jezreel? 2 Kings ix.

27. What were the other acts of Jehu against the relations of Ahab and worshippers of Baal, and what was his character? 2 Kings x.

28. What were the acts and character of Jehoahaz? 2 Kings xiii. 1–9.

29. What were the acts and character of Jehoash, or Joash? 2 Kings xiii. 10–13, 22–25, xiv. 8–16.

30. What further account have we of Elisha? 2 Kings xiii. 14–21.

31. What were the acts and character of Jeroboam II.? 2 Kings xiv. 23–29.

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32. What were the reign and the character of Zachanah? 2 Kings xv. 8–12.

33. What were the reign and the character of Shallum? 2 Kings xv. 13–15.

34. What were the reign and the character of Menahem? 2 Kings xv. 16–22.

35. What were the reign and the character of Pekahiah? 2 Kings xv. 23–26.

36. What were the reign and the character of Pekah? 2 Kings xv. 37–31.

37. What is recorded of Hoshea and his kingdom? 2 Kings xvii., xviii. 9–12.

#### § 46. Of Ezra and Nebemiah.

1. When Cyrus came to the throne of Persia, what kindness did he shew to the captive Jews, and what was the effect of it? Ezra i.

2. What number of Jews returned to Jerusalem in virtue of Cyrus's proclamation, and what their retinue? Ezra ii. 1, 2, 64–67.

3. What offerings did the Jews bring at different times for the service of the temple? Ezra ii. 68–70; Neh. vii. 70–72.

4. In what manner did the Jews proceed to restore the public worship of God, and to lay the foundation of the temple? Ezra iii.
5. What opposition did the Jews meet with from the Samaritans in building the temple? Ezra iv.
6. What opposition did they meet with from Tatnai, a governor of the country west of Euphrates under Darius Hystaspes? Ezra v.
7. In what manner were all these oppositions overruled for completing the temple, and how was it dedicated? Ezra vi.
8. What favour did Artaxerxes Longimanus shew to Ezra and his people, and how did they improve it? Ezra vii., viii.
9. What account have we of the licentiousness of the Jews in marrying heathen wives, and how was this abuse rectified? Ezra ix., x.
10. How was Nehemiah employed at the Persian court? Neh. i.
11. What success did Nehemiah obtain on representing his case to Artaxerxes, and what was the effect of it? Neh. ii.
12. What opposition did Nehemiah and his Jewish brethren meet with while building the wall of Jerusalem? Neh. iv., vi.
13. What steps did Nehemiah take to reform oppressive abuses among the Jews? Neh. v.
14. In what manner did Nehemiah provide for the safety and population of Jerusalem after the wall was finished? Neh. vii.
15. What further steps were taken by Nehemiah and Ezra towards a general reformation? Neh. viii.–xiii.

§ 47. Of Esther.

1. How came Ahasuerus (probably Darius Hystaspes) to divorce his queen Vashti? Esth. i.
2. How came Esther to be queen of Persia instead of Vashti? Esth. ii. 1–20.

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3. What good service did Mordecai, Esther's uncle, do to Ahasuerus? Esth. ii. 21–53.
4. What attempts were made by Haman the Amalekite, the son of Hammedatha, to destroy the Jews, and for what cause? Esth. iii.
5. What methods did the Jews adopt, by means of Esther, to prevent the threatened destruction? Esth. iv., v. 1–8.
6. What were the reflections of Haman on these preparatory steps? Esth. v. 9–14.

7. By what means came Mordecai to enjoy royal favour, while the Jews were in the greatest danger, and what was the conduct of Haman on this occasion? Esth. vi.

8. How came Haman to be hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai? Esth. vii.

9. What favour did Ahasuerus shew to the Jews, by means of Esther the queen, to counteract the murderous import of a former edict? Esth. viii.

10. How did the Jews improve the latter edict for their own safety, and what was the success attending it? Esth. ix.

11. How did Ahasuerus and Mordecai end their days? Esth. x.

#### § 48. The book of Job.

1. What account have we of Job's piety, prosperity, Satan's malice against him, his heavy losses, and the manner in which he bore all? Job i.

2. What further trial had Job from Satan and his wife, and how did he bear that trial? Job ii., iii,

3. What are the contents of the first speech of Eliphaz the Temanite to Job? Job iv., v.

4. What is the substance of Job's reply to Eliphaz? Job vi., vii.

5. What are the contents of the first speech of Bildad the Shuhite to Job? Job viii.

6. What is the substance of Job's reply to Bildad? Job is., x.

7. What are the contents of the first speech of Zophar the Kamathite to Job? Job. xi.

8. What is the substance of Job's reply to Zophar? Job xii.—xiv.

9. What are the contents of the second speech of Eliphaz to Job? Job xv.

10. What is the substance of Job's reply to Eliphaz? Job xvi., xvii.

11. What are the contents of the second speech of Bildad to Job? Job xviii.

12. What is the substance of Job's reply? Job xix.

13. What are the contents of the second speech of Zophar to Job? Job xx.

14. What is the substance of Job's reply? Job xxi.
  15. What are the contents of Eliphaz's third attack on Job? Job xxii.
  16. What is the substance of Job's reply? Job xxxiii., xxiv.
  17. What were the contents of Bildad's third attack? Job xxv.
  18. What was the substance of Job's reply? Job xxvi-xxviii.
  19. While his friends continued silent, what account does Job give of his former prosperity, and subsequent adversity? Job xxix, xxx.
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20. What reply does he make to several gross charges which had been urged against him by his pretended friends? Job xxxi.
21. What is contained in Elihu's introductory speech, as umpire in this controversy? Job xxxii.
22. What is contained in Elihu's first address to Job? Job xxxiii.
23. What is contained in Elihu's second address? Job xxxiv.
24. What is contained in Elihu's third address? Job xxxv.
25. What is contained in Elihu's fourth address? Job xxxvi., xxxvii.
26. When God interposes to decide the controversy, what is the substance of His awful address out of the whirlwind? Job xxxviii., xxxix.
27. What is the second awful address of God to Job? Job xl., xli.
28. What effect had all these addresses upon Job? Job xlii.

§ 49. Of the Psalms.

1. Who wrote the first and second Psalms, on what occasions, and of what doth each of them chiefly treat? Ps. i., ii.
2. Who wrote the third and fourth Psalms, on what occasions, and of what doth each of them principally treat? Ps. iii., iv.
3. Who wrote the fifth and sixth Psalms, on what occasions, and of what doth each of them principally treat? Ps. v., vi.
4. Who wrote the seventh Psalm, and the two following, on what occasions, and what are the chief things they respectively contain? Ps. vii.-ix.
5. Who wrote the tenth Psalm, and the three following, on what occasions, and what are the chief things they respectively contain? Ps. x.-xiii.
6. Who wrote the fourteenth Psalm, and the three following, on what occasions, and what do they chiefly treat of? Ps. xiv.-xvii.
7. Who wrote the eighteenth and nineteenth Psalms, on what occasions, and what do they principally contain? Ps. xviii., xix.

8. Who wrote the twentieth Psalm, and the four following, on what occasions, and what do they principally contain? Ps. xx.—xxiv.

9. Who wrote the twenty-fifth Psalm, and the four following, on what occasions, and what doth each contain? Ps. xxv.—xxix.

10. Who wrote the thirtieth Psalm, and the three following, on what occasions, and what doth each contain? Ps. xxx.—xxxiii.

11. Who wrote the thirty-fourth Psalm, and the three following, on what occasions, and what do they contain? Ps. xxxiv.—xxxvii.

12. Who wrote the thirty-eighth Psalm, and the four following, on what occasions, and what do they contain? Ps. xxxviii.—xlii.

13. Who wrote the forty-third Psalm, and the three following, on what occasions, and of what do they chiefly treat? Ps. xliii.—xlvi.

14. Who wrote the forty-seventh Psalm, and the four following, on what occasions, and of what do they chiefly treat? Ps. xlvii.—li.

15. Who wrote the fifty-second Psalm, and the five following, on what occasions, and of what do they principally treat? Ps. lii.—lvii.

16. Who wrote the fifty-eighth Psalm, and the six following, on what occasions, and what subjects do they treat of? Ps. lviii.—lxiv.

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17. Who wrote the sixty-fifth Psalm, and the three following, on what occasions, and what subjects do they treat of? Ps. lxv.—lxviii.

18. Who wrote the sixty-ninth Psalm, and the five following, on what occasions, and on what subjects? Ps. lxix.—lxxiv.

19. Who wrote the seventy-fifth Psalm, and the six following, on what occasions, and on what subjects? Ps. lxxv.—lxxx.

20. Who wrote the eighty-second Psalm, and the six following, on what occasions, and what do they treat of? Ps. lxxxii.—lxxxviii.

21. Who wrote the eighty-ninth Psalm, and the six following, on what occasions, and what do they treat of? Ps. lxxxix.—xcv.

22. Who wrote the ninety-sixth Psalm, and the six following, on what occasions, and what are the contents of each? Ps. xcvi.—cii.

23. Who wrote the hundred-and-third Psalm, and the four following, on

what occasions, and what are the contents of each? Ps. ciii.–cvii.

24. Who wrote the hundred-and-eighth Psalm, and the six following, on

what occasions, and what do they contain? Ps. cviii.–cxiv.

25. Who wrote the hundred-and-fifteenth Psalm, and the four following, on what occasions, and what do they contain? Ps. cxv.–cxix.

26. Who wrote the hundred-and-twentieth Psalm, and the eight following, on what occasions, and what do they chiefly treat of? Ps. cxx.–cxxxviii.

27. Who wrote the hundred-and-twenty-ninth Psalm, and the six following, on what occasions, and what do they principally contain? Ps. cxxix.–cxxxv.

28. Who wrote the hundred-and-thirty-sixth Psalm, and the seven following, on what occasions, and what doth each contain? Ps. cxxxvi.–cxliii.

29. Who wrote the hundred-and-forty-fourth Psalm, and the six following, on what occasions, and what do they treat of? Ps. cxliv.–cl.

§ 50. Of the Proverbs.

1. Who was the writer of the book of Proverbs, what is the design of it, and what are the chief things contained in the first chapter? Prov. i., xxx. 1, xxxi. 1.

2. What are the chief things contained in the second and third chapters? Prov. ii., iii.

3. What are the chief contents of the fourth and fifth chapters? Prov. iv., v.

4. What do the sixth and seventh chapters treat of? Prov. vi., vii.

5. What do the eighth and ninth chapters contain? Prov. viii., ix.

6. What things are contained in the tenth chapter, and the four following? Prov. x.–xiv.

7. What are the subjects treated of in the fifteenth chapter, and the four following? Prov. xv.–xix.

8. What is treated of in the twentieth chapter, and the four following? Prov. xx.–xxiv.

9. What are the chief things contained in the twenty-fifth chapter, and the four following? Prov. xxv.—xxix.

10. What were Agur's confession and prayer? Prov. xxx. 1–9.

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11. What is his representation of four sorts of men as remarkably wicked? Prov. xxx. 11–14, 17.

12. What does he say of four things, as insatiable, mysterious, troublesome, small but wise, and comely in motion? Prov. xxx. 15–31.

13. What was the solemn admonition Lemuel had from his pious mother?

Prov. xxxi. 1–9.

14. What is the character she gives of a truly virtuous wife? Prov. xxxi. 10–31.

#### § 51. Of Ecclesiastes and the Canticles.

1. What is the text of the royal preacher, and what are general proofs of the vanity of all created things? Eccles. i. 1–11.

2. What method did Solomon take to estimate the value of human know-

ledge concerning all things that are done under heaven, and what his estimate of sensual pleasures, of carnal wisdom and labour? Eccles. i. 12–18, ii.

3. How does he further shew the vanity of the endless variety of engagements, of power, of studious, of pleasurable, and busy natural pursuits; and

what his inferences therefrom? Eccles. iii.

4. What are the contents of the fourth chapter? Eccles. iv.

5. How does he shew the vanity of mere pretences to religion, and of riches without the proper use of them? Eccles. v., vi.

6. What are the contents of the seventh chapter? Eccles. vii.

7. What are the chief things contained in the eighth chapter? Eccles. viii.

8. What are the principal things contained in the ninth chapter? Eccles. ix.

9. What rules are prescribed for attaining wisdom, and avoiding folly? Eccles. x.

10. What are the contents of the eleventh chapter? Eccles. xi.

11. What are the preacher's concluding exhortations? Eccles. xii.

12. What is the spiritual import of the Song of Solomon, otherwise called the Canticles? Cant, i.–viii.

§ 52. Of Isaiah.

1. In whose reign did Isaiah prophesy? Isa. i. 1.

2. What is the substance of his first prophetic address to the Jews, concerning Judah and Jerusalem? Isa. i. 2–31.

3. What are the chief things contained in his second prophetic vision concerning the same people? Isa. ii.–v.

4. What was the vision which Isaiah had in the year that king Uzziah died? Isa. vi.

5. What occasioned Isaiah's message to Ahaz, and what was the import of it? Isa. vii.

6. What is the substance of Isaiah's alarming sermon to the Jews and Israelites, in reference to the Syrians and Assyrians? Isa. viii.–xii.

7. What were the contents of the *burden of Babylon*, or God's *judgments* on that oppressive city in favour of His people? Isa. xiii., xiv.

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8. What are the contents of the burden, or judgment, of Moab? Isa. xv., xvi.

9. What is contained in the burden, or judgment, of Damascus, and the land shadowing with wings? Isa. xvii., xviii.

10. What is the import of the burden, or judgment, of Egypt and Ethiopia? Isa. xix., xx.

11. What is the burden, or judgment, of the sea? Isa. xxi.

12. What is the burden, or judgment, of the valley of vision? Isa. xxii.

13. What are the contents of the burden, or judgment, of Tyre? Isa. xxiii.

14. What solemn warnings are given to the Jews and their oppressors? Isa. xxiv.

15. What are the contents of the twenty-fifth chapter, and the two following? Isa. xxv.–xxvii.

16. What are the prophetic woes, intermixed with mercies to the faithful pronounced upon the crown of pride, upon Oriel, upon the rebellious coun-

sellors, and upon those who seek the alliance of Egypt? Isa. xxviii.–xxxi.

17. What are the contents, and the occasions, of the thirty-second chapter and the two following? Isa. xxxii.–xxxiv.

18. What is contained in the prophetic description of the glories of the

Church, and what the occasion of it? Isa. xxxv.

19. What are the chief things contained in the thirty-sixth chapter, and

the three following, and what the occasions of them? Isa. xxxvi.—xxxix.

20. What are the chief contents, and the occasion of the fortieth chapter) and the four following? Isa. xl.—xliv.

21. What are the principal things contained in the forty-fifth chapter, and the four following, and what the occasion of them? Isa. xlv.—xlix.

22. What are principally treated of in the fiftieth chapter, and the two following, with the occasions of them? Isa. l.—lii.

23. What doth the fifty-third chapter contain particularly? Isa. liii.

24. What are the subjects contained in the fifty-fourth chapter, and the

four following, and what gave occasion to them? Isa. liv.—lviii.

25. What subjects are treated of in the fifty-ninth chapter, and the three

following, with the occasion? Isa. lix.—lxii.

26. What are the chief things contained in the sixty-third chapter, and the three following, and on what occasion? Isa. lxiii.—lxvi.

#### § 53. Of Jeremiah.

1. Who was Jeremiah, in whose reigns did he prophesy, and in what manner was he called and encouraged to his prophetic office? Jer. i.

2. What was the substance, and what the occasion of Jeremiah's first alarming discourse to the Jews? Jer. ii.—vi.

3. What was the substance, and what the occasion of Jeremiah's second sermon? Jer. vii.—x.

4. What was the substance, and the occasion of Jeremiah's third sermon? Jer. xi.—xiii.

5. What is the substance, and what the occasion of Jeremiah's discourse concerning the dearth? Jer. xiv., xv.

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6. What are the substance and the occasion of Jeremiah's sermon which begins with the charge he had, in vision, not to set up a family among the

Jews? Jer. xvi., xvii.

7. What is the substance, and what the occasion of that discourse which begins with the symbolic representation of a potter and his vessel? Jer. xviii., xix.

8. Who was Pashur, what concern had Jeremiah with him, and what effect had it on the prophet? Jer. xx.

9. When Zedekiah's messenger came to Jeremiah for advice, what answer was made? Jer. xxi.

10. What was the prophet's message to the king of Judah? Jer. xxii.

11. What message was delivered by Jeremiah to the pastors, or the rulers in Church and state, and by what was it occasioned? Jer. xxiii.

12. What were the import and the occasion of the emblematic vision of the two baskets of figs? Jer. xxiv.

13. What were the import and the occasion of those visions which Jeremiah had concerning Judah, in the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign? Jer. xxv.–xxviii.

14. In what manner did Jeremiah contradict the false prophecy of Haniah, and what was the consequence? Jer. xxviii.

15. What were the import and the immediate occasion of Jeremiah's letter to the captives in Babylon, and how resented by the false prophets? Jer. xxix.

16. What is contained in Jeremiah's prophecy of comfort to the captives? Jer. xxx., xxxi.

17. What was the cause of Jeremiah's imprisonment, the import of his buying the field of Hanameel, his prayer, and the prophecy immediately following? Jer. xxxii.

18. What were the import and the occasion of the second prophecy of Jeremiah while he was in the court of the prison? Jer. xxxiii.

19. What was Jeremiah's alarming prophecy against Zedekiah and the Jews of all ranks, and by what occasioned? Jer. xxxiv.

20. What were the particulars and the import of the discourse concerning the Rechabites? Jer. xxxv.

21. What were the particulars, the occasion, and the general import of the discourse concerning the rolls? Jer. xxxvi.

22. How came Jeremiah's prayers to be sought for by Zedekiah, and what was the reply? Jer. xxxvii. 1-10.

23. What was the cause of Jeremiah's imprisonment by Irijah, and what was the conduct of Zedekiah towards him on the occasion? Jer. xxxvii. 11-21.

24. How came Jeremiah's life to be threatened, and what was the event? Jer. xxxviii.

25. At what time, by whom, and with what circumstances was Jerusalem besieged and captured? Jer. xxxix. 1-10.

26. How was Jeremiah circumstanced amid that confusion and danger? Jer. xxxix. 11-18.

27. What became of the few Jews that were left in the land of Canaan

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after the destruction of Jerusalem, and what concern had Jeremiah with them? Jer. xl.-xliv.

28. What are the contents of the forty-fifth chapter, and the six following? Jer. xlv.-li.

29. What is contained in the fifty-second chapter? Jer. lii.

30. What are the principal things treated of in the Lamentations of Jeremiah? Lam. i.-v.

#### § 54. Of Ezekiel.

1. Who was the prophet Ezekiel, when, and where did he prophesy? Ezek. i. 1-4.

2. What were the particulars of the vision of four living creatures, and what was the import of it? Ezek. i. 4-28.

3. In what manner was Ezekiel prepared for his prophetic work? Ezek. id., iii.

4. In what manner was Ezekiel ordered to portray, emblematically, the siege of Jerusalem? Ezek. iv.

5. What was the vision of Ezekiel concerning his own hair, as an emblematic action, and how was it applied? Ezek. v.

6. What was the vision in which Ezekiel was commanded to set his face towards the mountains of Israel? Ezek. vi.

7. What is the vision which begins with denouncing an end on the four

comers of the land? Ezek. vii.

8. What was the vision which Ezekiel had in the sixth year, the sixth month, and the fifth day of the month? Ezek. viii., ix.

9. What was God's command to Ezekiel in reference to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans? Ezek. xii.

10. What was the substance of Ezekiel's prophecy against the false prophets? Ezek. xiii.

11. In what manner did he, by Divine command, answer the elders of

Israel? Ezek. xiv., xv.

12. In what manner did he, by Divine orders, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations? Ezek. xvi.

13. What were the two parables he was ordered to speak to the house of Israel, and their application! Ezek. xvii.

14. How did he refute the proverb of the fathers eating sour grapes, and

the children's teeth set on edge? Ezek. xviii.

15. What is contained in the parabolic lamentation for the princes of Israel? Ezek. xix.

16. What reply was he commanded to make to the elders of Israel when

they came to inquire of him in the seventh year, in the fifth month, and the tenth day of the month? Ezek. xx.–xxii.

17. How does he represent the idolatrous apostasy of Israel and Judah? Ezek. xxiii.

18. What was the purport of God's message to Ezekiel in the ninth year,

in the tenth month, and the tenth day of the month? Ezek. xxiv.

19. What are the judgments denounced against the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, and the Philistines? Ezek. xxv.

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20. What are the judgments denounced against the famous city Tyre? Ezek. xxvi., xxviii.

21. What are the predictions against Egypt? Ezek. xxix., xxxii.

22. How does he justify awful warnings to the Jews? Ezek. xxviii.

23. What is the substance of his prophecy against the shepherds of Israel, concerning God's care of His flocks? Ezek. xxxiv.

24. What is he made to prophesy against mount Seir, or the Edomites? Ezek. xxxv.

25. What is contained in the thirty-sixth chapter? Ezek. xxxvi.

26. What were the visions of the dry bones, and the emblem of the two sticks, and their import? Ezek. xxxvii.

27. What does the thirty-eighth chapter, and the following, treat of? Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.

28. What were the principal things contained in the vision which Ezekiel had in the five-and-twentieth year of the Babylonish captivity, when he was brought, in the visions of God, to the land of Israel, and set upon a very high mountain? Ezek. xl., xlvi.

§ 55. Of Daniel.

1. How came Daniel to be noticed at Nebuchadnezzar's court at Babylon?

Dan. i.

2. By what means came he to be made ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men, and what was his request of the king? Dan. ii.

3. How came Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be further greatly honoured and promoted? Dan. iii.

4. What is contained in the fourth chapter? Dan. iv.

5. How came Daniel to be clothed in scarlet, and proclaimed the third ruler in the kingdom, by Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's grandson? Dan. v.

6. What was Daniel's promotion in the court of Darius, when that monarch added Babylon to his dominions, and how came he to be further promoted? Dan. vi.

7. What was the vision which Daniel had in the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, and what its import? Dan. vii.

8. What was the vision he had in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar, and what the import of it? Dan. viii.

9. When Daniel understood, by computation, that the time predicted for

the deliverance of the Jews was drawing nigh, what did he resolve upon, and what was the effect of it? Dan. ix.

10. What was the vision he had in the third year of Cyrus king of Persia,

as preparatory to the following series of prophecies? Dan. x.

11. What is the general import of the two last chapters? Dan. xi., xii.

§ 56. Of the twelve minor prophets.

1. Who was Hosea, and about what time did he prophesy? Hos. i. 1.

2. What was Hosea's first emblematic vision, and how was it applied to the Israelites? Hos. i. 2-11, ii.

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3. What was the second emblematic vision of Hosea, and how was it applied? Hos. iii.

4. What are the subjects principally insisted on in the fourth chapter, and the nine following? Hos. iv.-xiii.

5. What does the fourteenth chapter principally contain? Hos. xiv.

6. Who was Joel, when and where did he prophesy, and what was the state of the Jews at that time? Joel i. 1-3.

7. What are the chief subjects contained in his prophecy? Joel i. 4-20, ii., iii.

8. Who was Amos, when and where did he prophesy, and what was the state of the Jews at that time? Amos i. 1, 2.

9. What are the objects of his prophetic reproofs in the two first chapters? Amos i. 3-15, ii.

10. What are the chief things contained in the third chapter of Amos, and the three following? Amos iii.-vi.

11. What are the principal subjects of the seventh chapter, and the two following? Amos vii.-ix.

12. Who was Obadiah, when and where did he prophesy, what was the state of the Jews in his time, and the chief subjects of his prophecy? Obad. throughout.

13. Who was Jonah, when and where did he prophesy, and how was he cast into the sea? Jonah i. 1-15.

14. How came he to survive so dangerous an expedient? Jonah i. 17, ii.

15. What was the purport of God's command to Jonah a second time, and what was the consequence? *Jonah* iii., iv.

16. Who was Micah, when and where did he prophesy, and what was the state of the Hebrews at that time? *Mic.* i. 1, 2.

17. What are the chief things contained in the three first chapters? *Mic.* i. 3–16, ii., iii.

18. What is contained in the fourth and fifth chapters? *Mic.* iv. v.,

19. What is treated of in the two last chapters? *Mic.* vi., vii.

20. Who was Nahum, when and where did he prophesy, and what was

the state of the Hebrews in his time? *Nah.* i. 1, 2.

21. What is the principal design, and the chief matter of his prophecy? *Nah.* i. 3–15, ii., iii.

22. Who was Habakkuk, when and where did he prophesy, and what was the state of the Jews in his time? *Hab.* i. 1–4.

23. What is the chief design, and what the leading parts of his prophecy? *Hab.* i. 5–17, ii., iii.

24. Who was Zephaniah, when and where did he prophesy, and what was the state of the Hebrews at that time? *Zeph.* i. 1, 2.

25. What was the scope, and the main subject of his prophecy? *Zeph.* i. 3–18, ii., iii.

26. Who was Haggai, when and where did he prophesy, and what was the state of the Jews at that time? *Hag.* i. 1, 2.

27. What is the main scope, and the chief manner of his prophecy? *Hag.* i. 3–15, ii.

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28. Who was Zechariah, when and where did he prophesy, and what was the state of the Hebrews at that time? *Zech.* i. 1–7.

29. What were the visions which the prophet Zechariah had in the second year of Darius, and what their import? *Zech.* i. 8–21, ii.–vi.

30. What was the message of Zechariah to the Jews in the fourth year of Darius? *Zech.* vii., viii.

31. What are the contents of the ninth chapter, and the two following? *Zech.* ix.–xi.

32. What subjects are contained in the twelfth chapter, and the two following? *Zech.* xii.–xiv.

33. Who was Malachi, when and where did he prophesy, and what was

the state of the Jews at that time, and what the general design of his prophecy? Mai. i.–iv.

§ 57. Of Jesus Christ, and the New Testament dispensation; particularly of the Gospel by St Matthew.

1. What account doth St Matthew give of the genealogy of Christ, and

the circumstances preceding His birth? Matt. i.

2. What was the cause of Herod's trouble, of Joseph's flight into Egypt, and of his return to Nazareth with Mary and the holy child Jesus? Matt. ii.

3. What was the import of John's preaching and baptism? Matt. iii.

4. What account have we of Christ being tempted of the devil, and the

final issue of it? Matt. iv. 1–11.

5. What account have we, by St Matthew, of Christ's first preaching and popularity? Matt. iv. 12–25.

6. What are the chief topics insisted on in Christ's sermon on the mount, in Galilee? Matt, v.–vii.

7. When He was come down from the mountain, what cures did He perform? Matt. viii. 17.

8 On His resolving to cross from Galilee to the country of the Gergesenes and Gaderenes, (so called from the cities of Gergessa and Gadara,) across the sea, or lake, of Galilee, (otherwise called the sea of Tiberias, and of Genesareth,) what is recorded of Him before, during, and after His passage? Matt. viii. 18–34.

9. When He had crossed again from the country of the Gergesenes to Capernaum, which was over against it, what remarkable facts are recorded of Him, prior to His calling the twelve disciples? Matt. ix.

10. Who were the twelve disciples chosen by Christ, and what is the substance of His address to them? Matt. x.

11. What answer did Christ return to the inquiries of John's disciples, and what were the instructions He took occasion to inculcate from thence?

Matt. xi.

12. In what manner does Christ reprove the Pharisees when they charge the disciples and Himself with doing what was unlawful on the Sabbath day? Matt. xii. 1–21.

13. On what occasion did our Lord charge the Pharisees with blasphemy

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against the Holy Ghost, what is the substance of it, with His application? Matt. xii. 22–37.

14. When the scribes and Pharisees required a sign, how did He reprove their impertinent curiosity; and how commend His sincere disciples? Matt. xii. 38–50.

15. While Jesus continued at Capernaum, and on a certain day met the multitudes by the seaside, what were the parables He insisted upon, what was their import, and what effect had they on the multitude? Matt. xiii.

16. On what account did Christ leave Capernaum, and sail along the coast (on the same side) to a desert place, and what miracle did He perform there? Matt. xiv. 1–21.

17. What befell Himself and the disciples from that time till they came to the land of Gennesaret, and what reception did they meet with there? Matt. xiv. 22–36.

18. In what manner did Christ reprove the scribes and Pharisees for transgressing the commands of God through their traditions? Matt. xv. 1–20.

19. What miracle did our Lord perform (after He left Gennesaret) on the coasts of Tyre and Sidon? Matt. xv. 21–28.

20. Having returned (from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon) to the sea of Galilee, what miracle did He perform there? Matt. xv. 29–39.

21. After moving some miles northward, from the coast of the sea of Galilee to those of Magdala, (otherwise called Dalmanutha,) in what manner did He reprove the Pharisees and Sadducees, and caution His disciples against them? Matt. xvi. 1–12.

22. When Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, (anciently Dan,) what passed between Him and His disciples? Matt. xvi. 13–28, xvii. 1–21.

23. What conversation had Christ with His disciples while they abode in Galilee, and when they were come to Capernaum? Matt. xvii. 22–27, xviii.

24. When Jesus departed from Galilee, and came (probably by a circuit to the east of Jordan) into the coast of Judea, followed by great multi-

tudes, what discourse had He with the Pharisees, a certain ruler, and His disciples? Matt, xix., xx. 1–16.

25. As Jesus proceeded towards Jerusalem, by Jericho and Bethphage, what discourse had He with His disciples and others, and in what manner did He enter into Jerusalem? Matt. xx. 17–34, xxi. 1–9.

26. How did He spend the remainder of that night? Matt. xxi. 10–17.

27. How did He spend the next day (answering to our Tuesday)? Matt. xxi. 18–46, xxii., xxv.

28. Where did Christ spend the following day, (answering to our Wednesday,) and what occurred on it? Matt. xxvi. 1–16.

29. What were the transactions of the day after (answering to our Thurs-  
day)? Matt. xxvi. 17–75.

30. What were the transactions of the following day (answering to our Friday) until the crucifixion? Matt, xxvii. 1–34.

31. What were the circumstances of the crucifixion, death, and burial of

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Christ, to the close of that day, which ended with the setting of the sun? Matt, xxvii. 35–61.

32. What passed on the Jewish Sabbath, (answering to our Saturday,) while Jesus lay in the grave? Matt, xxvii. 62–66.

33. What were the circumstances of Christ's resurrection, and what passed between Him and His disciples afterward? Matt, xxviii.

#### § 58. Of the Gospel of St Mark.

1. What account does St Mark give of John the Baptist, and of Christ until He began to preach? Mark i. 1–13.

2. How was Jesus employed, in the discharge of His prophetic office, while at Capernaum and the neighbouring places? Mark i. 14–45, ii.–iv.

1–34.

3. What is recorded of Him from the time of His crossing the sea of Galilee towards Gadara, till the time of His returning to His own country, Nazareth? Mark iv. 35–41, v.

4. What is recorded of Him and His attendants, from the time when He returned to His own country, Nazareth, to His arrival in the laud of

Gennesaret? Mark vi. 1–53.

5. How was Jesus Christ employed from the time of His taking haven in the land of Gennesaret, to the time of His going to the borders of Tyre and Sidon? Mark vi. 54–56, vii. 1–23.

6. What is recorded of Him from the time of His going into the borders of Tyre and Sidon to His going (by the parts of Dalmanutha) to Bethsaida? Mark vii. 24–31, viii. 1–21.

7. From the time of His going to Bethsaida to His going to Capernaum, what is recorded of Him? Mark viii. 21–31, ix. 1–32.

8. From the time of His going to Capernaum, with His disciples, to the time of their going into Jerusalem, what is related of Him? Mark ix. 33–50, x., xi. 1–10.

9. From His entering into Jerusalem to His institution of the sacred supper, what, are the principal things related of Him? Mark xi. 11–33, xii., xiii., xiv. 1–21.

10. What are the principal transactions related of Jesus Christ from His institution of the supper to His crucifixion? Mark xiv. 22–72, xv. 1–23.

11. What does Mark relate of Him from the time of His crucifixion to His ascension into heaven? Mark xv. 24–47, xvi.

§ 59. Of the Gospel by St Luke.

1. What are the contents of the first chapter of Luke? Luke i.
2. What are the contents of the second chapter, and the following? Luke ii., iii.
3. What are the contents of the fourth chapter, and the following? Luke iv., v.
4. What are the chief things recorded in the sixth chapter? Luke vi.
5. What are the contents of the seventh chapter? Luke vii.
6. What are the principal things recorded in the eighth chapter? Luke viii.

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7. Can you recite the substance of the ninth chapter, and the following? Luke ix., x.

8. What are the contents of the eleventh chapter, and the following? Luke xi., xii.

9. What are the contents of the thirteenth chapter, and the two following? Luke xiii.–xv.

10. Relate the chief things contained in the sixteenth chapter, and the two following. Luke xvi.—xviii.

11. Recite the contents of the nineteenth and twentieth chapters. Luke xix., xx

12. What are the contents of the twenty first chapter, and the following? Luke xxi., xxii.

13. What are the contents of the two last chapters? Luke xxiii.

§ 60. Of the Gospel by St John.

1. What is the testimony of St John concerning the person of Jesus Christ? John i.

2. Relate the miracles which Jesus wrought at Cana of Galilee. John ii. 1–11.

3. Recite the principal parts of His conduct and discourse at the pass-over. John ii. 13–25.

4. Can you relate the conversation that passed between our Lord Jesus Christ and Nicodemus? John iii. 1–21.

5. Relate the discourse of John the Baptist concerning Jesus, and the occasion of it. John iii. 25–36.

6. What conversation passed between Christ and a certain woman of Samaria, with the occasion and consequences thereof? John iv. 1–30.

7. What was the second miracle Jesus did, when He was come out of Judea into Galilee? John iv. 46–54.

8. Relate the miracle performed at the pool of Bethesda, with its occasion and consequences. John v.

9. What occasioned the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes, and what was the consequence? John vi.

10. Relate the circumstances of Jesus going up to the feast of tabernacles, and in what manner He vindicated His doctrine and conduct there.

John vii.

11. On what occasion did He shew that He was the light of the world, and what followed? John viii.

12. Relate the circumstances of Jesus Christ restoring sight to a man born blind, with the effects of it? John ix

13. What account does Jesus give of Himself as the shepherd of His people, and what was the effect of that doctrine upon the Jews? John x.

14. Recite what happened to the person and at the house of Lazarus, and the effect it had upon the Jews. John xi., xii. 1–19.

15. What reply did our Lord make to certain Greeks who desired to see

Him, and to the cavils of the people on that occasion? John xii. 20–50.

16. In what manner did Jesus Christ inculcate humility upon His disciples, after He had finished His public discourses? John xiii. 1–17.

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17. Relate how our Lord predicted who should betray Him, and Peter's repeated denial of Him? John xiii. 18–38.

18. What was the substance of His consolatory address to His disciples, who were sorrowful on account of His approaching departure from them?

John xiv.–xvi.

19. What were the principal things contained in our Lord's prayer to the Father in behalf of His disciples? John xvii.

20. Relate how our Lord's predictions concerning Judas and Peter were

fulfilled. John xviii. 1–27.

21. Relate the substance of his trial before Pontius Pilate, the civil magistrate, to whom he was led from Caiaphas the high priest. John xviii. 28–40, xix. 1–15.

22. In what manner was the sentence of Pilate executed upon Jesus? John xix. 16–42.

23. What evidence have we that Jesus Christ arose from the dead? John xx.,

§ 61. Concerning the harmony of the evangelists, and their respective distinguished characters.

1. What difference do you find between the account of our Lord's genealogy by Matthew and that by Luke? Matt. i.; Luke iii.

2. What number of passovers do you read of in the evangelists at which our Lord Jesus attended? John ii., v., vi., xiii.; Luke vi., &c.

3. How do you reconcile the following passages? Mark i. 35, and Luke iv. 42.

4. What difference do you find in the accounts of Mark and Luke concerning our Lord's appointment of the twelve apostles? Mark iii. 13–19; Luke vi. 12–16.

5. How do you reconcile the following passages? Matt. v., vi., vii., and

Luke vi. 17–49.

6. How do you reconcile these passages? Matt. ix. 18, and Mark v. 23.

7. How do you make these passages agree? Matt. xx. 21, and Mark x.
8. How do you make the following accounts agree? Matt. xx. 30; Mark,  
x. 46; Luke xviii. 35.
9. How do you reconcile the following passages? Matt, xxvii. 44, with Mark xv. 33, and Luke xxiii. 39.
10. How are we to account for the difference in these passages? Matt, xxvii. 54; Luke xxiii. 47.
11. What is the distinguished character of the Gospel by St Matthew compared with the other evangelists? Matt, i.–xxviii.
12. What is the peculiar character of the Gospel by St Mark compared with the other evangelists? Mark i.–xvi.
13. What is the distinguished character of the Gospel by St Luke compared with the other evangelists? Luke i.–xxiv.
14. What is the characteristic difference between the Gospel by St John and the other evangelists? John i.–xxi.

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§ 62. Of the Acts of the Apostles, from the resurrection of

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Christ to the separation of Barnabas and Paul, containing the transactions of about twenty years.

1. Who was the penman of the Acts of the Apostles, and to whom addressed? Acts i. 1, and Luke i. 1–3.
2. Relate the short review of Christ's history after His resurrection, and the circumstances of His ascension into heaven. Acts i. 1–11.
3. Recite the names of the apostles who tarried at Jerusalem, with the occasion and manner of choosing Matthias. Acts i. 12–26.
4. Relate the transactions of the day of Pentecost. Acts ii.
5. Relate the miracle performed by Peter and John by the temple, and the substance of Peter's address to the people occasioned by it. Acts iii., iv.
6. What was the occasion of the death of Ananias and Sapphira, with the manner of it? Acts v. 1, 2.
7. What was the occasion of the imprisonment of the apostles at Jerusalem, how delivered and afterwards employed? Acts v. 12–25.

8. When they were brought again before the Sanhedrim what was their

examination and their defence? Acts v. 26–32.

9. What effect had their defence upon their persecutors, what the advice

of Gamaliel, one of the counsel, and what was the result? Acts v. 32–42.

10. What was the immediate occasion of choosing deacons, what their intended work, their names, the manner of their ordination, and the im-

mediate effect of their appointment? Acts vi. 1–8.

11. What was the occasion of Stephen, one of the deacons, being accused

to the Sanhedrim? in what manner was this done, and what was the effect

it had upon him? Acts vi. 9–15.

12. In what manner does Stephen make his defence before the Sanhedrim, (in order to prove the typical nature of the Jewish worship, and the impiety

of the Jews,) and what was the consequence? Acts vii.

13. What was the effect of the severe persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem, and who chiefly signalised himself among the persecutors? Acts viii. 1–4.

14. What success had Philip, and, a little after, Peter and John, among the Samaritans? and what opposition did they meet with from Simon the

sorcerer, with their conduct towards him? Acts viii. 5–25.

15. When the apostles Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, where and

how was Philip (the deacon and evangelist) employed? Acts viii. 26–40.

16. Relate the manner of Saul's conversion. Acts ix. 1–9.

17. What command concerning him was given by the Lord to the disciple

Ananias of Damascus, and what was the result? Acts ix. 10–19.

18. Where did Saul (afterwards called Paul) first exercise his ministry? what was his subject, and with what effect? Acts ix. 19–22.

19. When Saul had continued at Damascus many days, (that is, about three years,) how came he to be introduced to the disciples and apostles at

Jerusalem, and what was the occasion of his removal to Cæsarea and Tar-

sus? Acts ix. 23-30.

20. What was the state of the churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, at this time? Acts ix. 31.

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21. What miracles did Peter perform at Lydda and Joppa? Acts ix. 32-43.

22. What was the Divine admonition given to Cornelius of Caesarea, the Roman captain? Acts x. 1-3.

23. Relate the Divine vision which Peter had at Joppa, and what was the purport of it. Acts x. 9-16.

24. Relate the interview of Peter with the three messengers from Cornelius at Joppa, and afterwards with Cornelius himself, and his Gentile friends at Caesarea, and what its very remarkable effect. Acts x. 17-48.

25. How does Peter, when accused at Jerusalem, vindicate his conduct in going among the Gentiles at Cæsarea, and what effect had it on the apostles and contending Jewish Christians? Acts xi. 1-18.

26. What success did the persecuted preachers meet with at Phoenicia, Cyprus, and especially at Antioch in Syria, and how was the cause at Antioch encouraged? Acts xi. 19-26.

27. What was the subject of Agabus's prophecy, and what effect had it on the disciples at Antioch? Acts xi. 27-30.

28. In what manner did the persecuting spirit of Herod Agrippa (not the tetrarch, but the deputy king in Judea) manifest itself? Acts xii. 1-4.

29. In what manner was Peter delivered from his murderous design at Jerusalem, and whither did he go? Acts xii. 5-19.

30. What became of the proud and cruel Herod, what was the state of the churches at that time in and about Jerusalem, and who went from thence to Antioch? Acts xii. 20-25.

31. How came Barnabas and Saul (accompanied by John Mark) to go from Antioch to Selencia and Cyprus? Acts xiii. 1-4.

32. What opposition and success did they meet with in the Isle of Cyprus, particularly at Salamis and Paphos? Acts xiii. 5–12.

33. On their leaving Cyprus and coming to Pamphilia, what became of

John, and whither did Barnabas and Saul direct their course? Acts xiii. 13–15.

34. What was the substance of the sermon which Paul (till now called Saul) preached at Antioch, in Pisidia? Acts xiii. 16–43.

35. What was the effect of their further attempt at this place, upon Jews and Gentiles, and what became of them? Acts xiii. 44–52.

36. In what manner were they received at Iconium, and afterwards at Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia? Acts xiv. 1–21.

37. How did Paul and Barnabas fulfil the remaining part of their mission until they returned to the church at Antioch in Syria? Acts xiv. 21–28.

38. What was the object of the mission of Paul and Barnabas from the church at Antioch to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem? Acts xv. 1–5.

39. When the apostle and elders had met together as a synod at Jerusalem, to discuss the question “whether or not the Gentile converts should

be circumcised,” what were the speeches of Peter, Paul and Barnabas, and

James respectively? Acts xv. 6–29.

40. After delivering the joyful decree at Antioch, what became of Paul and Barnabas, of Judas, Silas, and John Mark? Acts xv. 30–41.

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§ 63. The Acts of the Apostles, from the separation of Barnabas and Paul, to the end, containing the transactions of about twelve years.

1. After Paul and Silas had gone through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, what occurred in their travels through Derbe and Lystra, Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and Troas, until they came to Philippi and Macedonia? Acts xvi. 1–12.

2. What were the principal occurrences during their stay at Philippi? Acts xvi. 13–40.

3. Having left the city of Philippi and passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica, what reception did Paul and Silas meet with there? Acts xvii. 1–9.

4. How came Paul to go to Athens, (leaving Silas and Timotheus at Berea,) and what success had he there? Acts xvii. 10–34.

5. When Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth, what friends did he meet with there, what enemies, how was he employed, how long did

he stay, and with what success did he preach the gospel? Acts xviii. 1–18.

6. When Paul, in pursuance of his plan of sailing from Corinth to Syria,

came by the way of Cenchrea to Ephesus, what excursions did he make from thence to strengthen the churches? Acts xviii. 19–23.

7. While Aquila and Priscilla learned at Ephesus, what extraordinary preacher came to their assistance? and when he left Ephesus, where did he labour afterwards? Acts xviii. 24–28.

8. After Paul had made his excursions through the upper coasts, (Galatia, Phrygia, &c.,) and returned to Ephesus, how was he employed there, how long did he stay, and with what success? Acts xix.

9. What further excursions did Paul make, and with what friends, after leaving Ephesus, before he came to Troas? Acts xx. 1–6.

10. Relate what occurred at Troas, and the particulars of their proceedings until they came to Miletus. Acts xx. 7–16.

11. Relate the particulars of the travels of Paul and his companions, from their leaving Miletus and their coming to Cæsarea in Canaan. Acts xxi. 1–8.

12. Relate the particulars recorded during Paul's abode at Cæsarea, and

the progress of himself and companions to Jerusalem. Acts xxi. 9–17.

13. How was Paul employed at Jerusalem on his arrival, and some days after? Acts xxi. 18–26.

14. What opposition did he meet with from the Asiatic Jews there, and

what followed? Acts xxi. 27–40.

15. What was the substance of his defence, which by permission of the

chief captain he addressed to the people in the Syro-Hebraic language? Acts xxii. 1–21.

16. What effect had this address upon the hearers, and what was the consequence? Acts xxii. 22–30.

17. When Paul was set before the council at Jerusalem, what passed, and how was he delivered? Acts xxiii. 1–10.

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18. While confined in the castle, what happened, how was he delivered from his determined enemies, and whither was he taken? Acts xxiii. 11–35.

19. After his arrival at Cæsarea, by whom was Paul accused before Felix the Roman governor, and what was his defence, with the result of it? Acts xxiv.

20. On Porcius Festus coming into Felix's room, what became of Paul, how did he plead his cause against his accusers, before Festus, before King Agrippa, (son of Herod Agrippa,) and his sister Bernice, and with what effect? Acts xxvi.

21. When Paul, after having been a prisoner at Csesarea about two years, and sent a prisoner to Rome, who were his companions, and what were the particulars of his voyage until the time of his having a Divine admonition? Acts xxvii. 1–20.

22. What was the purport of the Divine admonition given Paul, and how was it accomplished? Acts xxvii. 21–24.

23. The crew landing at Melita, (or Malta,) what reception was given them, and what befell them while there? Acts xxviii. 1–10.

24. After leaving Melita, (where they had wintered three months,) by what steps did they proceed to Rome? Acts xxviii. 11–16.

25. On his arrival at Rome, what was the plan he pursued, and what was its effect? Acts xxviii. 17–29.

26. How long did Paul continue a prisoner at Rome, and how was he employed? Acts xxviii. 30, 31.

§ 64. Of the Epistle to the Romans.

1. What was the situation and the civil state of Rome, when this epistle was written, who was the author of it, and what the purport of the introduction? Rom. i. 1–15.

2. Why, and in what manner, does the writer describe the dreadful wickedness of the heathens? Rom. i. 16–32.

3. Why, and in what manner, does the writer prove that, as the heathen were condemned by the law of nature, so the Jews could not be justified by their observance of the Mosaic law? Rom. ii.

4. If neither Jew nor Gentile could be justified by the observance of their respective laws equally, what advantages had the Jew above the Gentile? Rom. iii. 1–8.

5. In what manner is it proved that the wickedness of mankind is universal, and what is the inference deduced from it? Rom. iii. 9–31.

6. How is the doctrine of justification further proved from the case of Abraham, and what is the inference therefrom? Rom. iv.

7. How is the doctrine of justification, with its fruits, necessity, and superior efficacy illustrated? Rom v.

8. In what manner does the doctrine of justification tend to universal holiness? Rom. vi.

9. In what manner is it shewn that the believer is freed from the law, as a covenant? Rom. vii. 1–6.

10. In what manner does Paul describe the use and excellence of the moral law, though ineffectual for justification? Rom. vii. 7–25.

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11. What are the principal privileges of believers as delivered from the law? Rom. viii.

12. In what manner does St Paul manifest his concern for his Jewish countrymen, while rejectors of the gospel? Rom. ix. 1–5.

13. In what manner is the sovereignty of God, in the distributions of His favours, illustrated, and the objections answered? Rom. ix. 6–33.

14. How does St Paul shew that the blessings of the gospel were ordained for the Gentiles, as well as the Jews? Rom. x.

15. How does he shew the consistency of God's ancient promises, and the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles? Rom. xi.

16. What are the practical improvements which the apostle deduces from the doctrines of grace? Rom. xii., xiii.

17. In what manner does he inculcate upon the believing Jews and Gentiles the lessons of mutual love and genuine candour? Rom. xiv., xv. 1–13.

18. What are the principal miscellaneous remarks contained in the latter part of the epistle? Rom. xv. 14–33, xvi.

19. What appears to be the spiritual state of the church at Rome when this epistle was addressed to them? Rom. i.–xvi.

## § 65. Of the Epistles to the Corinthians.

1. What was the situation and civil state of Corinth when this first epistle was written, who was the author of it, and what the import of the

introduction? 1 Cor. i. 1–9.

2. What was the state of the church of Corinth when this epistle was written? 1 Cor. i. 10–31.

3. In what manner does he vindicate his manner of preaching at Corinth? 1 Cor. ii.

4. How does he discountenance the carnality of professing Christians? 1 Cor. iii.

5. What is the true light in which gospel ministers ought to be viewed by Christian churches? 1 Cor. iv.

6. What should be the conduct of a Christian church towards an immoral member? 1 Cor. v.

7. What directions does St Paul give to the Corinthians about going to law? 1 Cor. vi. 1–8.

8. In what manner should Christians regard past crimes, and how improve their Christian liberty? 1 Cor. vi. 9–20.

9. What are the advantages and disadvantages of marriage? 1 Cor. vii.

10. In what manner” should strong Christians conduct themselves before the weak? 1 Cor. viii.

11. In what manner doth St Paul vindicate his apostolic right and authority? 1 Cor. ix.

12. By what arguments does he caution the Corinthians against apostasy disobedience, and unbelief? 1 Cor. x.

13. What were the principal abuses in the Corinthian church, and how doth St Paul rebuke and rectify them? 1 Cor. xi., xii.

14. What are superior excellences of Christian love? 1 Cor. xiii.

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15. What are the arguments against an unknown language in public worship? 1 Cor. xiv.

16. What are the principal arguments and illustrations advanced in support of the doctrine of the resurrection? 1 Cor. xv.

17. With what miscellaneous remarks does he conclude the first epistle? 1 Cor. xvi.

18. What were the principal excellences and defects of this church when

this epistle was addressed to them? 1 Cor. i.—xvi.

19. Who was the author of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and what is the purport of the introduction? 2 Cor. i., ii. 1–4.

20. What is the direction to them concerning a penitent backslider? 2 Cor. ii. 5–11.

21. What account does Paul give to the Corinthians of the success of his own ministry? 2 Cor. ii. 12–17, iii. 1–5.

22. How does he prove the superiority of the evangelical to the legal dispensation? 2 Cor. iii. 6–18.

23. What were the animating springs of Paul's ministerial labours? 2 Cor. iv., v.

24. In what manner did Paul and his companions conduct themselves in

their great work? 2 Cor. vi.

25. What were the principal effects which the first epistle produced in

the Corinthians? 2 Cor. vii.

26. How doth St Paul enforce the obligation of a charitable contribution for the poor saints in Judea? 2 Cor. viii., ix.

27. In what manner does he vindicate himself against the invidious suggestions of corrupt teachers? 2 Cor. x.—xii.

28. With what miscellaneous remarks does he conclude this epistle? 2 Cor. xiii.

29. What seems to have been the spiritual state of the church at Corinth when this second epistle was written? 2 Cor. i–xiii.

#### § 66. Of the Epistle to the Galatians.

1. What was the situation and civil state of Galatia when this epistle was written, who was the author of it, and what is the import of the intro-

duction? Gal. i. 1–5.

2. What is the cause of the author's sharp reproof, and of his vindication of his apostolical authority? Gal. i. 6–24, ii. 1–14.

3. By what arguments does he prove the doctrine of justification by faith, without the works of the law. Gal. ii. 15–21, iii.

4. How does Paul shew the Galatians their folly in cleaving to legal observances, and corrupt teachers, who blended the law and the gospel? Gal. iv.

5. By what arguments does he enforce his foregoing doctrine of justification, and exhort them to stand fast in gospel liberty? Gal. v. 1–12.

6. How does he caution them against abusing their liberty? Gal. v. 13–26.

7. With what miscellaneous exhortation does he conclude this epistle? Gal. vi.

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8. What appears to have been the spiritual state of the church at Galatia when this epistle was written? Gal. i.–vi.

§ 67. Of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

1. What was the situation and civil state of Ephesus when this epistle was first penned, who was the writer of it, and what is the import of the introduction? Eph. i. 1, 2.

2. In what particulars does he display the greatness of Divine grace to the church? Eph. i. 3–12.

3. What is the purport of his supplication for them? Eph. i. 13–23.

4. In what manner does he magnify the riches of free grace? Eph. ii.

5. How does he maintain his apostolic commission among the Gentiles? Eph. iii. 1–12.

6. What is the purport of his fervent prayer for the Ephesians? Eph. iii. 13–21.

7. What are the principal lessons deduced from the foregoing statements of the doctrine of grace? Eph. iv.

8. By what arguments does the apostle warn the Ephesians against sins of uncleanness, covetousness, and drunkenness? Eph. v. 1–20.

9. What are the relative duties enjoined on husbands and wives? Eph. v. 21–23.

10. By what arguments does he enforce the relative duties of children and parents, servants and masters? Eph. vi. 1–9.

11. What is the substance of his concluding exhortation? Eph. vi. 10–24.

12. What appears to have been the spiritual state of the church of Ephesus when this epistle was addressed to them? Eph. i.–vi.

§ 68. Of the Epistle to the Philippians.

1. What were the situation and the civil state of Philippi when this epistle was written, who was the author of it, and what are the contents of the first chapter? Phil. i.

2. By what arguments does he exhort the Philippians to harmony, kindness, humility, diligence, and exemplariness? Phil. ii. 1–18.
3. What are the principal commendations he gives to Timothy and Epaphroditus? Phil. ii. 19–30.
4. By what considerations does he caution the Philippians against blending the Jewish law and the gospel? Phil. iii. 1–14.
5. By what considerations does he recommend holiness and heavenly-mindedness? Phil. iii. 15–21.
6. What is the purport of his concluding exhortation? Phil. iv.
7. What seems to have been the spiritual state of the church at Philippi when this epistle was first addressed to them? Phil. i.–iv.

§ 69. Of the Epistle to the Colossians.

1. What were the situation and the civil state of Colosse when this epistle was written, who was the writer of it, and what is the import of the introduction? Col. i. 1–8.
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2. What was the subject of his prayer for them, and how does he engage their attachment to Christ and His grace? Col. i. 9–29.
3. By what considerations does Paul caution the Colossians against vain philosophy, the traditions of the Jews, and human institutions? Col. ii.
4. By what argument does he enforce heavenly-mindedness, mortification, and mutual love? Col. iii. 1–15.
5. What is the substance of his exhortation respecting the word of Christ, and various relative duties in Christian families? Col. iii. 16–25.
6. What are the principal parts of his concluding exhortation to the Colossians? Col. iv.
7. What appears to have been the spiritual state of the church of Colosse when this epistle was addressed to them? Col. i.–iv.

§ 70. Of the Epistles to the Thessalonians.

1. What were the situation and the civil state of Thessalonica when this epistle was perused, who was the writer of it, and what the import of the first chapter? 1 Thess. i.

2. By what considerations does he encourage their progress in the Divine

life? 1 Thess. ii.

3. By what particulars doth Paul shew his love to them? 1 Thess. iii.

4. How does he enforce the duties of purity, brotherly love, diligence, and the moderation of their sorrow after their departed friends? 1 Thess. iv.

5. How does he enforce a preparedness for the Lord's coming? 1 Thess. v. 1-10.

6. What are the contents of his concluding exhortation? 1 Thess. v. 11-28.

7. What appears to be the spiritual state of the church at Thessalonica when the first epistle was addressed to them? 1 Thess. i.-v.

8. After what interval of time from the writing of the first epistle was the second epistle addressed to the Thessalonians, and what is the import of the first chapter? 2 Thess. i.

9. What are the mistakes he attempts to rectify in the Thessalonians, and by what arguments? 2 Thess. ii.

10. What is his command respecting disorderly walkers in the church? 2 Thess. iii.

11. What appears to have been the state of the church at Thessalonica when the second epistle was addressed to it? 2 Thess. i.-iii.

#### § 71. Of the Epistles to Timothy.

1. Who was Timothy, and where did he reside when this first epistle was addressed to him? 1 Tim. i. 1-3.

2. In what manner does St Paul caution him against Judaizing teachers? 1 Tim. i. 4-11.

3. By what considerations doth he engage him to maintain faith and a good conscience? 1 Tim. i. 4-20.

4. From what considerations does he exhort prayers to be made for magistrates and all men? 1 Tim. ii. 1-8.

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5. How ought women to behave in their civil and religious capacity? 1 Tim. ii. 9-15.

6. What are the chief qualifications of Christian bishops, or overseers of their flocks, of deacons and their wives, respectively? 1 Tim. iii. 1-13.

7. What is the great character of the church, and the great mystery of godliness? 1 Tim. iii. 14-16.

8. What are his directions to Timothy in connexion with his caution respecting apostasy? 1 Tim. iv.

9. What are St Paul's directions with respect to old and young poor widows, church rulers, and Timothy's own person? 1 Tim. v.

10. What are his commands with respect to servants, contentment, and riches? 1 Tim. vi.

11. What light is thrown on the spiritual state of the church at Ephesus, at the time of writing this epistle? 1 Tim. i.-vi.

12. What interval of time was there between the writing of the first and second epistles to Timothy, and what is the import of the first chapter? 2 Tim. i.

13. By what arguments does he exhort Timothy to a courageous and persevering diligence in his ministerial work? 2 Tim. ii. 1-13.

14. What is the subject of his exhortation with respect to errors, false teachers, different sorts of professions, and Timothy's own personal conduct? 2 Tim. ii. 14-26.

15. What is the character of those who cause perilous times? 2 Tim. iii. 1-9.

16. By what argument does he urge Timothy to persevere in fidelity in his great work? 2 Tim. iii. 10-17, iv. 1-15.

17. What is the purport of his concluding address? 2 Tim. iv. 19-27.

18. What appears to have been the spiritual state of the church at Ephesus at the time of writing the Second Epistle to Timothy? 2 Tim. i.-iv.

#### § 72. Of the Epistle to Titus.

1. Where was the residence of Titus when this epistle was addressed to him? Tit. i. 1-5.

2. What are the qualifications of a faithful Christian minister, as distinguished from false teachers? Tit. i. 6-16.

3. What are the directions given to Titus respecting the old and young, and the conduct of servants, and upon what grounds? Tit. ii.

4. What are his directions with respect to civil magistrates, and from what consideration? Tit. iii. 1-8.

5. What is the concluding exhortation of St Paul to Titus? Tit. iii. 9–15.

6. What appears to have been the state of religion at Crete when this epistle was written? Tit. i.–iii.

§ 73. Of the Epistle to Philemon.

1. Where was Philemon resident at the time this epistle was written, and what was his general character? Philem. 1–7.

2. Who was Onesimus, and in what manner does St Paul recommend him to Philemon? Philem, 8–22.

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3. Who were the persons that joined St Paul in his Christian salutations? Philem. 23–25.

4. Does anything in this epistle cast any light upon the state of the Church at Colosse, and what the character of Philemon in particular? Philem. 1–25.

§ 74. Of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

1. Who were the persons addressed in this epistle, their residence and character, who was the writer of it, and what the import of the introduction? Heb. i. 1–3.

2. By what arguments does the author prove the superior excellence of the gospel dispensation? Heb. i. 4–14.

3. What is the inference he draws from the dignity of Christ? Heb. ii. 1–4.

4. How does he answer the objection to Christ's dignity drawn from His sufferings? Heb. ii. 5–18.

5. How does he shew the superior excellency of Christ, in comparison of Moses? Heb. iii. 1–6.

6. How does he enforce the danger of unbelief and apostasy? Heb. iii. 7–19.

7. In what manner does he prove the superior excellency of the Christian rest? Heb. iv. 1–10.

8. By what argument does he encourage our faith and hope in approaching to God? Heb. iv. 11–16.

9. How does it appear that Christ was called to, and discharged the office of a priest in a supereminent manner? Heb. v. 1–10.

10. In what manner does he reprove the Hebrews for their deficiency or

want of progress in Divine things? Heb. v. 11–14.

11. In what manner does he display the danger of apostasy, though his views of them were favourable? Heb. vi. 1–10.

12. By what arguments does he encourage them in faith and holiness? Heb. vi. 11–20.

13. By what steps does he prove the superiority of Christ's priesthood to that of Aaron? Heb. vii., viii. 1–6.

14. In what manner does he shew the excellency of the gospel dispensation above the legal? Heb. viii. 7–13.

15. What was the typical meaning of the Jewish sanctuary and its principal utensils? Heb. ix. 1–10.

16. How does it appear that they signified Christ and His work? Heb. ix. 11–22.

17. How does the necessity and superior efficacy of Christ's priesthood thence follow? Heb. ix. 23–28.

18. By what arguments does the apostle draw the attention of the Hebrews from the Levitical dispensation? Heb. x. 1–18.

19. In what manner does he encourage them to improve the doctrine of Christ's priesthood? Heb. x. 19–39.

20. In what manner does he describe the use and efficacy of faith? Heb. xi.

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21. How does he encourage believers to a patient enduring of their afflicting circumstances? Heb. xii. 1–13.

22. By what arguments does he enforce reverence and gratitude towards God as well as peace and charity towards men? Heb. xii. 14–29.

23. What are the apostle's concluding exhortations? Heb. xiii.

24. From a survey of this epistle, what seems to have been the state of the professing Jews at the time it was penned? Heb. i.–xiii.

#### § 75. Of the Epistle of James.

1. Who were the persons addressed in this epistle, where did they reside,

and what is its general import? James i. 1.

2. In what manner are the Hebrews directed to improve their circumstances, whether prosperous or adverse? James i. 2–12.

3. What are his remarks concerning the origin of sin and of good? James

i. 13–18.

4. In what manner is the word of God to be received and improved? James i. 19–22.

5. What are the genuine effects of pure religion as opposed to hypocritical pretence! James i. 23–27.

6. What rule has he given with respect to rich and poor, equity and mercy? James ii. 1–17.

7. By what means does he shew the folly of pretending faith without works? James ii. 18–26.

8. From what considerations does he argue the evil of an unruly tongue? James iii. 1–12.

9. How is heavenly wisdom recommended? James iii. 13–18.

10. What are the genuine causes of wars, brawlings, and ill success in temporal pursuits? James iv. 1–6.

11. What is the most proper deportment of persons surrounded with calamities? James iv. 7–10.

12. What directions does he give with respect to mutual candour, and proper management of temporal affairs? James iv. 11–17.

13. In what manner does he reprove the covetous and oppressive Jews? James v. 1–6.

14. By what arguments does he exhort believers to a patient and meek endurance of their tribulations? James v. 7–11.

15. What are his directions with respect to swearing, prayer, and praise? James v. 12–15.

16. What are his directions respecting mutual confessions, and the motives for prayer and zeal? James v. 16–20.

17. What appears to have been the state of the Christian Jews at the time when this epistle was written? James i.–v.

#### § 76. The Epistles of Peter.

1. Who were the persons addressed in the First Epistle of Peter, and what the import of the introduction? 1 Pet. i. 1, 2.

2. By what considerations does he endear to them their gospel calling? 1 Pet. i. 3–12.

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3. By what arguments does he exhort them to holiness and brotherly love? 1 Pet. i. 13–25.
4. What are the considerations suggested against the offence of the cross? 1 Pet. ii. 1–12.
5. What directions were given respecting obedience to governors, and masters, with the motives of obedience? 1 Pet. ii. 13–25.
6. What are his directions to husbands and wives, and to all Christians as to mutual agreement? 1 Pet. iii. 1–12.
7. By what arguments does he encourage believers under persecutions, and also deter the wicked? 1 Pet. iii. 13–22.
8. In what manner should our past disobedience, the wickedness of others, and impending judgments, be improved? 1 Pet. iv. 1–11.
9. How should persecution for righteousness' sake be endured and improved? 1 Pet. iv. 12–19.
10. What exhortation doth St Peter give with respect to elders and young persons? 1 Pet. v. 1–7.
11. What is the substance of his concluding exhortations? 1 Pet. v. 8–14.
12. What was the spiritual state of the Christian Jews at the time this epistle was written? 1 Pet. i.–v.
13. What interval of times was there between the writing of the first and this Second Epistle, and what is the import of the introduction? 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2.
14. What is the substance of this exhortation against slothfulness and apostasy? 2 Pet. ii. 3–11.
15. By what topics does he further urge them to adhere to Christ and His gospel? 2 Pet. ii. 12–21.
16. In what manner does he describe the character and doom of seducing teachers? 2 Pet. ii.
17. What observations are made with respect to Christ's second coming? 2 Pet. iii. 1–7.
18. In what manner ought the ceremony of Christ's second coming to be improved? 2 Pet. iii. 11–18.
19. What was the spiritual state of the churches of the Christian Jews when this epistle was written? 2 Pet. i.–iii.

## § 77. The Epistles of St John.

1. To whom was the First Epistle of John written, about what time, and what is the general scope of it? 1 John i. 1–5.
  2. By what arguments does he shew the necessity of holiness, and of the blood of Christ? 1 John i. 6–10.
  3. What are the genuine effects of a saving knowledge of Christ, and of union to Him. 1 John iii. 1–11.
  4. In what manner does he address Christians of different attainments to stand fast in faith, love, and obedience? 1 John iii. 12–29.
  5. What is the true effect of grace, adoption, and Christian hope? 1 John iii. 1–10.
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6. What are the distinguishing marks and great advantage of saving grace? 1 John iii. 11–24.
7. How may we distinguish the spirit of the gospel from any other spirit? 1 John iv. 1–6.
- S. From what considerations does he enforce brotherly love? 1 John iv. 7–21, v. 1, 5.
9. What are the grand evidences of the truth and importance of the gospel? 1 John v. 6–21.
10. To whom was the Second Epistle addressed, and what is the general import of it? 2 John 1–7.
11. What is the conduct recommended against persons holding errors of a very pernicious tendency? 1 John 8–13.
12. To whom was the third epistle written, and what is the leading design of it? 3 John 1–8.
13. What is the difference between the character of Diotrephes and that of Demetrius? 3 John 9–14.

## § 78. The Epistle of St Jude.

1. To whom, or by whom (or what Jude) was this Epistle written? Jude 1–3.

2. In what manner does he shew the danger of being infected with errors

in sentiment and practice? Jude 4–7.

3. In what manner are seducing teachers and their miserable end foretold? Jude 8–16.

4. What are his directions and cautions against seduction and imposture? Jude 17–25.

5. What light does this epistle cast on the spiritual state of the churches at the time it was written? Jude 1–25.

§ 79. Of the Revelation.

1. To whom and by whom was this book written? Rev. i. 1–9.

2. By what figurative representation does Christ reveal Himself for the encouragement of His friends, and the terror of His enemies? Rev. i. 10–20.

3. What is the purport of Christ's address to the church at Ephesus? Rev. ii. 1–7.

4. What is the import of His address to the church at Smyrna? Rev. ii. 8–11.

5. What is the import of His address to the church at Pergamos? Rev. ii. 12–17.

6. What is the character of the church at Thyatira? Rev. ii. 18–29.

7. What is the character of the church at Sardis? Rev. iii. 1–6.

8. What is the character of the church at Philadelphia? Rev. iii. 7–13.

9. What is the character of the church at Laodicea? Rev. iii. 14–22.

10. What was the august representation made to John as introductory to the vision of opening the seals, and what its leading import? Rev. iv.

11. What are the particulars of the vision of the book sealed with seven seals? Rev. v.

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12. What followed upon opening the first seal? Rev. vi. 1, 2.

13. What followed upon opening the second seal? Rev. vi. 3, 4.

14. What followed upon opening the third seal? Rev. vi. 5, 6.

15. What followed upon opening the fourth seal? Rev. vi. 7, 8.

16. What followed upon opening the fifth seal? Rev. vi. 9–11.

17. What followed upon opening the sixth seal? Rev. vi. 12–17.

18. What are the particulars of the vision of the angel sealing the servants of God? Rev. vii. 1–9.

19. By what emblems is the happy state of the Church represented? Rev. vii. 10–17.
20. What followed upon opening the seventh seal? Rev. viii. 1–6.
21. What followed when the first angel sounded? Rev. viii. 7.
22. What followed when the second angel sounded? Rev. viii. 8, 9.
23. What followed when the third angel sounded? Rev. viii. 10, 11.
24. What followed when the fourth angel sounded? Rev. viii. 12, 13.
25. What followed when the fifth angel sounded? Rev. ix. 1–12.
26. What followed when the sixth angel sounded? Rev. ix. 13–21.
27. What is the subject of the tenth chapter? Rev. x.
28. What is the subject of the first part of the eleventh chapter? Rev. xi. 1–14.
29. What followed when the seventh angel sounded? Rev. xi. 15–19.
30. What are the contents of the twelfth chapter? Rev. xii.
31. What are the contents of the thirteenth chapter? Rev. xiii.
32. What are the contents of the fourteenth chapter? Rev. xiv.
33. What are the contents of the fifteenth chapter? Rev. xv.
34. What followed upon pouring out the first vial? Rev. xvi. 1, 2.
35. What followed upon pouring out the second vial? Rev. xvi. 3.
- I 36. What followed upon pouring out the third vial? Rev. xvi. 4–7.
37. What followed upon pouring out the fourth vial? Rev. xvi. 8, 9.
38. What followed upon opening the fifth vial? Rev. xvi. 10, 11.
39. What followed upon pouring out the sixth vial? Rev. xvi. 12–16.
40. What followed upon pouring out the seventh vial? Rev. xvi. 17–22.
41. What are the contents of the seventeenth chapter? Rev. xvii.
42. What are the contents of the eighteenth chapter? Rev. xviii.
43. What are the contents of the nineteenth chapter? Rev. xix.
44. What are the contents of the twentieth chapter? Rev. xx.
45. What is the representation given of the New Jerusalem? Rev. xxi.
46. What are the contents of the twenty-second chapter? Rev. xxii.

§ 80. Miscellaneous questions on the Scriptures in general.

1. What are the three most excellent characters in the Old Testament, and why you think them so?
2. What are the three most excellent characters in the New Testament, and why?
3. What are the three worst characters in the Old Testament, and on what account?

4. What are the three worst characters in the New Testament, and on what account?

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5. What are the two greatest miracles recorded in the Old Testament, and why do you think them so?

6. What are the two greatest miracles recorded in the New Testament, and why?

7. What are the four most important books in the Old Testament, and why you judge them to be so?

8. What are the four most important books in the New Testament, and why?

9. What are the three chief prophecies in the Old Testament now fulfilled, and for what reason you think them so?

10. What is the chief prophecy of the New Testament not yet fulfilled, and why the chief?

11. What were the three most important promises of the Old Testament, and why?

12. What are the three most important promises of the New Testament, and why?

13. At what four periods was the Old Testament Church at the lowest, and why you think so?

14. At what four periods was the Old Testament Church in its greatest glory, and why?

15. What are the three greatest sins of commission mentioned in Scripture, and why you think them so?

16. What are the three greatest sins of omission mentioned in Scripture, and why?

17. What are the two chief graces or spiritual virtues mentioned in Scripture, and why they are so?

18. What is the greatest penal evil with which God threatens the disobedient, and why the greatest?

19. What is the greatest blessing that God proposes to them that love Him, and why you judge it so?

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**THE EVANGELICAL CATECHIST, ETC.★**

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## THIRD CLASS.

**THE OLDER CHILD'S CATECHISM,  
FOUNDED ON**

SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS, &c.

- § 1. Concerning God creating all things. § 2. Adam. § 3. Enoch. § 4. Melchizedek.  
§ 5. Isaac. § 6. Jacob and Esau. § 7. Joseph and his brethren. § 8. Job.  
§ 9. Pharaoh. § 10. Aaron.

§ 1. Concerning God creating all things.—Gen. i., &c.

1. Question. What do you know of that great and good God who created the heavens and the earth?

Answer. God is an infinite Spirit, (John iv. 24; 1 Kings viii. 27; Jer. xxiii. 24.)

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\* The chief design of this Catechism is to render the most important characters and providential facts here noticed interesting to young persons of about twelve years of age. For this purpose, the bare goodness or badness of a character, or the mere existence of a fact, is not thought sufficient; but special regard is had to the evidence on which assertions are founded. Holy Writ itself requires us to cultivate this mode of acquaintance with Christianity, and children should be habituated to it betimes, (1 Pet. iii. 15.) Not, indeed, in order to suspend their belief on that alone which they can comprehend, but to lead them, when easily

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2. Q. When it is said that God created the heavens and the earth, what do you understand by it?

A. I understand that He made them; and that the things which are seen were not made of things that do appeal, (Heb. xi. 3; John i. 3; Col. i. 16.)

3. Q. When it is asserted that God said, "Let there be light; and He saw the light, that it was good; and called the light day," do you suppose that He has a body like ours?

A. No; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as we have, (Luke xxiv. 39.)

4. Q. What is meant, then, by "God said?"

A. He made known His will.

5. Q. What is meant by "He saw?"

A. He observed or took notice.

6. Q. What is meant by “He called?”

A. He gave a name.

7. Q. Was the earth, when first created, the same as it now appears?

A. No; it was without form, and great darkness covered it, (Gen. i. 2.)

8. Q. Was there no sea at the very first?

A. No; for God on the third day caused the waters under the heaven to be gathered together unto one place, and called them seas, (Gen. i. 9, 10.)

9. Q. Were there at first no trees or grass?

A. No; for God on the third day also made the earth to bring forth grass, and herbs, and trees of every kind, (Gen. i. 11, 12.)

10. Q. Was there always a sun and a moon, and were there always bright stars?

A. No; for God on the fourth day set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth, (Gen. i. 14–18.)

11. Q. Which were made first—the grass and other vegetables, or the beasts and insects?

A. The grass and other vegetables were made first, (Gen. i. 11, 12, 24, 25.)

12. Q. Why were they made first?

A. Because the beasts and insects could have no suitable support without them.

13. Q. Which were made first—the waters or the fishes?

A. The waters were made first, (Gen. i. 9, 20, 21.)

14. Q. Why so?

A. Because without water the fishes could not have lived.

practicable, to understand the reasons of what they believe, and to inquire into the causes and effects of what they observe. This method is calculated to enlarge the mind, and not barely to store the memory, and may be read by children with advantage when not required to learn it in the usual way, though the author is apprehensive that the method here adopted is peculiarly favourable to easy recollection. How far it is calculated to answer the design proposed, in any degree superior to former publications of the kind, judicious parents and teachers who have the highest welfare of children at heart, and to whom it is respectfully presented by the author, will eventually decide.

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15. Q. Which did God make first—the birds, or the air in which they fly?

A. The air in which they fly, (Gen. i. 6, 7.)

16. Q. For what reason was the air made first?

A. Because without air birds could not live, nor use their wings by flying.

17. Q. What was the last thing that God made at the creation?

A. Man, male and female, (Gen. i. 27.)

18. Q. Who were the first man and woman?

A. Adam and Eve.

19. Q. When it is said that “God created man in His own image,” what is the meaning of it?

A. It means chiefly, that he was righteous and holy; very innocent, and very good, (Eph. iv. 24.)

20. Q. Is there any man or woman now innocent and good, like Adam and Eve?

A. No; for all have sinned, and are guilty before God, (Rom. iii. 23, v. 12.)

21. Q. Why was man made last of all the creatures, after herbs, fruits, beasts, fowls, and fishes?

A. Because he lives by them; and thus all other things were made ready for his use.

22. Q. When God had created the heavens, and the earth, and all the hosts of them in six days, in what manner was the seventh kept?

A. God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, (Gen. ii. 2, 3; Exod. xx. 11.)

23. Q. Why did God happily distinguish and set apart the seventh day rather than any other?

A. Because in it he had ceased from all His creating work.

24. Q. Were there not other creatures made, possessed of rational and immortal minds, besides human beings?

A. Yes; angels are among the creatures of God.

25. Q. How do you know that there are angels?

A. Though they are not mentioned in the account of the creation, they are noticed in other parts of Scripture very often, (Gen. xix. 1; Matt. xiii.

39, &c.)

26. Q. What sort of beings are they?

A. They are spirits of great knowledge and power, (Heb. i. 7; Matt, xiii,

49; 2 Pet. ii. 11.)

27. Q. Are they all good?

A. No; some have rebelled against God, and are called devils, (2 Pet. ii.

4; Jude 6; James ii. 19.)

28. Q. Have these any influence in this world?

A. Yes; great influence in tempting men to evil, and making them miserable, (Eph. vi. 11; 1 Pet. v. 8.)

29. Q. Have the good angels any influence in this world?

A. Yes; for they are all ministering spirits, ministering to those who shall be heirs of salvation, (Heb. i.)

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§ 2. Concerning Adam.—Gen. i. 26, &c.

1. Q. In what state was Adam, the first man, when created?

A. In a state of likeness to God.

2. Q. What was that likeness?

A. Spiritual knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, (Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 18.)

3. Q. What do you mean by spiritual knowledge?

A. Such knowledge of God and other things as helps the soul to be humble and happy.

4. Q. What was the righteousness of Adam?

A. His being without fault or blame.

5. Q. What do you mean by true holiness?

A. Purity of mind, and sincerity of obedience, (Matt. v. 8, vi. 22, 23.)

6. Q. Was Eve, the first woman, in such a state as this when created?

A. Yes; but she and her husband soon failed by disobeying the command of God.

7. Q. If they were so perfect, how came they to disobey God?

A. Satan, by the serpent, tempted Eve, and she tempted her husband to

eat the forbidden fruit, (Gen. iii. 1, &c.)

8. Q. What followed their sinning against God?

A. They became sinfully knowing, but spiritually ignorant, guilty, unholy,

and disobedient, (Gen. iii. 7–12.)

9. Q. When they had thus fallen, what did God do to them?

A. He shewed them that He was displeased with their sin; but signified that He had in mercy provided for them a Saviour, who should destroy the

power and policy of Satan, (Gen. iii. 14, 15.)

10. Q. What do you learn from this account of Adam?

A. I learn that I ought to fear sinning against God, to shun all tempters to disobedience, to be deeply humbled for the fall of my nature, and to be

thankful to God for providing a way of salvation.

§ 3. Concerning Enoch.—Gen. v. 18–24; Heb. xi.

1. Q. Who was Enoch?

A. He was the son of Jared, and the father of Methuselah.

2. Q. What was his character?

A. He was a very good man, who served and pleased God, though sur-

rounded with very wicked people, (Gen. v. 22, 24; Heb. xi. 5.)

3. Q. What became of him after thus walking with God?

A. God changed his body, and took him to paradise, without experiencing the pains of death.

4. Q. What do you mean by paradise?

A. A better world than that in which we now live, and which our senses

cannot perceive.

5. Q. What do you learn from this account of Enoch?

A. I learn that it is better to please God than men, and that eminent piety will be at last highly rewarded.

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§ 4. Concerning Melchizedek—Gen. xiv. 18–20; Heb. vii.

1. Q. Who was Melchizedek?

A. He was the king of Salem, and a priest of the most high God.

2. Q. What is a priest?

A. A true priest is one appointed of God to offer sacrifice and make intercession, (Heb. viii. 3, is. 24.)

3. Q. In what manner did he behave to Abraham?

A. He brought forth bread and wine for refreshment to Abraham and his friends, (Gen. xiv. 18.)

4. Q. What else did Melchizedek do?

A. He, as the minister of God, gave Abraham his blessing, (Gen. xiv. 19.)

5. Q. What return did Abraham make for such friendly offices?

A. He gave him the tenth part of the spoil as a token of his gratitude and submission to God, (Gen. xiv. 20; Heb. vii. 4-10.)

6. Q. Who were the father and mother of Melchizedek?

A. They are not recorded in the Scriptures, and in this respect he was without pedigree, (Heb. vii. 3.)

7. Q. As Melchizedek was an eminent type of the Lord Jesus Christ, can you tell me what is a religious type?

A. A religious type is any person or thing divinely appointed before the coming of Christ to represent Him or His Church, (1 Cor. x. 6; Heb. vi. 20.)

§ 5. Concerning Isaac.—Gen. xxi., &c.

1. Q. Who was Isaac?

A. The son of Abraham and the father of Jacob.

2. Q. Was Isaac Abraham's eldest son?

A No; Ishmael was older, but Isaac was the son of promise, and the father of God's chosen people.

3. Q. Who was the mother of Isaac?

A. Sarah, who bore him in her old age.

4. Q. What very great trial befell Isaac when a grown-up young man?

A. He was required by his father to submit to death as if he had been  
a  
lamb for sacrifice, (Gen. xxii. 1-14.)

5. Q. Did not his father love him?

A. Yes, very dearly; but God in this way tried Abraham, and gave him an opportunity to shew that he loved the command of God more than his  
child, (Gen. xxii. 15-18; Heb. xi. 17-19.)

6. Q. How was this prevented?

A. The angel of the Lord called unto Abraham, and said, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad, [or, the youth,] neither do thou anything unto him."

7. Q. Did not Isaac shew great love to God by being willing to die in obedience to His command?

A. Yes, very great; but Jesus Christ shewed much greater love in dying the just for the unjust that He might bring us unto God, (John xv. 13; Rom. v. 7, 8.)

8. Q. What else do you learn from Isaac's willingness to suffer?

A. That he who submits himself to God, and is willing to suffer for His, sake, shall be no loser in the end, (Matt. x. 39; Rev. xii. 11.)

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§ 6. Concerning Jacob and Esau.—Gen. xxv. &c.

1. Q. Who was Jacob?

A. The son of Isaac and Rebekah, and twin-brother of Esau.

2. Q. Was he a good man in his younger days?

A. Yes, upon the whole; but he did very wrong in not telling the plain truth to his father, (Gen. xxvii. 24.)

3. Q. Was Esau a good man?

A. No; he was a profane person, (Heb. xii. 16.)

4. Q. What evidence did he give of his profaneness?

A. He not only hated his brother, but followed vain pleasures, and undervalued religious privileges.

5. Q. When Jacob fled from the hatred of Esau, what happened to him

at Luz, which he called Bethel?

A. He there dreamed that he saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven,

and angels ascending and descending on it, (Gen. xxviii. 12.)

6. Q. Were the two brothers reconciled after this?

A. Yes; many years after, when Jacob returned from Mesopotamia into his native country.

7. Q. How was this effected?

A. Jacob, being the wiser and the better man, sent a submissive message with presents to his brother, and a reconciliation took place, (Gen. xxxii. &c.)

8. Q. How did Jacob behave while in the house of Laban?

A. With great diligence in his business, and great patience under trials, (Gen. xxxi. 39–42.)

9. Q. Where did Jacob spend the last years of his life?

A. In Egypt with his son Joseph.

10. Q. What do you further learn from this account of Jacob and Esau?

A. I learn that nearest relatives, even twin-children, may be one good

and the other wicked.

11. Q. Why was Jacob better than Esau?

A. It was because God loved him, and thus made him to differ; not of himself, but of grace, (Rom. ix. 11.)

§ 7. Concerning Joseph and his brethren.—Gen, xxxvii., &c.

1. Q. Who was Joseph?

A. The son of Jacob and Rachel.

2. Q. Where was he born?

A. In Mesopotamia, in the house of Laban his grandfather, (Gen. xxx. 22–24.)

3. Q. How did his father Jacob shew his excessive fondness for him, and imprudently distinguish him from his brethren?

A. By clothing him with a coat of many colours, or enviable finery, (Gen. xxxvii. 3, 4.)

4. Q. How did his brethren behave to him?

A. In a very jealous and envious manner.

5. Q. Had not Joseph some very extraordinary dreams?

A. Yes, he had two very remarkable dreams.

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6. Q. What was the first dream he had about some sheaves of corn?

A. In it he saw twelve sheaves of his brethren bow before his sheaf, which arose and stood upright in the field, (Gen. xxxvii. 5–8.)

7. Q. What other dream had he, respecting the sun, moon, and stars?

A. He saw the sun and the moon, and eleven stars, make obeisance to him, (Gen. xxxvii. 9–11.)

8. Q. When he related these dreams to his brethren, how did they receive the discovery?

A. They hated and envied him yet the more.

9. Q. When he related his last dream to his father, how was it received?

A. His father rebuked him, and said, “Shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee, to the earth?”

10. Q. How did his brethren behave to Joseph, when he found them feeding their flocks in Dothau?

A. They said, “Come, let us slay him and cast him into some pit,” (Gen. xxxvii. 20.)

11. Q. How was this prevented?

A. His brother Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hands.

12. Q. What did they do with him?

A. They sold him to a company of Ishmaelites who were going to Egypt, for twenty pieces of silver.

13. Q. While in Egypt, in the family of Potiphar, and tempted by his mistress to do what was very wicked, what did he say to her?

A. He said with indignation, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

14. Q. When his wicked mistress caused him, though innocent, to be put in prison, was he left without comfort?

A. No; for the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, (Gen. xxxix. 21.)

15. Q. When Joseph was brought out of prison to Pharaoh, in order to interpret his dreams for him, what advice did he give?

A. He advised Pharaoh to lay up in store provision against seven years of famine.

16. Q. Who was appointed by Pharaoh to superintend this national concern?

A. Joseph himself; for Pharaoh said unto his servants, "Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" (Gen. xli. 38.)

17. Q. Was not Joseph also made minister of state?

A. Yes; for Pharaoh said, "According to thy word shall all my people be ruled; only in the throne will I be greater than thou."

18. Q. How old was Joseph when he was advanced to this exalted state?

A. Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, (Gen. xli. 46.)

19. Q. Had Joseph any family of his own?

A. Yes, he had by his wife Asenath two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

20. Q. Why did he call his first-born Manasseh, or forgetfulness?

A. "Because," said he, "God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house."

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21. Q. And why did he call the other Ephraim, or fruitful?

A. "Because," said he, "God caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

22. While Joseph was in Egypt, what was the state of his father and brethren?

A. During the seven years of famine, which was felt by surrounding nations, Jacob sent his ten sons to Egypt to buy corn, (Gen. xlii.)

23. Q. Why did he not send Benjamin the youngest with the other ten?

A. Because he was fond of him; for he said, "Lest peradventure mischief befall him."

24. Q. In what manner did Joseph behave to his brethren when they first came?

A. When Joseph saw his brethren, he knew them; but made himself strange to them, and spoke roughly to them, (Gen. xlii. 7.)

25. Q. Did he act in this manner through revenge, or want of affection to them?

A. No; but to bring them to a proper sense of their past conduct.

26. Q. When Joseph had ordered his brethren to be imprisoned three days, and demanded one as a hostage until their youngest brother was brought to him, what did they say one to another?

A. They said, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear;

therefore is this distress come upon us," (Gen. xlii. 21.)

27. Q. Did they say this in the hearing of Joseph?

A. Yes; but they knew not that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them by an interpreter.

28. Q. How did Joseph bear this affecting scene?

A. He turned himself about from them, and wept.

29. Q. Did he return to them again?

A. Yes; and he took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes, (Gen. xlii. 24.)

30. Q. When Jacob, their father, heard that Simeon was kept as a hostage, and that Benjamin was also required, what did he say?

A. He said, "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away. All these things are against me."

31. Q. Did he then consent, at first, to send Benjamin with them into Egypt?

A. No; for he said, too hastily, “My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him in the way in which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave,” (Gen. xlii. 38.)

32. Q. But did he not, at last, let Benjamin go with them?

A. Yes; for their father Israel said unto them, “If it must be so now, do this, Take of the best fruits of the land in your vessels, ... and take double money in your hand. ... Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man,” (Gen. xliii. 11–13.)

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33. Q. When his brethren, full of apprehensions and fear, presented Benjamin before Joseph, how was he affected with the sight?

A. His bowels did yearn upon his brother: he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there, (Gen. xliii. 30.)

34. Q. Did Joseph make himself known to his brethren?

A. Yes; having caused every one of his attendants to go out from him, he made himself known to his brethren; and he wept aloud, (Gen. xlv. 1,2.)

35. Q. When he recovered himself a little, what did he say more?

A. He said to his brethren, “I am Joseph: doth my father yet live?”

36. Q. What reply did they make?

A. His brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

37. Q. In what manner did he encourage his brethren, when so troubled and terrified at his presence?

A. He said to them, “Come near to me, I pray you;” and he said, “I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. ... Be not grieved; ... for God sent me before you to preserve life,” (Gen. xlv. 5.)

38. Q. What message did he send to his father?

A. “Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not,” (Gen. xlv. 9.)

39. Q. What useful caution did he give to his brethren?

A. He said to them, “See that ye fall not out by the way,” (Gen. xlv. 24.)

40. Q. When his father heard the affecting account, what did he say?

A. He said, “It is enough; Joseph is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die,” (Gen. xlv. 28.)

41. Q. What do you chiefly learn from this history of Joseph?

A. I learn that envy and hatred are very bad things,—that innocence, piety, and wisdom are the path to true honour,—and that the ways of Providence are wonderful.

§ 8. Concerning Job.—Chap. i., &c.

1. Q. Who was Job?

A. He was a great prince in the land of Uz.

2. Q. What was he remarkable for?

A. For his holy character, for his great change from riches to poverty, and for his patience under great trials, (James v. 11.)

3. Q. What were some of his trials?

A. He lost his children by sudden death, and his property by fire and by robbers.

4. Q. What other trials had he?

A. He was afflicted in his body, treated unkindly by his friends, calumniated by Satan, and tempted to sin by his own wife, (Job ii., &c.)

5. Q. What did he say when he lost his children and property?

A. He said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord,” (Job i. 21.)

6. Q. What did he say to his wife when she tempted him to curse God, and die?

A. He said, “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.”

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What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” (Job ii. 10.)

7. Q. How does Job comfort himself against the persecution of his pre- tended friends?

A. He says, “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth,” (Job sis. 25.)

8. Q. When God shewed His own greatness and holiness to His servant Job, what did he say?

A. “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes,” (Job xlii. 5, 6.)

§ 9. Concerning Pharaoh.\*—Exod. iii., &c.

1. Q. Who was Pharaoh?

A. A proud and powerful king of Egypt.

2. Q. What did he do to Israel?

A. He kept them poor, and made them work hard, (Exod. v. 5–19.)

3. Q. Who were appointed to treat with him about Israel's deliverance from servitude?

A. Moses and Aaron, (Exod. v. 1.)

4. Q. When they requested the freedom of Israel, what answer did Pharaoh make?

A. Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice, to let

Israel go? (Exod. v. 2.)

5. Q. What did the Lord do to shew him his folly and wickedness?

A. He sent upon his land ten plagues.

6. Q. What effect had these plagues on him?

A. He at first hardened his heart, and then relented and confessed his faults, (Exod. vii. 13, 14, viii. 34, ix. 27, 28, x. 27, 28, xi. 31, 32.)

7. Q. How did he confess his faults?

A. He said, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked," (Exod. ix. 27.)

8. Q. "What became of him at last?"

A. He and his army were drowned in the Red Sea, while persecuting the Israelites, (Exod. xiv. 23–31.)

9. Q. What do you learn from the history of Pharaoh?

A. I learn from the history of Pharaoh, that he who hardeneth himself against God shall not prosper, but shall come to a miserable end.

§ 10. Concerning Aaron.—Exod. iv., &c.

1. Q. Who was Aaron?

\* Pharaoh was a name common to the kings of Egypt for many ages; for one of them was contemporary with Abraham, and others appear in succession till the time of Ezekiel. What was the proper name of this king who opposed Moses and Aaron is not easily ascertained.

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A. He was the son of Amram and Jochebed, the elder brother of Moses and Miriam, and the first high priest among the Jews.

2. Q. For what was he remarkable?

A. For his talent of speaking well, for performing many miracles before Pharaoh, and weakly yielding to the sin of the golden calf.

3. Q. What was the golden calf?

A. The golden calf was an idol which the people of Israel would have made, while Moses was on the mount with God, (Exod. xxxii.)

4. Q. Who were the sons of Aaron?

A. Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

5. Q. What became of Nadab and Abihu?

A. They were killed by fire from heaven, (Lev. x. 2.)

6. Q. For what cause?

A. Because they offered before the Lord strange fire, which He commanded them not, (Lev. x. 1.)

7. Q. How did Aaron behave under this afflictive providence?

A. He held his peace in humble submission, (Lev. x. 3.)

8. Q. What became of Eleazar?

A. Eleazar succeeded his father in the high-priesthood.

9. Q. How long did the family of Eleazar continue in the high-priesthood?

A. Till the time of Eli.

10. Q. What became of Ithamar?

A. His descendants were common priests till the time of Eli, and then became possessed of the high-priesthood.

11. Q. What do you learn from the history of Aaron?

A. I learn that he was a good man, highly honoured of the Lord.

12. Q. What do you learn concerning his sons, Nadab and Abihu?

A. I learn that God is much displeased with the profane and the presumptuous, in His service.

13. Q. If you are profane and presumptuous until death, what will become of you?

A. I must go to hell to suffer misery for ever.

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§ 2. Joshua. § 3. Achan. § 4. Samson.  
 § 5. Ruth. § 6. Saul. § 7. Solomon. § 8. Ahab. § 9. Jehoshaphat. § 10. Hezekiah. § 11. Manasseh. § 12. Josiah. § 13. Jeremiah. § 14. Belshazzar.  
 § 15. Ezra. § 16. Nehemiah. § 17. Esther. § 18. Haman and Mordecai.

§ 1. Concerning Balak and Balaam.—Num. xxii., xxxi.

1. Q. Who was Balak?

A. He was the son of Zippor, and a king of the Moabites, (Num. xxii. 4.)

2. Q. How did he behave towards the Israelites?

A. He sent for Balaam the son of Beor, saying, "Curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me," (Num. xxii. 6.)

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3. Q. How was Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, hindered from going to Balak with the messengers, and from cursing the people?

A. God said unto Balaam, "Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed," (Num. xxii. 12.)

4. Q. When he was prevailed upon by other princely messengers to go to Balak, what befell him by the way?

A. He "was rebuked for his iniquity; the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet," (2 Pet. ii. 16.)

5. Q. What was the occasion of this remarkable fact?

A. An angel hindered the ass from going forward, and her master smote her, (Num. xxii. 22, &c.)

6. Q. Did Balaam afterwards see the angel?

A. Yes; for "the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand," (Num. xxii. 31.)

7. Q. When Balak was full of expectation to hear curses pronounced upon Israel, what did Balaam say?

A. He said, "God is not a man, that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent. ... Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it," (Num. xxiii. 19. 20.)

8. Q. Did he say anything more?

A. Yes, many things; and, among others, he said, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel," (Num. xxiii. 23.)

9. Q. What do you learn from this history of Balaam and Balak?

A. I learn that they were both bad men,—one wished to curse the people whom God blessed, and the other would have done it if he durst.

10. Q. What else do you learn from the conduct of Balaam?

A. I learn that, without a new heart and a right spirit, there may be great knowledge, but no salvation.

§ 2. Concerning Joshua.—Exod. xxiv., &c.

1. Q. Who was Joshua?

A. He was the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, and the minister of Moses, (Exod. xxiv. 13.)

2. Q. Was this the only name by which he was called?

A. No; he was also called, at the first, Oshea, and Jehoshua, (Num. xiii.

16;) and once in the New Testament, Jesus, (Heb. iv. 8.)

3. Q. Was Joshua a religious man?

A. Yes; for he wholly followed the Lord, (Num. xxii. 12.)

4. Q. Was he a wise man?

A. Yes; he was full of the spirit of wisdom, (Deut. xxxiv. 9.)

5. Q. What authority had he over the people of Israel compared with Moses?

A. The Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life, (Josh. iv. 14.)

6. Q. Did God work any miracle by him?

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A. Yes; he dried up the water of Jordan by Joshua as he did the Red sea by Moses, (Josh. iv. 23.)

7. Q. Did not the sun and the moon stand still at the word of Joshua?

A. Yes; the light of the sun continued upon Gibeon, and the light of the moon in the valley of Ajalon, much longer than usual, (Josh. x. 12, 13.)

8. When Joshua had divided the land of promise by lot among the tribes of Israel, what was his exhortation to them?

A. He said, "Cleave unto the Lord your God. ... Take heed unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God. ... Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth," (Josh, xxiii. 8, 11, 14.)

9. Q. What was Joshua's own resolution?

A. He said, before all the people, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," (Josh, xxiii. 15.)

10. Q. What do you further learn from the history of Joshua?

A. I learn that religion, in a governor or a master, is a great blessing to

those who are under them; and that no business, however important, is a

sufficient excuse to persons in a public situation for habitually neglecting religion in themselves and their households.

§ 3. Concerning Achan.—Josh. vii.

1. Q. Who was Achan?

A. The son of Carmi, of the tribe of Judah.

2. Q. What great wickedness was he guilty of?

A. He was guilty of covetousness and theft.

3. Q. What did he covet?

A. A goodly Babylonish garment, or a princely robe, a quantity of silver,

and a wedge of gold, (Josh. vii. 21.)

4. Q. Did he steal as well as covet them?

A. Yes, and then hid them in the earth in the midst of his tent.

5. Q. How was he punished for these crimes?

A. All Israel, by Divine command, stoned him to death; and they raised over him a great heap, (Josh. vii. 25, 26.)

6. Q. What do you learn from the sin and punishment of Achan?

A. I learn that covetousness and dishonesty are very great sins,—that God is much displeased with those who covet and steal,—and sooner or later

He will severely punish all such offenders.

7. Q. How may you best avoid these dangerous crimes?

A. By being content with such things as I have, by esteeming honesty in others, and by seeking heavenly treasure.

§ 4. Concerning Samson.—Judges xiii., &c.

1. Q. Who was Samson?

A. He was the strongest of men, and a judge in Israel.

2. Q. Whose son was he?

A. He was the son of Manoah, of the family of the Danites, (Judges xiii. 2.)

3. Q. What was the first proof he gave of his strength?

A. When he met a roaring lion, he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand, (Judges xiv. 6.)

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4. Q. When the men of Judah were compelled to bind him with cords and deliver him to the Philistines, what followed?

A. He broke the strong cords before the Philistines, and with the jaw-bone of an ass he slew a thousand men of them, (Judges xv. 14–16.)

5. Q. Was this great strength always with him?

A. No; when God was displeased, it left him.

6. Q. When he lost his strength, what did the Philistines do to him?

A. They put out his eyes, bound him with fetters, and made him labour in the prison, (Judges xvi. 21.)

7. Q. When the lords of the Philistines rejoiced in their idol-god, as if

he had delivered Samson into their hands, and ordered the prisoner to be

brought forth for their sport, what happened?

A. His great strength now returned, and he pulled down the house where the lords and the people were assembled, perishing with them in the ruins, (Judges xvi. 24–30.)

8. Q. How long did he act as a chief magistrate over the Israelites?

A. He judged Israel twenty years, (Judges xv. 20, xvi. 31.)

9. Q. What do you further learn from the history of Samson?

A. I learn that, (like many others,) as he had a great talent, he had great trials; and therefore great talents should not be envied.

10. Q. What else do you learn?

A. That it is dangerous to be connected with wicked people, for most of his troubles were occasioned by his irreligious wives.

§ 5. Concerning Ruth.—Chap, i., &c.

1. Q. Who was Ruth?

A. She was a woman of Moab, (Ruth i. 4.)

2. Q. Did she not marry an Israelite who lived in her country?

A. Yes; she married a son of Elimelech and Naomi.

3. Q. How came she to leave her own country?

A. Her mother-in-law Naomi, now a widow, was going to the land of

Judah, and she herself had buried her husband, (Ruth i. 5–7.)

4. Q. Did Naomi urge her to go along?

A. No, but rather dissuaded her, (Ruth i. 8, &c.)

5. Q. How did Ruth bear this proposed parting?

A. She was much affected, and said, “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee,” (Ruth i. 16.)

6. Q. Did she not make a strong resolution not to leave her mother-in-law?

A. Yes; for she said to her, “Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried,” (Ruth i. 16, 17.)

7. Q. Was she not a convert to the true religion?

A. She was, it seems; for she said, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

8. Q. When they came to Bethlehem, what happened to Ruth?

A. She became acquainted with a man of great wealth, related to her former husband, and he married her, (Ruth iv. 13.)

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9. Q. Who was this man?

A. His name was Boaz, and he was the great-grandfather of David the king, (Ruth iv. 17.)

10. Q. What do you further learn from the history of Ruth?

A. That affectionate attachment among relations is very lovely, especially when strengthened by true religion.

§ 6. Concerning Saul.—1 Sam. ix., &c.

1. Q. Who was Saul?

A. He was a man of the tribe of Benjamin, and his father's name was Kish.

2. Q. How came he to be made a king?

A. He providentially met Samuel the prophet at Ramah; and the Lord had revealed to Samuel that he must anoint him to reign over Israel, (1 Sam. ix. 15-17.)

3. Q. When made king, did he conduct himself properly?

A. No; for in many things he disobeyed the commands of God.

4. Q. What was the consequence of his disobedience?

A. Samuel told him, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king," (1 Sam. xv. 23.)

5. Q. How did Saul receive the message?

A. He confessed that he had sinned, but does not appear to have been truly humbled.

6. Q. Who was anointed to be king in his stead?

A. David, the youngest son of Jesse, (1 Sam. xvi. 11-13.)

7. Q. How did Saul behave to David?

A. When David had killed Goliath the Philistine, he was praised by the people, and Saul was envious, (1 Sam. xviii. 6-8.)

8. Q. How did his envy shew itself?

A. He wanted to kill him several times, (1 Sam. xviii. 11, xix. 10.)

9. Q. Did Saul succeed in his evil design?

A. No; for through the friendship of Jonathan, the son of Saul, and the

constant care of God, he was preserved, (1 Sam. xix. 2, 3.)

10. Q. What was the character of Saul?

A. He was a very wicked man, full of envy, malice, and revenge.

11. Q. What was his end?

A. He fell in battle with the Philistines, together with his three sons, in Mount Gilboa, (1 Sam. xxxi. 1–6.)

12. Q. What more do you learn from the history of Saul?

A. I learn that a man may be much favoured by the appointment of Providence, while his conduct is very displeasing to God,—that disobedience to Divine commands is the way to ruin,—and that envy is a most criminal and dangerous passion.

§ 7. Concerning Solomon.—2 Sam. xii., &c.

1. Q. Who was Solomon?

A. The son of David, king of Israel.

2. Q. Had he not another name given him?

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A. Yes; Nathan the prophet called his name Jedidiah, because he was “beloved of the Lord,” (2 Sam. xii. 25.)

3. Q. “When the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream, saying, “Ask what I shall give thee,” what was the choice he made?

A. He said, “Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad,” (1 Kings iii. 9.)

4. Q. How did God testify His approbation of this choice?

A. God said unto him, “Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, ... lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was

none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee,” (1 Kings iii. 11, 12.)

5. Q. What was one glorious effect of his great wisdom?

A. Judah and Israel dwelt safely, (or, in confidence,) every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, all the days of Solomon, (1 Kings iv. 25.)

6. Q. What was another effect of his great wisdom?

A. He made suitable preparations for the exercise of true religion, especially by building a temple for Divine worship, (1 Kings v., &c.)

7. Q. Who was principally engaged at the dedication of the temple?

A. Solomon himself, attended by all the people of Israel, (1 Kings viii.)

8. Q. Was not the fame of his wisdom widely extended?

A. Yes; “there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from

all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom,” (1 Kings iv. 34.)

9. Q. How long did he reign?

A. The time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem, over all Israel, was forty years, (1 Kings xi. 42.)

10. Q. Notwithstanding all his wisdom, did not Solomon, in one part of his life, greatly displease the Lord?

A. Yes; “The Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing,” (1 Kings xi. 9, 10.)

11. Q. How did God manifest His displeasure?

A. The Lord said unto Solomon, “Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee,” (1 Kings xi. 11.)

12. Q. Did not Solomon repent of his misconduct?

A. We have reason to think that this message was the means of his repentance and reformation, and that the Book of Ecclesiastes was expressive of it.

13. Q. What do you further learn from the history of Solomon?

A. I learn, that even the wisest men are endangered by riches and honour; and that intimate connexions formed with irreligious persons are strong snares.

§ 8. Concerning Abab.—1 Kings xvi., &c.

1. Q. Who was Ahah?

A. He was the son of Omri, king of Israel.

2. Q. What was the general character of Ahab?

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A. Of him it is said, as well as of his father, that he “did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him,” (1 Kings xvi. 25, 30.)

3. Q. Whereby did he shew his wickedness?

A. He was indefatigable in persecuting the good prophet Elijah, (1 Kings xviii. 10.)

4. Q. Did he find him at last?

A. Elijah was beforehand with him, and said to Ohadiah, the governor of Ahab's house, "I will surely shew myself unto him to-day," (1 Kings xviii. 15.)

5. Q. What reception had Elijah with Ahab?

A. A very rough reception, for Ahab said unto him, in a rage, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" (1 Kings xviii. 15.)

6. Q. Was not Elijah afraid of him?

A. No; for, full of humble and holy courage, he answered, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim," (1 Kings xviii. 18.)

7. Q. Who was the wife of Ahab?

A. Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, an idolatress, and a woman of the worst disposition, (1 Kings xvi. 31, xis. 2.)

8. Q. Who was the man whose vineyard Ahab coveted, and whose death Jezebel caused by false accusation?

A. Nahoth the Jezreelite, whose vineyard was in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab, king of Samaria, (1 Kings xxi. 1, 8-10.)

9. Q. What became of Ahab?

A. He died according to the prediction of Elijah, who said, "In the I place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy. blood, even thine," (1 Kings xxi. 19, xxii. 37, 38.)

10. Q. What became of his queen?

A. She also died according to Elijah's prediction, who said, "The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel," (1 Kings xxi. 23, 2 Kings ix. 30-37.)

11. Q. How is the character of Ahab summed up?

A. "There was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up; and he did very abominably in following idols," (1 Kings xxi. 25, 26.)

12. Q. What more do you learn from the history of Ahab?

A. I learn that false views of religion beget and foster evil passions,—that persecution is displeasing to God,—and that persecutors shall at length be themselves punished.

§ 9. Concerning Jehoshaphat.—2 Chron. xvii., &c.

1. Q. Who was Jehoshaphat?

A. He was the son of Asa, king of Judah.

2. What is the general character of Jehoshaphat?

A. His heart was encouraged in the ways of the Lord, and he took away

the idolatrous high places and groves out of Judah, (2 Chron. xvii. 6.)

3. Q. How did he further manifest his attachment to the true religion?

A. In the third year of his reign he sent suitable instructors to teach

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the people; and ordered the great men about him to promote the design, (2 Chron. xvii. 7, 8.)

4. Q. In what manner did these instructors proceed in the work?

A. "They taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people," (2 Chron. xvii. 9.)

5. Q. What effect had this religious reformation on the neighbouring states?

A. "The fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat," (2 Chron. xvii. 10.)

6. Q. "Was not Jehoshaphat blameable for joining affinity with Ahab, the wicked king of Israel?"

A. Yes, and he was justly reprov'd for it by Jehu the prophet, who said to king Jehoshaphat, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?" (2 Chron. xix. 2.)

7. Q. Did he not repent of his folly, and proceed with the work of reformation?

A. Yes, for he endeavoured to bring back the people from their wicked ways unto the Lord God of their fathers, (2 Chron. xix. 4.)

8. Q. What was his charge to the judges whom he set in the land throughout the cities of Judah?

A. He said to the judges, "Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord. ... Wherefore now, let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our

God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts," (2 Chron. xix. 6, 7.)

9. Q. When the Ammonites and others came against Jehoshaphat to battle, what steps did he take?

A. "He set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah," (2 Chron. xx. 3.)

10. Q. In what manner did he seek the Lord?

A. He very earnestly prayed, saying, "O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee," (2 Chron. xx. 6, 12.)

11. Q. How did he exhort the people, when they were alarmed by their threatening enemies?

A. Jehoshaphat stood up and said, "Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper," (2 Chron. xx. 20.)

12. Q. Did not Jehoshaphat join himself, after all this, with Ahaziah; king of Israel, who did very wickedly?

A. Yes; for, though at first he was unwilling, he afterwards joined with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, (1 Kings xxii. 49; 2 Chron. xx. 35,36.)

13. Q. Was he not reprov'd for this imprudent conduct?

A. Yes; for Eliezer the prophet was commissioned to say, "Because

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thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works," (1 Kings xxii. 48; 2 Chron. xx. 37.)

14. Q. How long did Jehoshaphat reign over Judah?

A. Jehoshaphat was thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem, (2 Chron. xx. 31.)

15. Q. What do you further learn from the history of Jehoshaphat?

A. I learn that great and good men are too often drawn into improprieties of conduct,—that habits of association with unprincipled persons are dangerous,—and that when any are so betrayed, they should expect to suffer for it.

§ 10. Concerning Hezekiah.—2 Chron. xxix., &c.

1. Q. Who was Hezekiah?

A. He was the son of Ahaz, a very wicked king of Judah.

2. Q. With so bad an example set before him, what was the character of Hezekiah?

A. He was extremely different from his father, for he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, (2 Chron. xxix. 2.)

3. Q. What evidence did he give of his pious disposition?

A. He charged the ministers of religion to make suitable preparations for the public worship of the true God, (2 Chron. xxix. 3-11.)

4. Q. Was the charge readily complied with?

A. Yes: "And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly," (2 Chron. xxix. 36.)

5. Q. Had not Hezekiah much trouble from invaders?

A. Yes; for Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself, (2 Chron. xxxii. 1.)

6. Q. When thus endangered by a threatening invader, what steps did he take?

A. "He took counsel with his princes and mighty men" how they might best fortify Jerusalem, and encouraged all "not to be afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that was with him," (2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 7.)

7. Q. How did he enforce his exhortation?

A. He directed their thoughts to God; "for," said he, "there be more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God," (2 Chron. xxxii. 8.)

8. Q. When Sennacherib and his servants spoke against the Lord God of Israel, and set Him at defiance, what course was taken?

A. "For this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, prayed and cried to heaven," (2 Chron. xxxii. 20.)

9. Q. What did Hezekiah do with the blasphemous letter he received from Sennacherib?

A. He went into the temple, and spread the letter before the Lord, and then prayed, saying, "Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may

know

that thou art the Lord God, even thou only," (2 Kings xix. 14, 19.)

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10. Q. Was there any answer given to this prayer?

A. Yes; for the prophet Isaiah sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, That which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard," (2 Kings xix. 20.)

11. Q. In what manner was the insulting and blaspheming king of Assyria immediately punished?

A. That very night the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians (185,000) a hundred and eighty-five thousand men,

(2 Kings xix. 35.)

12. Q. When Isaiah, some time after, on Hezekiah's vain display of his

treasures to some messengers from Babylon, predicted the future invasion and captivity of Judah, what was the king's reply?

A. "Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou

hast spoken. And he said, Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?" (2 Kings xx. 19.)

§ 11. Concerning Manasseh.—2 Kings xxi.

1. Q. Who was Manasseh?

A. He was the son of good Hezekiah, and his mother's name was Hephzibah, (2 Kings xx. 21, xxi. 1.)

2. Q. What was the first general character of Manasseh?

A. "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel," (2 Kings xxi. 2.)

3. Q. How did his wickedness manifest itself?

A. "He built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal; ... and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them," (2 Kings xxi. 3.)

4. Q. What other abominations was he guilty of?

A. They are more than can be mentioned; but some of them were,— "He built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the Lord; he made his son to pass through the fire, [or, dedicated him to Moloch;] ... he used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards. ... Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much,

till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another,” (2 Kings xxi. 5, 6, 16.)

5. Q. How long did this king reign?

A. “Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign; and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem,” (2 Chron. xxxiii. 1.)

6. Q. But was he not greatly afflicted before his death?

A. Yes: “The captains of the king of Assyria took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon,” (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.)

7. Q. How did he behave in his affliction?

A. “When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him,” (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12.)

8. Q. Did the Lord attend to his prayer?

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A. Yes; for “He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom,” (2 Chron. xxxiii. 13.)

9. Q. What evidence did he give that his prayer and repentance were sincere?

A. It is said, that “Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God, ... and he took away the strange gods, ... repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon peace-offerings and thank-offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel,” (2 Chron. xxxiii. 13, 15, 16.)

10. Q. Who succeeded him in the kingdom?

A. His wicked son Amon, who had been dedicated to Moloch, who worshipped carved images, “and humbled not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more,” (2 Chron. xxxiii. 23.)

11. Q. What do you further learn from the history of Manasseh?

A. I learn, “that grace does not run in the blood,” that the most atrocious transgressors will make pretensions to some religion, and that with God there is forgiveness for the chief of sinners who humbly pray to Him.

§12. Concerning Josiah.—2 Chron. xxxiv., &c.

1. Q. Who was Josiah?

A. He was the son of wicked Amon.

2. Q. What is the character given to Josiah by the sacred historian?

A. “He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left,” (2 Chron. xxxiv. 2.)

3. Q. Did he not manifest a religious disposition when he was very young?

A. Yes; for in the eighth year of his reign (when about sixteen years of age) he began to seek the Lord, (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3.)

4. Q. Did he not after this proceed to reform abuses?

A. Yes; for in the twelfth year of his reign he began to clear Judah and Jerusalem from idolatry, (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3, 4.)

5. Q. After having broken down the altars and the groves, and destroyed the images and idols of the land, did he not promote the worship of the true God?

A. Yes; and among other improvements he repaired the house of the Lord, (2 Chron. xxxiv. 8.)

6. Q. What remarkable incident took place while the temple was under these repairs?

A. Hilkiah the priest found a book, or copy of the law of the Lord, (2 Kings xxii. 8, &c.)

7. Q. What effect had this discovery on Josiah?

A. When the king had heard the words of the book of the law, he rent his clothes, as a sign how much he was affected, (2 Kings xxii. 11.)\*

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\* It seems the king had not seen a perfect copy of the law before, containing the awful threatenings of God against the disobedient. Probably only abridged or mutilated copies were in circulation, and this practice was countenanced by the

8. Q. What was the Lord’s message to Josiah on this occasion?

A. The message was, “Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, ... I also have heard thee, saith the Lord,” (2 Kings xxii. 19.)

9. Q. What use did the king make of this book?

A. When he went up into the temple, with the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, “he read in their ears all the words of the book,” (2 Kings xxiii. 2.)

10. Q. What was his latter end?

A. He rashly engaged in a war against Necho, king of Egypt, though he was warned not to do so; and the archers wounded him at Megiddo, so that he died soon after at Jerusalem, (2 Chron. xxxv. 20–24.)

11. Q. What useful instruction do you gather from the history of king Josiah?

A. We see that a wicked father may (through Divine grace) have a good son,—that early piety is highly pleasing to God,—and that the reformation of abuses in religion, and the propagation of truth, are much to the honour of men in authority.

12. Q. What further do you gather?

A. I further gather that those who are under the influence of true religion will set a high value on the Holy Scriptures,—and that their hearts are tender, fearing the threats, and loving the promises of God.

13. Q. Are not even such persons liable to do what is wrong?

A. Yes; for the most eminent reformers, the most useful characters, and the greatest saints are liable to fall into sin, if they do not watch and pray lest they enter into temptation.

§ 13. Concerning Jeremiah.—Jer. i., &c.

1. Q. Who was Jeremiah the prophet?

A. He was the son of Hilkiah, who was one of the priests of Auathoth, near Jerusalem.

2. Q. How old was he when he began to be a prophet?

A. He was ordained to be a prophet unto the nations before he was born; and when about fourteen years of age he was commanded to warn the princes, the priests, and the people, of the land of Judah, (Jer. i. 5, &c.)

3. Q. Did he feel no objection because of his youth?

A. Yes; for he said, “Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child,” (Jer. i. 6.)

4. Q. How was he encouraged against his fears?

A. The Lord said unto him, "Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak,"\* (Jer. i. 7.)

priests and scribes; but when the royal reformer became acquainted with these awful sanctions, he was filled with awe and holy fear. To rend a garment was a token of lamentation and Borrow.

\*Jeremiah was about the same age as Josiah the king. Josiah began to reign

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5. Q. When he was threatened by the wicked, because of his faithful warnings, what encouragement did the Lord give him?

A. The Lord said to him, "I am with thee to save thee; and I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked," (Jer. xv. 20, 21.)

6. Q. In what manner did they treat Jeremiah at last, for his great faithfulness and zeal in reproving them?

A. Pashur, the son of Immer the priest, who was chief governor in the house of the Lord, smote him, and put him in the stocks, (Jer. xx. 1, 2.)

7. Q. When set at liberty from this confinement, what other trouble awaited him?

A. He was in derision daily, every one mocked him, and all his familiars watched for his halting, (Jer. xx. 7-10.)

8. Q. Did they do nothing else to him?

A. Yes; Zedekiah king of Judah shut him up in the court of the prison, (Jer. xxxii. 1, 2.)

9. Q. What further calamity befell him?

A. The princes were wroth with Jeremiah, and smote him, and put him again in prison; and afterwards into a miry dungeon, (Jer. xxxvii. 15, xxxviii. 6; Lam. iii. 52-55.)

10. Q. By whose means was he delivered from this dangerous situation?

A. By means of Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, who interested himself with the king in his favour; and Jeremiah was taken out of the dungeon, and remained in the court of the prison, (Jer. xxxviii. 7-13.)

11. Q. How long did he remain there?

A. He remained there until the day that Jerusalem was taken, (Jer. xxxviii. 28.)

12. Q. What became of him at that time of trouble and confusion?

A. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, gave charge concerning Jeremiah to

Nebuzar-adan, the captain of the guard, saying, "Take him, and look well

to him, and do him no harm," (Jer. xxxix. 11, 12.)

13. Q. Was this the end of Jeremiah's troubles for his prophetic warnings?

A. No; for Johanan the son of Kareah, and the captains of the forces, took him and all the remnant of Judah into Egypt, (Jer. xliii. 5.)

14. Q. What do you learn from this account of Jeremiah?

A. I learn that God can make the young in years both very good and very wise,—that nothing is more provoking to the wicked than to be re-

proved for their sins,—that God can raise up friends for us from unexpected quarters,—and that His protection can preserve us in the greatest dangers to which He calls us.

§ 14. Concerning Belshazzar.—Dan. v. 1, &c.

1. Q. Who was Belshazzar?

when eight years old, discovered a religious disposition at sixteen, and began to reform abuses when about twenty. We may therefore infer that the ministry of young Jeremiah contributed much to that reformation.

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A. He was the son of Evil-merodach, and the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, kings of Babylon,\* (Dan. v. 2, &c.)

2. Q. What was his character?

A. He was a wicked and profane man.

3. Q. Hare we not some account of a remarkable feast made by him?

A. Yes; he made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand, (Dan. v. 1.)

4. Q. How did he shew his profaneness on that occasion?

A. He ordered that the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, should be brought, that he and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein, (Dan. v. 3.)

5. Q. What did they do with them?

A. They drank wine in them, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone, (Dan. v. 4.)

6. Q. How did the Lord resent this profane insult?

A. In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over

against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote, (Dan. v. 5.)

7. Q. What effect had this very singular appearance upon him?

A. His thoughts troubled him to such a degree "that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another," (Dan. v. 6.)

8. Q. In this very alarming situation what did he do?

A. He sent for the astrologers, the Chaldean philosophers, and the soothsayers; promising them great rewards if they could interpret the writing; but none of them could, (Dan. v. 7, 8.)

9. Q. How did he bear this disappointment?

A. He was greatly troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were astonished.

10. Q. Was there no one who could interpret, or give the signification of the writing?

A. Yes, the queen had heard of Daniel, and recommended him to the king; and Daniel, after a very solemn address to him, interpreted the writing.

11. Q. What was the meaning of it?

A. That his kingdom was at an end, and should be divided between the Medes and Persians; and that he himself was weighed in the balances of God, and found wanting, (Dan. v. 25-28.)

12. Q. Was this prophecy fulfilled?

A. Yes; for "in that night was Belshazzar slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom,"† (Dan. v. 30, 31.)

13. Q. What may we further learn from this account of Belshazzar?

A. We learn, that plenty, magnificence, and mirth, are no certain signs

\* Evil-merodach, or the foolish Merodach, is regarded by the sacred historian as a "blank. According to some, he reigned only one year, and Belshazzar is considered as the son and successor of his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar.

† Cyrus was the general who took Babylon, under the direction of his uncle Darius, or Cyaxeres, the Mede; and he continued a partner only in the throne, until the death of his uncle, which took place about two years after, when he became the sole ruler.

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of happiness or safety,—that God is highly displeased with profaneness and irreligion, though countenanced by princes,—that He can alarm the guilty by unexpected methods,—and that a wicked, impenitent man, though

he may seek the assistance of God's true ministers for relief, shall at last perish in his iniquity.

§ 15. Concerning Ezra.

1. Q. Who was Ezra, or Esdras?

A. He was a priest among the captive Jews, who returned from Babylon to Jerusalem, at the close of the captivity, (Ezra vii. 1, &c.)

2. Q. What is said in Ezra's praise?

A. He was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, and prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments, (Ezra vii. 6, 10.)

3. Q. Of what service was he to Israel?

A. Through his great wisdom and address he procured from Artaxerxes, king of Persia, a commission very favourable to the Jews; in which they were encouraged to restore the worship of the true God at Jerusalem, (Ezra vii. 11–28.)

4. Q. What method did he take in order to obtain safety for himself and his friends on their journey to Jerusalem?

A. He proclaimed a fast for humiliation before God, and “to seek of Him a right way,” (Ezra viii. 21.)

5. Q. What reason does he assign for this conduct, in preference to more ordinary methods?

A. “I was ashamed,” he said, “to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him,” (Ezra viii. 22.)

6. Q. In this concern for a reformation, and returning into their own land, does it appear that Ezra and the people had much religious affection?

A. It seems they had; for Ezra prayed and confessed, mourned and wept; and there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congrega-

tion of men, and women, and children; and the people wept very sore, (Ezra x. 1.)

7. Q. What do you gather from this account of Ezra?

A. I gather that wisdom and learning are of great use in religion, and that the influence we may obtain with great men should be employed to

the honour of God, the revival or spread of religion, and the welfare of those with whom we are connected.

§ 16. Concerning Nehemiah,—Neh. i., &c.

1. Q. Who was Nehemiah?

A. He was the son of Hachaliah, and was born in Babylon during the captivity.

2. Q. When he was informed of the affliction of his brethren in Judea, and the desolated state of Jerusalem, what effect had it upon him?

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A. He sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, (Neh. i. 4.)

3. Q. As he was one of the cup-bearers of Artaxerxes the king, and had access to the royal presence, did he obtain any relief?

A. Yes; for the king observed his countenance sad, inquired the cause, and then granted him all he wished.

4. Q. What was Nehemiah's request of the king?

A. That he might be sent to rebuild Jerusalem, the city of his father's sepulchres, (Neh. ii. 5.)

5. Q. When he went there, though encouraged and commissioned by the king his master, did he not meet with some opposition?

A. Yes, with great opposition; for when Sanballat the Horonite heard that they builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and

mocked the Jews, (Neh. ii. 19, iv. 1.)

6. Q. Was he the only enemy they had?

A. No; for when the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, then they were very wroth, and conspired all of them together, to come and fight against Jerusalem, (Neh. iv. 7, 8.)

7. Q. When these enemies could prevail against Nehemiah and his men

neither by threats, by force, nor by stratagem, how was the government of Jerusalem settled?

A. Nehemiah gave his brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem, (Neh. vii. 2.)

8. Q. Was his brother Hanani a good man?

A. It should seem he was; for it was he who excited Nehemiah's compassion to the state of affairs in the holy land at the first, (Neh. i 2, 3.)

9. Q. What was the character of Hananiah the ruler of the palace, or the viceroy of Artaxerxes?\*

A. He was "a faithful man, and feared God above many," (Neh. vii. 2.)

10. Q. Did not Nehemiah make some efforts for the reformation of manners, and the revival of religion?

A. Yes; he exerted himself much with the nobles of Judah against the profanation of the Sabbath, and with both people and priests for their improper conduct.

11. Q. What do you infer from this account of Nehemiah?

A. I infer that we ought not to be unfeeling towards our friends and relations in their trouble, though at a distance from us,—that as opportunity offers, and according to our power, we should assist them,—and that

in every great and good work we may expect opposition from the wicked, but assistance from God.

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\* Judea was now a province of Persia, and the palace at Jerusalem was occupied by the Persian viceroy, and by Nehemiah during his visit. The royal residence was at Shushan, in Persia, during the winter season, being a very warm climate, and in summer at Ecbatana, a city in Media, a more northern situation. Chaldea, of which Babylon was the capital, was now only a province of the Persian empire.

§ 17. Concerning Esther.—Esth. ii, &c.

1. Q. Who was Esther?

A. She was the queen of Ahasuerus, king of Persia, who reigned over a

hundred and twenty-seven provinces, (Esth. i. 1, ii. 17.)

2. Q. To what family was she related?

A. Her parents were Jews, who both died when she was very young; and she was brought up by her cousin Mordecai, as his own daughter, (Esth. ii. 7.)

3. Q. How came she to be advanced to so exalted a situation?

A. Through her cousin's address, and her own personal accomplishments.

4. Q. "Was she not of great service to her kindred, the Jews?"

A. Yes, she procured for them deliverance from universal slaughter.

5. Q. How came they to be in so great danger?

A. An envious courtier, Haman, procured an edict for their destruction, by which he might wreak his revenge on Mordecai the Jew, who had displeased him, (Esth. iii. 2-11.)

6. Q. What method did queen Esther take to procure the revocation of this decree?

A. She first recommended to all the Jews in Shushan fasting and prayer, adding, "I also and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go in unto

the king, which is not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish."\*

7. Q. Did she succeed in this attempt?

A. Yes; for the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand, and encouraged her to ask what she pleased.

8. Q. What did she ask for?

A. She said, "If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request," (Esth. vii. 3.)

9. Q. What was the event?

A. Haman's plot was turned against himself, the former edict was revoked, and the Jews obtained a complete deliverance.

10. Q. What instruction do you gather from this account of Esther?

A. I gather that in every case of national or family danger we should apply to God by fasting and prayer, and commit ourselves to His protection in the use of lawful means.

§ 18. Of Haman and Mordecai.—Esth. ii., &c.

1. Q. Who was Mordecai?

A. He was the son of Jair, a Benjamite, who had been carried away from

Jerusalem with the captivity into Babylon.

2. Q. What was he remarkable for?

A. For having given his cousin Esther, who was an orphan, a distinguished education.

\* It was a law of Persia that whosoever, whether man or woman, the queen not excepted, went to the king into the inner court without being called, should be put to death, except such to whom the king should hold out the golden sceptre.

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3. Q. Was not Mordecai of great service to king Ahasuerus?

A. Yes; for he discovered a plot against his life, formed by two of his chamberlains, (Esth. ii. 21–23.)

4. Q. Had he not a dangerous rival?

A. Yes, Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, who sought his ruin.

5. Q. Why did he seek his ruin?

A. Because Mordecai bowed not nor did him reverence, (Esth. iii. 2, v. 13.)

6. Q. Did not the king shew him much honourable distinction above Mordecai?

A. Yes; he was advanced above the princes and officers of the king: “Yet,” said he, “all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king’s gate,” (Esth. v. 13.)

7. Q. How did envious Haman resent Mordecai’s conduct?

A. He procured an edict, under pretence of advantage to the king’s treasures, to have all the Jews massacred, (Esth. iii. 5–15.)

8. Q. How was this cruel purpose prevented?

A. Mordecai, Esther the queen, and all the Jews, having fasted and prayed, the plot was discovered to the king.

9. What became of Haman?

A. He was hanged on a gallows fifty cubits high, which he had prepared for Mordecai, (Esth. vii. 9, 10.)

10. Q. What became of Mordecai?

A. He was advanced to greater honour, and all the Jews were treated favourably.

11. Q. What do you learn from this account of Haman and Mordecai?

A. I learn that envy is a cruel and malignant passion—and that the

plan of Providence in preserving the innocent and punishing the guilty is worthy of our highest admiration.

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§ 1. Concerning the virgin Mary. § 2. Jesus Christ. § 3. St Peter. § 4. St John. § 5. Judas Iscariot. § 6. Herod Antipas. § 7. St Stephen. § 8. St Paul. § 9. Cornelius. § 10. Herod Agrippa. § 11. End of the World.

§ 1. Concerning the virgin Mary.

1. Q. Who was the virgin Mary?

A. The daughter of Joachim and Anna, of the tribe of Judah.

2. Q. What is she remarkable for?

A. For being the mother of Jesus Christ, and yet continuing a virgin.

3. How could that be?

A. By the power of the Highest; for with God all things are possible, (Luke i. 35, 37.)

4. Q. As the blessed God exists in three Persons, Father, Son (or Word,) and Holy Spirit, which of these Persons assumed our nature in the blessed virgin?

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A. The Word, or Son, was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (John i. 14.)

5. Q. Is not this a great mystery?

A. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, for God was manifest in the flesh, (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

6. Q. Can natural reason rightly understand this doctrine?

A. No; the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

7. Q. Why cannot he know them?

A. Because they are spiritually discerned; or, to be distinguished and understood only by spiritual illumination.

8. Q. Is there not good reason why Mary should be regarded as blessed among women?

A. Yes; for she was the happy instrument of introducing into the world the Messiah, who is the Almighty Saviour.

9. Q. Mary being espoused to Joseph the son of Jacob, and grandson of Matthan, was he not disconcerted when he learnt that she was with child?

A. Yes; but he was soon convinced that the cause was miraculous, by a messenger from heaven; who said to him, “Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost,” (Matt. i. 20.)

10. Q. In what manner did Mary herself consider this wonderful visitation I

A. When first informed by the angel what should take place, “she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be,” (Luke i. 29.)

11. Q. When certified of the will of God concerning her, did she not manifest a resigned mind?

A. Yes; for Mary said, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word,” (Luke i. 38.)

12. Q. How did she express her gratitude for this unparalleled condescension of God?

A. Mary said, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation,” (Luke i. 46–50.)

13. Q. What further account have we of Mary?

A. She was delivered of the promised child Jesus at the time predicted; conducted herself as a devout woman, and an affectionate mother; beheld the miracles of her son and Saviour; heard His public discourses; witnessed His sufferings and death; and lived (it is reported) to old age, under the affectionate protection of John the apostle.

## § 2. Concerning Jesus Christ.

1. Q. Why do you believe that Jesus Christ is the promised Saviour?

A. Because “to Him give all the prophets witness;” there was nothing

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in Him which did not answer to that character, but many things which could belong to no other, (Acts x. 43.)

2. Q. “What is the testimony of His most familiar and intimate disciple, John, concerning His person?

A. He calls Him the Word, and says, that “the Word was God,—that all things were made by him,—and that this Word was made flesh, (John i. 1, &c.)

3. Q. What is the testimony of an angel respecting Jesus Christ as the Messiah?

A. He said to a number of shepherds, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," (Luke ii. 8-11.)

4. Q. What was the testimony of aged Simeon concerning Him, when he took Him up in his arms?

A. He blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel," (Luke ii. 29-32.)

5. Q. In what manner did the wise men from the east bear testimony to the superiority of Jesus?

A. When they were come into the house, they saw the young child with

Mary His mother, and "fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh," (Matt. ii. 11.)

6. When, at twelve years of age, He was in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, what were their thoughts concerning Him?

A. "All that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers," (Luke ii. 47.)

7. Q. What was the testimony of John the Baptist before the inquiring multitude?

A. He said to them all, "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his fruit into the garner; but he will bum up the chaff with unquenchable fire," (Matt. iii. 11, 12.)

8. Q. What was John's testimony the next day, on seeing Jesus coming unto him?

A. He said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," (John i. 29.)

9. Q. What was the testimony of God the Father concerning Him?

A. A voice came from heaven, which said, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased," (Luke iii. 22, ix. 35.)

10. Q. What was the confession of two men possessed with devils concerning Him?

A. They cried out, saying, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matt. viii. 29.)

11. Q. What was the testimony of Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, respecting the miracles and mission of Jesus Christ?

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A. He said unto Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him," (John iii. 2.)

12. Q. What was Peter's testimony concerning His Messiahship, in the name of all the disciples?

A. Peter said unto Him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," (Matt. xvi. 16.)

13. Q. What was the testimony of the officers, who were sent by the Pharisees and the chief priests to take Him, concerning His discourses?

A. The officers answered, "Never man spake like this man," (John vii. 46.)

14. Q. What was the conduct and record of the multitude of His disciples, on His last entrance into Jerusalem?

A. They took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, "Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord," and began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, saying, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest," (John xii. 13; Luke xix. 37, 38.)

15. Q. What was the testimony of some children in the temple concerning Jesus?

A. When they saw how He healed the blind and the lame who came to Him in the temple, they cried, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," (Matt. xxi. 15.)

16. Q. What was the reluctant confession of the chief priests and Pharisees respecting Jesus?

A. Having gathered a council, they said, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on

him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation,” (John xi. 47, 48.)

17. Q. What was the testimony of Judas Iscariot to the innocence of Jesus?

A. He said, “I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood,” (Matt, xxvii. 4.)

18. Q. What was the testimony of Pilate, the Roman governor, concerning Jesus, before the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people?

A. He said unto them, “I have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod.” “Behold I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.” “I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it,” (Luke xxiii. 14, 15; John xix. 4; Matt, xxvii. 24.)

19. Q. What was the testimony of one of the malefactors who were crucified with him?

A. He said, “We receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man I hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,” (Luke xxiii. 41, 42.)

20. Q. What was the testimony of the centurion who stood over against him while on the cross, and they that were with him watching Jesus?

A. The centurion said, “Truly this man was the Son of God.” And

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when they that were with him saw the earthquake and those things that were done, they feared greatly, and said, “Truly this was the Son of God,”

(Mark xv. 39; Matt, xxvii. 54.)

21. Q. Of what weight is the testimony of Jesus himself in favour of His Messiahship?

A. Of the greatest weight, since He wrought many miracles to prove it, rose again from the grave according to His own prediction, confirmed it

during forty days on earth, ascended into heaven in the sight of His disciples, and imparted miraculous gifts to His followers, in order to establish the same.

22. Q. “What do you further learn from this account of Jesus Christ?

A. I learn that he is proved to be the promised mighty Saviour by all sorts of witnesses, and by every kind of suitable evidence, (1 John v. 6–11.)

23. Q. Why were these things written concerning him?

A. That we may believe on the name of the Son of God, and believing may know that we have eternal life, (1 John v. 13.)

24. Q. What will become of those who neither believe in Him, nor repent of their sins, nor obey the gospel?

A. They who believe not shall be condemned, they who repent not shall

perish, and they who obey not the gospel shall be punished with everlasting destruction, (Mark xvi. 16; Luke xiii. 3, 5; 2 Thess. i. 9.)

### § 3. Of the apostle Peter.

1. Q. Who was Peter, or Simon Peter otherwise called Cephas, and who was called to be an apostle?

A. He was the son of Jonas, and the brother of Andrew, (John i. 42, 43.)

2. Q. Where did he live?

A. At Capernaum, a city of Galilee near the sea or great lake in that country,\* (Luke iv. 31, 38.)

3. Q. What was his common occupation?

A. He and his brother Andrew were fishers. (Mark i. 16.)

4. Q. What was the character of Peter?

A. His natural temper was hasty and resolute, which, under the influence of grace, was made instrumental of much good.

5. Q. How did he manifest his haste and resolution?

A. When Jesus one night was walking on the lake of Gennesareth, Peter said, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water,” (Matt. xiv. 28.)

6. Q. When our Lord said, “All ye shall be offended because of me this night,” what did Peter say?

A. Peter said unto Him, “Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended;” and again, “Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee,” (Matt. xxvi. 33, 35.)

7. Q. When our Lord was surrounded with soldiers who came to seize him, what did Peter do?

\* Capernaum is supposed to have been on the eastern side of the great lake of Gennesareth, otherwise called the sea of Galilee, or of Tiberias.

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A. Having a sword, he drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and

cut off his right ear, (John xviii. 10.)

8. Q. Was he not guilty of a great sin in denying our Lord?

A. Yes, but he was a great penitent; and ever after he was eminently devoted to Christ and His holy service.

9. Q. How was his bold temper overruled for much good?

A. On the day of Pentecost, when immense crowds were assembled, Peter, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, stood up and spoke with great evidence and power concerning Jesus Christ as the promised Saviour; and great numbers believed unto salvation, (Acts ii. 14, &c.)

10. Q. After his great labours and eminent success in preaching the gospel, by what kind of death did he enter into the joy of his Lord?

A. Historians relate that he suffered martyrdom at Rome, about the year of our Lord 66, by crucifixion with his head downward.

#### § 4. Of the apostle John.

1. Q. Who was John the evangelist and apostle?

A. He was the son of Zebedee and Salome, and by profession a fisherman, (Matt. iv. 21; Mark xv. 40.)

2. Q. Who was called to be a disciple at the same time with John?

A. James his elder brother, (Matt. iv. 21.)

3. Q. What were these two brothers otherwise called, when set apart for the apostleship?

A. Jesus Christ surnamed them Boanerges, which is, "The sons of thunder," (Mark iii. 17.)

4. Q. What besides was John called?

A. "The disciple whom Jesus loved;" and by some, "The Divine."

5. Q. What evidence is there that Jesus particularly loved him?

A. He was taken to witness our Lord's transfiguration, and during His last supper he was permitted to lean on his breast, (John xiii. 25, xxi. 20.)

6. Q. What other scene was he chosen to witness?

A. He was chosen, with Peter and James, to witness Christ's agony in the garden, (Matt. xxvi. 37.)

7. Q. Where did he reside chiefly?

A. At Ephesus, in Lesser Asia.

8. Q. What calamity befell him in his old age?

A. He was banished by the emperor Domitian to the isle of Patmos, in the Ægean Sea.

9. Q. How did he fare, and how was he employed, while in that inhospitable place?

A. He was comforted by the Lord Jesus, who said unto him, "Fear not; I am the first and the last;" he had wonderful revelations of Christ and His Church, and was ordered to write them for the use of others, (Rev. i.

1-3, 11.)

10. Q. How long did he continue in Patmos?

A. About two years.

11. Q. How came he to be set at liberty?

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A. On the death of the emperor Domitian, Nerva, who succeeded him, recalled all whom he had banished.

12. Q. Did not John live to a great age?

A. When recalled from Patmos he was about ninety years old, and lived at Ephesus till he was about a hundred.

13. Q. "When he was grown so infirm that he could no longer preach a continued discourse to the people, what is he reported to have often said to them?"

A. He used to say, "My dear children, love one another."

§ 5. Concerning Judas Iscariot.

1. Q. What was the character of Judas, commonly called Iscariot?

A. He was a great hypocrite; for though he was outwardly an apostle, he was inwardly covetous and wicked.

2. Q. How did he manifest his covetousness and wickedness?

A. He sold his Lord and Master for money, and thus betrayed innocent blood, (Matt. xxvi. 14–16.)

3. Q. For what price did this abandoned man sell his innocent Master?

A. For thirty pieces of silver.\*

4. Q. What became of him after this?

A. His conscience accused him; and, having confessed his Master's innocence, he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and went and hanged himself, (Matt, xxvii. 4, 5.)

5. Q. What do you further learn from this account of Judas?

A. I learn that gifts and means, without grace, cannot keep us from sin,

—that evil men and seducers grow worse and worse,—and that there may

be a repentance which is not saving.

6. Q. What else do you learn?

A. I also learn that a hypocrite may go a great way in the profession of

religion,—that the love of money is the root of all evil,—and that he who

is often reprov'd, but hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and

that without remedy, (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10; Prov. xxix. 1.)

#### § 6. Concerning Herod Antipas.

1. Q. Were there not several persons called Herod in the New Testament history?

A. Yes; there were principally three.

2. Q. How was the first of them distinguished from the others?

A. He was the son of Antipater, reigned as king of Galilee under the Romans, rebuilt the temple at Jerusalem, and was called: The Great.”

3. Q. Was not this prince very proud and cruel?

A. It seems he did all his great acts from vain-glory; and as to his cruelty, he murdered, among many others, his wife, her mother, his three

sons, and young children without number.

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\* A *piece* of silver or of gold, among the Jews, signifies a *shekel*; and as one silver shekel was worth about half-a-crown, thirty would be equal to about three pounds, fifteen shillings.

4. Q. How were the other two Herods distinguished?

A. They were called Herod Antipas, and Herod Agrippa.

5. Q. Who was Herod Antipas?

A. He was a son of Herod the Great, an uncle of Herod Agrippa, and a tetrarch of Galilee.

6. Q. What was his general character?

A. He was full of criminal passions, and a slave to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

7. Q. How did he manifest his criminal passions?

A. He divorced his lawful wife, to marry Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, who was then living; and thus committed at once the base crimes of seduction, adultery, and incest.

8. Q. Was he not acquainted with John the Baptist?

A. Yes; he heard his discourses, and was in some respects reformed by them.

9. Q. Was he personally reprov'd by John for his unlawful conduct?

A. Yes; but John suffered much for it.

10. Q. What was the consequence of his giving such reproofs?

A. He was confined for eighteen months in the castle of Machærus,\* and afterwards beheaded. (See Matt. xiv. 3–12; Mark vi. 16–28; Luke iii.

19,20.)

11. Q. Had not this Herod an interview likewise with Jesus Christ?

A. Yes; for Herod was desirous of seeing Him, because he had heard many things of Him, and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by Him.

12. Q. Was he gratified in this?

A. No; Herod questioned Him in many words, but Jesus answered him nothing.

13. Q. How did he receive this remarkable instance of silent reproof from the suffering Redeemer?

A. Herod with his men of war set Him at naught, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate, (Luke xxiii. 2.)

14. Q. Was Herod tranquil and happy in the midst of sensual gratifications?

A. No; for his conscience terrified him, and he was defeated in war by

Aretas, the father of his lawful wife, (Mark vi. 16.)

15. Q. Was this the end of his trouble?

A. No; independent of his doom in another world, he was disgraced by

the Roman emperor, Caius, for treasonable practices, and banished out of

his dominion.

16. Q. What became of Herodias?

A. She fared the same fate with her adulterous partner, and died in disgraceful exile.

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\* Machærus was a castle and fort in the tribe of Reuben, a few leagues from the north-east side of the Dead Sea, near the boundaries of the respective dominions of Herod Antipas and Aretas, king of Arabia Petrea, whose daughter Herod first married.

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17. Q. What do you learn from this account of Herod?

A. I learn, that he who hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief, and that sensual indulgence is not only offensive to God and His children, but

also the source of much evil to the offender.

#### § 7. Concerning St Stephen.

1. Q. Who was Stephen?

A. He was one of the seven deacons of the church at Jerusalem, (Acts vi. 5.)

2. Q. What was his character?

A. He was “a man full of faith, of the Holy Ghost, and of power; and did great wonders and miracles among the people,” (Acts vi. 5, 8.)

3. Q. Was he not greatly opposed by the Jews?

A. Yes; many opposed him by disputation, but they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake, (Acts vi. 9, 10.)

4. Q. Did their opposition end there?

A. No; for they suborned men who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.” And they stirred up

the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught

him, and brought him to the council, and set up false witnesses.

5. Q. What did these false witnesses advance?

A. They said, “This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.”

6. Q. How did Stephen bear this load of accusations, equally false and malicious?

A. He was in a very heavenly state of mind, for “all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel,” (Acts vi. 15.)

7. Q. Was he permitted to answer for himself?

A. Yes; he gave a full reply to their false accusations, and made a very close application of the whole to his audience.

8. Q. How did he address them?

A. He said, “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it,” (Acts vii. 51–53.)

9. Q. How did they bear this close application?

A. “When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”

10. Q. Did this wonderful testimony appease them?

A. Far from it; for “then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped

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their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him,” (Acts vii. 57, 58.)

11. Q. How did he bear this cruel usage?

A. He called upon God, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he

kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their

charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep,” (Acts vii, 59, 60.)

12. Q. What do you learn from this account of Stephen?

A. I learn that they who peaceably suffer insult and reproach for the name of Christ are happy, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them, (1 Pet. iv. 14.)

#### § 8. Concerning St Paul.

1. Q. Who was Paul or Saul?

A. He was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, and a Roman citizen.

2. Q. Was he not a Jew?

A. Yes, he was of Jewish parents, and had his education at Jerusalem, (Acts xxii. 3; Phil. iii. 5.)

3. Q. As there were several sects among the Jews, to which of these did

he belong?

A. He was of the strictest sect, that of the Pharisees.

4. Q. Was he not brought up to business?

A. Yes; but among the Jews that was not inconsistent with the most liberal education.

5. Q. Was he not very much attached to the Jewish religion, and all the Mosaic institutions?

A. Yes; to such a degree as to conclude “that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth,” (Acts xxvi. 5, 9.)

6. Q. How did this ignorant zeal operate in him?

A. Many of the saints he shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them—he punished them oft in every synagogue—compelled them

to blaspheme; and thus breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, and being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them even unto strange cities, (Acts xxvi. 10, 11, ix. 1.)

7. Q. How old might he be at that time?

A. About four or five and twenty years of age.

8. Q. Was there not something very remarkable in the manner of his conversion?

A. Yes; for when on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus, at mid-day, “suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why

perse-

cutest thou me?" (Acts ix. 3, 4.)

9. Q. When thus wonderfully arrested, and addressed by the Lord Jesus Christ, what effect had it upon him?

A. He trembling and astonished said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6.)

10. Q. When Ananias of Damascus objected to receive Paul as a

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Christian brother, because of his well-known character as a persecutor of

the Christians, what answer was given him?

A. The Lord said unto him, "Go thy way; for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake," (Acts ix. 15, 16.)

11. Q. After Paul had been certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus, what was his first work as an apostle?

A. "Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God," (Acts is. 20.)

12. Q. What effect had his first discourses on the people?

A. All that heard him were amazed, and said, "Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests f ... But some went about to slay him," (Acts ix. 21, 29.)

13. Q. In what manner did the inhabitants of Lystra receive Paul, with his companion Barnabas, after the cure of a cripple who had never walked?

A. When the people saw what Paul had done, they lift up their voices, saying, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker," (Acts xiv. 11, 12.)

14. Q. In what manner did they receive this enthusiastic reverence?

A. They rent their clothes with concern, and ran in among the people, earnestly exclaiming, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should trail from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein."

15. Q. When the keeper of the prison at Philippi came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? what reply did they make?

A. They said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," (Acts xvi. 29-31.)

16. Q. In what manner did Paul conduct himself at Thessalonica?

A. Paid, as his manner was, went into the synagogue of the Jews, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus is Christ, (Acts xvii. 2,3.)

17. Q. When informed by the Holy Spirit that bonds and afflictions awaited him, how did he bear it?

A. He said, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God," (Acts xx. 24.)

18. Q. When his friends at Cæsarea wanted to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem, and were much affected with the prospect of his danger what reply did he make?

A. Then Paul answered, "What mean ye to weep, and to break mine

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heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus," (Acts xxi. 13.)

19. Q. After Paul had undergone great abuse at Jerusalem, and was in danger of being pulled in pieces of the mob, what encouragement had he from the Lord?

A. The night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome," (Acts xxiii. 11.)

20. Q. When king Agrippa, on hearing Paul's defence before him at Cæsarea, said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," what reply did he make?

A. Paul said, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear

me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds,” (Acts xxvi. 29.)

21. Q. When he was taken to Rome as a prisoner, in consequence of his appealing to Cæsar, how did he spend his time there?

A. He dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, “preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him,” (Acts xxviii. 30, 31.)

22. Q. After all his labours and sufferings for Christ, by what death did he glorify God?

A. He was beheaded, near the city of Rome, by the command of the emperor Nero.\*

#### § 9. Concerning Cornelius.

1. Q. Who was Cornelius?

A. He was a Roman centurion, or colonel, who lived at Cæsarea, and the first Gentile, or heathen, who was admitted into the apostolic church.

2. Q. What was his moral and religious character prior to his conversion to Christianity?

A. He was “a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway,” † (Acts x. 2.)

3. Q. How came he to be acquainted with Christianity?

A. An angel of God appeared to him in a vision, giving him particular direction to send to Joppa for Simon Peter, adding, “He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do,” (Acts x. 3–6.)

4. Q. What was the honourable account which the messengers of Cornelius (his two household servants and a devout soldier who waited on him continually) gave of their master?

\* It was reported that Nero was exasperated at the conversion of some of his intimates, by means of this apostle, as the immediate occasion of the mandate.

† Though unacquainted with doctrines purely Christian, and though no proselyte to the Jewish religion, he probably had the Scriptures of the Old Testament. He who can relish the Psalms of David, and enter into the spirit of the other Old Testament writings, is not far from the kingdom of God.

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A. They said, “Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee,” (Acts x. 22.)

5. Q. In what manner did Cornelius receive Peter?

A. Cornelius had called together his kinsmen and near friends, and after

proper explanations, he said, “Thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that

are commanded thee of God,” (Acts x. 33.)

6. Q. What was the effect of this visit of Peter to Cornelius?

A. While Peter preached the gospel to him and his friends, they were made partakers of miraculous gifts; they were then baptized in the name of the Lord, and thus became the first from among the Gentiles who joined the Christian Church, (Acts x. 44–48.)

7. Q. What do you learn from this account of Cornelius?

A. I learn “that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him.”

8. Q. What else do you learn?

A. I learn also that it is a great privilege to be more fully instructed in the truths of religion; and that they who diligently improve the knowledge they have, are the most likely to have more.

#### § 10. Concerning Herod Agrippa.

1. Q. Who was Herod Agrippa?

A. He was the son of Aristobulus, the grandson of Herod the Great, and

the nephew of Herod Antipas.

2. Q. Was he friendly to the Christians?

A. No; for “he stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church; and he killed James the brother of John with the sword,” (Acts xii. 1, 2.)

3. Q. Did his persecuting violence stop here?

A. No; for, “because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also,” (Acts xii. 3.)

4. Q. Did he succeed in his wicked purpose?

A. He succeeded so far as to apprehend him; “and when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions

of soldiers to keep him, intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people,” (Acts xii. 4.)

5. Q. Was Peter left in the power of Herod?

A. No; for “prayer was made without ceasing of the church for him.” And on the night before Herod would have brought him forth, while Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, an angel

said to him, “Arise up quickly;” then his chains fell off from his hands, and he followed the angel to another part of the city,\* (Acts xii. 5–10.)

6. Q. What was Peter’s reflection on this surprising deliverance?

A. He said, “Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel,

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\* Herod then resided at Jerusalem, but soon after he removed to Cæsarea, where he died.

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and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews,” (Acts xii. 11.)

7. Q. How did Herod bear this disappointment?

A. As soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers» what was become of Peter. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should

be put to death.

8. Q. What became of him when at Cæsarea addressing the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon?

A. Upon a set day, Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And when his flatterers among the people gave a shout, saying, “It is the voice of a god, and not of a man,” immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost,” (Acts xii. 21–23.)

9. Q. What do you infer from this account of Herod Agrippa?

A. I infer that God resisteth the proud, though in royal apparel,—that to give Divine honours to a creature is highly displeasing to Him,—and that the triumph of the wicked is short.

#### § 11. The end of the world.

1. Q. Will this world in its present form have an end?

A. Yes, for “the end of all things is at hand,” (1 Pet. iv. 7.)

2. Q. In what manner shall an end be put to this world?

A. “The heavens and the earth which are now are reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men,” (2 Pet. iii. 7.)

3. Q. Will this awful event take place suddenly and unexpectedly?

A. Yes; for “the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up,” (2 Pet. iii. 10.)

4. Q. What improvement should you make of this affecting subject?

A. Seeing that all these things shall be dissolved, I should solemnly consider “what manner of person I ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,”

(2 Pet. iii. 11, 12.)

5. Q. Will there not be another world when this is no more?

A. Yes; we are taught to “look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,” (2 Pet. iii. 13.)

6. Q. What will be the privilege of the righteous in that new world?

A. In that world “there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away,” (Rev. xxi. 4.)

7. Q. Will there not be a general resurrection of the body?

A. Yes, all shall rise; “for the Lord Jesus himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first,” (1 Thess. iv. 16.)

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8. Q. Will not the bodies of the saints be very different from our present bodies?

A. Yes, very different; for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither can corruption inherit incorruption, (1 Cor. xv. 50.)

9. Q. To what shall they be like?

A. Like the body of the glorious Redeemer; for He “shall change their vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body,” (Phil, iii. 21.)

10. Q. What will become of the disobedient at that awful period?

A. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, He will “take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,” (2 Thess. i.

7, 8.)

11. Q. In what manner will He take vengeance on them?

A. They shall be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,” (2 Thess. i. 9.)

12. Q. What will be the final sentence of the Judge upon these?

A. He shall say unto them, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye

gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not,” (Matt. xxv. 41–43.)

13. Q. What will be the final sentence of the Judge upon the righteous?

A. He shall say unto them on His right hand, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the

world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me,” (Matt. xxv. 34–36.)

14. Q. What do you learn from these awful facts?

A. I learn that “the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord,” (Rom. vi. 23.)

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## ON A CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

I. A CIRCULAR LETTER FROM THE INDEPENDENT MINISTERS  
OF  
WARWICKSHIRE.

II. THOUGHTS ON A GENERAL UNION.

III. HINTS TO A COMMITTEE IN LONDON.

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## A CIRCULAR LETTER, ETC.\*

DEAR BRETHREN IN THE LORD,—The importance of the subject of this letter, and the urgency of the occasion, are the only apology that you can reasonably expect, or we need to offer, for the liberty which is now taken in thus addressing you. It has been upon our hearts for some time (and we trust it is from the Lord) to communicate our thoughts and affections to you on a subject which we are persuaded is dear to you: we mean, *The prosperity of Zion, and the progress of the everlasting gospel*. You, as well as ourselves, must have observed that we all greatly need to be stirred up to a greater concern about this matter.

The great enemy of all good is busy and indefatigable. Working on our fallen nature, he has prevailed to an awful degree in the world, and his progress daily is more and more alarming.

\* A Circular Letter from the Independent Ministers assembled at Nuneaton, August 6, 1793, to the Associated Churches in Warwickshire, meeting at Warwick, Coventry, Birmingham, Foreshill, Bedworth, Nuneaton, Stretton, Atherstone, Stratford-upon-Avon, Kenilworth, and Kineton. With a Postscript, addressed to the Independent Associations of Ministers in the other Counties of England and Wales. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."—Mark xvi. 15.

At a meeting of ministers held at Warwick on Thursday, June 27, 1793, the following question was proposed for consideration:—"What is the duty of Christians with respect to the spread of the gospel?" After some conversation, the following resolutions were agreed to:—1. It appears to us that it is the duty of all Christians to employ every means in their power to spread the knowledge of the gospel, both at home and abroad. 2. As ministers of Christ, solemnly engaged by our office to exert ourselves for the glory of God, and the spiritual good of men, we unite in a determination to promote this great design in our respective connexions. 3. That we will immediately recommend to our friends the formation of a fund for the above purpose, and report progress at the next meeting. 4. That the first Monday of every month, at seven o'clock in the evening, be a

The men of the world also collect all their ingenuity, arts, and forces, to promote the ends by which their hearts are respectively captivated. And shall the heirs of eternal glory *alone* continue supinely negligent? Shall the consideration of everlasting happiness and everlasting misery have less influence on *their* hearts than the short-lived pleasures of sin have on those who pursue them?

In a short time, brethren, our opportunities of usefulness in our generation will be over; *ours* who now address you, and

*yours* who are addressed. In a short time we shall all wish we had been more active and diligent, and more *zealously affected* in every *good cause*, especially in being any way instrumental in promoting the cause of Jesus Christ in the world. In a short time every tongue will be sealed in silence, every hand and foot in perfect inactivity. How pertinent and weighty, then, is the wise man's advice: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

After many thoughts, consultations, and prayer among our-

season fixed on for united prayer to God for the success of every attempt, by all denominations of Christians, for the spread of the gospel. 5. That the Rev. Edward Williams be desired to prepare a Circular Letter\* on the subject of spreading the gospel, by the next meeting. 6. That the next meeting be held at Nuneaton, on Tuesday, August 6, 1793. At the same time a subscription was made, as a beginning, by the ministers then present, amounting to £5, 5s.

\* ["This letter," Mr Gilbert states, "is particularly deserving of notice, as to it, as an instrument in God's hands, may be traced the adoption of two most important measures amongst the Independents—the general establishment of monthly meetings in their congregations for special united prayer, and the sending of missionaries into pagan countries." A document possessing even already such historical value is deserving of preservation. No one, if he believes in the Divine appointment and efficacy of prayer, if he values the gospel, and seeks the salvation of the heathen, can over-estimate the importance of this short but earnest letter, with its postscript, when it stands related, as the exciting or stimulating cause, to such movements as those specified by Mr Gilbert.

The two papers that follow this had for their objects the same general purpose—viz., promoting the evangelical action of the Independents of England and Wales in the establishment of Home and Foreign Missions, and the strengthening of churches then existing. Those on a Congregational Union are already historically valuable. Although we may not be able to trace their connexion with the existing Congregational Union, it is certain that discussions like these create impulses which propagate themselves beyond the age in which they take place. Who can tell to what extent the swell of the present Union may be indebted to these papers? The connexion of the first with our monthly prayer-meetings and missionary institutions is historically ascertained; and in the nature of things there is no reason to suppose that the latter in their time were not similarly a cause of the good things that have come upon us. —ED.]

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selves, we have concluded that it is in your power, the Lord assisting you, to forward our wishes and our plans of usefulness. We shall therefore, in the first place, explain to you in as brief and distinct a manner as we can, what is our immediate *object* in soliciting your attention at this time, and then inform you in what particulars we wish and solicit your *concurrence*.

Our immediate object is the *revival of true religion* in all the churches with which we are connected in this county of “Warwick. Next to this, we wish to *introduce* the doctrines which are according to godliness into those parts of the county which are ignorant and profane, or desirous of assistance, in the most prudent and inoffensive manner we can; and this we conceive may be best effected by establishing and supporting two or three circulating-day schools, and a suitable itinerant preacher, whose office would be to superintend the schools and preach the gospel among the poor. And should God open your hearts in benevolence and your hands in contributions, according as He hath prospered you, we greatly desire to have it in our power to send *a man of God* among the poor heathen, who perish for lack of knowledge.

This is our *design*, and we humbly hope it is approved of God. If it should meet with *your* approbation, as an attempt calculated to glorify God and win souls, we beg leave to solicit your concurrence in two things more especially:—

I. By your PRAYERS for success. This all of you, who love Jesus Christ and His cause, may do, the poor as well as the rich. We doubt not but you *do pray* for the revival and success of religion; but what we now recommend is *a special union and concurrence* in all the associated churches, with an *explicit* reference to *this* object. And, in order to shew that your hearts are with ours in the work, to promote greater solemnity, (perhaps we might add greater efficacy,) and to engage a more general attention to the duty, we recommend a *monthly* solemn exercise of united prayer. It would be difficult, perhaps, to fix on any one day and hour that might equally suit all the churches. In this, therefore, we cannot *urge* compliance; let each society deliberate and determine according to its own convenience. Yet, desirous that the compliance be as universally concurrent as possible in *1* point of time, we recommend, knowing it to be convenient and agreeable to the greater number of our societies, the *first Monday in every calendar month, at seven o'clock in the evening*.

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It is hoped that, in proportion as you seriously consider the subject to which we are now calling your attention, the more you will be convinced that it is a reasonable service. God *alone* can revive His work in the midst of the years; He *alone* can open

*effectual doors* of usefulness; and who can tell but the time to favour us, the set time, is come? Compared with *this* object, what is the removal of legal restrictions and even penal laws, however desirable? And yet what zeal has been often shewn in procuring concurrence of design in the petitioners, and in soliciting the attention of an earthly sovereign or national representatives? May we blush at the thought of being *less* importunate hi seeking the peace and prosperity of the true Jerusalem! “For Zion’s sake “let us” not hold our peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake” let us “not rest, until the righteousness thereof goes forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.”

Let us, then, in the name of the Lord of hosts, shake off that prevailing supineness which too much pervades the churches, in this day of worldliness, growing error, and reproach. Let us, in the power of grace, be watchful unto prayer, with all perseverance and importunity. Let us, with shame for past omissions, set Jesus Christ before us as our example, with a constant desire to imitate Him in this particular. The connexion between the promise to be accomplished and the seeking of it by appointed means, should not be forgotten. Thus the connexion stands:—“The heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that which was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it. ... I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.”\*

You will excuse the liberty we further take of recommending to you such helps as we think peculiarly conducive to promote the spirit of prayer. Among these we reckon the repeated perusal of such promises and prophecies of Scripture as relate to the success of the gospel, and the glory of the latter day. Next to these, such parts of church-history as relate to the success of the gospel in all ages, the journals of missionaries, and the lives of eminently useful persons in promoting the cause of God. Such reading feeds the sacred flame of benevolence and zeal, furnishes with matter, disposes for a more affectionate and profitable exer-

\* Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37.

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cise of private and social prayer. We now proceed to solicit your concurrent assistance to forward our design.

II. By your pecuniary *contributions*. We do not expect or desire anything unreasonable, or inconsistent with your circumstances and other engagements. A little from many hands would amount to an encouraging sum, and enable us to hope that great blessings are designed for us. If *each* of you were to cast in a mite, we should be able with peculiar confidence to answer every insult or objection by saying, “Who hath despised the day of small things?”

We recommend to each congregation to appoint a treasurer of its own, who may receive your contributions respectively, which may afterwards be forwarded, on proper notice given, to a general treasurer of all the contributions. The treasurers will, of course, keep a book for this purpose open to the inspection of all. If the poorest among you were to contribute *one penny per week*, and the richer in proportion, one might hope that, at the year’s end, the pittance would hurt none sensibly, though it would assist in benefiting thousands.

When national safety is threatened, it is not uncommon for opulent individuals, or societies, to stand forward with promises of pecuniary aids very generous and ample, and even to pledge their *lives and fortunes* to secure that end. We would humbly suggest a query, Can any step more proper be taken than an earnest endeavour to *reform* a nation in order to promote its prosperity and safety? But national safety, however highly estimated, falls far short of what we wish to accomplish. We have in view the infinitely-deserved honour of the King of kings, and the welfare of immortal souls.

When a prospect opens for the display of national valour, when a powerful and ambitious rival is to be humbled, when the acquisition of conquests, triumphs, and territories, becomes probable, then *millions* are expended. But what is the acquisition of the most complete conquest, superb triumph, for even the richest of territories, compared with that victory which Divine grace gives, the triumph which accompanies salvation, and God’s everlasting kingdom, to possess which perishing sinners are invited?

While those around you cheerfully contribute very considerable sums to enable the forward sons of liberty to sound *their* trumpet in the land, we only solicit your fervent prayers, and a rational

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proof that they are sincere, for enabling the messengers of the Prince of peace to sound the gospel trumpet, which, through His blessing, may prove a *joyful sound* to hundreds and thousands, and be the means of bringing them to walk in the light of His countenance.

Observe, brethren, the zeal of politicians, and of all descriptions of men whom we behold engaged in the career of human glory. A little luxurious ease, a delicious morsel, a garb of trifling distinction, the empty breath of mortals, or a clod of earth viewed through the medium of a flattering imagination, is often with many of them deemed a sufficient object, for attaining which their passions are all alive, their ardour kindles, and their exertions are incessant. Observing these things, let us blush at the smallness of our own zeal in promoting the cause of God in the world.

The period will soon come when civil societies are *no more*—when all the revolutions of empires, all the states and governments of this world shall appear to every mind as unimportant, when contrasted with spiritual and eternal salvation, as a transient dream is compared with the highest concerns of time. One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, each greatly concerned and agitated with its own peculiarities, in the smaller and larger circles of life; but in *eternity* all meet. There all dwell for ever. There the dispositions and qualifications which men seek and continue to indulge on earth are unchangeably retained. There all who *die in the Lord*, and they alone, *are blessed*; they rest from their labours, and their *works of faith and love* follow them.

We dwell on these things the rather, brethren, because we have observed with regret in the present day that too many of the disciples of our common Lord imbibe the spirit of the world, and plunge themselves, to their no small detriment, into the muddy waters of contentious politics. Instead of perpetual complaints to men, do *you* pour out fervent prayers to God. And let *your* chief joy be, in viewing the affairs of the world, and musing on the eventful days in which we live, that *the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*. And we wish by such considerations to stir you up to

holy emulation, in hopes you will see it both your duty and interest to do as much for God as others do for mammon,—to do as much from an experience of *the love of Christ* as others do for *the love of fame*.

View the greatness of those blessings which you have now a

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call to promote. Consider the interesting nature and uncomputed value of revealed truth, and especially of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which you are solicited to assist in propagating. Reflect on the inconceivable worth of immortal souls, whose endless happiness you may be instrumental in promoting. Think especially how small the number of professing Christians in the whole world, and how smaller still that of awakened and converted persons.

If you have tasted that the *Lord is gracious*, use your influence, employ your interest with a gracious God, and liberally-minded men, to prove to the hearts of sinners that He is so. When men's hearts are engaged in meaner transitory concerns, you know they "leave no stone unturned," and strain every nerve to further their accomplishment. Oh, when shall the children of light be as wise in their generation as the children of this world!

It would be easy to multiply arguments from a thousand topics to enforce what has been already recommended, not only in reference to a reformation among ourselves in this country, but also to the propagation of the pure gospel of Christ among the heathen,—and many forcible considerations might be urged from the [state of the world at this time,]—but we are persuaded that more is not necessary, and that you are satisfied with the reasonableness and expediency of our solicitation. Looking up incessantly to the God of all grace for His Holy Spirit to influence our own hearts and yours, and that He will be pleased to open your views to eternal realities, that nothing may intervene to prevent your exertions to bring souls to Christ and everlasting rest, we, for the present, take our leave of you, and respectfully address ourselves to *others*.

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## A POSTSCRIPT,

ADDRESSED TO THE INDEPENDENT ASSOCIATIONS OF  
MINISTEES

IN ALL THE OTHER COUNTIES OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

DEAR AND RESPECTED BRETHERN IN THE LORD,—We trust you will readily acquit us of the crime of presumption, should any be so uncandid as to charge us with it, while we take this fraternal

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freedom of addressing you on a subject which lies very near our hearts.\*

From the preceding Letter you plainly see what is our *general* design—viz., *the revival of religion* in the churches, and the *introduction* of gospel truths into those places where most wanted; and you observe that our *immediate* object is that *county* in which we reside. “We now call your attention to a few particulars that we earnestly wish you to take into serious consideration, and which we urge the rather from a persuasion that you heartily concur with us in the before-mentioned *general design*. And this, we think, will be greatly forwarded by—

I. Annual *County* Associations. This is what *we have* adopted, and now, with all becoming deference, recommend to *you*. It is no part of our wish to infringe on the monthly, quarterly, or other

\* MINUTES.—Tuesday Morning, August 6, 1793.—Met at Nuneaton to assist at the ordination of Mr Daniel Fleming, and the opening of the place of worship there, which had been enlarged.

Mr Morris, of Stretton, began the service by reading the Scriptures and prayer; Dr Williams, of Birmingham, delivered the introductory discourse on the nature of an ordination; Mr Moody, of Warwick, prayed the ordination prayer; Mr G. Burder, of Coventry, gave the charge to the minister; and Mr Saunders, of Coventry, preached to the people.

In the afternoon, the Circular Letter was produced, read, approved, and ordered to be immediately printed. By request, the ordination service also will be soon published.

On account of the shortness of the time, the meeting was adjourned to Coventry, at six o'clock the next morning, when it was resolved to send copies of the Letter, &c., to ministers, and especially associations, in other counties, requesting their concurrence.

Several of the ministers, in hopes of exciting their friends by their example, paid their subscriptions into the hands of the Rev. G. Burder, who was appointed treasurer. The Rev. S. Burder, his nephew and assistant, was chosen secretary.

The next meeting is to be at Coventry, Vicar Lane, Thursday, October 3, 1793; the Annual County Association at Birmingham, Carr's Lane, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, May 6, 7, and 8, 1794.

All the ministers of the Association are requested to prepare and produce an account, by letter, of the state of their churches respectively, with the increase and decrease of members, that the minutes may be drawn up from these written documents.

It is requested that ministers, &c., in other parts of the kingdom, who are desirous of communicating or of receiving useful hints on the subject of this address, will send their communications to our secretary, the Rev. S. Burder, Coventry; and that all friends of the gospel, concurring with our views, who wish to contribute, may send any donation or subscription to the treasurer at Coventry; Mr Joseph Rogers, Birmingham; or Mr Thomas Wilson, "Wood Street, Loudon.

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meetings now existing, (in which ministers of *different* counties often join, from convenience of situation,) but to establish one in each county *annually*, in *addition* to any others which may be thought expedient. Instead of discouraging these friendly meetings of ministers, we would rather urge their *continuance* and *frequency* where they are, and their *commencement* where they are not held; not for political and party purposes, but for the infinitely more important end of promoting *the religion of Jesus*, both in ministers and people.

Nevertheless, by regulating this *one* meeting in the year by the *county* limits, so far as to have one sermon, at least, preached by a minister of the county where the meeting is held, and the concerns of all the churches therein canvassed, (but the meeting in all other respects common to all who may think proper to attend,) we think many advantages would accrue. Among these we might reckon the more practicable ascertaining of the state of the churches in our several connexions. Hereby we should be better able to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep;" to pray for success, or offer praises, with the *understanding*, as well as with the *spirit*. Hereby materials would be offered for a conversation far more profitable than what often occupies the professing circle, and the cause of Christ in the world would become a more common, as it is indeed an interesting topic.

Often have we heard our friends in different parts of the kingdom expressing their anxious wishes to form meetings of ministers with more determinate objects, and a bond of union less liable to be broken by caprice, than those which are held in common. How many are there of the Independent denomination of whom it may be said that they belong to no association whatever, (not for want of inclination, but of a proper inducement,) and often are, contrary

to their desires, *independent* to an extreme! And the associations which are formed but too commonly fall a prey to slackness of attendance or dissolution. A connexion formed on principles *merely* sentimental is far more liable to be broken than that which has an explicit and *invariable* boundary. And were every Christian society in a county, professing itself to be of the same denomination, and willing to join, to be taken into the number of the associated churches, many things improvable in churches or ministers might be reformed, and, at the same time, many a weak interest would be strengthened and greatly encouraged by the

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union. But these annual county meetings would not by any means answer the desired end, without adding—

II. Annual *Circular Letters*. These ought, of course, to be addressed to the churches, and adapted to their general state; to which brief *minutes* of the meeting should be added. Were every county in England and Wales to adopt this method, what a fund of useful information and profitable entertainment would be afforded to the churches! What a channel of regular communication and mutual acquaintance would it open! To ascertain with ease the number and situation of churches in each county, and in the kingdom, with the names of their ministers, would be but a small advantage, compared with the large field it would open for *prayer* and *praise*, for tender sympathy to men and gratitude to our God, and for generous endeavours to assist our brethren, with less hazard of being imposed upon in contributions. Such *minutes* of the meetings (in which there should be inserted the *increase* and *decrease* of every church, from year to year) would be open to corrections; all mistakes would be easily rectified; the movements of the Divine cloud of success would be easily observed, and provoke the beholders to emulation; and such a foundation would be laid for a fair and exact history of the state of religion in those churches (on which the *circular letters*, also, would throw considerable light) as could not be obtained, perhaps, by any other way. What we next beg leave to call your attention to is—

III. Your *fraternal agreement* with us in carrying into effect the plan proposed in the preceding letter, especially in these particulars:—

1. An explicit agreement in a *monthly* exercise of *prayer*, with occasional *fasting*. In addition to what has been said in our preceding letter, we shall subjoin the following observations from one who was greatly favoured of God, and eminently wise to win souls:—

“So is God’s will,” says he, “through His wonderful grace, that the prayers of His saints should be one great and principal means of carrying on the designs of Christ’s kingdom in the world. When God has something great to accomplish for His Church, it is *His will* that there should precede it the *extraordinary* prayers of His people, as is manifest by Ezek. xxxvi. 37, together with the context. And it is revealed that, when God is about to accomplish *great things* for His Church, He will *begin* by remarkably pouring out *the spirit of grace and supplication*, Zech. xii. 10.”

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“Before the first great outpouring of the Spirit of God on the Christian Church, which began at Jerusalem, the Church of God gave themselves to incessant prayer, Acts i. 13, 14. When Christ is mystically born into the world, to rule over all nations, it is represented in Rev. xii. as being in consequence of the Church’s *crying, and travailing in birth, and being pained to be delivered*. One thing here intended, doubtless, is her crying and agonising in prayer.

“One thing more I would mention concerning fasting and prayer, wherein I think there has been a neglect in ministers; and that is, that although they recommend and much insist upon the duty of secret *prayer* in their preaching, so little is said about secret *fasting*. It is a duty recommended by our Saviour to His followers, just in like manner as secret prayer is, as may be seen by comparing Matt. vi. 5, 6, 16–18. Though I do not suppose that secret fasting is to be practised in a stated manner, and steady course, as secret prayer; yet, it seems to me, it is a duty that all professing Christians should practise, and frequently practise. There are many occasions, of both a spiritual and temporal nature, that do properly require it; and there are many particular mercies, that we desire for ourselves or friends, that it would be proper in this manner to seek of God.”\*

2. The speedy establishment of charitable *contributions*, on a regular plan, is what we greatly wish to see, as a necessary step, previous to any exertions of moment that can be made towards

the propagation of the gospel, whether at home or abroad. It is needless to repeat what we have said before on the subject. But we entreat your further indulgence to the *extracts* following, which you may think, on several accounts, of greater weight than anything we can offer of our own:—

“To encourage us to abound in works of charity, the Scripture tells us that proportionally to the degrees of our charity shall be the degrees of our reward. Upon this consideration the apostle exhorts the Corinthians to be liberal in their charity:—2 Cor. ix. 6, ‘He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; but he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully.’ So that whatever we lay out in this kind is to the *greatest advantage*, and upon the *best security*.

“We certainly do it to the *greatest advantage*; because God will consider the *very smallest* thing that any of us do in this

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\* President Edwards’s Thoughts concerning the Revival of Religion, part v.

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kind. He that shall *give* so much as ‘a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose his reward.’ These last words, ‘shall not lose his reward,’ signify much more than they seem to speak—viz., that he shall have a very great reward, infinitely above the value of what he hath done.

“And we do it likewise upon the *best security*. So Solomon assures us, Prov. xix, 17, ‘He that hath pity upon the poor [and especially the “ignorant,” and such as are “out of the way”] lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.’ And we may be confident of our security where *God* is our security; nay, He tells us that in this case He looks upon himself as *principal*.

“And on the other side, the Scripture no way passeth a more severe doom upon any sort of persons than upon those who have no bowels of compassion towards their brethren in distress. [And what distress so great as that which relates to the *immortal soul!*] That is a fearful sentence indeed which the apostle pronounceth upon such persons, James ii. 13, ‘He shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy.’

“Let us who call ourselves Christians do something *for God*, for which we have no hopes to be recompensed in this world; that we may shew that we trust God, and take His word, and dare

venture upon the security of the next world, and that recompence which shall be made at the resurrection of the just.”\*

To these considerations, which are so consonant to Holy Scripture and right reason, we would add, as well calculated to impress the hearts of all, and especially of Christian ministers, “one of the fairest examples of this kind which either this, or perhaps any other age could easily present us with.” We mean the Rev. Mr Thomas Gouge:—“Besides his constant and weekly labour of preaching, he was very diligent and charitable in visiting the sick, and ministering not only *spiritual counsel* and comfort to them, but likewise liberal *relief* to the wants and necessities of those that were poor and destitute of means to help themselves in that condition. He did, also, *every morning throughout the year, catechise* in the church, especially the poorer sort, who were generally most ignorant; and, to encourage them to come thither to be instructed by him, he did once a week distribute money among

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\* Archbishop Tillotson’s Sermon, preached at the funeral of the Rev. Mr Thomas Gouge.

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them, not upon a certain day, but changing it on purpose, as he thought good, that he might thereby oblige them to be constantly present. These were chiefly the more aged poor, who, being past labour, had leisure enough to attend upon his exercise.

“That virtue which of all others shone brightest in him, and was his most proper and peculiar character, was his cheerful and unwearied diligence in acts of pious charity. In this he had a singular sagacity and prudence in devising the most effectual ways of doing good, and in managing and disposing his charity to the *best purposes*, and to the *greatest extent*; always, if it were possible, making it to serve some end of piety and religion: as the instruction of poor children in the *principles of religion*, and furnishing grown persons, that were ignorant, with the *Bible* and other *good books*; strictly obliging those to whom he gave them to a diligent reading of them, and, when he had opportunity, exacting of them an account how they had profited by them.”

It is well known what an extraordinary friend he was to Wales, because he judged there was a very great occasion for his charity: accordingly, he not only contributed what he could spare himself,

but also employed much of his time and pains to excite and engage the charity of others to assist him in it. “And in this he had two excellent designs: *one*, to have poor children brought up to read and write, and to be carefully instructed in the principles of religion; the *other*, to furnish persons of grown age, the poor especially, with the necessary helps and means of knowledge. So that, all things considered, there have not, since the primitive times of Christianity, been many among the sons of men to whom that glorious character of the Son of God might be better applied, that he *went about doing good.*”\*

We are aware that many objections may be started against bringing forward a design of this nature *at present*, owing to the *badness of trade*, &c. And yet even *now*, bad as times are, money *is laid out* on many *superfluous* things, at least on things that are incomparably less deserving of our money than the object now proposed, and which will turn out, at the last, to a less honourable and less profitable account. What is the gratification of appetite or fancy, the finery of dress, merely ornamental, expensive fur-

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\* Archbishop Tillotson’s Sermon.—We rejoice that in North Wales some efforts have been made of late among the young poor that are already crowned with considerable success.

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niture, compared with provision for the perishing souls of men, the pleasure of true religion, and the spiritual ornaments of the mind? What is the securing of political, or even religious liberty, (if that is all,) compared with that freedom which the Lord Jesus Christ has to confer on all who are found at last His faithful servants? What is the procuring (often at a great expense) of knowledge, of acquaintance with languages and science, and the most ingenious inventions, compared with the saving knowledge of Christ, His atoning death, victorious resurrection, and perpetual intercession in heaven, of which millions, and hundreds of millions, of our brethren of the human race know nothing, and of which numbers in our own land know nothing to saving purpose?

If a serious acquaintance with the fundamental truths of the gospel be not a concern infinitely superior to every other in this world, the gospel is nothing better than a cunningly-devised fable, the most zealous of the apostles was himself deceived, and those act the most *consistent* part, at least, who make no pretensions to

a compliance with the dictates of revealed religion. But our professed conclusion is, that *the gospel is true*; and, blessed be God, while *Tie is good, holy, just, and faithful*, we need not hesitate about retaining that conclusion. The knowledge of the gospel, therefore, is infinitely interesting to *all mankind*, no clime, nation, or tribe excepted.

How is it, then, that those persons who are supposed to know the value of the gospel are so indifferent about its propagation? Why are the opulent not more liberal with their property, and the poor not more ardent and importunate in their supplications to the Lord of the harvest, and Governor of the world? Let us, brethren, “awake to righteousness,” and shake off this too prevailing sin. Let us put up with a few inconveniences in this world for the good of others and the Redeemer’s glory, remembering that we have to possess, as the gift of sovereign grace, unsearchable riches, and an everlasting inheritance. There we shall enjoy, without the least painful ingredient, tranquillity, rest from our labours, and uninterrupted happiness. Nor is this prepared for *us only*, but for *all those*, also, who shall believe *through our means*.

If it be asked, Why application should not be made to all denominations without distinction? we reply, that our design is not to reject *any contributions* that may occasionally be made,

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but rather would be thankful for the least; and, in some cases, it may be prudent to *solicit* them; but we wish the churches in our own immediate connexion to act without the least dependence on supplies of so precarious a nature. Though a *union* of different denominations, in promoting any charitable end, appears in some respects desirable, yet it must be granted by all who consider attentively human nature, that an effect greatly superior may be expected from each denomination exerting itself separately. In such a case, numbers will do something who otherwise would do nothing at all. Besides, every religious body of people has some peculiarities; and, in proportion as an individual is attached to these, will he be anxious that his contribution be not applied to any purposes which counteract them. Whereas, when those of the same views unite, and manage their concerns by a committee of their own choosing, the contracted hand is more freely and liberally

opened. And when this mode of proceeding originates not in a bigoted partiality, but in the purest benevolence,—when one denomination *rejoices* in the success of another, (especially in the faithfulness and prosperity of parochial ministers, which might render our attempts unnecessary,) while the same main object is in view, it gives exercise to many Christian virtues at once. We hope, however, that none who have it in their power, will improve (or, more properly, *abuse*) this representation into a convenient shelter for excusing themselves from not doing anything of such a public nature, because their own denomination is not so engaged. We next recommend a fraternal agreement to promote—

3. A few *circulating charity schools* in each county. These are not intended, in any respect, to interfere with *Sunday-schools*. Where the latter are *not* introduced, the utility of a school residing for a year or two in one place, and then in another, and afterwards in another, until it be thought needful to return to the same place again, must be obvious to every one. And where they *are* introduced, these institutions would greatly befriend them, by bringing the scholars forward in the week, and especially by teaching them the *principles of religion*. If we hope to benefit the rising generation in reference to another world, this last particular should be strenuously attended to. If the principles of religion are not learnt in school, generally speaking, the learning of them by heart afterward will be much more difficult. In *this* particular, above all others, we should “train up a child in the way he should go.”

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The teachers ought to be men of conscientious diligence, and serious godliness, that they may perform their work, not by constraint, but of *a ready mind*, with sincere desires and endeavours to improve the children.\* But what would greatly tend to invigorate, as well as to facilitate the execution of this part, would be—

4. A *supernumerary minister* in each county, to preach the gospel among the poor as an itinerant; to superintend the concerns of the schools, under the direction of a committee; and occasionally to exchange with the settled ministers, as circumstances may require. We are persuaded there are very few who will not readily acquiesce in the expediency of this particular, and the rational prospect it affords of great good. One thing, however, we must

mention, that these itinerant efforts in villages, &c., and the schools, would tend very much to help each other *mutually*. In some places the schools would conciliate attention, and make way for preaching; in others the reverse of this mode; and the preaching-would countenance and encourage the schools always. The masters would in some respects be useful to the preacher. And while the latter would have opportunities to advise, exhort, or direct the

\* This part of our plan we recommend with the greater confidence from the successful manner in which a similar institution has been, and still is, conducted in North Wales, as may be seen in a *printed* account of it. Under the care of *six* masters, there were last year taught, in the manner here recommended, 267 scholars. It is hoped the following *note*, from the close of the *printed report*, will not be unacceptable:—"The *quarterly* account of the schools, delivered to the committee by the superintendent, has been very satisfactory and encouraging. As the schools are attended to *every day* in the week, and *circulate* from place to place, as the committee shall appoint, according to the exigences of places, and the proficiency of the scholars, their importance must appear very great. The benevolent, who are earnestly solicited to further this charitable and humane design for the present and everlasting welfare of the rising generation, (and are so disposed,) are requested to signify their intentions to the Rev. George Lewis, of Caernarvon, the present superintendent and secretary; to Mr Thomas Jones, cutler, Chester, the present treasurer; or any one of the aforesaid committee."

The committee for 1792, appointed at a meeting held at Wrexham, December 1791, were—

Rev. Daniel Lloyd, Denbigh.		Mr Thomas Jones, Chester.		
„ Edward Williams, Oswestry.		„ Samuel Davies, Holywell.		
„ Jenkin Lewis, Wrexham.		„ John Roberts, Oswestry.		
The expenditure for teachers, books, &c., amounted to		£78	2	6
The subscriptions,	74	1	6	
Deficient, for 1792,	4	1	0	

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masters, the object of his arduous work would be more interesting, and his prospects of usefulness more promising. We now conclude our solicitations for your fraternal agreement with us, by calling your attention to one particular more, which, we think, is by no means the least important, viz.—

5. The sending of *missionaries among the heathen*. We are sensible this is an expensive work. Some counties in England, and most in Wales, would find a difficulty (without the aids of other denominations) in raising a fund sufficient for putting in execution the *preceding part only* of what we propose. But then, let it be observed, there are *others* who could do something handsome without feeling any inconvenience. And some opulent individuals in a congregation might, with great propriety, appropriate something for *this* purpose separately; and in proportion as a

*suitable person* became an *immediate* object of attention, in connexion with the *precise place* of his destination, &c., the number of contributors and contributions themselves would be daily augmented.

Should any say, “We ought to leave these matters to the *higher powers* and *opulent companies*,” we reply, if we wait until the higher powers and opulent companies undertake a suitable plan either of reformation among ourselves, or of sending proper missionaries abroad, and call *that* exclusively the signal of Providence inviting our aids and contributions, we may wait long—perhaps to the day of our *death*; possibly to the end of time. For what *prospect* is there that people of that description should be *foremost* in setting forward such a work. Of all the machines *they* set in motion, the philanthropic and truly Christian ones are seldom among the *first*. Has not the poor heathen world waited long enough? If not, how many *centuries* longer must the ignorant and uncivilised wait? Were *one man of God*, truly qualified for the work, sent from *each county* in the kingdom, what great things might we not expect? Or even, were some of the larger and more opulent counties to do this; while the smaller ones joined together to send one between two or three? The Lord pardon our too long continued indifference towards an object of such magnitude and moment! Let us seriously and repeatedly consider whether we have not now a fair call to testify our love and allegiance to Jesus Christ; and what valuation we put on the souls of our fellow men.

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Some one may urge, by way of excuse, “that attempts have been already made, and are still being made, in promoting this end.” We allow it, and rejoice therein. There is a Society for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the poor, for distributing Bibles among our soldiers and seamen, and even for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts; and one lately instituted by our Baptist brethren, for sending missionaries among the heathen. But are *you*, who are the objector, a *promoter* of these, or *any* of these benevolent institutions? Or if you are, do you go as far in your charitable contributions as is *required* by the gospel? Might not *something* be given up which you *little need*, in order to cast

in a *second*, or even a *third* mite into the treasury, and promote among perishing sinners *the one thing needful*?

Such is the Divine benevolence and mercy, that “God is in Christ reconciling the world,” the whole world, “to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” When, therefore, we endeavour to propagate the gospel, we only concur with Him who *seelceth* spiritual worshippers, and who says, “Look unto me, *all the ends of the earth*, and be ye saved.” We are the favoured instruments of accomplishing those prophecies, which assure us, “that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;” of gathering those wandering sheep in the wilderness which Christ has engaged to bring to His fold. Next to a concern for our own souls, a concern for the souls of others, is a mark of the highest wisdom. “He that winneth souls is wise.” Ministers especially, are commanded to “teach all nations,” in that very commission by virtue of which they exercise their ministry. The nature of their office requires that they embrace every opportunity to promote the growth of the gospel tree; that it may not only take deep root, but also extend its branches, that its fragrance and fruit may be communicated to all the world.

Dear brethren, it is to be feared that we do not enter enough into the real spirit, as well as the Protestant interpretation of these words:—“Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, and the halt and the bh’nd. ... Go out unto the highways and the hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”\* If those who know the Saviour, and have found Him precious, do not shew a readiness to fulfil this part of His gracious pleasure, who *will*,

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\* Luke xiv. 21, 23.

who can be *expected*, who is *qualified* to do it? Must we wait until those who *do not* love Him undertake the work? Do we expect grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Have we not reason to suspect that a selfish and contracted spirit, the enemy of a disinterested diffusive benevolence, imposes on our judgments as well as chills our affections? While a spirit so entirely opposite to the Divine philanthropy prevails, what liberal design, what generous effort, what great good can be expected? What was the

temper of the Jewish nation when the gospel was first commanded to be preached to all the world? How spirited and admirable St Paul's animadversion on it! If he did not join with *them* in extolling their privileges to the *contempt* of all other people, was it owing to a criminal indifference to *their* welfare? Nothing less. "My heart's desire," says he, "and *prayer* to God for Israel is that they may be *saved*." But strong as were his desires, and fervent his prayers for, he could not *confine* his regards to them, No, when viewing his commission extending; to the idolatrous Gentiles, he felt a pleasing exultation; he magnified his office; he counted it the honour of his ministry to be so employed. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek," the European, the Asiatic, the African, or the American; "for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that *call* upon Him." But as he forcibly argues, "How shall they *call* on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they *believe* in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they *hear* without a preacher? And how shall they *preach* except they be *sent*." How can credit be given to the Divine testimony, where that testimony is not announced? And how can it be carried to the heathen world, and those who are far from salvation, if ministers and other Christians do not exert themselves?\*

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\* "It has been said we ought not to force our way, but to *wait* for the openings and leadings of Providence; but it might with equal propriety be answered in this case, neither ought we to *neglect* embracing those openings in Providence which daily present themselves to us. What openings of Providence do we wait for? We can neither expect to be transported into the heathen world without ordinary means, nor be endowed with the gift of tongues, &c., when we arrive there. These would not be providential interpositions, but miraculous ones. Where a command exists, nothing can be necessary to render it binding but a removal of those obstacles which render obedience impossible, and these are removed already. Natural impossibility can never be pleaded so long as facts exist to prove the contrary. Have not the Popish missionaries surmounted all those difficulties which *we* have generally thought to be insuperable? Have not the missionaries of the

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It deserves the closest inquiry, Whether the want of a powerful and lively acquaintance, in our own souls, with Jesus Christ and the benefits of His gospel, be not at the bottom of all indifference about the salvation of others? and, Whether those blessed characters, in former and latter ages, who were so greatly honoured in propagating truth in their several situations, differed from us in any-

thing so much as in the *strong conviction* and *awakening apprehension* they had of spiritual and eternal things? Learning and parts, philosophy and science, or the acquisitions of polite literature, (though useful auxiliaries,) will never prove sufficient substitutes for the *religious feelings* of such men. Were the ministers of Christ *now* to *feel* as the primitive disciples, the Christian fathers, the reformers and preachers of later times who have been most successful in the conversion of souls, whose praise is in the churches, and who speak by their useful writings, what blessed fruits might be expected, with the Divine blessing, in a short time! We conclude with the following very emphatical words:—"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest."

*Unitas Fratrum*, or Moravian Brethren, encountered the scorching heat of Abyssinia, and the frozen climes of Greenland and Labrador, their difficult languages and savage manners? Or have not English traders, for the sake of gain, surmounted all those things which have generally been counted insurmountable obstacles in the way of preaching the gospel? Witness the trade to Persia, the East Indies, China, and Greenland; yea, even the accursed slave trade on the coast of Africa. Men can insinuate themselves into the favour of the most barbarous clans, and uncultivated tribes, for the sake of *gain*; and how different soever the circumstances of trading and preaching are, yet this will prove the *possibility* of ministers being introduced there; and if this is but thought a sufficient reason to make the experiment, my point is gained."—*Carey's Inquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, p. 11.

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## THOUGHTS

ON

"A GENERAL AND EXPLICIT UNION

OF THE WHOLE BODY OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES,"

OCCASIONED BY AN ADDRESS FROM THE LONDON

COMMITTEE TO

MINISTERS OF THE CONGREGATIONAL ORDER.

BY

A TRUE FRIEND TO THE UNION.

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GENTLEMEN,—A sincere friend to "a general and explicit Union of the whole body of Congregational Churches," having had opportunities of discussing the subject with no inconsiderable number of ministers and members of churches in different parts of the

kingdom, presumes to reply to your late address in this public manner, rather than by a private letter, principally for two reasons: first, because he hopes hereby to excite a more general attention to a subject of confessed importance; and next, because he wishes that every one of the numerous committee may examine his thoughts at leisure, and so proceed to approve or object, in any future discussion, on maturest reflection.

In presenting to you these thoughts, gentlemen, I think it needless to adopt any formal method; but shall content myself with offering them in the order suggested by the successive parts of the address itself which you have circulated. And here I cannot do

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provements and additional parts of the *present* plan, compared with the *first* address, which, as far as I have been able to learn, was too brief and too general to engage public interest or attention.

It is pleasing to observe that there are comparatively few of the numerous class of ministers and people in question who do not approve of the *general idea* of *explicit union*, though the difference is great respecting the *practicability* of such a plan as may prove truly beneficial and lasting. Some, indeed, view the whole attempt through a gloomy medium, and would counteract every effort to effect a general union, as if it were somehow a violation, or, at least, an abridgment of Independent Congregational principles. But such a surmise can have existence only on supposition that *union* implies *power*, and that the *power* so obtained will be *misapplied*. The first of these is readily allowed; hut the last consequence is so far from being a *necessary* one, that even a *probability* of it is excluded in proportion as the plan is wisely laid.

In fact, the excellency of the plan contemplated must consist in its *instrumentality* to effect the noblest purposes of a moral and religious nature. It is not any *part* of religion, or of morality, but a grand *mean* whereby the most valuable and lasting good may be promoted with the least possible expense or labour. It is a great machine consisting of many parts, but not more complicated than useful. And although simplicity of construction be a high recommending quality, it must not be so simple as not to be firmly connected, or not to produce the effect proposed. A plan which would require strenuous and lasting exertions, in order to support it, may be safely pronounced a bad one; and yet a plan

without some superintending care, however excellent in itself, resembles a good engine without a proper direction of its powers.

You modestly acknowledge, gentlemen, that the plan you have lately circulated is not “perfect,” and that you “do not present it to your brethren as such; but affectionately invite their sentiments upon it, to which the most respectful attention will be paid.” While, therefore, I regard this as a sufficient warrant for the freedom thus taken in addressing you, I would also disclaim all pretensions to “perfection” in what I have to offer. And yet, were I not fully satisfied that what is about to be proposed to your consideration, is calculated to answer the great ends projected, I should spare you the trouble of reading, and myself of writing this address.

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Your general *principles*—that the measures adopted by the union be perfectly consistent with Christian liberty; “that no principle be adopted which is clearly calculated, in practice, to counteract Christian benevolence and liberality; that those principles alone be admitted which befriend the genuine interest of every individual church”—appear to me unexceptionable, as far as they go; since they appear well adapted to guard the several parts of the plan against any infringement on the *liberty*, the *liberality*, and the real *interest* of every individual church, minister, or person connected.

The same unexceptionable approbation of the proposed *objects* of the scheme I cannot give, without some explanations. I regard it as a rule dictated by plain common sense, that no specific object should be proposed to be sought by such a general, explicit union, which may be attained as well without it. And, on the contrary, those objects alone should be proposed which are at once important in themselves or in their consequences, and which could not be attained, or so well attained, as by such union. The *general* object—viz., “The mutual benefit of the churches which enter into the union, and the advancement of the Redeemer’s cause, in all places, and by all scriptural and laudable means”—is highly important, and, I doubt not, may be greatly promoted by a well-formed concurrence. Let us now examine the *specific* objects contained in your plan. The first you propose is, “The encouragement of newly-raised congregations;” and the second, “The revival of interests that are

fallen into decay." That these are objects of no small importance is readily granted; but in what way you suppose the *union* may contribute to secure them, it is difficult to say. There appear to me but two ways whereby such congregations or interests can be served—viz., by *advice*, or by *pecuniary contributions*. But for all the *union* to give *advice* is an impracticable supposition, without incurring ten times more trouble and expense than any individual case can be supposed to merit. For it would be necessary to address those ministers and churches of which the union consists by circular letters, and then to receive their answers; which every person who considers the business impartially must allow to be equally tedious, expensive, and unsatisfactory. If it be said, that the union may give advice by proxy,—that is, by some committee,—the idea *itself* is too absurd to be defended by any reflecting person. It would be no less absurd than for all the parishes

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in the kingdom to appoint a *committee*, who should give *advice* in all cases of application made to them, respecting a point of difficulty or distress occurring in any individual parish. Congregational churches are too well acquainted with their inalienable right to think of referring matters of *opinion*, or of disputes among themselves, to be decided for them by any distant committee.

But if the mode of serving such congregations be by *pecuniary* aids, are we to take it for granted that a *general fund* may be established for such purposes, to be disposed of by a committee? This deserves very attentive consideration. Speaking in general terms, that a fund is highly desirable must be admitted; but the *mode* of raising and applying the money is a matter of the utmost delicacy and importance. Can it be imagined that the congregations of the union will have collections for a *general fund* to be at the disposal of a committee? I am persuaded that if the trial were made, not one in ten would see it right to do so; and this I would infer without imputing to them any blame. I would rather say, that in proportion as their zeal is mixed with discretion, they will see the impropriety of doing so. Besides, in order to render collections *effective*, the object should be *specific*, and not for a *general fund*, *ibid* yet I am firmly of opinion that funds may be raised for all the important purposes of the union.

Let us then suppose the union to be formed, and a plan of communication between the London committee and all parts of the country properly matured. In that case it will be very easy to ascertain, for instance, the situations and numbers of churches or “interests fallen into decay.” Let the most important out of all these be maturely recommended by the respective country committees to that in London. The London committee, from those various communications, may be able to draw up an interesting case; a case of great importance, and, by reason of the number of places included, of great magnitude. Here is a specific object capable of interesting the several congregations of the union in proportion to the numbers which form the aggregate of the case. Supposing forty or fifty places, or double that number, all over the kingdom, were fallen into decay; how desirable would be a plan whereby effectual relief may be afforded to them all? An attempt of such magnitude would soon exhaust a *general fund*; and many who had contributed might be greatly dissatisfied with

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such an application of their contributions. But by the following method this grand end may be obtained with comparative ease, and without any possible ground of complaint. Let a case—that above mentioned, for instance—be sent by the London committee to every church in the union, requesting a collection, and this to be forwarded to the treasurer. Those who feel a sufficient interest in one or more of these places will comply; but all will have an opportunity to judge for themselves. If the contributions fall short of the estimate, they will be applied in proportion; but if they exceed, the surplus remains with the treasurer, to be applied by the committee to these or similar objects.

At another time “the encouragement of newly-raised congregations” may form a case. But these should be very select, and of peculiar circumstances. Suppose, for instance, places of worship in watering-places, where there may be neither church nor minister already found to move in such business. At another time, a collection may be solicited for fifty or a hundred itinerants for different parts of the kingdom, in a certain proportion specified. For such, and all other important purposes, the application to the united congregations would be the same as before mentioned, as well as the disposal of the collections.

In this way it is obvious there would be an opportunity of learning the minds of all parts of the union respecting each case; their contributions will be the result of their own deliberation, and the application of their benevolence will be without any clashing of claims. Hereby an incomparably larger sum may be raised, and raised with the most cheerful concurrence, than by an annual contribution for a *general fund*. This is the way, even without the I superior advantage of explicit union, that the missionary collections have been so productive. Were the Missionary Society dependent on a *general fund* to be collected for *all religious purposes*, its finances would be soon exhausted.

This being a very important point, it claimed a more particular notice. Let me now, gentlemen, propose a few remarks on another object you have thought proper to propose—viz., “Diligent inquiry for young persons of a truly serious spirit and promising talents as candidates for the Christian ministry, to be educated in the seminaries belonging to the Congregational denomination, and to afford them temporary assistance.” It is allowed that such inquiry *should* be made, and perhaps we might add, *is* actually made. But

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how a general and explicit union of Congregational churches is calculated to afford any effectual aid in such an inquiry, I am frank to acknowledge is not within my comprehension. Every seminary has its own friends and connexions, and by their means an inquiry for suitable young men may at any time be more effectually made when suitably reminded than by any effort of the general union. If, indeed, the neglect of the churches were so general as to render it necessary, the committee in London may be of some service in calling upon the united churches separately to make this a peculiar object of attention and prayer; and this may be done though the churches be not so united.

As for temporary assistance, in a pecuniary view, it appears to me impracticable, except in the way before explained. That is, except this object appear of such magnitude as to call for a *specific case* to be drawn up, and an appeal to be made to all the congregations, soliciting collections for this very purpose, which should be forwarded to the treasurer, and be proportioned by the London committee to the respective academies. But this would be attended probably with more difficulties than advantages, except the utmost

caution be employed. In the first place, many congregations would scruple to contribute, from an apprehension of difficulty in the application of such money. Nothing should be admitted into the plan which affords a strong handle of jealousy and dissatisfaction. But what committee could pretend to act in such an affair without giving offence, and probably a just cause of offence, to some of our seminaries, except they had some other rule to go by than their own discretion? I see no other method of avoiding unpleasant surmises, of removing jealousies, and preventing dissatisfactions, but for each seminary to draw up a statement and estimate of its wants, to be examined by a committee in its own neighbourhood, to be adjusted and admitted in connexion with the London committee previous to the formation of the general case. In the circular address, all the objects and claims should be specified; and the sum raised, if less than the said estimate, should be distributed according to proportion; but if more than the estimate, it may be either funded for a similar use in future, or distributed in equal proportions to the claimants.

I am quite at a loss, gentlemen, how a general union can assist “vacant congregations in procuring ministers.” Nothing, surely, should be considered as an act of the union in which every church

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and member of it has not a power of deliberate decision. But how can this be possibly done in recommending a minister? By means of a *public office*, indeed, a more general knowledge of churches and ministers may be obtained; and it might be of considerable use to preserve always in such office two lists,—one containing the names of destitute churches, another the names of movable ministers; and these may be printed and circulated annually. But all interference in the way of official recommendation would soon bring the union into discredit, as it could not fail to excite endless jealousies, and one unsuccessful attempt in the committee would give a handle to the disaffected whereby to produce in the union great confusion and mischief.

The next object, that of “giving advice respecting trust-deeds and other temporalities,” seems to me superfluous, as the Deputies of the Three Denominations of Dissenters for the protection of our civil rights are always accessible; or if any advantage could be

derived from the general union in such affairs, it is scarcely worthy of notice in comparison of other objects.

As to the object you propose, gentlemen, of “affording counsel in order to heal differences in any congregation,” I would ask, who is to give the counsel? If it be said, *the union*, that cannot be; for surely no one can suppose that the united body of churches and ministers ought to be, or can be, consulted about “differences which may unhappily have arisen in any congregation.” But if it be said, the London committee of the union, I see two objections to the idea. The first is, that it is *wrong* to invite such cases which may soon become a vexatious and intolerable burden to a committee composed of persons who are strangers to the circumstances of the case. How much better is the mode already in use—viz., to convene a number of neighbouring ministers and deputies, who may soon be made to enter into all the circumstances, a minute acquaintance with which is often of essential importance. The second objection is, that a committee of strangers undertaking such a task would not fail to expose themselves to public, severe censure, at least by one of the parties and their friends, in moments of disappointment and irritation.

It is with great pleasure, gentlemen, I proceed to notice the last thing you propose as an object—viz., “The effectual prevention of improper petitionary cases among the churches of the union; that the liberal may have all possible satisfaction as to the merits of

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the case proposed.” Every one will acknowledge that this is an object highly worthy of the united efforts of all who wish well to the interests of real religion. It requires your united wisdom; and though difficult to be accomplished, it is not beyond the reach of human contrivance. If an effectual rejection be made of every case not recommended by the union, and if the recommendation be made by the most unexceptionable persons, the main, if not the only difficulty is removed.

Should any one object that he will not be influenced by any such restriction; the inconvenience is all his own. For those who unite in requiring certain credentials will have a rule by which to act,—a rule which, if properly made, will never deceive them; while those who reject it will be liable to the same impositions as in the former state of things. If any *choose to be deceived*,

or to continue *liable* to deception, *let them*. They injure not the union, but themselves. Let them give their property without discrimination if they please, no man, or body of men, has a right to control them; but let them all reflect that they are only stewards, and that they must render an account of their stewardship and their talents. If they consider their own judgment as a sufficient guide, it is admitted that in some instances it may be so, where a case occurs under their personal knowledge; but in most others it is presumption to suppose that individual judgment is so competent to decide.

These remarks naturally lead us to inquire, What may we consider as a sufficient recommendation of a case? or, What security can we have against undeserving cases?

In the first place, no case should be encouraged but that of a society in the union; that is, in some association subordinate to the general union of churches. Such a rule would be the best possible security of its establishment and extension.

In the second place, no case should be encouraged but what is unanimously recommended by the association to which it belongs. If these associations, representatively, are not competent judges, it is plain that no other persons can be.

In the third place, no case should be encouraged, out of its own district, which is not sanctioned by a county committee. Without this there would be no sufficient guard on some small or obscure associations. A county committee, on any suspicion arising,

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would correspond with a person or persons of acknowledged reputation respecting any fact or circumstance in question.

In the fourth place, no case should be encouraged in London or its vicinity which is not admitted on record among the approved cases. For it should be a rule, that every case admitted by a county committee should be enrolled in a London office; and whatever case is presented there without being so enrolled, should be rejected; but if so entered, then it should be admitted with the appointed seal or testimonial.

After all, however well guarded the plan of the first admission of cases may be, it is more than possible that the best ever encouraged and the most worthy recommenders, may become the innocent occasion of abuse, except a further precaution be main-

tained. What I mean is, fifthly that it be required of every one whose case is countenanced by the churches and members of the union to present the *whole account* of money actually received from the first, without any concealment of sums which have been collected, whether at home or abroad.

Respecting the *members* of the projected union, I have but little to observe; and yet, if I mistake not, that little is of great importance. The general idea is this, that all ministers who are I acknowledged *members of associations* professing themselves Protestant Dissenters, and of the Congregational order, with their churches, *throughout England and Wales*, and *no others*, are to be acknowledged *members* of the union. “The members of the Congregational Board in London” are included of course; for this “board” of ministers (which should be carefully distinguished from the *Fund Board*) is, I presume, only the London *association* of ministers and churches.

My reason for acknowledging no others as members is, that subordinate associations are of great importance, in order to insure the extension and universality of the union. Nor can I conceive how this restriction could operate unfavourably on any

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## HINTS

PROPOSED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF A COMMITTEE IN  
LONDON,

FORMED FOR

THE PURPOSE OF DIGESTING A PLAN FOR A NATIONAL  
UNION

BETWEEN THE

EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES, &c.,  
THROUGH ENGLAND AND WALES,

BY WAY OF ANSWER TO QUERIES, &c.

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1. What is the *best kind* of union among Christians? That, undoubtedly, which is founded on the knowledge and love of God. And whatever is favourable to personal religion, must be pro-

portionally favourable to such union. This will cement the affections of Christians of every name and clime; to which end monthly prayer meetings and annual missionary meetings have been, and we may hope will still be, highly useful.

2. What kind of *national union* is most desirable? It should be that which is perfectly consistent with Christian liberty, while it answers a general good end. But we can never sufficiently insist upon the importance of distinguishing between what is *desirable*, and what is *practicable*,—what is plausible in theory, and what is founded in tried experience. Human nature is the same now as in past ages; and the principles which have been found uniformly to fail hitherto, should, in prudence, be distrusted. We may, therefore, rest assured that no national religious union,

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founded in *voluntary promises* alone, can be lasting. The will of man is a changeable thing, and disinterested benevolence is ever liable to be supplanted by the subtle operations of self-interest. As in a *civil*, so in a *religious* union, those laws or rules alone will prove *uniting* and *lasting* ties which insure the *general good* by the medium of *individual interest*.

3. Is there any kind of union among Congregational churches *desirable* which is not reducible to practice? Undoubtedly there are many kinds. It is highly desirable that all should preach the same doctrines, mind the same thing, walk by the same rule, observe the same discipline, live in peace, support the cause of true religion according to their property and abilities,—these, and many more, are among the *desirables*; but, alas! what rules, laws, promises, or even oaths can insure a permanent compliance? If, therefore, by a skilful application of self-interest to the general good of religion, and to those particulars which are immediately subservient to this, a few important, radical points can be attained, it is all that the nature of the case will admit of.

4. What is that *hind* of national union which appears at once highly desirable and easily practicable? At first it may appear that any union founded on *pecuniary* considerations must be of a *subordinate* nature. In one respect it certainly is so; but in the practical mode of operation it will be found otherwise.

In some places, proposals have been made for *collections* once a year, to be remitted to a county treasurer, and to be applied by a

committee for county purposes among the churches, &c. But such schemes, however desirable, are mere unoperative theories. Will every county *engage* to have such a fund? If they now engage, is it probable that they will *perform* their engagement? Will a committee *apply* what is collected to the general *satisfaction* of applicants? If the ministers and churches be not satisfied, (as, assuredly, there is no probability that they will be,) will not the committee consider their office a very thankless one? Besides, such a plan as county collections, and a general fund, is directly calculated to dry up the sources of liberality, without answering any one general good end which may not be more effectually answered another way.

5. What *pecuniary union* is both highly desirable and easily practicable? Whatever gives the religious public sufficient *confidence* that their pecuniary contributions are made to answer the

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*best purposes*, or that they are not *imposed upon* for want of sufficient knowledge, must be highly desirable. And to effect this most completely, let the following particulars be considered. The *FIRST* is a plan for effectually detecting every *false* or *improper case* presented to the religious public, and for inspiring general confidence in countenancing good ones, of whatever kind; and the *SECOND* is a plan for the most important and general *information*, which may be rendered subservient to a thousand useful purposes.

I. A plan for effectually detecting *ever? false* or *improper case* presented to the religious public, and for inspiring general confidence in countenancing good ones, of whatever kind. Let not this be called a *small matter*, or a *subordinate* part; it will be found, *in practice*, to be the *mainspring* of the national union.

1. It is, assuredly, *in the power of the London committee* to form a *national union*; and most sincerely and ardently do I wish that they will claim the honour, and resolve upon the plan of effecting it. But if *they* decline, (which I hope they will not,) it may be effected by originating in another quarter, though by a more slow progress. Next to London, the county of York has it in its power to effect this union—even a *national union*. Let us proceed on the supposition that the Congregational ministers (and churches, through them) will take it up in London.

2. That the union should originate in London is preferable on many accounts; not only because it is the metropolis, the centre of intelligence and of wealth, but especially because no cases (or scarcely any cases) are sent from London to the country, and almost all from the country are sent to London.

3. Let it be very particularly observed, that want of *complete conformity* among the ministers, however desirable, is not absolutely necessary. It is therefore *humbly proposed*—

That as great a number as can be brought over, at the very first, of the London ministers, as the representatives of the respective societies to which they belong, should form themselves into a *united body*, not only as an example, but also *in aid of a national union*:

That this body of ministers (to which future accessions will be always admissible, and to which, when they see it in their *interest*, all will be glad to accede) form out of their number a *committee*, a *secretary*, and a *provisional treasurer*. This last office may not be *immediately* necessary, (except on account of

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incidental expenses,) but as the plan proceeds in its operations, may become important:

That this respectable united body (by their committee and secretary) address a circular letter to every evangelical Congregational minister in England and Wales, containing proposals, directions, and motives, in favour of a national union:

(*N.B.*—The writer of this has forwarded to Joseph Bunnell, Esq. a more correct list than any extant, he supposes, of congregations and ministers, (out of London,) on a plan which will secure information, on future occasions, with the utmost accuracy. On this plan, every congregation and minister in England and Wales may be ascertained, without exception, in the course of a few months:)

That the *circular letter* addressed to each minister and his congregation should contain a strong representation of *two advantages* immediately affecting *themselves* in particular, as well as greatly conducive to the good of religion in the nation at large—viz., that by acceding to the union, they will be effectually guarded against *imposition* relative to cases;★ and, on the other hand, should they ever need public and honourable countenance to any case of their own, this is the only effectual way to secure it:

That, moreover, the circular strongly recommend to each minister, 1st, a *district union*, and, 2d, a *county union*, in subservience to a more general or national union. But *cui bono?* where the *advantage*, where the *interest* of doing so? It will soon follow. For let it be further stated—

That the London committee, formed in aid of a national union, resolve to *admit no case from the country* but from a minister and congregation *connected with some district and county union*. Here public and private utility are united; and the general good is insured by self-interest:

That the number of *districts* in each county be left perfectly free, as depending on the size, convenience, &c. But that each minister or church, expecting any *advantage* or *countenance* from the union, (whether of the county, of London, or the nation,) in a *pecuniary* view, should be expected to unite with *some district* in the county to which they belong:

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\* [The reference here is to chapel debts. It was the practice then, and long afterwards, for churches to send their ministers; and many ministers were not loath to go and beg money for their liquidation. Glaring abuses not unfrequently occurred. This essentially degrading practice has ceased.—ED.]

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That the number of churches in a district should *not be less than three*; but as many more as convenience may suit:

That the ministers of each district form a committee, called a *district committee*, for the purpose of examining any case or cases in that district. And that, as no case is to be admitted in London but what belongs to a district union, so likewise it should pass through the hands of a *county committee*, before it be admitted in London. The advantages of this plan will be found very great. It will secure perfect regularity, with very little practical trouble or difficulty of any kind:

That *district meetings* of ministers be recommended, suppose *three* times a year at least, and that a part of the business then be to produce *cases*, either to be *admitted* among them, or to be *recommended* by them. And that *no case* be *admitted* from *any other district* which is not recommended by the *district committee* to which it belongs, and the *county committee* also of that district:

That when a case is thought worthy of a recommendation by the *committee* of its own *district*, it be forwarded by its appointed secretary to the secretary of the county committee, from whom it shall be returned through the same channel to the minister to whom it belongs. A case thus signed, *first* by those who, from their situation, and a professed discussion of it, must needs be the best judges, and, *secondly*, by a county committee operating as a check on obscure districts in their county, precludes all possibility of imposition, either on London or any part of the country:

That these credentials, and nothing short of these, be produced, both in London and in the country, by every holder of a case. The bearer now has the whole land before him,—his case signed by two committees, (no other names are necessary,) and his time of admission into London, or into any county district, to be previously settled by post. He enters on his work with modest confidence that his cause is good, and can meet even with refusals without chagrin. This removes all mutual suspicions; the benevolent, by being secured from imposition, give cheerfully; the sources of liberality are opened, &c.

These ends, however important, form but one part of the advantages to be further derived from this plan of union. It is calculated *to facilitate every other hind of union* among evangelical churches, and *every good work* (spread of the gospel, itinerating,

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enlightening dark counties and corners of our land, strengthening-weak interests, &c.) which may be promoted by a national union.

Having offered some thoughts on a plan of union founded on the principles of *mutual interest*, and therefore calculated to become of itself operative without the aid of foreign interference, let us proceed to notice—

II. A plan for the most important and general *information*, which may be rendered subservient to other very useful purposes; indeed, all the purposes for which any union whatever, of a national kind, is desirable among dissenting evangelical churches. It is, therefore, with submission, proposed—

That the London committee address a circular letter to every minister in the country, recommending the *importance* of their having the most *accurate knowledge* of the state of all the

churches in the union, in order to promote their advantage, and the *good of the whole*:

That, moreover, it be proposed, and warmly recommended, to every minister to draw up, within a reasonable specified time, an account in writing of the *rise*, the *history*, and the *present state* of the church and congregation to which he ministers; that this account be produced, and read at a district meeting of ministers, and committed to the secretary. One such account will generally be sufficient for one meeting; and those which are shortest may more conveniently be produced first, that more time may be allowed for longer and more difficult ones. And it would be a good method to propose, at each district meeting, *who will undertake* to produce his account at the next meeting; his acceptance of the proposal will be a pledge of his performance:

That the secretary forward by letter an abridged account of each document (not exceeding in quantity one sheet of paper, single postage) to the secretary in London, for the purposes hereafter mentioned.

This, it is manifest, will become a business of importance and magnitude, with a London secretary, who corresponds and receives communications from all directions. It is, therefore, humbly proposed further—

That the secretary of the London committee have a salary proportioned to his important office and labours; that there be a public office appointed, (suppose Dr Daniel Williams' Library, Red Cross Street;) that a set of books be provided, in which may

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be inserted the abridged accounts, (revised and corrected by the committee, or a select committee,) according to the order in which they are sent; and that a full and complete *index* be kept of all the churches in the union through England and Wales, both alphabetically arranged, and according to each county, as in Mr Bunnell's list, with a column of reference to the volume and page of historical records. Here all historical information of the union is brought to a focus, and the state of each county and each church is easily accessible by all whom it may concern.

What a treasure should we regard such records of churches in our land since the ejection of the Nonconformists! But it is not to gratify curiosity that this proposal principally claims attention;

it may be rendered subservient to every good work. Hereby the London committee (and occasionally others) may have the most accurate statement of churches and ministers in the union, and, indeed, in the kingdom; which may prove a most valuable guide to direct the labours of itinerants,—in some cases to bequeath legacies for the spread of the gospel, &c.

It is probable that the London committee may sometimes have an object to be accomplished of national, or at least very general importance. The preceding plans and arrangements will greatly facilitate the accomplishment of such object, by rendering the channel of information and communication plain and easy.

It is also probable that the committee may sometimes see it right to apply to all the churches in the union for a *collection* to answer some important purpose. Then especially a *treasurer* will be necessary, who will always have his accounts open to inspection, and occasionally the state of the fund may be printed, and forwarded to contributors. But no *stated* contributions should be proposed, nor any others, but on urgent specific occasions, such as for itinerating on a large scale, &c.

Having extended these “Hints” considerably beyond my first intention, I ought now to apologise for their length. Should any part of them contribute in any measure to promote the cause of true religion, I shall rejoice; and I fear not to obtain your indulgence for the freedom with which I have proposed them.—Prom your affectionate friend and brother,

EDWARD WILLIAMS.

To the Rev. George Burder, London.

ROTHERHAM, *January* 1807.

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## PUBLIC LETTERS, ETC.

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- I. A LETTER TO THE REV. T. BELSHAM; WITH A REVIEW OF HIS “CALM INQUIRY.”
- II. A LETTER TO DR PRIESTLEY.
- III. A LETTER TO MR D. LEVI.
- IV. TWO LETTERS ON SANCTIFICATION.
- V. REVIEW OF STEWART’S PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS.

**A FRIENDLY LETTER ADDRESSED TO  
THE  
REV. THOMAS BELSHAM,  
CONCERNING THE NATURE, COMPARATIVE EXCELLENCE,  
AND INFLUENCE OF TRUTH;  
TO WHICH IS ADDED**

A REVIEW OF HIS WORK ON THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

§ 1. Introduction, § 2. The subject stated, § 3. Truth, what? The proper nature of revealed truth is that of a means to virtue and happiness, § 4. “Which Mr Belsham grants, by making it an object of choice, § 5–7. But his further account of truth is, First, Inconsistent with that liberty which is essential to accountable agents, and God’s moral government, § 8–10. Second, Inconsistent with the superior excellence and peculiar office of goodness in rendering means efficacious, § 11–13. Third, Inconsistent with the Scripture doctrine of Divine influence, as the only true source of virtue and happiness.

§ 14. Recapitulation.

§ 1. REV. AND DEAR SIR,—For writing to a gentleman who has shewn himself to the public as an able advocate for “ the importance of truth, and the duty of making an open profession of it,”† it

\* [This letter was appended to the first edition of the Author’s Sermon on the Influence of Religious Practice upon our Inquiries after Truth, (see vol. iii., p. 291;) but it was omitted in a second edition of that discourse, with the intimation that it should be included in a volume of tracts by the reverend author, which his family contemplated publishing at that time.—ED.]

† See vol. iii., p. 292.

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may be deemed a sufficient apology, that the writer professes himself to be a lover of truth, and, according to his humble ability, a defender of it. While I approve and admire many things in the discourse alluded to, I discover, or think I discover, several things which are injurious to truth. “We both profess to have the same general end in view—“to inculcate a proper love of truth, and a habitual regard to it, to excite an ardent thirst after it, impartiality and unremitting diligence in the investigation of it, firmness and fortitude in adhering to it.”\* And I am persuaded that a free discussion, conducted with a becoming temper, will always be serviceable, eventually, to the cause of truth. A friendly collision of thoughts may cause a spark of truth to shew itself which might otherwise have remained invisible. I am sorry now to add that the objectionable parts referred to are in my apprehension of no small moment.

§ 2. Not to insist on your Athanasian† creed; your representation of “honesty” as a poor simple thing; your bold assertion that God created a countless multitude of percipient and intelligent beings, for *no other purpose* than to display His benevolence and to make them happy;” your severe reflections on the Assembly’s Catechism‡—a system that has not only gained the admiration of

\* Mr Belsham’s Sermon, p. 1.

† “And there seems to be a plausible presumption in favour of that pleasing hypothesis, which some benevolent speculatists have advanced, that the earth may, in process of time, revert to its original paradisiacal state, and that the comforts of human life will be multiplied, and its evils diminished, the limits of it be proportionably extended, so that they have even ventured to express some faint expectation that death itself may be annihilated. Nor would it be difficult to shew, if there were a proper time and place, that the Scriptures themselves are not unfavourable to this amiable speculation. This account, which, for an obvious reason, I call an *Athanasian* creed, [a pun on the Greek word ἄθανασία, which means *deathless*.—Ed.] appears to me far less worthy of belief than the established one: only, it must be confessed, it has no damnatory clause, and therefore may be deemed harmless, though ‘visionary in the extreme.’”

‡ “Native goodness of heart, the beauty, order, and happiness which prevail in the world, and the whole strain and tenor of the New Testament, which uniformly teaches that God is love, all contradict and abate the influence of that terrible doctrine that all mankind are by the fall brought into and left to perish in a state of sin and misery, excepting the happy few whom God has out of His mere good pleasure elected to everlasting life. (Assembly’s Catechism.) But so far as such principles are believed, and practically regarded, they naturally tend to contract the heart, to sour the temper, to inspire dread and hatred of God, and to disquiet the mind with the most formidable and distressing apprehensions,” (p. 30.) Query: Can we suppose that a person who writes thus ever understood or felt the genuine

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the Reformed churches at home and abroad, but also has been to millions the occasion of grateful praises; your contradictory assertions that the publication of the “most dangerous tenets” has done “no material injury;”★—not to insist upon these particulars, and some others of less moment, or to repeat what has been noticed in

influence of the system here opposed? We are here reminded of the sentiments and experience of a venerable body of Christian bishops:—“As the godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ: so, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God’s predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchedness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.”  
—*Catholic Doct. of the Church of England*, Article xvii.

★ “But are pernicious principles to be avowed and disseminated, and the peace of mankind and the good order of society to be disturbed by doctrines tending to infidelity and immorality? I answer, that no man deems his own principles to be pernicious; and if he thinks them of sufficient importance, he ought, without hesitation, to avow them. If they are really detrimental, they must be false, and easily overthrown. No material injury has ever yet resulted from free discussion, nor from the publication of the most dangerous tenets. Some few half-thinking minds have been perverted to infidelity, some depraved hearts have been riveted in vice,” (p. 41.) But are not half-thinking minds accountable for their actions as well as others, and liable to endless punishment if perverted to infidelity and riveted in vice? Or, is the injury done to these individuals by pernicious principles, the less in itself because the wisdom of heaven overrules it for the good of others? “A man ought, without hesitation, to avow pernicious principles if he thinks them of sufficient importance!” A maxim this without any foundation in reason, and subversive of morals—a proposition highly affronting to the dignity of truth! If a man’s principles are pernicious, he ought to think them to be so; to deny this, is to deny all moral obligation. And if he ought to think them to be so, he ought not to publish them. Again: when a man deems any principles to be true and important, while in reality they are false and pernicious, he deems them to be what they are not, and therefore it is impossible for him to have clear ideas in forming a judgment of them: consequently, he judges without evidence. But are crude notions formed without evidence, pernicious weapons thus formed in the dark, to be thrown among men, to their eternal danger, and the perpetrator be blameless in the presence of the just and holy Judge? Or, does it follow, that because his fellow-mortals have no right to control him in these matters, that he ought to do them mischief? Besides, the above principles are contradicted by Mr Belsham himself:—“No principle can be more absurd than this, that speculative errors are of little consequence. A man’s views and principles have a necessary influence upon his volitions; volitions produce actions, &c.; error, in proportion as it prevails, will debase the character,” (p. 25.) How then can it be said that “no material injury has ever yet resulted from the publication of the most dangerous errors?”

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the preceding discourse, there are three things more especially to which I must object, as being, if I mistake not, radical parts of your view of truth. They do not, indeed, appear directly to lessen its importance, though, in my view, they greatly misrepresent it, by making it distinctive of that liberty which is essential to accountable agents, and God's moral government, while acting otherwise than as a moral means; by assigning it an office which does not belong to it, and which is peculiar to goodness—viz., the rendering of means efficacious in forming the moral character; and, finally, by putting it to militate against the only true source of virtue and happiness, which is the Divine influence. The first, I apprehend, is inimical to the foundation of moral philosophy; the second greatly affects the superstructure of it; and the third is, in its just consequences, subversive of the whole system of Christian theology. It will now be expected that I should produce my evidence from your discourse of its containing these principles, and then shew that they are chargeable with the tendencies I have ascribed to them.

§ 8. Truth, in the most general and comprehensive import of the word, is *that which is conformable to fact*. Hence, those beings, properties, and relations, those ideas, propositions, and declarations, are true which are conformable to fact. Truth is essential to God, because of His infinite knowledge and integrity; hence it is said that He “cannot lie.” When He, therefore, forms a proposition, or makes a declaration, we may be quite sure that such is conformable to fact; or, that His expressions, whether in word or conduct, perfectly correspond with the reality of the things expressed. Now all Divine revelation, as such, is nothing else than a number of propositions infinitely conformable to the reality of things, addressed to men with the merciful and legislative design of their becoming virtuous and happy; and in proportion as they contradict these propositions, either by thoughts, words, or actions, they contradict infinite truth, and give the lie to the reality of things. They declare some things to have existence which have none, and deny existence to others which have it. And, on the contrary, in proportion as any one accedes to those propositions in heart and life, in thought, affection, word, and conduct, he sets to his seal that God is true; he becomes virtuous

and happy. From the premises it follows, that the proper nature of revealed truth is that of perfect means to virtue and happiness.

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§ 4. What I have now advanced—that revealed truth is only a means to virtue and happiness—is, in fact, by yourself granted:—“If man be intended for future existence, and if it be the object of religion to teach us how to attain final happiness, it cannot be denied that just views of religious truth are of the utmost consequence.” And, indeed, the very terms employed by you throughout,—such as doctrine, principles, system, &c., to be embraced, believed, judged of, &c.,—shew not only that revealed truth is an object without us, and therefore has a real subsistence, an invariable permanency, independent of our conceptions, but also, that it is an object to be improved. You allow that we are to “judge of its comparative excellency,” and to use it as what is calculated to improve our character and promote our happiness, and that “all who embrace just scriptural principles of religion ought to excel the rest of mankind in piety and virtue.” It may be thought singular that any proof is adduced for a point so plain; but, plain as it may appear to some, your whole system, as I shall presently shew, is built upon a virtual denial of it. For—

§ 5. FIRST, Your further account of truth is inconsistent with that *liberty* of choice which is essential to accountable agents and God’s moral government. You say that “truth will gradually makes its way by its native energy, and will in the end rise superior to every prejudice.” And again:—“A man’s views and principles have a necessary influence upon his volitions: from good principles, good actions, valuable habits, and virtuous characters naturally take rise; from erroneous principles, the reverse.” That is, according to the obvious import of this language, and the general tenor of the discourse, truth will act upon the mind mechanically, and it will be in the power of man to resist its evidence. And this effect follows upon those whose “irregular conduct had disgraced their principles.” But it is contrary to experience, that truth will produce any effect but according to the disposition with which it is received; and produce the disposition itself it cannot, except it be at once the means and the subject of conviction; which is the same as to say that truth sown in the mind is both the seed and the soil.

§ 6. “We have before seen, and you have granted, that revealed truth is only a means to a higher end; but the very idea of a means, in connexion with a rational agent, implies that it is frustrable. If the human mind be not free, as to be capable of

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frustrating all means, as such, there is no ground left for its accountableness. That there is a necessity of consequence, I readily grant, but yet maintain, that human liberty, in reference to means, is the sole foundation why man is accountable for his actions. Necessity is the appointment of God as a Sovereign; but liberty belongs to man as a subject of moral government only, and is essential to a state of trial. Without necessity of consequence God is no Sovereign over the systems He hath formed; and without freedom in the creature to use or to abuse all means whatever, as such, be they ever so glorious and powerful, God is no Moral Governor. But since He is the blessed Sovereign of all worlds, He cannot fail to render all events infallibly certain; and since He is the equitable Governor of all His moral subjects, all the moral means He employs may prove ineffectual. Every degree of certainty with respect to moral events is the produce of absolute sovereign acts, and not properly speaking of any means. It therefore follows that truth, which is only a means to promote a higher moral end, will not, cannot, act necessarily on the mind, but in proportion as it is sovereignly predisposed. But those whose “irregular conduct disgraces their principles” are not predisposed to give truth a favourable reception, except we say that vice is a preparation for virtue, or that enmity to real goodness disposes the mind to goodness. Consequently, “truth will not gradually make its way by its native energy, and will not in the end rise superior to every prejudice,” to any assignable certainty, without a sovereign act of God superior to all means whatever.

§ 7. To deny this reasoning is to undermine the foundation of moral philosophy. For all ethics are built upon the supposition, that happiness is certainly attainable by a moral agent; for happiness is the end of ethics, and the subject of this practical science is accountable, that is to say, free, absolutely free, as far as means go, either to improve or misimprove them. But, to say that the mind is free with respect to all means, and yet that happiness is certainly attainable, which constitute the foundation of morals,

involves a contradiction, if the intervention of sovereign acts, superior to all mechanism of means, be not admitted. I therefore conclude, that your representation of truth is inconsistent with that liberty which is essential to accountable creatures, incompatible with God's moral government, and inimical to the vey foundation of moral philosophy.

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§ 8. SECOND, But your account of truth is further inconsistent with the superior excellence and peculiar office of goodness in rendering means efficacious. While you represent it as producing in a vicious mind, by its "native energy," the primary good disposition, you assign it an office which it is impossible for it to discharge. That it is adapted in its own nature to improve the mind, to promote virtue and happiness, when the disposition is capacitated to employ it for that purpose, is readily granted from its very nature as a means; but except we argue in a circle, we must further inquire, How comes the mind by that capacity of disposition? Truth, from its nature, being an object held forth by the equitable Governor of the world to solicit men's approbation, and the human mind from its very accountableness being free to embrace or to reject this object; what can it be that secures it success? Let truth be clearly proposed to men, and confirmed by the most astonishing miracles; will this produce conviction if the mind be not predisposed to improve it? If not, as innumerable Scripture facts prove, what becomes of truth's "native energy" to overcome prejudices? Why do not the sublime truths of revelation convince those who daily read the Scriptures, and who profess the firmest attachment to the Christian revelation? How many are there, who, notwithstanding their opportunities of information and their embracing the Scriptures as divine, are utter strangers to their efficacious influence and genuine tendency? How does not the mechanical energy of truth overpower the prejudices, hypocrisy, uncharitableness, covetousness, luxury, and sloth of its professors? Is the fault in the truth itself or in the disposition? Not in the truth itself, for that is always the same, consisting of propositions infinitely true, which, like their Author, know no variableness, neither shadow of a change. It remains, then, that the fault lies in the badness of the disposition; the truth falls on stony ground, among thorns, or on the trodden path. It is, there-

fore, the peculiar office of *goodness*, as a subjective quality, to render truth efficacious in the mind.

§ 9. “Happiness,” you say, “is the great end of intellectual existence; and it is obvious that truth is the only safe guide to happiness. Properly speaking, vice itself originates in error.” Happiness, indeed, is the great end of intellectual existence; truth is not of itself capable of leading the erroneous and the disaffected to enjoy happiness any more than the gladsome light of day is

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capable of leading the blind in a right path to the end of his journey. Without a previous principle of goodness in the mind, truth can have no existence there, because nothing else can properly discern and embrace it. To suppose otherwise is no less absurd than if I should say that the objects of sense, as the moon, a rose, an apple, a bell, or a ball are the proper cause of animal life, as well as the instruments of sensation. And for a moral means, as truth is, to operate mechanically, is contradiction in terms. Besides, the immediate effect of truth, when rightly improved, is not happiness, but goodness. For, suppose truth to exist in the mind in any assignable form, if it is not improved for the purpose of promoting universal goodness, no happiness will be attained except what is delusive. Goodness of disposition, therefore, is the “only safe guide,” first to truth, and then to happiness. Truth may advance, as a means, a virtuous disposition, and the sum of happiness, when rightly used; but it is the province of sovereign benevolence to produce the one, and to confer the other.

§ 10. Nor, again, does vice “originate in error,” if by error we understand any object of choice, as the reverse of truth, evil under the semblance of good, or the wrong means of happiness. Error may increase both vice and misery; but does not generate the first vice, any more than truth can generate the first virtue. There must be therefore a defection of another nature than any that error can effect, to give the first error admission. Error presented to a mind qualified and disposed to resist its influence, has no bad effect, as appears from Christ’s temptations. All vice, and all successful error, therefore, originate in the previous state of the mind. Nor does this imply any unbecoming reflection on the Author of our nature. For it must be owned that defectibility is essential to an accountable agent as such; therefore

certain perseverance in virtue, or a restoration of it when lost, are equally the effect of sovereign favour, and not of mere equity, or, for the same reason, of any moral means whatever. And to relax or suspend that act of sovereignty for the very reason that it is sovereign, is not requisite on the ground of equity in the Moral Governor. This defectibility, therefore, is a sufficient source, and indeed the only one, of evil prior to the entrance of error. I say that this defectibility is essential to a created nature in a state of probation; for what can possibly constitute its accountableness, but its liableness to deviate from rectitude, without

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a sovereign prevention, as well as to preserve it? And when ignorance has once invaded the mind, no means in the universe can enlighten it of themselves; whether revealed facts, miracles, examples, or anything else. He alone who “commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” by an act of mere sovereignty, can restore the capacity for receiving and improving goodness and truth. “The pursuit of happiness by wrong means, and the choice of evil under the semblance of good,” are undoubtedly vicious; but what is it that sets the mind upon pursuing these wrong means? Is it a perfect or a vicious mind that begins this pursuit? If vicious, than vice exists there without the choice of error; if perfect,—and, alas! in vain do we look for such in our world,—how comes evil to appear good? I therefore conclude, that your account of truth is inconsistent with the superior excellence and peculiar office of goodness in rendering means efficacious. Nor is this all; for—

§ 11. THIRD, Your doctrine concerning truth is inconsistent moreover with the Scripture doctrine of Divine influence, as the true cause immediately of goodness, and efficiently of virtue and happiness. What you ascribe to human mechanical skill in the philosophy of mind, whereby the force of truth is happily applied to the mental machine, the Scriptures impute to the immediate influence of God’s Holy Spirit. According to you, it is philosophy “which teaches man to know himself, to form a just estimate of the dignity [and why not also the present *depravity*?] of his nature, of his high and happy destination to number and to measure his intellectual powers, to calculate their strength, to direct their exertions, and to carry them to the highest state of improvement,

which opens to view the hidden sources of knowledge, which reveals the subtle movements of the intellectual machine, the laws which it obeys, and those secret springs which, with invariable certainty, regulate all its motions, and which, if skilfully touched, will, as by an infallible chain, produce the regular harmonious movements of the whole, and carry it on in a steady and unerring course to virtue, to honour, to ultimate, complete, interminable happiness.” The Holy Scriptures, on the contrary, declare that the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding,\* or true knowledge of God and His dispensations,—that we become virtuous by being born of the Spirit,† or changed by His agency,—that we

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\* Job xxxii. 8. † John iii. 3, 7.

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are begotten to virtue and happiness *by* the sovereign pleasure of the Father of lights,\*—that it is the Lord that giveth to some in a distinguishing manner hearts to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear,—that a man can receive nothing in a religious sense except it be given from heaven as a matter of sovereign favour,!—that we are saved by grace through faith as the gift of God,§—that the truly virtuous are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,||—that we are saved by the renewing of the Holy Ghost,¶—that it is the work of the Lord God to dispose the heart to love Him, that we may live,—\*\* and that virtuous persons are the Divine workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,††—that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure,‡‡—that true Christians are chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of this truth,§§—that love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, are the fruits of the Spirit. || || And, indeed, some of the wiser heathens were constrained to own that the source of virtue was purely Divine,—that it is neither capable of being taught, nor to be acquired by science,—that it comes not from nature any more than from instruction, but, proceeding from Divine inspiration, it is communicated to the virtuous without the instrumentality of their understanding,¶¶—that every virtuous action originates in God\*—that there is no mind truly virtuous without Divine aid,†—and

that we are bound to believe no virtuous man becomes such but by the special help of God.‡

§ 12. But while heathens with their glow-worm light ascribe all real virtue to a Divine influence; and while revelation, with its meridian brightness, discovers that the source of all virtue and happiness is the discriminating agency of our heavenly Father, who

\* James i. 17, 18. † Deut. xxix. 4. ‡ Johu iii. 27.

§ Eph. ii. 8. || John i. 13. ¶ Tit. iii. 5.

\*\* Deut. xxx. 6. †† Eph. ii. 10. ‡‡ Phil. ii. 13.

§§ 2 Thess. ii. 13. || || Gal. v. 22, 23.

¶¶ Οὐ διδακτὸν ἔστιν οὐδ' ἐπιστήμη δ' ἐπιγιγνῆται ἢ ἀρτή. Ἄρετή εἴη οὔτε φύσει οὔτε διδακτὸν ἀλλὰ Θεῶα ποιῶα παραγίγνομένη ἄνευ νοῦ οἷς ἂν παραγίγνηται.—*Socrates apud Plat, in Men.*

\* Τι ἂν ἀγαθὸν πράττης εἰς Θεοῦ ἀναπέμπε.—*Bias apud Laert.*

† “Nulla sine Deo mens bona est.”—*Senec. Epis. lxxiii.*

‡ “Et nostra civitas et Græcia tulit singularis viros, quorum neminem nisi juvante Deo talem fuisse credendum est.”—*Cicero de Nat. Deor., lib. ii., § 66. Glasg., 1748.*

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has promised to give His Holy Spirit to them who ask Him; it may be shewn, if I mistake not, with demonstrative evidence, that if there be any such thing as virtue in our world it must be derived from a higher source than the mechanical power of truth, whether “philosophical, political, or theological.” And though we grant that the particulars and the circumstances of this doctrine are to be learned from revelation, yet we maintain, in opposition to those who imagine that we have no other foundation for it than a mistaken interpretation of the sacred oracles, that the necessity of its existence is founded in reason, and is as capable of demonstration as most points in moral philosophy. For—

First, The evil of imperfect existence is essential to every creature, except we should say that self-existence is no perfection, or hold a contradiction in terms, that the want of absolute perfection is no imperfection. Hence our absolute dependence on the Creator for every degree of existence, and every degree of perfection. Therefore—

Second, The good of virtuous existence is absolutely dependent on the Creator. If intelligence and volition, and the heart itself, are absolutely dependent upon God, much more do a right intelligence, a good volition, and a virtuous state of the heart, so depend upon Him. Hence it follows—

Third, That every degree, even the smallest, of virtue and happiness in creatures is a matter of sovereign favour, and not of equity; and, on the contrary, that every degree, even the smallest, of moral pravity in accountable agents is equitably punishable. But—

Fourth, From the moment that the desert of punishment commences, a state of probation expires, upon the ground of mere equity. For the trial of moral agents, in strict equity, is a trial of strict rectitude according to the moral means afforded; and when the balance is once turned to moral pravity, it is impossible from the nature of the thing that equity should ever restore it. Wherefore—

If any man becomes virtuous who was once otherwise, it must be the effect of sovereign benevolence, dispensed by way of supernatural influence. For if we assert that it is dispensed in any other way, we shall be forced to contradict the above plain axioms. If any one hesitates about the truth of this remark, let him try his skill in forming an objection; or, if he prefers it, in disproving either of the principles—which I call axioms—themselves.

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§ 13. What appears to me to be the only objection of plausibility is this: that the sovereign benevolence consists in affording us those means which in strict equity God was not engaged to grant, such as a revelation of mercy, righteous laws, eminent examples, &c. But what are the *means* to a mind ill affected to the holy nature and immediate end of means, and which is alienated from the life of God through ignorance, as every one without virtue must needs be? But what utterly invalidates this objection is, that mere means are so far from being sufficient to restore the balance from vice to virtue after it is lost, that they are not sufficient to preserve it virtuous when put *in equilibrio*. In short, I scruple not to assert that if the doctrine of Divine supernatural influence be not admitted, neither the entrance, nor the existence, of moral evil in the universe can be reasonably accounted for, nor any rational prospect of deliverance from it be shewn.

§ 14. Thus, Sir, have I presumed to submit to your consideration a few strictures on your account of truth, as inconsistent with *liberty*, degrading to *goodness*, and injurious to *God*; and I further presume that the following language will in your estimation justify

my conduct:—"Nor will it be difficult to prove that it is the indispensable duty of all, as far as ability and opportunity permit, to bear testimony to truth, by diligent inquiry after it, courageous profession of it, faithful adherence to it, and by using every fair and honourable means of promoting its progress in the world." Nor need I request of a gentleman, so devoted to thought and reflection as yourself, a close attention to my arguments in opposition to the superficial haste and premature conclusions of many readers; but what I request is, that you will receive in a candid and friendly manner my contribution of a mite towards advancing the stock of investigated truth and practical Christianity; and that you will believe me to be, Reverend Sir, your sincere well-wisher,'

EDWAED WILLIAMS.

OSWESTRY, *February* 1791.

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#### A REVIEW OF MR BELSHAM'S "CALM INQUIRY."\*

The substance of this volume, its author informs us, was delivered in a course of lectures to his pupils, when he occupied the theological chair at Daventry. The Dissenting Academy at this place was a continuation of that over which Dr Doddridge presided at Northampton; and which, by the will of its benevolent founder, Mr Coward, was placed under the direction of trustees, who were expected to guarantee the orthodox integrity of the institution. Mr Belsham, it should seem, began to be dissatisfied with the fundamental principles of the seminary, and was in consequence induced to commence "A Calm Inquiry into the Scripture Doctrine concerning the Person of Christ." At this time, from his own avowal, he was a "firm believer in the pre-existence of Christ."

On this statement two reflections naturally occur. The first is, that the author, at different periods, exhibits himself "a firm believer" of opposite and contradictory sentiments; and therefore, from his own account, compared with his present views, he firmly believed without evidence. The other is, that Mr Belsham had but a slender claim, rather no claim at all, to the theological chair, when he held the Arian pre-existence of Christ, which appears to have been the full extent of his orthodoxy at the outset, while his post was retained on the condition, according to the

founder's will, that he was "a firm believer" in the deity of Christ, in opposition to the Arian, as well as to the Socinian hypothesis. With regard to the first of these considerations, we think it may be justly questioned, whether a mind so formed and so disposed, however active in learning, is ever likely to arrive at the "knowledge of the truth." As for the second, we must leave it to Mr Belsham's casuistry to explain, how, as an honest man, he could retain an office and receive a salary to which he must know he was not entitled, during eight years of his doctrinal vacillation.

The plan adopted by Mr Belsham in order to ascertain the point in question, carries, at first sight, an air of plausible impartiality;

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\* "A Calm Inquiry into the Scripture Doctrine concerning the Person of Christ; including a Brief Review of the Controversy between Dr Horsley and Dr Priestley, and a Summary of the various Opinions entertained by Christians upon this Subject. By Thomas Belsham, Minister of the Church in Essex Street." *Eclectic Review*, 1813.

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it was, "to form a collection of all the texts in the New Testament which in any way related to the person of Christ." We do not object to this process, when properly conducted; but we are convinced it cannot possibly be so conducted without some prerequisites in the mind of the inquirer. Every one who has paid due attention to the principles and operations of the human mind, must know that on subjects of this nature, minds differently disposed may arrive at opposite results. It is therefore of the utmost importance to ascertain with what dispositions, with what expectations, with what *precognita*, we enter upon this inquiry. That it be "calm" is not sufficient. When we peruse the records of civil history, the maxims of Confucius, the eclogues of Virgil, or the elements of Euclid, we may "calmly" expect to be gratified; the active principle of curiosity is kept awake, and we anticipate some rays of truth convertible to useful purposes. But when we read the will, the "last will and testament" of a father or brother, we feel a lively interest in the document. Here, to be perfectly calm, is the same as to be stupid or rude. And yet, when this very document comes to the decision of a counsel or a judge, to whom it is a point of speculative concern, personal interest being out of the question, a "calm" investigation is most proper; though even in this case the form of the words will not

always decide the import of the will, without including circumstances, and especially the probable design of the testator.

Now, we may ask, what were the *precognita*, what the rules of interpretation, what the requisite circumstances, that Mr Belsham and his pupils brought with them in order to learn “the Scripture doctrine concerning the person of Christ?” Our author shall speak for himself and his brethren:—

“All Christians agree that Jesus of Nazareth was, to outward appearance, *a man like other men*; and that though he was an inspired prophet who performed miracles, was raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven, he is not, on these accounts solely, to be regarded as being of rank superior to the human race, but that separate and direct evidence is necessary for the establishment of this specific fact. Hence it follows that, in this inquiry, *the whole burden of proof* lies upon those who assert the pre-existence, the original dignity, and the divinity of Jesus Christ. If any one affirm that a being who has every appearance, and every incident and quality of a man, is not a real man, but a being of an order superior to mankind, it is incumbent upon him to prove his assertion. If he fail in his proof, his hypothesis vanishes, and the person in question must be regarded as a real man. In this controversy, therefore, the proper province

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of the Arian and Trinitarian is to propose the evidence of their respective hypotheses,—that is, to state those passages of Scripture which they conceive to be conclusive in favour of their doctrines. The *sole concern* of the Unitarian is to shew that these arguments are inconclusive; that the passages in question are either of doubtful authenticity, or misunderstood, or misapplied. This is the precise state of the question. *It is admitted by all parties*. It must be continually kept in view. This view of the subject points out the true and only proper method of conducting the argument. It is by proposing and carefully examining the controverted texts. He who will not submit to this labour must be content to remain ignorant, or to take his opinions upon trust,” (pp. 1–3.)

We are by no means of the number of those who are “content to remain ignorant, or to take our opinions upon trust.” We have also submitted to the labour of “carefully examining the controverted texts,” attended with all the advantages of Mr Belsham’s criticisms and comments. But to record *seriatim* what we were constrained, by apparent superior evidence, to regard as false deductions, and to give at length our reasons for so thinking, would require a ponderous volume like his own. An undertaking, with this specific design, we find is publicly announced; and we doubt not the cause of truth, candour, and piety, will be promoted by

the comparison. All that can be reasonably expected from an article in a periodical work may be comprised under two leading divisions: in the first place, some observations on the author's assumed principles; and, secondly, some remarks on the general controverted subject.

Mr Belsham assumes, *in limine*, that "all Christians agree that Jesus of Nazareth was to outward appearance *a man like other men.*" In other words, he takes for granted that all Christians agree to be Socinians; since who, besides these, professing Christianity, will concur in this assertion without a corrective limitation of the similarity? To that declaration of the apostle, indeed, in his epistle to the Hebrews, "in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren," as explained by the apostle himself, all Christians, worthy of the name, will unreservedly subscribe. Some of the ancient visionaries who assailed the fundamental articles of the Christian Church contended, it is true, that He had not a real, but only an apparent, human body. But these dreams are gone. It is now universally maintained,—as those who take the Holy Scriptures, common sense, and right reason for their guides, have ever maintained,—that Jesus Christ had a true body

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and soul; that is, a human nature, subject to the innocent infirmities of that nature. But the Scriptures assert, that in other very extraordinary respects He was *not* like other men. They testify that, while in this world, "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,"—that "He knew no sin," or was no sinner, "did no sin," but was "without blemish and without spot." This is an essential difference of "appearance," and the Bible teaches us the reality. In this respect, at least, Jesus appears a perfect unique of character among the countless millions of free agents who have inhabited our globe as the descendants of the first man. To that declaration, universally true when applied to others, "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not," He was a perfect exception. Must we ask Mr Belsham's pardon for thus calling in question one of his first principles? No; but we will quote his own language in explanation of his assertion, that Jesus was "a man like other men:"—

"The Unitarian doctrine is, that Jesus of Nazareth was a man constituted *in all respects like* other men, subject to the same infirmities, the

*same ignorance, prejudices, and frailties,*” (p. 447.) “When *Jesus* or his apostles deliver opinions unconnected with the object of their mission, such opinions, and *their reasonings* upon them, are to be received with the *same* attention and caution with those of *other* persons in similar circumstances, of similar education, and with *similar habits* of thinking,” (p. 451.) “They maintain that it no more derogates from the authority of Christ than it does from that of Moses, that his inspiration should not extend beyond the proper objects of his mission; and that in *other cases* he should entertain the *same opinions*, and be liable to the *same misconceptions*, as his countrymen, and those among whom he was educated. Also, that the character of Jesus should be gradually formed, is more useful as an example to his followers, than if he were by nature and necessity a perfectly holy and impeccable being, incapable of being influenced by temptation of any kind, and consequently in no respect similar to his followers,” (p. 472.) “The moral character of Christ, through the whole course of his *public ministry*, as recorded by the evangelists, is pure and unimpeachable in every particular. Whether this perfection of character in *public life*, combined with the general declarations of his freedom from sin, establish, or were intended to establish, the fact, that Jesus through the whole course of his *private life* was completely exempt from all the *errors* and failings of human nature, is a question of NO GREAT INTRINSIC MOMENT, and concerning which *we have no sufficient data to lead to a satisfactory conclusion,*” (p. 190.)

In this ample specimen of our author’s bold, and we are tempted to add blasphemous opinions concerning the person of Christ, (and

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they pervade every page of the work before us,) the gratuitous assumption is evidently implied, that mankind, however chargeable with errors and crimes, have *no need* of a sinless mediator, but that “a man in all respects like other men,” subject to the same ignorance, prejudices, and frailties, will answer the purpose extremely well. To men of no conscience, or whose conscience is thoroughly cauterised, this doctrine may cause neither alarm nor uneasiness; but to those who know the evil and demerit of sin, who feel the burden of guilt, who have just apprehensions of the holiness and justice of the Supreme Governor, the purity of His laws, and the awful nature of their sanctions,—in a word, to those who are acquainted with their moral state and the true character of their Maker an obvious reflection presents itself: Of what possible advantage can this “man like other men” be to us, considered as criminals? The author replies, Jesus is a “Saviour or deliverer.”

“This title (σωτήρ) is applied to Christ upwards of fifty times in the New Testament. Christ was the deliverer of the Jews from the bondage and curse of the law,—of the Gentiles from the bondage of idolatry,—and of all mankind from sin and misery. The word σωτήρ, *saviour*, expresses ‘deliverer;’ and σωτηρία, *salvation*, ‘deliverance in general,’” (p. 274.) “Christ sometimes authoritatively pronounces the forgiveness of sins,” (p. 329.) “In the *same sense* he confers upon his apostles authority to forgive sins—*i.e.*, to *heal diseases*. ‘The sin not unto death,’ may mean a *curable disorder*, for recovery from which it may not be unreasonable to pray. ‘The sin unto death’ may be an *incurable malady*; in which case prayer for recovery would be useless and improper,” (p. 330.) “Our Lord pronounces, concerning the woman who washed and perfumed his feet, ‘Thy sins are forgiven.’ This woman was probably a Gentile; and as it is said her ‘sins were many,’ it is probable that she had been remarkably addicted to idolatrous superstitions; but that by our Lord’s preaching and miracles she had been convinced of his divine mission, and converted to the worship of the true God,” (*ibid.*) “By his kind address to her, he publicly testified that she was now translated from the community of *sinners, i.e.*, heathen idolaters, into the communion of saints or holy ones, *i.e.*, the true worshippers of God.” “The word *sinner* often signifies nothing more than heathen.” “A conversion from heathenism, and admission into the community of true worshippers, is sometimes expressed by the terms *repentance* and *forgiveness of sins*, and that without immediate regard to personal character,” (p. 331.) “Thus the apostle Peter speaks of Christ as exalted to be a prince and a *saviour*, to give repentance to Israel, and the *remission of sins*, (Acts v. 31.) It cannot be doubted that the gospel teaches the free forgiveness of moral offences to the sincere penitent; but this could not with propriety be represented as the distinguishing peculiarity of the Christian dispensation, because the promises of for-

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giveness in the Old Testament are as numerous, as clear, as full, and as decisive, as any that are to be found in the New,” (p. 332.)

It is difficult to conjecture why this last sentence was introduced in this connexion, except it were for the purpose of demolishing the one immediately preceding it, and even the whole strain of the foregoing pages. It was asserted, (p. 274.) “that Christ was the saviour of all men from *sin and misery*.” This means, one while, *pronouncing* penitents to be forgiven; another, *healing* bodily diseases. It denotes, either *teaching* idolaters to worship the true God; or *testifying* that this change was effected. It follows, from the author’s own explanations, that Jesus Christ is “a *saviour* from sin” in the same sense precisely that Moses and the prophets, John the Baptist, and the apostles are so. *They*

pronounced, taught, and testified the same doctrine, and many of them healed bodily diseases. How is it, then, we ask, that salvation from sin is never ascribed to them as the *agents*, while it is constantly applied to Jesus Christ? Why is it expressly declared that “there is no salvation in any other,”—“that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved?” a declaration ascribed to the apostle Peter “when filled with the Holy Ghost,” (Acts iv. S, 12.) In the notion of our author, if he will but keep consistent with himself, there *is* salvation in Moses, David, Isaiah, Peter, Paul, and many others. “Why, then, is the honourable title, “saviour,” denied to them, while it is applied to Christ upwards of fifty times in the New Testament? We leave the reader to indulge his own reflections on this point.

Mr Belsham assumes another principle, on which he supposes a minute inquiry into the import of controverted texts ought to be conducted—viz., “That *the whole burden of proof* lies upon those who assert the pre-existence, the original dignity, and the divinity of Jesus Christ.” This canon of inquiry, in which the author seems to place great confidence, and which, *prima facie*, bears the character of rectitude, may prove on closer inspection, to be a fallacious one. “The whole burden of proof.” The proof of what? Of the specific *fact* in question. Now, as different kinds of facts require their appropriate kinds of proof, and all proof depends on evidence, we should learn what sort of evidence is demanded. Mathematical and metaphysical evidence are excluded by the nature of the subject. Not again the evidence of sense, whether direct or historically recorded; for, whether Jesus Christ

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*appeared* as possessing all the properties of humanity is no part of the dispute, though Mr Belsham has taken much needless trouble to record it. There remain, then, the evidences of testimony, of reason, and of what will satisfy a well-instructed conscience. Each of these is of great importance in this inquiry. The last, however, our author has totally neglected, as if it were wholly out of the question. The investigation regards the person and qualifications of one who, it is allowed on both sides, is represented as “a saviour from sin and misery.” But the conscience of no man “awakened to righteousness,” and the reason of no man who has a proper knowledge of his own character and rela-

tions, can be satisfied, without some superior evidence to the contrary, that a being *merely human* may be such a saviour. Therefore, “the whole burden of proof,” consisting of some superior evidence, lies upon him who obtrudes the assertion; an assertion which alarms and offends conscience, and insults reason. No one can willingly entertain, *à priori*, a probability of meeting any divine testimony so ruinous to his hopes; although a man of sincere and upright mind, who is disposed to place implicit confidence in the infinite wisdom and paramount authority of that Being who has represented himself as “merciful and gracious,” will not refuse to hear all the arguments of an assailant, professedly founded on Divine revelation.

In order to know the proper meaning of any revealed’ doctrine or testimony, some facts necessarily, from the nature of the case, must be presupposed; as, that the assertion is consistent with the possibility or nature of things, with other parts of Scripture, with the Divine character and dispensations, with the actual state of mankind, and with the first principles of knowledge. Here, however, it concerns us to exercise the greatest caution, lest we arrogantly assume that anything is *absolutely* incompatible with primary truths, merely because *we* cannot comprehend the nature of the evidence—except, in addition to this, we have clear evidence to the contrary. He, therefore, who enters on inquiries into subjects long controverted, and especially subjects which involve the eternal interests of men, should beware of adopting weak assumptions as the basis of proof. They, for example, who assume that mankind are not in a degenerate state, or that the consideration of their degeneracy is of little moment in reference to a plan of recovery, will inevitably, while retaining that opinion, put a very

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low construction on various revealed doctrines; that is, a construction degrading to the nature of the subject,—a construction unsatisfactory to men of enlarged views and accurate observation,—a construction, we will add, totally different from that of others whose persuasion is opposite, supposing their critical skill, in other respects, to be equal. In proportion as any one values his final happiness, and knows in what it consists, as a matter of settled conviction, he cannot be—and ought not to be, if he could—in-different to the result, whether he interpret a Divine testimony in

a way that is favourable to that happiness, or that threatens to destroy it. In all inquiries of this nature it is obvious the previous state of the mind—not only its accuracy and comprehension, but also *its moral taste and habitude*—has a very great, not to say a decided influence. Suppose two persons approach the sacred oracles for information on the present subject, the person of Christ, each equally disposed to submit to their decision: if one, from previous associations, thinks that his happiness is not at stake, on whatever side he may finally settle; and the other, for weighty reasons, is persuaded that if he mistake the truth through ignorance or disaffection, his everlasting welfare is in danger; is it not plain that the inquiries of the latter will unavoidably be serious, marked with ardent solicitude, with a habitual regard to conscientious integrity, while those of the former will be of a character directly the reverse? The investigation of the one being more practical, he will be in less hazard of adopting a wrong interpretation, or even a false rule of interpreting; while that of the other, being more speculative, he will be more exposed to the influence of selfish ends, the suggestions of fancy, the indulgence of sceptical doubts, and the adoption of false conclusions.

Gibbon has somewhere an observation to this effect—that the best employment of reason is to defend what we like most. While very far from approving of this fascinating writer's vacillancy and laxity of moral sentiment, and further still from tolerating his licentious insinuations, we think that his observation characterises a general *fact*. The mind's inclination to a result, and too commonly when in the wrong direction, prescribes to the reasoning-faculty, as a reward, its office of defence; while reason seldom checks the devious and rapid strides of its leader. When, indeed, the inclination is directed by the light of real knowledge to the most eligible good, reason cannot be more laudably employed than

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in defending its elections and forwarding its progress. Let it be supposed that "Jesus or His apostles peremptorily and unequivocally declare the doctrine of His pre-existence and original dignity;" who is to judge what is peremptory and unequivocal? Is it not clear that no declaration will be admitted to be of this character by one who assumes not only the inutility of the doctrine, but also its prior improbability? He will not fail to seek, nor be long un-

successful in finding, innumerable evasions and expedients—canons of criticisms, doubts of inspiration, difference of copies, and critical conjectures without end. The conduct of another who regards that declaration as not only possible, but also probable, and useful to his highest interests, is necessarily very different. He considers himself as an offender against the infinite Moral Governor, whose every law is equitable and good, and who has declared that He “will by no means clear the guilty.” Though He has revealed Himself merciful, and ready to remit the offences of the penitent, it must be in some way consistent with the rights of moral government,—by some wonderful expedient whereby the attributes of justice and mercy are made to harmonise. To Socinianism the inquirer looks in vain for a solution of his difficulties; it offers only vague declamations on the benevolence of the Deity, and does not even pretend to shew how God “declares His righteousness” in the remission of transgressions. It has nothing to suggest but what is altogether unsatisfactory both to reason and conscience, in reply to the question, How is the exercise of general benevolence in pardoning a guilty sinner consistent with the claims of moral government and the sanctions of its laws? Does repentance itself, or the appointment of repentance, or Divine benevolence, annihilate the penal sanction? The fact, indeed, of repentance being required as a condition, and of pardon being-promised as a consequence, is plainly announced in the sacred code; but this, like every other fact, must have an appropriate cause. Press a modern Unitarian to assign one which is rational, consistent with pre-emptory sanctions, the honour of a holy law, the unsullied dignity of moral government, the sacred character of a judge, or the wisdom of a benefactor,—a cause which does not even involve the subversion of these sacred and essential relations,—and you will hear nothing but round assertions without proofs,<sup>7</sup> and fanciful conjectures without probability; you are invited to a chaos of critical doubts and discordant interpretations.

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The serious inquirer reflects that infinite wisdom *can* assign a satisfactory answer why the forgiveness of sin is *not* inconsistent with sacred relations,—why this act of benevolence involves nothing irreconcilable with the claims of justice,—an attribute infinitely awful And he considers it probable that, in the New Testament,

the product of matchless counsel, and the fulfilment of the dispensations of God towards mankind in this world, this problem *will* be solved. He feels it to be extremely interesting to his happiness to have some discovery in this revelation, how the Divine justice, government, and laws, may be honoured, while grace and mercy are dispensed to sinners. He reflects that the Supreme Being, in His nature, is infinitely different from every other,—that He may be so as to the mode of His existence, for aught that reason has to advance to the contrary,—that, as His existence cannot possibly have any other analogous to it, it is probable, if not absolutely certain, that His manner of subsistence has no resemblance among created objects on which analogy can be founded,—that, finally, as the Old Testament contains frequent intimations of some mysterious essential distinctions in Deity, whereby the grand and infinitely interesting problem in question may be solved; so, probably, the New Testament will unfold its nature, as far as Divine realities, which have nothing strictly analogous to created natures, are capable of being conveyed by the language of mortals, (language so imperfect at the best, and formed originally for other purposes,) while all is communicated in a manner consistent with a state of moral probation. The assumptions of Mr Belsham, however, if admitted, would extinguish every spark of hope:—

“The Unitarians generally believe that Jesus, having exercised his public ministry for the space of a year, and perhaps a little more, suffered death publicly upon the cross,—not to appease the wrath of God, not as a satisfaction to Divine justice, not to exhibit the evil of sin, *nor in any sense whatever to make an atonement to God for it*, for this doctrine, in every sense, and according to every explanation, *they* explode as irrational, unscriptural, and derogatory from the Divine perfections,—but as a martyr to the truth, and as a necessary preliminary to the resurrection,” (p. 449.) “And though they readily admit that one positive unequivocal declaration, either of Christ, or his apostles authorised and instructed by him, would be sufficient to set aside all the presumptions arising from the *antecedent improbability* of the fact; that nevertheless, this improbability is to them a reason why they are *very slow* in yielding assent to any evidence short of the most express and unquestionable testimony, and why they are disposed to examine with the *utmost rigour* whatever is advanced in proof

of a fact so unlikely, so *unusual*, so contrary to all analogy, and, in their estimation, *of so little use*,” (p. 467.)

What declaration can be imagined so positive or unequivocal as not to be controverted by persons assuming such principles, and whose "sole concern" is to shew its invalidity? To pronounce it impossible for the Deity to form a personal union with our nature, in order to reunite man spiritually and for ever to Himself, and that the operations of justice may have a full and honourable course in perfect accordance with the exercise of mercy, every modest person must regard as most presumptuous arrogance. Is there anything in this antecedently more incredible than the creation of the world, the formation of man, or the use of temporary appearances as "the mere organs of the Deity, used for the purpose of making Himself known and understood by His creatures," which is Dr Priestley's conjecture respecting "what are called angels, who had the forms of men, who even walked and spake, &c., like men?" (Hist. of Early Op., vol. i., p. 5.) Is the supposition more incredible than the doctrine of the resurrection, which is professed by the Unitarians themselves? A serious and reflecting mind cannot be so positive, so dogmatical, so arrogant, as to set bounds to the capabilities of power, of benevolence, and of wisdom in the Deity. No; he comes to the revealed will of God in *expectation* of finding some "unusual" truths, which no other source of information could supply—truths in which his peace and felicity are deeply interested. In proportion, indeed, as he is humble and pious, he submits his understanding, his will, and all his powers, to the disposal of that Almighty Friend who has indulged him with a revelation of truths "hidden from ages and generations," and is resolved to receive them with acquiescence, whatever may be the result of his inquiries. Approaching the revealed testimonies in this temper of mind, he thinks he discovers in Moses and the prophets, and more clearly in the New Testament, exhilarating intimations of a solution of his difficulties, and a pleasing prospect that his hopes will be realised. The point where his inquiries commence is a state of conscious guilt, moral darkness, and sinful depravity,—a state of deviation from rectitude, contrariety to infinite holiness, and exposure to penal evil. And having discovered in Scripture what he *thinks* admirably calculated to remove his fears, and to promote his happiness, by casting great light on the doctrines of justice and mercy, he cannot but regard

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every hypothesis of an opposite tendency, and which threatens to deprive him of these advantages, with a jealous eye. He naturally feels as one who, when possessed of a treasure, encounters a suspected thief or a robber; while, in point of argument, he has an undoubted right to lay “the burden of proof” on his aggressor. Mr Belsham, however, follows a process diametrically opposite, and recommends the same to others. He sees nothing excellent, nothing desirable, nothing important in any respect, in a mysterious union between the Divine nature and the human,—in a Messiah perfectly righteous, “made a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him,”—but regards such representations, however often they seem to occur in the Christian revelation, as forbidding, offensive, and absurd; throwing them aside as the corruptions of Christianity, instead of valuing them as its glory and its riches. Some, no doubt, will be glad to imitate him in this: such as dread a rational inquiry into truths and relations below the surface of sensible appearances, who are content to estimate moral evil as a trifle, and who are willing to admit that mysterious truths and impossibilities are the same thing. Let us now look at some of Mr Belsham’s canons of criticism, and observe how others differently minded will probably regard them:—

“When a fact is contrary to *the established order of nature*, and the antecedent improbability is very great, the direct evidence must be proportionably strong. The doctrine of the pre-existence and high original powers of Christ ought not to depend upon a few obscure, mystical, and ambiguous tests.”

Here the question obviously occurs, To *whom* do such texts appear obscure, mystical, and ambiguous? To those, doubtless, who see nothing useful or any way desirable in the doctrine which such passages appear to countenance, and who previously wish it may be nowhere found. In this canon also we have an instance in which a rule of interpretation, adapted exclusively for physical inquiries, is transferred to a moral use. What can “the established order of nature” suggest to us as a remedy for the *moral* state of mankind? It is reasonable, therefore, to expect something *above* that order; to anticipate some wonderful disclosure of harmony between apparently opposite claims,—inflexible justice and sove-

reign mercy in their exercise towards creatures deserving of misery, such as the Divine and human natures of Christ in one person ap-

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pear to afford. Instead of concluding that the evidence of such a doctrine must be “very strong” in order to admit the probability of its truth, how much more just is the contrary, that the evidence *against* a ground of hope and happiness,—a ground of which the established order of nature is destitute, but which the doctrine of a Divine Redeemer in our nature affords,—must be “very strong” before we ought to relinquish it. We cannot but regard Mr Belsham, in this instance, as resembling a pleader who should say to his client, The *direct* evidence must be very strong, or I will not utter a word in your favour. Surely while a man considers himself already possessed of an estate which he values, he ought not to forego his claim until positive and irresistible evidence is produced against it.

The following is one of the admonitions which Mr Belsham is careful to impress on all who approach the present subject:—

“Impartial and sincere inquirers after truth must be particularly on their guard against what is called the *natural signification* of words and phrases. The *connexion* between words and ideas is perfectly arbitrary, so that the natural sense to any person means nothing more than the sense in which he has been accustomed to understand it. But it is very *possible* that men who lived two thousand years ago might annex very different ideas to the same words and phrases, so that the sense which appears most foreign to us, might be most natural to them,” (p. 4.)

If, however, we are to guard against what is here called the “*natural* signification of words and phrases,” we ought to be equally watchful against what *may* be called an unnatural signification of them. All words, used as they ought to be, are either natural or figurative signs of ideas, but the use of language is altogether perverted when these signs are unnatural; and whether Mr Belsham, in order to avoid consequences destructive of his theory, does not very frequently betake himself to this interdicted refuge, the impartial reader of his work will judge for himself. It is true that the *original* “*connexion* between words and ideas is perfectly arbitrary;” but it is also no less true, that when the connexion is formed by a writer, his interpreter is not to charm it away at pleasure in order to avoid a disagreeable consequence. Again, it is “very possible,” no doubt, that men, living in distant periods of

time, “might annex very different ideas to the same words and phrases;” but is it not also “very possible” for a modern “Unitarian” to annex “ideas to the same words and phrases” very “different” from those which were annexed to them by the sacred

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writers? If words are so perfectly arbitrary, and the connexion between them and ideas is so uncertain, we should act wisely in devoting a proportionably greater share of our attention to things,—that is, to the ideas themselves which are compatible or incompatible with first principles; and most earnestly would we counsel this mistaken writer, that, instead of confiding in physical analogies which have no pertinence to the subject in question, he would learn to treat with more regard those great realities which we alluded to before,—conscience, law, justice, and mercy,—realities which are far from depending on the caprice and versatility of language, and which are as permanent as they are appropriate.

This author lays down as one of his canons, that, “in examining the validity of an argument from Scripture, the first inquiry is whether the text be genuine,” (p. 4.) On this we remark, if the canon of Scripture be left to the decision of controvertists, who have a specific end to answer by pronouncing a text genuine or spurious, what probability is there of an unexceptionable canon being ever established? Surely it is a much more fair and a more rational process to ascertain from appropriate evidence the canonical authority of the New Testament, without any reference to particular controversies,—after which, nothing will remain but to settle the true import of the text, and the correctness of its application. If neither the various editions of Erasmus, Stephens, Beza, Elzivir, of Walton, Mills, Wetstein, Bengelius, and Griesbach,—if neither these nor any edition extant will serve their purpose, let the Socinians honestly come forward and publish a Greek edition of the New Testament, retaining only those texts to which a decisive appeal may be made in point of Divine authority. Without more evasion, let them distinctly state whether they deem any parts of Scripture entitled to this honourable distinction, and if so, let them draw the discriminative line. We may then, too, have some means of judging what advantage this labour will be to their cause. Any other method leaves the first principles of scriptural evidence uncertain; and every controverted subject

opens a wide avenue to endless disputes about what is authoritative, and what is not. Who would attempt to purchase by weight or measure while the standard between the parties remained unfixed? As to the *varice lectiones*, they are but as the small dust upon the balance compared with the substantial truths on which all copies of note and credit are agreed. The anti-

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Socinians assuredly have nothing to fear from an appeal to real science, as contradistinguished from that of sophists, from “philosophy and vain deceit,” and “science *falsely* so called.” Beal science never can be inconsistent with revealed truth; but it is a humiliating fact, that a large proportion of speculating men, when they discourse on morals and religion, deal in little else than unfounded assumptions and idle conjectures. Mr Belsham further observes:—

“It ought by all means to be remembered, that profound learning and acute metaphysical subtlety are by no means necessary to settle the important question concerning the person of Christ. The inquiry is into a *plain matter of fact*, which is to be determined, like any other fact, by its specific evidence, the evidence of *plain unequivocal testimony*; for judging of which, no other qualifications are requisite than a sound understanding and an *honest mind*. Who can believe that the decision of the great question, whether Jesus of Nazareth is the true God and the Creator and Governor of the world depends upon a critical knowledge of the niceties of the Greek article? With equal reason might it be maintained, that no person can know anything of the history of Greece who is not perfect in the metres of the Greek dramatic writers,” (p. 5.)

It is willingly allowed that learning and acuteness are not necessary to settle this important subject, except in so far as they assist in detecting sophistry, and in setting the true state of the question in a fair light. The inquiry, indeed, is to be determined by its specific evidence; but few, notwithstanding, can instantly agree as to what evidence is decidedly specific in the case, and fewer still can coincide with our author when he speaks of it as “a plain matter of fact.” There are a thousand other questions respecting “matter of fact” which are by no means “plain.” It is a “fact,” for example, that the human mind is either immaterial or material; Mr Belsham decides for the latter, but where is his “plain unequivocal testimony” for that decision? It is a “fact,” that the conception of our blessed Saviour was either miraculous or after the common course of nature; Mr Belsham pronounces the latter to

be the case, but is the judgment founded on “plain unequivocal testimony?” It is a “fact,” that the Logos existed before Abraham, or He did not; Mr Belsham asserts the latter, but does he support his assertion by “a plain unequivocal testimony?” Were this the question, Whether Jesus had a human body and mind, or appeared as a man among men? his observation would be admissible, for it would relate to “a plain matter of fact;” but this

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we repeat over and over again is *not* the true state of the question: it is no part of the dispute, because the affirmative is conceded on both sides. In our apprehension, the point at issue between the Trinitarians and the Anti-Trinitarians, respecting the person of Christ, is this, Whether the Supreme Being, whose existence, it is demonstrable, *is* essentially different from every other, and whose mode of existence *may* be so, for aught that reason can allege to the contrary,—that Being whose energies of wisdom, power, and goodness unfolded themselves in the work of creation, beginning with a rude chaotic mass, and proceeding to the innumerable forms of order and beauty, regularity of operation, and usefulness of result,—whether this First Being, in some wonderfully mysterious manner, a manner not less mysterious than creation itself, united Himself to human nature, as the basis of a new order of things in reference to the moral world? It is universally admitted, that out of nothing He produced a chaos “without form and void,” and that from this chaos He educed unspeakable grandeur and beauty, in order to manifest the glory of His perfections, and to communicate His goodness in a manner worthy of Himself. Why then, Ave ask, should it be thought incredible or improbable, that the *moral* order of things, to which the physical is infinitely subservient, should originate in the predestined assumption of human nature, and that this took place at the fulness of time? Why may it not be concluded of this, “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men?”\* The nature and perfections of Deity, His works of creation and providence, the generation and growth of animals and plants, the formation of mineral substances,—are full of mysteries, and is it to be expected that the moral world, so much less within the sphere of sensible observation and experiment, should be grossly and palpably plain?

It is not true that the advocates of the Trinitarian doctrine respecting the person of Christ maintain, as their opponents are anxious to insinuate, (we do not pretend to assign the motive,) that God was converted into man, or that the humanity of Christ is God. It is not true that they hold that any *change* whatever took place in the Godhead on the assumption of our nature. They are not so grossly ignorant as to suppose it possible. But they *do* maintain, as a grand and glorious truth,—a truth calculated to satisfy the largest desires, the most importunate cravings of the mind, to

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\* 1 Cor. i. 25.

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shed the most exhilarating light on the laws and sanctions, the justice and government of God, and their consistency with the exercise of His pardoning and purifying mercy,—that the human nature of Jesus was so assumed by a modal distinction of Deity, (which distinction no terms in any language of mortals is adequate to express,) that it had no personal existence independently of that assumption. Human languages are formed on physical analogies, but here an exact analogy cannot, it is obvious from the nature of the case, be found to convey the ideas intended. Here, different expressions are used in several connexions, or else recourse must be had to circumlocutory explanations; which, after all, to a mere verbalist, or a cavilling objector, must unavoidably leave much room for petty criticism. Whether the terms Form, Son, Word, Wisdom, Power, Subsistence, Person, or any other, be adopted out of human vocabularies,, in order to express that modal distinction in Deity by which the human nature was assumed; still the reality intended cannot rationally be expected to be adequately designated by words and phrases originally formed to convey ideas so essentially different.

Of this inadequacy of language to define, or even to describe supernatural realities, many of the Anti-Trinitarians, both ancient and modern, have taken a disingenuous advantage. This, also, is the frequent practice of sceptics and infidels, in their allusions to the phraseology of Scripture. But all such men, and especially those who wish to retain the Christian name, must be either pitied or blamed; because, if they are free from lamentable ignorance, they are chargeable with criminal perversity. Whether the language

of our author be not too often tinged, we may say, strongly tinged, with this species of pollution, let the Christian reader judge for himself:—

“The *incarceration* of the Creator of the world in the body of a helpless, *puling* infant, is a fact the credit of which must rest, like that of all other facts, not upon grammatical subtleties, but upon evidence direct, presumptive, or circumstantial, upon the validity of which every person of common sense is competent to decide,” (p. 6.)

In what an awful state of obdurate impiety must the mind of that man be who could pen such a paragraph as this! The sentiment, indeed, is worthy of an infidel; but for the credit of our nature, we hope that the bad eminence of being able to express it with the same degree of coarse and vulgar levity belongs to Mr

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Belsham. With equal justice might a malignant spirit (if, at the period to which we are going to allude, spirits there were who had rendered themselves vile) deride such mysterious propositions as these: that the hidden energies of the Omnipotent, operating in the first dark and formless embryo, would, in a very short time, develop themselves in a bright and beauteous universe, that should continue through revolving ages pregnant with interesting wonders and glorious benevolence,—that the same energies would shortly, through the medium of a very small portion of inert matter, shew themselves in an organic form of astonishing mechanism and admirable symmetry, as the lord of a terraqueous globe, the organ also of an intellect, of powers and passions, capable of dignity, of happiness or misery beyond description,—that these energies, also, would fix upon an insignificant part of the same created form, and cause it to evolve itself into a structure resembling the other, with diversities, however, full of wisdom and design,—that the same omnipotent energies, moreover, would, by a mysterious law, fix on a recondite particle, as a physical rallying point, in perpetual succession, and produce a race of human beings of different sexes, with an exact adjustment of numerical proportion of each,—that, finally, when all these bodies should be reduced to their primordial inert particles, these Divine energies would assume some physical points, around which other subtle atoms would instantly rally, unfolding themselves into as many forms as existed before, but far more splendid and permanent, as suited to a correspond-

ing exalted state of things, and possessing so much of comparative identity (an identity of moral use) as to justify their being called resuscitated bodies. Had these facts been announced to the malignant spirit we have supposed, he would have laughed them to scorn as incredible fables; and yet they are facts acknowledged, we presume, by modern "Unitarians," though, *à priori*, not more credible than what the Trinitarians consider as a fact attested by various representations in the New Testament; a fact at once mysterious as to the *modus operandi*, interesting above all comparison to every human being, and infinitely glorious in its consequences. This fact implies that a particle of material nature is assumed as the element evolved by the animal principle,—that both are unfolded by a rational, more interior principle,—and that, for reasons infinitely wise and benevolent, all are expanded by the indwelling energy of the Divine Word, or Wisdom,

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or Power, or Son of God, for manifesting the glories of His nature, His relations and perfections, to a degree far more transcendent and sublime than any other process in the universe. Such are the characters of the two natures, the Divine and human, it is maintained by some, as implied in scriptural declarations and their uses; and such the supernatural union subsisting between these natures, the one assuming and the other assumed, though in themselves, abstractedly considered, objects infinitely dissimilar; that the humanity has no personal existence, but the modal subsistence of Jehovah, which, as before observed, is variously expressed; and that this Divine subsistence has neither development nor exercise in redeeming men from sin and misery, but by the humanity as its organ. So that Jesus, it is maintained, is the organic medium of the Divine nature, *sui generis*, in a way essentially different from every other prophet. In and through this medium the Deity displays Himself to the enlightened, intelligent universe, by the fullest expansion and glory of which the human nature is capable, through endless ages. Inadequate as may be this representation of the subject, as, indeed, every verbal one must unavoidably ever be, it harmonises, we apprehend, with that which is contained in the New Testament, without having recourse to the strained, far-fetched, and unnatural comments of Socinianism. It fully justifies the scriptural application of names and

titles, works and offices to Jesus Christ, and the strong ascriptions of honour and praise so frequently applied to Him; instead of reducing them, as the Socinians effectually do, by their critical alembic, into a mere *caput mortuum*.

It is a calumny often urged by these ingenious persons, that the Trinitarians are guilty of idolatry in worshipping Jesus Christ. Now this charge can have no appearance of pertinence, except on one of these two suppositions: either that there is no personal union between the Divine and human natures, which is to beg the question in dispute; or that the human nature of Jesus is regarded as an object of worship, which is peremptorily denied. The consistent Trinitarian does not worship the human nature, though assumed by the Divine, and though “crowned with glory and honour” inexpressible, but Him to whom that nature is hypostatically united, and who is discriminatively identified by that union. Nor does he present religious homage to three ultimate

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but to the one Eternal Existence, who has revealed Himself under these personal relations,—relations, however, which are understood to be essential to that Eternal Existence, and without which He would not be Jehovah. Through the defect of language, terms of analogical relations are unavoidably employed; but no sentiment is admitted which implies any possible change in Deity, and much less is it supposed that these expressions of personal relations are intended to countenance the absurd notion of their being effects of power and will.

It will be readily granted, that a critical knowledge of the niceties of language contributes but little towards an accurate perception of celestial truths.\* “A sound understanding and an honest mind” are, doubtless, of greater moment; but it is not easy to convince any man that his understanding is not sound, that his heart is not honest: and many will suspect that the short passage last quoted does not proceed from sources quite so respectable. “The incarceration of the Creator of the world in the body of a helpless, puling infant.” What could produce this profane effusion but strong and unrestrained prejudice at the commencement of the inquiry? The latter of these marked expressions will appear to most “calm” inquirers as an exuberant ebullition of contempt against the doctrine itself, which is here impiously ridiculed,

and against myriads of Christians of unquestioned virtue, talents, learning, piety, and integrity. The former expression indicates either a want of knowledge, or a culpable misrepresentation. It conveys to most readers, and to all in its plain construction, that the Creator is inclosed or circumscribed by the human nature of Jesus, as a man is by the walls of a prison! Is it possible that this representation can proceed from a mind imbued with the slightest tincture of candour or decency? What Trinitarian was ever absurd enough to entertain for a moment the sentiment here imputed to the whole body? Do they, when they with reverence represent the Deity as assuming the essential principles of our nature for the purpose of expanding them to the utmost limits of which that nature is capable, and of illustrating before adoring myriads the harmony and grandeur of Divine perfections in the salvation of countless multitudes of the human race,—do they deserve to be outraged with the low ribaldry we have quoted; a mode of expression, we will

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\* 1 Cor. i. 19, &c.

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venture to say, which is much more appropriate to the character of a renegade than a Christian. Mr Belsham would do well to reconsider what he has written with “a sound understanding and an honest mind.” In truth his efforts to characterise “the Saviour of the world” as a mere prophet, who has delivered to us great truths, but who does not “save His people from their sins,” either by a propitiation or by power, resembles that of a man who should diligently labour to sink a ship, without being able to furnish the crew with even a plank for their escape; or that of one who should attempt to blow up a citadel, when he has not the means of providing a cottage or a tent for the dislodged garrison. A prophet may be more or less influenced or filled with a Divine impulse, but this does not constitute him different from other men in his original formation, or in his mode of subsistence; and consequently he would be destitute of the most essential requisite of “a saviour from sin and misery.” Nor is it conceivable that such a man, however “full of faith and the Holy Ghost,” however endowed with knowledge and wisdom, with graces, energies, and miraculous gifts, could make approximations, even the smallest,

towards removing the difficulties introduced by sin, in the way of our happiness, or casting any light on the character, the government, and the dispensations of God.

We are now, by the length of this article, reminded of our promise to make some remarks on the general controverted subject, according to the arrangement into which this volume is cast, but with all the brevity which the nature of the work and the topics will admit. This inquiry, after the introduction, consists of two very unequal parts. The first, which conducts us to page 446, consists of a selection and examination of those passages in the New Testament which have been alleged in favour of the pre-existence, the original dignity, power, and divinity of Jesus Christ. The second, which is despatched in eighty-four pages, contains “A Summary View of the various Opinions which have been entertained concerning the Person of Christ, and of the Arguments for and Objections against each.”

That “the Jews expected a pre-existent Messiah,” is the title of the first section, which occupies but little more than one page; and the argument adduced by some as founded on this expectation, is repelled in these words:—“Trypho, the Jew, in his dialogue [with Justin Martyr, early in the second century, represents the

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notion of the pre-existence and incarnation of Jesus, as not only wonderful but silly: and he reproaches the Christians for their belief in the miraculous conception of Christ, which he ridicules as a fiction equally absurd with that of Jupiter and Danæ,” (p. 11.) Thus Mr Belsham sides *with* the rancorous Jew *against* the primitive Christians!

The second section, about doable the size of the former, notices the argument for the pre-existence from “the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ.” This argument is triumphantly overthrown by the remark, that “the narrative itself is of very doubtful authority!” For “the Ebionite Gospel of Matthew and the Marcionite Gospel of Luke did not contain these accounts!” Besides, “the miraculous conception of Jesus would no more infer his pre-existence, than the miraculous formation of our first parents.” And thus Mr Belsham, either artfully or ignorantly changes the state of the question, from the pre-existence of Him who assumed human nature to the pre-existence of the human nature itself!

The third section, which occupies about 137 pages, professes to examine those “texts which are conceived to express, in the most direct and unequivocal terms, the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.” Out of the many ornaments with which this large apartment is furnished, we can present the reader with only a few, by way of specimen:—

“Neither the history nor the discourses of Christ, nor those of his apostles, for thirty years after his ascension, contain the *least hint* of his pre-existent state and dignity,” (p. 16.) “They [i.e., John and Paul] never declare nor hint they were *authorised* to teach any new doctrine concerning the person of Christ; nor do they lay down any such doctrine to be received as an *article of faith*,” (p. 18.) “In the Gospel of John our Lord sometimes uses metaphors of the most obscure and offensive kind.” “And Paul, in his Epistles, introduces many harsh and uncommon figures.” “The principal appeal is to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, which are figurative throughout beyond all others: and to the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author of which is doubtful, and in which the writer *indulges himself in* an ingenious, but *forced* and *fanciful* analogy between the Mosaic institute and the Christian dispensation,” (pp. 18, 19.)

“The *Logos* is the *man* Jesus Christ, by whom God hath spoken to the world, the *teacher* of truth and righteousness,” (p. 27.) “Hence, Rev. xix. 13, he is called the Word of God; and, 1 John i. 1, the “Word of life, because he *taught* the doctrine of eternal life,” (p. 29.) “And being a *prophet* of the highest order, to whom the Divine will was fully revealed, who was endued, in a very superior degree, with miraculous powers, and who was appointed Lord and King, in that new dispensation which he was authorised to intro-

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duce to supersede the Mosaic covenant, he is, for these reasons, in the well-known phraseology of the Jewish Scriptures, entitled to be called a *god*,” (p. 30.) “Jesus is the *revealer* of a *future life* by a resurrection from the grave; and this heavenly doctrine is the *principal means* of instruction, reformation, and comfort, to mankind,” (p. 33.) “He was in the world, and the world was *enlightened* by him, yet the world knew him not.” “With some *hesitation* I adopt the method of supplying the ellipsis proposed by my learned and ingenious friend Dr Carpenter,” (p. 35.) “Mr Simpson’s own translation is, ‘He was in the world, and the world was *formed* by him, yet the world knew him not.’ Which he paraphrases thus:—‘He was publicly *conversant* with men; many were *reformed* by him; and he *imparted* the best *means* of renovat-

ing the human race; yet mankind in general did not receive him.' Mr Cappe gives quite a new turn to the passage. He translates the text, 'He was in the world, and the world was made *for* him'—*q. d.*, 'He was for some time freely and publicly *conversant* among his countrymen, preaching the word of God.' But though he has brought *abundant* evidence to prove that διὸ, with a genitive, sometimes expresses the final cause, I nevertheless feel some *reluctance* to understand it in this passage in a sense so *unusual*," (pp. 36, 37.) "John i. 15, 'He who cometh after me has got before me, for he was my principal,'" (p. 39.) "John iii. 13. He might *imagine* himself transported into heaven, and *not be able* to distinguish whether what he saw and heard was visionary or real. And Mr Palmer thought that when Jesus spoke of himself as having been in heaven, it was in *allusion* to this Divine vision." "Mr John Palmer was a man of abilities and learning, and an *excellent* Scripture critic," (p. 42.) "It does not appear that any of the early Christian sects or ecclesiastical writers *ever heard* of this supposed assumption of Christ into heaven, or *ever attempted* to explain the evangelists' phrases by that hypothesis," (p. 43.) "It is a fair remark, that if 'ascending to heaven' signifies *knowing* the Divine counsels, 'descending from heaven' may signify *not knowing* them. But the figure is preserved if the person spoken of ascends to *learn* heavenly truths, and descends to *communicate* them. 'Who is in heaven' is omitted in the Vatican, and *some* other manuscripts, and is at least of *doubtful* authenticity," (p. 51.) "Matt. xi. 27, 'No man knoweth the Son but the Father'—*q. d.*, No one knoweth the extent of the Son's *commission* but the Father," (p. 54.) "John vi. 62, 'What and if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?' Jesus, knowing their mean and secular views, resolved to release himself from these selfish and unworthy attendants, and for this purpose he delivers a discourse" (ver. 33–62) "which they could not comprehend, and the *design* of which was to *shock* their prejudices, to *disgust* their feelings, and to *alienate* them from his society," (p. 57.) "Ver. 35–40. Jesus now *confounds* and *perplexes* their understandings by speaking of himself personally as the promised bread from heaven," (p. 59.) "Ver. 43–51. Jesus continues to assert the divinity of his mission, and the vivifying power of his doctrine, in language still *more offensive* and *unintelligible* to the multitude," (p. 61.) "Jesus, knowing their mean and secular motives, and desirous of being forsaken by them, does not condescend to correct their mistake, but proceeds to express

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himself in language *still more offensive* and *disgusting*," (p. 62.) "The Jews, observing the *seriousness* and *solemnity* of our Lord's *manner*, and understanding his declarations in a strict and literal sense, are more offended and

and disgusted than ever, and resolve to forsake his society, *probably* conceiving him to be *disordered in his mind*," (p. 63.) "They did not speak out, but Jesus judged from their *looks* and *whisperings* what passed in their minds,"

(p. 64.) “Ver. 61, 62. By his *person*, the Son of man, he still means his *doctrine*.” “This will be called a forced interpretation. And it is certainly very different from the plain literal meaning of the words,” (pp. 66, 67.) “John viii. 58. The Jews evidently *understood* the language of Jesus as an assertion of his *existence before* the birth of Abraham, for in the paroxysm of their rage, they took up stones to stone him as a liar and a blasphemer,” (p. 75.)

By the way, were not the Jews as competent to understand “the language of Jesus” as Mr Belsham and the modern Unitarians? If so, must not these, on their own principles, draw the same conclusion? “A liar and blasphemer!”

“It is not *probable* that our Lord would have been so *very open and explicit* upon this high and mysterious subject to his enemies when he was so reserved to his friends, and does not appear to have *hinted* it to his disciples.” “If he had *intended* in this instance to announce his own pre-existence so very explicitly as many believe, he would have taught this extraordinary doctrine *more frequently*, in a *greater variety* of phrase, and would have laid *greater stress* upon it; and finally that this fact, so solemnly declared, would have been more attended to, and would have made a more permanent and vivid impression,” (pp. 79, 80.) “Before Abraham was born I was *he; i.e.*, the Christ—*q.d.*, Before that eminent patriarch was brought into being, my existence and appearance under the character of the Messiah at *this period*, and in *these circumstances*, was so completely *arranged*, and so irrevocably *fixed* in the immutable counsels and purposes of God, that in *this sense* I may be said even *then* to have existed,” (p. 85.) “To the Jews, therefore, who were *familiar* with the language and imagery of their own prophets, our Lord’s declaration of his *existence* as the Messiah before the birth of Abraham would not sound so harsh and offensive as it does to modern readers, who, not being accustomed to the bold dramatic language of prophecy, are apt to understand that of *actual existence*, which the Jews would *easily perceive* to be *figurative*,” (p. 91.)

If the Jews “easily perceived” that the asserted existence was not “actual” but “figurative,” and if this “would not sound so harsh and offensive as it does to modern ears,” how came they, “in the paroxysm of their rage,” to take up stones “to stone him as a liar and blasphemer?” Notwithstanding this glaring inconsistency in Mr Belsham’s own statement, he adds, “In the explanation of

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this important text, it was thought necessary to be thus particular, because it is in a great measure *decisive of the whole controversy*,” (p. 102.)

“John xvi. 28. But it is *better* to take both clauses *figuratively*. As Jesus *came* into the world when he appeared in public as a messenger from God, so, conversely, he *left* the world and returned to the Father when his mission closed, and he ceased to appear any longer as a public teacher,” (p. 104.) “John xvii. 5. The words *παρὰ σεαυτῷ*, ‘with thy own self,’ are opposed to the words *ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*, ‘upon the earth,’ in the preceding verse: and the words *παρὰ σοί*, ‘with thee,’ in the Scriptures and in all good writers, are used in a *local* sense to express ‘in thy house,’ ‘in thy presence,’ and the like; and *never* signify ‘in thy *purpose* or *decree*.’—‘O Father, glorify thou me with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee,’ that is, in Thy immutable *purpose* and decree, the glory which was intended for me ‘before the world was,’” (pp. 106, 109.) “John xvii. 24. Our Lord prays that his apostles may be *witnesses* to the great success of his gospel,” (p. 118.) “2 Cor. viii. 9. If the fact [*i.e.*, of the pre-existence of Christ] were *antedecently* established, this passage might, indeed, be admitted as a *graceful allusion* to it,” (p. 122.) “The apostle affirms the existence of two contemporary events, that Christ was rich, and, *at the same time*, that he lived in poverty.” “Jesus Christ was rich in miraculous powers, which it was *at his option* to employ for his own benefit,” (pp. 125, 126.) “Phil. ii. 5-9, ‘Who being in the *form* of God.’ As Christ is said, ver. 7, to have assumed the *form* of a *slave* when he was not *really* a slave, so he might appear in the *form* of God, without being really and essentially God,” (p. 130.)

It is natural to ask here, on what principle of criticism does Mr Belsham render the Greek word, *δοῦλος*, a slave, rather than a servant? When Jehovah says, “Remember ye the law of Moses (τοῦ δοῦλου μου, Sept.) *my servant*,” are we to understand by the term a slave, as contradistinguished from one rendering service? (Mai. iv. 4.) When He says, “Behold I will bring forth (τῷ δοῦλον μου) *my servant* the *Branch*,” does He mean, *my slave*? (Zech. iii. 8.) When he says, “I will take thee, O Zerubbabel (τῷ δοῦλου μου) *my servant*,” what supposable connexion has it with slavery? (Hag. ii. 23.) When again it is said, “Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord’s *servant*,” is the designed idea slavery or service? (Isaiah xlii. 19.) In the parable of the householder who let his vineyard to husbandmen, it is said “he sent (τοὺς δούλου αὐτοῦ) *his servants* to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it,” (Matt. xxi. 34.) Surely the idea conveyed by the term is that of superintending servants, rather than of slaves. The following passage is peculiarly in point:—Matt. xx. 27, 28,

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“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your (δοῦλος) *servant: even as* the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to *minister*, and to give his life a ransom for many.” It would be easy to produce many other passages, both from the New Testament and Septuagint, where it would be preposterous to substitute the word slave for servant; but it is of more importance to observe that there is not, we think, any one instance to be found where, either by this or any other term, the idea of a “slave” is attached to Jesus Christ. “The *form of a servant*” must mean, in all consistency, the aspect or deportment of a servant; for what possible form of a slave can be applied to Him as contrasted with the aspect or deportment of one serving? In the whole course of His obedience He conducted himself as one serving, or ministering; this was the aspect which He bore, this was the appearance He made. And, according to the intended contrast, “being in the *form of God*,” must signify, living or *existing* (ὑπάρκων) as God—He who existed as the *form*, aspect, mode, personal distinction, or the relative subsistence of Deity, assumed a nature capable of obedience and service.

“The words ‘he thought it not robbery,’ are attended with considerable difficulty. The Greek word ἀρπαγμῆ, here translated *robbery*, scarcely occurs in any other Greek writer. It seems, however, rather favourable to the supposition that the word is used in the *active* sense,” (p. 134.) “The proper simple meaning of the phrase appears to be, not to covet, to be fond of, or to affect or display, but to *hold fast*, as a person does what he has seized by force, claims as his right, and is resolved not to relinquish. In this sense it stands in opposition to ἐκένωσε, ‘he exhausted himself,’ he parted with all, without retaining anything.” “So far from tenaciously grasping, and refusing to relinquish, he voluntarily, and of his own accord, divested himself of everything that is intended by the form or likeness of God. If the immutable attributes of Deity are intended, these were concealed,—or the pre-existent glories of the Logos, these were quiescent,—or his extraordinary miraculous powers, these were voluntarily suspended, while he suffered himself to appear and to be treated as though he possessed them not,” (pp. 138, 139.)

Is Saul also among the prophets? Yes, but he soon returns to more congenial occupations:—

“The *exaltation* of Christ consists in his *possession* of a Divine commission and voluntary miraculous powers. His humiliation consists in

his *neglecting* to use those powers for his own benefit, in submitting to a humble, laborious, and dependent condition, and, finally, in resigning himself to suffering and death in obedience to the will of God, and *for the good*

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of mankind. Thus this celebrated text may at least be regarded as neutral," (pp. 144, 145.) "Col. i. 15. The *word first-born* is used to express excellence of its kind. And of the *new* creation Christ is the head and chief, being the chief instrument of God in the renovation of the moral world," (p. 147.) "Col. i. 47, 'He is before all things;' *i.e.*, in time, dignity, and excellence, in the *natural* creation, if that be the subject of the apostle's discourse; or, of the *new* creation, if that be the subject treated of, as Unitarians maintain!" "No argument for the pre-existence of Christ can be drawn from this *ambiguous* text," (p. 148.)

The attentive reader will have observed, that through the whole of this long section, as, indeed, throughout the work, the author seems to labour under the same inveterate prejudice we before noticed,—that something may be said, nay, ought to be said on every text which is calculated to lower its meaning. This is "the *sole concern* of the Unitarian: that the passages in question are either of doubtful authenticity, or misunderstood, or misapplied." Those who can relish these morsels of comments and criticisms will find, in the remaining sections of this part in the work itself, an ample repast; beside the dessert contained in the second part. We are, however, under the mortifying necessity of putting off our readers with little more than "the bill of fare."

The fourth section exhibits "a collection of texts, which, if they do not directly assert the pre-existence of Christ, have nevertheless been thought to allude to it, and to be most easily explained upon that hypothesis."

"John viii. 23, 'I am from above;' *I am*, *i.e.*, *my doctrine is*, from heaven," (p. 154.) "Gal. i. 1, 'An apostle, not of man, nor by men, but by Jesus Christ;' *q.d.*, Not of, nor by *ordinary* men," (p. 158.) "Heb. ii. 14. The expression 'took part,' seems to indicate a *voluntary assumption* of human nature. It ought to have been rendered 'he *participated* of the same,'" (p. 159.)

The fifth section notices the attributes supposed to be ascribed to Christ, which infer His pre-existence and divinity.

"John i. 1. The beginning of the *gospel dispensation* is here intended," (p. 171.) "John ii. 19, 'In three days *I will raise* it up.' Not that he would *raise himself*, but that he would be *raised* by God," (p. 173.) "John

x. 17, 18. *If* this text is to be understood of the death and resurrection of Jesus, it is to be explained on the same principles as the preceding; and though *active* verbs are used, they are to be taken in a *passive* sense," (p. 174.) "Matt. xxvii. 20. The promise is addressed to the apostles *only*. It is limited to the termination of the *Jewish* dispensation by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple," (p. 179.) "Matt. ix. 4, Mark ii. 8. *Perhaps* the historians might mean nothing more than that he judged from their

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*countenances* what was passing in their minds," (p. 179.) "Luke vii. 39, 40. The Pharisees expected as a *matter of course* that a prophet would know by *inspiration* the character and *thought* of those who approached him," (p. 180.) "John xvi. 28, 30. His accurate knowledge of these *speculations* convinced them that he came from God," (p. 182.) "Col. ii. 2, 3. The manuscripts *vary*," (*ib.*) "Rev. ii. 2, 23. To say nothing of the *doubtful authenticity* of the Apocalypse, or of *this portion* of it, these passages would prove *nothing more* than that Christ, in his *exalted* state, is acquainted with the *circumstances* of his churches, and with the *character* of individual members," (p. 183.) "John xiv. 7, 11. This *mystical* language of the evangelist, when translated into *popular* phraseology, means *nothing more* than that our Lord spoke and acted under a *Divine commission*" (p. 188.)

Section the sixth, "concerning the alleged superiority of Christ to angels:"—

"The whole mythology concerning angels is destitute of all foundation in the Jewish and Christian revelations. By Jesus and his apostles it is *alluded* to as the *popular* and established belief of the age; by whom it was never taught as an article of faith. Revelation therefore is no more responsible for the existence of angels *good or evil*, than it is for the existence of *witches, &c.*," (p. 195.) "Heb. i. 4, 9. 'Being made so much better than the angels'—the *prophets* mentioned ver. 1." "It is with respect to *them*, and not to angels, that the comparison with Christ is instituted in the beginning of this epistle," (p. 206.)

The seventh section treats of the "titles and characters attributed to Christ, or thought to be so attributed, which are supposed to imply superiority of nature."

"The Unitarians plead that Christ is called *God*, as being a *prophet* invested with miraculous powers," (p. 214.) "Luke i. 16, 17. Though strictness of construction warrants the application of the pronoun *him* to the antecedent *God*, yet as the phrase 'Lord our God' is never applied to Christ in the New Testament, no *Jew* would ever think of such an application of the words. John was the forerunner of the *Lord their God*, by being the forerunner of *Jesus*, the great messenger of God to mankind," (p. 217.) "John i. 1, 'And the Word was God,' or, a *God*; *i.e.*, an *inferior* God derived from the Supreme, and delegated by Him: or, God was

wisdom: or, the Word, *i. e.*, the *teacher*, was a *prophet* endowed with miraculous powers," (p. 215.) "John xx. 28, 'And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.' This is a sudden exclamation of astonishment and joy—*q. d.*, My Lord and my God! how great is thy power! or, My Lord and my God *has done this!*" (p. 218.)

In the eighth section we have a "collection of passages which are supposed to teach that Christ is the maker and preserver of all things," and in the next is considered the question, "whether

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Jesus Christ was the medium of the Divine dispensations to the patriarchs and to the Hebrew nation; and whether he ever appeared under the name and character of *Jehovah*."

"Any sensible symbol of the Divine presence is called an *angel*, and this symbol is called *indifferently* the *angel* of *Jehovah*, or, *Jehovah Himself*. Gen. xvi. 7, 'The *angel* of *Jehovah* found her;' but, ver. 13, it appears that this *angel* was *Jehovah Himself*," (p. 307.) "In the Chaldee idiom, the term *Mimra*, 'word,' is substituted for the reciprocal pronoun *self*; so that the 'word of *Jehovah*' means *nothing more* than *Jehovah Himself*," (p. 310.) "Rev. xxi. 23. No conclusion can be drawn from the *obscure* and *figurative* language of prophecy," (p. 312.) "Matt. iii. 1, '*Jehovah*, whom ye seek, *shall come* suddenly to his temple.' Jesus visited the temple as the *messenger* of *Jehovah*," (*ib.*)

Section the tenth: "The present exaltation of Christ, and the high offices which he now sustains, or to which he is to be appointed hereafter, are said to be incompatible with the supposition of his *proper* and *simple* humanity." Who of Mr Belsham's opponents deny His "proper" humanity?

The eleventh section takes into consideration the passages "concerning the worship of Christ."

"1 Pet. i. 8, 'Whom having not seen, ye *love*.' It seems surprising that *personal* affection to Christ should be so often represented and insisted upon as a Christian *duty* of the highest importance. The apostles and other *immediate* followers of Christ, who knew him *personally*, and had derived *personal benefits* from him, in addition to the greatest veneration of his character, could not but feel the most affectionate attachment to his person. But it is *impossible* that Christians of *later* times, who have had no *personal intercourse* with Christ, and who have received no *personal benefits* from him, *can* love him in the same sense in which the apostles and his other companions did," (p. 355.) "Matt, xxviii. 9, 17; Luke xxiv. 51, &c. The *worship* in these instances offered to Christ was *civil* respect, not *religious* homage." "The question is concerning the lawfulness of addressing worship to Christ, now that he is no longer *sensibly* present," (p. 361.) "Rev. v. 8-14. The *authenticity* of this book is *doubt-*

*ful*” “It is unreasonable to argue from visions to realities.” “The foundation of the homage paid to the Lamb is, that he was *slain*: therefore he is *not God*, nor entitled to Divine honours,” (pp. 371,372.) ““They stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ This holy protomartyr had just been favoured with an actual *vision* of our Lord.” “The example of this primitive martyr, therefore; does not fall within the limit of *religious* worship, nor in the least degree authorise addresses to Christ when he is not sensibly present,” (p. 373.)

Many more specimens of this plain and obvious style of criticism might be produced; but we think our readers would by

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this time begin to be wearied of them, even if they came recommended by the merit of ingenuity. What their feelings will probably be in contemplating them as they *are*, we will not trust ourselves to conjecture.

The last section of this part contains “arguments to prove the proper humanity of Jesus Christ.” For what honest purpose this writer should accumulate arguments, through above forty pages, to prove the proper humanity of Jesus Christ, when no one in the present day questions it, we are at a loss to conceive. Do any of Mr Belsham’s opponents pretend that the humanity of Jesus was not “proper,” or that He was only a phantom? At the close of this section, which the author himself owns “is not necessary,” there is an appendix containing an “abstract of the controversy between Dr Priestley and Dr Horsley concerning the existence of an orthodox church of Hebrew Christians at Ælia, who had departed from the Jewish ritual.” Were this point settled to the highest degree of probability on either side, of what argumentative use could it be towards adjusting the controverted subject? That a professing body of Christians *did* believe a set of opinions even in the apostolic age, except these opinions were sanctioned by the apostles, is no evidence that they ought to have believed them. That men should bestow so much of their time, attention, talents, and erudition on a subject which, if ascertained to a certainty, could be of no conceivable use in solid argument, we regard as a lamentable evidence of the human mind’s depraved propensity to unprofitable speculation.

The concluding part of this work exhibits “A Summary View” of different schemes of doctrine concerning the Person of Christ, the proper Unitarian, the Socinian, the Low Arian, the High

Arian, the Semi-Arian, the Indwelling Scheme, the Sabellian, the Swedenborgian doctrine, Tritheism, and the Trinitarian doctrine. It is time for us also to conclude this article, though we find it not very easy to give the work a definite character. We have scarcely ever seen a book of equal size, drawn up by a person of some learning and much labour, (the labour of transcribing from Socinian comments and criticisms,) conveying so little instruction; and considered as a theological work, it would be difficult to find one less adapted to promote religion and virtue, in any acceptation of these terms. We can perceive no tendency in it to elevate the mind, to stimulate to action, to recommend the gospel as a wise

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and holy religion worthy of being propagated. It has no adaptation to the state of mankind as they *are*, but to an imaginary set of beings, without laws, without sanctions, without moral government, without guilt of conscience; beings who, if they have a little instruction from a prophet respecting present duty and future prospects, can save themselves; beings who require no transforming influence, no secret energy, no religion of love; beings who need “nothing more” than objective means of happiness, and those all reducible to a little information.

On the whole, the Unitarianism of modern Socinians is the art of dilapidation, detached from the science of building. Its efforts are directed to shew—that is, to conjecture—what Christianity *is not*, rather than to prove what it is; whether we regard its doctrines or duties, the greatness of its blessings, or the nature of its obligations. By the help of the “floods and streams” of pseudo-criticism, its aim is to demolish, not only the fabric of orthodoxy, but also the solid rock, in which its foundations are deeply laid. Or, to change the allusion, it would have us desert the Christian temple, and renounce all that we have learnt in the New Testament, in order to make nearer approaches to the schools of modern Jews, Mohammedans, and Sceptics.

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## A LETTER TO DR PEIESTLEY, CONCERNING

THE DATA REQUISITE FOR A RATIONAL INVESTIGATION  
OF DIS-  
PUTED POINTS IN THEOLOGY, AND THE OPINIONS OF  
FALLIBLE  
MEN, AS A GUIDE FOR THE PURPOSE OF INTERPRETING  
THE  
HOLY SCRIPTURES.

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Introduction. The writer's motive. Success in our inquiries after truth depends on method, as well as industry and perseverance. Some common principles requisite as *data*. Dr Priestley's, what? Requested to be explicit on this head. His appeal from Scripture to historical evidence of early *opinions* unjustifiable. Not a good guide, because—1. Not calculated to lessen the difficulty, as it pretends, but rather increases it. 2. The precariousness and insufficiency of it appears from constant experience. 3. It has been solidly refuted long ago by Protestants in the Popish controversy, and to revive it tends to superstition. 4. It is plainly reproved by Jesus Christ. 5. Highly untheological in its just consequences. 6. Also illogical, the consequences being gratuitously assumed. 7. If we have no better guide than this, we are left a prey to perpetual scepticism, it being insufficient from its very nature to settle the mind. Divine revelation the only true data, because this alone affords objective certainty. The objection, that a diversity of opinion still obtains among those who are agreed in their data and method of inquiry, answered. The plan of Dr Owen in this work. His reasoning not easily confuted. This Epistle to the Hebrews utterly overthrows Dr Priestley's grand argument, taken from the historical evidence of early opinions concerning Christ.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—To a gentleman who has claimed for a number of years, and in various kinds of researches, the laudable pretension of impartially inquiring after truth, no other apology is requisite in soliciting his attention for a few minutes than the solemn avowal of a similar motive and design, in prosecution of the same important end.

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But though I flatter myself that, for the reason now mentioned, no further apology is necessary for making an epistolary address to you, yet it may be expected, by yourself and the public, that I assign my reason for doing it in the present form. It is not with a view to solicit any public notice of it from your pen,—this is neither desired nor deprecated,—but it comes principally to request a greater favour—a candid, unprejudiced attention to the contents of the volumes\* to which this letter is joined, of which I beg your friendly acceptance.

Indeed, when I consider the religious sentiments contained in these volumes, the quantity of reading, though so much abridged, and your various other engagements, I can hardly expect your compliance; but on the other hand, when I reflect on your art in improving time, and quick despatch in perusing larger works, in connexion with your known candour, and my author's unquestionable character for erudition and piety, I am not without hope that my request will be complied with.

Having thus, dear Sir, explained my chief reason for addressing you in this way, I shall take the liberty of suggesting a few things of another nature, and particularly of testifying in how commendable a light I view your persevering industry in a professed search after religious truth. And yet I must observe, what you well know, that success in obtaining the object of our pursuit, very much depends on the *mode* of inquiry; if this be not happily chosen, the more persevering we are the further we recede from the desired mark. Two philosophers, or divines, may be equally industrious and persevering, perhaps (at least in a sense) equally sincere, in making lovely truth the end of their studious toil, but if nevertheless they disagree in their data and method of investigation, the further they advance, the more remote may be their conclusions.

Hence, then, arises the necessity among disputants of fixing on some *common principles*, which may be called data. Without this there can be little or no hope of bringing any disputed point to a fair issue. Without this, when closely urged, they will be for ever shifting sides, and running from the spot to which they ought to be confined, as their skill in sophistry may tempt, or the life of their cause require.

Considering the matter in this light, while occasionally attend-

\* [Dr Owen's Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as abridged by Dr Williams.—Ed.]

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ing to the motions of the controversial war in which you have been so long engaged, I have been induced to pause and put the question, what are the *data* of these polemic champions, on which to stand, and from which to argue? Is not this the reason that they are so seldom brought to a *close encounter*, and are seen hectoring one another at a distance, spending so much time and breath in the fruitless (not to say *impertinent*) work of estimating the abilities and qualifications of each other? I have sometimes wished to know in particular, but have yet to learn, what those *common principles* are on which you build your differing system. How far, for instance, you can travel in company with a Calvinist in the high road that leads to the temple of truth, and where precisely is the spot on which you must stop and say, I can go no further; here I must leave you, our road now parts? It would gratify my curiosity much, and perhaps assist my inquiry, to meet with a candid, unequivocal solution of such difficulties. For I am hitherto of opinion that if there be not some infallible *objective certainty* on which we may depend as a foundation, Christian theology is but an empty name.

Though I have sought in vain for your polemical *data*,—whether it is revelation or something else, and if the former, whether the whole of the common canon or only a part, and if a part, what it is, and where is the line of difference,—though I have been unsuccessful in *this* inquiry, I am furnished with better means of information respecting your *method* of investigating the points of difference, as it is laid before the public in your various writings, and which is briefly summed up by yourself in the following words:—“Christians are not agreed in the interpretation of *Scripture language*; but as all men are agreed with respect to the nature of *historical evidence*, I thought that we might perhaps better determine by *history* what was the faith of Christians in early times, independently of any aid from the Scripture; and it appeared to be no unnatural presumption, that whatever *that* should appear to be, such was the doctrine of the apostles, from whom their faith was

derived; and that by this means we should be possessed of a *pretty good guide* for discovering the true sense of the Scriptures.”\*

Now after having thought, dear Sir, pretty deliberately on the method here proposed, viewed it in different lights, and endeavoured to trace its genuine consequences, it always, and in various

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\* Defences of Unitar. for 1788 and 1789, p. 83.

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respects, appears to me a “*very bad guide*,” for several reasons. For—

1. The proposed method is not calculated to *lessen* the difficulty, which it pretends to remove, but rather *increases* it; since men will no less differ about historical evidence than the meaning of Scripture. It increases the toil without improving the fruit. By avoiding a visionary Scylla we are driven on a real Charybdis.

“*Christians are not agreed in the interpretation of Scripture.*” True; and what is there almost in the whole compass of literature, where mathematical, demonstration is wanting, in the interpretation of which men are all agreed? One well observes:—“So wild and extravagant have been the notions of a great part of philosophers, both ancient and modern, that it is hard to determine whether they have been more distant in their sentiments from truth, or from one another; or have not exceeded the fancies of the most fabulous writers, even poets and mythologists.”\* And yet, notwithstanding all their jars and blunders, we cannot justly say that there is no *true system* of nature. But what should we say of a reformer in philosophy, who should propose to rectify our notions of the *system of the universe* by setting before us a train of “historical evidence” of what was the “opinion” of the ancients about it? While he urged their *opinions*, had we not a right to demand rather the *principles* and arguments? If it be said that the case is not parallel, because Thales, Pythagoras, Aristotle, &c., were *fallible* teachers, but that Matthew, John, Paul, &c., were *infallible*, this does not alter the case; it is sufficient for my purpose that the “*opinion*” formed of the one or the other is *fallible*. And therefore the opinion of Ebion is no more to be confided in than that of Calvin. And there were false opinions concerning Christ in the apostolic age as well as in the present. Had you taken, therefore, the *other* side of the question, the impropriety

would have been all one; for the fault lies in the *very nature* of the medium of proof.

“*But all men are agreed with respect to the nature of historical evidence.*” By no means; for, if I mistake not, fact lies directly against it. Christian Protestants, almost unanimously, echo the maxim of Chillingworth—“That the *Bible alone* (as opposed to tradition and historical evidence, &c.) is the religion of Protestants, and a safe way to salvation” and Divine truth. But let

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\* Rowning’s Compend. Syst., Introd.

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me not misunderstand the position, which is somewhat equivocal; for the words “with respect to the nature of historical evidence” may refer either to *fact* or to *right*: either what it is that actually constitutes the evidence, so that all are agreed about the *real meaning* of the testimonies of the ancients, and the *quantum* of evidence they contain for and against, supposing their opinion to be in its own nature admissible and of moment; or what *influence* such evidence ought to have towards finally determining our judgment in favour of the controverted point. But it does not appear to me that the position is admissible in either sense. Not the *former*; for daily stubborn facts prove that what one admits as “historical evidence” another does not, whom yet charity compels us to regard as intelligent, learned, pious, and impartial. They are as much divided in their judgments about the meaning of the ancient fathers as about the sense of the apostles; not to mention the incomparable disadvantage of this new method of interpreting Scripture, arising from its inevitable tediousness, supposing all the necessary materials at hand. Not the *latter*; for the rational inquirer will deem it quite unsatisfactory to infer that because a party of men had *heard the apostles*, or their immediate successors, therefore the opinions they formed in religious matters were *just*. This he can no more admit than if one should say that the Unitarian hypothesis must needs be true, because the Unitarians have read the writings of the apostles; or, because all the Christian societies in England, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety, have in use the same version of the Bible, therefore their religious opinions must be the same. Nay, we cannot safely conclude concerning the major part of those in England this day who

may be styled *sworn adherents* to Calvinistic doctrines, that therefore their religious opinions *are Calvinistic*. In short, that all men are *not agreed* “with respect to the nature of historical evidence,” anyhow understood, is but too palpably evident in the storms of furious disputations and the din of paper wars. Hence I conclude that the method you propose is not calculated to lessen the difficulty, but rather to increase it.

2. The precariousness and insufficiency of it appears from *experience*. As a specimen of the truth of this remark, let one fact suffice *instar omnium*. It respects a writer of the present day,—a writer of erudition, of extensive learning and knowledge, and who can boast of an intimate acquaintance with the recondite

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treasures of ecclesiastical antiquity, and who can also boast of being “much at home” in the learned languages. Dr Horsley, then Archdeacon of St Alban’s, now Bishop of St David’s, took upon him (in 1786) to establish as a fact “the decline of Calvinism, amounting almost to a *total extinction* of it among our English Dissenters; who, no long time since, were generally Calvinists.”\* He adds, “I believe, however, that the truth is, and is pretty notorious, that *Calvinism is gone* among the Dissenters of the present times.”† And again:—“I consider it as the reproach of the Dissenters of the present day, that a *genuine Calvinist is hardly to be found*, except in a sect conspicuous only for the encouragement which the leaders of it seem to give to a disorderly fanaticism.”‡ Were not the writer already known, one might be induced, on perusing this account, to exclaim, Did this extraordinary declaration proceed from some *ἰδιώτης* of the eighteenth century? Did the writer reside in some remote corner of the world, taking his information at second-hand from incompetent vouchers? Was the “religious opinion” of which he gives an account so remote from his own that he could hardly be thought sufficiently interested in it to make a due inquiry? Nothing less. Confessedly sensible and learned, near the metropolis at the time, himself a Calvinist, and while he laments the decline of Calvinism, he utters the above declaration; nay, he undertakes *professedly* to establish it as a fact. You know, Sir, too well the state of the *real* fact to need a comment; and the use I think we should make of this and similar mistakes that we so often meet with is, that we

should be peculiarly circumspect in admitting “historical evidence” for the state of religious opinions, whether in later or in earlier times. To illustrate this matter we will suppose a case—viz., that some ages hence there will appear a learned *collector* of the state of religious opinions in the eighteenth century, and that the ravages of time will destroy all monuments of counter-evidence to invalidate the above assertion: how could the historical collector choose but admit it for fact, though nothing in reality be less so? What I might the historian say, shall I tax the veracity, or impeach the knowledge of such a writer, and a writer so advantageously circumstanced for all necessary information, as to hesitate in my conclusion? The application is *in promptu*. And it is a matter that we must

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\* Tracts in Controversy with Dr Priestley, p. 386.

† Ibid., p. 397. § Ibid., p. 400.

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not forget, that the late Dr Worthington, and other eminent characters now living, assure us that the world *grows better*, and, therefore, that the ancients are *less entitled* to our credit and confidence than the moderns. Again—

3. The attempt to “determine by *history* what was the faith of Christians in early times, independently of any aid from the Scripture, that we may thereby gather what was the doctrine of the apostles,” has been long ago *solidly refuted* and justly exploded by the great Chillingworth, and other eminent Protestants in their controversy with the Papists. There is no admitting of it but at the expense of one of the noblest principles, and strongest pillars of the reformation from Popery—“That the Scripture is the *only rule* whereby to judge of controversies;” and it appears to me that the revival of it into a rule would directly tend to restore the Popish privilege of rendering blind obedience to our spiritual guides. For every attempt to explain Scripture by Scripture principles would be checked as wrong and dangerous, while the unlearned—that is, the body of the Christian Church—would be called upon to embrace on the word of a few learned, and every Christian church on the *ipse dixit* of its pastor, however unqualified to make a fair report, to submit to the *opinions* of the ancient Church for their guide; which leads at once to imposition and imposture on the one hand, and to blind obedience, superstition, and

an abject deference to human authority in matters of conscience, on the other. Besides—

4. The above method of proceeding is plainly *reproved by Jesus Christ* in the New Testament. For it is the same principle must give it life as was adopted by the *Jewish doctors*, which taught them to appeal on every occasion from revealed evidence to human traditions, or a pretended *oral law*—the sayings and *opinions of their ancients*, which they reckoned a *good guide* for the right understanding of the Mosaic writings. But this pretended guide, instead of being honoured and recommended, is by our Lord opposed and reproved, (Matt. xv.; Mark vii., &c.) Nor does it make any difference, in the present argument, whether the human traditions and opinions be *written* or *unwritten*.

5. The scheme proposed is, moreover, highly *untheological* in its consequence, for it is inconsistent not only with human fallibility, but also with free agency and accountableness. In physics, indeed, we may often with certainty infer the cause from the effect;

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but in ethics and religion, where the *morality* of an act, or the *truth* of an opinion is in debate, it is absurd to say, that because a fallible creature acts or thinks in this or that manner, he *therefore ought* to do so; nay, it is so untheological that it strikes at the root of all religion, natural and revealed. For if men, confessedly imperfect and uninspired, are not always *liable to err*, they are not *free*, and therefore not accountable. Therefore, the “opinions” of such persons, though they lived in the apostolic age, and supposing them to be exactly ascertained, can be no safe medium of proof. They are utterly incapable of affording us any objective certainty, any more than ours to those who shall come after us. Their *antiquity* makes no difference, because that does not alter their *nature*; nor does it much matter, for the same reason, whether they are few or many. Wherefore without better *materials*, whether orthodox or heterodox, the controversial warrior will do little execution on a reflecting judicious mind, though he should charge his “*cannon*” with them, together with his “small arms.”

6. I shall venture a step further, and profess to you, dear Sir, that the method you propose for settling our opinions appears to me *illogical*, as teaching us to infer the truth of the premises from

the fact of the conclusion. In other words, it makes the conclusions of men, who were fallible and fickle as ourselves, and which they pretended to draw from the premises of revelation, to be a safer guide by which to form our judgment, than revelation compared with itself, the premises from which they professedly inferred their conclusion; that is, we are led by it to assume a fallible conclusion, and from the gratuitous assumption to pronounce upon the truth of the premises.

7. Once more; if we have no better guide than this, we are exposed as a prey to perpetual *scepticism*, it being insufficient from its very nature to settle the mind. If this guide leads any one to the temple of truth, it is by accident, and not because it was ever designed for that end; we cannot, therefore, put any *confidence* in it while we are following its footsteps: the event would always appear dubious, and the prospect of success would never be sufficient to counterbalance the toil. In short, it directly tends, (supposing the sole motive of the inquirer to be the love of truth,)—it directly tends to retard the pace of industry, and to clip the wing of genius; and, therefore, can be no genuine friend to free inquiry.

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I think, Sir, that thus far I have stood on firm ground in my reasoning. There is no theological truth to be found in which we may put any confidence without some *data*, some first principles of this Divine science, possessed of *objective certainty*; but the *foundation* you have chosen for your polemical building is an *uncertain* one, and the *guide* you recommend is, in my apprehension, a “*very bad*” one; seeing it is so far from lessening our difficulties, as Christians and theologians, that it considerably increases them,—it is found to be insufficient from the experience of all ages and undeniable facts,—it is what our most eminent reformers from Popery, and Protestant polemics, have solidly refuted in their opposition to blind obedience, church-authority over conscience and arbitrary power,—it is reproved and condemned in its principle by our Lord himself,—is untheological, as incompatible with the moral state of man in this life of fallibility and imperfection,—is contrary to the rules of just reasoning, by gratuitously assuming the conclusion of the practical syllogism included in it,—and, finally, is deserving of a charge of no small magnitude, its being of a sceptical tendency. What weight my arguments

have in opposition to the *fundamental principles* of your controversial and historical writings against the orthodox faith, is left to your candid examination, and the verdict of the impartial public.

Having shewn the necessity of *some* principles, as *data* peculiar to the science of which we treat, and endeavoured to shew the insufficiency of what you substitute for that purpose, it may naturally be expected that I should be explicit in avowing what it is that I judge deserving of that important claim; and this I very willingly do, but with the greatest brevity, seeing it would seem impertinent to *defend in form*, what you have not *in form attached*. My *data* then are, Divine Revelation, and that *only*, and the *whole* of it. And it appears to me, on the maturest reflection, that if *Divine revelation self-compared* does not answer that purpose, nothing else will; and that whatever else is set up for that purpose is demonstrably fallacious. “The *positive evidence* of Scripture,” as I have observed elsewhere, “holds the same rank in theology as *experimented evidence* does in reference to any hypothesis in philosophy. As, in the latter case, there is no disputing in favour of a system *against facts*, phenomena, and experiments; so, in the former case, no reasoning can be valid in opposition to *positive*

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*evidence*, or express discernible authority.”\* Common sense, right reason, the opinions of the good and great, &c., have their use, and an important use, in their proper places; but they are no *data* in Christianity. As to the order of investigation, *preceding* revelations, and divinely-authenticated facts, are the only *safe ride* by which we ought to examine any *particular part* of Scripture. Every *foregoing* dispensation of religion, and, indeed, every revealed fact, is, I may say, a torch lighted in heaven, to illuminate those that follow, until we come to the “sealing of prophecy,” or the end of the canon; and every succeeding one, to the last, reflects a still more abundant light on all that went before. Wherefore, let all that revere the authority of heaven, all the friends of revelation and rational inquiry, attend more to *this light* that shineth in a dark place, and not—I mean as the principal, and only safe means—not to the false lights of human opinions (early or late) in the Church; by following which we expose ourselves to

wandering and danger every step of our road, while in pursuit of truth and happiness.

If it be objected, That a *diversity* of opinions still obtains among those who are agreed in their *data* and method of inquiry, I would briefly reply in the following particulars:—

1. To urge this objection is the same as to urge that men do not form their opinions *mechanically*, but freely; and that some of them reason *falsely*. But what then? Shall I depreciate and reject a rule, concluding it is not a good one, because I know not how to use it?

2. The objection implies, as far as it has any force, that men are not *accountable* for their mistakes, nor liable to make any, provided their *means* are sufficient; which amounts to little less than self-contradiction. It is much the same as to object against an experiment—an accurate experiment—in philosophy, because the consequences which the learned draw from it are various.

3. While men are free and accountable, it is no less necessary that the *disposition* of the mind be right, than that the principle be well chosen. Free inquiry of itself will never insure success, without a *right use* of that freedom. This is the only way, that I know of, to avoid bad consequences; and any other, short of this, must prove abortive.

But let us not forget, that the *good disposition* which we need

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\* Antipædobaptism Examined, chap. iii., § 2; vol. ii., p. 119, of this edition.

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for this purpose, is not only to be cultivated by the use of means, but also is to be received, in the habits of it, from the Divine favour, as a matter of gospel promise. If there is anything of a spiritual nature promised in the word of God, there is the promise of a *Divine influence* to be obtained by *asking* for it; that is, importunate seeking in God's appointed way. (See Luke xi. 1–13; James i. 5–8.) And this is so far from being inconsistent with moral agency in this our state of trial for eternity, that the *trial* eminently consists, with respect to those to whom the promise is given, in their submitting, or not submitting, to its gracious import. In short, for “the heart to be established with *grace*,” (Heb. xiii. 9,) is the best preparative for using our freedom well, and the best preservative in the line of truth. And if, after all

our pretensions to sincerity and teachableness, the love of truth and impartiality in seeking it, are equal, and yet our sentiments differ, there is no remedy in *this* world; to our common Master we stand or fall; our own judgment of ourselves, as well as that of our fellow-creatures concerning us, must be equally submitted to the Judge of the whole earth. "Every way of man is *right in his own eyes*; but the Lord pondereth the heart," (Prov. xxi. 2.)

I must confess, dear Sir, that I was much grieved when I perused the following sentence, which you not only suffered to drop from your pen, but to be published to the world:—"If, to your *arguments* you can even add *miracles*, the doctrine you propose [*i. e.*, personal distinctions in the Deity] could not be received."\* What a reflection upon the Christian Church, and upon millions of the most distinguished pious characters in every age! But though the expressions are strong, and your conviction such as they represent it to be, yet you must allow, that it is *possible* you may be in a mistake; for such have been the *convictions* of many persons in favour of an *erroneous sentiment*, as to stand firm against *actual miracles*, repeated miracles, performed in proof of a contrary sentiment. Your own observation will justify and illustrate this remark:—"The prejudices of some persons against the clearest and most important truths may be so strong, (as we see in the case of the scribes and Pharisees of our Saviour's time,) that *no evidence will convince them.*"†

\* Defences of Unitar. for 1788 and 1789, p. 176.

† Sermon on the Proper Conduct of Dissenters with respect to the Test Act, p. 10.

If you condescend, Sir, to peruse these volumes, you will find that the author, who, for depth of erudition, and extent of knowledge, proper for an accomplished divine, has been excelled by few, if any,—you will find, that he undertakes no less a task than to demonstrate that this Epistle to the Hebrews teaches doctrines and facts which utterly overthrow the opinions you espouse concerning the person and priesthood of Christ. His foundation is not laid upon the *surface*: he first demonstrates the canonical authority of the epistle, before he proceeds to investigate the contents of it; and the latter he does in the light of *preceding revelations*, and a very enlarged acquaintance with Judaism, both ancient

and modern, in its pure and corrupted state. His exposition, reasoning, and doctrines, are all along founded on the *general scope* of the passage he is upon; and it will not be easy for any one to convict him of mistake, without shewing that he has mistaken the *main design* of the epistle itself, which, in my opinion, would be a Herculean task.

Before I conclude, I have one remark to make, which, I presume, is not unworthy your attention. It is this: If the Nazarenes and Ebionites were what you have represented them to be,—Jewish Christians, who held the mere humanity of Christ, and who may be traced to the very age of the apostles,—the plain inference is, that this Epistle to the Hebrews was intended by the author of it, and by Him who is Head over all things to the Church, as an *antidote* to counteract such an opinion in the most direct manner; and were the historical evidence of the positions you have advanced, Sir, concerning the person and offices of the Messiah a thousand times more clear than it is, or is likely to be, the irrefragable conclusion is, that the writer of this epistle, and all who embraced his doctrine, were *displeased* with them in that very thing for which you seem to *caress* them. And if any of the Nazarenes themselves *submitted* to what it plainly inculcates, they must have *abandoned* the sentiments you ascribe to them; or if they did not, their obstinate refusal stands condemned by it in every page.

But “Paul often reasons inconclusively”—a bold charge! and a charge destitute of proof. Now, supposing, without granting, that “he wrote as any other person of his turn of mind and thinking, and in his situation, would have written, without any particular inspiration,” it is but reasonable to say that the number of his converts and of the churches founded by him was very consider-

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able; and that they imbibed his sentiments, to a great degree at least, appears from his writings addressed to many of them. Now, upon what principle of reason and equity can we gather that *Ebion* and his adherents, holding contrary opinions, deserve the honour of being better qualified to rectify our judgments concerning points of the greatest importance in Christianity, in preference to St Paul and the churches founded by him? Were the *Nazarenes* infallible? or did *Ebion* ever reason inconclusively? Was the church at Jerusalem infallible? or were their pastors *more con-*

*clusive* reasoners than Paul? If they were, upon what principle? if not, why impeach *his* apostolic teaching in particular, (in which we may presume he sometimes *reasoned*,) and degrade his abilities? The truth is, St Paul was a wise master-builder, who laid the foundation of many churches, and edified them in the most holy faith by his preaching and his pen. From Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, *he fully preached* the gospel of Christ. He was sent by Christ himself to *open men's eyes*, and to turn them from darkness to light, through mighty signs and wonders, *by the power of the Spirit* of God. He was an apostle, (not of men, *neither by man*, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father,) and certified his converts that the gospel he preached was not after man; for he saith, "I neither received it of *man*, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Upon the whole, for any one to prefer a few obscure accounts of a few obscure persons to the accounts we have of the commission, authority; principles, and reasonings of this man of God, by which to form our judgments concerning true Christianity, appears to me like a person who should prefer a heterogeneous mixture of *iron and clay* to pure gold; and then, to make his wisdom appear more consummate, that he should, after having once made the choice, rummage all the musty scraps of antiquity for something that may help to stamp a current value on it, and to depreciate what has been thus renounced. In reality, the Nazarenes were *ignorant* of the true nature of the gospel: whatever *instructions* they were favoured with, they had made little *proficiency* in the school of Christ; else why should they be so tenacious of what *all the apostles* laboured to dispossess them of?—why attempt to build again what they had unanimously, and by Divine direction, been pulling down? I forbear enlarging; but disinterested observers of what is going on among us will be ready to exclaim—"Surely

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we may congratulate the *humility* (if we cannot the wisdom) of the eighteenth century, so famous for many other interesting and memorable exploits, while we behold its 'most rational divines,' after struggling for liberty, and improving science, commencing, with no small complacency, the obsequious disciples of these obscure, ignorant, anti-apostolic Nazarenes and Ebionites!"\*

\* The following passage, from a late learned and acute Reviewer of the "History of Corruption," &c., appears to me so just, and so much to the purpose, that I cannot forbear transcribing it:—"But an indifferent reader may, perhaps, stop the disputants in this career of controversy, and ask them of what importance it is to the main object of the debate between them, to know what the opinions of these Nazarenes were; especially as it is a point agreed upon between both, that these Nazarenes, whatever their principles of faith might have been, were ignorant and bigoted observers of the Mosaic law, which both the orthodox and heretics acknowledge to have been abrogated by the death of Christ? Do *they* stand so high in the scale of authority, that we should appeal to them in the decision which respected the nature and person of Jesus Christ? What is gained on the one hand, and what is lost on the other, by settling this dispute, supposing it capable of being settled at all? A very proper question! And the answer we shall make to it is this: That though the believers in the pre-existence of Christ have a thousand testimonies to appeal to in proof of their faith, yet this seems to be the *last resort* of the Socinian, when he is called on to produce authority for his principles in the primitive ages. Deprive the Socinian of this *twig of antiquity*, and he is ready to make the same lamentable outcry that was made by Micah in old times—"You have taken away my gods, in whom I trusted, and what have I more?"

"The argument drawn out in form is the following:—The first Christians were called Nazarenes: those who afterwards went by that name were their genuine followers; but those succeeding Nazarenes did not believe that Jesus Christ had a pre-existent nature: *therefore* it was not a doctrine believed by the first Christians, because the later Nazarenes transmitted their opinions (at least on *this* head) in their original purity, without the adulterations of those who were afterwards called orthodox.

"There are many things in this argument which may be doubted, and some which may be denied. If the Nazarenes were the members of the original Church of Christ, and the genuine followers of the apostles, how came they so far to counteract the design of the Christian institution as to mix with the ordinances of the gospel the abrogated ceremonies of the Mosaic law? Was such conduct in any respect authorised by the New Testament? Was it not in direct opposition both to the conduct and instructions of the apostle Paul? We know what *such* a Nazarene as Toland would say on this subject; but what would Dr Priestley say? If the Nazarenes were people of such low and carnal sentiments, so weak in their understandings, and so superstitious in their practices, can we deem them fit authorities to be appealed to, in contradiction to the concurrent testimony of the most eminent lights of the primitive Church? If, in points of practice, in which the laws delivered for their direction were so clear and definite, they still pertinaciously adhered to old and exploded customs, which the gospel had rendered totally useless, is it a matter of any surprise that they should have fallen into some errors of faith, and maintained, with an obstinacy

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Wishing that you may possess an abundant measure of the Divine teaching promised in the sacred oracles, to lead you into all truth,—that you may have peace in believing,—that you may be found in Christ Jesus, not having your own righteousness, which is of the law,—and, finally, that you may be replenished with the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, I am, Reverend Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

EDWARD WILLIAMS.  
OSWESTRY, *February* 1790.

peculiar to their race, some of the false prejudices of the Jews relating to the nature and qualifications of the Messiah?

“For our part, we are ready to confess, that if the Nazarenes were, with the Ebionites, given up to the Socinians, who are so eager to claim them as their elder brethren, we do not perceive the very great advantage they would gain by such an acquisition.

“Dr Priestley is not always careful to keep clear of *gratuitous* assertion. It is a compendious method of argument; but unless it comes from an *oracle*, we have a right to admit, or reject it, just as we please. ‘No person,’ says he, ‘can, I think, reflect upon this subject with proper seriousness without thinking it a little remarkable that the Jewish Christians, in so early an age as they are spoken of, should be acknowledged to believe nothing either of the divinity, or even of the pre-existence of Christ, if either of those doctrines had been taught them by the apostles.’ On the same mode of reasoning, and with equal propriety, we might say—‘It is a little extraordinary that the Jewish Christians should have continued such adherents to the rituals of the Mosaic law, if they *had* been explicitly taught that they were abrogated by the death of Christ. Can we suppose any who owned the truth of the gospel to have remained ignorant of the grand design of its promulgation, if that design had been properly delineated and explained? Or could they have persevered in an obstinate resistance to it, if it had been enforced by proper authority? These were the standards of *ancient simplicity!* at least simplicity of *Christian doctrine*; though the veil of Moses was over their faces, and the yoke of the old law fettered their necks!’—*Monthly Review*, vol. lxi., p. 219, &c.

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## A LETTEE TO MR DAVID LEVI,

RECOMMENDING THIS WORK\* TO HIS CANDID AND  
ATTENTIVE PERUSAL.

DEAR SIR,—What I observed to your late antagonist, Dr Priestley, in my preceding letter to him, respecting my principal motive in addressing him in the manner I have done, is applicable also in general to the present address. It is not intended to provoke your polemic pen, but to solicit a favour. Since you profess a sincere love of truth, and an openness to conviction, your *candid and attentive perusal* of the volumes herewith sent you, is amicably requested.

The Epistle here commented upon was *originally designed* for your nation, the Hebrews; not only for the edification of those who had embraced the gospel, but also for the conviction of such as continued to reject it. This being its primary designation, and it being, as I firmly believe, divinely revealed, I can no less than importunately and affectionately recommend it to you and your

friends, as an instrument chosen by Infinite Wisdom, admirably calculated, when rightly understood, to subserve your best and everlasting interest.

The writer of it was a Hebrew of the Hebrews; in the former part of his life zealous for the law, in your view of its import: he was a strict Pharisee, and no small proficient in the learning of the Jews, as well as their religion. Nor did he embrace the

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\* [Dr Owen's Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as abridged by Dr Williams.—Ed.]

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Christian faith, which I venture to call the accomplishment and *perfection* of the Jewish, but upon the clearest evidence and strongest conviction that the mind of man, in matters of this nature, is, perhaps, capable of. He was well qualified to form an estimate of both; and the result was, upon the most deliberate review, that he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord. This, it is true, brought upon him the odium of his countrymen, as if he were an apostate from the religion of their forefathers; whereas, in reality, no man, after his embracing the gospel, better understood wherein the life and glory of that religion consisted. No man had a higher veneration for the Divine authority of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the exalted character of Moses. What he before thought to be quite inconsistent—the legislation of Moses, and the Messiahship of Jesus Christ—appeared now, as indeed they are, perfectly reconcilable.

His writings in general, as well as this epistle, are characterised not only by a depth, compactness, and force of argument, but also by an admirable spirit of *benevolence*. So powerfully did this Divine principle operate in his virtuous and holy mind, that it breaks forth into language inimitably strong and pathetic. (See Rom. ix 1–5.) Lest any should imagine that his adherence to the Christian cause was the effect of bigotry,—that he was only a violent party man,—he declares in the most solemn terms, that for the love he bore to his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh, he could even submit, were that available, to the same treatment from the Christian Church as he had received from the Jewish.

The subject of this epistle is peculiarly interesting. It treats of a religious controversy of great magnitude; indeed, I may say, the greatest controversy that ever existed in the Church of God, and in which you and your brethren are concerned in a direct and immediate manner. This is another reason that induces me to solicit your attention to this work, in your professed capacity of an impartial inquirer.

But there is reason to fear that we are very liable to mistake the true nature of this controversy; and while we labour under that mistake, it is no wonder that our prejudices are strengthened in favour of our own tenets, right or wrong, while affronted truth, indignant, eludes our disappointed grasp. Though the question,

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Whether Jesus Christ be the true Messiah? be to Jews and Christians, if properly weighed, infinitely momentous; yet, in my apprehension, it is a question too complicated, or not sufficiently radical, for an accurate inquirer to begin with. If I may presume to offer my thoughts on this important subject, the *previous* question ought to be, not, Whether any part of the Old Testament ought to be attacked and renounced, as if not given by Divine authority? but, *What is the TRUE IMPORT of the Old Testament system?* Was it given with a *subordinate* design, with a view to introduce a dispensation of a more *spiritual* form, or was it not? Are the Messiah's kingdom, and its grand blessings, as represented in the ancient promises, and by the spirit of prophecy, of a temporary and perishing, or of a *permanent and eternal* nature? Before we can, therefore, properly agitate the question about the *person* of the Messiah, we ought, as regular investigators and controvertists, for the sake of lessening the labour, to come to a previous issue concerning—*What kind of a Messiah* the ancient records hold forth? What is the nature of the *work* there assigned for Him? Do His offices relate only to this transitory life, or do they respect redemption from moral evil and everlasting-misery? If the former, you are in the right; but if the latter, we bid fair for being so.

I may here observe, that you stand, in a sense, the representative of your English brethren, while publishing and defending *that sense* of the Old Testament writings which this epistle undertakes to prove is the *wrong* sense of them. St Paul's *interpretation* of the

Holy Scripture, and *yours*, are diametrically opposite. This consideration also, in connexion with my idea of Paul's knowledge, disposition, and abilities, induces me to call your closest attention to his different method of explaining the sacred oracles. And may the God of all grace lead you into all truth! By the knowledge of His merciful and sovereign pleasure in His various dispensations, may you effectually learn wherein consists the true kingdom of God!

With respect to the *exposition* of this epistle, by the learned and pious Dr Owen, together with the *exercitations*, they contain, in my opinion, a full reply to everything of moment contained in your late publications in favour of Judaism. Without reflecting on what others have done, I am inclined to think that this work enters more into the merits of the cause than anything you seem to be

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acquainted with, as far as I can judge from your writings. Will you excuse me if I here add, that I am satisfied, from the idea I have of the general tendency of this work, and a truly religious character, that were your progenitor Abraham on the land of the living to peruse it, he would subjoin his *heartly amen*.

When I consider your notion of the Messiah's kingdom, and of the *unanimity* of His subjects, I am aware of your being ready to object to *every* proposal from a Christian, be it what it may, as in your first letters:—"To convert a nation, such as the Jews, to Christianity, the professors thereof ought to be *unanimous* in what the work of salvation consists, otherwise they might be deterred therefrom, by reason of the difficulty attending the making a proper choice of that which is right."\* That is, if there be any force in the objection, you will be right in rejecting Christianity because Christians differ in their judgment about the particulars of their religion. But how unreasonable, how preposterous the requisition! Do any Christians differ about Jesus being the Messiah? No. Give us then the meeting *thus far* before you object to less general differences. If you expect such unanimity among uninspired men in the present state, before you grant them leave to recommend their religion to their fellow-men, as of Divine original, you must suppose them to be mere machines, that do not act by free choice. On this principle it is impossible that there ever should be unanimity among men. For just with the same reason may every

individual object, of whatever religion—Christian, Jewish, Moham-  
 medan, or heathen. It is the same as to say, I will never embrace  
 truth until all who profess it act a worthy part; I will never aim  
 at being truly religious until all others are so first; I will have  
 nothing to do with *any truth* but what acts mechanically on all  
 who *profess* it, producing in them a uniform good effect, whether  
 they will or no! But, dear Sir, you seem to expect among the  
 subjects of King Messiah what will never be in this world, and  
 which God has never promised. That those of the same general  
 denomination are not “agreed among themselves” in some par-  
 ticulars is so far from being a characteristic mark of a false  
 religion that it is in reality no more than the natural, and, in the  
 present imperfect state, the unavoidable result of human freedom.  
 It is acknowledged by yourself, that “conscience ought to be free;”  
 that is, I presume, in every state under the reign of the Messiah

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\* Letters to Dr Priestley, p. 72.

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not excepted. Men, in the present state, are fallible and account-  
 able, consequently no mere profession of the sublimest truths  
 conceivable can insure unanimity. Modern Judaism is either  
*right* or *wrong*, notwithstanding the petty jars among its pro-  
 fessors; and the same is true of Christianity.

Reflecting further on your views of religion, liberty of conscience,  
 and charity, I can easily conceive how uninteresting must appear  
 to you any attempt at conversion, whether by Jews or Christians.  
 “We do not,” say you, “think ourselves bound, as the Christians,  
 to *propagate* our religion,” not even “by *arguments*.” Singular  
 and frigid sentiment! and not less singular the ground on which  
 it stands; for, concerning mankind, who are not Jews, you observe,  
 “If they do but keep the *law of nature*, that is, the *seven precepts*  
 of the sons of Noah, or Noachides, we maintain that they thereby  
 perform all that God requires of them, and will certainly, *by this*  
*service*, render themselves acceptable to Him.”\* These you call  
 the *pious* of the nations of the world, who will be partakers of  
*eternal life!* The seven precepts are these:—“First, Not to  
 commit idolatry. Second, Not to blaspheme. Third, To appoint  
 and constitute just and upright judges, that justice may be main-  
 tained, and impartially administered to all. Fourth, Not to com-

mit incest. Fifth, Not to commit murder. Sixth, Not to rob, or steal, &c. Seventh, Not to eat a member of a living creature.” Alas, alas! if Noah and his sons had *no better* ground of hope of *eternal life* than arose from their performance of *this service*, they could no more have quieted the accusations of conscience, or abated the horrors of an eternal existence with a holy and just God, than they could avert the stroke of death, or suspend the laws of nature! Is *this* your view of religion and the Divine dispensations? The absurdity is almost unparalleled, and wants a name. Blessed be God for the gospel!

“If you are really in earnest,” say you to Dr Priestley, “and wish to convert the Jews to what you call Christianity, I think you must produce more substantial proofs in support of your hypothesis than what you have yet done. And, if I might presume to offer my opinion in so weighty a cause, I think that the fairest method, and that which is the likeliest to lead to conviction on either side, is to take a review of *all the prophecies* concerning the Messiah, from Moses to Malachi, and compare them with the

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\* Letters to Dr Priestley, p. 12.

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acts of Jesus, recorded in the New Testament, to see whether or no they have been fulfilled in his person.”\* I must confess that this method, as far as it goes, (for it includes *only* the prophetic part of the ancient oracles.) appears to me, under the limitations before observed, a good one, and doubt not but that it meets with the approbation of all liberal Christians. Nay, Jesus Himself recommends it:—“Search the Scriptures, for they are they that testify of me.” And as you announce such a design, it may be of service to you to weigh very carefully what Dr Owen has done this way in the Exercitations; and if you should think him not sufficiently minute in the abridgment, you would do well to consult the original edition. But excuse me, dear Sir, if on this occasion I drop a monitory hint,—viz., that you *deal fairly*, and draw no conclusions which are not justified by a thorough knowledge of the subject, and a comprehensive view of it. Without this we cannot be said to *investigate* the meaning of Scripture, but to trifle with it to our own ruin. Happy were it for us all if nothing but the clear evidence of truth, arising from an acquaint-

ance sufficiently extensive with any controverted subject, determined our choice! The happy effects would be more humility, (that valuable, though old-fashioned virtue,) more moderation, and less premature triumph in disputants, more industry in seeking, and peace in enjoying truth.

But to what end is it to *examine prophecies*, while you examine them by the following standard? “*We hold the perpetuity* of the law of Moses, and to which nothing is to be added or diminished by any succeeding prophet whatever.”† If this were granted you as an *axiom*, (but which I call a *fundamental error*,) you would make quick work with all the prophecies as well as the gospel. But while you hold this opinion, you hold what I think can never be proved, what the law neither requires nor intends, what is highly affronting to God himself, and destructive to the souls of men. Were Moses upon earth, he would, perhaps, be the first to contradict your interpretation of his words. We maintain with Paul, what is, I think, demonstrated in the following epistle and exposition, that it is not by a *different authority* from that which enacted the law that it is repealed; and surely it must be absurd to contend (while His own declarations do not oblige) that a local, ceremonial institution cannot be abrogated by the Supreme Law-

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\* Letters to Dr Priestley, p. 90. † Second Letters, p. 56.

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giver. That the “apostles inculcated the *abolishment* of the Mosaical dispensation” is very true; and it is equally true that it was at first given with that design. And has not Providence incontestably confirmed their doctrine? Has it not rendered the observance of the Mosaic law absolutely impossible? If we hold with the apostles, “that the law of Moses cannot effect the justification of mankind,” it is, because we believe and prove that it was never given for that end, never effected for that purpose, and is, in its own nature, incapable of it. We do not reject the law, nor did the apostles, as if it were not holy, just, and good in its *proper place*; it is good as a schoolmaster, but not as a Saviour—as a mirror of the Divine will, and the rule of human obedience for the time, and to the end of its appointment. And we confidently add, that the Mosaic law is more truly and effectually honoured by every true Christian, than by any Jew in the world; for if the

grand end of it, in its covenant form, be answered in the life and death of Christ, and if the ceremonial part of it be *repealed* by the united voice of the gospel and of Providence, (both which we maintain to be facts,) our conduct must be more honourable to the law and the Lawgiver than yours can be; and obstinately to adhere to a *repealed* law, is but a slender proof of respect to the legislative authority. Besides, the apostles were taught this very doctrine from the words of Jeremiah, (chap. xxxi. 31–34.) and other prophetic testimonies, as well as from the nature of the Jewish economy and Divine direction. That “God never contradicts Himself,” we readily believe; which is a strong reason, among others, obliging us to receive Jesus as the Christ of God; for we think that if He is not the *Messiah*, we have nothing left us but a heap of contradictions, as the venerable author here recommended to you abundantly shews. On your supposition, we think, neither promises, prophecies, sacrifices, characteristic notes of the Messiah, nor His principal offices, to save from sin and misery, have any meaning; and we apprehend that your interpretation must be at every step subversive of itself.

You, indeed, frankly acknowledge, that “if Christ’s *divinity* is false, and he did not come to suffer for the *redemption* of mankind, as Christians hold, he came for nothing.”\* When we hear such language, we cannot help inquiring, What *better work* have you for *your* expected Messiah? Or in what *better manner* can

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\* Second Letters, p. 12.

you conceive of a redemption to be brought to men, than that which is exhibited in the New Testament? Is there any enemy worse than *sin*, or any better method of deliverance from it than what we maintain? If *motives* are required, what can we desire, or even conceive of, more forcible and engaging? And that the Mediator of the new covenant does not authorise *external force* to procure uniformity of sentiments and worship, is so far from being a defect, that it must appear to every considerate mind perfectly consistent with all just views of human nature, man’s designation in this state of trial, and the Divine perfections. If men act a part unworthy of the best means, while they profess an adherence to them, this no more argues the deficiency of those means than it

would argue the badness of the seventh command, and the Mosaic legislation, because a professed Jew commits adultery. As to the insinuation, that the New Testament recommends our going after *other Gods*—because the *divinity* of Christ, as you justly contend, is taught by the apostles; or, that He is God manifest in the flesh, as if the apostles and their followers taught *another* God than the God of Abraham, is a calumny that must be answered for before Him who says, “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

You are pleased to say, that you are “*a Jew* by choice, and not because you are born a Jew.”\* And I am happy to say, that I am a *Christian* by choice, and not because I was born a Christian. But one of us must be certainly *wrong* with respect to the point of difference, which, if there be any truth in religion at all, is a point of infinite importance. While our views of religion are so directly opposite, *both* of us cannot have *clear evidence* that we are right. How dear your religion is to you I cannot tell; but this I can say, that, according to my habitual feelings, I would not exchange for ten thousand worlds, were they at my disposal. I would not exchange *my present peace of mind*, which is the pure effect of the religion I embrace, as held forth in the New Testament, independent of the *eternal weight of glory* it exhibits to be enjoyed hereafter, for all the advantages that your most sanguine hopes can imagine, as attending the appearance of another Messiah. And my satisfaction is derived as well from the *Old Testament* as the *New*,—the writings of Moses, as well as those of Paul; for the mercy of God, through the Mediator and His atoning sacrifice,

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\* Letters, p. 91.

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explicit or implied, shines in every page, in both I find pardon, peace, righteousness, and life; grace reigning through righteousness, unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth a propitiation for sin, in order to *declare His righteousness*, that He might be *just*, and the *justifier* of him who believeth in Jesus. And Dr Owen undertakes, in this performance, to demonstrate, that for any of Adam’s race to be pardoned and made happy with God for ever, without such a provision, is utterly inconsistent,—even taking the Old Testament only for our *data*,—utterly incon-

sistent with all just apprehensions of the attributes of Jehovah; and we defy all the world fairly to disprove his conclusion. But, alas! what a light and insignificant thing is the *demonstration*, of a Christian in the scales of a Jew! I can easily conceive that the human mind (such is the darkness and degeneracy of our fallen nature) is capable of admitting the bare *opinions* of friends to be of greater weight and authority than the *demonstrations* of others. Hence we may learn to adore the *sovereignty of Divine grace* in every instance of a cordial submission to the truth of God. If men hear not Moses and the prophets, in their testimony for Jesus, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead—*as He has actually done.*

Dear Sir, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. May the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by His effectual grace, bring you to know His eternal truth! How differently would you then judge of the evil and demerit of sin, and of the need of a real atoning sacrifice to secure the honour of the Divine government! How infinitely desirable would then appear a Saviour from the power and love of iniquity, and from a fatal security under its dominion and deceitfulness! With what concern would you then regard the folly of that interpretation of the lively oracles which confines the work of the promised Messiah to this short life, the life of a mere mortal, and a small spot of this globe! Seriously reflect, dear Sir, how unworthy of God, how inadequate to the real wants of an immortal mind, and how inconsistent with the whole tenor of Divine revelation, as well as absolutely contrary to the clearest passages, must such an interpretation be.—I am, dear Sir, your sincere well-wisher,

EDWARD WILLIAMS.

OSWESTRY, *February* 1790.

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## LETTERS ON SALIFICATION,

WRITTEN TO A FRIEND.

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## LETTER I.

ON THE IMPORTANCE AND NATURE OF SANCTIFICATION.  
 DEAR FRIEND,—You desire my thoughts on sanctification. Surely no subject of greater *importance* can ever employ our thoughts, our tongues, or our pens. It is recommended to our most attentive consideration, most affectionate regard, and unwearied pursuit, by the glorious character of God himself, “whose nature is all holiness;” by the personal perfection and spotless example of Jesus Christ, who even in *our world* was “holy, harmless, and undefiled,” and whose greatest excellence it was to be so. To this interesting point all the means of grace invariably tend. This is the merciful aim of all the dispensations of religion and providence towards the Church. From its aptness to promote our sanctification is faith itself so useful and excellent. “Purifying their hearts by faith,” (Acts xv. 9.)

Indeed, the subject on which you request my thoughts is powerfully recommended, as of the utmost moment, by the consideration of our *true happiness*. *Purity of heart* and real *blessedness* are inseparable companions. By sanctification the soul is led to, and qualified for, the happiness of heaven; and while it restores to us the moral image of our Maker, it serves as a blessed medium of communion with Him, both now and to eternity. If we expect this privilege and attainment in any eminent measure, let us ever

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listen to the voice of God sounding in His Word and in our hearts: “Be ye holy, for I am holy,” (1 Pet. i. 15, 16.)

But though the importance of sanctification be evident, there is no small danger in mistaking its *nature*. Not only the world in general, but many professors of godliness, are quite mistaken about it. The scriptures that treat of it are but too often misinterpreted; and the best of men, while off their guard, have been biased in their opinions on this head, as on many others, according as they have connected it with some peculiar favourite sentiment.

The subject, therefore, being important, and the danger of mistaking its nature great, your request and my compliance appear fully justifiable, in attempting to form and communicate clear and scriptural ideas upon it. But as this doctrine is one of the *deep*

*things of God*, I am sensible that success in treating it, as well as the blessing in pursuing it, depends on the Father of lights, *the only wise God* our Saviour. Let us both look up to Him, then, that He would impart to our minds that ray of wisdom which may dispel our sinful darkness, and favour us with that *unction* which teacheth all things. "Who teacheth like Him?" He can prepare the mind and form the disposition, as well as impart the real truth. He has the key of all valuable knowledge and experience; nor is He ever backward in communicating the blessings we need, until we are first wanting to ourselves in seeking. "Seek, and ye shall find."

For a profitable view of the subject under consideration, there seem to be two principal questions that claim attention:—*What is evangelical sanctification in itself?* and, *What is the most effectual and direct method of obtaining it, as far as our duty is concerned?* The former of these questions, though very important, does not require much room on my paper; but the latter, because it refers to duty and daily practice, and enters into the very heart of experimental religion and a life of communion with God, will require a larger space. Happy shall your correspondent feel himself if he can offer anything to your satisfaction on these points from the Word of God and his own experience!

To *sanctify* is to *set apart for God*; and the nature of that separation for God is principally determined by the nature of the *subject* so set apart. To sanctify a place or thing, as the tabernacle or temple and their furniture of old, and to sanctify the soul, differ as much as the natures of those things differ one from

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another. The one is external and ceremonial; the other internal and spiritual. In a word, to *sanctify* is to *make holy*; but that holiness which is effected is as different in its nature as the *capacity* of the subject which is made holy, and the *design* of God in effecting it. The sanctification which you inquire after is that of the human soul; that which is *evangelical*, and not ceremonial, or merely legal; that which is the work of the Spirit, and not the offspring of nature; that which is wrought in God's elect, and not the partial change of apostates or pharisees; that which makes no pretensions to absolute perfection in this life, but always admits of improvements in the use of means. And this may be

defined in brief, “A gradual restoration of a sinful soul to the image of God.”

On this definition permit me to make a few remarks. You perceive it presupposes that the soul is previously in an *unholy* and depraved state; and that there is a gracious *provision* made to effect its restoration. When I say *gradual*, it is to distinguish it from *regeneration*, which is instantaneous, as all who attend to the sacred oracles, and the nature of the change, well know. The one is the *communication* of life; the other its *advancement*. The one supposes the subject *wholly* passive; the other both passive and active, as the *advancement* of our natural life depends partly on the sovereign will and agency of God, and partly on our own use of means through His assistance, while its *origin* depends wholly and exclusively on God.

Thus, my dear friend, the *nature* of sanctification is, I hope, sufficiently plain to you. And you will easily perceive, that, when the Scripture says, “This is the will of God, even your sanctification,” the meaning is, it is the will of God that you should be separated from sin and the world, made holy, or gradually restored to His moral image; conformed to His law, will, and holy nature, by *loving* Him *above* all, and *in* all, and serving Him faithfully, diligently, and constantly. For this end was the Sacred Word given, and all *ordinances* appointed. For this end, Christ came into our world, and loved the Church to the death of the cross, “that He might sanctify and cleanse it, and present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” For this end were the elect chosen, “that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love; through sanctification of the Spirit and

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belief of the truth.” For this the saints have ardently panted and prayed, that their “whole spirit and soul and body might be sanctified wholly, and preserved blameless.”

But the grand point which demands our chief attention is, *the method of obtaining it*; or, as before stated, “What is the most effectual and direct method of obtaining it, as far as our duty is concerned?” This is the holy *art*, if you will excuse the expression, to which we should bend our utmost efforts. And we should be exceedingly cautious not to rest in it as a *theory*, or mere science,

however sublime its end, or excellent its nature. The limits of this letter, however, will not permit me to proceed at present; but if you will indulge me with the freedom, on some future day, you may expect my thoughts on that very interesting question. In the meantime, let us be looking, with ardent and glowing pleasure, to the uncreated Source of life and holiness, that we may be making constant progress in this great work, according to the knowledge we have attained.—I remain, yours, &c.,

E. W.

## LETTER II.

### ON THE REQUISITES AND MEANS OF SANCTIFICATION.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—In my former epistle concerning *sanctification*, on which you requested my thoughts, I made some remarks, tending to shew *what it is in its own nature*; and promised to resume the subject in reference to another question of the utmost moment—viz., *What is the most effectual and direct method of obtaining it, as far as our duty is concerned?* In other words, What is that method which Divine wisdom prescribes, and the best experience of the saints approves, as the most sure and speedy for obtaining evangelical sanctification? And truly glad shall I be, if any remarks of mine prove in any measure serviceable to you, on a subject so interesting. But as the method of communicating our ideas by words ought, in some cases, to resemble those works in which what is first and principal in design is last in execution, excuse me if this mode be now adopted which, no doubt, will eventually prove more to your satisfaction than any other.

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If we would be holy in our *obedience*, it is indispensably requisite that we *love* it in all its branches. Love is the grand principle of all acceptable and holy service. The real character and denomination of all outward observances and works must be sought from the inward principle, and nothing short of love can be acceptable. To perform a service without a love and liking to it, is truly slavish; it is to perform it from selfish motives, or for ignoble ends. Can anything but love make the yoke of Christ easy, and His burden light? Can anything short of this render

His commandments otherwise than grievous? Is there anything but love that can make us take up our cross daily, with sweet submission and holy cheerfulness? It is our *duty* to approve of, and acquiesce in all the Divine dispensations concerning ourselves and others; in all the trials imposed, in all the precepts enjoined, and in all the sufferings endured. But can anything without love enable us to bear those trials and sufferings, or thus to acquiesce and approve? It is our *duty* to rejoice in tribulations; but is there any probability that this will take place if the heart be not influenced by love? And indeed to suppose otherwise, is to contradict all reason and analogy. If any one offered to render you the service of a friend, and you knew it was for sinister ends or from selfish motives, would you be pleased with his pretensions? Surely not; his offers would be despised, and his hypocritical pretensions detested.

Again; as all obedience that is holy and acceptable must proceed from love to the duties themselves, so it must be founded on love to the *lawgiver* or institutor of those duties. All duties being ultimately of God's appointment, love to *them* implies love to Him who made them to be what they are. The reason why duties are loved, if loved aright, is *because* they are *holy, just, and good*; answering to, and commensurate with the law which bears that character. But if so, the Lawgiver Himself must be loved supremely, because He is supremely excellent, holy, just, and good.

Moreover, as *holy* obedience implies love to God, because truly and supremely excellent, so it implies that this love has for its object *everything* in God, or done by Him. For He *has* nothing which is not infinitely excellent; and He *does* nothing which is not worthy of Himself. His operations in grace, providence, and nature, are good in themselves, in their tendency, motive, and end.

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Therefore, He must be loved, not only in His goodness and mercy, but also in His power, justice, judgments, works, and ways; in all we suffer from His appointments, as well as all we *enjoy* from His bounty. This, my friend, is a difficult lesson to learn while we are in the present state; and yet nothing can be more true, (as plainly follows from what was now said,) than that the man whose

real experience does not answer to it, is in the same degree *un-sanctified*.

From hence it is plain, that in order to a right performance of these holy duties, and to be evangelically sanctified, we must possess what the Psalmist prayed for—*a clean heart and a right spirit*. The human mind, since the original apostasy, is *carnal*; the carnal mind is *enmity* against God, and therefore is not *subject* to the law of God, nor indeed can be. And this implies that it is averse from spiritual duties, which the law prescribes and requires, and will not perform them further than self is gratified and served. Whereas there must be, as before shewn, a pleasure and holy delight in the service itself, to render our obedience acceptable. In proportion as a man is truly sanctified, he can say from genuine experience, “I delight in the law of God after the inward man,” (Rom. vii. 22.) The sin of our nature is a tree *deeply rooted*, and grows with widely-spreading branches; and to aim at evangelical sanctification by the performance of a few or even all outward duties, without this inward principle of renovation, is equally unsuccessful as an attempt to root up a sturdy oak by lopping off its branches. It is to expect a large and fair crop from a barren soil; grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles; or, if you please, a burning focus from the moon. First, then, *make the tree good* before you expect that the fruit will be so.

Now, the question remains, What are the divinely-appointed *means* which we are to use for obtaining this Divine principle? St Peter answers, (2 Pet i. 4,) “To us are given exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature.” He was here addressing the Jews, who had been long favoured with the promises, as recorded in the Old Testament, but who did not fully understand their nature, use, or preciousness. And the promises he refers to more especially, are those which relate to the Messiah, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and life eternal. The *end* of all dispensations and means of grace in the present state is *a participation of a God-like nature, righteous-*

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ness, and true holiness; and this end is accomplished only by receiving Christ, the Spirit, and immortal life, conveyed by the promises. And their preciousness arises principally from the value of the blessings conveyed; the advantageous and easy terms on

which these are to be enjoyed—viz., by faith; and the certain, solid, and blessed *effects* produced by them in the believer. But to *whom* are these promises given? *To us*,—to you and me, my friend. *To us* God *hath* given, and *still* giveth eternal life, in and with His Son, by way of grant; not *because* we *are* sanctified, but that thereby we *may* be sanctified.

The Scripture assures us that by *believing* on the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be *saved*. Now, salvation implies and includes holiness and sanctification. Without holiness and purity of heart, none shall see God, or be saved; but by believing we shall be *saved*, and, therefore, *sanctified*. Now, believing on Christ being but *one* uniform, continued act and exercise of the mind and heart, and not divers, it must be necessarily understood to mean *such* a believing as derives *virtue* from Him. “Abide in *me*,” says Christ; that is, Continue to *believe* in me. To what end? That you may bear fruit; that *hereby* you may derive life, the constant influence of my love and grace; that *hereby* you may become strong and vigorous, comfortable in your own souls, and fit to promote my glory. If faith apply not to Him for this very purpose, it remaineth *alone*, as a barren speculation. If it seek only *happiness* as the *end*, whatever that happiness be called,—salvation, everlasting rest, glory, &c.,—and not *sanctification* as the means for attaining it, no other evidence is necessary to prove that the supposed faith is not a saving grace, but ignorant presumption. That cannot be the faith of God’s elect, and what the gospel requires, which inverts the Divine order. Besides, Christ is made to us *sanctification*,—the procuring and *influencing* cause of it,—no less than righteousness.

I must not close my epistle without observing, that, as by the promises Christ and all His benefits are conveyed and received by faith, for the express purpose of sanctification, in order to future glory; so faith must regard Christ with the express design of being habitually *united* to Him as our living head, because all vital acts in us presuppose vital influence from Christ, and proceed from it; and all vital influence presupposes a mystical union with Christ. To receive influence is a part of communication,

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which cannot be without previous union. “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same

bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing," (John xv. 5.) Faith, as a *sanctifying* principle, therefore, unites the soul to Christ.

At present I must conclude, with sincerest wishes and earnest prayer that you, and all the disciples of Jesus, may have a daily increase of that faith which receives from His fulness all mercy to pardon and grace to help. On some future occasion you may expect my thoughts on the *manner how* faith seeks union to Christ, and satisfaction from Him.\*—In the meantime, I remain, yours, &c.,

E. W.

May 1795.

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\* [If this purpose was ever carried into effect, the Editor, after the most diligent search, has been unable to recover the letter here promised.—ED.]

## REVIEW

### OF

## STEWART'S PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS.\*

1. IN offering to the public the volume here announced, Mr Stewart has gratified a large portion of private friends, and raised the expectations of philosophers in general. Considering the respectability of the author's character, his long continuance in the walks of literature and science, the official capacity he has sustained as university lecturer, his unremitting attention to the objects of his profession, and his uncommon powers of discrimination on subjects the most minute and abstruse which relate to the human mind and its operations, fully evince with what deference the public ought to receive what he presents to their attention. His works abounding with philosophical criticisms, and those criticisms, in general, delivered with the candour of a highly-cultivated mind, is another consideration why the work before us should be approached with the utmost respect.

2. The volume consists of two parts, and a preliminary dissertation. The chief aim of the dissertation is "to correct some prevailing mistakes with respect to the philosophy of the human

mind.” One of these mistakes is the supposition that it is previously necessary to ascertain the materialism or immaterialism of the human system, in order to make proficiency in the philosophy of the human mind; whereas matter, as well as mind, is known

\* [This Review of the first series of Mr Dugald Stewart’s well-known Essays was written, and then corrected with care, by Dr Williams. From that revised manuscript it was copied by another hand, evidently for publication; but in what form I have no means of ascertaining. It does not appear to have been prepared for a periodical. While complete in itself, it is clear it is only the first part of a critique on Mr Stewart’s entire volume; see p. 545.—ED.]

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to us by its *qualities* alone, and we are equally ignorant of the *essence* of either,” (p. ii.) “For my part,” observes the Professor, “I have no scruple to say, that I consider the physiological problem in question [how our different mental operations are produced by means of vibrations, and other changes in the state of the *sensorium*] as one of those which are likely to remain for ever among the *arcana* of nature; nor am I afraid of being contradicted by any competent and candid judge, how sanguine, however, may be his hopes concerning the progress of human discovery, when I assert that it has hitherto eluded completely all the efforts which have been made towards its solution,” (p. iii, &c.) The philosophical inference that our author would draw from this conviction is, that, “laying aside all hypothesis, we should apply ourselves to collect such facts as may lead us in due time to the only satisfactory conclusions we have much chance of ever forming concerning the connexion between mind and body—the discovery of some general laws by which their connexion is regulated,” (p. viii.)

3. P. viii.:—“The circumstance which peculiarly characterises the *inductive science of the mind* is, that it professes to abstain from all speculations concerning its nature and essence, confining the attention entirely to phenomena which every individual has it in his power to examine for himself who chooses to exercise the powers of his understanding.” But so much, at least, must be known of the mind’s nature and essence, that it is essentially different from the First Mind, as well as from gross matter, which is the subject of common physical laws. If we do not presuppose it dependent in its nature, limited in its essence, and variable in its operations, in a manner totally different from the wind and the waves, &c., our author supposes that “those conclusions concern-

ing the mind, to which we are fairly led by the method of induction, rest upon a firm and indisputable basis of their own, and are equally compatible with the metaphysical creeds of the materialist and the Berkleian.”

4. As these remarks contain explicitly the author’s object, mode of inquiry, and expectation in the philosophy of mind, we would observe that the terms by which he designates this object of study—“the inductive *science* of mind”—appear to us extremely inapplicable to the nature of the subject. *Science* implies a *certainty* of knowledge, as opposed to what is conjectural and merely hypothetical. But, on the plan proposed, where shall we find even one

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foundation-stone of science? We are to search for “some general laws by which this connexion is regulated.” The question returns, What evidence have we that any such general laws exist as may justify a *scientific* inference? On the contrary, the evidence is not weak against their existence. General laws imply stability and uniformity of operation, so that similar means shall answer similar ends. It is not enough to say that a certain process will “probably” produce the intended result, for probability is not science. Suppose, on the inductive plan of observation, we wish to erect a pyramid of science; let the philosopher cautiously proceed in his observations of certain phenomena which he expects may be resolvable into some general laws. Has he any foundation, either in experience or analogy, for expecting the result of such a general law? But imagine him to succeed ten times successively, his conclusion cannot be called *scientific*, except he has evidence of the ground of *certainty* as well as of the bare facts. Ten thousand coincidences of process and result would not justify the denomination of science, unsupported by the evidence of their *certainty*, as contradistinguished from so many lucky chances.

5. But what shall we say of those philosophical criticisms which dispute the exactness of every statement? Thus, in different minds, different theories on the point in dispute—as the general laws alluded to—would arise, as so many bubbles of air, filling, floating, and bursting in perpetual succession. In point of science, indeed, the advantage is incomparably on the side of the bubbles, for they are the result of fixed and uniform laws. In a word, in order to justify the application of the term *science* to that philo-

sophy of mind for which our author is so strenuous an advocate, it ought to be at least settled that the mind is so fixed and uniform in its operations, at least in some respects, as to be liable to no failure or exception. To call anything science which is capable of being destroyed, is an egregious abuse of terms. An ingenious hypothesis, a plausible theory, a probable conclusion, may be destroyed, but science is *indestructible*.

6. A second prevailing mistake to be corrected is the assumed theory of *association*. This was advanced by Hartley, opposed by Reid, and defended by Priestley. It is not a little curious to hear a determined opposer of philosophical necessity express himself in the following manner:—"The order established in the intellectual world seems to be regulated by laws *perfectly analogous* to those

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which we trace among the phenomena of the material system," (p. xiii.)

7. A third prevailing mistake with respect to the philosophy of the human mind is an attempt to deduce an immense variety of particular phenomena from some general principle or law already acknowledged by philosophers. It is difficult to say why such an attempt, abstractedly considered, should be regarded as an object of censure, since in general physics it has been attended with eminent success, and no good reason appears why some success ought not to be expected in the study of mind. The censure ought to rest on the persons who presume to erect a scientific structure on insufficient data, and who boast of a discovery which they have not made. Devoted as our author is to the example of the Newtonian school, and to the footsteps of those who, disclaiming all pretensions to natural sagacity, aspire to nothing higher than to rise slowly from particular facts to general laws, we may venture to assert that he would have no objection to rise *quickly* from particular facts to general laws when the connexion appeared evident. May not one man, like Newton, "rise from particular facts to general laws" more in one day than another in half a century?

8. As a fourth (which is the last) instance of prevailing mistakes respecting the subject in question, we wish to give the following remarks all the publicity in our power:—P. xxii., "It is a circumstance not a little remarkable that the philosophy of the

mind, although in later times considered as a subject of purely metaphysical research, was classed among the branches of physical science in the ancient enumeration of the objects of human knowledge. The words matter and mind express the two great departments of nature which fall under our notice; and, in the study of both, the only progress we are able to make is by an accurate examination of particular phenomena, and a cautious reference of these to the general laws or rules under which they are comprehended. Accordingly, some modern writers, of the first eminence, have given their decided sanction to this old and almost forgotten classification, in preference to that which has obtained in modern Europe." Mr Smith ("Wealth of Nations," vol. iii., p. 163, &c.) observes "that as the human mind, in whatever its essence may be supposed to consist, is a part of the great system of the universe, and a part, too, productive of the most important effects,

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whatever was taught in the ancient schools of Greece, concerning its nature, made a part of the system of physics." Mr Locke, too, in the concluding chapter of his Essay, proposes, as what seemed to him the most general as well as natural division of the object of our understanding, an arrangement coinciding exactly with that of the ancients, as explained by Mr Smith in the foregoing passage. To these authorities may be added that of Dr Campbell, who observes that "spirit, which here comprises only the Supreme Being and the human soul, is surely as much included under the notion of natural object as body is; and is knowable to the philosopher purely in the same way by observation and experience."

9. On no topic is our author so much at a loss as in giving us his thoughts about metaphysics. We are told that the word metaphysics is of no older date than the publication of Aristotle's works by Andronicus of Rhodes, one of the learned men into whose hands the MSS. of that philosopher fell, after they were brought by Sylla from Athens to Rome. To fourteen books in these MSS., which had no distinguishing title, Andronicus is said to have prefixed the words *τὰ μετὰ τὰ φυσικά*, either to denote the place which they occupied in Aristotle's own arrangement, (immediately after the Physics,) or to point out that which it appeared to the editor they ought to hold in the order of study. This hackneyed story (whether true or false) is wonderfully well adapted to give a diminutive idea

of what the term has been used to express. For, first, it is not nineteen hundred years old; secondly, Andronicus, not Aristotle, was the father of it; and, finally, not the word itself was coined by him, but only the rudiments, or detached materials, from which some other unknown fabricator has ventured to make one long word of it. But, seriously, of what possible disadvantage can either the age or pedigree of a term be to the objects which, from its composition, it is so well qualified to express, especially when, if this term be rejected, there is no other in existence so well adapted to express those objects? From an author who generally enforces the importance of *precision* in the use of terms, and especially those which may be denominated philosophically technical ones, we might have naturally expected some statement, some definition either of the name or of the thing intended. But this we look for in vain; and yet the use of the words metaphysics and metaphysical perpetually occurs, and on every occasion you are completely at a loss what sort of idea the author intends to

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convey, or whether he has really any meaning. For our part we have often thought that the use of the term *metaphysics* in modern philosophy bears a strong resemblance to the use of the word *Methodism* in modern religion; and that the one and the other is intended to signify, according to the humour of him who uses it, either what is good, what is bad, or what is nonsensical. There are cant terms among learned philosophers as well as among the illiterate multitude. But it is time either to expunge the term metaphysics from the philosophical vocabulary, or to bring it to express some definite idea. We intimated before that it is well adapted to express an important province of science which claims affinity to no other term. Allowing the term physics to occupy not only matter, but also mind, and their phenomena, for its objects, still we want a term expressive of a science whose evidence is absolute certainty. Physical evidence can rise in certainty no higher than the uniformity of the laws of nature, but the human mind ought to be conversant with a science which comprehends these laws themselves as only one field of its vast province. It will be some illustration of our meaning if we advert to mathematical science compared with physics. Though mathematics be conversant about quantity and number, which are physical objects,

its evidence is not physical, but of a nature infinitely more stable, and unchangeably certain. A mathematical demonstration would remain true were all the physical laws in the universe altered, or even reversed. We further assert that the human mind ought to be conversant with a science of which the whole compass of mathematics is but a small portion; for there are other things innumerable, besides number and quantity, which admit of evidence not at all inferior to the mathematical, founded on the same principles, and comprehensive to infinity. In a word, it is the science which treats of possibles and impossibles, in point of evidence, shewing with the most absolute certainty why some things must be and others must not be. Now as physics express *actual* phenomena, what term can be more significant than metaphysics to express phenomena under the notion of *possible* and *impossible*, relative to evidence? And this is perfectly agreeable to the commonly received notion of *metaphysical evidence*,—an evidence which admits not of any exception or any flaw. It is of little moment what the heathen or Christian Peripatetics understood by the term; it is enough that it aptly designates the noblest of all sciences, and

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which presides eternally over all others. The Peripatetic school, it is true, connected many crude notions with the use of this term, as they also did with that of physics; but as this association ought to form no prejudice in the one case, so neither ought it to be admitted to operate in the other.

10. The second part of the preliminary dissertation contains an answer to a critique in the *Edinburgh Review*, vol. iii., p. 269. The objector proceeds on the idea that the inductive process of philosophising recommended by Bacon, and exemplified with such good success by others, is scarcely applicable to that philosophy of mind for which Mr Stewart is a strenuous advocate. Distinguishing between experiments and observations, between what is subject to our control, and what is not so, and determining that observations on mental phenomena are of the latter class, it is implied, that to direct so much attention to Mr Stewart's favourite study is a waste of time, and a misapplication of talent. The reply to these charges appears more ingenious than solid, discovering the skill and address of the advocate rather than the form of reason.

11. Brit there appears to us yet a stronger objection against what is most insignificantly called the “inductive science of mind;” which is, that its very foundation is merely *hypothetical*. The professed object is, to rise from particular observations to general laws as the basis of science. But what evidence is there that any such general laws exist, as connected with mental phenomena? Thus the alchymistic labourers assumed it as a fact, that a philosopher’s stone was to be found, while every one hoped to be the successful discoverer. And the inquirers after a perpetual motion have ever taken it for granted that such motion was discoverable. But, supposing that, by a persevering attention to mental operations, some general laws may be discovered which may be applied, for instance, to the business of education,—a most interesting question arises thence, Whether such a discovery ought to be hailed as a blessing, or deprecated as a curse to the world? Taking an impartial survey of the history of mankind, and of the present state of the world, who can presume that the major part of educational influence would be in favour of virtue? But how terrific the thought of general laws operating with certainty being directed in favour of vice, and the selfish passions of individuals!

12. To expect, in process of time, a discovery of any general

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laws that operate with uniformity and certainty, as a constituent part of science, and that these laws should be at the disposal or control of man, is chimerical in the extreme, as being utterly incompatible with that freedom which is essential to free agency. Supposing even the materialism of the mind, surely no such mechanical uniformity could be hoped for as was inconsistent with the mind’s active freedom.

We will put the case on the most favourable footing that can reasonably be desired. Let the speculative philosopher consume his days and nights in experiments and observations on his own mind, and the minds of others; and we will suppose him to have succeeded to his entire satisfaction in deducing some general laws from his particular observations. A momentous difficulty occurs. By what means is he to bring others to see things as he does, and to admit his conclusions among the indisputable certainties of science? He cannot appeal to the senses as vouchers for his conclusions; testimony will not be credited; the reasonings of

probability will never be admitted in the room of scientific certainty. If, indeed, the evidence of a discovery of general laws be that of demonstration, the point is neared; but it is neared on this condition, that metaphysical evidence be admitted as the sole arbiter and sovereign of the “inductive science of mind.” Demonstration is the result, not of induction, but of principles known intuitively.

13. P. xlv.:—“Human life,” we are told, “exhibits to our observation a boundless variety both of intellectual and moral phenomena; by a diligent study of which we may ascertain almost every point that we could wish to investigate, if we had experiments at our command.”

Allowing all this, how mortifying to the hopes of the philosopher is the stubborn fact, that different persons appear in circumstances perfectly similar, as far as human observation is concerned, and yet the subsequent effects are extremely different! Such is the fact, and such it must be, that a similarity of result will never be insured by similarity of *observable* circumstances, except we also take into the account a perfect similarity of mental state, accurately to observe and ascertain which is infinitely beyond the reach of human penetration. The drift of these remarks is not to dissuade from attention to mental phenomena, much less from a suitable application of any useful discovery, but to shew the folly of

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attempting to form into a science what is absolutely incapable of being so formed. Never will the materials collected by inductive philosophy, which has the mind and its operations for its object, be formed into a compact fabric of science without the cement of metaphysical evidence—that evidence which results from intuitive first principles of all knowledge.

14. It has been asserted, (p. si.) “In metaphysics, certainly knowledge is not power.” If by metaphysics be designed what is termed “the inductive science of mind,” the assertion may be admitted to stand, as far as we can perceive; but, in what is properly termed metaphysical evidence, we are equally confident in reversing the sentence—“In metaphysics, certainly knowledge *is* power.” This evidence, the brightest that can have place in the human mind, is Bacon’s *philosophia prima*,—a science which comprehends all others, and to which we may apply those words

of his, (p. liv.,) “Ita ut non solum *ex natura mentis*, sed *ex natura rerum* quoque hæc scientia emanet.” The value of any science, or any kind of evidence, should be estimated according to the *use* of which it is capable. Now this *philosophia prima*, in the acceptation before mentioned, is no less adapted to illustrate and to establish moral science, than the laws of gravitation, well understood and applied, are adapted to establish and to illustrate the true system of the universe. This assertion may be thought bold; but we are not unprepared to offer some weighty thoughts in confirmation of it when required.

15. Considering how little regard is paid to moral feelings in the speculations of philosophers on physical science, we are not a little gratified to receive the following testimony of one who ranks high in the philosophic school, (p. lxxviii.,)—“According to the prevailing maxims of modern philosophy, so little regard is paid to feeling and sentiment in matters of *reasoning*, that, instead of being understood to sanction or confirm the intellectual judgments with which they accord, they are very generally supposed to cast a shade of suspicion on every conclusion with which they blend the slightest tincture of sensibility or enthusiasm. The prosecution of this idea will, if I do not much deceive myself, open some new views with respect to the *logic of morals*; and I am induced to suggest it here, in the hopes of directing the curiosity of some of my readers to an inquiry, which, I am persuaded, will lead them to conclusions deeply interesting to their own happiness.”

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16. It is undoubtedly the province of a lover of wisdom not only to seek a discovery of new truths, but also an exposure of old errors; which latter has been attended, in many instances, with astonishing effect. This idea is important, and is well expressed in the following paragraph:—“To what did the *discoveries* made by Luther amount, but to a detection of the impostures of the Romish Church, and of absurdities sanctioned by the authority of Aristotle? Yet, how vast the space which is filled by his name in the subsequent history of Europe! and how proud his rank among the benefactors of mankind! And I am doubtful if Bacon himself did so much by the logical rules he gave for guiding the inquiries of his followers, as by the resolution with which he inspired them to abandon the beaten paths of their predecessors, and

to make excursions into regions untrodden before. As it is seldom, in such instances, (p. lxxiii.) easy to trace to particular individuals what has resulted from their exertions, with the same precision with which, in physics or mechanics, we refer to their respective inventors the *steam-engine* or the *thunder-rod*, it is not surprising that the attention of the multitude should be so little attracted to the intellectual dominion of superior minds over the moral world; but the observer must be blind indeed, who does not perceive the vastness of the scale on which speculative principles, both right and wrong, have operated on the present condition of mankind; or who does not now feel and acknowledge, how deeply the morals and the happiness of private life, as well as the order of political society, are involved in the final issue of the contest between true and false philosophy.”

17. Of the five essays which complete the first part of this volume, the first treats on Locke’s account of the sources of human knowledge, and its influence on the doctrines of some of his successors; the second, on the idealism of Berkeley; the third, on the influence of Locke’s authority upon the philosophical systems which prevailed in France during the latter part of the eighteenth century; the fourth, on the metaphysical theories of Hartley, Priestley, and Darwin; and the fifth, on the tendency of some late philological speculations. These philological speculations are principally those of Mr Home Tooke, in his “Diversions of Parley,” in which our author discovers a sceptical tendency

From this brief syllabus, it is manifest who is the principal figure in the group, and that the leading sentiment controverted

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is Locke’s doctrine of the origin of our knowledge. As the chief part of these essays consists of philosophical criticisms on passages selected from the numerous writings of authors who are supposed to have imbibed Locke’s notions on the origin of our ideas, it cannot be expected that, whatever may be our views of his doctrine, we should follow our author *κατὰ πόδα*. It will be sufficient for us, without appearing as partisans, to give a concise but faithful statement of the chief points at issue. We begin with stating our author’s own views, which is best done in his own words:—

18. P. 1:—“In speculating concerning any of the intellectual phenomena, it is of essential importance for us constantly to re-

collect that, as our knowledge of the material world is derived entirely from our external senses, so all our knowledge of the human mind is derived from consciousness.”

P. 5:—“The belief which accompanies consciousness as to the present existence of its appropriate phenomena, rests on no foundation more solid than our belief of the existence of external objects; or our belief that other men possess intellectual powers and faculties similar to those of which we are conscious in ourselves. In all these cases, the only account that can be given of our belief is, that it forms a necessary part of our constitution.”

P. 7:—“Our own existence is not a direct or immediate object of consciousness, in the strict and logical meaning of that term. “We are conscious of sensation, thought, desire, volition, but we are not conscious of the existence of mind itself.”

P. 8:—“The very first exercise of my consciousness necessarily implies a belief, not only of the present existence of what is felt, but of the present existence of *that* which feels and thinks. Of these facts, however, it is the former alone of which we can properly be said to be conscious, agreeably to the vigorous interpretation of the expression. The latter is made known to us by a suggestion of the understanding *consequent* on the sensation.”

P. 9:—“As the belief of our *present existence* necessarily accompanies every act of consciousness, so, from a comparison of the sensations and thoughts of which we are *now* conscious, with those of which we recollect to have been conscious formerly, we are impressed with an irresistible conviction of our *personal identity*.”

P. 13:—“There is a great variety of notions so connected with our different intellectual faculties, that the exercise of the faculty

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may be justly regarded as a *condition* indispensably necessary to account for the first origin of the notion.”

P. 14:—“The exercise of a particular faculty furnishes the *occasion* on which certain simple notions are, by the laws of our constitution, presented to our thoughts; nor does it seem possible for us to trace the origin of a particular notion any further than to ascertain what the nature of the *occasion* was which, in the first instance, introduced it to our acquaintance.” “If the foregoing remarks be well founded, they are fatal to a fundamental principle

of Locke's philosophy, which has been assumed by most of his successors as a demonstrated truth, and which, under a form somewhat disguised, has served to Hume as the basis of all his sceptical theories."

19. Nearly of the same import is the following passage, P. 94:—"I am always unwilling to attempt innovations in language; but I flatter myself it will not be considered as a rash or superfluous one, if I distinguish extension and figure by the title of the mathematical affections of matter, restricting the phrase *primary qualities* to hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, and other properties of the same description. The line which I would draw between *primary* and *secondary* qualities is this, that the former necessarily involve the notion of *extension*, and consequently of *externality*, or *outness*; whereas the latter are only conceived as the unknown causes of known sensations, and when *first apprehended by the mind*, do not imply the existence of anything locally distinct from the subjects of its own consciousness. If these observations be well founded, they establish three very important facts in the history of the human mind:—(1.) That the notion of the *mathematical affections* of matter presupposes the exercise of our external senses, inasmuch as it is suggested to us by the same reasons which convey to us the knowledge of its *primary qualities*. (2.) That this notion involves an irresistible conviction on our part, not only of the external existence of its objects, but of their necessary and eternal existence; whereas, in the case of the primary qualities of matter, our perceptions are only accompanied with a belief that these qualities exist externally and independently of *our* existence as percipient beings,—the supposition of their annihilation by the power of the Creator implying no absurdity whatsoever. (3.) That our conviction of the necessary existence of extension or space is neither the result of reasoning

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nor of experience, but is inseparable from the very conception of it, and must therefore be considered as an ultimate and essential law of human thought. The very same conclusion, it is manifest, applies to the notion of *time*,—a notion which, like that of *space*, presupposes the exercise of our external senses; but which, when once acquired, presents irresistibly its object to our thoughts as an existence equally independent of the human mind, and of the ma-

terial universe. Both these existences, too, swell in the human understanding to infinity,—the one to immensity, the other to eternity; nor is it possible for imagination itself to conceive a limit to either. How are these facts to be reconciled with that philosophy which teaches that all our knowledge is derived from experience?”

20. Here our author identifies *extension* and *space*, and therefore takes it for granted, that if space be necessary and eternal, extension must be so, and thus departs from the common usage of language without, as far as we can perceive, deriving any advantage, either to science in general, or to his own views in particular. Extension is an essential property of matter by common consent, and if matter be annihilated, its extension must be so too. But if extension remain after the annihilation of the thing intended, how can it be considered as the essential property of that thing? Can the essential property remain when the thing itself is no more? However, let it be allowed that extension be taken to designate space, what propriety is there in saying that it is necessary and eternal? The only plausible answer is, that we cannot in idea annihilate space. But this answer is by no means conclusive, because it rests upon a postulate which ought not to be granted—viz., that space is an *existence*, as our author calls it; a positive rather than a negative consideration. Space being a positive term, we are liable to be betrayed into the conclusion, that the idea intended by it is also a positive one. We should rather say, that an extended substance bears the same relation to space as something does to nothing. We cannot destroy space, it is said, in idea. True, if we allow it a positive existence; nor can we destroy nihility, if we first suppose it to be something positive. We are bound to regard space as a negative idea, until it appears to possess some essential property, but no such property is pretended but by begging the question in dispute. We must, therefore, conclude, that space is mere nihility as it stands related to a circum-

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scribed substance. Take away the substance, and nothing remains; it is a mere contrast to a corporeal existence. A plenum and a vacuum, as co-existent in the same place, are incompatible; but space may be constantly regarded as co-existent in the same place in the way of contrast. But suppose a plenum to be exchanged

for a vacuum, and *nothing* remains, except the negative idea of contrast; nor can anything be made of this contrast but *pure nihil-ity*, considered in the way of *relation* to some extended substance.

Our author ascribes to *time* also the awful properties of necessary and eternal. With what propriety, we shall now consider. The only plausible ground for such an opinion seems to be the identifying of time and duration, which it would be difficult to exculpate from a wanton deviation from the established use of terms. If there be no difference between time and duration, then time and eternity are the same thing, for eternity is duration also; and the duration of the Deity would be of the same nature with that of a creature, which would lead us to the most absurd and idolatrous conclusions. To conceive of the eternity of an infinitely perfect Being, even that which is denominated *à parte post*, to be the same in kind as the everlasting duration of a creature, is infinitely degrading to Him. The existence of every creature, however exalted, and however durable, is continued by successive moments, and must consist of those moments continually added. But how mean, how absurd the thought, that the duration of the self-existent Being is of this kind! As His nature and perfections are *absolutely* great, and not merely relative, so His duration is equally *absolute* as distinguished from relative succession. Time, like the existence of a creature, admits of addition of the future to the present; but eternity, like the existence of the First Cause, admits of no addition. To suppose that the existence of an infinitely perfect Being admits of increase, is palpably absurd; and equally so is the supposition that His eternity is made up of the additions of successive moments.

Time is a *mode* of duration, a mere relation of co-existence between what is changeable and what is unchangeable; or it is the interval subsisting between one instant of contingent existence compared with another, which interval is measured by another existence less changeable than itself. As our design is not to contend about words, the same notion may be expressed in different ways. Time is duration compared with created existence,

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at different instants of that existence, and measured by what is permanent. The continuation of contingent existence is time in general, and the continuation of such existence from one given in-

stant to another, as it stands related to an unchangeable standard of measure, is time in particular. Eternity is duration compared with absolute existence; and time denotes the relation of co-existence between a fleeting succession and a permanent object. And from this view it follows, that were there nothing *permanent*, there could be nothing *successive*; and were there nothing *absolute*, there could be nothing contingent and *changeable*.

Our author, after apologising for an apparent innovation, calls extension and figure the *mathematical affections* of matter. How this use of terms contributes to the advancement of science, we acknowledge our inability of conceiving; but it has a direct tendency to confound ideas that were before clear and plain to a contemplative mind. Does the term “affections” mean anything different from what is well understood by the term “properties?” However, say that body is *mathematically affected* by figure and extension, or that there are mathematical affections of body; of what use is it to call these affections “mathematical?” The term is probably adopted with a view to shew that these properties or affections of matter are as permanent and indestructible as mathematical verities. But the conclusion will not hold good. Mathematical truths always *suppose* the existence of quantity or number, and are absolutely dependent upon that supposition. If, therefore, figure and extension be mathematical affections of matter, they must *suppose* the existence of matter, and absolutely depend upon that supposition. If there be no triangle or circle supposed, no mathematical demonstrations from them can follow; and if the existence of body be not previously admitted, no affections, whether we call them physical or mathematical, can possibly remain, even in idea.

Even supposing time and space to have a positive existence, and that they *swell* in the human understanding to infinity, this is so far from proving what our author wishes to establish, however praiseworthy might be his aim in opposing Locke’s indefensible positions respecting the exclusive origin of our ideas, that it really makes against him. For that any ideas are capable of being *swelled* to infinity, proves only the *operations* of the human mind, of which we are *conscious*. We are conscious of these operations in two

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respects: first, that we can proceed in this work of *swelling* our ideas a great way; and, secondly, that we can proceed in no other way than by adding one thing to another. Whereas if Mr Stewart had argued against the Lockeites from *absolute* infinity, whether of existence or duration, rather than from what is merely *relative*, which consists in our capacity of swelling our ideas, his conclusion would have been valid, and his opponents would have no room to triumph. The advocates of truth too often injure their cause by insisting on weak and indefensible arguments. And here we may add, the most radical defect in Locke's position, concerning sensation and reflection as the exclusive inlets of our ideas, is the same as that of Mr Stewart—viz., identifying that infinity which is merely relative, and that which is absolute. The latter can never be known by means of either sensible objects or a reflection on our own minds. For what though we may be conscious of the operations of power, wisdom, goodness, justice, &c., and may *swell* these *ad infinitum*, this kind of infinity has not the least approximation to that which is absolute. The latter, therefore, must be an original intuitive perception, *sui generis*, whatever may be the *occasion* of exciting it, whether Divine revelation or anything else.

21. Let us now view Locke's own statement:—

P. 15:—"In experience all our knowledge is founded, and from *that* it ultimately derives itself. Our observation employed about either external sensible objects, or about the internal operations of our minds, perceived and reflected upon by ourselves, is that which supplies our understanding with all the materials for thinking. These two are the fountains of knowledge, from whence all the ideas we have, or can naturally have, do spring." P. 17:—"These two, I say,—viz., external material things, as the objects of sensation, and the operations of our own minds within, as the objects of reflection,—are to me the only originals from whence all our ideas take their beginning. But it is not in the power of the most exalted wit, or enlarged understanding, by any quickness or variety of thoughts, to invent or frame one new simple idea in the mind not taken in by the ways before mentioned; nor can any form of the understanding destroy those that are there." P. 22:—"I, therefore, cannot but confess here again that external and internal sensation are the only passages that I can find of know-

ledge to the understanding. These alone, as far as I can discover, are the windows by which light is let into this dark room/'

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P. 24:—"The prevailing opinion since Locke's time has been that all our simple ideas, excepting those which the power of reflection collects from the phenomena of thought, are images or representations of certain external archetypes with which our different organs of sense are conversant; and that out of these materials, thus treasured up in the repository of the understanding, all the possible objects of human knowledge are manufactured."

22. In opposition to this statement, partly expressed and clearly implied in Mr Locke's doctrine, Mr Stewart maintains that not only consciousness and reflection are necessary to furnish us with many of our simple ideas, but also *memory*, *abstraction*, and *reason*. To which we add, as what appears to us still more forcible, if sensation and reflection be the only sources of our simple ideas, how could the notion of *absolute existence*, as distinguished from contingent existence, enter into the human mind? For neither in the material universe nor in the phenomena of our own minds can anything of the kind be found. Here, then, is a simple idea, or notion rather,—one too of infinite importance,—for the admission of which Mr Locke has made no provision.

Again, on Mr Locke's theory, the simple but momentous ideas of *possibility* and *impossibility* can never be accounted for. The same may be said of *absolute infinity*. It may be said, that these ideas, especially those of absolute existence and infinity, are not simple, but complex, or compounded of other ideas which are simple. For instance, we have by sensation an idea of existence, and by reflection we only deny to it contingency. But, it is replied, since no existence but what is contingent can ever enter the mind by sensation and reflection, seeing every object of sense, and every subject of consciousness in ourselves is only contingent, it must needs follow that the idea of *absolute existence* is not derived from these sources, but is an original, simple idea, *sui generis*. Mr Locke's notion of the manner in which we acquire the idea of absolute *infinity* is very exceptionable. He supposes that, by the addition or multiplication of what is finite, we arrive at length at the denial of all bounds, and call this unbounded accumulation of unites infinite. But this is a very inferior accep-

tation of the term infinite, and is totally incompatible with the notion implied in that term when applied to the Divine nature and perfections. On Mr Locke's principles, the Supreme Intelli-

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gence is infinite in nature only by an increase of what is finite; or else, that our notion of this nature is nothing better, and, consequently, both is, and, from the nature of the case, must be idolatrous, which is absurd. How much more rational is it to admit that the simple idea of absolute infinity is suggested to the mind, on occasions that offer by the laws of our constitution, and not by either sensation or reflection?

23. Our author, in the next place, proceeds to state the speculations of various eminent writers since the time of Locke. But these are so numerous, and the shades of variation so great, that it would prove more fatiguing than profitable to follow our author. A few of these, however, we must notice:—

P. 26:—"We are percipient of nothing (says Bishop Berkeley) but of our own perceptions and ideas." "It is evident to any one who takes a survey of the objects of human knowledge, that they are either ideas actually imprinted on the *senses*, or else such as are perceived by attending to the passions and operations of mind, or, lastly, ideas formed by help of memory and imagination, either compounding, dividing, or barely representing those originally perceived in the foresaid ways." According to this statement, there is no knowledge of God in human minds but what is idolatrous.

P. 27:—"All our ideas (says Hume) are nothing but copies of our *impressions*; or, in other words, it is impossible for us to *think* of anything which we have not antecedently *felt*, either by our *external* or our *internal* senses." From any disciple of Hume we should be glad to learn how the idea of a mathematical point entered into his mind. As a rational being, he will, of course, acknowledge that it is a *simple*, and not a complex idea; as a mathematician, he will allow that it has no *sensible* dimension; and, as a man of thought, he will own that he has "not antecedently *felt*" it.

P. 29:—"At present, I only wish to infer, from what has been stated," says Mr Stewart, "that, according to the most *probable* interpretation of Locke's own meaning, and according to the *un-*

*questionable* interpretation given to his words by Berkeley and Hume, his account of the origin of our ideas amounts to this, that we have no knowledge of anything which we do not either learn from consciousness at the present moment, or which is not

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treasured up in our minds as a *copy* of what we were conscious of on some former occasion.”

P. 31:—“All the ideas, or the materials of our reasoning and judging, are received by some immediate powers of perception, internal or external, which we may call senses. Reasoning or intellect seems to raise no new species of ideas, but to discover or discern the relations of those received.” In opposition to this, and similar statements, our author adduces, with great propriety, the intuitive judgments involving the simple ideas of *personal identity, causation, time, number, truth, certainty, probability*.

24. Much as we approve, in general, of Mr Stewart’s remarks in refutation of those philosophers on whom he animadverts, respecting the origin of our ideas, we regard the following sentiments as highly exceptionable. He is speaking of the manner in which Dr Hutcheson might have made a plausible defence against some inferences of Hume:—“*Extension* was certainly a quality peculiarly fitted for obviating the cavils of his adversaries; the notion of it (although none can doubt that it was originally suggested by *sense*) involving in its very nature an irresistible belief that its object possesses an *existence*, not only independent of our perceptions, but *necessary* and *eternal*, like the truth of a mathematical theorem.” Necessary and eternal extension! What can be the import of such language, though sanctioned by the ingenuity of Dr Clarke? Can there be any doubt that extension is exclusively a property of matter? Is matter necessary and eternal? Does not the annihilation of matter include the annihilation of extension? Should it be said, that extension is implied in the truth of a mathematical theorem, which is eternal; we reply, that the *extension* is not *necessary*, but hypothetical, and that the *relation* asserted is alone necessary. That in a right-angled triangle the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the square of both the other sides, is an eternal truth; but the triangle itself (and, consequently, its extension) is neither eternal nor necessary. It is a necessary and eternal truth, that a creature should

be dependent on the Creator; but it is neither eternal nor necessary that there should be a creature. In like manner, extension is necessary on supposition of matter existing, but not otherwise. (See pp. 93, 94.)

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25. On the comparative aims of Berkeley and Hume, the follow-

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ing remark is not a little interesting. P. 56:—"The truth is, that, whereas Berkeley was sincerely and *bond fide* an idealist, Hume's leading object, in his metaphysical writings, plainly was to inculcate a universal scepticism. In this respect, the real scope of his arguments has, I think, been misunderstood by most, if not by all his opponents. It evidently was *not*, as they seem to have supposed, to exalt *reasoning*, in preference to our instinctive principles of belief; but, by illustrating the contradictory conclusions to which our different faculties lead, to involve the whole subject in the same suspicious darkness. In other words, his aim was not to *interrogate* nature, with a view to the discovery of truth, but, by a *cross-examination* of nature, to involve her in such contradictions as might set aside the whole of her evidence as good for nothing."

26. P. 84:—"The Hindoo system represents the material universe as at all times in a state of immediate dependence on the Divine energy. Coinciding in this respect with the opinions of those pious men in our own quarter of the globe who have supposed its continued existence to be the effect of a creative act renewed every moment, but admitting, in the most explicit terms, the regularity of the laws according to which its phenomena are exhibited to our senses, and the reality of these phenomena as permanent objects of science. The scepticism of Hume, on the contrary, proceeds entirely on a scholastic hypothesis concerning perception, which, when followed out to its logical consequences, leaves no evidence for the existence either of the Divine mind, or any other, nor, indeed, for that of anything whatever but of our own impressions and ideas."

27. P. 101:—"The account given by Locke of the origin of our ideas, we are informed, has for many years past been adopted implicitly, and almost universally, as a fundamental and unquestionable truth by the philosophers of France. It was early sanctioned

in that country by the authority of Fontenelle, whose mind was probably prepared for its reception by some similar discussions in the works of Gassendi. At a later period, it acquired much additional celebrity from the vague and exaggerated encomiums of Voltaire; and it has since been assumed, as the common basis of their respective conclusions concerning the history of the human understanding, by Condillac, Turgot, Helvetius, Diderot, D'Alem-

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bert, Condorcet, Destutt-Tracy, De Gerendo, and many other writers of the highest reputation at complete variance with each other in the general spirit of their philosophical systems. But although all these ingenious men have laid hold eagerly of this common principle of reasoning, and have vied with each other in extolling Locke for the sagacity which he has displayed in unfolding it, hardly two of them can be named who have understood it exactly in the same sense, and perhaps not one who has understood it precisely in the sense annexed to it by the author. What is still more remarkable, the praise of Locke has been loudest from those who seem to have taken the least pains to ascertain the import of his conclusions."

28. This account seems to savour not a little of prejudice and paradox. If those who praised Locke the loudest were worthy and virtuous characters, and his conclusions were dangerous, they must have admired him on other grounds than his conclusions; but if they were of a sceptical and infidel cast, how could they admire the same things as the others without having "taken pains to ascertain the import of his conclusions?" Candid and liberal as the Professor appears on most other subjects, he scarcely knows how to give Locke any quarter where he perceives him in any respect vulnerable; and probably most impartial judges will think that a wound is often inflicted either without cause, or on very slight occasions. Locke's own declarations are implicit against infidelity and scepticism, and of those who were tainted with these vices, "perhaps not one understood his principle in the sense annexed to it by the author." Protracted as this article has been, we cannot refrain inserting here a remark of Leibnitz, containing a just statement of Locke's chief defect, free from the asperity of critical censure:—"Had Locke sufficiently considered the difference between truths which are necessary or demonstrative, and

those which we infer from induction alone, he would have perceived that necessary truths could be proved only from principles which command our assent by their intuitive evidence, inasmuch as our senses can inform us only of what *is*, not of what *must necessarily be*." This, we think, is extremely judicious and accurate, and, in point of real utility, more valuable than volumes of desultory criticisms.

29. We have neither room nor inclination to follow our author's

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remarks on the theories of Hartley, Priestley, and Darwin, or on the philosophical speculations of Home Tooke. Indeed, the whole of the first part of this volume is thick-set with the thorns and briars of philosophical controversy; but we announce with pleasure, that the second part, which we must notice on a future occasion, presents us with pleasant walks, bordered with the flowers of *beauty*, and accompanied with the decorations of *taste*.

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END OF VOL. IV.

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